ROMANO-ARABICA

XXII

Arabic literature, quo Vadis?

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST
CENTER FOR ARAB STUDIES

ROMANO-ARABICA

XXII

Arabic Literature, Quo Vadis?

2024

Contents

I. ARABIC LITERATURE, QUO VADIS?

RETHINKING THE ARABIC LITERATURE CURRICULUM:
A BRIDGE TO WRITTEN ARABIC (*FUṢḤĀ*) AND A MECHANISM FOR CULTURAL CHANGE – CASE STUDY OF THE PALESTINIAN MINORITY IN ISRAEL

BASILIUS BAWARDI

Bar-Ilan University

Abstract: As in neighboring countries, Palestinians living in Israel attend schools in which Arabic is the language of instruction. However, their situation is unique in that Arabic is the minority language, and students and teachers alike have to learn and function in the majority language – Hebrew – as well as the international language of science and commerce – English. In this article I present an overview of the particular problems this situation creates in terms of the accessibility of written Arabic – *fuṣḥā*. This inaccessibility is compounded by the choice of texts for the Arabic literature curriculum which neither engage the students nor contribute to the development of their critical thinking, that essential skill for progress and success in the 21st century era of pluralism, diversity and non-conformity. Within the context of the Sanctuary (*maʿbad*) Theory of Kamāl ʾAbū Dīb and the Diaspora Theory of Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, I demonstrate a model of such teaching with a poem by the Syrian author, ʾAdūnīs.

Keywords: Arabic literature curriculum-Israel; teaching of Arabic; Non-conformist literature; Diaspora Theory; Sanctuary (maʿbad) Theory, Kamāl ʾAbū Dīb; ʾAdūnīs.

> *2350 years ago, a dramatic event took place in Athens: Aristotle appeared at the gates of the Academy of Sciences and announced his resignation from that esteemed institution. What led Aristotle to take such an extraordinary, almost unprecedented step? Aristotle joined the Academy at the age of 17 and worked alongside Plato for 20 years. Plato died and Speusippos was elected to take his place as the head of the Academy. Speusippos was a mathematician. Aristotle claimed that a mathematician looks at the universe around him and sees a static, frozen, unchanging reality, while he – Aristotle – as a researcher of life phenomena, saw a world that was dynamic and constantly changing. According to Aristotle, these two worldviews contradict each other, and since a mathematician had been elected to lead the Academy, he chose to be outside it.[1]*

Introduction

Aristotle's view quoted above expresses the vitality and necessity of change in human lives. The Academy of Sciences in ancient Athens used to be a symbol of power because, according to Aristotle, its influence could affect all directions of human thought. Aristotle's position is a continuation of the comments of his mentor Plato who, in turn, related to

---

[1] Feldman, 2011, 74-81.

Heraclitus' view of the dynamic nature of the universe and the endless flow of the world's elements, their uniformity and contrasts. The views of Heraclitus illustrated the fact that truth and knowledge are constantly changing, as is human existence, which is an integral part of the cosmos. The basic understanding that constant change is an integral part of that existence appears also among modern philosophers such as Nietzsche and Heidegger, and indeed underpins this article (Cartwright 1965: 466-485; Heidegger 1979: ix; Kahn 1981; Kirk 1951: 35-42).

The aim of this article is to answer the basic question: can Arabic literary texts create a linguistic and cultural change among readers and particularly among school pupils in the post-modern era, and if so, how? This article focuses on the teaching of literature within the school setting as a rich space where young people may structure their identity and autonomy. My belief is that the study of literature has the power to prepare pupils, as emerging human entities, for the era of pluralism, diversity and disagreement.

The theory underlying this article is the constructivist approach influenced by postmodern schools of thought whereby there is no absolute truth, since every individual understands the world in his or her own way. Literature is a key tool for instilling these values at school in order to prepare graduates for new and rapidly changing life experiences. Thus, the starting point for this article claims that the Arabic literary text can raise the level of contemporary existential thinking among Arab pupils and Arabs in general. To this end, I believe Arabic language and literature curricula must include specific texts that challenge the status quo within Arab society and help Arab pupils stand firm when faced with the frequent existential and intellectual changes, both local and global. Moreover, I believe that in order to encourage Arab pupils to engage with such texts, some of these must be chosen not only for their content, but also for their linguistic accessibility, given the tremendous diglossic gap between Arabic as it is spoken in various countries (‘āmmiyya) and the written language (fuṣḥā). While this is true for all school systems in which Arabic is the language of instruction, this is particularly critical in Israel, the site of this case study, where the problems of diglossia are compounded by the fact that Arabic is the language of the minority and is spoken and used as the medium of instruction for some 20% of the country's population in Israel. As stated, however, the other driver to encourage students to overcome the difficulties of fuṣḥā is to select texts that challenge the students to think about issues relevant to their own lives.

A brief overview of the Arabic curriculum for the Arab schools in Israel reveals that there are no texts that question the social, intellectual, and existential status quo in Arab society. Non-conformism in this context is an important tool to change the thinking horizons among Arab pupils in Israel. I believe suitable literary texts may arouse new thought and empower the voice of the individual against the collective hegemony of a variety of axioms, traditions and norms that limit free thinking in an era characterized by uncertainty in all walks of life.

This article will suggest open-ended, non-conformist texts as well as a theoretical framework based on the Sanctuary Theory (naẓariyyat al-maʿbad) of Syrian author and critic Kamāl ’Abū Dīb (Abu Deeb 1988: 160-181; Abu Deeb 1997: 101-133) and the Diaspora Theory developed by Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (2005). Such a framework can enrich educational and literary discussion as a progressive process centered on a non-conformist text. While this article does not suggest specific teaching methods, the examples provided

below lend themselves to fruitful dialogue within a democratic classroom setting. The provocative non-conformist text is essential for rethinking the values of Arab society and the real questions that lead to positive and productive thinking in all areas of life.

The teaching of written Arabic (Fl1) in Arab schools in Israel

The study of Standard written Arabic, as a second language, in Arab schools in Israel is a unique case in that, unlike in neighboring Arab states, Arabic is the language of the minority. Nevertheless, the problems of teaching Arabic language and literature presented below bear similarities to those in all Arabic-speaking countries. Hence the particular case study of Israel has implications far beyond its geographical boundaries.

The teaching of Arabic language and literature in Arab schools in Israel is affected by a number of elements. I refer to the reversal of its status as the dominant language – the superstratum – to that of minority language – the substratum. We must remain aware of the fact that Arabic is now the language of the national minority, with all that this entails.

This overview does not provide precise statistics but rather reflects and examines in depth the real problems inherent in the teaching of Arabic in Arab schools in Israel today. One might offer several descriptions of the state of Arabic teaching in these schools, but perhaps the most understated way would be to describe it as being in a painful state of crisis. By using the term 'crisis' I mean that, particularly at the high school level, not only is there no advancement, but the status quo is also not being maintained, and we are witnessing a worrying regression that is reflected in various aspects that can be measured by certain parameters that, together, create a very gloomy picture[2].

The first parameter is the matriculation exams taken in 12th grade (11th grade in some schools). The national average score is just under 60% and is 12% lower than the national average for Hebrew as first language in the Jewish schools. The second parameter is the scores for the verbal section on the psychometric tests for university admission. While Arabic speakers often receive an exemption from further study on the basis of their score for English, for the most part they receive a lower score on the verbal section for Arabic as first language. The third parameter is the MEITZAV[3] tests (standardized tests administered nationwide in first language, math, and science in grades 5 and 8 as measures of school effectiveness and growth[4]). These results provide a very dismal picture among Arab elementary school pupils in general and reveal serious difficulties in reading comprehension and written expression in particular. The fourth parameter is the entrance exam for the Faculties of Arabic at Israeli universities and colleges, and the intra-faculty transition exams. Usually, a large percentage of the test-takers fail to reach the threshold score. The fifth parameter is the international PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – *al-imtiḥān ad-duwalī li-qiyās madā taqaddum al-qirā'a fī*

---

[2] For information concerning Arabic in Israel, see Amara, 2002; Amara, 202 (a), pp. 63-103; 'Amāra, 2010; Amara, 2013, 77-90; Ben-Rafael, 2006, 7-30; Ilan, 2002, 7-30; Yitzhaki, 2008.
[3] applications/ims/homepage.htm/
[4] *'imtiḥān maqāyīs al-namā' wa-l-najā'a fī al-madāris*

l- 'ālam) test[5], which examines first language literacy. Without the average of the Arab students, Israel is ranked 11th out of 45 participating countries, and with the scores of the Arab students it drops to 32nd place. The scores of the Arab students on their own would place Israel in 42nd place.

There are several solid reasons for this situation, which can be grouped into three categories, in my opinion: (a) issues intrinsic to Arabic; (b) the teacher; (c) the education system. I relate to each of these categories below.

Issues intrinsic to Arabic

Arabic is characterized by diglossia, or to be more precise – Arabic suffers from extreme diglossia, with a significant difference between the spoken dialects – mother tongue – (*'āmmiyya*) throughout the Arab-speaking world and the written language. This in itself makes it hard to acquire the written language, FL1 – (*fuṣḥā*) – because the pupils only encounter it in books and literature classes. But if this duality were not enough, the situation is even more severe for reasons connected to the situation of the Arab minority living in Israel, namely its exposure to Israeli society and to Hebrew. Moreover, globalization and the hegemony of the media further influence the language of the youth, who are developing their own language that differs both from *fuṣḥā* and from the regular local *'āmmiyya*. Consequently, the place of the Arabic that pupils learn at school and are tested on makes it hard to do well in reading comprehension, written expression and literature in Standard Arabic. We can rank the lingual habits of the Arab youth in Israel in the following order:

1. In the first place – "normative" spoken Arabic.
2. "Hebric" – a hybrid of spoken Arabic and Hebrew that is seeping into many areas of life for many different age levels.
3. "Arabish" – a mixture of Arabic and English – the language of the internet, chat rooms and social media websites.
4. Normative Hebrew, which Arab students must learn in order to function and advance in Israeli society.
5. Normative English, essential for admission to academic studies, but also affecting the youth through music, film, and television.
6. Classical Arabic, the language of poetry and literary prose, a language they are tested on to ascertain their levels in the four competencies of language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The place of classical written Arabic is thus at the bottom of the list of priorities for most Arab pupils, who see its necessity as only marginal, apart from the religious Islamic aspect. The proper use of this language is not seen as a necessity that determines their daily existence, and thus their attitude towards it is also marginal.

---

[5] For results see: http://cms.education.gov.il/educationcms/units/rama

The teacher

In no way do I underestimate the Sisyphean task the teachers of Arabic are faced with; the conditions they work under are very often difficult and frustrating. Nevertheless, this component contains three factors that prevent teachers from delivering the study content more effectively:

a) **The deliverer factor**: Arab teachers, particular young teachers, who themselves experienced the situation described above regarding Arabic, are expected to be the agents of Classical Arabic, and pass on to their pupils the language that they, themselves, found difficult to acquire. I am referring not only to the teachers of Arabic, but to teachers of all subjects who have trouble expressing themselves in classical language, and papers they hand out to their pupil (exams, worksheets, explanations etc.) can be full of spelling, grammar, and syntax errors.

b) **The default factor**: The admission threshold for many professions, particularly those held in high prestige, is set high and is hard to attain (this includes the psychometric tests mentioned earlier as an impeding factor). This situation, and students' fears about learning new professions and not finding work in them drives many Arab students to choose the teaching profession and teacher education colleges not as the realization of a dream or preferred choice, but rather by default – or as a 'lesser evil'. They complete their degree requirements, but in the field, they will not be teachers who can bring about any significant change even if they try hard.

c) **The weak magnet factor**: Following on from the default factor, the teaching of Arabic and teaching in general cannot compete with prestigious professions such as medicine, hi-tech and nanotechnology, and thus there is no opportunity to attract people with high potential to teaching, and we cannot see any meaningful change in the foreseeable future for the teaching of Arabic or for teaching in general.

The system

I refer to a number of factors that are found in various environments in terms of the distance from the pupils as individuals, but which affect them directly or indirectly. In other words, the interaction between the individual and the different environments – those circles surrounding the individual constitute what Bronfenbrenner calls the "ecological environment". The types of interaction in these systems change according to the degree of closeness between the system (the circle) and the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977(a): 199-212; Bronfenbrenner, 1977(b): 513-531). Bronfenbrenner's circles constitute four systems as follows:

- Microsystem – direct and immediate circle of family and peers
- Mesosystem – an interim circle of family and peers
- Exosystem – external circle such as neighborhood and the media
- Macrosystem – laws, history, culture, and socioeconomic conditions

13

In my opinion, all the circles of influence surrounding the individual, and in this case, the Arab pupil, are party to the crisis that Arabic teaching is undergoing. I do not share the currently popular belief that the Israeli government is the only, or even the prime factor for the failure of the Arab education system, particularly Arabic teaching. On the other hand, I most certainly do not want to free the government from the grave responsibility it bears with regard to the Arab education system in Israel. However, all the circles of influence – home, school, local authorities, the Ministry of Education, and the governments over the years – have played a part in creating and perpetuating this failure. I believe this is connected to what Muhammad Amara, following Giles (Giles, 1977, 307-343) defined as 'ethnolinguistic vitality', which is comprised of three variables: status, demography, and institutional support. The greater the linguistic vitality of an ethnic group, the greater the group's ability to preserve its social identity and mother tongue in various areas of life. The converse is also true, i.e. most of the circles of influence do not perceive Arabic as a central social, political, or even national tool. Despite the grand declarations of the exosystem and macrosystem about the essentiality of Arabic, these declarations are not put into practice when it comes to teaching Arabic in school. It is a language perceived as less central despite all the best intentions.

In light of all of the above, I propose one possible path that may enable a change in Arabic teaching, be it only partial. I propose teaching Arabic through the vehicle of non-conformist texts that arouse such interest that pupils will be motivated to make the effort to overcome the linguistic barriers. This motivation will be further fueled by a methodology of open discussion. Such discussion and debate will, by definition, enhance the pupils critical thinking skills and thus, the Arabic literature class will not only enhance proficiency in classical Arabic, an important goal in and of itself, but at the same time it will enable a profound change in thinking among Arab teachers and pupils alike. This is no easy path, as it will be filled with many social, religious, and even ethnic obstacles. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is essential if we want to create a society of young Arabs who are proficient and take pride in their first language and who question, investigate, and keep abreast of the surrounding global changes.

Non-conformist literature as a tool for change

In his poem "'Awwal aš-Ši'r" (The beginning of poetry)[6], 'Adūnīs ('Alī 'Aḥmad Sa'īd, b. 1930) the Syrian poet says:

> You can be beautiful if you shake spaces,
> And people? Some will say: you are a voice in the wilderness,
> Others: You are just an echo.
> You can be the most beautiful if you are a good example
> Of light and dark
> The final words will be yours, the first, too
> And people? Some will say: you are nothing but froth

---

[6]   Translation mine, for the purposes of this article.

> Others will say: You are the Creator.
> You can be the most beautiful if you are a goal –
> A crossroads
> Between speech and silence.
>   ('Adūnīs, 1988(a), *al-Muṭābaqāt wa-l-'Awā'il – Parallels and Beginnings*, 154).

The words of the Syrian poet 'Adūnīs are a strong foundation for the difficult and complex question: is it possible to bring about a cultural change through literature? The direct answer to this multidimensional question contains the hope that literature can indeed lead to cultural change, but this answer is also mixed with an obvious difficulty – that the impact of literature is very limited. A literary text is elitist, one that only few are exposed to or understand, so that it can only have a shallow impact on daily life experiences. The skepticism as to whether literature can, indeed, generate cultural change is both understandable and legitimate. Nevertheless, this article claims that a non-conformist literary text that is presented within the schools as a focus of discussion and debate among thousands of pupils may, indeed, be able to bring about social, moral, and cultural change. The text becomes the eye of the storm, part of the pupils' daily experience, allowing them to see things differently.

This type of discussion needs two basic elements to allow skepticism, welcome confrontation and questioning of human existence. The first element is the willing teacher, who must be prepared to neutralize any prejudices and initiate an open discussion of the text. The second element is the inclusion of non-conformist texts in the curriculum that can provoke pupils to examine and challenge existing norms, to raise difficult questions while broadening multidimensional thinking about life. Below I will present and analyze a non-conformist text as a model for discussion aimed towards change, within a theoretical framework that will guide the teachers as to how to manage the discussion.

The discussion about the subversive aspect of a modern Arabic literary text leads us to a meaningful discussion of the textual activity of the modern Arab author, but it is also a discussion of a text that has the power to generate cultural, social, educational, and existential changes. The very act of looking into literary texts (prose and poetry) places the author on the seam between two poles: the first pole is the past, immersed in the united triangle of religious, patriarchal and establishment symbols. The other pole is the creative individual, filled with the spirit of freedom and rebellion that places human intelligence center stage and reconsiders the axioms that dictate predetermined thinking. Before dealing with the subversive views of this Arab poet, we can determine from the outset that his main achievement lies in our renewed examination of accepted mindsets, how he looks at the world anew, while trying to upset its tranquility. The author has refused to accept the existing literary frameworks as sacred, and discusses them, offering alternatives that suit his view of the future. His rebellion has become an ideology that has implications for both literature and culture.

We can divide modern Arabic non-conformist poetry into two main parts: first, the more direct and obvious, as in 'engaged' literature through which an author writes hegemonic literature, but not in the sense that Antonio Gramsci gives this term when saying: dominant discourse that creates and constitutes an outcome of consensus that balances between the ruler and the ruled: in other words, the ruling group concretely adapts

15

itself to the general interests of the groups inferior to it, and life in the state is thus perceived as the ongoing creation of unstable balances that are resolved (within the framework of the law), balances between the interests of the dominant group and those of the inferior groups, balances in which the interests of the dominant group supersede the others, but up to a certain point (Gramsci 1971: 215, Mumby 1997: 347-357; Ives 2004: 63-81; Ramos 1982: 34-42). Actually, in the case of engaged Arabic literature, the author undermines the ruling establishment and aspires to change the structure of the regime and the power relations in civil society – that civil society that Gramsci describes as a political and cultural hegemony that one social group has over the whole society, in other words, that hegemony as the ethical content of the state. (Gramsci 1971: 216). The "inferior" groups constituted the national, Marxist opposition forces, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s. Yet here, the author represents the consensus of the people and not of the ruling hegemony in the form of the various Arab regimes. However, that same hegemony also created a balance of interests when it was in control. The prose and poetry of the engaged Arab author is an ideological national civil literature that was usually identified with pan-Arabism and preaching in favor of a united Arab nation from the Persian Gulf to the Ocean (*'umma 'arabiyya wāḥida min al-muḥīṭ 'ilā l-ḫalīǧ).*

Palestinian authors were an excellent example of the engaged subversive text which strove diligently to change the national and political Arab list of priorities. These authors worked alongside Arab authors from other Arab states and were deemed the Arab national moralists seeking to shake up the political and national order and status quo.

Nevertheless, in this context one must mention that engaged literature seeks to imprison the literary work within a framework with rigid, pre-defined community and even literary boundaries. "These boundaries will turn literature into a place, and the authors themselves will become a tool in the hands of the powers of the State, of society, the regime, the ideology; they will become the guardians of the collective memory", as Kizel writes; "[t]his memory is borne by the myths and rituals infused with engaged poetry, the formal tools of the civil religion. This memory serves to define ideological groups that each foster a different memory, and thus in the field of struggles for domination, in the historical and political arena, poetry will be engaged to constantly compete between the memories that become a home, that become a sacred place" (Kizel 2010: 57).

The second type of modern Arab subversive literary text is one that seeks to undermine the existing scale of values and confront the existential definitions this scale represents. This is literature that not only undermines the existing political, national regime, but more profoundly questions the existential guiding principles of the Arab individual in general. This subversion may be closely examined within the emergence of the prose and poetry of a group of authors who arbitrarily undertook to cease being the voice of the collective and opted for literary writing that seeks to debate the deep existential questions and desires relevant to the changing life of the Arab individual.

What is the modern Arab subversive text based on? I choose to explain the features of this kind of literature by means of what the Syrian author and critic Kamāl 'Abū Dīb calls Sanctuary Theory (*naẓariyyat al-ma'bad*). 'Abū Dīb clearly outlines the subversive aspect of modern Arabic literature, focusing on poetic text. But these characteristics should be understood as applicable to all subversive Arabic literary texts. 'Abū Dīb claims that the

deep meaning of the new Arabic poetry is expressed in the terms "shock", "release", "unmodeled", "uncentered", "lacking a single guideline", and "lacking organic connection". In contrast, there are the concepts of the sanctuary, the place of prayer, concepts that frame the modern poetic process. In the sanctuary, people behave according to the rules it dictates, there is a sense of centered stability. Those who come to the sanctuary uniformly believe in the idea upon which it was established. They are committed to a certain ideological content. In the sanctuary, literature has a center with very clear features, there is certainty, ready-made answers, stability, and the outcome of the sanctuary experience is the dominant text. The sanctuary school of thought believes in one-directionality. According to 'Abū Dīb, Arab text must free itself from several bonds:

1. Contemporality – belonging to a predetermined time and place. The poetic text should not be slave to time or place.
2. Ideology – which closes the door on debate with myself and the other. It should not prevent the author from writing artistically or from any discussion with the self and with the other.
3. Cerebrality – writing cerebral poetry. According to the "sanctuary" approach, everything is known in advance and nothing should be questioned. One must be liberated from any pre-determined mode of thinking.
4. Centrality complex (one ruling school of thought) – all other issues pertaining to variety, diversity and acceptance of others are nullified. Diversity enables everyone to have space and time, and there is no single dominance.
5. Essence of relationship – one must free oneself of any pre-determined relationship. The patriarchal structure has natural hierarchical relationships that are known in advance (e.g. the male rules the family). In literature, the relationship between the author and the text is also known in advance. If the author changes the relationship through the use of a new metaphor, for example, it will be considered a poetic flaw. When an author tries to change the relationship with the text, he encounters the strong objection of the literary center.

Consequently, 'Abū Dīb offers the term "fragmentation" for the new Arab poetry. This is a term that redefines the connection with the text and the language. In order to initiate new modes of expression, a deep shock is needed, liberation from the center and its one-way approach, extreme fragmentation into parts. The intention is to break out of the single center framework, i.e. no longer the solid, known themes, the idea that there is no longer one single school of thought but rather a broad fragmentation in all directions; there is no longer a single truth, but rather partial truths that reflect a variety of legitimate opinions. Another dimension of literary and educational subversion that intersects with what 'Abū Dīb mentioned above can be seen in the Diaspora Theory. In this article I will focus on the concept of place or home as reflected in this theory. Belonging to a single home means a definite framing of identity. The concept of home or place deeply impacts the components of a person's identity. The fixation of identity leads to monotonous thinking and prevents people/pupils from frank and universal critical thinking. Diaspora Theory offers the frankness and universal experience of contemporary man. The identity permanence of one single place is a factor in creating a person who does not participate in the open global space. Such permanence preserves mental stability and certainty and prevents any

confrontation with the essential elements of the post-modern world, i.e. mobility and uncertainty (Kizel 2010: 49-59).

The two theories briefly described above emphasize the tremendous necessity of liberation from stereotypical thinking in order to generate a literary text that leads to the creation of a new human being. The starting point for the theories of both fragmentation and diaspora are diametrically opposed to the essentialist mindset (Sayer 1997: 453-487). Essentialist philosophy believes that, like everything else in the universe, humans belong to a predetermined essence. This approach emphasizes a person's solidity and axiomatic attribution regardless of any other constructive processes. This approach confronts, or even opposes in certain aspects, the relativist approach that does not believe in a single truth, value structure or patriarchal hierarchy (Davies 1995: 1-18). In the literary/educational process discussed here, the relativist principle is of the utmost importance. It is crucial because it bridges between traditional experience based on the one single truth and on solidity and religious, social, and epistemological commands that motivate human thought. The subversive literary text is actually one that offers a way to connect to the relativism that can overcome the gap between traditional educational thinking and constructivist education that encourages individual critical thinking processes and a break away from the existing cultural, mental and existential status quo (compare with Postman 2009).

The textual corpus: 'Adūnīs as a textual model

As an example of a text than might generate existential cultural change, I have chosen to focus on the poetry of the Syrian poet 'Adūnīs ('*Alī 'Aḥmad Sa'īd*). 'Adūnīs' poem "The New Noah" used to be the only poem in Israel's Arabic literature syllabus that might fall under the category of being non-conformist or subversive. Moreover, this poem was only encountered by pupils taking the advanced literature exam. But even this poem was removed from the syllabus as of September 2014.

For my textual analysis I have chosen "aṭ-Ṭūfān" (The Flood) by 'Adūnīs:

The Flood

> Go dove, we do not wish you to return
> They surrendered their flesh to the rocks
> and I – here I am advancing towards the deepest point,
> entangled in the ship's sails.
> Our flood is a planet that does not revolve
> It is flowing with waters and ancient
> Perhaps we might inhale from it the scent of distant times
> Perhaps we prefer this authentic encounter
> So, go, dove, we do not wish you to return[7]. ('Adūnīs 1988, vol.1: p. 400)

---

[7] My translation for the purposes of this article.

The title of the poem has a sub-text that "is at the same time both separate and connected" (Hollander 1985: 212-226; Wilsmore 1987: 403-408). It contains complex associations ranging from the past to the present and from place to place and from text to text. "The Flood" is an abstract and complex text (Hering 1961: 43-48) that requires close examination and general knowledge. In this poem, the level of *fuṣḥā* is not a challenge in terms of lexis or syntax; the challenge lies in revealing the hidden message that this text seeks to convey. The theme of the poem does not readily yield its true meanings, and thus must be reread and elucidated by an experienced reader (Rosenblatt 1994). The reading of this poem will strengthen the pupil's divergent thinking (Lewis 2013: 46-58), which involves consideration of more than one solution to a problem. This kind of thinking can strengthen pupils when confronting the complex problems of modern existence. This text, like most of 'Adūnīs' repertoire, is open (Bondanella 2005); its vagueness allows for a multifaceted discussion encompassing a wide range of opinions and perspectives. It is a lyrical poem that presents the author's personal existential, philosophical, and religious view without any dramatic developments or diversity of voices, even though one can point out the basic narrative trend of a story. The speaker in the poem is part of the poetic creation, whose perspective is subjective and closer to the events. There is no plot or sequence of events, nor are there many figures or voices.

The word *ṭūfān* (flood) is loaded with the notion of utter destruction that distorts patterns. The first association leads us to Noah's Ark,[8] but this is misleading. The poet is expressing a wish – he wants the flood to continue. This is an odd wish that shatters the expectations of the reader. The poet does not want the dove to announce with an olive branch that everything is over, and we should return to what we had before as commanded by that God. The end of the flood symbolizes a return to the familiar framework – the familiar life cycle, overt, hierarchical, with man controlled by God, following a prescribed existence. The poet explains why he doesn't want the dove to return: *"They surrendered their flesh to the rocks"*. In other words, people had become slaves to the rocks, to the land (they followed what was fixed and certain – rocks are immobile).

The speaker in the poem is apparently entangled in the sails of his ship. Yet he talks of an alternative – rocks are found on the surface, the shell. This is not something deep. The poet strikes out against the fixed place, standing still, and in fact declares that he is moving forward, while they are as if on a treadmill, not advancing anywhere. If the rocks are on the surface, the shell, then the poet has another task – to delve into the depths and seek how not to remain static. He is caught in the sails, and this, in fact, is an indication that the ship is not anchored, but rather sailing, moving toward the deep waters. The ship is not sinking in that sense, but rather it symbolizes continuous, never-ending discovery of the depths. All this is in opposition to the static nature of life people will return to once the flood has ended. The poet is dynamic, and this is the alternative he offers. He hopes the flood will be everlasting, unchanging, or revolving, constant – and that is how our lives should be – continual movement over the seas to enable ongoing discovery. The poet writes that our flood is ancient, and thus it requires the dynamism of discovery. It is not a rock that we can look at once and understand its existence, it is constant motion. Henceforth,

---

8   In both versions of this story in the Torah and in the Qur'ān see: Genesis 6:9 to 11:33, in the Qur'ān in several sūras, mainly sūra 71 verses1-28; sūra 11 verses 27 and 57, sūra 26 verses 105-121.

there is a different kind of dependence of man on God. It is not a dependence that requires the usual submission to God or the traditional hierarchical relationship – it is something else entirely. The word "surrendered" is not unfamiliar – it is what man does when submitting himself before God.[9]

The poet intends to develop a different relationship with this God of distant times, not the dependent relationship between slave and master. He rejects our ordinary, static, predetermined way of life. The relationships in this scenario are all known. The path is known, as are the details, which follow religious belief (even after a person's death). Hence the voice in the poem ponders - if that life has already been destroyed, why go back to it? The poet is against the religious, intellectual, existential hierarchy of values; he is not willing to accept this pre-determinist, static, bounded way of life, this normative existence of home and belonging. The poet desires continual movement; he desires to be in a constant state of flood that obliterates the symbols of ordinary life. In other words, the poet has a proposition, based on the flood motif, for an existential change.

"The Flood" constitutes an objective correlative (Mattihissen 2009: 83-96), that the poet uses to express his opinions indirectly. He does not explicitly state "I want a change". The word 'flood' does not lead us to the flood that we know. Arabic poetry, in fact, breaks away from the common associations of words. The poet wants to rethink the nature of the relationships in our lives and to lead us also to rethink matters. He does this by means of a different relationship between words. In this poem, we see an essential change in the regular meanings of words. The 'flood' in the title does not lead to the usual, traditional meaning and its associations, but rather to a disruption of normative thinking, to broader thinking about the nature of human existence.

The diasporic effect is deeply present in this poem and constitutes a basis for understanding its components. The journey does not focus on place, but rather embraces the dimension of time. The return to the norm that ordinary people desire is not what the voice in the poem aspires to. The speaker prefers to journey far and wide in order to discover his real existence. A return home, settling into a familiar place does not promote the journey of existential discovery that the speaker is striving for. Diasporic thinking helps the speaker to undergo diverse, universal experiences, ones that break through the local boundaries of normative thinking. This is no ordinary journey; it is one that sets out from the epistemological system we know to other worlds of knowledge, the epistemological system that develops a different kind of access to self and to the other, to different cultural codes that shape the world. The everlasting flood that the speaker in this poem desires is a lifestyle of constant, infinite, renewal.

How the poet expresses this abstract text is also a new existential perspective; different textual comprehension is also a way to express difference and change.

The dramatic, dialogic nature of the poem enables 'Adūnīs to divide the figures into two groups – those who surrendered their flesh to the rocks and those who move forward to the depths of the sea – the speaker in the poem, of course, belonging to the latter category. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope experienced by each side is existentially different. Chronotope refers to the essential reciprocity relative to time and space, such that there is no separation at all between the dimensions of time and space. In the poem, the

---

[9] The word 'Islām bears the same meaning – total submission before God.

figures are divided in such a way that the two groups experience their lives in different existential spaces and times. The term "chronotope" is of interest here because of the reciprocity between the two groups and the dialogue between them; a dialogue in which they can intersect, confront each other, and show understanding. Bakhtin emphasizes that chronotopes can be inclusive of each other, coexist, intertwine, interchange, confront each other or maintain a more complex reciprocity (Bemong 2010: 3-17; Ladin 1999: 212-236). In this poem, the relationship is sharply confrontational and polar, and the dialogue is one of challenging what the other represents. Examination of the chronotope represented by the second group sheds light on the legitimization of offering an alternative existential narrative that proposes an order that digresses from the familiar, normative narrative path. This chronotope is typically always dynamic and does not purport to accept convention. Sailing on the ship and the return to earlier times and to another God indicate a different space and time that the speaker and his group represent. The refusal is expressed here in the strong resistance towards the spaces and times of the first group. Any attempt to shake up the chronotope of the first group means a complete upheaval of its existence. The chronotopic dialogue in this context indicates a deep schism between the two narratives, but it also indicates the legitimacy of critique, of expressing opinions that are essentially different. In class the pupil can agree with the attitudes of either one of the groups but is at least aware of the other parallel position that opposes one's own. The literary text allows pupils to take a close look at existential options and decide freely and democratically where they belong and why. The importance of texts such as this one by 'Adūnīs lies in that first and foremost they protest the existing situation, this protest enables discussion. The very fact of the discussion is a serious attempt to break through the epistemological framework. It is not about imposing opinions, but about exposure to a different kind of thinking.

This poem by 'Adūnīs is subversive on all levels, despite the fact that at first reading, or even fourth, it may be hard to grasp the real connection between the words and the meanings. It is poetry that challenges the reader and aspires, among other things, to undermine the one-directional understanding of the Arab people; the mode of expression, the nature of the connection between the words, the different kind of existential thinking, the liberation from the center and the existing normative power relations – all these seriously call into question the Arab religious and social establishment.

Conclusion

According to Foucault, schools seek to adapt pupils to the typical, submissive, and mostly normal norm. Schooling, which educates towards a certain framework, changes the pupil from an individual who rises above the framing norm to someone who does not engage in openly creative thinking to reach new horizons. Foucault assumes that the type of pupil schools are 'creating' has transferred to hospitals, prisons and the army (Foucault 1979: 138). This article demonstrates that one important tool that can deepen an internal, individual discussion that respects the other and prevents the type that Foucault identifies in schools is the literary text. It is precisely in a traditional Arab society in a country that faces new existential challenges on a daily basis, that the Arabic literary text can be a strong resource through which to raise the level of critical thinking and exposure to healthy

internal deliberations about the perception of oneself and of the other; an exposure that leaves plenty of room to accept the other and reconcile with the basic principle of the universe that the world *is* change.

In this article I offer a model for teaching a literary text that combines a number of elements. The first is the non-conformist text that can lead to a dialogue about the meaning of our existence and identity, whether it is relativism that rejects prior frameworks, or essentialism that is fixated within the existing framework. The second is the theoretical concept of Kamāl ’Abū Dīb’s Sanctuary Theory, and the Diaspora Theory of Ilan Gur-Ze’ev. Both these theories clarify that existential space cannot imprison people’s thinking in pre-determined casings. In the practical section I have demonstrated how to deal with an abstract text of the poet ’Adūnīs – “The Flood”. I believe that analysis of a literary text can generate a real, uncompromising debate about the inner truth of each and every pupil, offering them diverse existential possibilities, while at the same time enriching them with the beauty of Classical Arabic by bringing it closer to the world of the younger generation.

References

Abu Deeb, K. 1988. “Cultural Creation in a Fragmented Society”, Hisham Sharabi (ed.), *The Next Arab Decade: Alternative Futures*. Colorado-London: Westview Press & Mansell Publishing Limited. 160-181.

Abu Deeb, K. 1997. “Conflicts, Opposition, Negation: Modern Arabic Poetry and the Fragmentation of Self/Text”, I. J. Boullata & T. DeYoung (eds.), *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Literature*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press. 101-133.

’Adūnīs. 1988. *al-’A‘māl al-kāmila*. Beirut: Dār al-‘awda.

’Adūnīs, 1988a. *al-Muṭābaqāt wa-l-’awā`il.* Beirut: Dār al-’ādāb.

Amara, M. H. 2002. *Language education policy: The Arab minority in Israel*. Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Amara, M., & Mar'i, A. A. R. 2002a. *Language education policy: The Arab minority in Israel*. Springer Science & Business Media.

’Amāra, M. 2010. *al-Luġa al-‘arabiyya fī ’Isra’īl: siyāqāt wa-taḥaddiyāt*. Nazareth, Kufr Qarʿ and ʿAmmān: Dar Al-Huda & Dirasat Dar Al-Fiker-Jordan.

Amara, M. 2013. “Teaching programs of the Arabic language in the Arab Colleges in Israel”, Ayman Agbaria (ed.), *Teacher Education in the Palestinian Society in Israel: Institutional Practices and Education Policy*. Tel-Aviv: Resling. 77-90 (in Hebrew).

Bemong, N., Borghart, P., De Dobbeleer, M., Demoen, K., De Temmerman, K., & Keunen, B. (eds.) 2010. *Bakhtin’s Theory of the Literary Chronotope. Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*. Gent: Academia Press. 3-17

Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, M., Amara & Trumper-Hecht, Nira. 2006. “Linguistic Landscape as a Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: The Case of Israel”, *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3(1). 7-30.

Bondanella, P. 2005. *Umberto Eco and the Open Text: Semiotics, fiction, Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. 1977a. “Lewinian space and ecological substance”, *Journal of Social Issues* 33 (4). 199-212.

Bronfenbrenner, U. 1977b. “Toward an experimental ecology of human development”, *American Psychologist* 32(7). 513-531.

Cartwright, H. M. 1965. “Heraclitus and the bath water”, *The Philosophical Review*, 74(4). 466-485.

Davies, S.& Margolis, J. & Stecker, R. 1995. “Symposium: relativism and interpretation”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53(1). 1-18.

Feldman, M. 2011. “Between science and advanced art of science, changing art”, Dani Kaspi, Osnat Lider, Yivsam Azgad (eds.), *The Song of Science: Annual of literature, Art and Science in Commemoration of Prof. Ofer Lider*. Rechovot: Weizmann Institute of Science. 74-81. (in Hebrew)

Foucault, M. 1979. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage.

Giles, H., Bourhis, R.Y. and Taylor, D.M. 1977. "Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations", H. Giles, (ed.), Language, Ethnicity and Inter-Group Relations. New York: Academic Press. 307-343.

Gramsci, A. 1971. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. New York: International Publishers.

Gur-Ze'ev, I. (ed.). 2005. Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy Today. Haifa: University of Haifa.

Heidegger, M.& Fink, E., (eds.). 1979. Heraclitus seminar. Northwestern University Press.

Hering, C. 1961. "The Genesis of an Abstract Poem: A Note on August Stramm", Modern Language Notes, 76(1). 43-48.

Ives, P. 2004. Language and hegemony in Gramsci. London: Pluto Press.

Kahn, C. H. (ed.). 1981. The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: A New Arrangement and Translation of the Fragments with literary and Philosophical Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kirk, G. S. 1951. Natural change in Heraclitus. Mind, 60 (273). 35-42.

Kizel, Arie 2010. "Poetry as an alternative educational space in the framework of diasporic philosophy", Devarim 49-50 (in Hebrew).

Ladin, J. 1999. "Fleshing Out the Chronotope", Emerson, Caryl (ed.), Critical Essays on Mikhail Bakhtin. New York: Hall. 212-236.

Lewis, C., & Lovatt, P. J. 2013. "Breaking away from set patterns of thinking: Improvisation and divergent thinking", Thinking Skills and Creativity, 9. 46-58

Mattihissen, F. 2009. "The 'Objective Correlative'", Bloom, Harold (ed.), T. S. Eliot. Broomall: Chelsea House Publisher. 83-96.

Mumby, D. K. 1997. "The problem of hegemony: Rereading Gramsci for organizational communication studies", Western Journal of Communication, 61(4). 343-375.

Ramos, V. 1982. "The Concepts of Ideology, Hegemony, and Organic Intellectuals in Gramsci's Marxism", Theoretical Review, 30(3-8). 34-42.

Rosenblatt, L. M. 1994. The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work. Chicago: SIU Press.

Postman, N. and Weingartner, C. 2009. Teaching as a subversive activity. New York: Delta.

Saban, Ilan and Amara, Muhammad. 2002. "The Status of Arabic in Israel: Law, Reality, and Thoughts Regarding the Power of Law to Change Reality", Israel Law Review 36(1). 7-30.

Sayer, A. 1997. "Essentialism, social constructionism, and beyond", The Sociological Review, 45(3). 453-487.

Smith, Steven. 2005. "Bakhtin and Chariton: A Revisionist Reading", Branham, Bracht (ed.), The Bakhtin Circle and Ancient Narrative. Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing and Groningen University Library. 164-92.

Wilsmore, S. J. 1987. "The Role of titles in identifying literary works", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 45(4). 403-408.

Yitzhaki, D. 2008. Minority Languages and Language Policy: The Case of Arabic in Israel. (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Bar Ilan University).

LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE POEM *EDIRNE* BY MAʿRŪF AR-RUṢĀFĪ IN THE CONTI ROSSINI ARCHIVE AT THE ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DEI LINCEI IN ROME[*]

ALI FARAJ

University of Milan-Bicocca

Abstract: This paper aims to present a version of the poem *Edirne* by Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī preserved in the Conti Rossini Archive at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and to compare it with the copies in the collections of Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā, Muṣṭafā ʿAlī and Muṣṭafā al-Ġalāyīnī. The poem was composed on the occasion of the siege and capture of Edirne (formerly known as Adrianople) by the Bulgarian Army (1912-1913) and its themes are war, occupation and *ḥamāsah* (lit. "valour"). The *qaṣīdah* in the Conti Rossini Archive, found inside an envelope with other material from Tripolitania, bears in Italian the title "Per la caduta di Adrianopoli" ("For the Fall of Adrianople") and was most likely copied by Conti Rossini himself. The poem is composed of thirty-seven lines, each of which is divided into two hemistichs; the first verse consists of two lines, while the following seven verses consist of five lines each. The present work will focus on the literary aspects of the poem, providing a translation of the text and a description of its salient features, function and meaning.
Keywords: Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī, Arabic poetry, Arabic literature, Arabic language, Carlo Conti Rossini, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, qaṣīdah, Political poetry.

Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī's life

Maʿrūf ʿAbd al-Ġanī Maḥmūd, known later as ar-Ruṣāfī, was born in Baghdad in 1875 in the al-Qarāġūl quarter of ar-Ruṣāfah to a modest mixed Kurdish-Arab family. No one can say with certainty who Maʿrūfʾs father was because he rarely spoke about his family. The investigations by genealogists led them to the conclusion that his father belonged to the Kurdish tribe of al-Ġabbārah,[1] which was acknowledged by all the Kurds as being of ʿAlid origin. If so, then it must have originally been an Arab tribe which migrated to non-Arab districts. His mother is said to have belonged to the tribe of al-Qarāġūl, a branch of Šammar which dwells on the plains of Iraq.[2]

He began his education when he was three years old, attending the elementary school in which he received a traditional *kuttāb* education and completed the study of the Qurʾān.

---

[*] I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr Nadia Bovino for her suggestions.
[1] A tribe that dwells near Kirkuk, a north-eastern Iraqi town.
[2] For further details, see Khulusi, S. ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz (1950), 13: no. 3, 616-626.

Then he joined the ar-Rušdiyyah Military School[3], but he failed to complete the course. Afterwards he continued his studies at religious schools where he was tutored by some of Baghdad's most famous religious scholars, in particular Maḥmūd Šukrī al-ʾĀlūsī with whom he stayed for twelve years. Because of his vast knowledge of religious studies, al-ʾĀlūsī called him "ar-Ruṣāfī" on the analogy of the poet Maʿrūf al-Karḫī[4]. After the completion of his studies in Arabic and Islamic sciences, ar-Ruṣāfī accepted a post as a teacher in a primary school in ar-Rušdiyyah suburb north of al-ʾAʿẓamiyyah city and then in 1902 he taught Arabic in a secondary school in Baghdad.

After the declaration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908, he left for Istanbul (Constantinople), where he was appointed as a teacher in the Higher Royal School. In 1909 ar-Ruṣāfī became the chief editor of the newspaper Sabīl ar-Rašād and in 1912 he was elected as a member in the al-Mabʿuṯān Council in Constantinople, representing the al-Muntafiq district of Iraq.[5] In 1919 he left Turkey for Iraq, but because of the political disarray and the closing of its borders, he was compelled to settle in Damascus, where he remained less than a year. In Damascus he was in a critical position due to his attacks against al-ʾiṣlāḥiyyīn (lit. "reformers") at the Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913; he believed that their demands were a contributing cause of national disunity in the Arab country. Moreover, his belligerence toward aš-Šarīf Ḥusayn[6] when he revolted against Turkey in 1916 further exacerbated his precarious position. In 1920 he moved to Jerusalem, where he was appointed as a lecturer at the Teachers' Institute and returned to Baghdad in 1921. Ar-Ruṣāfī again found himself in critical position owing to his opposition to King Fayṣal and his government. He left Iraq in 1922, returning there the following year. In 1924 ar-Ruṣāfī was appointed inspector of Arabic language in the Directorate of Education in Baghdad and in 1927 lecturer of Arabic at the Higher Teachers' Training College in Baghdad. Between 1928 and 1937 he was a member of Parliament five times. In 1937 he abandoned his work and decided to live in isolation. He died in Baghdad on 16 March 1945.

Political poetry

Political poetry occupies a prominent place in the poetic production of Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī, which focuses mainly on the themes of freedom, intended both as a term referring to the individual's freedom regarding civil rights and, more generally, as the freedom, sovereignty and independence of any country.

Ar-Ruṣāfī's demands for independence started with the beginning of the Balkan Wars and reached their acme during the First World War, when the Allies occupied the Arab World. During this critical historical period, the Ottoman Empire lost its remaining

---

[3] Ar-Rušdiyyah Military School is a historical school located in the city of Baghdad which was founded in the 19th century A.D. during the Ottoman era.

[4] For more details, see Al-Jibouri, Y. T. (2013), 29: 22-26.

[5] Al-Muntafiq, called also il-Mintifiǧ, is a district in Southern Iraq.

[6] For more details, see Longrigg, S.H., "Ḥusayn", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 04 November 2022 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2977> First published online: 2012.

vestiges of power and several of its provinces. Ar-Ruṣāfī strongly encouraged the people to oppose the Western occupation, in order to obtain their own independence. In this case it must be said that ar-Ruṣāfī was referring to the freedom of a country to govern itself. He believed that the Western authorities were imperialist; during Ottoman rule he stressed the freedom of individuals. Accordingly, from 1911, ar-Ruṣāfī conducted an attack on the Allies warning the people against believing their frequent promises to help the Arabs get rid of the Ottoman domination.

His *qaṣīdah Edirne* is framed in this context; it was written on the occasion of the Bulgarian siege and capture of Edirne (1912-1913), which saw Bulgaria (King Ferdinand I) opposing the Ottoman nationalists led by Enver Pasha. The siege of Edirne (formerly known as Adrianople) took place during the First Balkan War, which began on November 3rd, 1912 and ended on March 26th, 1913. The fall of the city of Edirne to the 2nd Bulgarian army and the 2nd Serbian army was the final decisive blow to the Ottoman army, thus bringing the First Balkan War to an end.[7] A treaty was signed in London on May 30th, 1913. The Ottoman Empire succeeded in recapturing Edirne during the Second Balkan War[8].

The Edirne poem

The poem *Edirne* presented in this paper is the version in the Conti Rossini Archive at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome. Carlo Conti Rossini began his career as an officer, after graduating in law from Sapienza University of Rome in 1894, which led him to hold positions of great responsibility. Among these positions was Director of civil affairs of the colonial government of Eritrea from 1900 to mid-1903 and General Secretary for political and civil affairs in Tripolitania from March 1914 until October 1915. In addition to law and finance, Conti Rossini showed a strong interest in oriental studies, in particular in the Ethiopian Language and Culture, becoming a pupil of prof. Ignazio Guidi, professor of History and Languages of Abyssinia at Sapienza University, whom he succeeded as a teacher in 1919. He remained in this position until 1949. His library was willed to the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei of which he had been a national member since 1921. The collection contains documents collected by Carlo Conti Rossini during the course of his institutional and scientific activity, including photographs, copies of manuscripts, parchments, and other archaeological finds[9].

The *qaṣīdah* will be compared with the copies in the collections listed below, arranged in chronological order:

1- Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā (1953), Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī, 4th ed., Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, Egypt, pp. 487-489 (hereafter called Ṣ).

---

[7] Monroe, W.S. (1914), 114.
[8] Harbottle, T. B. (1981), 11.
[9] This collection has been catalogued in detail by Paola Cagiano De Azevedo. For more details, see: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2018, Fondo Carlo Conti Rossini, Inventario Paola Cagiano De Azevedo.

2- Muṣṭafā ʿAlī (1975), Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī, Dār al-ḥurriyyah, Baghdad, vol. 3, pp. 291-296 (hereafter called A).

3- Muṣṭafā al-Ġalāyīnī (2014), Dīwān Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Egypt, pp. 703-706 (hereafter called Ġ).

The *qaṣīdah* in the Conti Rossini Archive, found inside an envelope with other material from Tripolitania, bears in Italian the title "Per la caduta di Adrianopoli" ("For the Fall of Adrianople") and was most likely copied by Conti Rossini himself.

The poem is composed of thirty-seven lines, each of which is divided into two hemistichs; the first verse consists of two lines, while the following seven verses consist of five lines each.

The meter of the *qaṣīdah* is *al-mutaqārib* "nearing": *Faʿūlun Faʿūlun Faʿūlun Faʿūlun* (فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ فَعُولُنْ) because the five lines that compose the seven verses are close.

Translation and commentary

1   أَدِرْنَةَ مَهْلًا فَإِنَّ الظُّبَى *** سَتَرعِي لَكِ ٱلْعَهْدَ وَٱلْمَوْثِقا

[O] Edirne go easy, the edge of the swords *** will keep the covenant and the trust for you

The two introductory lines are characterised by a *qāf* rhyme. The first line, that comprises a supplication in which the poet-supplicant submits to the city Edirne, starts with an implicit vocative particle *yā* (يا), indicating the meaning of *aṭ-ṭalab* "the request", which precedes the name of the city.

أَدِرْنَةَ: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: أَدِرْنَةُ in nominative case.
مَهْلًا: "go easy, take it easy!", verbal noun of أَمْهَلَ - يُمْهِل "to give more time to (someone)", that follows the name of Edirne.
الظُّبَى: "the edge, end, or extremity of the swords" (singular ظُبَّة), synonym of حَدٌّ. In Ṣ, A: الظُّبَى; Ġ: الظُّبَا.[10]
سَتَرعِي: "it will keep", in Ṣ, A, Ġ: سَتَرْعَى.

2   وِدَاعًا لَمْغْنَاكِ زَاهِي ٱلرُّبَى *** وِدَاعًا وَلكِنْ إلى ٱلْمُلْتَقَى

Farewell to your abode, sparkling of hills *** Farewell, but see you soon

The second line introduces the dominant motif of the poem, namely separation and exile, through the use of the verbal noun وِدَاعًا "farewell" repeated at the beginning of both hemistichs to give greater emphasis.

---

[10]   See Lane, E.W. (1968), V: 1908ab.

وَدَاعًا: "farewell", verbal noun of وَادَعَ – يُوادِعُ "to farewell, to say goodbye". In Ṣ, A, Ġ: وَدَاعًا.

مَغْنَاكِ: "your abode, dwelling, residence; place".

زَاهِي: "sparkling, bright flowering".

الرُّبَى: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: الرُّبَا.

الْمُلْتَقَى: "the act of meeting, ability to encounter, reunion, meeting face to face", verbal noun of الْتَقَى "to meet, encounter".

3   عَزاءً لِمَسْجِدِكِ آلجَامِعِ *** أَفارَق مِحرابَه آلْمِنْبَرَا

Consolation for your great mosque *** did its *miḥrāb* separate from the *minbar*?

The poet expresses his condolences for the great mosque of Edirne with an interrogative sentence starting with the verb أَفارَقَ, using the *hamzatu l-ʾistifhām* (the *ʾa-* of interrogative). This line and the following two present a *rāʾ* rhyme.

عَزاء: "consolation, comfort, condolence, good patience".

المسجد آلجَامِعِ: "the great mosque", the formula describes the great assembly mosques in which the *ḫuṭbah* is pronounced.

مِحرابه: "its *miḥrāb*", *miḥrāb* is the niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the *qibla*, the direction of the Kaʿbah in Makkah, where the Imam stands at the time of prayer. In Ṣ, A, Ġ: مِحرابُه , with vocalization.

المنبر: "the *minbar*", *minbar* is the pulpit, which in origin denoted an elevated seat.

4   وَكَمْ في مُصَلَّاهُ مِنْ رَاكِعٍ *** يُجيبُ آلْمؤَذِّنَ إنْ كَبَّرا

How many *rākiʿ*s on its *muṣallā* *** respond to *al-muaʾḏḏin* when he says *Aḷḷāhu ʾakbar*

The theme of condolences continues in this line, in which the poet cites some terms related to Islamic prayer.

كَمْ: "how many", exclamatory particle, it has the same quantitative and qualitative value as the interrogative particle كم *al-ʾistifhāmiyyah*.

مُصَلَّاهُ: "its *muṣallā*", مُصلًّى *muṣallan* "a place of prayer, prayer hall". In Ṣ, A, Ġ the sentence presents a different construction: وهل في مُصَلَّاهُ "is there on his *muṣallā*?".

رَاكِع: "person who kneels, bows", active participle masculine singular.

الْمؤَذِّنَ: "the muezzin", person who calls to prayer, announcer of the hour of prayer or who utters the formula *Aḷḷāhu ʾakbar*.

كَبَّرا: "to enlarge, to make something bigger, to say اَللَّهُ أَكْبَر 'God is the greatest'".

5   فَيَا لَسُقُوطِكِ مِنْ فَاجِعٍ *** بِه فَجَعَ الدَّهرُ أُمَّ القُرَى

By what calamity you have fallen! *** Time afflicted *ʾummu l-qurā*

The verse is characterised by the *taqdīr* structure, namely the suppletive insertion of elided elements, in this case لَسُقُوطِكِ "o God what a fall is yours!", a vocative and exclamatory sentence that emphasizes regret for ʾummu l-qurā, lit. "the mother of villages / cities", a name given to Makkah.

فَاجِعٍ: "calamitous, heartrending, painful".

6   وَقَبْرَ ٱلنُّبُوَّةِ فِي يَثْرِبَ يَثْرِبَا *** وَمَثْوَى ضَجِيعَيْهِ مَثْوَى التُّقَى

The grave of the prophecy in Yaṯrib *** and the shrine of its two bedfellows is the shrine of devoutness

The poet quotes Yaṯrib, the pre-Islamic name of an oasis settlement in the Arabian Peninsula in which the Prophet Muḥammad sought refuge in 622 A.D., whereupon renamed *al-Madīnah* (Medinah) in his honour, and expresses his *madīḥ* ("praise") for the Prophet Muḥammad and for his two successors Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and ʿUmar bin al-Ḫaṭṭāb, who are buried next to his tomb.

يَثْرِب: "Yaṯrib", note the involuntary mistake written by the scribe, who deleted the name يَثْرِبَ by scratching it out (*ḍarb*) with two lines and re-wrote it correctly as يَثْرِبَا .
مَثْوَى: "home, place, adobe, shrine".
ضَجِيعَيْهِ: "his two bedfellows", the two successors of the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and ʿUmar bin al-Ḫaṭṭāb.
التُّقَى: "the devoutness, Godliness, God-fearing, righteous" (singular تُقاة).

7   وَمَن فِي ٱلبَقِيعِ وَمَنْ فِي قَبَا *** وَمَنْ شَهِدُوا ٱلْفَتْحَ وَٱلْخَنْدَقَا

Those who are in *al-Baqīʿ* and those who in *Qubā* *** and those who attended / witnessed the [day] of opening and *al-Ḫandaqā*

In this line the poet mentions two sacred places and two significant events in the early history of Islam.

ٱلبَقِيعِ: "al-Baqīʿ", the principal cemetery of Medinah, the oldest and historically most important Islamic graveyard.
"Qubā" standing for مَسْجِدُ قُبَاء: it is a mosque located in a village two miles from Medinah named قباء.
مَنْ شَهِدُوا standing for مَنْ شَهِدُوا "those who attended / witnessed the conquest of Makkah and the Battle of the Ditch in Medinah".
الفتح ٱلْفَتْحَ standing for يَوْمُ ٱلْفَتْح: "the day of opening", which goes back to the Qurʾānic *al-fatḥ* which originally meant "[a divine] decision [to bring success to the faithful]" and appears to have taken on the sense of "conquest" only after the capture of Makkah at the beginning of 630 A.D.

الْخَنْدَقَ: lit. "the Ditch", known as معركة الخندق the "Battle of the Ditch", (627 A.D.), mentioned in Qurʾān 33:10. It is an early Muslim victory that ultimately forced the Meccans to recognize the political and religious strength of the Muslim community in Medinah.

8   رُوَيْدًا أُدِرْنَةَ لَا تَـجْزَعِي *** وَإِنْ قَد أَمَضَّكِ هذَا الأذى

Take it easy Edirne, don't worry *** even if this offence already pains you

The theme of supplication returns in this line, characterised, as in the next two lines, by a *ḏāl* rhyme, in which the poet tries to console and comfort the beloved Edirne for its sad and tragic fate.

أَمَضَّكِ: "it hurts you, causes pain to you".

9   إذَا أَنتِ بِالسَّيفِ لَمْ تَرْجِعِي *** فَلا حَبَّذَا آلعِيْشُ لَا حَبَّذَا

If you by the sword do not return *** loveless is life, loveless (it is not desirable to live/ it is not commendable)

The idea of not being able to win back Edirne is too painful for the poet, who does not want to live without it. In the second hemistich the construction لا حَبَّذَا is used in the sense of الذَّمُّ *aḏ-ḏamm*, that is "to dispraise, to disesteem, to denigrate; to decry; to degrade something", thus to dispraise the life without Edirne.

In Ṣ, A, Ġ: لَمْ تُرْجَعِي "you are not returned, brought back, re-conquered", in passive form.

10   فَإِنَّكِ أَلْزَراسْنَا فَآسْمَعِي *** وَنَحْنُ آلْفِرَنسِيسَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَا

You are our Alsace, so listen *** we are the French after this

The line contains a parallelism with Alsace, a region long disputed between Germany and France, and definitively returned to France after the Second World War. The poet turns to Edirne saying: "You are our Alsace", that is "you are like Alsace to the French, we will not forget you as they did not forget Alsace".

In Ṣ, A, Ġ: أَلا أَنْتِ, the construction is slightly different, starting with أَلا أَنْتِ ألْزَراسْنَا فَآسْمَعِي "are not you".

11   سَلامٌ عَلَى قُطْرِكِ المُجْتَبَى *** سَلامٌ عَلَى أَفْقِكِ آلْمُنْتَقَى

May peace be upon your chosen land *** may peace be upon your desired horizon/region

The poet greets the chosen land of Edirne, now lost, and wishes peace for it.

أُفْق: "area or position in space, part of a surface, side; direction".

12   أَيُمْسِي لِشِرْكِ العِدَا مَلْعبًا *** وَكَانَ لِتَوْحِيدِنا مَعْبَقَا

Will it [your land] turn into a playground for the enemy's polytheism *** when it was a fragrant place for our monotheism?

In this line, characterised by an interrogative sentence, the poet recalls what Edirne was and contrasts it with what it is now.

In Ṣ: لِسِرْكِ العِدا مَلْعبًا, the word "polytheism" is replaced by سِرْك "circus"; in A: لِشِرْكِ العِدى, ; in Ġ: لِشِرْكِ العدا ملعبًا مَلعبًا
مَعْبَق: "fragrant place", that is a place full of perfume and goodness.

———

13   لَقَدْ حَلَّ فِيهَا حلالٍ لِوَءُ آلصَّلِيبِ *** حُلُولَ آلحَقَارَةِ بَيْنَ آلجَلالِ ْ

The flag of the crucifix has already settled on it *** [as] the onset of despicability in the midst of solemnity

The parallelism between "before" and "after" continues in this line, in which the poet uses the opposite terms حَقَارَةٍ "despicability" and جَلالٌ ْ "solemnity".
The word حلال "permitted, allowed, legal" in the first hemistich, was evidently copied by mistake, and the scribe scratched it out.
In Ṣ, A, Ġ the first hemistich recites: حَلَّ فيها لواءٌ مُريبٌ, where the word صَلِيبِ "crucifix" is replaced by مُريبٌ "disquieting, annoying", derived from the active participle of the verb أَرَابَ "to disturb someone, to raise doubts".
الجَلالِ ْ standing for الْجَلالْ: "solemnity, loftiness, sublimity, splendour".

14   وَظَلَّتْ بِأدْمُعِهَا وَالْنَحِيبِ *** تَنُوحُ عَلَى نَـجْمِهَا وَالهِـلالِ ْ

And it remained [day and night] wailing in tears *** mourning its star and crescent

In this line the poet expresses the pain, the anguish and the heartbreaking lament of Edirne for the loss of its flag. Note the *lām* rhyme, as in lines 13 and 15.

وَظَلَّتْ: in Ṣ, A, Ġ فظَلَّتْ with *fā ʾ al-taʿqīb* "the consequence *fā*ʾ".
الْنَحِيبْ: "the weeping or wailing voice; wept, or wailed loudly".
نَـجْمِهَا وَالهِـلال: "its star and crescent", meaning the flag of the Ottoman Empire, which includes a star and a crescent. Since 1793 the Ottoman Empire had used a red and white flag with a star and a moon. In 1844 this flag was slightly modified into a five-pointed star and a crescent and was adopted as the official national flag of the empire. It later formed the basis of the flag of modern Turkey, which succeeded the empire that disappeared in 1923.

31

15 أَنَنْسَى أَدِرْنَةَ عَمَّا قريبِ *** إِذَا لَبَلَغْنَا آلْعَلَا وآلْكَمَالْ

Shall we soon forget Edirne *** and then will we have reached the apex of perfection?

This line contains a rhetorical question starting with the interrogative particle أَ *ʾa* in أَنَنْسَى that is characterised by sarcasm, called in Arabic *as-suḫriyah* or *at-tahakkum wa-l-ʾistihzāʾ*. The second hemistich begins with the consequential linking particle إِذَا instead of إِذَنْ (in Ṣ, A, Ġ: إِذَنْ), called in Arabic particle of جَزَاء *ǧazāʾ* / جَوَاب *ǧawāb*, meaning "in that case; then; for that reason; thus". It is used in conditional clauses usually at the beginning of a sentence. It begins a clause or question that comes as a result or conclusion of a previous statement. It should be noted that the verb لَبَلَغْنَا with لَـ *la-*, as a kind of invocation, is used to oppose the validity of a fact. Indeed, the poet uses the particle إِذَا / إِذَنْ to call attention to, to emphasize and to express a warning; verily by forgetting Edirne we will not be able to achieve perfection.

In Ṣ, A, Ġ: لَا بَلَغْنَا; لَا is a variety of negation, emphatic as well.
الْعَلَا instead of الْعُلَى: "the apex, the nobility, the honour". In A, Ġ: الْعُلَا, in Ṣ: الْعُلَى
الْكَمَالْ: "perfection, excellence", verbal noun of كَمُلَ "to be entire, to be whole, to be perfect".

16 فَسَوْفَ عَلَى آلرَّغْمِ مِنْ أُورُبَا *** نَقُودُ لَهَا فَيْلَقَا فَيْلَقَا

So, in spite of Europe *** we will lead legion upon legion towards it

The poet resorts to the expedient of the *at-takrār li-t-tawkīd*, namely the "repetition for the sake of emphasis" of the word "legion".

عَلَى آلرَّغْمِ: "in spite of, unwillingly".
نَقُودُ "we lead". In Ṣ, A, Ġ: نَقُومُ "we do, we rise, we get up", both verbs with future intent.
فَيْلَقَا فَيْلَقَا: "legion upon legion, the great army".

17 فَتُبْكِي هَزَاهِزُنَا آلْمَغْرِبَا *** وَتُضْحِكُ أَسْيَافُنَا آلْمَشْرِقَا

So our battles make the West weep *** and our swords make the East laugh

In this line the poet hopes for battles that will bring victory to the East against the West.

فَتُبْكِي standing for تُبكيه: "they make it [the West] weep, cry".
هَزَاهِزُ: "battles, wars" (singular هَزْهَزَةٌ).

The following verses, from line 18 to line 22, do not appear in Ṣ and Ġ. Perhaps they were added later.

———

18 أَيَقْتَدِرُ آلشِعْرُ أَنْ يُشْكَرَ *** كَمَا يَــجِبُ آلشُّكْرُ ذَاكَ آلبَطَلْ

Is poetry able to give thanks *** as thanks are due to that hero?

Ar-Ruṣāfī wonders if poetry is really able to pay tribute to the hero and equal his courage.

أَيَقْتَدِرُ: interrogative construction starting with the particle أ ʾa followed by the verb يَقْتَدِرُ "it is capable, it can".
يُشْكَرَ : in A: يُشْكَرَا .
البطل: "the hero, the protagonist". It means a man of courage and valour, a brave man, as well as one who does not fear being wounded and whose wounds do not prevent him from being courageous.

19 فَتَّى كَانَ في آلحَرْبِ مُسْتَشْعِرَا *** شِعَارًا أَجَلَّتُهُ كُلُّ آلدُوَلْ

A youth was in the war wearing the garment of war *** he was honoured by all nations

The purpose of the line is to praise the young warriors who fought for Edirne.

فَتَّى: "youth, young, youthful; adolescent, brave, generous, chivalrous, helper".
مُسْتَشْعِرَا شِعَارًا: in the past form استَــشْعَرَ شِعَارًا "he put on or clad himself with a شِعار", that is "an innermost garment". Hence, اِسْتَــشْعِرْ خَشْيَةَ اللهِ ! "make the fear of God be!" شِعَارَ قَلْبِكَ , namely "the thing closest to thy heart".

20 فَيَا سَيْفَ شُكْرِي وَكُلُّ آلوَرَى *** غَدَتْ تَضْرِبُ آليَوْمَ فيكَ آلمَثَلْ

O sword of Šukrī, all the people *** have taken you as an example this day

Using the vocative particle yā (يا), the poet addresses Šukrī's sword directly, to praise it. Šukrī was the military leader who freed Edirne.

شُكْرِي: "Šukrī", the military leader who won back Edirne.[11]
الوَرَى: "people, humans, mankind".
غَدَتْ standing for صارت: "it became, turned into, came to be (something)".
فيكَ: note the omission of the diacritic point of the fāʾ.

21 سَيَجْرِي لَكَ آلشُّكْرُ لَنْ يُنْضَبَى *** وَيَجري آلزَمانُ بِهِ مغرقَا

Thanks for you will flow, inexhaustibly *** and time will flow immersed in it

---

11   For more detail, see ʿAlī, Muṣṭafā (1975), 3: 294.

The poet describes and compares the gratitude for Šukrī and his sword to the inexhaustible flow of the water, that does not run out and rush down.

يُنْضَبَى: the original form is يُنْضَبُا "it is absorbed into the ground", cf. نضب الماء "the water drained".
مُغْرِقَا: "drown in something", active particle.

22 وَإِمَّا ذُكِرْتَ حَلَلْنَا ٱلْحُبَى *** وَقُمْنَا كَقَوْمَتِنَا فِي ٱللِّقَا

And if you are mentioned, we open al-ḥubā *** and we stand up the way we stand in a meeting

The praise for the hero Šukrī also continues in this line, where the poet uses a metaphor quoting and referring to a custom typical of the Arabs.

حَلَلْنَا: "we opened". It is a metaphor to show respect for and glorify Šukrī and his sword.
الْحُبَى: "the turban, or piece of cloth, or some other thing with which a man performs what is called الاِحْتِبَاءُ" (singular حُبْوَةٌ). الاِحْتِبَاءُ means "to wrap oneself in a garment", for instance احتبى بالثَّوْب: "he drew together and wrapped his back and his shanks in a turban or the like"[12]. Since the Arabs did not have walls in their deserts to lean against when assembling, they used to set up their knees in a sitting position, lean a sword against them, or wrapped their knees and back in a piece of cloth, or joined their hands, or arms, together around their knees, and rested in that position. الْحُبَى also means حِيطَانُ الْعَرَب "the Arabs' walls". Note the ʾalif maqṣūrah in الْحُبَى instead of the long ā due to metrical exigency.

———

23 أَرَى ٱلدَّهْرَ أَنْهَضَ كُلَّ ٱلعِدَا *** عَلَى حِينٍ قَدْ قَعَدَ ٱلْمُسْلِمُونْ

I see time has made all the enemies rise *** whereas the Muslims had sat out [the war]

The poet turns directly to the Muslims who have neglected their duties, reproaching them for not fighting for Edirne. Note the nūn rhyme in this line and in the following two.

الْعِدَا: "the enemies", in Ṣ, Ġ: الْعِدَا; A: الْعِدَى
أَنْهَضَ: "it made rise, it made someone stand up; it roused, it stirred up; it stimulated".
عَلَى حِينٍ standing for فِي حِينٍ: "whereas, while".
قَعَدَ: "he abstained from, omitted, neglected, left, relinquished, forsook the thing or affair; hung back, sat out, or held back, from it".

---

[12] Lane, E.W. (1968), II: 507bc.

24 فَكم أَلُوسٍ جَرَّعُونَا الرَّدَى *** وَنَحْنُ عَلَى كَيْدِهِمْ صَابِرُونْ

How many Elos[13] made us swallow death *** while we were patient at their plot!

كم: "how many". It is the "assertive *kam*", called in Arabic *kam al-ḥabariyyah*, with predicative and informing function. In this case, Wright translates the term *ḥabariyyah* as "assertory, predicative, exclamatory". The word كم "a lot" has also another use, which denotes *at-takṯīr*, an augment or enlargement[14].
جَرَّعُونَا: "they made us swallow, gulp", for instance جَرَّعَ "he swallowed in consecutive portions, one time after another, like him who acts against his own will"[15]; synonym سَقَوْنَا "they made us drink".
In Ṣ, Ġ: فَكم جَرَّعُونَا كئوس الرَّدَى "how many cups of death they made us swallow!"; with the noun "cups" instead of "Elos". In A: فَكم جَرَّعُونَا كؤوس الرَّدَى, the verb precedes the noun.
كَيْدِهِمْ: "their plot, deception, cunning".

25 أَيَحْسُنُ يَاقَوْمُ أَنْ تَقْعُدُوا *** وَقَدْ آنَ أَنْ يَنْهَضَ القاعِدُونْ

O people, is it right for you to sit out [the war] *** when the time has come for those who sat out to get up?

In this line, composed in an interrogative form, the poet urges Muslims not to stay at home and to join those who are fighting to free Edirne.

يَاقَوْمُ: "O people", here we find again the interrogative particle أ *ʾa* (*at-tahakkum wa-l-ʾistihzāʾ*).
تَقْعُدُوا : "you hold back, remain behind, sit out", in Ṣ, A, Ġ: نَقْعَدَا.
آنَ: "to come, to approach", a synonym of حانَ, an indication of temporal proximity.
القاعِدُونْ: "those who hold back, sit out, at home".

26 فَسَيْلُ آلـمَصائبِ غطَّى آلرُّبى *** وَغَيمُ النَوائبِ قَدْ طبَّقا

So the torrent of misfortunes covered the hills *** and clouds of calamities have already covered [the sky]

The poet uses terms related to natural phenomena to express that the situation is now unbearable, has reached its limit and that something must be done to deal with it.

سَيْلْ: "a torrent, or a flow of water, much water, or a pool of rainwater, flowing, or running".

---

[13] Elos is a village and a former municipality in Laconia, Peloponnese, Greece.
[14] For a discussion on the two uses of the word *kam* in assertive sentences and in questions, see Wright, W. (1896-1898), II: 125-127.
[15] Lane, E.W. (1968), II: 410c.

الرُّبى: "the hills or elevated ground, which the water does not cover", it is an idiomatic expression. In Ṣ, A: الزُّبَى (singular الزُّبْيَة); Ġ: الزُّبَا. An Arabic proverb says بَلَغَ السَّيْلُ الزُّبَى "the torrent reached the tops of the hills"[16], to refer to a thing, or an affair, or a case, exceeding the ordinary bounds or limit. That is to say, "enough is enough" or "the matter has come to a head".

طَبَّقا: "covered" referring to the clouded and blinded atmosphere. In the poem the meaning is that the matter has developed to the point of no return. Cf.: طَبَّقَ السَّحَابُ الجَوَّ "the clouds covered the mid-air between the heaven and the earth" and الغَيْمُ أَطْبَقَ السَّمَآءَ "the clouds covered the sky".[17]

نَوائب: "calamities", synonyms: حَوادِث ، كَوارِث ، مَصائب .

27 وَأَوْشَكَتِ آلأَرْضُ أَنْ تُقْلَبَا *** وَصُبْحُ آلقِيامَةِ أَنْ يُفْلَقَا

And the earth was about to be overturned *** and the morning of the Resurrection would soon break

The situation is so painful and tragically overwhelming that the poet comes to evoke the *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, lit. "The Day of Resurrection".

يُفْلَقَ: "it is split, cleft, or split". In Ṣ, Ġ: يَفْلِقَ; in A: يُفْلَقَا, in passive form. Cf. فَلَقَ اللَّهُ الصُّبْحَ "God made the morning break, or appear".

────

28 دَعِ آلغَرْبَ يَنْعَمُ في حَالِهِ *** وَإِنْ لَقِيَ آلشَّرْقُ مِنْهُ آلكُروب

Let the West live peacefully in its condition *** even though the East is afflicted by its calamities

The figure of speech of sarcasm or antiphrasis characterises the first hemistich of this line, ending in a *bāʾ* rhyme as the following two lines. It is used intentionally by the poet as a form of verbal aggression towards the audience, namely the Muslim community.

يَنْعَمُ: "it enjoys".

حَالِهِ: "its condition, state, situation". In Ṣ, A, Ġ: بالِهِ "its condition, state, mind"; thus literally يَنْعَمُ في حَالِهِ signifies "it enjoys ampleness and easiness of its life". Cf. also وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ "And He will amend their condition" (Qurʾān 47:5). Hence, the two words حَال and بَال are synonyms.

الكُروب: "calamities, agonies, worries, griefs, anguishes" (singular كَرْب).

29 ولا تسألنَّ بافعاله *** فَعَهْدُ آلتَمَدُّنِ عَهْدٌ كَذُوب

And do not ask about its deeds *** for its civilization is a false era

────

16 Lane, E.W. (1968), III: 1215a.
17 Lane, E.W. (1968), V: 1824c.

The political outburst becomes more intense; the poet criticizes the civilization proposed by the West and affirms that it is actually a false civilization.

تسْألنَّ: "you ask", in Ṣ, A, Ġ: تسْألنْه, with the light *nūn* of emphasis (*nūn at-tawkīd al-ḫafīfah*).

30 وَنَحْنُ آغْتَرَرْنَا بِأَقْوَالِهِ *** وَلكِنَّنَا بَعْدَ هذَا نَتُوب

We were deceived by its words *** but after that we repent

Again, in this line the poet criticizes the West, its imperialism and its deception.

وَنَحْنُ: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: فنحنُ.
اغْتَرَرْنَا: "we were deceived".
The second hemistich in Ṣ, A, Ġ reads: وَلكِنَّنَا بَعْدَ هذي الحروبُ "but after these wars we", with the word "wars" instead of the verbal construct "we repent".

31 وَنأبى عَليْهِ أشَدَّ آلإبَا *** فإمَّا آلفَنَاءُ وإمَّا آلبَقَا

We strongly oppose it [the West] *** and we shall either perish or survive

Resistance against the oppressor and struggle for freedom are the only way to deal with this situation. Independence and freedom are indeed two fundamental values for every people, to the point that it is better to die than to live as oppressed.

نأبى: in Ṣ, A, Ġ: سنأبى, with the *sin* of the future.
الإبَا standing for الإبَاء: "refusal to, denial of, rejection of, abhorrence for, disobedience against, disgust for, unwillingness to"; in the present copy الإبَا is shortened, without *hamza*, for poetic licence, in particular for the exigency of rhyme.

32 وَنَرْكُبُ مِنْ عَزْمِنَا مَرْكَبَا *** وَنَرقَى وَإِنْ صَعُبَ آلمُرتَقَى

We shall embark on the ship of our determination *** and we shall rise even though ascension is difficult

The poet uses the construction "to embark on the ship" to exalt the purpose of his message figuratively and expressively: if the East engages with determination and energy, it will be able to achieve scientific and civil progress.

عَزْمِنَا: "our will and intention, aim, determination of mind and heart, without hesitation".
نَرقَى: "we rise, we elevate ourselves, we promote ourselves, to a higher position in a higher ranking of scientific and civil progress".
الـمُرتَقَى: صَعُبَ آلمُرتَقَى: "a level or step of an arduous ascent or hard to get to, or inaccessible"; synonym of الارتقاء: "promotion, being promoted, ascension, upgrade".

33   لَقَدْ آنَ يَا قَوْمُ تَرْكُ ٱلوَنَى *** وَتَرْكُ ٱلشِقَاقِ وَتَرْكُ ٱلدَّدِ

O people! The time has come to abandon weakness *** to leave schism and to leave diversion

The poet turns directly to the Muslims to incite them, inviting them to abandon fun and play; calling for unity against the oppressor.

ٱلوَنَى: "weakness, faintness, tiredness, apathy, tepidness".
ٱلشِقَاق: "schism, dissension, discord, dispute, hostility, antagonism, enmity".
ٱلدَّد: "diversion; fun or play". Cf. the saying of prophet Muḥammad مَا أَنَا مِنْ دَدٍ وَلَا ٱلدَّدُ مِنِّى "I have no concern with diversion", "nor has diversion any concern with me".[18]

34   إِلَى كَمْ نُكَابِدُ هذا ٱلعَنَا *** وَنَخْبِطُ فِي جَهْلِنَا ٱلأَسْوَدِ

For how long do we suffer this submission *** and crash around in our black ignorance?

In this line too, composed in the interrogative, the poet urges the Muslim community to resist and fight for freedom.

نُكَابِدُ: "we endure, or contend with this difficulty, trouble, distress".
ٱلعَنَا instead of ٱلعَنَاء: "severity, fatigue, hardship, submission", shortened with poetic licence.
نَخْبِطُ: "we walk adrift", such as one moving randomly.

35   وَبِٱلعِلْمِ مِنْ قَبْلُ نِلْنَا ٱلمُنَى *** وَفُزْنَا مِنَ ٱلعَيْشِ بِالأَرْغَدِ

And through knowledge, we reached our goals in the past *** and we won all the best from life

The poet makes a reference to the past of the East, remembering that through knowledge it has obtained the best riches.

ٱلمُنَى: "desires, wishes, hopes, goals" (singular ٱلْمُنْيَة).
فُزْنَا: "we triumphed over, we won, gained".
ٱلأَرْغَد: "the richest, the most fertile, the best, most comfortable life", superlative. Cf. أَرْغَد في العيش: "he became affluent or fecund and earned a well-endowed life and livelihood", that is: his life is ample in its means or circumstances, unrestrained, plentiful, easy, and pleasant.

---

[18]   Lane, E.W. (1968), III: 862b.

36   وَلكِنَّمَا آلعِلمُ قَدْ غَرَبَ ***؛ فَلَا خَيْرَ إلَّا إذَا شَرَقَا

But since knowledge has gone to the West *** there is nothing good until it goes to the East

Knowledge is considered as a way to freedom and the only element for the growth and development of the East. Consequently, there is no way for Eastern people to live without it.

غَرَبَ: "it went to the West", in Ṣ, A, Ġ: غَرَّبَا.
شَرَقَا: "it goes to the East, heading to the East".

37   فَهُبُّو إِليْهِ هُبُوبَ آلصَبَا ***؛ عَسى أنْ يُسيحَ وَيَغْدُو وَدْقَا (!)

So rise quickly towards it like a blowing wind *** hoping that it flows down and becomes rain!

The poem, characterised by an assortative and motivational style, closes with a request expressed through metaphorical images related to natural phenomena.

هُبُّو instead of هُبُّوا : "hurry up and energize, arise, move, rise!".
الصَبَا standing for الصَّبا: "the wind that blows from the East when nighttime and daytime are equal (Equinox)".
يُسيحَ وَيَغْدُو وَدْقَا in Ṣ, A, Ġ: يَسُحَّ وَيَغْدُوْدِقا "the (rain) flows down and becomes copious or very abundant".

Conclusion

The theme of separation constitutes the dominant note and is the guiding thread of the whole poem. Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī expresses the loss of the city of Edirne, with feelings of pain and bitterness. He addresses the city directly, almost personifying it, as if it were an interlocutor dear to him (for instance, "Edirne go easy" in line 1; "Take it easy Edirne, don't worry" in line 8; "May peace be upon your chosen land" in line 11). After a series of references to historical events, rites and sacred places of Islam, the disheartened poet dwells on what Edirne was and what it is now through an interweaving of elements (for instance, the reference to the flags, the use of antonyms such as حَقَارَة "despicability" and جَلالٍ "solemnity" in lines 13 and 14, مَلْعَبا "playground" and مَعْبَقا "fragrant place" in line 12). The feelings of estrangement then give way to praise and exaltation of the hero, the man who virtuously goes to the battle (the reference is to Šukrī and his sword in lines 20 and 21) and to the condemnation of the Muslims who have neglected their duties, whom he addresses

with words of indignation. The following verses are characterised by the political outburst of the poet against the West and its false promises. After a final reflection on the fate of Edirne and the bitter tragedy of the East, the poet exhorts the Muslim community, whom he addresses directly ("O people! The time has come to abandon weakness" in line 33), to join in the resistance and the struggle for freedom, encouraging them to move towards knowledge, the only way to redeem the East from the Western oppressor.

      With regards to the literary aspect, the poet resorts to different linguistic expedients to enhance the expressive message that he wants to convey through his poem, in particular the use of interrogative sentences, for instance starting with the interrogative particle أَ *ʾa*; the repetition of words, for instance وَدَاعًا "farewell" in line 2, and فَيْلَقَا "legion" in line 16; the use of the vocative particle يا *yā*. The use of figures of speech is also frequent, such as the simile, in Arabic التَّشْبِيهُ *at-tašbīh*, comparing two elements called الـمُشَبَّهُ *al-mušabbah* (lit. "resembling") and الـمُشَبَّهُ بِهِ *al-mušabbah bi-hi* (lit. "resembling by means of"), for instance فَإِنَّكِ أَلْزَاسُنَا "You are our Alsace" in line 10, and فَكَم أَلُوسٍ "How many Elos" in line 24. There is also sarcasm or antiphrasis, called in Arabic *as-suḫriyah* or *at-tahakkum wa-l-ʾistihzāʾ*, for instance "Let the West live peacefully in its condition" in line 28. The poet uses metaphors too, in Arabic اِسْتِعَارَةٌ *istiʿārah*, for instance حَلَلْنَا آلْحُبَى "we opened *al-ḥubā*" in line 22, and هُبُوبَ آلصَبَا "a blowing wind" in line 37.

      The rhythm of the poem is marked by the rhyme, in Arabic قَافِيَةٌ *qāfiyah*, at the end of the second hemistich. In particular, the *qāf* rhyme, that characterises the first two lines, is repeated - always in rhyming couplets - every three lines in which the rhyme is, on the contrary, formed using other consonants (*rāʾ* in lines 3, 4, 5; *ḏāl* in lines 8, 9, 10; *lām* in lines 13, 14, 15; *lām* in lines 18, 19, 20; *nūn* in lines 23, 24, 25; *bāʾ* in lines 28, 29, 30; *dāl* in lines 33, 34, 35).

      Compared to the copies in the collections of Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā, Muṣṭafā ʿAlī and Muṣṭafā al-Ġalāyīnī, the version preserved in the Conti Rossini Archive presents slight differences in the syntax of some lines (for instance the first hemistich of line 4 and the first hemistich of line 10) and sometimes a word is replaced by another (for instance in the three copies compared the word صَلِيب "crucifix" is replaced by مُرِيبْ "disquieting, annoying" in line 13, in Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣaqqā the word لِشِرْك "polytheism" is replaced by سِرْك "circus" in line 12). In addition, it presents several non-vocalized voices and some grammatical inaccuracies, probably due to an imperfect knowledge of the Arabic language on the part of the copyist.

Per la caduta di Adrianopoli

أُدْرِنَةُ مَهْلاً فإنَّ الظُّبى — سَتُرْجِعُ لكِ العَهْدَ والمَوْثِقا

وداعًا مَغْناكِ زاهِي القُرى — وداعًا ولكن إلى المُلْتَقى

عزاءً لمجدِكِ الجابِهِ — أُفارِقُ مِحْرابَهُ المِنبَرا

وكم في مُصَلّدةٍ من راكِعٍ — يُجيبُ المؤذِّنَ إنْ كبّرا

فما تَسْقُطَنَّكَ من ماجِهٍ — به جَمَعَ السَّفَرَ أمَّ القُرى

وقبرُ النبوّةِ في يثربٍ — ومثوى مُحِبِّيهِ مثوى النَّقى

ومَنْ في البقيعِ ومَنْ في قُبا — ومَنْ شيّدوا الفَتحَ والخَنْدَقا

رُوَيْدًا أُدْرِنَةُ لا تجزعي — وإنْ قد أمَضَّكِ هذا الأذى

إذا أنتِ بالسيفِ لم تَرْجِعي — فَنُدْحَةُ العَيْنِ لك حَسْبُها

فإنَّكِ أقراؤنا فاسمعي — ونحنُ الأُنَيْسى بمن بَقِّدَ ذا

شَمَمْتُ على قطرِكِ المجتبى — شَمَمْتُ على أفْقِكِ المُنتَقى

أبيتي لشِرْكِ العِدا مَلْعَبا — وكان لتوحيدِنا مَعْبَدا

لقد حَلَّ فيها حَمَلةُ الصليبِ — حَلّوا المَقارَةَ بين الجَلْدِ

وخَلَّفَتْ أدمُعَها والنَّحيبَ — شَنّوا على نَجْرِها والهِلالِ

أتَنْسى أُدْرِنَةُ عمّا قريبٍ — إذا كَلَّفَنا العَلّا والكَمالُ

فنعطف على الرَّغمِ من أوروبا — نَقودُ لها فَيْلَقا فَيْلَقا

فتبكي هزائمَها المُثقَلا — وتَضْحَكُ أيّامَنا المُشرِقا

أيقدِرُ التيمُ أن يَنْكُلُ — كما يَهِبُّ الكَرُّ ذاك البَطَلُ

مَتى لا تَزالُ في الحربِ مُشتَغِلا — شِعارًا أعمَّتْهُ كلُّ الدُّوَلِ

فيا سيفَ تكريمٍ وكلَّ الوَرى — عَدَّتْ تُقَرِّبُ اليومَ بيكَ المُثُلِ

نُجيبُ لكِ الشُّكرَ أن يَنضُبِي — ويُحيي الزَّمانُ به مَفْرِقا

وإنّا ذُكِرْتُ خَلْقًا الخِبى — وقِمْنا لقَوْمِنا في اللِّقا

Photo 1

Photo © Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma
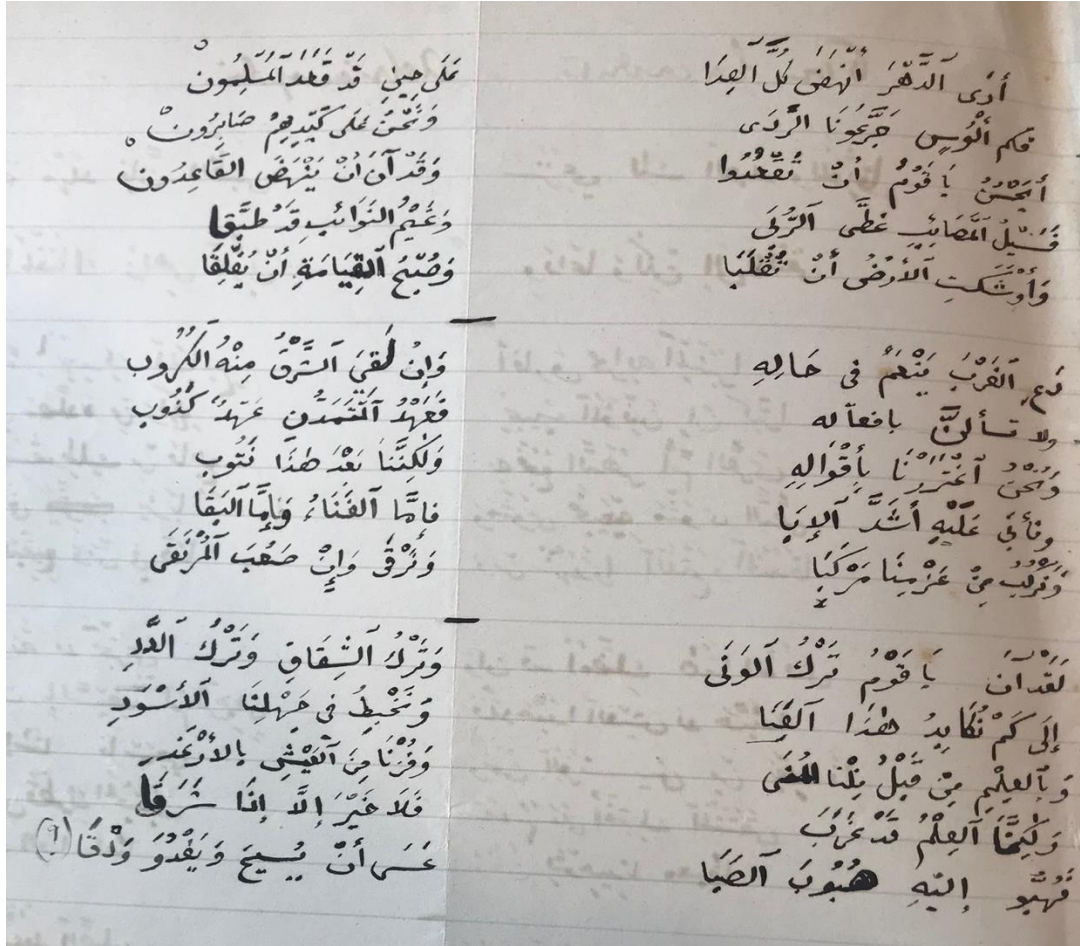
Photo 2
Photo © Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma

Bibliography

Al-Ġalāyīnī, Muṣṭafā (2014). *Dīwān Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī*, Egypt: Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, pp. 703-706.

Al-Jibouri, Yasin T. (2013). "Two Baghdadi Poets, one from Ruṣāfa, one from Karkh - part one - Poet Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī", *Gilgamesh*, Dār al-Maʾmūn House for Translation and Publication, Iraqi Ministry of Culture, vol. 29, pp. 22-26.

ʿAlī, Muṣṭafā (1975). *Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī,* Baghdad: Dār al-ḥurriyya, vol. 3, pp. 291-296.

Aṣ-Saqqā, Muṣṭafā (1953). *Dīwān ar-Ruṣāfī*, 4th Edition, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, pp. 487-489.

Cagiano De Azevedo, Paola (2018). *Fondo Carlo Conti Rossini*, Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

Harbottle, Thomas Benfield (1981). *Harbottle's Dictionary of Battles*, Third Edition, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company.

Khulusi, S. ʿAbdul- ʿAzīz (1950). "Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfī, 1875-1945", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 616-626.

Lane, Edward William (1863-93). *An Arabic-English Lexicon,* London: Williams and Norgate, 8 vols.

Longrigg, S.H. (consulted online on 04 November 2022), "Ḥusayn", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2977> First published online: 2012.

Monroe, Will Seymour (1914). *Bulgaria and her people: with an account of the Balkan wars, Macedonia, and the Macedonia Bulgars*, Boston: Page Co.

Wright, William (1896-1898). *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, Third Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

INSIGHTS OF THE MARRIAGE IN QATARI LITERATURE:
A READING OF THREE SHORT STORIES

NAJLA KALACH

UNINT University

Abstract. Arabist scholars have started quite recently to pay attention towards the fascinating Gulf literary production. However, Qatari literature remains one of the most under investigated subjects, especially in Europe, despite its interesting aspects and remarkable development.
Through the literary comparison of three short stories, namely *al-Ḫuṭwa al-aḫīra* (The Last Step) by Umm Akṯam, *Ṣafā' ar-rūḥ* (The Purity of Soul) by Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ al-Faḍāla, and *Ḥarām 'alayk* (Shame on You) by Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī, this article aims to provide a thematic analysis of some insights of the marriage in Qatar. Through the short stories we will be able to explore the relationship between men and women related to the social local issues affecting the community at the time of writing.
Keywords: Arabian Peninsula, Gulf Literature, Qatar, Short Story, Qatari Writers, Marriage.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, when compared to other Arab countries, such as Egypt, Syria or Iraq, the narrative of the Arabian Peninsula is relatively young. Its development can only be concretely observed starting from the 1960s and 1970s (al-Dwīk 1989: 148; al-Nadawī 2007: 52). As Michalak-Pikulska writes (2016: 6), the literary flourishing was strongly influenced by contacts with certain Arab countries such as Syria or Egypt, but also by contacts with Europe, since the Arabs from the peninsula had visited Europe not only to familiarize with modern civilization, but also for study purposes and religious missionary activities. The literary production of some Gulf countries, for example of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, has only recently aroused the interest of both European and Arab scholars. In the introduction to the volume *Rose d'Arabia. Racconti di scrittrici dell'Arabia Saudita* (Roses of Arabia. Tales of women writers from Saudi Arabia), Camera d'Afflitto (2018: 16) proposes a reflection on Saudi short story by summing up how much the Eurocentric point of view tends to affect the reading of the short stories and novels originated in the Gulf countries, sometimes by prejudicing the quality of their literary production that may appear too obvious to the eyes of Westerners, but it should be bear in mind that every literary expression must be encouraged. This has to be done especially when it requires the reader's special attention towards the social sphere and not only to the artistic one.

Among the almost unknown countries in Europe from a literary point of view with interesting social and artistic spheres, there is Qatar, a country that is often brought up in reference to its relevance on the world geopolitical chessboard, rather than for its intellectual life. [1] Qatar has not only been investing a great deal in education and in the arts, but has also been strongly encouraging the dissemination of the literary production of Qatari authors for years. For these reasons, we have decided to dedicate this article to the Qatari literature, an undiscovered research field that deserves a closer look. Through a comparative analysis of three short stories that were written and published between the late 1970s and the end of the 1990s, their common theme, marriage, will be examined through the female and male points of views of authors and their characters. The aim is to reflect and delve into the social issues inside the man-woman relationship in the Qatari community at the time, and the stylistic-narrative changes in the short story devoted to this *topos*.

The Evolution of the Qatari Short Story

The great wealth acquired by Qatar, thanks to oil revenues during the 1950s, allowed the country to flourish not only economically, but also culturally, and the Qatari short story can be considered evidence of the country's intellectual and social transformations. Specifically, it was thanks to the advent of printing that the short story and the very short story written by local authors, both men and women, spread in Qatar in the early 1960s through local newspapers and magazines (often the editors themselves were writers).

As for some studies of Qatari short story, it is possible to identify three main generations of writers who have given depth to local literature, namely: the pioneer generation, represented by authors such as Yūsif an-Na'ma and Ibrāhīm Ṣaqr al-Mirrīḫī, who had been writing between the 1960s and the mid-1970s, a middle generation, represented mainly by women writers – such as Kalṯam Ǧabr al-Kuwārī, Nūra Āl Saʿad, Ḥaṣṣa al-Ǧabr, Ḥaṣṣa al-ʿAwaḍī – who had been showing a more solid artistic maturity, and the 'young' generation dating back to the end of 1994, represented by authors such as Ǧamāl Fāyiz, Dalāl Ḫalīfa and Šamma al-Kuwārī (Kafud et al. 1996; al-Nadawī 2007: 63-68; Belabed 2023: 14).

However, as Salīm (2021: 40-42) points out, it should be specified that not all the short stories published immediately after the 1960s can be fully classified as such, since some lacked the typical narrative structures of this genre, and the characters, whose psychological traits were neglected, were not well developed. The short stories of the early period of the Qatari literature were a photographic illustration of events in traditional social life: they were a means for the author to express their reflections, especially on the social changes that were shaking the country (this was also the case of other Gulf countries undergoing a similar economic and cultural development). Nonetheless, these attempts at writing were valuable in the local context of those times and developed spontaneously along with social growth. Among the first works written between 1962 and 1971, are worth mentioning: *Bint al-ḫalīǧ* (The Girl of the Gulf) and *Liqā' fī Bayrūt* (A Meeting in Beirut)

---

[1]   Some Qatari stories and novels have already been translated into various European languages such as English, French, Italian and German. Nevertheless, critics about the Qatari literary production still exists.

by Yūsif al-Na'ma, the short story titled *al-Yatīm* (The Orphan) by 'Īsā Manṣūr of 1960, *Ḏikrā lan tamūt* (Memory Won't Die) by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mālik published in 1970, and *al-Ḥanīn* (Nostalgia) by Ibrāhīm Ṣaqr al-Mirrīḫī of 1971.[2]

Gradually, the Qatari authors began to focus on the social problems of the contemporary world, dealing with topics such as the criticism of the dogmas of traditional society, concerning especially marriage, divorce, polygamy, women's emancipation, and the role of patriarchism in society. From the second half of the 1970s onwards, a more mature form of narrative, in terms of both quantity and quality, developed (al-Dwīk 1989:148; al-Nadawī 2007: 53). In fact, the authors of this period build the story around the description of the inner world of the protagonist and other characters, showing an improvement in style. Moreover, new narrative techniques were adopted, such as the use of inner monologue, stream of consciousness and symbolism, thanks to which a greater psychological analysis emerges, especially in the stories of women writers, such as Kalṯam Ǧabr al-Kuwārī, Nūra Āl Sa'ad and Umm Akṯam (Michalak-Pikulska 2016: 12; Subota 2018: 164).

Thematically, according to al-Nadawī (2007: 73-74), the literary output of the Qatari writers, who had been publishing since the late 1970s, approaches a romantic aesthetic and then takes a trend of realism in the early 1980s. It keeps making its way through the early 1990s, progressing to a more intimate and introspective narrative, and to an increasingly deeper psychology of the characters. In fact, the 1990s represent a new phase in Qatar's cultural transformation: a strong interest and awareness in the field of literature and art grows under the supervision and encouragement of local institutions, which highlight a new generation of Qatari talent through the organization of annual literary competitions and the awarding of prizes (al-Nadawī 2007: 73-74; Kāfūd 2005: 4-5). The themes addressed by the writers dealt with social criticism – including immigration and the role of Oriental expats within the Qatari society – and the conflict between tradition and progress. However, it should be noted that some social issues, such as family relations, the man-woman relationship, and the role of women in the local community, will also remain in the stories of the generations of writers of the 1990s, as some authors will go through a transition phase between the romantic and the realist current, preserving traces of both romantic and realist elements in their works.

Social and Narrative Insights of the Marriage in Qatar

According to the study of Nora bint Nasser bin Jassem Al Thani (2015: 55), "[f]amilies insist on marriage because they want to preserve ethics and honorable behavior; they are convinced that marriage is a protection against vice. This trend is inspired from Islam that invites youth to build Muslim virtuous families". Thus, the theme of marriage also inevitably reverberates in local literature.

---

[2] Besides Umm Akṯam, among the best-known female writers of that time, we can find Kalṯam Ǧabr al-Kuwārī who since 1978, at a very young age, has been publishing various stories in local magazines. Although she belongs to the generation of the pioneers of the short story in Qatar, her style and themes are associated to the generation of 'middle' authors; thus, she is considered to be the artistic continuum between the two generations.

Most short stories – especially those of the 1980s and 1990s – propose a negative perception of this institution, where the husband is portrayed by a woman, mainly from a female point of view. Fahmī (1983: 8) observes that 'marriage is the first symbol of the residue of customs and traditions': that is why marriage has been a much-treasured theme by female writers, who have been very active in the intellectual community since the beginning of the Qatari literary production. They tell stories about unhappy or troubled unions as they are arranged by the families to strengthen their blood ties or for material and economic reasons[3]. They also focus on the relationship between husband and wife, often governed by the rigid rules of tradition and gender inequality. However, the female protagonists of these short stories do not only appear to be surrendering to being treated as objects; on the contrary: some of them are strong female personalities who tenaciously rebel against their fate, although often being hindered by other women such as their mothers or grandmothers. Despite this, especially in the stories of Umm Akṯam and Kalṯam Ǧabr al-Kuwārī, most of the rebel heroines end up giving in and suffering their destiny. In keeping with modern times, however, the female protagonists turn into educated women who love and seek the understanding with their partner who in turn have become more affable in their attitudes towards the matrimony (Michalak-Pikulska 2016: 25).

In this framework, the considerations proposed by al-Dwīk (1989:150-151) in relation to the preponderant role of Qatari female writers confirm that writing was indeed a means of venting and escaping from the vortex of social frustrations that surround women. However, this does not mean that these feelings of impatience belong exclusively to the Qatari female generation, because it is also a characteristic of the male writers: in fact, the literary production by both sexes can be considered two sides of the same truth. And it is a fact that also male writers have been raising the issue of early marriages and of the deprivation of a woman's right to choose her husband. Abū Šihāb (2016: 70) argues that the man's role within the institution of marriage – which was perhaps more cohesive before the oil revolution and economic prosperity – according to most Qatari short stories dealing with this topic, appears deprived of his family duties. This is because he has adjusted to the needs and the pace of the times. So, in order to seek his ego, he often leaves his wife and children behind to travel and study or spend time having fun thanks to the new availability of money, while the woman remains faithful to her family. Albeit sometimes over-exaggerated in negatively presenting the marriage, the Qatari short story serves to expose the local and non-local communities to this social issue, by inviting the readers to ponder. The scholar (Abū Šihāb 2016: 66) then adds that in the Qatari short story there is a continuity in the manifestation of gender conflicts in the depth of marriage. Despite their sensitivity towards the social issue, Subota (2018: 165) states that the works of the men writers "did not give the reader such emotions and experiences for the fate of women as women's short stories did. Instead, they were perceived as statements of the fact that backward traditions suppressing female identity dominate the society". However, we do not consider this statement to be fully valid for all the short stories by male authors that

---

3   In most Qatari short stories, marriage is portrayed as a situation of unhappiness, experienced by the characters. However, this article does not intend to imply that all marriages in those times were unsuccessful. It aims to bring to light, through literature, a social issue that the Qatari authors perceive as being very consistent in the local community of the time.

deal with this issue, and we will find evidence of this in some of the short stories selected for this article.

In the following lines three short stories will be examined, namely *al-Ḫuṭwa al-ʾaḫīra* (The Last Step) by Umm Akṯam, *Ṣafāʾ ar-rūḥ* (Purity of Soul) by Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ al-Faḍāla, and finally *Ḥarām ʿalayk* (Shame on You) by Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī[4]. The three selected stories, published between 1978 and the late 1990s, provide us with a broad overview of this topic. In fact, the authors of these short stories are one female and two males, who analyze the same theme through the eyes of very different characters, through whom the dogmas of the traditional structure of the local Qatari society are presented. In the first short story *al-Ḫuṭwa al-ʾaḫīra* (The Last Step) the protagonist is an unhappy woman victimized by her husband, portrayed by the artistic sensitivity of the writer Umm Akṯam. In the second, by the writer Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ al-Faḍāla, the main character is a disappointed man who feels betrayed by the western woman. In the third, an unhappy woman victimized by her insensitive husband is portrayed by Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī. Behind these choices lies the intention to have a fairly comprehensive range of perspectives on the theme of marriage in order to compare them by literary perspective.

The Last Step – Umm Akṯam

The short story *al-Ḫuṭwa al-ʾaḫīra* (The Last Step) by Umm Akṯam was published in July 1978 in issue 31 of the magazine *ad-Dawḥa*[5]. The author's real name is Fāṭima at-Turkī (b. 1950s), who used to sign herself with the pseudonyms of Umm Akṯam, or Sāra. Under those names she published more than 15 short stories in *ad-Dawḥa* magazine, from issue 30 of June 1978 to issue 122 of July 1985; however, no collection of her short stories has ever been published (Saleem 2021: 42-43). Despite the fact that the writer retired from literary life in the mid-1980s, she is still remembered as one of the pioneering women writers of the short story in Qatar, whose style was distinctive. A proof of this is the publication of several of her short stories in the most important Qatari magazine of the time, which was by no means taken for granted for a woman in Doha in the late 1970s.

Through this story, the author focuses on marriage based only on material advantages at the expense of the woman's happiness. The story is narrated in the first person with the use of inner monologue. However, the narrative structure approaches the stream of consciousness, which is definitely an innovative element in the Qatari short story for the time (al-Ḥāfiẓ et al. 2016: 662). Umm Akṯam does not mention anything in her story that would suggest that it takes place in Qatar.

The young female protagonist lives in a state of deep despair as she is married to a repulsive forty-year older man, who makes her very unhappy. The text opens with a descriptive sequence that is both lyrical and expressive, as the intensity of the protagonist's emotionality makes the language more akin to a poetic text: the reader is introduced into

---

[4] English translation is by the author's article with the exception of *Ḥarām ʿalayk* (Shame on You) by Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī that follows the translation in Al-Azab, Amir, Alshishakli, Samar Mahmood (trans.) *Crops. Anthology of Qatari Short Stories*, pp. 150-154, 2016.

[5] In this article, we use the original version of the story, which was published in 1978 in issue 31 of *ad-Dawḥa* magazine, pp. 108-109.

the character's mind without any explanation or premise. In fact, the figure of the hated husband and the repulsion that the young woman feels for him are immediately presented through the use of metaphors and similes, as the following extract shows (1978: 108):

تطوقني كأخطبوط.. كخنجر تغرسه في عنقي المهزوم..وأرتعد..وأنتفض..كمحارب يحتضر..وأعدو..كأرنب بري جازع..لأغتسل من رائحة الموت المتسلقة جسدي.

You wrap me up like an octopus, like a dagger plunged into my neck which gives in to you. I shake with convulsions, I tremble, like a dying warrior. I start running like a panicky wild rabbit, to shake the smell of death off my body.

Then the sequence is interrupted by a flashback: the protagonist jokes and plays carefree with her dear friend Sāra, also given in marriage to an old man 'thrown away like rubbish in the arms of an old man held up by a mountain of gold' (1978: 108). The protagonist will then give birth to a child that she subsequently rejects, blamed to be 'the fruit of the disappearance of joy from my lips'. But she does not give up and waits for the final step, which gives the story its title, namely the divorce from the man she detests so much. Her wait from that moment is described like "a bird that breathes in the scent of life behind the latticework of the cage and flaps its wings against the door of its prison and does not get tired of doing so" (1978: 109).

The story continues with a dialogue sequence in which the protagonist converses with her grandmother, a symbol of the clash between the old and the new generation. It is interesting to note that the protagonist never addresses her husband, as if to eliminate his presence altogether, hoping it was not true. The young woman thinks she has achieved her goal and has finally obtained the so longed repudiation so much that she impatiently asks her grandmother when the certificate is going to arrive. Her grandmother, in response, slaps her, accusing her of bringing shame to the family and sticks up for her husband who, having gone back to his first wife, has not decided to repudiate the protagonist, but to let her stay in their house and to support her and their young son (1978: 109):

أيها الحمقاء.. ها أنت تدفعين ثمن غرورك.. ومعاملتك الجافة لزوجك.. لقد نصحتك [...] لقد تزوج من فتاة أصغر منك سناً وأكثر جمالاً.

What a fool! You are going to pay the price for your arrogance, your rude manners towards your husband. I warned you. [...] He is now married to a girl who is younger and prettier than you.

The entire story takes place in the house, while the temporal structure is characterized by a moderate use of analepsis (flashback). The story is made up of short sentences interrupted by points of suspension, which give the narrative text a distressing reading rhythm, as if the author intended to convey to the reader the 'hammering' of unhappiness suffered by the protagonist.

Thanks to a semi-poetic language studded with metaphors and similes, Umm Akṭam shows her pioneering expressive skills, which she lays bare part of the matrimonial reality of the Qatari society of the time with. In addition, the story is pervaded with her daring

artistic personality, so the reader is swallowed by a vortex that urges them to read it all in one breath.

Purity of Soul – **Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ al-Faḍāla**

Ṣafā' ar-rūḥ (Purity of Soul) by Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ al-Faḍāla is one of the short stories awarded prizes in the literary competitions organized by the Department of Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information of Qatar since the second half of the 1970s. It is included in the book that collects six other award-winning short stories entitled *Sabʿat 'aṣwāṭ fī l-qiṣṣa al-qaṭariyya al-ḥadīṯa* (Seven Voices of the Qatari Modern Short Story), published in 1983 by the Department of Studies and Research with the Department of Culture and Arts[6]. The linguistic register used by the author is informal, which lends itself well to the narration of everyday family relationships. The author resorts to the use of metaphor and simile when referring to his women, but there is no deep analysis of the inner self of the characters, except for that of the protagonist, who, anyway, is described more superficially than the main character of *The Last Step* by Umm Akṯam.

The protagonist is Ḫālid, a young man who decides to move to London, to study medicine at university. The story opens with the separation of the two lovers, Ḫālid and Ṣafā', a cousin on his father's side, who promise not to forget each other and to wait for Ḫālid's return to Qatar before getting married. After this very brief preamble, it is immediately interesting to note the author's choice regarding the title: the word *ṣafā'*, which in Modern Standard Arabic primarily means 'purity', is also the name of Ḫālid's fiancée, as if it was a pun. Therefore, the title could be either interpreted as 'purity of soul' or 'Ṣafā' of my soul'. We will return to this point later.

The storytelling, through the voice of the inner narrator, goes on describing Ḫālid's feelings of alienation and nostalgia upon his arrival in Europe (2016: 145):

من دفء قطر وحنانها في أيام الشتاء إلى لفحة البرد القارسة في لندن، أشعرتني برودة الجو وكأنني خرجت من ملابسي، عرياناً وسط زحام لم أعهده من قبل، الوجوه غير الوجوه، اللغة غير اللغة، والنساء لا يخجلن من الغير أو من أنفسهنّ يكشفن أكثر مما يخفين.

From the nostalgia and mildness of Qatar in the winter days to the freezing cold of London, the biting air made me feel as if I had dropped my clothes, naked in the midst of a crowd I had never seen before, faces were not faces, language was not language, women with no shame of others or of themselves, exposed more than what they concealed.

Lost in his new London life, with his heart full of nostalgia for Qatar, Ḫālid's only comfort was reading the many letters he received from Ṣafā'. He concentrated on his studies and one day at university he met Janet, a beautiful British girl, with whom he began

---

to develop a strong friendship: she was always by his side, helped him by providing him with lecture notes, took care of him and assisted him when he got ill from the bitter cold he was not used to. So, he falls madly in love with her, slowly forgetting about his girlfriend Ṣafā' in Qatar (2016: 146):

كانت تعرف كيف تتلاعب بعواطفي، ترغبني وتصدني، تتساهل وتتشدد، كنت كالغريق في بحر هواها لا أقوى على فراقها، كنت دائمًا منجذبًا لها تمامًا كالفراشة التي أعماها نور المصباح عن ناره، شعرت بحبها يجرف كياني، أهملت قراءة خطابات صفاء والرد عليها.

She knew how to play with my feelings, she desired me and rejected me, she was surrendering and uncompromising, it felt like I was drowning in the sea of her desire, and I did not have the strength to separate myself from her. I was always longing for her, just like the butterfly that is attracted by the light of a lamp, I felt a love for her that overwhelmed my being. I stopped reading and answering her letters.

Ḫālid decides to marry Janet, so their friends organize a party to celebrate the occasion. It is during this party that Ḫālid learns from one of his university friends that Janet is not a virgin and that she has had men before. Upset, Ḫālid feels cheated on, as he was confident, she was a pure woman, so he decides to leave immediately for Qatar, right after the party. Janet, unaware of the conversation between Ḫālid and his friend, invites him to return to her soon, but he replies sarcastically and pleads his 'pure' Ṣafā' to forgive him for breaking up with her (2016: 147-148):

" - إني عائد إلى قطر.. لا لأحصل على موافقة والدي على زواجك بل لأتزوج صفاء.. وأعود معها لأكمل تعليمي. "
لم أعر ذهولها انتباها.. وحولت وجهي صوب المطار، وقد ارتسمت صورة صفاء بخجل العذراء.. ببسمة الحب البريء في كل وجه رأيته في المطار.
يا صفاء الروح والقلب اعذريني.. كادت بنات أوروبا ينسينني وجهك الضحوك.. يا صفاء الروح أنا قادم.. قادم كي أجعل من حلم عمرك حقيقة تحميني من أفاعي الغرب...

– I am going back to Qatar not to get my father's consent to marry you, but to marry Ṣafā', be with her and finish my studies.
I paid no attention to her astonishment and headed for the airport, and the image of Ṣafā' and her virginal modesty and pure smile appeared before me, superimposed on every face I saw in the airport.
Ṣafā' of the soul and heart, forgive me. The girls of Europe were trying to make me forget your smiling face, Ṣafā' of the soul I am coming, I am coming to make the dream of your life come true, which will protect me from the vipers of the West...

However, a manly view of the idea of marriage is important to us because it contrasts with that of the female main characters of the other two stories analysed here, that is to say *The Last Step* and *Shame on You*. What role does the Qatari man of the time give to the institution of marriage and its local traditions? Does he prefer foreign women or Qatari women? In *Purity of Soul*, the desire to escape from one's own society and traditions emerges, but, as in most short stories published at the time, the characters eventually get

back to their roots, to the nest, and their attempts at rebellion often end in acceptance or surrender to what they are meant to be. The writer treats the paradox of the man-woman relationship between reality and dreams from a new angle in *Purity of Soul*, since it is set in a totally different context from the local one (al-Dwīk 1989: 151). But it is the local values that give human beings their individuality, and it is for this reason that the existence of the protagonist Ḫālid is thus shaken up to the core, and according to Fahmī (1983: 14), traditions – namely that of marrying a cousin – become "a shield and protection from all storms" that influence the individual's freedom of choice. In fact, Ḫālid voluntarily decides to settle back in his country and to comply with the traditions, without any imposition. Regarding the pun in the title, the protagonist chooses Ṣafā' as the embodiment of what, for him, in his world, is the purity of soul, whom he can finally share the rest of his life with. Behind these reflections lies the relevance of this prize-winning story, which was among the very first to portray the interaction between Western and Eastern civilisations through the perspective of an upcoming marriage (al-Nadawī 2007: 57).

Shame on You – Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī

The writer Muḥsin Fahd al-Hāǧirī (b. 1973) belongs to the generation of young Qatari writers who became well-known during the 1990s. He published three collections of short stories, namely *al-Balāġ* (The Report) in 1996, *Banāt Iblīs* (The Devil's Daughters) in 1997 and *Ḥarām ʿalayk* (Shame on You) in 1998. The short story analysed here, gives the title to the last collection published by al-Hāǧirī and was also included in the anthology entitled *Qiṭāf. Muḫtārāt min al-qiṣṣa al-qaṭariyya* (Crops. Anthology of Qatari Short Stories), which contains 13 short stories that have attracted critical interest.

Ḥarām ʿalayk (Shame on You) is the story of an unhappy marriage between a woman and an insensitive man, who constantly humiliates his wife. In the diegesis, ekphrastic sequences alternate with narrative excursus in which the external narrator relates the thoughts of the female protagonist. The narrative construction depends on the reiteration of the whispered phrase "Shame on You", which is repeated six times in the text, each time introducing a different scene that crystallises the protagonist's crisis (al-Hāfiz et al. 2016: 247). The opening immediately shows the reader the husband's brutal and humiliating actions to the detriment of his wife (2017: 163):

«حرام عليك».. تقولها همسًا عندما يوقظها من أحلى ساعات نومها في منتصف الليل ليمارس رجولته في ربع ساعة أو نصف ساعة، ليدير بعدها ظهره لها فيغط في نوم عميق.

She whispered "shame on you" when he woke her up from the sweetest hours of her sleep in the middle of the night to show off his virility for fifteen or thirty minutes, only to turn his back to her afterwards and fall into a deep sleep. (2016: 151)

The story continues with the description of the husband who, while watching television, makes appreciations to the women on screen, careless of his wife's presence. Then the narrator drags us into the mind of the protagonist, who feels oppressed and afraid of her husband, as we can read in the following extract (2017: 164):

كان بودها أن تصرخ لتخرج ما في جعبتها من أوجاع كتمتها عنه لفترة طويلة، ضاق صدرها بكل
شيء، فلم يعد يطيق أكثر، امتلأ بتفاهاته واستهزائه وشماتته وسخافته ووحشيته، وهي ما تفتأ تكتم
همساتها عنه.

> She wished she could shout to get out all the pain stored in her chest. She was fed up
> and couldn't get any more of his mocking, gloating, silliness, and brutality. She even
> muted her whispers. (2016: 152)

The considerations of the protagonist, presented by the narrator's voice, trigger a
flashback that takes her back to her traumatic wedding night, when she naively thought her
groom would be gentle, but instead, without even speaking to her, he starts kissing her
violently and comes at her like a hurricane. Then he sits on the floor and begins to eat
dinner without saying a word. She waits for him to invite her and share the food, but he
does not, so the young bride sits next to him and extends a hand to take a bite, but the man
begins to yell (2017: 166-167):

ـ اسمعي يا امرأة .. هذه أول وآخر مرة تأكلين فيها معي.. أنا أولاً. ثم تأتين من بعدي تأكلين.. أفهمت
يا امرأة؟
صدمت لسماعها ذلك منه، وكاد أن يغمى عليها لولا أن تمالكت نفسها، وارتعشت وهي تقول
له:
ـ حرام عليك.
لقد كانت أول مرّة تقول فيها هذه الكلمات له، بل إنها أول مرّة تعلن عما بداخلها له، لأنها بعد
ذلك لم تستطع أن تفتح فمها بشيء.. طيلة حياتها.

> – Listen, woman! This is the first and last time you are eating with me. Me first, then
> you come to eat after I finish, do you understand, woman?
> She was shocked and about to faint, but she held her nerves. She was trembling when
> saying:
> -Shame on you!
> It was the first time she said such words; even it was the first time she declared what
> was in her mind because she couldn't utter a word ever after. (2016: 153-154)

Thus, during that night the woman hears her husband's first words to her and in
response to them, for the last time in her life, she articulates the phrase 'Shame on you' out
loud. The last lines of the story make the reader account for all the things that the woman,
who is not even called by her name in the dialogue sequence, had been subjected to.

Concluding remarks

From our study it emerges that marriage is often linked to difficult situations in the Qatari
short story, marriage often embodies disillusion for both sexes, but mainly hatred and
woman's feeling that she is just something owned by a man, raising awareness in readers,
and showing evidence of the beginning of social change in Qatari communities since many
writers wrote about this situation of iniquity (Fahmī 1983: 8). From the narrative

perspective, the plot is almost inconspicuous, as the narrative is all about the psychology and emotions of the protagonist, so that the reader can empathise with their issues. Concerning language, it is not surprising that in the three selected stories, the use of the Qatari variety, for example in the dialogues, was not given attention to. This is likely due to the fact that Qatari authors of that time had to show their artistic and linguistic skills through a language of prestige – a language that was acquired even in a rather short period of time if one considers when the institutions of higher education were founded. So, it was unthinkable to use the local language for this purpose. As a matter of fact, the writing style could have also been influenced by the author's education background and their involvement in the intellectual Qatari community.

Therefore, the marriage becomes a means to investigate both social issues of the Qatari community at that time, and the different narrative styles that characterise the Qatari short story. In this regard, this article tried to reach this objective through the analysis of three sample short stories: *al-Ḫuṭwa al-'aḫīra* (The Last Step), *Ṣafā' ar-rūḥ* (Purity of Soul), and *Ḥarām 'alayk* (Shame on You).

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the latest short story of the selection is dated 1998, so there is no doubt that in more recent works the perspective on marriage has changed. For example, as observed by Abū Šihāb (2016: 69), the marriage in the Qatari short stories is today portrayed as a daily routine and it does not evoke any ecstasy or value. There is also an adaptation to modern times: for example, one of the spouses checks the other's mobile phone and finds out to be cheated on by checking social networks and apps such as WhatsApp or Instagram. This is the case of some short stories in the collection dated 2014 *Nawāfiḏ 'alā šurfat ar-ruḥ* (Windows at the Soul's Balcony) by the writer Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mālik: here it would also be interesting to investigate the institution of marriage in the post 2000s Qatari literature.

References

Al Thani, Nora bint Nasser bin Jassem. 2015. *Marriage in Qatar. Its regulation, customs and traditions in Qatari society* (trans. Abdelhakim El Omrani). Doha: Department of Cultural Research & Studies.

Abū Šihāb, Rāmī. 2016. *Al-'ansāq aṯ-ṯaqāfiyya fī l-qiṣṣa al-qaṭariyya*. Doha: Wizārat aṯ-ṯaqāfa wa-r-riyāḍa.

Al-Azab, Amir, Alshishakli, Samar Mahmood (trans.). 2016. *Crops. Anthology of Qatari Short Stories*. Doha: Ministry of Culture and Sports State of Qatar.

Al-Dwīk, Muḥammad Ṭālib. 1989. "Al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra fī Qaṭar", *Al-'Ādāb 37*, 147-152.

Al-Faḍāla, Nāṣir Ṣāliḥ. 1983. *Ṣafā' ar-rūḥ*, in *Sab'at 'aṣwāt fī l-qiṣṣa al-qaṭariyya al-ḥadīṯa*. Doha: 'Idārat aṯ-ṯaqāfa wa-l-funūn.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ, Ṣabrī, & Salīm, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, & Ḥusayn Ikrāmī Fatḥī. 2016. *Al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra fī Qaṭar. Bīblūgrāfiyā šāmila wa-dalīl waṣfī taḥlīlī*. Doha: Wizārat aṯ-ṯaqāfa wa-r-riyāḍa.

Al-Hāǧirī, Muḥsin. 1996. *Al-Balāġ*. Doha: Ṭab'a ḫāṣṣa.

Al-Hāǧirī, Muḥsin. 1997. *Banāt 'Iblīs*. Oman: Dār 'Usāma li-n-našr wa-t-tawzī'.

Al-Hāǧirī, Muḥsin. 1998. *Ḥarām 'alayk*. Doha: Maṭābi' Dār aš-Šarq.

Al-Mirrīḫī, Ibrāhīm Ṣaqr. 1971. "Al-Ḥanīn", *Maǧallat al-'Urūba* (52), Doha.

Al-Na'ma, Yūsif. 1970. *Bint al-ḫalīǧ*. Doha: Maktabat at-Tilmīḏ.

Al-Na'ma, Yūsif. 1970. *Liqā' fī Bayrūt*. Beirut: Ṭab'a ḫāṣṣa.

Al-Nadawī, Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Rāšid. 2007. *Al-ittiǧāhāt al-ǧadīda fī l-ḥaraka al-'adabiyya fī dawlat Qaṭar*. Beirut: Mu'assasat ar-Riḥāb al-Ḥadīṯa.

Belabed, Abdelhak. 2023. "Introduzione", Najla Kalach (ed.), *Rinascita. Racconti dal Qatar*. Roma: UNINT University Press. 13-16.

Camera d'Afflitto, Isabella. 2018. *Rose d'Arabia. Racconti di scrittrici dell'Arabia Saudita*. Roma: Edizioni e/o.

ʿAbd al-Mālik, Aḥmad. 1970. "Ḏikrā lan tamūt", *Maǧallat al-ʿUrūba* (23), Doha.

ʿAbd al-Mālik, Aḥmad. 2014. *Nawāfiḏ ʿalā šurfat ar-ruḥ*. Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Riḥāb al-Ḥadīṯa.

Fahmī, Māhir Ḥasan. 1983. "Malāmiḥ al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra fī l-'adab al-qaṭarī", *Ḥawliyya*, *n.6*, 7-22.

Kāfūd, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm. 2005. "Taqdīm", *'Ibdaʿāt ḫalīǧiyya fī l-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra*. Doha: al-Maǧlis al-waṭanī li-ṯ-ṯaqāfa wa-l-funūn wa-t-turāṯ.

Kitāb al-Dawḥa 77. 2017. *Qiṭāf. Muḫtārāt min al-qiṣṣa al-qaṭariyya*. Doha: 'Idārat al-buḥūṯ wa-d-dirāsāt aṯ-ṯaqāfiyya.

Manṣūr, ʿĪsā. 1960. "Al-yatīm", *'Aḫbār šarikat nafṭ* (1), Doha.

Michalak-Pikulska, Barbara. 2016. *Modern Literature of the Gulf*. Frankfurt; New York: Peter Lang.

Salīm, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā. 2021. "Al-qiṣṣa al-qaṣīra fī Qaṭar", *Maǧallat ad-Dawḥa* (164), 39-46.

Subota, Inna. 2018. "Short Story Genre in the Modern Literary Process of Qatar", Khomitska, Olena, & Horvat, Bohdan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the History of Arabic Literature, Kyiv, May 19-20, 2016*. 162-169.

Umm Akṯam. 1978. "Al-ḫuṭwa al-'aḫīra", *Maǧallat ad-Dawḥa* (31), Doha.

WRITING A *MARWIYYA* IN CONTEMPORARY TUNISIA: TAOUFIK BEN BRIK'S *KAWASAKI*

CRISTINA LA ROSA

University of Catania (Italy)

Abstract: *Kawasaki* is a novel published in 2014 by Tunisian writer Taoufik Ben Brik, already renowned for his book entitled *Kalb ben Kalb*. Although *Kawasaki* addresses issues relevant to literature of resistance, Ben Brik prefers to define it a *marwiyya*, almost as if to create a new genre. The novel is set in a dry, barren Tunisia, where everything is arid and stony, a metaphor of the state of mind of the men and women who feel trapped in contemporary Tunisian society. The novel bears the name of the protagonist's motorcycle on which he undertakes a physical journey towards Tataouine, but also a complex metaphorical journey characterised by the nonsensical thoughts that assail him on the way. He is a schoolteacher, a father, and a husband. Keen on art and reading, he does not view the world like everyone else. All of this is reflected in the language used by Ben Brik, which produces an illogical and delirious prose, also on account of the blending and alternation of Tunisian and Standard Arabic. In this paper, I will analyse the main formal features of the novel and its principal narrative strategies.
Keywords: *Taoufik Ben Brik, Tunisian novel, stream of consciousness, marwiyya, literature of resistance, mixed varieties.*

Literary production in vernacular Arabic flourished in Tunisia following the Arab Spring[1]. These bottom-up works emerged thanks to the commitment of several Tunisian intellectuals who increasingly frequently have chosen to write in their mother tongue or in mixed varieties of Arabic. In recent years, the work of the Association Derja,[2] which aims to foster the use of Tunisian as a language of culture, has also driven this trend. Naturally, this growing literary production in the vernacular does not mean that novelists did not employ mixed varieties or Tunisian Arabic in their works before the so-called Jasmine Revolution.[3] However, as Ferrando (2011) observed in Morocco, there was no strong vernacular literary tradition before 2011, whereas now, in Tunisia, it is really hard to keep up with the intense flowering of novels in dialect. In fact, the 2011 Revolution eliminated any mediation between writers and the public, encouraging self-publishing, opening up new literary genres, and creating a "democratisation of register."

---

[1] See La Rosa 2022 and relative bibliography.

[2] See bettounsi.com and the Facebook page *Derja la langue tunisienne*, available at https://www.facebook.com/derja.association (consulted on 26/09/2022).

[3] For instance, ʿAlī al-Duʿāǧī (d. 1949), Bašīr Ḫurayyif (d. 1983) and Maḥmūd al-Masʿadī (d. 2004) included some dialectal elements in their novels and short stories. On Bašīr Ḫurayyif, see Nicosia 2021.

In Tunisia, we are witnessing what Mejdell (2017: 85), referring to Egyptian literature, defined as a "destandardisation process" characterised by a pluralism of expressions and the creation of new, fluid writing norms. Until recently, however, there has not been much interest in Tunisian literary production.

Tawfīq b. Brīk's[4] *Kawasaki* must be read in the context of this cultural landscape.

1. Bio-bibliographical Notes on Taoufik Ben Brik

Born in a small Tunisian town called Jerissa, near El Kef, Taoufik Ben Brik was one of six children of the founder of the first mining union, a man who had struggled against the French protectorate, and the brother of engaged Tunisian politician Ǧalāl b. Brīk al-Zuġlāmī. Known for his satirical writings denouncing Ben ʿAlī's dictatorship, Taoufik Ben Brik was censored and arrested several times by the police of the former regime. A brilliant writer and journalist, he has received awards for both literature and journalism. Not surprisingly, he often selects contributions by Z – a controversial and anonymous Tunisian cartoonist known for his stance against the Tunisian government[5] – who also produced the cover of *Kawasaki*.

Taoufik Ben Brik's novel *Kalb ben Kalb* (*Dog, Son of Dog*, 2013) was an immediate bestseller, selling 40,000 copies in one year. The book, which is written entirely in Tunisian dialect, narrates the story of the marginalised sections of society in a marginalised idiom. Indeed, this democratisation of register is a visible and audible effect of the Revolution. The book raised a great controversy and Ben Brik was heavily criticized as, for the first time in decades, there no longer was authority responsible for controlling language, thereby also opening the door to the use of explicit sexual language in literature (Omri 2019).

2. Hammām and Kawasaki in a "ṭāṭāized" Society

The novel begins with the introduction of the protagonist, Hammām, a forty-year old primary school teacher from Sīdī Ḥmad Ṣāliḥ, who is driving towards Tataouine (Ṭāṭāwīn) on a "Japanese-made gazelle made of iron and fire […] to do something meaningless" (Ben Brik 2014: 21). Tataouine is an oppressive town inhabited and ruled by the ʿarš, a word meaning throne, tribe, but also age-old clans. In his introduction to *Kawasaki*, Ḥusayn al-Wād (d. 2018), another Tunisian novelist and scholar, states that «Taoufik Ben Brik got his hands on a secret worth discussing and revealing.» In fact, the "secret" that allows one to understand the book is that the Ṭāṭā clan, responsible for the "taṭaization" [corruption] of society, represents the Trabelsi family. The /ṭ/ which is repeated in proper and geographical names, as in the case of Tataouine (Ṭāṭāwīn), is in fact the initial of the surname Ṭrabelsi, the family of ousted President Ben ʿAlī.

Sīdī Ḥmad Ṣāliḥ is a small and irrelevant town, like many others, 200 km away from Tataouine. It is grey and arid and everything there is stone. Indeed, it is forgotten by God:

"al-kilāb kilāb w-l-aʿbād aqall mi-l-kilāb" meaning "the dogs are dogs, and humans are less than dogs" (Ben Brik 2014: 114). The animals that live there have adapted to the environment so well that they live without drinking (Ben Brik 2014: 114). The protagonist undertakes a physical journey on his Kawasaki motorcycle stopping at various Tunisian villages (such as Manouba, Mejez el-beb, Testour, El Kef and Tajrouine). As Kawasaki advances along the road, Hammām is assailed by illogical thoughts of all kinds and from every direction. The first description of the man portrays him *"muqawwas aẓ-ẓahr wa-marfūʿ ar-raʾs"* meaning "with a curved back and raised head," thinking in a delirious language that in Arabic is defined by the words *haḏayān*, *huḏāʾ* and *halwās* (Ben Brik 2014: 13). Hammām is an extremely symbolic name in Arabic as it indicates not only someone who is worried, restless, anxious and troubled, but also a person who is ardent, passionate, resolute, active and tireless. Yet, the latter is the exact opposite of how Hammām feels and describes himself. Moreover, the name is also linked to *hamm*, which means "importance" in Arabic, but also "misery" in Tunisian Arabic. Hammām may also be an implicit allusion to Hammāma, indicating by metonymy all the tribes of Tunisia and thus representing an allegory of the conditions of the country. Even the protagonist wonders why his father called him Hammām and whether it was a mistake or just a joke (Ben Brik 2014: 32). Hammām leads a simple life in the northeast of Tunisia. He is married to his cousin, Mehria, who is older than him and stopped studying after elementary school. Moreover, his two 18-year old twins, Muḥammad ʿAlī and ʿAmmār, consume all of his earnings, leaving him in a precarious economic condition (Ben Brik 2014: 33-38). He lives in a world in which everything is unpleasant and men are like animals – brutish and savage – but Hammām is keen on arts and culture. Suddenly, he decides to yield to temptation and become a criminal. As Kawasaki is his only interlocutor, he turns to it enquiring "Am I normal or am I strange?" (Ben Brik 2014: 35). The motorcycle is a sort of *alter ego* for Hammām, who identifies with it and states *"anā Kawasaki, al-insān an-nārī"*, meaning "I am Kawasaki, the man-motorcycle" (Ben Brik 2014: 74).

3. Formal Features and Narrative Strategies of the Novel

The novel is narrated in the first-person, which is also characteristic of Egyptian novels using mixed varieties or *fuṣḥā* (Haland 2021, Zack 2001). The narrator is intradiegetic and disappears to the extent that he seems to coincide with the protagonist.

Dialogue, when present, always take place in the mind of the protagonist and is likely imaginary. In fact, dialogue is rarely present and we never know whether it really occurred. In addition, direct or indirect dialogue may be in *fuṣḥā*, in dialect, or in a mixed variety. The result is a long Joycean stream of consciousness that follows the protagonist's thoughts. The expression "stream of consciousness" was coined by the psychologist James in 1890. It was then applied to English literature as it allowed writers to narrate their stories from a new point of view, from inside characters' minds and feelings (Humphrey 1968: 1-3).

Kawasaki may be defined an open text, in which each sentence is independent of all others and has its own meaning. A further important feature of the novel – one which makes it very complex – is its intertextual nature and the continuous use of quotations from

Classical and contemporary Arabic and world literature, poetry, religious literature, cinema, music, theatre, etc.

Reading *Kawasaki* leaves readers confused and disappointed as they fail to grasp the essence of the reasoning and of the narration itself. [6]

4. Linguistic Features

Kawasaki by Ben Brik is the *summa* of a process – underway not only Tunisia, but in other Arab countries, too – seeking to overcome the rigid separation between *fuṣḥā* (the language of writing and formality) and dialect, long considered to be the language of informality and orality (see Eid 2002 and Mejdell 2014). Consequently, the first Arab novels were based on *fuṣḥā* and Arabic dialects were only used for dialogues.

However, as Brustad (2017) has shown, diglossia is an ideology and the two terms – *fuṣḥā* and *ʿāmmiyya* – are inadequate to analyse texts such as *Kawasaki*. Indeed, Rosembaum's (2000) notion of *Fuṣḥāmmiyya* is far more appropriate. Ben Brik uses both varieties, along with mixed elements, throughout the novel. While his use of various varieties of Arabic does not reflect Tunisian sociolinguistic reality, it does contribute to the criticism of society and the disgregation of Tunisian reality.

Furthermore, the novel follows the thoughts of a schoolteacher who thinks both in his mothertongue (Tunisian Arabic) and in Modern Standard Arabic. He is a person with an above average culture, as proven by the numerous quotations in *fuṣḥā* from Arabic and World literature.[7] Hammām's knowledge, of course, reflects Ben Brik's high and broad culture. In a certain sensem Hammām is Taoufik, and viceversa, as their common ascendance from the tribe of Zuġlāmī suggests.

Ben Brik uses the varieties of Arabic with different functions. In brief,[8] dialect in *Kawasaki* mainly serves an expressive function, whereas *fuṣḥā* generally has an informative function in the narration. The author also distinguishes between them by using different fonts. The language used in the novel should be considered Ben Brik's idiolect. It helps the narrator move beyond genres, deconstructing and mixing them to create a very personal one called *marwiyya*. However, as it is well-established that stream of consciousness does not employ "standard" rules of grammar and syntax to convey the idea that people's thoughts are ever-changing and evolving, writers usually insert symbols into their texts, too (Behtash, Ghalkhani 2021: 824). Indeed, Ben Brik plays with mathematical symbols.

---

[6] I would like to thank Lucia Avallone for pointing out some formal and narrative similarities between *Kawasaki* and the Egyptian novel *An takūn ʿAbbās al-ʿAbd* by Aḥmad al-ʿĀydī during the 6th Conference of the Association Internationale du Moyen Arabe (AIMA) held in Bratislava on Sept. 20-23, 2022. See, for instance, Avallone 2012: 167.

[7] The numerous references to Orwell's *Animal Farm* and, more generally, to a Tunisian society described as inhabited by animals is an example.

[8] I have offered my first reflections on the features of the Arabic varieties used in the book by Ben Brik at the 6th AIMA Conference which was held in Bratislava on Sept. 20-23, 2022. The detailed results of my linguistic analysis will be published in the Proceedings of the Conference.

5. Main Issues Addressed

The novel addresses issues on two different levels, both of which are related to the notion of crisis. The first level is represented by the collective and social crisis caused in Tunisia by corruption as the result of "ṭaṭaizzaton," an endemic disease provoked by the ʿarš.[9] Ben Brik indentifies them with the Zuġlāmī – the tribe to which Ben Brik belongs, too – and states: "the Zuġlāmī […] are ʿarš (a clan) occupying large areas of land; they enter the waṭāʾ of ṭāʾ [the depression of ṭāʾ]". Although "depression" here refers to "low ground," this metaphor is frequently used by Ben Brik to allude to the vileness of the ʿarš Ṭāṭā. Through Hammām's words, the author adds that *"az-Zuġlāmī man zaġlama, yuzaġlimu, zaġlamatan"*. If we were to search for these words in classical dictionaries, we would only find az-zuġlama in the Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ and Lisān al-ʿArab indicating a doubt or worry. So, this is another pun, used by the author to indicate peculiar behaviour of the clan. In fact, Hammām states that the clan members provoke hatred and resentment, exhort to revenge, and their leader is the most tyrannical. Their gang rules both on earth and in the grave. They say that they are amāzīġ, free men, shepherds who speak šilḫa, wear a traditional wool coat, eat couscous, and walk on knives. Then, he adds that az-zuġlāmiyya is a catastrophe: it spawned an empress who would not marry anyone from the middle class. She adores banks and travel agencies. This description seems to refer to the Trabelsi once again and probably to Layla Trabelsi, in particular (Ben Brik 2014: 106-107).

In the novel, Tataouine is portrayed as having the shape of an animal: a rabbit, an eagle, or a reptile with a detached tail, depending on the vantage point from which it is viewed. It is small and airless, a place of repentance and dishonesty. Hammām describes his relationship with the town: "I learnt from it the secrets of dishonesty and ignorance" (Ben Brik 2014: 1). Then, he immediately mentions the fall of the ʿarš Tataouine and defines the city as a little Tripoli (Ṭarābulus ṣaġīra). This is another play on words with the surname "Trabelsi" (Ben Brik 2014: 1). Ben Brik uses many expressions to allude to the family's mafia-like attitude and the events that led to the Jasmine revolution:

> Today is the day of Al Capone. [...] the day of judgement has come and the clan of Ṭāṭā has fallen, its leaders have been terrorised, its ranks have been dispersed, large prisons opened to them, and their leader has finally stepped aside. [...] We saw them return from whence they came and leave behind excrements. We welcomed the war of wars. After a year, the dead stepped out of their graves and returned. Their legacy is vileness [al-waṭā]. We brought down the Ṭāṭā and made any return impossible (Ben Brik 2014: 24-26).

Even Hammām, in the end, becomes part of the ṭaṭaized society by stating "I want the two ṭāʾ. I want my part of the ṭāʾ" (Ben Brik 2014: 126) to the extent that the name of his son ʿAmmār becomes ʿAmrīṭā (Ben Brik 2014: 136). So, everything is ṭāṭāized, including him and his family, too.

---

[9] The idea of corruption as a disease is also present in other Arab novels, such as *ʿImārat Yaʿqūbiyān* by al-Aswānī. See Avallone 2020: 182.

In the novel, the criticism of the state and society is clear: corruption, social immobility, mafialike attitudes, and the consequent feeling of disillusionment felt by citizens are all caused by the State. This is a country in which nothing seems able to save its citizens, not even the dignity of culture represented by Hammām. Tunisian society is represented as a prison from which no one can break free or prove worthy of respect[10]. There seems to be no possible solution. The future is compromised and denied.

The second level addressed by the novel concerns the character's personal crisis. What emerges is the ineptitude of Hammām and Tunisians, in general, who criticise the situation but do not seem to have the strength to change it. Hammām feels that his life has no meaning and that his home is a prison. He feels a sense of oppression and personal dissatisfaction.

Due to the issues it addresses and the way in which they are treated, *Kawasaki* may be classified as literature of resistance. However, as Avallone (2012: 163) has pointed out, existentialist issues have underpinned post-modern – and particularly Egyptian – literature since the late 1950s and the fragility of the human condition and a sense of alienation still characterise the works of many contemporary writers. In the past, writers responded to the failure of government through political and social commitment; at present, the new avant-garde prefers to explore the distortions that society produces in frontline individuals: maladjustment, schizophrenia, and rebellion. It is important to note that while the main character, Hammām, is a frail outcast, the writer, Ben Brik, is a politically committed intellectual who has experienced censorship and has been imprisoned various times.

Moreover, in many Egyptian novels written in ʿāmmiyya, the protagonists were and still are poor and outcast. Ben Brik somehow draws on a literary tradition that was established in the Arab world in the early decades of the 20th century (Zack 2001: 194-95), albeit in this case the context has been profoundly transformed by the Jasmine Revolution: personal and social hardships have been exacerbated.

Unlike *Kalb ben Kalb*, *Kawasaki* was received very positively. In fact, readers have appreciated the novel and critics have lauded Ben Brik's original use of language.[11]

6. The Metaphor of the Journey

Hammām makes a double journey: a literal one on his Kawasaki around Tunisia and a metaphorical one, through his delirious thoughts. The protagonist leaves his hometown to travel to Tataouine to accomplish something of no importance. It is simply a pretext to escape from routine. In fact, the metaphor of the journey used by Ben Brik envisions physical space and travel as the opposite of the immobility that plagues Tunisian society. It is a journey without meaning and without purpose. It does not change things and ends in

---

[10] The notion of the society as a prison or a cage is also present in other Arab novels: see, for instance, Avallone 2020: 174.

[11] See, among others, the review made by the Tunisian artist Slimane El Kamel, available at http://tnayer.blogspot.com/2015/02/blog-post.html. Ben Brik has released several interviews on *Kawasaki*, see for instance this one in which he states that the work should not be compared with *Kalb ben kalb* and that he only writes the books and does not wish to judge them: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg1gbWiS3kY.

the same way in which it started. The final sentence pronounced by the protagonist: "I went to Tataouine to do something meaningless" becomes a symbol of the impossibility of true social and political change in Tunisia. Rhetorical figures are used to convey the idea of immobility: the metaphor of individual lives and cities as prisons controlled by the Ṭāṭā clan (Ben Brik 2014: 26). Synesthesia helps to convey this notion through colours. Hammām, for instance, describes Tataouine as a black and white chessboard, with only two streets, in which movement is restricted. In fact, the city may be summed up by just one street and it has no suburbs (Ben Brik 2014: 21-22). Tajrouine is described as "ṣafrāʾ ka-siǧn al-Alkatrāz" or "yellow like Alcatraz prison." In it, everything is yellow, even the seven years that Hammām spent there (Ben Brik 2014: 90-91)[12]. More in general, the nouns and adjectives used to refer to the Tunisian towns and cities visited by the protagonist are related to the notions of barrenness, sterility, immobility and corruption. As, for example, in the following excerpt:

> the valleys are dry, so is the land, the sun is white as an oven light, there is nothing. The Most High has forgotten it. They [citizens] eat and await death [...] the sons of Sīdī Ḥmad Ṣāliḥ have stopped eating, they have glued themselves to stone, like stones, even the trees have become stones, the water is a stone, the air, the sky is a stone. People have become like animals. Dogs are dogs and people are less than dogs (Ben Brik 2014: 113-114).

The metaphorical and physical journey is a typical element of Arabic literature, as in the *raḥīl*, the *qaṣīda*, and the *riḥla* in travel literature. However, this is neither a *riḥla* for religious reasons, nor a *fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*. It is not even a sentiment of unrequited love that drives the protagonist's displacement. In this case, the journey is a literary expedient that enables Ben Brik to weave important Tunisian social issues into the narration. Moreover, the metaphorical journey allows Hammām to escape the prison of family life through his fantasy, even though this does not provide him any relief. To borrow Sheetrit's (2012) expression, in *Kawasaki*, a *riḥla* is narrated in the text, but the text itself is a *riḥla* on the protagonist's thoughts and feelings, too.

7. Concluding Remarks

Referring to *Kawasaki* as a "*marwiyya*," Ben Brik denies that it is a common novel[13] and overtly declares that he aims to create a new literary genre. Such experimentalism is certainly not an absolute novelty in the Arab world. In fact, as Avallone (2012: 165) points out, by the 1960s, Arab novelists had already begun to break out of the mould of the novel and experiment with avant-garde forms to deconstruct narrative structures, characters, and narrative voices through introspective storytelling techniques. Talking about al-ʿĀydī's *An takūn ʿAbbās al-ʿAbd*, an Egyptian novel published in 2003, Avallone (2012: 166) remarks:

---

[12]   Another passage in which colours are used is Ben Brik 2014: 46.
[13]   Similarly to what al-ʿĀydī does, see Avallone 2012.

> Starting with the graphic layout of the text, the author chooses to confront the reader with the unusual and distributes sentences, paragraphs, and blank spaces both to aesthetic ends and to satisfy narrative requirements. Different fonts and font sizes are used to highlight phrases.

Unlike al-ʿĀydī, Ben Brik does not employ Latin script or emoticons in his text, which is written entirely in Arabic script[14] but like the Egyptian writer, formal, linguistic, and stylistic experimentalism correspond to a fragmentary and deformed representation of reality (Avallone 2012: 167). It is the result of the projection of Hammām's delirious thoughts and of Ben Brik's protest against the unfairness of Tunisian society.

One main feature of *Kawasaki* as a *marwiyya* is the absence of any chronological linearity to the narration, which simply follows the protagonist's stream of consciousness. Therefore, the narration weaves in and out Hammām's mind, memories, and sensations. In fact, everything that is linked to the five senses and to what he perceives – his inner state of mind – is narrated, as in the case in which he vents his frustration at not being respected by anyone, not even his children (Ben Brik 2014: 41). He tries to escape reality through his imagination, like when he pretends to flee, to be rich or powerful, or to marry other women (Ben Brik 2014: 36). Yet, the ugly reality in which he is trapped, always draws him back. The protagonist reveals a deep disconnection from reality, a deep cleavage that does not even heal in his dreams.

A further characteristic is the circularity of the novel. The same formula ("I went to Tataouine to do something meaningless") opens and closes the novel and thereby cancels everything that happens in the book. It is as if the stories, the events, and the journey had never taken place.

In addition to this, while motion through space appears possible and can be followed and understood via Hammām's narration of his physical journey between Tunisian towns, there is no timeline, either in reality or in Hammām's delirious mind. In fact,

> the story of the stream of consciousness, instead of linear and chronological time emphasizes the mental time, which at every moment slides from one memory to another and from one image to another (Behtash, Ghalkhani 2021: 823).

With regard to the term *marwiyya*, what does it really mean? What does it refer to? Is it something narrated both in written and oral forms? The term used for "novel" is generally *riwāya*, whereas *marwiyyāt*, in the plural, usually refers to "tales, stories, reports." *Marwī* denotes something reported orally. This "*marwiyya*" certainly breaks the mould. It moves beyond canonical literary genres, starting with the use of a revolutionary language that somehow helps to break free from reality. In fact, both the novel and the language used by Ben Brik are a means of resistance against the unfairness of society.

---

[14] The Tunisian journalist and writer Nizār Šaʿarī, for instance, also used Latin script in his novel. See La Rosa 2022.

Kawasaki is a story, or a series of stories, narrated as a stream, a continuous watercourse[15]. Avallone's (2012: 191) remark on al-ʿĀydī's novel *An takūn ʿAbbās al-ʿAbd* also applies to Ben Brik's *Kawasaki*:

> Skilled in the use of the expressive tools he chooses to adopt, al-ʿĀydī makes his narrative a *manifesto* of human malaise in the context of a society that he defines as a 'prison' (Caridi 2006) and employs it as a place for linguistic and stylistic experimentation. It is a profoundly original work that gives the inner world the exclusive dignity of reality, one that functions 'with its own language, its own jargon, its own slogans, its own methods' (Caridi 2006).

In *Kawasaki*, the noun *marwiyya* appears in a few passages. So, we can try to explain it in Hammām's own words as "the language of memory. A language of life and of shocking actions" (Ben Brik 2014: 124). Or when he states:

> The *marwiyya* appeared and prevailed (*tasalṭana*). The *qiṣṣa* narrates from inspiration (*waḥy*), describing what is good and hiding what is not worth being narrated (*sard*), to the extent that *al-ḥikāya* became *ḫurāfa*, which is very close to imagination, far from the truth, beyond the limits of fantasy and logic, and unbelievable (Ben Brik 2014: 133).

This declaration by the author seems to refer to the superiority of the *marwiyya* over other genres that appear obsolete or not authentic enough to still be valid today.

As mentioned above, the novel apparently has no finale due to its circular incipit and finale. The reader is continuously and constantly disorientated, both by the language and the content. And the sentences uttered by Hammām do not help us to decipher the enigma, as when he wonders "Where is the truth? It is in nonsense" or "understanding is not to understand" (Ben Brik 2014: 126 and *passim*).

The final episode of the novel, which is set in Aṭlanṭa (*sic.*), is an allegory of Tunisia and of the region of Tataouine. The area is off limits. It is inhabited by "the men of the hills" and can not be entered. The ʿarš sit on their thrones, on the eggs of the *ruḫḫ*. Every now and then, they throw food to the citizens or provide them with entertainment (as in the renowned Latin saying *panem et circenses*) to allow Ṭāṭā *al-waṭwāṭ*, the vampire, to survive. Ṭāṭā, in fact, is a lie, the lie of the legend of Aṭlanṭis, by which Tunisia has been deceived for five hundred thousand years. Comparing Atlantis to Trabelsi's Tunisia is strident as, according to the legend, Atlantis was a fair continent in which the inhabitants were united and behaved very properly (Ben Brik 2014: 154-156).

The novel closes with the protagonist's ambiguous words:

> Come on, Kawasaki, let's go! Gather some letters, of every letter take a couple, and put them on your boats, let's overcome the limits together, with me on your back! The limits of the opposite of equal (=) and let's go uphill the parallel (II) and you will see that *al-ṭāʾ* is permanent. And what is to be permanent? To be permanent is not to be permanent. The return is now. I went to Ṭāṭāwīn to do something meaningless (Ben Brik 2014: 155-156).

---

[15] However, it is well known that the root *r.w.y.* in Arabic refers to the action of irrigating, watering, and giving someone/something a drink/water. See, for instance, الباحث العربي - معنى كلمة روي (baheth.info).

References

Avallone, Lucia. 2012. "Scelte linguistiche e stile nella narrativa di ʾAḥmad al-ʿĀydī". Linguistica e filologia 32.161-192.

Avallone, Lucia. 2020. *Ascoltando le voci di palazzo. Per una lettura sociolinguistica di* Palazzo Yacoubian. Canterano: Gioacchino Onorati (Arabeschi 6).

Eid, Mushira. 2002. "Language is a choice: Variation in Egyptian Women's Written Discourse", Aleya, Rouchdy (ed.), *Language contact and language conflict in Arabic: variations on a sociolinguistic theme*. London: Routledge. 250-281.

Ferrando, Ignacio. 2011. "Apuntes sobre el uso del dialecto en la narrativa marroquí moderna", Meouak, Mohamed; Sánchez, Pablo; Vicente, Ángeles (eds.), *De los manuscritos medievales a internet: la presencia del árabe vernáculo en las fuentes escritas*. Zaragoza: Univerisdad de Zaragoza. 349-358.

Humphrey, Robert. 1968. *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

La Rosa, Cristina. 2022. "*Tūnis fī ʿīnayyā* by Nizār al-Šaʿarī: al-Dāriǧa al-Tūnisiyya between Resistance and Hypertextuality", Chikovani, Guram & Tskhvediani, Zviad (eds.), *Studies on Arabic Dialectology and Sociolinguistics. Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of AIDA, June 10-13, 2019*. Kutaisi: Akaki Tsereteli State University. 398-409.

Mejdell, Gunvor. 2014. "Strategic Bivalency in Written 'Mixed Style'? A Reading of Ibrahim ʿIsa in *al-Dustūr*", Durand, Olivier, Angela Langone, Guiliano Mion (eds.), *Alf lahǧa wa lahǧa: Proceedings of the 9th AIDA Conference*. Verlag: LIT. 273–278.

Mejdell, Gunvor. 2017. "Changing Norms, Concepts and Practices of Written Arabic. A 'Long Distance' Perspective", Hoigilt, Jacob & Mejdell, Gunvor (eds.), *The Politics of Written Language in the Arab World. Writing Change*. Leiden/Boston: Brill. 68-89.

Nicosia, Aldo. 2021. "*ad-Diǧla fī ʿarāǧīnihā*: palm trees and freedom in southern Tunisia". *La rivista di Arablit* 21-22. 101-113.

Omri, Mohamed-Salah. 2019. "*Écriture et liberté en Tunisie: Une justice (poétique) transitionnelle*", Bonvalot, Anne-Laure; Rebreyend, Anne-Laure; Roussin, Philippe (eds.), *Escribir la democracia: Literatura y transiciones democráticas* [online]. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez. http://books.openedition.org/cvz/8761 (consulted on 26/09/2022).

Sheetrit, Ariel M. 2012. "The Poetics of the Poet's Autobiography: Voicings and Mutings in Fadwā Ṭūqān's Narrative Journey". *Journal of Arabic Literature 43*. 102-131.

Zack, Elisabeth. 2001. "The Use of Colloquial in Prose Literature: *Laban il-ʿaṣfūr* by Yūsuf al-Qaʿīd". *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 19. 193-219.

Zare Behtash, Esmail; Ghalkhani, Hossein. 2021. "Comprehension and Translation Problems of Stream-of-consciousness. Texts A case study: William Faulkner's the Sound and the Fury". *Journal of Foreign Language Research* 10 (4). 814-841.

Sitography

Albeheth.info, http://baheth.info.

Debatunsie, available at http://www.debatunisie.com/ (consulted on 13/10/2022).

Derja la langue tunisienne, https://www.facebook.com/derja.association (consulted on 26/09/2022).

Kawazaki, *Tawfiq ben Brik*, by Slimane El Kamel, http://tnayer.blogspot.com/2015/02/blog-post.html (consulted on 14/10/2022).

توفيق بن بريك يحكي عن كتاب كوازاكي ... برشا ضحك في فز تسمع العز, *Radio IFM* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg1gbWiS3kY (consulted on 14/10/2022).

الترجمة الأدبية وإشكال الحفاظ على البعد الثقافي
نقل رواية "IL FU MATTIA PASCAL" للويجي بيرانديللو إلى العربية نموذجا

أنجيليكا بالميجياني (ANGELIKA PALMEGIANI)

جامعة محمد الخامس، الرباط، المغرب

ملخص: تمثل الترجمة الأدبية ممارسة أدبية وفكرية وأيديولوجية تشتغل في إطار التواصل عبر الثقافات، لكونها تضع الثقافات في حوار وتساهم عندما تسمو بنفسها عن تشويه هوية الآخر ـ في التعارف المتبادل بينها، إذ تفتح الترجمة آفاقا وعوالم جديدة تبقى مغلقة في غياب وساطة المترجم الذي تناط به مهمة نقل النصوص/الثقافات من الحقل الأصل إلى الحقل الهدف. كما وتقوم الترجمة بتشكيل هوية الآخر في نسق مختلف عن نسقه الأصل، وتعدّ كذلك فرصة لإغناء الثقافة المرسلة والمستقبلة في الآن نفسه، إلا أنها قد تنطوي على جانب سلبي عندما تتصرف في هوية الآخر، وترسم له صورة مشوهة خدمة لأيديولوجية معينة وأهداف مبيتة (Venuti 1998: 67). انطلاقا من ذلك سنعالج في هذه الدراسة ديناميات الترجمة الأدبية وسنركز أساسا على الإشكاليات المتعلقة بالتحولات الثقافية. لأن كيفية تعامل النقل من اللغة المصدر إلى اللغة الهدف تؤثر في الشكل الذي يتمثل به قارئ اللغة الهدف العناصر الثقافية والحضارية المتضمنة في النص الأصل.

الكلمات المفاتيح: *الترجمة الأدبية، العناصر الحضارية، الهوية الثقافية، الاستراتيجيات الترجمية، التطويع، التغريب.*

مقدمة

يتضمن النص الإبداعي مجموعة من العناصر الثقافية والحضارية الخاصة للبيئة التي أنتج فيها النص نفسه، ويشتمل تعبيرات وتراكيب تشكل الخصوصية اللغوية للثقافة المنتمية إليها (Newmark 1988: 94-103). يتعلق سؤال من الأسئلة المطروحة في إطار الترجمة الأدبية بمصير المخزون الثقافي عندما يُنقَل من حقل اللغة المصدر إلى حقل اللغة الهدف، حيث تؤثر طريقة تصرف اللغة الهدف في هذه العناصر في تمثل الثقافة المستقبلة للثقافة المرسلة (Osimo 2004: 91-92).

من أجل معالجة الإستراتيجيات المتحكمة في إعادة إنتاج العناصر الثقافية في النص الهدف، ننطلق مما أكّده شلايرماخير (Friedrich Schleiermacher 1768-1834) وهو يشير إلى اختيارين: تقوم الترجمة بتقديم الثقافة المرسلة في حقيقتها أو تخفيها، تسمح للنص الغريب بالظهور في غرابته أو تجعل من نص غريب نصا يبدو ثمر الثقافة المستقبلة، تحمل ـ بحسب تعبيره ـ القارئ عند الثقافة الغريبة أو تحمل الكاتب عند القارئ (Bassnett, Lefevere 1992: 149-151). تفيد الطريقة الأولى النص المصدر والنسق الهدف في الآن نفسه، لأن النص المصدر يعيش حياة جديدة في النسق الهدف من جهة، ومن جهة أخرى تتجدد وتتطور الثقافة المستقبلة بفضل اللقاء مع الآخر الغريب (Benjamin 2000: 15-25).

من ثمة سنتطرق في هذه الدراسة ـ التي قمنا بها استنادا إلى المنهج الذي وضع أساسه المنظر الفرنسي أنطوان برمان (Berman 1995: 64-73) مشتغلين بحسب المفاهيم التي قدمها برمان (88-87 ;54-45 :1985; 50-56 :1984) وفينيوتي (87-67 ;272-187 :1998; 1995) عندما تحدثًا عن الترجمة بوصفها عملية قد تقوم بتطويع النص المصدر أو بتغريبه ـ إلى إستراتيجية المترجم المصري محب سعد إبراهيم في نقله للتمثلات الثقافية المتضمنة في رواية «Il»[1]

«Fu Mattia Pascal للكاتب الإيطالي لويجي بيرانديللو (Luigi Pirandello 1867-1936)، مما سيمكننا من الكشف عن تعامله مع العناصر الحضارية وعن الحلول التي لجأ إليها لتجاوز ما يُعدّ من أكبر التحديات بالنسبة للمترجم الأدبي.

التمثلات الثقافية وطبيعة أنواعها

استنادا إلى تحليلنا، قمنا بتصنيف التمثلات الثقافية الحاضرة في النص المصدر إلى التمثلات ذات المرجعية الدينية، والتمثلات التي تحيل إلى العادات الإيطالية، والتمثلات التي تجعلنا نرجع إلى البيئة الثقافية التي ظهر فيها النص المصدر والتمثلات التي تخص البنية الاجتماعية والتصور للواقع.

سنناقش في ما يأتي بعض النماذج لكي نوضح كيف نُقِلَتْ من الإيطالية إلى العربية وكيف أثّر ذلك في تمثل القارئ العربي للثقافة الإيطالية.

النموذج الأول: التمثلات ذات المرجعية الدينية

المثال الأول: العنصر الحضاري وتغيير دلالته في اللغة الهدف
في التمهيد الأول من الرواية يقدم الراحل ماتيا نفسه بصفته أمينا لمكتبة بوكاماتسا ويضيف أنه سيكتب قصة حياته وموته. يستمر ماتيا، في الفصل الثاني، ـ عبارة عن تمهيد ذي بعد فلسفي ـ بتقديم وضعه الغريب الذي يقوم بإعادة بنائه بنظرة استعادية. في إطار وصف المكتبة قائلا:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 11: [...] أكتبها هنا في **الكنيسة المهجورة** على الضوء الذي يصلني من مشكاة أعلى القبة؛ أكتبها هنا في **المحراب** المخصص لأمين المكتبة والذي تغلقه بوابة منخفضة من الخشب ذات أعمدة صغيرة [...]	ص. 52: [...] Lo scrivo qua, nella **chiesetta sconsacrata**, al lume che mi viene dalla lanterna lassù, dalla cupola; qua, nell'**abside** riservata al bibliotecario e chiusa da una bassa cancellata di legno a pilastrini [...]

يضعنا هذا الوصف أمام إشكالين منهما: يتعلق الأول بإخفاء دلالة العنصر الأصلية، ويتعلق الثاني بحضور عنصر ثقافي خاص بالثقافة المسيحية (بالمفهوم الواسع) غيّر وظيفته لحظة دخوله إلى الثقافة العربية الإسلامية.

نأخذ بالحسبان أفق القارئ العربي الذي يتلقى وصفا لفضاء يقول عنه السارد: إنه كنيسة مهجورة فيها محراب. سنركز بداية على النص العربي، من دون أن نقارنه بالنص الإيطالي، بغية الكشف عن الارتباك الناتج عن اختيارات المترجم. يشير "مهجور" باللغة العربية إلى أن الفضاء لم يعد مسكونا، إلا أن السارد يؤكد أنه متوجد في الكنيسة مع دون إليجو. بحسب الوصف الذي جاء في الترجمة يبدو أن الكنيسة مهجورة ومسكونة في الآن نفسه، الشيء الذي يمثل تناقضا بالنسبة للقارئ العربي من حيث كونه وضعا غير منطقي. توضح العودة إلى النص الإيطالي أن هناك خلل يرتبط بانزياح دلالي. يصف السارد الإيطالي كنيسة لم تعد تُستعمل للطقوس الدينية؛ لأنها فقدت حالها المقدس وأصبحت مكانا مدنسا غير صالح للقيام بالعبادات، مما جعل هذا الفضاء يغير وظيفته، في حين يصف السارد العربي فضاءً متروك الاستعمال. زيادة على ذلك نسجل أن كلمة "sconsacrata" تنتمي إلى المعجم الديني ولا تُوظَّف لوصف أماكن غير مخصصة للعبادات، أما الكلمة العربية فهي لا تنتمي إلى معجم خاص، مما جعل المترجم يستعمل الكلمة نفسها في السياقين الآتيين:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 244: [...] عرجت بفكري على روما، دخلت كخيال في البيت المهجور. [...]	ص. 287: […] Ripiombai col pensiero a Roma; entrai come un'ombra nella casa abbandonata. […]
يوظف المترجم الكلمة في سياق الوصف لبيت عائلة بلياري الذي كان يسكن فيه أدريانو قبل انتحاره. واللافت بالانتباه أن السارد الإيطالي لا يقصد أن البيت مهجور، كما يتبين من السؤال الذي يطرحه السارد نفسه: «هل كانوا نائمين جميعا؟» («dormivano tutti?»)، الشيء الذي يدل على أن البيت مسكون. كان السارد الإيطالي يقصد أن أدريانو قد ترك البيت بعد أن قرر تظاهر انتحاره، في حين يقدم السارد العربي وصفا متناقضا، حيث يقول إن المكان مهجور ومسكون في الآن نفسه.	
ص. 269: [...] هيا، هيا. غدا سأذهب أنا لزيارة ذلك المتوفى المسكين، المهجور هنالك، بلا زهرة وبلا دمعة [...]	ص. 310: […] Su, su. Ci andrò io domani da quel povero morto, abbandonato là, senza un fiore, senza una lacrima […]
في هذا السياق يوظف المترجم الكلمة لوصف وضع الشخص الذي يقول عنه السارد الإيطالي إنه تُرك في مقبرة ميرانيو بلا زهرة وبلا دمعة.	

انطلاقا مما سبق ذكره نتساءل عن سبب هذا الانزياح: أيكمن في عدم اكتساب المعنى أم في عدم القدرة على عرض الرسالة، أم كما يقول جيل: يتعلق الأمر بخطأ على مستوى الفهم أو بخطأ على مستوى إعادة كتابة النص، حيث يحدث الأول في مرحلة قراءة النص المصدر وفهمه، ويحدث الثاني في مرحلة إنتاج النص في اللغة الهدف (Collombat 2009: 46). للإجابة على هذا السؤال، نعود إلى النص الإيطالي ونؤول الرسالة التي يسعى الكاتب إلى إرسالها. يربط بيرانديللو الكنيسة بالمكتبة، حيث يمثل الفضاء الأول (الكنيسة) فضاءً مقدسا يُعدّ بيت الله مكان تُقامُ فيه الطقوس والعبادات، ويرمز الفضاء الثاني (المكتبة) إلى فضاء المعرفة والبحث. يقدم بيرانديللو تدنيس هذين الفضاءين لأنه يعلن أزمة المبادئ الكبرى: ينتقد الكنيسة الكاثوليكية المتهمة بالفساد الأخلاقي ويفكك كذلك النماذج الأدبية العظمى. تحيلنا صورة الكنيسة التي فقدت مقدستها إلى أزمة المعتقدات الدينية، حيث ينقص تحويل الكنيسة إلى مكتبة المكتبة نفسها من قيمتها، لأنها لم تعد تكون فضاءً مقدسا يحافظ على المعرفة، بل أصبحت فضاءً لا قيمة له. ترتبط صورة الكنيسة التي فقدت وظيفتها بصورة المكتبة التي أصبحت فضاءً مدنسا، ويؤكد على ذلك ماتيا وهو يسخر من منصبه متسائلا إن كان في العامين الآخرين صائدي الفئران أم أمينا على كتب هذه المكتبة (Barilli 2008: 31-32). انطلاقا من الترجمة المقترحة يبدو أن المترجم لم يقبض بالكامل على الدلالة العميقة التي يشير إليها ربط الفضاءين مفادها العرض لأزمة المبادئ الكبرى.

ننتقل إلى الإشكال الثاني الذي يتعلق بحضور عنصر كان يخص الثقافة المسيحية (abside) ودخل في مرحلة لاحقة الثقافة العربية الإسلامية وأصبح عنصرا متميزا لها (المحراب).

يدل المحراب، في الهندسة الإسلامية، في المسجد:

ـ على اتجاه القبلة (الكعبة المشرفة) التي يستقبلونها المسلمون في صلاتهم
ـ على مقام الإمام.

قبل أن يصبح المحراب عنصرا خاصا للهندسة الإسلامية كان يدل، في ما قبل الإسلام، على الكوة التي توجد فيها صورة لقديس أو تمثاله. يبدو أن المحراب ظهر لأول مرة في هندسة المساجد في حكم الخليفة الوليد الأول (668 م ـ 715م)، ويبدو أن أصل الهيكل يرجع إلى الكنائس البيزنطية التي كانت فيها الكوة ـ عبارة عن بنية معمارية نصف دائرية أو مضلعة ينبثق منها هيكل يُستعمل للتسقيف ـ تفيد في تحديد الفضاء أو في إثارة الانتباه إلى ما كان يُرسم فيه (عادة لوحات المسيح أو مشاهد من الإنجيل).

تختلف وظيفة العنصرين ودلالتهما من حيث انتمائهما إلى ثقافتين مختلفتان، إسلامية من جهة ومسيحية من جهة أخرى، أدت إلى تطور هندسي خاص، حيث يخدم كل عنصر من العنصرين تصورا محددا للدين ولعلاقته مع الفن.

مع أن الدال الذي يستعمله المترجم في النص العربي له أصل يدل على العنصر الهندسي المسيحي، إلا أنه أصبح مع مرور الوقت عنصرا متميزا للهندسة الإسلامية، الشيء الذي ينتج نوعا من الارتباك لدى القارئ العربي المسلم وعلى القارئ العربي المسيحي على حد سواء. نظرا لذلك نظن أنه كان بإمكان المترجم توظيف كلمة أخرى مثل "كوة" لها دلالة ثقافية حضارية أقل تحديدا.

المثال الثاني: توظيف الموروث الديني في الكلام اليومي
يصف ماتيا، في التمهيد الثاني، وضع المكتبة التي تمثل تدنيس فضاء المعرفة، الشيء الذي يتبين من وجود الفئران فيها. زيادة على ذلك يصف ماتيا حالة الكتب السيئة بعدما تركتها البلدية في مخزن واسخ ورطب لمدة طويلة، واستخرجتها منه، ووضعتها في كنيسة سانتا ماريا ليبيرالي، إذ قام دون إليجو بمحاولة ترتيبها. يقول ماتيا:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 11:	ص. 52:
[...] بينما يستشيط دون إليجو غضبا تحت عبء المهمة التي تكفل بها ببطولة، وهي أن يسعى لترتيب **فوضى الكتب هذه.** [...]	[...] mentre don Eligio sbuffa sotto l'incarico che si è eroicamente assunto di mettere un po' d'ordine in questa vera **babilonia di libri.** [...]

يوظف الكاتب الموروث المسيحي توظيفا مجازيا لأنه يربط أسطورة برج بابل ودلالتها بفوضى الكتب في المكتبة. بحسب ما جاء في الكتاب المقدس، في العهد القديم (التكوين XI 9,1)، كان الإنسان يتحدث لغة واحدة جعلها الله تتبلبل لكي يعاقب الإنسان من محاولة بناء برج يصل حتى السماء. من السياق الأصلي أُكتُسِبت العبارة التي وُظِّفت في اللغة اليومية للإشارة إلى فضاء يتسم بالضجيج والفوضى والاضطراب.

اللافت للانتباه أن أسطورة برج بابل معروفة ومنتشرة في الثقافة العربية الإسلامية، كما تدل على ذلك العبارة العربية "تبلبلت اللغات". قام المترجم باستبدال العبارة المشتركة بين الإيطالية والعربية بجملة توضيحية تشرح المعنى. يخفي هذا الاختيار الصورة التي خلقها المؤلف عبر العودة إلى الموروث الديني الموظف توظيفا مجازيا التي كان بإمكان المترجم أن يعيدها باللغة العربية من حيث وجود المقابل. زيادة على ذلك يمنع هذا الاختيار القارئ العربي من الكشف عن المشترك بين الثقافة العربية الإسلامية والإيطالية المسيحية، وهو مشترك يرجع إلى أصل الديانات السماوية.

المثال الثالث: إخفاء البعد الرمزي
في الفصل الثامن المعنون بـ"Adriano Meis/أدريانو مايس" تبدأ المرحلة الثانية من الرواية بظهور القناع الذي ارتدته الشخصية بعد انتحار ماتيا. يختار أدريانو اسمه الجديد أثناء رحلته في القطار بعدما أنصت إلى حديث الشخصين اللذين يناقشان عن فن الأيقونات المسيحي. يقدم أدريانو ظهوره بما يأتي:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 97:	ص. 143:
[...] «أدريانو مايس. حسن جدا! **لقد أطلقا علي اسمي.**» [...]	[...] «Adriano Meis. Benone! **M'hanno battezzato.**» [...]

إذا تركنا النص الإيطالي جانبا وركزنا على الترجمة فالمعنى الذي نبنيه هو أن الشخصين اختارا له اسم "أدريانو مايس"، في حين تبرز العودة إلى النص المصدر أن المترجم قام بإخفاء البعد الرمزي الذي تتميز به الجملة الموظفة من طرف أدريانو الذي يقول إنه عُمد منهما، الشيء الذي يجعلنا نوضح البعد الرمزي المفقود في نقل الجملة من اللغة الإيطالية إلى اللغة العربية.

في الدين المسيحي تمثل المعمودية سرا من الأسرار السبعة المقدسة وهي: 1. المعمودية، 2. الميرون المقدس، 3. القربان المقدس، 4. التوبة والاعتراف، 5. مصحى المرضى، 6. الكهنوت، 7. الزواج. تمثل المعمودية السر الأول والأهم لسببين: يمحو الخطية الجدية التي ترجع في أصلها إلى الخطية التي ارتكبها آدم وحواء والتي ولد بها الجنس البشري كله، ويسمح للمؤمن بأن "يُولد" من جديد بعد أن غُمِرَ في الماء المقدس.

نلاحظ، إذن، أن الجملة التي يلفظها أدريانو للتعبير عن ظهوره المجدد لا تشير إلى اختيار الاسم فقط، بل إلى القطع مع الحياة الأولى التي تخلصت منها الشخصية وإلى بداية حياته الجديدة. تخفي الترجمة هذا البعد الرمزي إذ لا تبرز القطع بين الحياة الأولى والثانية، ولا ينتهي، على مستوى بناء الرواية ككل، الجزء الأول وانطلاق الجزء الثاني. زيادة على ذلك لا يسمح المترجم للقارئ العربي المسلم بالتعرف على العادات والتقاليد المسيحية وأبعادها الرمزية وغير رمزية حيث يقترح ترجمة "شفافة" (بمفهوم فينوتي)[2] لا تترك الغريب مجال الحضور حسب مرجعيته الثقافية والدينية.

النموذج الثاني: التمثلات ذات بعد ثقافي

المثال الأول: الأكلات الخاصة
في الفصل التاسع "Un po' di nebbia"/"شيء من الضباب" يتأمل أدريانو في حياته: كانت ذات استمتاع في البداية وتحولت في مرحلة لاحقة إلى قصص من حيث عدم وجود أدريانو إداريا بالنسبة للمجتمع. يشعر أدريانو بالوحدة لأنه كان يعيش في العزلة غير قادر على بناء علاقات اجتماعية وعلى الاستقرار. وكان هذا الوضع يصبح صعب التحمل في أوقات المناسبات المهمة كالأعياد. يقول أدريانو:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 111:	ص. 156:
[...] الشتاء، الشتاء كان يوحي إلي بهذه الأفكار الحزينة، وعيد الميلاد القريب يدفعني إلى الرغبة في دفء ركن عزيز، وفي التأمل وفي خصوصية البيت. [...] وحتى أضحك وأتلهى، كنت أتخيل نفسي، وأنا أحمل **فطيرة العيد الكبيرة** تحت ذراعي، وأنا أقف أمام منزلي. [...]	[...] L'inverno, l'inverno m'ispirava queste riflessioni malinconiche, la prossima festa di Natale che fa desiderare il tepore d'un cantuccio caro, il raccoglimento, l'intimità della casa. [...] Per ridere, per distrarmi, m'immaginavo intanto, con un buon **panettone** sotto il braccio, innanzi alla porta di casa mia. [...]

يتذكر أدريانو وهو في حجرة الفندق لوحده أجواء عيد الميلاد الذي يمثل بالنسبة للمسيحيين العيد الثاني الأهم (بعد عيد الفصح) لكونه ذكرى ميلاد المسيح ولكونه مناسبة تجمع فيها العائلة. تتصف هذه المدة بالجانب المرتبط بالطقوس الدينية وبالجانب المرتبط بعادات وتقاليد الاحتفال يمتد من 24 ديسمبر إلى 6 يناير.
تتميز مدة العيد بتحضير أكلات خاصة من بينها ما يشير إليه أدريانو الإيطالي كـ"panettone" وما يعبر عنه أدريانو العربي كفطيرة العيد الكبيرة. يخص الإشكال الذي نسجله المسألة المتعلقة بكل تلك العناصر التي تنتمي إلى ثقافة معينة والتي تغيب في ثقافة أخرى. تطرق عدد من المنظرين إلى هذا الجانب الذي يمثل معرقلا من عراقيل الترجمة الأدبية التي يمكن تجاوزها باللجوء إلى مختلف الحلول. نذكر في هذا السياق موقف رومان ياكوبسون (Roman Jakobson) الذي يختلف عن موقف برتراند روسل (Bertrand Russell): يؤكد الأول أن القدرة على تحدث لغة معينة تعني أيضا القدرة على الحديث عن هذه اللغة، مما تفيد هذه العملية الميتالغوية في تجاوز الصعوبات المذكورة، في حين يعتقد الثاني أن نقل العناصر مثل الأكلات التقليدية الخاصة يستحيل لأن القارئ الذي لا يعيش تجربة التعرف المباشرة على تلك العناصر لا يكتسب المعنى (118-113 :2000 Jakobson).
ويطرح النموذج المدروس هذا النوع من الإشكال من حيث عدم وجود مقابل في اللغة العربية يساوي ما جاء في النص الإيطالي. نلاحظ صعوبة المترجم في تقريب القارئ العربي من صورة الحلوى الإيطالية التي ليست هي حلوى فحسب،

---

[2] يتحدث فينوتي في دراسته «The Translator's Invisibility» عن مفهوم «الشفافية» من زاويتين:
1. شفافية الترجمة ويقصد بها المنظر أن الترجمة تنتج نصا شفافا إلى درجة أن قارئ اللغة الهدف يتلقاه وكأنه إنتاج الثقافة الهدف، بعبارة أخرى النص الشفاف هو النص الذي يُترجم بحسب معايير الجمالية للثقافة المستقبلة وبحسب الأيديولوجية السائدة في النسق الجديد.
2. شفافية المترجم ويقصد بها المنظر أن المترجم لا يحضر إطلاقا في الدراسات عن الترجمة. ترتبط شفافية المترجم بشفافية الترجمة وتزيد درجة شفافية المترجم بزيادة درجة شفافية الترجمة، مما يعني أن تكون الترجمة أكثر وضوحا وأن يصبح المترجم أكثر شفافية. (42-1 :1995).

بل هي عنصر ثقافي أيضا. ينطلق القارئ العربي في تمثله لهذه الفطيرة من بيئته ومن تجربته. يربط القارئ الفطيرة برقاقة من العجين تخبز وتحشى بمختلف المكونات قد تكون حلوى أو مالحة، ويتخيلها كبيرة (بحسب الوصف الذي يقدمه السارد الذي استبدل "اللذيذة، طيبة" بـ"كبيرة")، في حين تُحَضر الحلوى الإيطالية المذكورة بعجن الماء والحليب والطحين والبيض والزبدة والخميرة وتُضاف إليه الفاكهة المسكرة وقشرة من البرتقال والزبيب. يُوضَع هذا العجين، بعد أن بقي ليلة كاملة يخمر، في قالب له أساس دائري وشكل طويل وضيق في قيمته وواسع في أساسه وتُقَدّم الحلوى في غلاف ملون له أشكال متعددة. زيادة على ذلك، نؤكد أن هذه الحلوى هي حلوى خاصة بعيد الميلاد.

لا يتعلق الإشكال باستحالة نقل المذاق إلى القارئ العربي ـ الشيء الذي يطلب التذوق المباشر ـ بل بعدم القدرة على تقريب القارئ من أهمية الحلوى في البيئة الإيطالية لكون الترجمة تطوع العنصر الإيطالي وتلغي غرابته. يقرأ القارئ العربي المقتطف الذي استشهدنا به ويمر من دون أن يتوقف لأن الغريب الذي كان بإمكان أن يُثِر انتباهه وأن يحمله إلى البيئة الإيطالية يغيب تماما. من الحلول التي نقترحها هناك تعريب الاسم، مما يعني أن كتابة الكلمة كما تُنطق بالإيطالية تدفع القارئ العربي إلى أن يتساءل عن أصل ذلك العنصر ويبحث عنه في مرحلة لاحقة. نعرف أن هذا الحل قد يكون حلا مدقعا، إلا أننا نفضل طريقة تفيد الآخر الذي يظهر في خصوصيته من جهة، ومن جهة أخرى تفيد المتلقي الذي يتعرف على عادات وتقاليد قد تكون بالنسبة له جديدة.

المثال الثاني: الملابس بين تحديد الطبقة الاجتماعية والرحلة في الماضي.

في إطار الوصف الذي يقوم به السارد كثيرا ما نجد إشارات إلى ملابس خاصة تجعلنا نتوقف عند وظيفتها داخل النص (في ظل أفق النص وقارئه الأول) من جهة، وعند تمثل القارئ الراهن للمجتمع الإيطالي لبداية القرن العشرين من جهة أخرى، آخذين بعين الاعتبار المسافة الزمنية التي تفصل زمن الرواية عن زمن التلقي الراهن. وعندما ننتقل إلى الترجمة فعلينا أن نذكر أن إنجازها تم بين سنة 2005 و2007، مما يجعلنا نؤكد على المسافة الثقافية والزمنية الشاسعة التي تفصل أفق القارئ العربي (أفق الألفية الثالثة) عن أفق النص الأصل (بداية القرن العشرين). نجد في الرواية النماذج الآتية:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 67: [...] عندما اقتربت من مائدة أخرى، يلعبون فيها بمبالغ كبيرة، بقيت في البداية لفترة طويلة أتأمل الناس الموجودين حولها؛ كانوا في أغلبهم سادة يرتدون **الفراك (الملابس الرسمية)** [...]	ص. 112: […] Appressatomi a un altro tavoliere, dove si giocava forte, stetti prima un buon pezzo a squadrar la gente che vi stava attorno: erano per la maggior parte signori in **marsina** […]
ص. 75: [...] ولم أكن أرتدي **الملابس الرسمية**، هذا حق، ولكني كنت أرتدي بدلة سوداء، بدلة حداد لائقة جدا. [...]	ص. 120: […] Non ero in **marsina**, è vero, ma avevo un abito nero, da lutto, decentissimo. […]
ص. 95: [...] سوف أترك شعري يطول، وبهذه الجبهة العريضة، وبالنظارة وذقني الحليقة، سوف أبدو فيلسوفا ألمانيا، وسأرتدي **ملابس رسمية وقبعة عريضة الحواف**». [...]	ص. 140: […] Mi farò crescere i capelli e, con questa bella fronte spaziosa, con gli occhiali e tutto raso, sembrerò un filosofo tedesco. **Finanziera e cappellaccio a larghe tese**.» […]
ص. 97: [...] وبدا لي كذلك أن هذا الاسم يتناسب بشكل جيد مع الوجه الحليق والنظارة، والشعر الطويل، **والقبعة ذات الحواف** التي لابد أن أضعها فوق رأسي. [...]	ص. 143: […] Mi parve anche che questo nome quadrasse bene alla faccia sbarbata e con gli occhiali, ai capelli lunghi, al **cappellaccio alla finanziera** che avrei dovuto portare. […]

نوضح أولا وظيفة الملابس المشار إليها في النص المصدر آخذين أفق النص نقطة الانطلاق. تقع أحداث الرواية في بداية القرن العشرين وهي المدة التي تشكل فيها المجتمع الإيطالي الجديد الناتج عن الوضع السياسي والاقتصادي ما بعد الوحدة السياسية في عام 1861. كان الوضع الاقتصادي الإيطالي أقل تقدما بالمقارنة مع الدول الأوروبية الغربية الأخرى، مما جعل الحكومة الجديدة تقوم بإصلاح النظام الاقتصادي لمحاولة بناء دولة تتنافس مع الدول الغربية ، إلا أن الفرق بين شمال إيطاليا وجنوبها أصبح شاسعا: تقدم الشمال سريعا بفضل اختيارات الحكومة التي قررت أن تركز التقدم الاقتصادي في الشمال وتراجع الجنوب. وفي هذا السياق ظهر المجتمع البرجوازي الذي كان يأخذ مكانة الطبقة الأرستقراطية.

لنعد إلى النص الذي يقدم صورة المجتمع الأوروبي والإيطالي عبر صوت ماتيا وهو يشير ،في أثناء الوصف للأشخاص الذين يلعبون في الكازينو، إلى بعض العناصر التي يربطها القارئ الأول، باعتباره ابن زمنه، بالوضع الاقتصادي الذي يحيط به.

عندما يقرأ القارئ في المثالين الأول والثاني أن الرجال حول مائدة اللعب يرتدون السترة المسماة بـ "marsina" أو فراك فإنه يعرف أن ماتيا يتحدث عن أشخاص ينتمون إلى الطبقة الأرستقراطية الأوروبية لأن هذه سترة، التي ظهرت في فرنسا في القرن السابع عشر، أصبحت عنصرا متميزا لهذه الطبقة الاجتماعية في أوروبا كلها. ويعرف القارئ وهو يقرأ المثالين الثالث والرابع أن أدريانو قرر ظهوره باعتباره برجوازيا لأنه يرتدي السترة والقبعة المستعملة من رجال البرجوازية، وخاصة من المصرفيين الذين كانوا طبقة اجتماعية في مركز الانتباه في إيطاليا في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر بسبب فضيحة بنك روما عام 1893[3]. وليس مجرد صدفة أن يرسم بيرانديللو هذه الطبقة الاجتماعية بشخصية أدريانو وهو عبارة عن بنية وهمية مبنية على الكذب. يربط بيرانديللو شخصية أدريانو بالطبقة الحاكمة التي خابت آمال الشعب الإيطالي واستغلت مكانتها لمصلحتها الخاصة.

يتبين، إذن، أن وظيفة هذه الملابس تتعلق بتحديد الطبقات التي تكوّن منها المجتمع الأوروبي الغربي بين نهاية القرن التاسع عشر وبداية القرن العشرين. يختلف وضع القارئ الإيطالي اليوم عن وضع القارئ الأول بحكم المسافة الزمنية الشاسعة، الشيء الذي يجعل القارئ الإيطالي في الزمن الراهن يعود إلى تاريخه حتى يفهم المعنى في عمقه. تغيرت العادات الإيطالية في اللباس ورغم أن أنواع السترة المذكورة في النص لا تزال موجودة، فإنها لم تعد تشير إلى طبقة محددة. وإذا كان القارئ الإيطالي يشعر بهذه المسافة بينه وبين الرواية، فالقارئ العربي يشعر، نظريا، بالمسافة الزمنية والثقافية.

من المقارنة بين النصين المصدر والمترجم يبدو أن المترجم لم يعتبر وظيفة الملابس (تتعلق بتمييز الطبقات الاجتماعية) في النص الإيطالي ذات أهمية كبيرة في تبليغ الرسالة، الشيء الذي جعله يتبع إستراتيجية ترجمية غير واضحة. يترجم الكلمة التي تشير إلى سترة الطبقة الأرستقراطية (marsina) مرة بـ"فراك" ويزيد بين قوسين أنه يدل على الملابس الرسمية، ومرة أخرى بـ"ملابس رسمية". ونرى أنه كان بإمكان المترجم أن يوظف "فراك" فقط، لسببين:
ـ يساوي "فراك" الكلمة الإيطالية ("marsina" تسمى فراك أيضا)
ـ يعرف القارئ العربي المقصود الـ"فراك" الذي دخل المعجم العربي بعد اللقاء مع الثقافات الغربية في العصر الحديث. وكان بإمكان المترجم أن يلجأ إلى الكناية لينقل الكلمة التي تشير إلى سترة البرجوازية التي يترجمها لـ"ملابس رسمية". أما بالنسبة للقبعة فهو يترجم حرفيا المرة الأولى ويوظف الترجمة نفسها في السياق الثاني كون مقصود أدريانو النوع نفسه من القبعة، إلا أنه لا يبرز الجانب المتعلق بكون هذه القبعة عنصرا متميزا للطبقة البرجوازية.

نستنتج أن المترجم قد ترك أفق القارئ العربي مفتوحا لأن المتلقي يؤول ويتمثّل "الملابس الرسمية" حسب تصوره الخاص ومرجعيته الثقافية، وما يكون عبارة عن ملابس رسمية في البيئة الثقافية العربية يختلف عما نجده في البيئة الثقافية الإيطالية. إضافة إلى ذلك يتم نوع من إلغاء المسافة الزمنية والثقافية بين القارئ العربي والنص المصدر لأن غرابة الغريب لا تظهر، الشيء الذي لا يسمح للقارئ بالتغلغل في البيئة الاجتماعية الإيطالية والغربية وبالعودة إلى السياقات التاريخية المذكورة.

---

[3] لم يُشكل النظام المصرفي الرسمي للدولة الجديدة بعد في سنة 1893 ولذلك كلفت الحكومة مختلف المصارف الإيطالية بإصدار النقود. وبرز أن بنك روما أصدرت أكثر نقود مما قررته الحكومة بطريقة غير قانونية.

النموذج الثالث: علاقات القرابة

تشكل علاقات القرابة إشارة مباشرة إلى البنية الاجتماعية الناتجة عن تصور معين للواقع الذي يختلف من ثقافة إلى أخرى. في سياق ترجمة النصوص الأدبية كثيرا ما يجد المترجم إشارات إلى علاقات القرابة تطلب منه، عندما يترجم من لغة غير لغته الأم، العودة إلى الثقافة المرسلة لفهم بنيتها الاجتماعية حتى ينقل النص وتمثلاته نقلا يعكس واقع تلك الثقافة.

ونجد في النص المصدر نموذجا يتعلق بعلاقات القرابة شكل معرقلا بالنسبة للمترجم من حيث غياب مجموعة من المعلومات الأساسية في النص الإيطالي، مما يجعل بناء المعنى صعبا بالنسبة للقارئ الإيطالي وللمترجم العربي على حد سواء. نستشهد بعض الأمثلة تفيدنا في توضيح الإشكال:

الترجمة	المصدر
ص. 31: [...] وفي أحد الأيام، وفي أثناء رحلة الصيد وبمناسبة الحديث عن مالانيا، وكنت قد حدثته عن بطولاته مع زوجته، قال لي إنه قد رمق فتاة، وهي ابنة **بنت خال** مالانيا [...]	ص. 75: […] Ora Mino, un giorno, a caccia, a proposito del Malagna, di cui gli avevo raccontato le prodezze con la moglie, che aveva adocchiato una ragazza, figlia d'una **cugina** del Malagna appunto […]
ص. 32: [...] قالت لي أن ملائّو صديقك يستقبلانه في بيتهما باستمرار وإنه، كما يبدو في الأفق، يفكر في أن يقوم بضربة شديدة بالاتفاق مع **ابنة خاله** وهي امرأة شمطاء [...]	ص. 75: […] M'ha detto che il tuo *Malanno* lo han lì sempre per casa, e che, così all'aria, le sembra che mediti qualche brutto tiro, d'accordo con la **cugina**, che è una vecchia strega. […]
ص. 32: [...] وأنها تشاجرت كذلك مع ابنتها التي لم تعرف كيف تجتذب **قريبها**. والآن فإن العجوز يظهر أخيرا ندمه الشديد لعدم إسعاده **بنت ابنة خاله**، ومن يدري. أية فكرة مخادعة أخرى قد خططت لها تلك العجوز الشمطاء. [...]	ص. 76: […] e che se la sia presa anche con la figliola che non aveva saputo attirare a sé lo **zio**. Ora, infine, che il vecchio si dimostra tanto pentito di non aver fatto lieta la **nipote**, chi sa qual'altra perfida idea quella strega può aver concepito. […]
ص. 33: [...] وقدمني للمرأتين «ماتيا باسكال. ماريانا دوندي، أرملة بسكاتوري، **ابنة خالي**. وروميلدا، **قريبتي.**» [...]	ص. 77: […] mi presentò alle donne. - Mattia Pascal. Marianna Dondi, vedova Pescatore, mia **cugina**. Romilda, mia **nipote.** […]
ص. 35: [...] قائلا لي إنها من عمل فرانشسكو أنطونيو بسكاتوري، **ابن خاله**، وهو نحات قدير [...]	ص. 78: […] dicendomi ch'erano opera di Francesco Antonio Pescatore, suo **cugino**, valentissimo incisore […]
ص. 40: [...] لقد جاءني ورفع يديه في وجهي، صارخا في أن أحذر من أن أشكك في شرف **قريبته.**» [...]	ص. 83: […] Mi è venuto con le mani in faccia, gridandomi che mi fossi guardato bene dal mettere in dubbio l'onorabilità di sua **nipote!** […]

نركز على النص الإيطالي الذي يضعنا أمام إشكال غياب بعض المعلومات الأساسية. نستنتج من النص أن ماريانا دوندي، الأرملة بسكاتوري، لها ابنة اسمها روميلدا وأن الأرملة قريبة لباتا مالانيا، ولكننا لا نستطيع أن نحدد طبيعة هذه القرابة لأن النص لا يسمح لنا بذلك. يعدّ السارد الأرملة "cugina" لمالانيا ولكنه لا يحدد إن كانت القرابة من جهة الأم أو الأب، ولا يحدد إن كانت قرابة مباشرة أم غيرها. لذلك هناك احتمالات كثيرة. يوجد في اللغة الإيطالية مصطلح واحد "cugino/a" لا يوفر أية معلومة إلا عبر التحديد والشرح. يمكننا تأكيد، انطلاقا من المعلومات المتضمنة في النص، أن الأرملة ليست ابنة عم مالانيا لكون اسميهما العائلي مختلفا.

ننتقل إلى علاقة القرابة بين روميلدا ومالانيا. بما أن روميلدا ابنة الأرملة وهذه الأخيرة ابنة خال/خالة ملانيا (أو كل الاحتمالات الأخرى إلا ابنة عمه) فإذن روميلدا ابنة ابنة خاله/خالته، إلا أن السارد يعدّها "nipote" له ويعدّ ملانيا "zio" لها. هذا يفتح مجموعة من الاحتمالات الأخرى لأن الكلمتين "nipote" و "zio" لا تتوفران، كما في الحالة السابقة، أية معلومة إلا عبر التحديد والشرح. من السياق نفهم أن هذه المصطلحات لها المعنى العام لقريب/قريبة.

يتعلق السؤال المطروح بسبب اعتبار العلاقة بين مالانيا وروميلدا كعلاقة القرابة فقط. ولا يمكن الإجابة إلا بالعودة إلى الثقافة الإيطالية حيث، عادة، يُستعمل المصطلحان المذكوران عندما يوجد فرق شاسع في العمر بين الشخصين، مما يفيد هذا الاستعمال في تحديد المسافة بين الأكبر، "zio"، والأصغر، "nipote"، حيث يمارس الأكبر نوعا من السلطة على الأصغر وعلى هذا الأخير أن يحترم الأكبر بحكم الفرق في العمر. فيرتبط عدّ علاقة مالانيا بروميلدا بصفتها علاقة القرابة بسببين:

1. يمكن لمالانيا أن يسيطر على روميلدا

2. لا يمنع الزوج بين الأقرباء كما هو الشأن في حالة العلاقات بين أولاد عم/عمة أو خال/خالة. ولابد من الإشارة هنا إلى أن العلاقة بين أولاد عم/عمة أو خال/خالة تُعدّ محظورا ثقافيا، وأن الكنيسة الكاثوليكية تَعدّ الزواج بينهم قابلا للإبطال بحكم علاقة القرابة المباشرة. وبما أن مالانيا كان يخطط لزواج من روميلدا أو لعلاقة جنسية معها بتواطؤ الأرملة، فعدّ هذه العلاقة علاقة القرابة يفيد في تجنب فكرة أنها عيب (حتى الكنيسة لا تَعدّ علاقة القرابة عائقا للزواج).

يتضح من المقارنة بين النصين الإيطالي والعربي أن المترجم قام بالاختيار المناسب في ترجمة ما يشير إلى علاقة القرابة بين روميلدا وملانيا لأنه التقط المعنى الذي يقصده السارد. أما في حالة علاقة القرابة بين الأرملة بسكاتوري ومالانيا فاختار المترجم، من بين الاحتمالات الممكنة كلها، أن يجعلهما ابني خال مما يدفعنا نتساءل عن سبب هذا الاختيار بالضبط. ففي غياب المعلومات الضرورية لتحديد درجة القرابة في النص المصدر يلجأ المترجم إلى الحل المذكور من دون أن يأخذ بعين الاعتبار أن المؤلف اختار أن يترك القارئ يشك في طبيعة هذه العلاقة. حدد المترجم ما لم يكن كذلك في النص الأصل وتوجه القارئ العربي إلى تمثل دقيق لعلاقة القرابة بين الشخصيتين، مما يجعل تصور القارئ العربي يختلف عن تصور القارئ الإيطالي.

زيادة على ذلك كان على المترجم أن يأخذ بعين الاعتبار موقف بيرانديللو من مفهوم العائلة وعلاقات القرابة. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أن الكاتب قد عدّها بنية اجتماعية تقيد حرية الفرد، مما يجعلنا نعتقد أنه اختار ألا يحدد علاقة القرابة بين الشخصيتين وأن يرسمها بنية وهمية تتميز بالمصلحة.

خاتمة

انطلاقا من دراستنا يتضح أن المترجم وجد نفسه أمام إشكال صعب التجاوز حين تعلق الأمر بنقل المخزون الثقافي المتضمن في النص المصدر، الشيء الذي جعله يقوم بنوع من التبسيط أحيانا، ومن المجانسة أحيانا أخرى، حيث يكمن السبب الرئيسي وراء هذا الاختيار في تسهيل قراءة القارئ العربي الذي يمتلك مرجعية ثقافية خاصةَ للنص. يترك المترجم قارئه في موقف "أمين" ومريح، بما يخدم حسن تلقي القارئ لترجمته. إلا أننا نتساءل إن كانت هذه الإستراتيجية الترجمية تفيد، في الحقيقة، القارئ، خاصة أننا نعتقد أن الترجمة الأدبية هي فرصة هامة بالنسبة للنص المصدر الذي يعيش حياة جديدة في النسق المستقبل وبالنسبة لقارئ اللغة الهدف الذي يسافر نحو عوالم جديدة ويستفيد من تجربة فريدة. انطلاقا من ذلك نعتقد أن وظيفة المترجم الأدبي وليس مقصود كلامنا محب سعد إبراهيم الذي أخذ على عاتقه نقل رواية بيرانديللو إلى العربية والذي يبقى له فضل كبير في تقديم هذا العمل الأدبي للنسق العربي هي أن يدفع القارئ باتجاه الآخر وأن يوفر له العناصر التي تعبر عن الخصوصية الثقافية بقَدر المستطاع. لا شك في أن النص الأدبي قد يعيش عبر الترجمة حياة جديدة في النسق المستقبل، إذا أنجِزَت الترجمة بوصفها فضاء للاختلاف (Venuti 1992: 1-13) ومراعاة لخصوصية عنصر التغريب، الذي يسمح للنسق الهدف بالتعرف على النص المصدر بكل

خصوصياتها الجمالية والثقافية، والذي يجعل القارئ يلمس الاختلاف والخصوصية ويقترب بقدَر الإمكان من عالم الآخر من دون أن يفقد الكثير في تلقيه للنص عبر اللغة الهدف.

لائحة المصادر والمراجع
المصادر

المتن الروائي المشتغل عليه

أ. المصدر
Pirandello, Luigi. 2007. *Il fu Mattia Pascal*. Milano: Bur Rizzoli.

ب. الترجمة
بيرانديللو، لويجي. (٢٠٠٧). *الراحل ماتيا بسكال*. ت. محب سعد إبراهيم. القاهرة: المجلس الأعلى للثقافة.

المراجع
Barilli, Fabiana. 2008. *Umorismo e ironia. Ispezioni testuali tra Cantoni, Pirandello e Svevo*. Tesi di Dottorato non pubblicata. Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. Università degli Studi di Parma. XX ciclo.

Bassnett, Susan, & Lefevere, André. 1992. *Translation, History and Culture. A Sourcebook.* London & New York: Routledge.

Benjamin, Walter. 2000. "The Task of the Translator. An introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens". tr. Zohn, Harry. Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 15-25.

Berman, Antoine. 1984. *L'épreuve de l'étranger (Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne Romantique)*. Paris: Gallimard.

Berman, Antoine. 1985. *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain*, (ed.) Le tour de Babel. Mauvezin: Trans-Europ-Repress.

Berman, Antoine. 1995. *Pour une critique de traduction: John Donne*. Paris: Gallimard.

Collombat, Isabelle. 2009. "La didactique de l'erreur dans l'apprentisage de la traduction". *The Journal of Specialised Translation XII*. 37- 54.

Jakobson, Roman. 2000. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation". Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 113-118.

Newmark, Peter. 1988. *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Osimo, Bruno. 2004. *Traduzione e qualità. La valutazione in ambito accademico e professionale*. Milano: Hoelpi.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1992. *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London and New York: Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1998. *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethic of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility*. London & New York: Routledge.

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF STYLES, REGISTERS, AND VARIETIES IN *HOT MAROC*

ROSA PENNISI

**IREMAM, Aix-Marseille Université
and University of Catania**

Abstract: In *Hot Maroc* (2016), Yassin Adnan, a Moroccan author and journalist, reconstructs through the literary fiction the political and social changes of contemporary Morocco, from the end of the reign of Hassan II until today. Through the eyes of the main character, Raḥḥāl, the reader discovers both the social jungle of Marrakesh and the digital Moroccan jungle in which the young man becomes a professional keyboard warrior. Being paid by Moroccan *mukhabarat*, Raḥḥāl manipulates public opinion through readers' comments published in an electronic journal, called *Hot Maroc*. The present study aims to analyse styles, registers, and linguistic variation through a sociolinguistic perspective. Although the main language of the novel is *Fuṣḥā* (here intended as Modern Standard Arabic), discursive parts make also use of *Dāriǧa* (Moroccan Arabic). The plurality of voices and linguistic diversity which emerge from online and offline discourses and interactions among characters is not limited to merely enhancing the novel's 'realism', but it makes it possible to analyse how the communicative nature of language is functionally manipulated to serve instead as an instrument of miscommunication.
Keywords: *contemporary Moroccan novel, Yassin Adnan, stylistic variation, Moroccan Arabic, online and offline interactions.*

1. Introduction

"Literary compositions in an Arabic colloquial are nothing new" (Cachia 1967:12). The opening sentence of Cachia's study claims clearly that the use of colloquial varieties in prose and poetry is not a contemporary new development. In Arabic modern fiction, some authors considered Modern Standard Arabic (MSA, henceforth) ineffective for realistically representing specific social realities in dialogues (Abdel-Malek 1972)[1]. In fact, as Mejdell (2006) pointed out, the use of the vernacular in dialogues of novels and short stories is a "stylistic choice, […] a concern for realism, […] to 'provide local flavour' to the text" (Mejdell 2006:204)[2]. It is worth mentioning, however, that linguistic choices of modern

---

[1] Differently from Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ who used *Fuṣḥā* as a literary language even in dialogues, although more recently, as mentioned by De Angelis (2021), he wrote dialogues in "colloquialised *Fuṣḥā*" (Somekh 1991:26-27).

[2] Rosembaum's research (2000, 2012) on what he termed *fuṣḥāmmiyya* (an intentionally written style alternating *Fuṣḥā* and *ʿĀmmiyya*), questioned the linguistic-stylistic dichotomy between MSA/Narrative

authors also depended on political and ideological cultural factors. Between 19th and 20th century, Egyptian cultural production, such as satirical newspapers, used *ʿĀmmiyya* (Colloquial Arabic), as an educational tool aimed at indoctrination of the nationalistic movement against the English occupants (De Angelis 2021:166), whereas in contemporary literary production the choice of linguistic varieties and registers responded mainly to "stylistic, and not political, considerations" (De Angelis 2021:168).[3]

The relationship between language choices and realism was also discussed by Lucia Avallone (2020) in her sociolinguistic analysis of ʿAlāʾ al-Aswānī's contemporary novel *ʿImārat Yaʿqūbyān* (2002). Her definition of social realism, whose narrative aim is "the representation of reality to raise awareness of its problems" [4] (Avallone 2020:27), perfectly sums up a type of narrative that brings out social issues. As she states, "[in *ʿImārat Yaʿqūbiyān*] the narrative is a *representation* of the human condition, often dramatic, attentive not only to the social dimension but also to psychological introspection." (Avallone 2020:25-26). [5] Social dimensions and psychological introspection are thus (re)constructed in the narrative, also through stylistic and linguistic choices.

Hence, starting from the assumption that literary texts are a 'representation' of human condition, the present study aims at analysing through a sociolinguistic perspective the plurality of voices and the linguistic variation as an intentional stylistic strategy for representing in literary production what Avallone called "social realism". In the novel *Hot Maroc* (2016), Yassin Adnan reconstructs social and political developments of contemporary Morocco focusing on language (mis)communication and on individual and social impacts of the internet and social media, as a new public space for communication.

After a brief presentation of Yassin Adnan and his novel, the analysis will focus on language choices in discursive sections, both in offline direct speeches (reflecting oral ordinary interactions between characters), and in the online communications (reflecting digital written interactions).

2. Yassin Adnan and his novel

Yassin Adnan is a Moroccan cultural journalist internationally known. He is a member of the *ittiḥād kuttāb al-maġrib* 'Union of Moroccan Writers', a board member of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction Booker, but also a poet and a short story writer. Actually, *Hot Maroc* is his first novel, published in 2016 and edited by two publishers, the Egyptian (*Dār al-ʿayn*) and the Moroccan (*Dār al-fanak*). In 2017, *Hot Maroc* entered the long list of the Arab Booker Prize and in 2020 it was first translated into French by Meyer (2020), and in 2021 the English translation by Alexander Elinson (2021) was also published.

---

vs. Colloquial/Dialogues in contemporary literary production, stating that *fuṣḥāmmiyya* is also used in the narrative sections.

3   See also Rosenbaum (2012) observing that the stylistic choices of contemporary Egyptian authors (i.e. sentences entirely in *ʿĀmmiyya* or in a mix of *ʿĀmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā*), respond to achieve precise stylistic intentions through precise narrative strategies, such as emphasising the change of point of view or for free indirect speech.

4   Translated from Italian into English by the author.

5   *Ibidem*, emphasis added.

The novel is a social comedy. It is set in Marrakech and Yassin Adnan reconstructs through literary fiction the political and social changes of contemporary Morocco, from the end of the reign of Hassan II until today. The novel devotes special attention to the role of mass media after the Digital Revolution and the emergence of online newspapers and social media. A large part of the novel, in fact, takes place between the real life of the characters and the web, where readers' comments on the articles of a new online newspaper, called in the fiction 'Hot Maroc', play an important role in the construction of the narrative.

2.1. *Narrative structure and stylistic strategies*

The novel is structured in three parts, which are: I *al-firāša fī ṭarīqi-hā ilā al-maslaḫ* 'The Butterfly on Its Way to the Slaughterhouse',[6] II *al-singāb yadḫul al-ʿulbat al-zarqāʾ* 'The Squirrel Enters the Blue Box', and III *al-kūmīdiyā al-ḥaywāniyya* 'The Animal Comedy'[7].

In the first part, the reader meets Raḥḥāl, the protagonist, the anti-hero of the novel. Raḥḥāl is an introverted and inept student at the Faculty of Arabic Literature. He acts and reacts only in his dreams. He does not really live his real life. He lives in an inner universe and finds refuge in the web[8]. Even his marriage to Ḥassaniyya, a fellow student, is not his choice; the girl makes this decision and thanks to her, Raḥḥāl ends up managing a cybercafé and thus starting his real virtual life. In the second part of the novel, his alter egos enter the scene. They take revenge of Raḥḥāl's repressed feelings by vilifying people with whom Raḥḥāl has never really been able to interact and communicate in the real world.

The cybercafé became a favourite meeting place for regular customers, all from different social backgrounds and experiences. Raḥḥāl will be intercepted by the Moroccan *mukhabarat* who will pay him to continue using his digital alter egos in order to influence public opinion, writing comments on the online newspaper Hot Maroc, and convincing people to support a new populist political party. In the third part of the novel, the "animal comedy" is performed. The main plot concerns the election campaign, the media conflicts between parties, and the effects that the actions of Raḥḥāl's alter egos have on the outcome of the political election. The other micro-stories take a turn in this final part, with episodes that also affect the offline lives of Raḥḥāl and the other secondary characters.

The novel is constructed by an omniscient narrator. Direct or reported speeches (dialogues and online written messages) perform the function of narrative action. The non-dialogue sections, on the other hand, serve for the description of environments, characters, or to explain particular events. The narrator often assumes the internal point of view of the characters with whom he dialogues, and thus representing the inner voice of each character.

The novel is written in the standard variety of contemporary Arabic. However, some dialogues, but also some descriptive parts, show elements and expression in *Dāriǧa*

---

[6]   All English translations of the novel are from Elinson (2021).

[7]   As already shown in titles, animals are a core element in the novel. The main character sees himself as a squirrel, and assigns animal features and animal names to all other characters.

[8]   Note the metaphoric name of the main character: the noun *raḥḥāl* meaning 'wanderer, traveller' in Arabic, represents here not the classical 'wandering poet of the desert', but a 'wandering poet of the internet', considering the fact that Raḥḥāl is also a keen expert in classical Arabic poetry.

(Moroccan Arabic) and in other different stylistic registers. In an interview with *Lepoint*, Adnan states:

> "Dans le livre, j'utilise l'arabe coranique, celui de la poésie préislamique, l'arabe officiel, l'arabe administratif, l'arabe journalistique, l'arabe des réseaux sociaux, le darija (arabe dialectal marocain). Le roman est écrit en arabe moderne standard, c'est l'arabe du narrateur. Mais les *strates narratives* emploient ces *différentes modalités de l'arabe*. La voix du narrateur utilise cette langue arabe standard afin de poser aussi une forme de neutralité ; puis je suis contre toute forme de sacralisation de la langue arabe. L'arabe est une langue vivante, *dynamique* et elle doit le rester"[9].

The following analysis focuses on the concept of narrative layers and dynamicity of the Arabic language.

3. Offline interactions in fictional narrative

According to the different communicative contexts in the novel, characters express themselves -in direct speech and reported speech- using different registers, expressions and varieties. Their speeches, and the combination of different varieties and registers, allow the reader to contextualise the different social profiles within the novel. The analysis of the offline interactions focuses on the language practices of three characters, namely Ḥassaniyya (Raḥḥāl's wife), Yazīd (a customer of the cybercafé) and Raḥḥāl with his alter egos.

3.1. *Ḥassaniyya and Raḥḥāl*

Ḥassaniyya is Raḥḥāl's fellow student. They work together at their final dissertation. Moreover, she gives Raḥḥāl permission to ask her in marriage, despite the fact that Raḥḥāl had never spoken to her about marriage. In (1), Ḥassaniyya, in a peer-to-peer communication context, expresses herself in MSA:

(1)

"لقد فكرتُ مليّا في الموضوع، وأنا موافقة. يمكن أن تتقدّم لخطبتي في أيّ وقت".
أحس رحّال كما لو أن الأرض تدور به. لكنّ حسنية ستضيف بهمسها الراعش، إنما بنفس النبرة الحازمة:
"بالمناسبة، أمي هي الأخرى موافقة. فقط عليك ألّا تتأخّر". لكأنّ البُنَيّة تستخْطِبُك أيها السنجاب.[10]

(Adnan 2016:126)

At the end of Ḥassaniyya speech, the readers can hear Raḥḥāl/Squirrel's inner voice in: "لكأنّ البُنَيّة تستخْطِبُك أيها السنجاب." 'It sounds like the little girl is proposing to you, Squirrel!',

---

[9] https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/yassin-adnan-ce-roman-parle-d-un-maroc-en-entre-deux-page-2-13-03-2020-2367059_3826.php#xtatc=INT-500 (30/08/2022), emphasis added.

[10] "I've thought it through, and I'm all for it. You can propose to me anytime." Rahhal felt as if the earth was spinning around him. But Hassaniya would add in her trembling whisper, in the same, resolute tone: "And by the way, my mom agrees, too. It's just up to you not to take too long." It's as if the young lady is proposing to you, Squirrel. (Elinson 2021:89).

which is his reaction to Ḥassaniyya's proposal. This is an example of how the third-person point of view switches to the inner Raḥḥāl's point of view: the inner narrator dialogues intimately with himself, using the second person,[11] and a familiar lexical register, such as the diminutive *al-bunyya* 'the young girl'.

When she talks to Raḥḥāl, she often adopts an informal style, combining MSA and Moroccan Arabic. In the following example (2), Ḥassaniyya explains to Raḥḥāl her trick to quickly finish their dissertation: her speech, mainly in MSA, is intercut with informal expressions (a non-high MSA, in the underlined parts) and expressions in Moroccan Arabic (in bold):

(2)

أكثر من عشرين صفحة ستكون كافية لنشتغل عليها بالإضافة والتمطيط والحشو وحشد الشواهد الشعرية ونخلص من هذا المسلسل. **صاحبك** يريد السطو على مجهود الطلبة، فلنتركه يسطو على جهد باحث سوري مغمور وننهي القصة. **صعيبة هاذي؟**[12] (Adnan 2016:126)

The combination of MSA and *Dāriǧa* reproduces a mixed style (neither high nor low) of ordinary (educated) communication between students.

Moreover, depending on the different communicative contexts, Ḥassaniyya tends to use more *Dāriǧa* or more MSA. Note the different language choice among (3) (the wedding night) and (4) (Raḥḥāl's uncle asking about the issue of having children):

(3)

- أطفئ النور يا رحّال.
  [...]
- ولماذا أطفئ الضوء يا حسنية؟ أريد أن أتفقّد حرثي، أعاين موضع الحرث والغرس. وأتجوّل في بستاني. أرى الرمان ناضجا والتفاح موّردا، وأتفقّد حوض النعناع قبل أن أسقيه...
- **آش من نعناع وآش من باكور هندي؟** رحّاااال، قلت لك اطفي الضّو.
  [...]
- **شوف الله يخلّيك. المسخ وقلة الحيا ما عندي ما ندير بهم. دير داك الشي اللي ف السُنّة ونوض فحالك**[13]..
  (Adnan 2016:150-153)

(4)

- **إيوا، آش كا تتستاي آ حسنية؟** ما زال **ما بغيتيش تجيبي لنا شي وليّد و بنيّة باش نفرحو؟**
  [...]
- **ذاك الشي ديال الله آ عمّي.**
- ولكن الله عزّ وجل **كا يقول**: "سبّب آ عبدي وأنا نعاونك" صدق الله العظيم.

---

[11] Note the ironic construction with the suffix pronoun -*ka* (2nd m. s.) in the X form of the verb *istaḥṭaba* (3rd f. s.), which is not usual in MSA, where the VIII form meaning 'to seek a girl's hand in marriage' is instead currently used.

[12] "More than twenty pages will be enough for us to work with, to which we'll add some stuffing, expand things here and there, include some poetic quotes, and we'll be done with this soap opera. Your friend wants to take advantage of students' efforts, so let him seize upon the efforts of an unknown Syrian researcher and be done with it. Is that so hard?" (Elinson 2021:31).

[13] "Turn out the light, Rahhal." […] "Why should I turn out the light, Hassaniya? I want to inspect my land, to lay eyes on where I'll sow and plant my seed. To wander around my garden. To see the pomegranate ripen and the apple redden; to survey the patch of mint before I water it . . ." "What mint? What shit are you talking about? Rahhaaaaal! I told you to turn out the light." […] "Look, please. Doing it as if we're in some sort of a disgusting and bizarre porn flick, no way. Do what's required by the Sunna and as the Prophet has shown us and get your ass out of here!" (Elinson 2021:106-107)

- فعلًا، صدق الله العظيم، علّقت حسنية ساخرة قبل أن تقوم مغتاظة عن مائدة الأكل.
اختفت لدقائق ثم أطلّت على الفأرين وعلى ملامحها ارتسمت ابتسامة احتقار. قالت لعياد:
- سَلّم لي على أخيك وزوجته، ولا تنس أن تدقّق مع عبد السلام في أيّ من سُوَر القرآن وردت تلك الآية.[14]

(Adnan 2016:253-254)

In (3), at the end of the dialogue, her sentences are syntactically and lexically constructed in *Dāriǧa*. Note for instance the switch between the first *ʾAtfiʾ al-nūr*, 'Turn out the light', in MSA, and the second *ṭfī l-ḍəw* in *Dāriǧa*; this switch shows the increasing nervousness of the young girl in that embarrassing situation with Raḥḥāl. Whereas, in (4) the expression of her nervousness turns into sarcasm. The bold parts show all sentences in *Dāriǧa* (interrogatives, prefix conjugation, indefinite article, final proposition, etc.) from ʿAyyād and Raḥḥāl, the latter adapting himself to the familiar register in *Dāriǧa* (see for instance, *dəkšī dyāl Allah ā ʿammī* 'my uncle, that's up to God'). Ḥassaniyya on the other hand, irritated by the question, answers in perfect MSA. Her communicative strategy, i.e. the choice of MSA in a colloquial dialogue, underlines, not only her dominant personality, but also her (cultural) superiority over ʿAyyād.

3.2. Raḥḥāl and Yazīd

Raḥḥāl, like Ḥassaniyya, has a higher level of education that allows him to exploit all registers of Arabic depending on the communicative situation. While in his traditional family he is used to interacting in a colloquial register, Raḥḥāl's ordinary communications with the outside world tend to be in an educated and controlled register. In the following dialogue (5) between Raḥḥāl and Yazīd (a customer of the cybercafé), Raḥḥāl register is accommodating to the communicative contexts:

(5)

- الأخ.. الأخ.. **الله يخلّيك**، ناداه رحّال بتضرُّع.
- **آش خصّك ثاني؟** تساءل اليزيد بنفاد صبر.
- **الله يخليك**. اقرأ **شو** مكتوب **فـ** الباب: ممنوع التدخين. وهذا **ماشي القانون ديالي**. أنا **غير خدّام**. هذا قانون **واضعينه** أصحاب المحل.
- لا لا **ماتخافش. ماحدّي معاك هنا ماكاينش دين أمّه اللي يقدر يشعل كارّو فـ هاذ المحل.**
- ولكن ها انت شعلتيه؟
- لا . . كن هاني، طمأنه اليزيد، **حتى حدّ آخر ما نخلّيه يكمي فـ السيبر غير ادّيها فـ شغلك**.[15]

(Adnan 2016:308)

---

[14] "So? What are you two waiting for, Hassaniya? You still don't want to bring us a baby boy or girl to brighten our world?" "That's up to God, Uncle." "But as God Almighty says, 'Make it happen, my servant, and I will help you,' trust in God Almighty." […] "Sure, trust in God Almighty," Hassaniya snarled before getting up angrily from the table She disappeared for a few minutes then glared at the two rats with a hateful smile on her face and said to Ayad: "Say 'hi' to your brother and his wife, and good luck to you and Abdeslam finding that verse in the Qur'an." (Elinson 2021:180).

[15] "Uh, excuse me, my friend. Please . . ." Rahhal implored. "Now what?" Yazid asked impatiently.
"Please, read what's written on the sign: 'No smoking.' This isn't my rule. I just work here. This is a rule imposed by the shop's owners." "No, don't worry about it. No one here, damn his mother, will dare light a cigarette."
"But haven't you just lit one?" "No, calm down," Yazid assured him. "I won't let anyone else smoke in this cybercafe . . . Just mind your business." (Elinson 2021:219)

While Yazīd only speaks in *Dāriǧa*, Raḥḥāl accommodates himself to the style and register of his interlocutor. See for instance in Raḥḥāl's approach to the dialogue, the use of *al-aḫ* instead of the more common *ḫuyya* in *Dāriǧa*, and the mixing with MSA, such as in *haḏa māšī l-qānūn dyālī*, 'this is not my rule', where the pronoun *haḏa* 'this' follows the MSA spelling, unlike the Yazīd's utterance where he uses the spelling *hāḏ* 'this', in *Dāriǧa*. All Yazīd's direct speeches in the novel are in *Dāriǧa*, in a sort of rude *Dāriǧa*'s register, representing his social background: a petty criminal who tries to survive every day with lucky jobs on the edge of legality.

4. Online interactions in fictional narrative

In online communications, Raḥḥāl successfully utilises his linguistic accommodation skills. His alter egos express themselves each with their own unique styles and registers reconstructing different, although non-existent, social profiles. In the following example (6), a sequence of comments from Raḥḥāl's alter egos, show how Raḥḥāl interprets different social profiles. In this sequence, Raḥḥāl uses defamation for a personal vendetta against Wafīq al-Daraʿī, an ex-colleague of the Faculty of Literature, who became a famous poet. Raḥḥāl deeply detests Wafīq and his poetry, so when Raḥḥāl read in Hot Maroc that Wafīq won the National Poetry Prize Ibn al-Wannān, wrote three comments on the article in order to denigrate the young poet:

(6)

الاسم: قاعدي سابق.

عنوان التعليق: شعرية الوشاية.

"قرأتُ باهتمام مقالكم حول **أمير شعراء الفروماج** المدعو وفيق الدرعي [...] كاتب المقال أغفل محطّة أساسية في ساره وهي العمالة للمخابرات [...] فمناضلو كلية الآداب [...] يعرفون شاعركم **المُلفَّق** ـ أريد أن أقول **المفلق** ـ خير المعرفة خبروه أساسا كعنصر مخابراتي كان مدسوسا على **مناضلي الاتحاد الوطني لطلبة المغرب**. [...]ورحم الله ابن الونّان مرة أخرى، فقد أعدتّم قتله اليوم بمنح جائزة تحمل اسمه لجاسوس جبان".[16]

(Adnan 2016:224-225)

الاسم: **ولد** المواسين.

عنوان التعليق: فخر واعتزاز.

لا يسعُني كأحد أبناء **حومة** المواسين إلا أن أُعْلِن فخري واعتزازي وأنا أتلقّى هذا الخبر السعيد. ابن حومتي يفوز بأهم جائزة شعرية في بلادنا. [...] لذا اسمحوا لي بأن أقدّم أحرّ التهاني **للكوميسير** السرّاج ولكل عائلة

---

[16] "Name: A Former Qaîdi Basista Student. Comment Title: The Poetics of Denunciation. I read with interest your article about the prince of cheesy poets, aka Wafiq Daraai, […] the article's author neglected a key element in his biography – that being his collaboration with the Mukhabarat, […] The militants of the College of Humanities […] know their poetic counterfeiter – what I mean to say is, their poet, whose poems glitter – essentially as a Mukhabarati element who served as a mole within the ranks of the National Union of Students in Morocco. May God have mercy on Ibn al-Wannan once again, with you having killed him a second time by granting a prize that carries his name to such a cowardly spy." (Elinson 2021:157-158)

الدرعي في المواسين على هذا الإنجاز. [...]لذا **أعتذر يا وفيقة** ـ عفوا، يا وفيق ـ **عن كل ما حصل في الحمّام** [...]وفّقك الله ومتمنياتنا لك بالمزيد من التألّق.¹⁷"

(Adnan 2016:226)

الاسم: عبد المقصود الطاهري.
عنوان التعليق: **شعر أم شعير؟**
باسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [...]، أوّلا أتحفّظُ بشدّة على التعليقين المنشورين أعلاه. [...] فهذه السفاسف لا تشغل بال **الناقد العلّامة والدارس البحّاثة**. ما يعنيني أصلحكم الله هو الشعر ذاته. [...] وأطرح سؤالي على وفيق الدرعي نفسه ومن أمثاله من أشباه الشعراء; هل بهذيانكم المريض واستعاراتكم الذهنية وكلامكم المعمّى [...] سنُحرّرُ فلسطين ونُعيد للأمة العربية عزّتها وكرامتها؟ لا وألف لا. [...]هل تعرف الرّجل الذي فزت اليوم بجائزة تحمل اسمه؟ جواب لديّ، ببساطة لأنني أحدس أن لا جواب لديك. [...] **ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله**".¹⁸

(Adnan 2016:227-228)

All the comments are written in MSA, but in three different styles. The former has an ironic and sarcastic tone. Note, for example, the construction *Amīr šuʿarāʾ al-frūmāǧ* 'the prince of cheesy poets' in contrast to the expression *Amīr al-šuʿarāʾ*, a traditional honorary title for poets, and the ironic wordplay between المُلفَّق 'fake' and المُفلَق 'eminent'. Finally, the references to the National Union of Students of Morocco build up the profile of an ex-militant student.

The second comment is more informal, with the use of some words that are apparently in standard Arabic, but depending on the pronunciation they could also be in *Dāriǧa* (e.g. the term *ḥawma* 'neighbourhood' spelled in *Dāriǧa* as *ḥūmā*, or seemingly the term *walad* 'a guy' spelled *wuld*).

The third shows Quranic formulae, at the beginning and at the end. Stylistically, the commentary is written in a formal style, with word plays that mark irony (شعر أم شعير؟ 'Poetry or barley', same radical letters, but different forms and meanings), but also internal assonance or reiteration of morphological constructions within the prose (e.g. بال الناقد العلّامة والدارس البحّاثة 'The mind of the sage critic and erudite scholar', where 'critic' and 'scholar' share the same pattern of active participle, as well as their qualifiers share respectively the same adjective pattern). Those stylistic strategies make the comment almost lyrical, thus

---

17 "Name: A Guy from Mouassine. Comment Title: Pride and Glory. As someone from Mouassine, all I can do is express my pride and joy at having come across this happy piece of news. Imagine, someone from my neighborhood winning the most prestigious poetry prize in the country. […] So, allow me to present my warmest congratulations to Police Commissioner Serraj and to the entire Daraai family in Mouassine on this achievement. […] Therefore, I apologize, Wafiqa – I mean Wafiq – for everything that happened in the hammam so long ago, […] May God grant you success and we hope for even more brilliance for you." (Elinson 2021:158-159)

18 "Name: Abdelmaqsud Taheri. Comment Title: Poetic Food for the Soul or Poetic Fodder?
In the name of God, […]. First of all, I absolutely disassociate myself from the two comments posted above. […]. This triviality is of no concern to the scholarly critic or academic research. What concerns me, may God allow you all to prosper, is the poetry itself. […] I direct my question to Wafiq Daraai himself, along with the so-called poets like him. Is there anything in your mad ravings and your intellectual metaphors and blind talk […] with which we will liberate Palestine and return the Arab community to its former honor and greatness? No! A thousand nos! […] Do you know the man for whom the prize you won today is named? I have no response, simply because I'm going to guess that you have no response. […] There is no power nor strength save for in God." (Elinson 2021:159-161)

seemingly to the language of a man of letters, like a professor, in order to authoritatively justify the artistic inconsistency of Wafīq.

The (mis)communication strategy of Raḥḥāl, that is the construction of a vilifying discourse based on attacks from heterogenous social points of view, is also used when he works for the *mukhabarat* with the aim of manipulating public opinion.

In the other sections of the novel, the narrator's inner voice, the voice of Raḥḥāl, commenting his online vilifying actions will state:

(7)

والأنداد الآخرون سيُردّدون نفس الشيء. كلٌّ بِلُغَتِه، ومزاجه، واسلوبه. فما تكرّر تقرّر. والتَّكرار يُعلّم الحمار[19].

(Adnan 2016:369)

This statement is particularly interesting not only for the concept of reiteration as a mechanism of persuasion, but especially because it underlines that each reiteration represents different styles and registers, i.e. individual voices that together represent/(re)construct social actors and contexts, and consequently, the messages and discourses whether they come from real or fake users, through reiteration become shared, then authoritative, then persuasive, so truthful.

5. Conclusion

The linguistic and stylistic choices in *Hot Maroc* represent/(re)construct the multifaceted socio-cultural landscape of contemporary Morocco. Different social profiles express themselves in their dialogues reflecting their social environment: a rude petty criminal (Yazīd), educated young students (Raḥḥāl and Ḥassaniyya), Moroccan from rural regions (Raḥḥāl's uncle), erudite man of letters (Raḥḥāl's fake digital alter ego), etc. Everyone expresses himself using different multi-layered registers of Arabic (rude Moroccan Arabic, Educated and Mixed Arabic).

In the analysis of offline and online dialogues, several phenomena, such as linguistic variation, intrasentential codeswitching, accommodation, have been investigated accordingly to sociolinguistic approaches to authentic corpora. In *Hot Maroc*, registers and linguistic varieties (re)shape the plurality of voices that make up contemporary Moroccan society. The dialogues are, of course, not authentic, but represent, with their heterogenous voices, communicative strategies that serve to reconstruct the pragmatic functions of discourses. Linguistic choices and narrative actions based on the construction of dialogues allow the author to apply the mechanism of reiteration and persuasion serving for (mis)communication purposes, as a literary strategy. The stylistic variation in *Hot Maroc* does not only serve to represent the Moroccan sociolinguistic reality in a realistic manner, but more generally to serve as literary strategy to represent and consider the relationship between power, language and society.

---

[19] "And the others will repeat the same thing, each in their own language, mood, and style. For that which is repeated is set. As they say, 'Repetition teaches the donkey'." (Elinson 2021:263)

References

Abdel-Malek, Zaki N. 1972. "The Influence of Diglossia on the Novels of Yuusif al-Sibaaʿi", *Journal of Arabic Literature 3*, 132-141. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4182901

Adnan, Yassin. 2016. *Hūt Mārūk*, al-Qāhira: Dār al-ʿAyn.

Avallone, Lucia. 2020. *Ascoltando le voci di palazzo: per una lettura sociolinguistica di Palazzo Yacoubian*. Roma: Aracne Editrice.

Cachia, Pierre. 1967. "The Use of the Colloquial in Modern Arabic Literature". *Journal of the American Oriental Society 87/1*. 12-22.

De Angelis, Francesco. 2021. "Literature in Dialect: The Great Absentee", in Golfetto, Marco Aurelio, Osti, Letizia, Chakrani, Brahim (eds.), *Arabic Language and Language Teaching: Policies, Politics, and Ideology*, *Lingue Culture Mediazioni 8/2*. 163-176.

Doss, Madiha. 2006. "Cultural Dynamics and Linguistic Practice in Contemporary Egypt". *Cairo Papers in Social Sciences 27 (1-2)*. 51-68.

Elinson, Alexander. E. 2021. (trans.) *Hot Maroc, a novel*, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Mejdell, Gunvor. 2006. "The use of colloquial in modern Egyptian literature – a survey". *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*. Harrassowitz Verlag. 195-213.

Meyer, France. 2020. (trans.), *Hot Maroc*, Arles: Actes Sud.

Rosenbaum, Moshe, Gabriel. 2000. "'Fuṣḥāmmiyya': Alternating Style in Egyptian Prose". *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik 38*. 68-87.

Rosenbaum, Moshe, Gabriel. 2012. "Mixed Arabic and Stylistic Choices in Contemporary Egyptian Writing". Bettini, Lidia & La Spisa Paolo (eds.), *Au-delà de l'Arabe Standard: Moyen Arabe et Arabe Mixte dans les sources médiévales, modernes et contemporaines*, *Quaderni di semitistica 28*, Firenze: Università di Firenze. 291-306.

Somekh, Sasson. 1991. *Genre and Language in Modern Arabic Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

OLD AND POSSIBLY NEW PERSPECTIVES ON METRICS AND PROSODY – COULD THERE BE A PLACE FOR METRICAL STRESS, AFTER ALL, IN THE RECITATION OF ARABIC POETRY?

OVIDIU PIETRĂREANU

University of Bucharest

Abstract: The present paper approaches the issue of metrical stress in the recitation of classical Arabic poetry: it begins with an overview of the opinions expressed on the subject by Western philologists, from the XIXth century, when, under the considerable influence exerted by Graeco-Latin metrics – an influence that left its mark on the treatment of many aspects of the Arabic metrical system, including one as basic as the structure of metrical feet –, there were attempts at arguing in favor of the existence of such a feature and detecting the rules that might govern its distribution within a verse, up until the second half of the XXth century, when these ideas were largely discarded and the purely quantitative nature of the system gained an increasingly widespread acceptance; we also review some positions adopted by Arab philologists, who, while obviously preoccupied with the features granting Arabic poetry its musicality and rhythmicity, have generally stayed away from concepts pertaining to linguistic prosody, even when they have demonstrably come in contact with Western sources and ideas. Finally, based on the evidence that we have been able to gather so far (a survey of our own and a number of recordings available online), we argue that, contrary to the currently prevalent opinion, there are a few contexts where metrical stress can be brought to the fore: in the intervals occupied by the rhyme, if the lexical stress is not in alignment in all the verses, the reciter can artificially bring it into alignment; when poems are chanted rather than plainly recited, it is possible for the chanter to impress on the intervals occupied by the metrical feet the prosodic contour that they would have if they were actual words, with the metrical stress being placed, within these intervals, according to the rules governing the placement of lexical stress.
Keywords: *poetry, metrics, prosody, verse, syllable, syllabic quantity, lexical stress, metrical stress, meter, metrical foot, rhyme.*

The metrical system governing the structure of Arabic classical poetry has been subjected, in Western academia, to a diverse array of inquiries, many of which have been shaped by assumptions often originating in the European poetic traditions of their respective initiators. The absence of syllable as a theoretical concept in the Arabic grammatical tradition notwithstanding[1], the centrality of syllable quantity was acknowledged early on, and this

---

[1] The syllable as a theoretical concept did not emerge, in premodern eras, in the reflections of Arab grammarians and philologists: *’ahmala l-‘ulamā’u l-‘arabu dirāsata l-maqāṭiʻi wa-’aškālihā wa-’aǧzā’ihā ’ihmālan tāmman*, "Arab scholars completely ignored the study of syllables, their forms and their parts" (Muḫtār ‘Umar 1988: 120); it has, however, been adopted, in the modern era, by some specialists in different fields of language studies, including poetic metrics and prosody, as it will be shown in this paper; the term used in contemporary Arabic with the meaning of "syllable", *maqṭaʻ* (primary, non-specialized meaning: "section", "segment"), was, in fact, used as a specialized term in the metricians' lexicon, but it meant either one of the two types of subunits of the metrical foot, the quantitatively variable subunit known as *sabab* and the quantitatively invariable one known as *watid* (Wright 1996, vol. II 358-359, ’Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 17; see also note 6); the mere fact that these

alone can hardly be exclusively correlated with European or, more precisely, Graeco-Latin classical influence, because the system can really be accurately described, in the broadest of terms, as being designed so as to engender regulated sequences of short and long syllables[2]. The earlier sources, however, go beyond simply expressing the information provided by Arab authors on the subject through the filter of this concept on account of it being more familiar for a European readership and, thus, more pedagogically advantageous as a minimal metrical unit than the "(moving, *mutaḥarrik*, and quiescent, *sākin*) *ḥarf*", used in this capacity by Arab metricians[3]: they also show a quite marked preference for conjuring up notions belonging to their Graeco-Latin culture on a larger scale, making casual use of the terminology sanctioned by the classical European tradition. A good illustration of the balancing act done by Western philologists in their overviews of Arabic metrics from the early stages of their engagement with the matter is offered by the compendium on prosody coming at the end of William Wright (1830-1889)'s grammar of the Arabic language: the section about meters begins with a paragraph wherein the key Arabic terms relevant for the scansion of a verse are listed, then the meters themselves are exemplified with a series of

---

subunits are ranked, like syllables, at a level of complexity coming between the minimal one, represented by phonemes, and the relatively complex one, represented by metrical feet (in fact, there is even a type of *sabab*, known as *sabab ḫafīf*, "'light' *sabab*", that consists of a long syllable), can hardly be taken as a hint towards an intuition of the syllable as a concept – George Bohas & Bruno Paoli do recognize some degree of correspondence between the two types of units, but, at the same time, they unequivocally deny the emergence of the syllable as part of the arsenal of theoretical concepts that Arab grammarians operate with: "…la notion de syllabe telle qu'on l'entend couramment, à savoir une unité suprasegmentale composée d'une attaque et d'une rime branchante ou non […] n'existe ni dans l'analyse métrique ni dans l'analyse phonologique des grammairiens arabes; [c]ela ne veut pas dire qu'ils ne disposaient pas d'unités suprasegmentales, mais que celles-ci etaient définies différemment; [à] la place de la syllabe, les métriciens utilisent le *sabab*" (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 141-142). A somewhat more convincing argument in favor of there being an "intuition, if not an explicit theory of syllable structure" relies on terminology, pointing to the primary meanings of the terms *ḥarf* and *ḥaraka*, "limit" and, respectively, "movement" (Bohas et al. 2017: 95); the fact remains, however, that the premodern Arabic linguistic tradition did not operate with the concept of syllable.

2   Syllable quantities will be symbolized in the metrical notation used in this article as follows: u for short syllables, – for long syllables and <u>u</u> for quantitatively variable syllables.

3   The minimal unit used in the Arabic linguistic tradition in general and in the Arabic metrical theory in particular is designated by the term *ḥarf*, which can generally label, depending on context, one of the graphemes making up the Arabic alphabet or the phoneme corresponding to it: "[t]he term *ḥarf* (pl. *ḥurūf*, *'aḥruf*), 'part, particle, edge, end, boundary' is used in Arabic linguistic terminology to indicate (1) the final segment formed as a result of the linear segmentation of the Arabic word; (2) a component of the prosodic, morphological, and lexical pattern of a word…" (Karabekyan & Yavrumyan 2007: 236); "…les métriciens arabes, et les grammairiens en général, n'ont pas eu recours à la notion de syllabe mais se sont plutôt attachés à la consonne (*ḥarf*), laquelle est tantôt mue, vocalisée (*mutaḥarrik*), tantôt inerte ou non-vocalisée (*sākin*)" (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 168); that the segments identified as *ḥarf*s are taken as the most basic building blocks of linguistic expression in ordinary speech as well as in metrically regulated texts becomes readily apparent from the very first lines of an elementary treatise of grammar or prosody: in his commentary on *al-'Āǧurrūmiyya*, 'Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (1816-1886) states that "linguistic expression is the sound containing some of the *ḥurūf ḥiǧā'iyya*", i.e. the discrete sounds whose graphic counterparts are listed in the alphabet (*al-lafẓu huwa ṣ-ṣawtu l-muštamilu 'alā ba'ḍi l-ḥurūfi l-hiǧā'iyyati* – Daḥlān 2014: 14), and in a modern handbook of poetic metrics, the definition of *wazn*, here "meter", is formulated as follows: *waznu l-bayti huwa silsilatu s-sawākini wa-l-mutaḥarrikāti l-mustantaǧatu minhu, muǧazza'atan 'ilā mustawayātin muḫtalifatin mina l-mukawwināti*, "the meter of a verse is the series of quiescent and moving [*ḥarf*s] that can be abstracted from it, divided into different levels of constituents" (Ḥarakāt 1998: 7). Given the complexity of the concept, we will use the Arabic term in this paper.

verses that one usually finds in Arabic treatises (a mixture of hemistichs out of which some are taken from preexistent verses composed in the respective meters, some are created specifically for the purpose of exemplifying them and contain references to their names, some are Qur'anic passages that happen to reflect them and, finally, some are made up of the dummy words containing the consonants *f*, *ʿ* and *l* that are typically used for representing metrical feet); next, the sixteen meters [4] are organized into five groups, according to what he considers to be their basic metrical configuration: iambic, antispastic, amphibrachic, anapaestic and ionic (Wright 1997: 358-368). It is the selection of these bases and the manner in which they are projected onto the meters belonging to their respective groups that are particularly revealing of the Graeco-Latin background shaping Wright's understanding of Arabic metrics. For instance, the metrical foot, thrice repeated in a hemistich, of the *raǧaz*, the first meter of the "iambic" group, whose structure is the most easily pliable so as to fit the iambic character ascribed to it, is said to be a diiamb, a foot that consists of two iambs, u – u –. However, if we look at the basic representation of the foot in strictly ḫalīlian terms, we can see that it does not completely coincide with a diiamb: the foot is, in fact, mnemotechnically rendered as *mustafʿilun*, which means that its primary (or "ideal"/"theoretical" – Stoetzer 1998: 622) syllabic structure is – – u – (or, in Western terms, it contains a spondee and a iamb) [5]. The purely iambic form, embodied by the diiamb, is achieved by selecting one of the possible actualizations of the foot, which is realized, in this system, by performing on the first of the two "light" (ḫafīf) *sabab*s [6] coming before the *watid*, a *ziḥāf* [7] that consists in dropping its final *ḥarf* (which is

---

[4] For lists and descriptions of the sixteen meters of the ḫalīlian tradition (fifteen of which are reputedly identified as such by the philologist al-Ḫalīl b. ʾAḥmad al-Farāhīdī (*c*. 100/718-175/791) himself, the one who is credited with the establishment of poetic prosody as a discipline, whereas the sixteenth, the *mutadārik/mutadārak*, is said to be added by his successor and Sībawayhi's disciple, al-ʾAḫfaš al-ʾAkbar (d. 825~835) – Weil 1913: 464-465, Stoetzer 1998: 619), see Bohas & Paoli 1997: 19, 59-128 (where a Western perspective that is detached from the Graeco-Latin heritage can be found), and ʾAbū Ġarbiyya 2018: 35-206, Fāḫūrī 1987: 19-119 and Ḥarakāt 1998: 54-154 (where one can find a traditional Arab perspective).

[5] The maximally extended forms of the metrical feet, wherein the light *sabab*s, which are the most frequent, are realized as long syllables, are taken to be their basic, primary forms: "[t]he level of representation of the metre noted by al-Xalīl is only made up of *watid* and long syllables (except as regards circle 2 [i.e. the circle in which the ḫalīlian system includes the two meters containing heavy *sabab*s, the *wāfir* and the *kāmil*])" – Bohas et al. 2017: 143 (see also note 6); this is also reflected in the terms used to qualify these forms in Arabic handbooks and treatises: *namūḏaǧī*, "exemplary" (Ḥarakāt 1998: 24), *ṣaḥīḥ*, "complete", *sālim*, "sound"/"integral" (Fāḫūrī 1987: 120).

[6] The quantitatively variable and (mostly) invariable parts of a metrical foot are known as *sabab* (non-specialized meaning: "rope") and, respectively, *watid* (non-specialized meaning: "peg") – Ḥarakāt 1998: 16; the type of *sabab* known as "light" (ḫafīf), a long syllable (or, in traditional Arabic terms, a moving *ḥarf* followed by a quiescent one – a long vowel is analyzed in the Arabic grammatical tradition as what would represent, in contemporary Western terms, a sequence covering a vowel and a glide of the same quality (in the case of *a*, the "glide" is an "'alif', most likely interpretable as a lenited glottal stop): *ā* = *a'*, *ī* = *iy*, *ū* = *uw* –, which means that there is no distinction between the sequences cvc, i.e. a long closed syllable, and cv̄, i.e. a long open syllable, the latter being equated with the former – Weil 1913: 463, Bohas & Paoli 1997: 142, Bohas et al. 2017: 98-99), is found in all the meters, and the type known as "heavy" (ṯaqīl), a sequence of two short syllables (or of two moving *ḥarf*s), is only found in two (the *kāmil* and the *wāfir*); the *watid* is a sequence of two syllables of different quantities arranged in either order, the most frequent type of *watid* being the one where the short syllable comes first (ʾAbū Ġarbiyya 2018: 17-22, Fāḫūrī 1987: 14-16, Ḥarakāt 1998: 19-20, Bohas et al. 2017: 143).

[7] The *ziḥāf* is an operation that can be performed on the *sabab*s, the variable parts of a foot, and leads to their contraction, either by dropping the quiescent *ḥarf* coming at the end of a light *sabab* (which has the

---

also the second *ḥarf* of the foot, or the *s* in *mustafʿilun*), an operation known as *ḫabn* (non-specialized meaning: "folding", "contracting")[8]. It is through this operation that the foot becomes a "diiamb" (symbolized by the form *mutafʿilun*). We can thus clearly see that, were it not for the strong influence of Graeco-Latin metrics, there would be no particular reason why Wright (or any other scholar having a similar take on the issue) should choose, of all the possible actualizations of this foot, the one that happens to have this structure (by looking at this case in isolation, one might be left with the impression that perhaps it is the form of the *watid* that has offered an incentive for going in this direction and regularizing the structure of the whole foot by choosing a form of the variable part of the foot identical with it, but it is just a coincidence, because a look at all the basic forms will quickly make it clear that the only criterion for selecting one particular actualization of a foot as the basic configuration of a group of meters is its coincidence with a foot sanctioned by the Graeco-Latin tradition: the antispast, u – – u, for instance, the basis of the second group, in which only one meter, the *hazağ*, is included – Wright 1997: 363, is an actualization of the foot *mafāʿīlun*, u – – –, whose *watid* comes at the beginning and is followed by two variable syllables representing the light *sabab*s, the second one of which is realized here as short, and the same kind of selection of actualizations that conveniently match Graeco-Latin meters is transparent in the case of all the other bases). Wright mentions what he takes as alternative actualizations of the diiamb together with its basic form in the case of the *rağaz* – "the basis is u – u – (diiamb), which may be varied in one or two places by the substitution of – – u – or – u u –, and more rarely u u u – (ibidem: 362)" –, and a synthesis of all the information he provides about this meter and the others, together with the adoption of the syllable as a minimal unit, strongly suggests that Wright, and any other philologist sharing his view, already had at their disposal the primary data and theoretical tools necessary for reaching the conclusion that, in those portions of the feet that

---

effect of shortening the long syllable that the light *sabab*, in its maximal and theoretically original actualization, represents – cvc > cv) or by stripping the moving *ḥarf* coming at the end of a heavy *sabab* of its vowel (which entails the substitution of two short syllables with a single long one – cvcv > cvc); the other type of operation that can modify a foot is named *ʿilla* (primary meaning: "illness"), and there are a few differences that set the two operations apart: the *ʿilla* generally modifies the last foot of a hemistich, unlike the *ziḥāf*, that can modify any foot, it can alter the *watid*, the part of the foot that is invariable in the rest of the hemistich, and it must, in principle, be constantly present, in the same position, in all the verses of a composition, a condition that the *ziḥāf* does not have to fulfill (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 155-162, Fāḫūrī 1987: 120-126, Ḥarakāt 1998: 34-45); Bohas & Paoli name the first operation *ziḥāfa*, perhaps following Weil (cf. Weil 1913: 464); however, we have not been able to find this form of the term in any Arabic or other Western source; we can only guess that it is an erroneous back-formation from the plural *ziḥāfāt*, which does appear quite often, perhaps more so than the singular sometimes, in texts theorizing about the subject (as an example, in the chapter on metrics of the book *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, only the plural *ziḥāfāt* is used – Bohas et al. 2017: 145-148); the term is, in fact, a verbal noun corresponding to the verb *zāḥafa* (primary meaning: "to draw near"; Weil translates the noun as "relaxation" – Weil 1913: 464, while Stoetzer tentatively translates it as "dragging gait" – Stoetzer 1998: 622).

8   Each *ziḥāf* has a distinctive name, according to the position of the affected *ḥarf* within the foot (Fāḫūrī 1987: 121-123, Bohas & Paoli 1997: 156-158, Bohas et al. 2017: 145-147); there are contemporary Arab reference works that do away with listing these terms and, while acknowledging their existence, deem it possible to account for the variations associated with the *ziḥāf* just by relying on its general definition and properties (cf. Ḥarakāt 1998: 40).

are occupied by light *sabab*s, long and short syllables alternate freely[9] (with some restrictions in specific cases that do not invalidate the general principle – Bohas & Paoli 1997: 56-58), and in the intervals occupied by heavy *sabab*s the free alternation occurs between a sequence of two short syllables and a long syllable[10]. By placing all variations at the same level, such a perspective has the capacity to delegitimize the idea of there being a certain basic or primary form of the foot, in regard to which all the others are supposed to be particular actualizations, and thus to render the issue of identifying such a form pretty much moot and inconsequential, at least for purely practical purposes[11]. If, instead of taking such a step, Wright cast aside the basic forms of the feet as they are posited by the Arabic tradition only to replace them with other forms, that happen to coincide with Graeco-Latin meters, it is in large part due to the great normative force of the models offered by European classical studies in this field of research.

This situation, telling as it is for how a whole era[12] witnessed, in the study of Arabic poetic metrics in Europe, the influence of the locally authoritative poetic tradition, is not

---

[9] Bohas & Paoli (1997: 20) assign to the 1920s and 1930s the first sources that reflect the adoption, in Western academia, of the view that the feet of Arabic meters contain positions that can be occupied by either long or short syllables.

[10] Bohas & Paoli (1997: 53-54, 75-80, 106-108) refer to this particular kind of alternation by using the term "diaeresis" ("diérèse", from Gr. *diaíresis*, lit. "taking apart", "division"); the choice of terms here is quite interesting, because it does not reflect very faithfully their general theoretical stance, which does not intentionally favor one actualization over the other: the explanation they provide for the conventional notation of the position where such an alternation is allowed, a capital X, is "syllabe variable pouvant être réalisée comme deux brèves [vv] ou une longue [–]" (p. 20), a formula that reflects more or less the idea of free alternation; at the same time, the term "diaeresis" seems to suggest that the process referred to here is not as much an alternation as it is a unidirectional operation, in which one long syllable is "taken apart", "divided" into two separate, short syllables, and thus the long syllable implicitly becomes the basis; if this were so, it would be a departure from the Arabic traditional theory, which grants this status to the sequence of two short syllables (see note 7), but only inasmuch as it would substitute one basis for the other.

[11] The attachment to the idea of identifying basic forms that coincide with Graeco-Latin meters might seem all the more striking if one thinks that circumventing these bases in favor of assuming the existence of positions that can be occupied by syllables of either quantity, like later theoreticians have done, would not have necessitated a complete detachment from the frame of Graeco-Latin theory, which does operate with the concept of "anceps", defined as a "space for either one short or one long syllable in a metrical unit" (Halporn et al. 1963: 121), and whose use could be extended so as simply label as anceps all those positions where syllables of either quantity can be placed. This is, in fact, not to be wondered at, because this concept was indeed involved already in the explanations of Heinrich Ewald, the author who has, very early on, so thoroughly reshaped the description of Arabic meters along the lines of the Graeco-Latin tradition that he has been deemed worthy of "tak[ing] equal rank to al-Khalil" (Weil 1913: 466): "sunt autem in his pedibus syllabae, quae quo valore ponantur poetarum relictum est arbitrio, *ancipites* vulgo dictae", "there are however in these feet syllables, commonly called *anceps*, that have been left at the poets' discretion as to the value with which they should be placed" (Ewald 1825: 24); and yet it did not suggest to the author the slightest departure from systematically using Graeco-Latin terms, concepts and, most importantly, meters in describing the Arabic metric system.

[12] The period when the Graeco-Latin influence was prevalent in descriptions of the Arabic metrical system lasted from the 1820s to the 1960s (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 163); the interactions between the authors that wrote on the subject are quite complex, ranging from acknowledged influences to disapprovals and recurrent reassessments (the article "'Arūd" by Gotthold Weil in *The Islamic Encyclopedia* (1913) provides an account of the disputes going on up until its publication and, at the same time, offers the author's own contribution as an active participant in the debate); the grip of the Graeco-Latin tradition

necessarily reflective of the most impactful ways in which inputs from different traditions
and theories have been grafted on the understanding of the formal features of Arabic poetry.
After all, the fact that both systems share the core feature of relying, either directly or
convertibly, on syllable quantity neutralizes the practical consequences of applying the
theoretical frame of one to the other in settling an issue such as what the primary forms of
the feet, from which their variations are presumedly derived, might be. These projections
become more conspicuous and more heavily felt when they involve aspects that have a
direct bearing on a most practical corollary of any theory about Arabic versification,
namely on how Arabic poetry is actually supposed to be recited. The formal features that
tend to be impacted in such situations are suprasegmental and thus the field that generally
covers them is prosody, provided that the term be associated here not with the meaning
ascribed to it in poetics, where it can sometimes be used interchangeably with "metrics",
but with the meaning it carries in linguistics (which is also the one it is meant to carry in
the title of this paper). The Western philologists' conjectures about the prosodic
specificities of Arabic verse were stimulated in great part by the absence of references to
them in the works of Arab metricians, a fact that is unsurprisingly concordant with a lack
of preoccupation with prosody in the Arabic linguistic tradition in general (with one
notable exception, the strict regulations to which the recitation of the Qur'an is subjected
in accordance with a tradition passed down both orally and in writing – Bohas et al. 2017:
96-97). Stress, the prosodic feature that is almost by default approached in any
contemporary general reference work on a given language, is not conceptualized by
premodern Arab linguists[13] (there is an unmistakably coherent picture emerging from the
absence of both syllable and stress from the array of concepts that the Arabic linguistic
tradition operates with, since they are both situated at the same level of complexity in a
phonological system, the stress of a word being assigned to one of its syllables – cf. Kager
2007: 344)[14]. All this was perceived by the earliest Western authors as an oversight that
needed to be compensated, and the diversity of the hypotheses that they came up with
speaks for their personal backgrounds and preferences and, on a wider scope, for the
tendencies prevalent at different stages in their research area. The existence, in the prosody
of Arabic poetry, of metrical stress (also known, in classical terminology, as ictus[15] –

---

and its premises was progressively loosened as time went by, and Wright's classification of meters can
itself function as an example of this evolution, being, as he himself acknowledges, "adopted" from
Ewald (Wright 1997: 361) and, at the same time, closer, at least in Bohas & Paoli's view (Bohas &
Paoli 1997: 171), to the Arabic theory.

[13] *'ahmala l-'ulamā'u l-'arabu dirāsata n-nabri 'ihmālan tāmman, wa-li-hāḏā fa-'innanā lā nastaṭī'u 'an
natabayyana mawāḍi'a n-nabri fi l-'uṣūri l-'islāmiyyati l-'ūlā*, "Arab scholars completely neglected
the study of stress, which is why we cannot identify the positions of the stress in the earliest ages of
Islam" (Muḫtār 'Umar 1988: 120).

[14] "It is well known that the Arabic linguistic tradition, beginning by Sībawayhi, has ignored the question
of lexical stress, perhaps because the same tradition does not even seem to have worked on the concept
of syllable" (Mion 2011: 344).

[15] The existence of ictus has been a matter of debate in European classical poetics as well, as it is stated
in the following definition: "[ictus is a]n emphasis in pronunciation which, as some modern metricians
believe, is to be placed above the arsis (or on the first syllable of the arsis) of every metron or foot; e.g.,
in a dactyl the ictus is regarded as falling upon the first syllable, and in an iamb upon the second syllable;
[w]hether Greek and Latin poetry actually had ictus or not is still controversial (Halporn et al. 1963:
125); for the meanings of "arsis" (and "thesis"), see note 16.

primary meaning in Latin: "hit", "blow"), was often the focal point of the debates, with the first generations of interested Arabists practically taking for granted the idea that the recitation of Arabic poetry must have been punctuated by a regularly distributed beat.

One step in this direction was taken by Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), who relied on the principle that the cadence of the verse was marked by arsis (from Gr. *ársis*, primary meaning: "lifting", "raising") and thesis (from Gr. *thésis*, primary meaning: "placing", "setting", "putting (down)")[16], and his definition of "rhythm", which is equated with "measure" (Lat. *numerus*, i.e. "cadence" in musical terms or "metrical foot" in poetical terms), centers around these concepts: "rythmum (sic) (quem Latini numerum dixere) constat aequabili arseos et theseos vicissitudine contineri", "it is well known that rhythm (which the Latins have called 'measure') consists of a uniform alternation of the *arsis* and the *thesis*" (Ewald 1825: 19). The distribution of these two prosodic features was supposedly conditioned by syllable quantity: "[h]abetque hoc Arabum poesis non tam singulare (idem enim ab initio Graecis fuit), quam constans ubique et immutatum, ut sicut rei indoles suadet, arsis syllabis longis insigniatur, thesis brevibus", "and the poetry of the Arabs has this [property] which is not so much unique (for the Greeks had it from the beginning) as it is pervasive and invariable, that, as the very nature of the phenomenon requires, the arsis be assigned to (lit. "marked by") long syllables and the thesis to short ones" (ibidem: 20). It is not entirely clear how the arsis is supposed to be phonetically realized in Ewald's mind: some of the terms that he uses (like the verbs "tollo", "to raise", "surgo", "to rise") seem to suggest a higher pitch, but terms like the noun "nisus", "pressure", or the adjective "remissior", "more relaxed", used to describe the realization of the thesis, on the other hand, make it hard to entirely rule out an increase in volume, i.e. a stress (or dynamic) accent, whereas an adjective like "elatior", the comparative of "elatus", which mostly means "elevated", but is, nevertheless, the passive participle of the verb "effero", whose primary meaning is "to bring forth", leaves some room for ambivalence; it is, of course, possible (and perhaps safer) to altogether abstain from projecting such a

---

[16] This pair of concepts initially emerged in the field of music and was subsequently taken over by poetics as well; the following passage reflects the "traditional" view on the primary meanings of the corresponding terms and their semantic evolution: "[t]hese terms refer originally to the 'raising' and 'lowering' respectively of the foot in Greek dancing and beating rhythm; [l]ate Roman metricians later transferred the terms to the raising and lowering of the voice; [s]cholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries called *arsis* that part of the metron or foot which is normally occupied by long elements and thesis the part normally occupied by short elements; [t]hus, a dactyl was described as a 'falling' rhythm, because in it the arsis precedes the thesis" (Halporn et al. 1963: 122); a more recent study of both Greek and Latin sources has reached the conclusion that, in the field of music and musical rhythmics, these terms did not exclusively designate, initially, the "raising" and, respectively, "lowering" of the foot in dancing (which would make the thesis the marked element in a sequence reuniting the two) – and the marked element was not signaled by means of dynamic accentuation –, but denoted, in broader physical terms, a general "upward motion" (Lynch 2016: 496), and, respectively, "stillness" (ibidem: 500) and were realized, phonetically, as a high and, respectively, low pitch, with the arsis being the marked element (ibidem: 499-501); as for the scansion of Latin verse, which was accompanied by audible and physical signals mostly in didactical contexts, it indeed entailed realizing the arsis, the marked element, "with a raise in the voice's sound" (ibidem: 510), but the arsis and the thesis had come to occupy invariable positions within a foot, with the arsis marking the foot's beginning and the thesis coming at the end (ibidem: 511-512); Ewald clearly reflects, by connecting the distribution of arsis and thesis with syllable quantity, the understanding of these notions that was prevalent in his days.

distinction on his text. The interval allotted to the arsis is marked by an ictus, an idea
reflected by his description of the iamb (a foot that he treats at this stage as the fundamental
unit of Arabic metrics, a position which he later backs down from – Weil 1913: 466) as
being made up of "two syllables, the latter of which, being marked by the ictus, is long,
and the former, placed by its side, is pronounced faster" ("syllabae duae, quarum posterior
quia ictu insignitur, longa est, prior huic opposita celerius pronunciatur" – Ewald 1825:
21). The definition of rhythm clearly states that the arsis and the thesis are supposed to
alternate, which means that the sequences where the conditions for this alternation are not
met from his perspective (more exactly, where two or more long syllables or three short
syllables are found side by side) pose a problem that needs to be addressed. The solution is
found in relativizing the power of the arsis when two long syllables coexist in the same foot
as a general principle, even if they are not contiguous, by postulating that "in a foot
containing two long syllables, nature itself requires that one or the other be less elevated
by the power of the arsis" ("in pede duas syllabas longas complectente hoc ipsa natura
fer[t], ut alterutra arseos valore minus tollatur" – ibidem: 25); conversely, in the rather rare
situations where three short syllables are in immediate succession, the first one qualifies
for being marked with an arsis, because it is automatically "prolonged" ("producitur"), also
by virtue of the very "nature" of things, "which does not allow three syllables, all initially
short, to be brought together" ("quae tres syllabas ab initio omnes breves legi non sinit" –
ibidem: 26). This is when the quantitative variability of syllables in certain positions, which
does not escape Ewald (see note 11), comes in handy, because he takes this variability as a
proof that in those positions the arsis can be converted into a (quasi-)thesis and, more rarely,
the thesis can be promoted to the status of an arsis (ibidem: 24-29).

Music was even more overtly embraced as a source of inspiration for filling the void
left by the absence of explicit references to linguistic prosody in traditional Arabic poetics
by Stanislas Guyard (1846-1884), who constantly uses musical notation for explaining
what he thinks is the prosodic contour of the metrically regulated sequences he subjects to
his analysis. Already at this early stage he bemoans the excessive reliance of his
predecessors on Western classical metrics (Guyard 1877: 2) and, establishing, as a premise
for his theory, the existence of a close connection between music and linguistic prosody
(ibidem: 4-5), he adopts a maximally rigorist view on what qualifies for regularity and
symmetry, taking the uneven dimensions of the feet in some of the meters or the
quantitatively variable syllables in some positions as proof that the traditional, either Arab
or Western, sources cannot convincingly claim that the system as they present it is regular
and, hence, musical[17] (ibidem 1877: 37-40). The fundamental concepts that he operates
with are the equivalents of Ewald's arsis and thesis, the "downbeat", "temps fort", and the
"upbeat", "temps faible", that coexist within a musical bar, or measure, and he assumes
that words are to be treated, from a rhythmical point of view, as sequences equally divided

---

[17] "Les métriciens arabes ont beau nous dire que la métrique et la musique sont sœurs, que Khalîl découvrit
les lois de la versification en entendant à Baṣrah le marteau d'un forgeron tomber en cadence sur
l'enclume, on se prend à croire qu'ils ont rêvé tout cela quand on jette seulement les yeux sur les
schémas transcrits à l'européenne d'un *Radjaz*, d'un *Ṭawîl* ou de tout autre mètre. Les mots *musique*,
versification éveillent dans l'esprit certaines notions de régularité, d'ordre sévère, qui paraissent
singulièrement violées dans la prosodie arabe" (Guyard 1877: 37-38).

between them (ibidem: 21-25), so that the rhythm of a word is "le rapport de quantité établi entre ses syllabes par le temps fort et le temps faible" (ibidem: 25; at this point, it is worth mentioning that he does not single out languages that have, like Arabic, phonological and phonotactical systems relying on vowel and, respectively, syllable quantity, but sketches a unified theory of rhythm and prosody that is supposedly appliable to any language, the examples adduced in the introductory chapter being taken from a number of languages, including French). The ictus marks the interval occupied by the "temps fort" (ibidem: 17); it is realized as a stress accent (ibidem: 15) – unlike Ewald, Guyard clearly distinguishes between pitch accent and stress accent (ibidem: 14-15) –, and the interval ascribed to a "temps fort" is a long syllable[18] (ibidem: 17). His skepticism towards the accuracy of both Arab and Western descriptions of the system does not extend to the system itself, which he does believe is characterized by a regularity that must have been aurally perceived by the Arabs, who did not have the completely suitable theoretical tools for describing it (ibidem: 40-41). One element of their description is, however, taken as a foundation for his argumentation and a reflection of some of their intuitions: the division of the verse into feet, which were, in turn, represented by "*mots* empruntés à la technique grammaticale" (ibidem: 41), a fact that he takes as proof that the verse was perceived as "un groupe de complexes, isolés les uns des autres" (ibidem: 42). This division of the verse into groups of syllables whose representation is, in the metricians' convention, similar to that of words in the general grammatical tradition suggests to Guyard that metrical feet must share with ordinary words rhythmical and prosodic features that make them approachable as if they were, themselves, actual words (ibidem: 43-44). This, in turn, justifies, for him, taking the basic forms of the feet (which he names "pieds primitifs" – ibidem: p. 44) as they are envisioned by the Arabic metrical theory (a sign of increased receptiveness, Guyard's declared skepticism notwithstanding, to the premises of Arab theorists, if we remember that Ewald and Wright do not accept these forms at face value) and looking at them through the filter provided by the rules that should apply to words. Much like Ewald, he assumes that the

---

[18] Long syllables are, in fact, called by Guyard not only "longues", but also "fortes", and his choice of terms reflects his specific takes on articulatory phonetics and phonotactics: in consonance with his definition of rhythm as the quantitative ratio established between syllables by the two beats, syllable length becomes rather a consequence than a cause of a syllable falling within the interval allotted to either a "temps fort" or a "temps faible" (hence the metonymical transfer of the adjectives "fort, -e" and "faible" from the beats to the syllables; he also argues that it is under the impact of the ictus, a stress accent, which, unlike the pitch accent, influences the whole syllable, that a syllable is lengthened – Guyard 1877: 18-19; the description of the iamb by Ewald, quoted above, suggests, in less elaborate terms, a similar point of view); when he talks specifically about Arabic meters, he also describes long syllables as "composées", a term used as an alternative to "fermées" (ibidem: 11), in a referral to the Arabic grammatical tradition, which, adopting the *ḥarf* as a minimal phonological unit, invariably sees, in a long syllable, a sequence covering a moving *ḥarf* and a quiescent one (ibidem: 45; see also note 6), a perspective which, while not identical to that of Guyard, is not very far off from it either, as he states, in the introductory chapter, that consonants are, in principle, always followed "d'une voyelle ou d'une résonnance quelconque" and the emission of vowels is preceded and accompanied by a "very light" ("très léger") glide of the same quality (for *i* and *u*) and an "aspiration gutturale" for *a*, the logical outcome of these premises being that any given word can be analyzed as a series of "articulations", each of which consists of a consonant followed by a vowel, and it is these "articulations" that ought to be recognized as actual syllables (ibidem: pp. 7-11).

two beats must alternate (ibidem: 35, 44) and, also in the same vein, that in more extended, polysyllabic words, it is to be assumed that there are more than one "temps fort", but only one of them is the "dominant" one, the other one(s) being "sous-fort" (ibidem: 26, 44). The situations that seem to challenge the alternation principle are addressed by assuming the following: whenever there are three contiguous "temps forts", either within the same foot or straddling the boundary separating two feet, the one in the middle is not really strong, and he finds in the permutations and quantitative variations allowed by the system arguments supporting this assumption (ibidem: 46-47); when only two "temps forts" occur in contiguity, their sequence is expanded by inserting between them a pause functioning as a "temps faible", so that the alternation between beats is secured and, at the same time, every one of the "primitive" feet ends up preserving two "temps forts" (ibidem: 48-51). As for the issue of identifying the dominant "temps fort" of a foot, he shows his preference for the first one, resorting, once more, to the analogy with words, wherein he argues that radicals usually come first and desinences and suffixes come second (ibidem: 61-62).

Finally, in what amounts to yet another proof of increasing openness towards solutions suggested by the Arabic theoretical system itself, Gotthold Weil (1882-1960) incorporates, besides the Arab metricians' segmentation of the verse into feet, an additional element of their theory, namely the distinction between *watid*, the invariable part of the foot, and *sabab*, the variable part (see note 6), into the data he uses in developing his own hypothesis about what might determine the prosodic contour of an Arabic verse. He does agree with the previously mentioned authors on the Arabic metrical system being both quantitative and accentual and on there being an ictus, the central tenet of his theory being that the ictus falls on the *watid*. The arguments brought forth for supporting this idea share with Guyard's reasoning their reliance on an analogy with actual words: the two *sabab*s, corresponding to one long or two short syllables, have the syllabic structure of proclitics or enclitics, that do not carry a stress of their own in the prosody of ordinary speech, whereas the two *watid*s, corresponding to a short syllable followed by a long one and vice versa, have the syllabic structure of words or phonetic sequences that do have, in Weil's view, a stress of their own (Weil 1958 apud Bohas & Paoli 1997: 177-179).

This type of conjecturing, that reflects expectations for there being a specific prosodic system distinguishing the recitation of Arabic poetry from ordinary speech, has been left aside, for the most part, in later works on the subject, and there is now a quasi-consensus about the exclusively quantitative nature of Arabic poetry – Dmitry Frolov, while giving a nod of acknowledgement to the efforts made by those who tried to detect such a system, ultimately dismisses them, stating that "in spite of their ingenious arguments, their theories did not hold; [a]t the end of the 20th century, several scholars independently and almost simultaneously reaffirmed the quantitative character of Arabic metrics" (Frolov 2007: 208). A rebuttal of both Guyard and Weil is offered by Georges Bohas and Bruno Paoli: Guyard's thesis that all feet have two "temps forts", the first of which is always the dominant one, is seen as reductionistic and too restrictive and, moreover, the bidirectional equivalence between words and feet has the inconvenient effect of projecting on words an unnatural stressing pattern, one that is not in agreement with the actual rules governing the placement of stress in Classical Arabic (Bohas & Paoli 1997:

176-177); as for Weil's thesis, it is rejected by questioning the clitic nature of some of his examples, by pointing to the existence of words that contradict his assumptions about what constitutes, in Arabic, a stressed or unstressed word and, in more general terms, by criticizing an insufficient distinction between rhythm and meter (ibidem: 179-180).

A somewhat more sympathetic and accommodating position is expressed by Georges Bohas, Jean-Patrick Guillaume and Djamel Eddine Kouloughli, who, drawing an analogy with the disciplines that regulate the recitation and chanting of the Qur'an, which rely, to a great extent, on an orally transmitted expertise, leave some room for the possibility of finding illuminating data on the matter, pinning their hopes on the existence of an oral "tradition of declaiming poetry" that could provide such data:

"Arabic metrics did not entail the notion of metrical stress (*ictus*). That has distressed a lot of people. Some have concluded, prematurely, that stress played no part in Arabic metrics; others have attempted to find the notion of *ictus* somewhere in the circles and, Heaven knows, at least if we have understood anything, it does not appear there! If the grammarians did not speak about stress, and the metricians did not speak about *ictus*, that need not distress us: these suprasegmental phenomena have been transmitted by oral tradition and it is by referring to it that we can speak about them. Let us compare the metrics with a field in which the oral tradition plays a big part: what would we know of the *tartīl* of the Qur'ān if we had only the reading marks of the Qur'ānic text at our disposal? Or what would we know of the *tajwīd* if we only had specialized treatises? Similarly, there is a tradition of declaiming poetry, and it is by analyzing the suprasegmental phenomena within that framework that we can hope to progress, while, of course, correlating our analysis with the collection of facts which we know, but without asking the Arab grammarians and metricians to treat points which did not fall within their province; that would be as absurd as to reproach specialists of the *naḥw* for not treating figures of speech, when this field belonged to the rhetoricians" (Bohas et al. 2017: 150-151).

This fluctuation is, understandably, not to be found in the writings of Arab philologists, largely because, as we have mentioned before, linguistic prosody was not developed as a discipline in the Arabic linguistic tradition and, therefore, stress and its distribution, either in ordinary speech or in poetry, did not emerge as an object of preoccupation for them. This state of affairs has largely been carrying over into the modern era, with Arab authors describing the Arabic metrical system in a way that closely reflects the traditional and, specifically, ḫalīlian theoretical mindset: we can find in their works, for instance, descriptions of the meters based on the *ḥarf* as a minimal unit (cf. Ḥarakāt 1998: passim, 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: passim) or the grouping of meters into circles, according to the classification system attributed to al-Ḫalīl[19] (cf. 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 315-327). This is not to say that the interest for the acoustic characteristics of recitation and its aesthetic qualities are absent from the minds of Arab authors. On the contrary, the very title of two of the books used for the writing of this paper (*Mūsīqā š-ši'r al-'arabī* – *The* Music *of Arabic Poetry*) bears witness to such an interest, and one can find, in this kind of works,

---

[19] "The original classification of meters incorporated in the *'arūḍ* theory by its author is that of the circles, which are often called 'mysterious'. […] The circle represents the ordered sequence of the *'awtād* and the *'asbāb* […], which has neither a beginning nor an end, and which generates different meters according to the point of departure" (Frolov 2007: 214).

chapters and passages dedicated to the description of those features that are seen as ingredients contributing to the "musicality" and "rhythmicity" of poetic texts. In one of the books bearing the aforementioned title, the one written by Maḥmūd Fāḫūrī, there is a chapter titled *Mūsīqā š-ši'r al-'arabī fī l-qaṣīda at-taqlīdiyya* ("The Music of Arabic Poetry in the Traditional *Qaṣīda*"), wherein we can find an overview of the metrical system and the general features of Arabic poetry aimed at highlighting those elements that contribute to the elevation of a poetic text to a level warranting the listener's enjoyment and appreciation. There are, in the author's view, two opposing overarching qualities that must coexist and balance each other in a poem, regularity and variation. Among the elements providing regularity there are rhythm, *'iqā'* (defined as *tawālī l-ḥarakāti wa-s-sakanāti 'alā naḥwin muntaẓimin* – Fāḫūrī 1987: 164, "the succession of movements and quiescences in a regular manner"), and meter, *wazn* (defined as *maǧmū'u t-taf'īlāti llatī yata'allafu minhā l-baytu* – ibidem: 165, "the totality of the feet that the verse is made of")[20]. These elements need to be balanced by those that provide variation: the first one is an integral part of the metrical system itself, and is represented by the variations of metrical feet obtained by means of the processes known as *ziḥāfāt* and *'ilal* (ibidem: 167-168; see note 7); the second one is the variation of the words' sounds (in the examples discussed by Fāḫūrī a special prominence is given to the distribution of long and short vowels in a way that matches the mood that the verses in question are meant to convey – ibidem: 168-169); the third element is *'inšād*, "declamation", which is explained as "the reading of poetry in accordance with what is required by the meaning" (*qirā'atu š-ši'ri 'alā ḥasabi mā yataṭallabuhū l-ma'nā* – ibidem: 171), and the detailed presentation of what it consists of is of particular interest, because it is clear that what the author has in mind falls well within the scope of linguistic prosody: *wa-l-'inšādu yaqtaḍī ḍ-ḍaġṭa 'alā ba'ḍi l-maqāṭi'i wa-l-kalimāti fī ḫilāli l-bayti, wa-ṭūla ṣ-ṣawti fī ba'ḍi l-kalimāti, wa-qiṣarahū fī l-'uḫrā, wa-'uluwwa ṣ-ṣawti 'awi nḫifāḍahū; wa-kullu ḏālika ya'tamidu 'alā fahmi ma'ānī l-'abyāti, wa-ṣilatihā bi-nafsi ṣāḥibihā...* (ibidem: 172), "declamation requires pressure upon some sections[21] and words

---

[20] Given that feet are, themselves, made up of relatively regular sequences of moving and quiescent *ḥarf*s according to the Arabic metrical theory, we can see how, even if the definition of rhythm, taken in its literality, seems to place more of an emphasis on the distribution of vowels (which does not amount to much in terms of specificity or distinctiveness, because a formula like *ḥarakāt wa-sakanāt* can easily be interpreted as just a metonymy for *mutaḥarrikāt wa-sawākin*, "moving and quiescent (*ḥarf*s)"), the distinction between rhythm and meter, in the absence of other elements (such as those pertaining to linguistic prosody), leaves quite a lot to be desired. This relative closeness between the two concepts might hearken back to the premodern era, when *'īqā'*, "rhythm", emerged as the equivalent, in the field of music, of what *wazn*, "meter", or *'arūḍ*, "metrical system", represented in the field of poetry, as musicians took inspiration from the metrical system of poetry in quantifying the units they were operating with (al-Maqdūd 2019: 123-124), the difference between the two being that rhythm deals with sound in general, while meter operates with the material provided by language (ibidem: 128); in some of the earliest lexicographic sources there is no mention of *'īqā'* as a specialized term related to music, while in others its definition is rather vague; its meaning may be related to the meaning of the verbal nouns *waq'*, "the audible impact of a strike" and/or *tawqī'*, "falling ununiformly on the ground (in reference to rain)" (ibidem: 125-126); in the premodern era, the term was not used, in general, in relation to poetry, or in the works of literary critics (ibidem: 127-131).

[21] It is not entirely clear what is meant by *maqāṭi'* in this context – Fāḫūrī does not use the concept of "syllable", currently designated with the term *maqṭa'* (see note 1), in explaining how the metrical system works, but in this context the term's association with this meaning cannot be completely ruled

inside the verse, the length of the sound in some words, its shortness in others, the height of the sound or its lowness; all this relies on understanding the meanings of the verses and their connection with their author's soul…". The terms *ḍaġṭ*, "pressure" *'uluww*, "height", *inḫifāḍ*, "lowness" suggest that, in strictly physical and acoustic terms, Fāḫūrī might very well be talking, among other things, about stress and pitch accent, but the wider context framing this remark clearly indicates that they are not to be taken as signifying lexical or metrical stress: first of all, the very fact that *'inšād* is listed among the elements providing variation means that it cannot include metrical stress, because this feature, whenever it is found, does not mitigate regularity but, on the contrary, enhances it; nor can it include lexical stress, because the unit of meaning whose interpretation must lie at the basis of the reader's performance is the verse, therefore the "pressures" and "heights" involved in reciting cannot be conditioned by lexical units, but refer instead to modulations of the voice that are dictated, first and foremost, by the reciter's own perception of the verse's meaning. The same goes for the "length" and "shortness" of the sound, which cannot be the phonological length of vowels. Finally, the recitation's dependance on the reciter's intellectual and emotional abilities means that a certain amount of subjectivity is implicit, which drives whatever *'inšād* means here further away from predictability and, ultimately, regularity. All this leads to one inescapable, and fairly obvious, conclusion – the prosodic features that Fāḫūrī talks about here fall under the broad category of intonation. The same idea is supported by another passage, in which an abridged definition of *'inšād* is provided: *murā'āt[u] l-ma'nā wa-n-nabri wa-l-lahǧati 'inda qirā'ati l-qaṣīdati 'aw 'inšādihā* (ibidem: 178), "the observance of meaning and of [the appropriate] inflection and tone when reading or reciting a *qaṣīda*". This definition brings an enticing addition, namely an occurrence of the name *nabr* (primary meaning: "raising"), regularly used for designating "stress" in modern Arabic sources (see note 13), but which in this context, where the same association between meaning and performance is mentioned, clearly does not signify either lexical or metrical stress.

An extensive work on Arabic poetry, titled *al-Muršid 'ilā fahm 'aš'ār al-'arab wa-ṣinā'atihā* and divided into four parts, with the fourth part containing two sections, that was published, in several editions, in five volumes, was penned by the Sudanese writer and philologist 'Abd Allāh aṭ-Ṭayyib (1921-2003). Its purpose is to offer a comprehensive presentation of Arabic poetry and its metric system. While the information included therein is thorough and detailed, the book's layout and content make it look less like a typical handbook and more like a treatise bearing the obvious marks of the author's own, personal takes on its topic. Right from the start a marked and significant difference with the previously mentioned work can be noticed – the definitions and explanations use the concept of "syllable" (*maqṭa'*), which demonstrates the author's exposure to, and receptiveness towards, the influence of Western sources and theories. When introducing meter as one of the two pillars of versification, together with rhyme, he states that "it is usually made up of a number of long and short syllables, arranged in a particular way" (*yatakawwanu 'ādatan min 'adadin mina l-maqāṭi'i ṭ-ṭawīlati wa-l-qaṣīrati munaẓẓamatan bi-ṭarīqatin ḫāṣṣatin* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1970: 13), and then, aware of the possible novelty that this concept might represent for his readers, he explains, in a footnote, the different types

out; even if it were so, the understanding of the passage could still not be convincingly geared towards detecting a reference to lexical or metrical stress.

of syllables by equating each of them with the corresponding moving and quiescent *ḥarf*(s) – he identifies two types of syllables, long and short, further dividing the latter type into two subtypes, the first one being what is usually defined as a long syllable and the second one – the overlong syllable (ibidem). The internal structuring of the field covering the "musicality" and "rhythmicity" of poetry is similar, though not identical, to the one put forth by Fāḫūrī. At the beginning of a chapter titled *'Awzān aš-ši'r wa-mūsīqāhā*, "Poetic meters and their music", in which the predilection of meters for being associated with specific moods and poetic themes (*'aġrāḍ*) is argued for (aṭ-Ṭayyib is not alone in supporting this idea – Fāḫūrī is also one of its proponents and inserts, at the end of each of the chapters in which the sixteen meters are presented and exemplified, a section containing his ideas about what moods the respective meter inspires and what themes it is mostly suited for), the musicality of poetry is said to be provided by two elements: *mūsīqiyyan-i š-ši'ru 'amrāni : an-naġamu l-muntaẓimu, wa-huwa t-taf'īlātu, wa-ġarsu l-'alfāẓi* (ibidem: 72), "musically poetry consists of two elements: regular melody, which is the metrical feet, and the sonority of words". It thus becomes apparent that regularity is provided by "(metrical) feet", i.e. by meter, which no longer shares this specific function with rhythm, while "the sonority of words", *ġars al-'alfāẓ*, is complementary with meter in contributing to poetry's "musical" character. As it turns out, the term *ġars* alone, with no modifiers, is explicitly equated by aṭ-Ṭayyib with the English term "rhythm" and is granted a quite comprehensive scope, that includes meter and rhyme, but also other features – the rhetorical figures *ğinās*, "paronomasia" and *ṭibāq*, "antithesis", word order and the choice of words in general – so that *ġars*, i.e. rhythm, ends up covering all the phenomena that contribute to the musicality of the poetic text – and it is these features, that fall under the category of rhythm besides meter and rhyme, that are taken as a topic for the second part of the book, titled *Fī l-ġars al-lafẓī*, "About verbal sonority" (ibidem: 459), which means that the phrases *ġars al-'alfāẓ* and *al-ġars al-lafẓī* designate all the "musically" and "rhythmically" relevant features that fall outside the boundaries of meter and rhyme. The author submits *ġars* as a successor of sorts for the premodern *faṣāḥa*, "eloquence", that was at the center of Arab rhetoricians' reflections about the criteria for aesthetically evaluating speech, the reason for this proposal being that if a term like *ġars*, or even *ġars* itself, was not included in the specialized terminology of rhetoric, it was only because it would have been too evocative of music, only marginally accepted, back then, as a legitimate part of an Islamically sanctioned culture (ibidem: 459-460). The two concepts overlap to a considerable degree, since the intended meaning of *faṣāḥa* itself is "the resonance of words" (*ranīn al-'alfāẓ* – ibidem: 458), without them being identical, because *faṣāḥa* includes aspects that are closer to style and thus do not fall under the category he calls *ġars* (ibidem: 463). After a lengthy excursus on, and a contribution to, the debates that revolved around the appropriate criteria that should be adopted when looking into the aesthetic properties of words (ibidem: 463-482), aṭ-Ṭayyib argues that beauty is primarily reliant on "harmony" (*insiğām*), that comes, in turn, as a conjunction of "unity" (*waḥda*) and "diversity" (*iḫtilāf*) or "dissimilarity" (*tabāyun*), of "repetition" (*takrār*) and "diversification" (*tanwī'*), with the former set of features characterizing the whole and the latter being characteristic of the details making it up (ibidem: 489-491). In the case of poetry, harmony is realized by the reunion between meter and ordinary speech, each with its own, specific "resonance" (*ranīn*); in more concrete terms, this means that the recitation of a verse, whose structure is already impacted by meter, is not supposed to reflect the

metrical divisions highlighted by scansion, but should be paced by the flow of ordinary speech, with its own, natural pauses and divisions, because otherwise the regularity of meter would be overpowering and monotony would prevail (ibidem: 491-492). At this point, it has already become apparent that meter is considered fully capable, with no additional help, of providing regularity, so much so that it needs to be counterbalanced by the rhythm of ordinary speech. The self-sufficiency of meter in this regard is further highlighted when aṭ-Ṭayyib conjectures that recurrent formulas, or whole verses that, by virtue of their repetition, enhance regularity and are functionally similar to what refrain is in Western poetry, are, in Arabic poetry, a remnant of a more distant stage in its evolution, one in which meter had not yet been fully developed (ibidem: 495-497).

In the book's third part, he reverts to the issue of syllables and their adoption as a theoretical tool for explaining the Arabic metrical system and offers a series of clarifications that contain ampler references to music. He states that by using the syllable – and, more specifically, "long and short syllables" (*al-maqāṭi' al-qiṣār wa-ṭ-ṭiwāl* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 45) –, a theoretical concept borrowed from Western sources, it is possible to simplify the complex terminology surrounding the variations incurred by metrical feet, which is why he chose to integrate it in his presentation, even though the syllable is not capable of fully capturing the musicality of Arabic poetry (ibidem: 44-46). This musicality, aṭ-Ṭayyib claims, was a feature that al-Ḫalīl was well aware of (he is, at the same time, cautious enough not to hype up expectations about the detectability of his musical expertise in the form of the theoretical system that is traditionally ascribed to him: *wa-fī niẓāmi l-ḫalīli llaḏī tabiʿahū, ġayri hāḏā llaḏī yarwūnahū 'anhu, mā yadullu dalālatan wāḍiḥatan 'alā 'idrākihī li-ḥaqīqati n-nisabi z-zamāniyyati wa-l-mūsīqā l-kāminati fī l-'a'ārīḍi* – ibidem: 47, "in al-Ḫalīl's system, the one that he followed, not this one, that they report as belonging to him, there is clear proof that he was aware of the true nature of the temporal proportions and the music that were inherently present in the metrical feet"). The evidence that is still present in the system is said to be represented by the segmentation of the meters into symmetrically positioned feet and the envisioning of "ideal meters" (*'abḥur miṯāliyya* – ibidem), and for whatever shortcomings there may be the blame is laid on al-Ḫalīl's and his successors' formation as grammarians: it is the search for complete regularity, "his habit of bringing the exceptions into conformity with the rules" (*mā ta'awwadahū min 'itbā'i l-qawā'idi š-šawāḏḏa* – ibidem: 48), typical for a grammarian, that made him establish the cumbersomely numerous terms designating the different types of *ziḥāfāt* and *'ilal* that account for the departure of the actual verses from the templates embodied by the "ideal meters" (ibidem: 47-48; leaving aside the issue of the dispensability of these terms, admitted by other modern Arab authors as well – see note 8 – we cannot help but detect at least a whiff of internal contradiction here: on the one hand, aṭ-Ṭayyib takes al-Ḫalīl's positing of ideal forms of the meters as a proof of his musical acumen and presents it in a positive light and, on the other hand, he takes a disparaging look at his efforts of finding a way to reconcile the formal variations exhibited by Arabic verses with these very ideal forms). The connection with music is further explored by looking into the composition of the feet, which are said to be formed by units that are named *ranna*, "sound", "reverberation" (ibidem: 49) or *ḍarba*, "beat" (ibidem: 50), and it ensues from his explanations and exemplifications that they are not identical with the long and short syllables that he uses, along with Western specialists, to symbolize the configuration of the

feet, nor do the syllable quantities in the ideal forms of the feet necessarily reflect the temporal proportions between these units[22] (temporal proportionality is taken as a core feature of the system: *al-wazn*[*u*] *yadūru ‘alā nisabin wa-ḍarabātin lā ‘alā muǧarradi tafʿīlātin maqṭaʿiyyatin* – ibidem: 58, "meter revolves around proportions and beats, not just around syllabic feet"). The interpretation of the term *ziḥāf* enables the author to expound on the meaning of these key terms: whenever a short syllable is substituted for a long one in a *ḍarba*, there is a "silence" or "pause" (*sakta*) coming after the syllable, so that the *ḍarba* is not quantitatively altered – at this point he also makes a brief digression towards the *watid*, which he states was distinguished by Arab metricians because they "wanted […] to communicate something of a melodic nature" (*rāmū nawʿan mina l-bayāni n-naǧmiyyi* – ibidem: 50). All this means that the *ḍarba*s (or *ranna*s) are "temporal gaps the inside of which is occupied by syllables, with no disturbance of the proportional relation [between the *ḍarba*s]" (*faǧawāt*[*un*] *zamāniyyat*[*un*] *taḥillu l-maqāṭiʿu fī ǧawfihā min ǧayri ḫtilālin bi-t-tanāsubi* – ibidem: 51). As for the term *ziḥāf*, it is inspired by the dragging gait of the camel, because, when a *ziḥāf* intervenes, it is "as if the poet, from their perspective, were stricken by a bout of fatigue and dragged the hoof of his speech in order to complete the metrical foot" (*ka-’anna š-šā’ira ‘indahum ’aṣābahū ’iʿyā’un fa-ǧarra firsina kalāmihi ǧarran li-yukmila t-tafʿīlata* – ibidem: 51-52; his interpretation is thus convergent with the translation of the term by Stoetzer – see note 7).

In the first section of the book's fourth part, aṭ-Ṭayyib revisits the meter as one of the factors contributing to the unity of the *qaṣīda*, and some of the ideas he formulates therein throw additional light on his engagement with Western theories about the issue at hand. One particular paragraph, in which he mentions the terminological equivalence between the Arabic *tafʿīla* and the English *foot*, is especially important, because it contains the originally Graeco-Latin names of different feet used in English poetry, together with English words used as examples for them, briefly presented in the author's own words and with his own terminology: the "iambic" foot is exemplified with the word *away*, the "trochaic" one with *father*, the "anapaestic" with the formula *go away* and the "dactylic" with *merrily* (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1990: 42). The pairing of Graeco-Latin terms with English examples is, in a way, symptomatic for the whole book, even if the English language and literature are specifically mentioned here, considering that in numerous other occasions he treats the Western poetic tradition holistically (using the term *’ifranǧī*, "European", originally "Frankish", to designate it), while constantly using English poems and verses,

---

[22] In discussing one of the examples, composed in the meter *raǧaz* (whose foot is, as we have already mentioned, *mustafʿilun*, syllabic configuration: u̲ u̲ u –), he states that the foot of this meter contains three equal time intervals (for which he uses the terms *buʿd*, "dimension", here "interval", and *ḥayyiz*, "extent") and the four *ranna*s are distributed among them so that the first two intervals are occupied by one *ranna* each and the last one is occupied by two *ranna*s; while the quantitative correspondences in the case of the first two intervals do not require much of an explanation – each interval is occupied by one *ranna*, and each *ranna* is filled, in turn, with a long syllable –, the less straightforward correspondence between one interval and two *ranna*s filled with two syllables one of which is long is succinctly explained as follows: *mā ’aḥrā ’an yakūna ’awwaluhumā qaṣīran li-yakūna ’adalla ‘alā t-talāḥuqi* "how appropriate it is for the first one of them (i.e. "of the last two syllables", that actually make up the *watid* of the foot) to be short, so that it may better indicate [their] close succession" (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 49).

not surprisingly composed in accentual verse, to illustrate phenomena or characteristics that he ascribes to this tradition – in the third book, in the previously mentioned context of discussing the suitability of long and short syllables for describing Arabic poetry, he goes as far as to say that syllables "are totally suitable for explaining Western meters" (*ṣaluḥat muṭlaqa ṣ-ṣalāḥiyati fī tawḍīḥi l-'awzāni l-'ifranǧiyyati* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 48). All this strongly suggests that he does not differentiate, in general, between quantitative and accentual metrical systems when it comes to Western poetry, and this is what makes this paragraph all the more remarkable, because here, while he does use the traditional Arabic convention for explaining the syllabic structure of these English words (*fa'ūl* for *away*, *fa'lu* for father, *fa'ilun* for *go away* and *fā'ilu* for *merrily*), which would, by itself, indicate the equation of stressed syllables in English with long ones in Arabic and of unstressed syllables in English with short ones in Arabic, he does not fail to point out that this is just an approximation and that the two languages function differently in this respect: *wa-l-lafẓu l-'inkilīziyyu taḫtalifu ṭarīqatu n-nuṭqi bihī 'ani l-lafẓi l-'arabiyyi wa-'innamā 'aradnā t-taqrība* (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1990: 42), "English words are pronounced differently from Arabic words, but we just wanted an approximation". Even more importantly, he refrains from using the same terminology that he uses for long and short syllables in Arabic, using instead the phrases *maqṭa' šadid*, "strong syllable" and *maqṭa' ḍa'īf*, "weak syllable", for designating stressed and, respectively, unstressed syllables in English. This distinctive set of terms proves that, in this instance, he no longer amalgamates quantitative and accentual systems and implicitly recognizes that they are to be set apart from each other (we do not exclude the possibility that he had only gradually come to the realization of these differences, because there are other instances where, in later parts of his book, he reacts to new works that he comes across in the meantime, to criticisms elicited by opinions expressed by him in earlier parts, which suggests that his book was a work in progress and the evolutions of his views on different matters did not lead to emendations of previously published parts, but were signaled as he went along writing the book). At the same time, it is equally significant that we do not have, even here, explicit references to linguistic prosody or to stress, either lexical or metrical, and this, in spite of the fact that the author is obviously open to Western concepts and, more than that, in some points his ideas are convergent with some elements of the theories put forth by Western authors: like Guyard, he resorts to the insertion of "pauses" in order to achieve the desired form of a metrical sequence, and his remark about the Arab metricians having singled out the *watid* because it must have a "melodic" quality is, of course, reminiscent of Weil's theory (this is not to say that these convergences provide a sufficiently solid ground for entertaining the thought of actual influences having been exerted by these authors, especially in the case of his passing, extremely brief digression about the *watid*). He was, it seems, either oblivious to the existence of linguistic prosody or, if he ever took notice of it, which is not unlikely in light of his discernible interactions with Western sources, was reluctant to engage with it and ultimately chose to stay away from it. In any case, his obvious interest for "musicality" and "rhythm" notwithstanding, his openness to Western ideas and theories does not extend to this discipline and the tools it might offer him for conducting his analysis.

These writings give us just a glimpse into the vast Arabic literature concerning the Arabic metrical system, but they are illustrative, to a considerable degree, of how the rhythm of Arabic poetry is generally treated by modern Arab authors in the absence of

concepts pertaining to linguistic prosody, whether their perspective is shaped in its entirety by the Arabic linguistic tradition or has been exposed to Western influences. We certainly do not rule out the possibility that lexical or metrical stress be explicitly referenced by Arab authors in their treatment of this topic, but this is not something we have as yet been able to find.

Up until this point, we have been approaching the prosodic contour of Arabic verse and the ideas entertained about it exclusively through theoretical works about the subject, but this is certainly not the only possible path for such an investigation. A look into the direct, practical engagement with Arabic verses and poems is also possible and should be capable of producing meaningful results. One type of such engagement, which is still likely to be more or less theoretically conditioned, is the translation of Arabic poetry in forms meant to imitate, as faithfully as possible, the metrical structure of the original texts, and another one is, naturally, the recitation of Arabic poems by native Arabic speakers.

The metrically imitative translations[23] we will be looking at are exhibited by two works going back to the end of the XIXth and the first half of the XXth century, a period marked, as we have already mentioned, by the popularity of the thesis that Arabic poetry must have had a specific prosodic contour involving metrical stress: Charles James Lyall's *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry* (1930, first published in 1885) and Reynold A. Nicholson's *A Literary History of the Arabs* (2004 (1930), first published in 1907). In the introduction to his book, Lyall (1845-1920) states the following: "[i]n the majority of the translations contained in this volume an attempt has been made to imitate the metres of the original Arabic" (Lyall 1930: xlv), and signals that he is fully aware of the fundamental difference between the Arabic and the English metrical systems: "Arabian prosody in its general features resembles that of Greek and Latin: that is to say, the prosodial value of syllables depends not upon their accent, as in English, but upon the quantity or position of their vowels"[24] (ibidem: xlvi). Some of his theoretical stances can be deduced from the actual notation of the metrical structure of the meters, because his reasonings are sparingly described in explicit statements. He embraces the existence of the ictus as a matter of fact, as it is apparent from the accents placed on the syllables that are supposed to bear it. Within any given foot, the invariably stressed syllable is the long syllable of the *watid*, but it is not uniquely distinguished in this manner, because in the longer, tetrasyllabic feet, that contain two *sabab*s, there is also a second accent, placed on the second closest syllable to the stressed one within the *watid*. In the case of the meter *basīṭ*, in the second and fourth foot

---

[23] In the context of assessing the translation of the *Mu'allaqāt* into different European languages, Pierre Larcher tentatively links the productivity of translations in poetic form to the degree of compatibility between the types of versification characteristic of the source and target languages respectively: "[l]a traduction poétique est un genre où se sont particulièrement illustrés les Allemands […m]ais les traducteurs de langue anglaise ont aussi beaucoup donné […]; [e]n revanche, les Français semblent plus réticents, peut-être (ce n'est qu'une hypothèse) en raison de la nature syllabique du vers français, qui le rend moins aisément compatible avec le système arabe que les vers allemands ou anglais, de type quantitatif-accentuel" (Larcher 1999: 131) and further states, in a footnote, that "aucun système métrique n'est pur" (ibidem); for the sake of the present discussion, we will not address the issue of whether English versification also has, as Larcher claims, a quantitative dimension, especially since the authors whose translations we are investigating operate on the assumption that it is accentual.

[24] This is obviously a faulty presentation of the basis of the Arabic metrical system because it fails to capture the crucial distinction between vowel and syllable quantity.

of the hemistich (*fā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u̱ u –), where the long and stressed syllable of the *watid* occupies the last position, he assumes there is a "secondary stress" (ibidem: li), graphically marked with a grave accent, on the first syllable: "[i]n the second and fourth foot of this metre (u u –), the Arabs are accustomed to lay a somewhat strong stress on the first short syllable (which in the second foot may be a long one)" (ibidem: l-li). A secondary stress is also placed on the first syllable of the first and third feet of the *ḫafīf* and on the first syllable of all the feet of the *madīd* (ibidem: li-lii). He does not elaborate on the reasons why these syllables should bear a secondary stress, but by looking at the scansion of one hemistich of each of the respective meters (*basīṭ*: u̱ ú u –́ / ù̱ u̱ –́ / u̱ –́ u –́ / ù̱ u –́; *ḫafīf*: ù̱ u –́ – / u̱ –́ u –́ / ù̱ u –́ –; *madīd*: ù̱ u –́ – / ù̱ u̱ –́ / ù̱ u –́ –) it becomes more than plausible that the reason for the secondary nature of their stress is their coming, either once or twice, in direct contiguity with stressed syllables of the adjacent feet (the first syllable of the second foot of the *madīd* does not face this situation, but it is possible that the secondary stress that it bears is carried over from the *basīṭ*, whose second foot is identical, since Lyall considers the *madīd* "a sort of compound of [the *ḫafīf* and the *basīṭ*]" – ibidem: lii). Here is the scansion and the metrically imitative translation by Lyall of the verse he uses for exemplifying the meter *basīṭ* (the transcription from Arabic is ours):

u – u – / u u –́ / – –́ u –́ / u u –́ // – –́ u –́ / u u –́ / – –́ u –́ / u u –́

wa-'inna 'aš'ara baytin 'anta qā'iluhū / baytun yuqālu 'iḏā 'anšadtahū ṣadaqā

Of áll the vérses which thoú hast máde the faírest in praíse, / is thát whereóf, when they heár, men sáy, yea, thát is the Trúth (ibidem: l)

and here is the English verse by which he intends to imitate the secondary stress that he claims to exist in the same meter:

And wélcome thoú whèn the wínds blew shríll in dárk wìntertíde (ibidem: li).

It seems, based on these scansions and remarks, that, unlike Ewald, Lyall accepts the coexistence of two stresses, or ictuses, in one foot, but he is still committed to the general principle of alternation between stressed and unstressed intervals and, like both Ewald and Guyard, has a problem especially with stressed syllables appearing side by side. As for the rendition of Arabic verses into English, the transition from one system of versification to another is, for him, not a drastic one, given that the Arabic system itself is treated by him, in practice, as a mixed one, and thus all he has to do is make the positions of the metrical stress in the Arabic original be matched by those of the lexical stress (that also happens to be enhanced by intonation) in the English translation.

A less theoretically conscious and more intuitive approach to metrically imitative translation is exhibited by Nicholson (1868-1945), who offers, in the chapter of his book dedicated to pre-Islamic poetry, a number of translations that are transparent or even explicit attempts at replicating in English the Arabic versification, whose quantitative nature is obviously not lost on him ("all the metres are quantitative, as in Greek and Latin" – Nicholson 2004 (1930): 75). He resorts to a method that resembles Lyall's, inasmuch as it also consists of matching the positions of stressed syllables in English with the positions of metrically salient syllables in Arabic. What is less clear in Nicholson's case is how these syllables are identified, because he is stingier with theoretical remarks than even Lyall is. It is most likely that he is, at least in intention, tributary to Lyall, because he mentions him precisely in connection with his aforementioned introduction about meters (ibidem). In an attempt to clarify his method, we will be looking at some verses of the translation of a poem

by the pre-Islamic poet Ta'abbaṭa Šarran, in relation to which he states that he "endeavored
to suggest as far as possible the metre and rhythm of the original" (ibidem: 97). The
translation is preceded by the specification of the meter (which is the *madīd*) and of this
meter's scansion: u̱ u – – / u̱ u – / – u – – (ibidem: 98). As we can see, the scansion does
not include any accents, but the presence of metrical stress in his theoretical background
cannot be ruled out, especially if we take into account his reference to Lyall in this context
as well (he says, in a footnote, that in translating the poem he has followed Lyall's
"masterly interpretation" – ibidem: 97) and also the mention of both "meter" and "rhythm"
in talking about the formal features of the original. The poem's first verse is

> *'inna bi-š-ši'bi llaḏī 'inda Sal'in / la-qatīlan damuhū mā yuṭallū*

(the transcription from Arabic is ours) and Nicholson's rendition of it is the following:

> *In the glen there / a murdered / man is lying –*
> *Not in vain for / vengeance his / blood is crying* (ibidem; the partition into feet is ours).

If we look at the prosodic features of the sequences corresponding, in English, to the
first and last foot of each hemistich (*in the glen there*, *man is lying*, *not in vain for*, *blood
is crying*) we can see that the penultimate syllable, the one that corresponds to the long
syllable of the *watid* in Arabic, is constantly stressed, which would suggest that stressing
this syllable is a priority. The picture is different, however, when it comes to the sequences
corresponding to the second foot of each hemistich (*a murdered*, *vengeance his*), where, if
we look for a primarily stressed syllable, which, in accordance with Lyall's theory, should
be the last one (and, if there is another, it should be the first one and it should bear a
secondary stress), we can see that, in the first foot, it is the second one that bears the stress
(with no apparent position for a secondary stress), while the first one is the most plausible
candidate in the second. A look at the second couplet yields relatively similar results:

> *He hath left me / the load to bear / and departed;*
> *I take up the / load and bear / it true-hearted* (ibidem; the partition into feet is ours).

The approximation in this case goes a step further: the second foot of the first
hemistich has four instead of three syllables, and this, together with its prosodic contour,
draws the hemistich closer to the *ḫafīf* (*fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun*, syllabic
configuration: u̱ u – u̱ / u̱ – u u̱ / u̱ u – u̱). The distribution of stress is also rather loosely
evocative of the one that is associated, according to Lyall, with the *madīd*: in the sequences
he hath left me, *I take up the*, *it true-hearted*, the penultimate syllable is, indeed, stressed,
but one could argue that the overall prosodic contour could just as well fit the distribution
of stressed syllables that the foot of the *hazaǧ* (*mafā'īlun*, syllabic configuration: u – u̱ u̱)
might suggest, with the syllables immediately preceding the stressed ones bearing what one
would call, together with Lyall, a secondary stress; this oversight is significant, because
these syllables correspond to the short ones of the *watid*s, and a *watid*-centered rendition
could be expected to take greater care not to stress them.

A corroboration of all these facts suggests that the prosodic contour that Nicholson
had in mind is more of an approximation of the one that Lyall's stricter approach would
require, and the arrangement of the stressed positions does not seem to be necessarily
conditioned by the long syllable of the *watid*. In fact, a source for the prosodic contour of
his verses that is at least as probable as one that prioritizes the positions occupied by the
long syllables of the *watid*s could simply be, also with a certain degree of approximation,

the one suggested by the reading of the dummy words symbolizing the feet making up the hemistich of the *madīd* (*fā'ilā́tun fā́'ilun fā'ilā́tun*), so that the primarily stressed positions would generally be those occupied by the syllables that would be stressed if the sequences representing the feet were read in accordance with the stress rules that apply to the words of the Arabic language[25]. This treatment of the verses, their meter and their prosodic contour is, as we have already said, more intuitive and less constrained by the adherence to a clear set of theoretical premises, but it does ultimately fall back on one of the central tenets of a theorist like Guyard, who argues that the partition of verses into feet reflects the existence of rhythmic and prosodic commonalities between the sequences making up these feet and actual Arabic words.

Finally, the recitation of Arabic poetry by native Arabic speakers is arguably the most obvious way of investigating the prosodic contour of Arabic verses. Such experiments have already been conducted, and Bohas & Paoli provide us with the detailed description of one, beginning with the initial theoretical assumptions and ending with the results and conclusions. The theoretical premise that they put to the test was the core of Weil's theory, namely the existence of a metrical stress on the long syllable of the *watid*, and, in connection with this, they sought to verify two theses: ictus, or metrical stress, and lexical stress are "une seule et même réalité", which would mean that the long syllables of the *watid*s are "des positions accentuelles potentielles" that are actualized whenever they are stressed as per lexical stress rules, or ictus and lexical stress are two distinct realities, which would mean that either lexical stress is superseded by metrical stress in recitation or they coexist, creating "une courbe prosodique, un rhythme complexe" (Bohas & Paoli 1997:

---

[25] Stress rules in Arabic are presented either in a single set, accounting for both complete and pausal forms, or in separate, customized sets; Bohas and Paoli (1997: 182), for instance, opt for an integrated presentation, with rule d) specifically designed to cover situations presented by some pausal forms: "a) [l]'accentuation est fixée par les limites du mot (syntagme accentogène accompagné de ses clitiques satellites); b) [l]a zone accentuable est limitée aux trois dernières syllabes du mot; c) [l]'accent peut frapper toute syllabe, quelle que soit sa longueur (ou son poids); d) [l]'accent porte sur la dernière syllabe du mot si elle est surlourde (CVXC); e) [i]l porte sur la pénultième si d) ne s'applique pas et si la pénultième est lourde ou surlourde, ou si le mot est dissyllabique ; f) [i]l porte sur l'antépénultième si d) et e) ne s'appliquent pas"; Karin Ryding (2005: 37-38), on the other hand, distinguishes the stressing of complete and pausal forms: "[…] in words of two syllables, stress is on the first, no matter what that first syllable is like (strong or weak); […s]tress is on the second syllable from the end of the word (the penult) if that syllable is strong (CVC or CVV); […i]f the second syllable from the end of the word is weak (CV), then the stress falls back to the third syllable from the end (the antepenult); […t]he same basic set of rules applies to pause form, but there is an important additional rule for pause form pronunciation: stress falls on the final syllable of a word if that syllable is a super-strong one (CVCC or CVVC)". From a diachronic point of view, there is no consensus about whether stress rules have evolved throughout the centuries or not: Mion (2011) contemplates, relying on arguments involving both Classical Arabic and vernacular Arabic varieties, the idea that there might have been, initially, two accentual systems, both originating in the Mashreq, with the older one eventually spreading to the Maghreb and the newer one ultimately prevailing in the East and becoming associated with the pronunciation of Classical Arabic, whereas Bohas & Paoli (1997: 182) adopt the opposite view: "[…] aucune indication historique ne nous donne à penser que l'accentuation de la langue arabe ait évolué dans le temps; [d]'ailleurs, […] l'arabe littéraire est très conservateur, ce qui l'a préservé jusqu'à présent de changements significatifs: la stabilité remarquable du système vocalique est en corrélation avec celles de la quantité syllabique et de la localisation de l'accent".

180-181). The validity of the first thesis was verified by Bruno Paoli, who examined 566 verses of the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays with the aim of establishing the percentage of cases where the position of lexical stress (established in accordance with the commonly accepted rules – see note 25) coincides with that of the long syllable of the *watid*, and concluded that there was no statistically significant prevalence of cases where such a coincidence occurs (ibidem: 181-185). As for the verification of the second thesis, which requires examining the recitation of Arabic verses by native Arabic speakers, Bohas & Paoli begin by pointing out that whatever results this kind of survey might produce are not automatically projectible on how Arabic poetry used to be recited centuries ago, then go on to describe the experiment, stating that they chose verses in which the coincidence between the position of the long syllables of the *watid*s and that of the lexically conditioned stress was reduced to the minimum, so that the substitution of lexical stress with metrical stress may become readily apparent in case it really is resorted to in the course of the verses' recitation. The persons that were recorded while reciting them were two native Arabic speakers and al-Azhar graduates, who were also well versed in the classical Arabic literary culture and tradition. Upon examining the recordings, Bohas & Paoli concluded that they exhibited no discernible modification of the lexical stress, the only noticeable phenomenon being the propensity of one of the two reciters for stressing, mainly in the last foot of the verse, the short syllable preceding or following the long syllable of the *watid*, which frequently resulted in the stressing of the penultimate short syllable of the verse, a stressing pattern that might qualify as an "accent de rime". Their overall conclusion was, however, that the recitation of Arabic poetry involves no metrical stress, lexical stress being overwhelmingly prevalent, which means that there is no basis for Weil's theory or for any other theory arguing in favor of the existence of metrical stress in Arabic poetry, and that this poetry is of a strictly quantitative nature (ibidem: 185-188).

It must be said that, for all those who have had the experience of listening to Arabic verses being recited by native Arabic speakers, the absence of metrical stress is hardly surprising, because there is, indeed, no apparent difference between the distribution of stress in ordinary speech, in accordance with lexical stress rules, and the stressing habits generally adhered to in reciting Arabic poetry. However, Bohas & Paoli's judicious caution against projecting the current state of affairs on previous eras works both ways, i.e. the absence of metrical stress or, in more general terms, of a specifically poetic prosodic contour of the verses in the present does not automatically mean that there was no such thing sometime in the past either. The hints towards the possibility that recitation in the past might have been different than it is today are not totally absent – if native Arabic speakers are justifiably involved as reciters in testing the existence of metrical stress, it is no less justifiable to involve them as recipients as well, so that not only their performance, but also their reaction to the performance may be put to the test. This is a kind of experiment we have not yet been able to conduct systematically, but we did come across some anecdotal evidence that might be significant in this respect: on more than one occasion, we witnessed how native speakers of Arabic that were clearly knowledgeable in the field of Arabic poetry and metrics found it difficult to spontaneously identify the meter of a given verse or poem. If this proves to be a statistically significant occurrence, it will be, in our opinion, something of a challenge to the idea that the Arabic metrical system has always relied exclusively on syllable quantity, because any given metrical system, no matter what

it operates with, should be capable of creating for the speakers of the language in relation to which it has been developed, by itself and with no additional props, symmetrical and regular sequences that should be perceived as such spontaneously and, we might add, even in the absence of theoretical knowledge about the system in question[26]. If this does not happen, then two possibilities could serve as explanations: there really is something lost (perhaps, at this stage, irretrievably so) in the Arabic metrical system, an additional element, likely pertaining to linguistic prosody (whose disappearance from the system might have been facilitated by the absence, in the Arabic linguistic tradition, of a discipline contributing to its preservation by codifying it), that used to contribute to the regularity and symmetry of Arabic poetry, in the absence of which these qualities are not as readily perceived as they used to be (a possible argument in favor of this hypothesis can be found in Arabic poetic terminology: the term *'inšād* can be used in modern Arabic, as we were able to see in Fāḫūrī's text, for signifying artistic, expressive, but not technically specific recitation, and yet the very existence of a special term designating the recitation of poetry suggests that it might have had formal features setting it apart from ordinary speech[27]); another possibility is that the contrast between short and long syllables may no longer be nowadays as salient as it used to be[28], which would increase the difficulty of perceiving the metrical regularities relying on this contrast.

Going back to a strictly synchronic perspective, we sought to verify, for our part, whether there are really no contexts whatsoever in which stress acquires a metrical quality in the recitation of Arabic poetry by native speakers of Arabic, and the possibility that caught our attention was that such a context might be provided by rhyme[29] (after all, it is

---

[26] Nigel Fabb & Morris Halle (2008: 12) claim that the Chomskyan thesis of there being an innate, universally shared "human capacity for language" can be extended to metrics as well: "[p]oets and their audiences have the ability to judge that lines are metrical, and this ability is part of the human capacity for language; [t]his capacity, which must minimally include the ability to judge certain word sequences as syntactically well formed, includes, in our view, also the ability to judge word sequences as metrically well formed"; going by this, if a given metrical system does not offer the legitimately expected sense of regularity, then maybe it is the system that is, or rather has become, deficient, and not the speakers' perceptive abilities.

[27] Šawqī Ḍayf (1960: 195) states that the term *'inšād* used to designate a kind of performance representing an intermediate type between "(ordinary) reading/recitation" (*qirā'a*), and "singing" (*ġinā'*); a look at the meanings of different terms having the root *n.š.d.*, such as the noun *našīd*, defined as "the elevation of the voice" (*rafʿ aṣ-ṣawt – al-Munǧid* 1986: 808), does suggest that *'inšād* might have signified some sort of special reciting technique (perhaps one that entailed "elevating one's voice" in conspicuous places in the recited text, that did not coincide with the lexically conditioned ones?).

[28] Such a development would be analogous to the one that occurred in later stages of Latin's evolution, when the compensatory practice of using metrical stress (or "artificial accentuation" – Lynch 2016: 511) was introduced, mostly in didactic settings: "the new practice of verse scansion was introduced in didactic contexts to compensate for the weakened perception of syllable quantities caused by the rise of stress accents, which undermined a 'natural' identification of metrical feet on the basis of pure quantities" (ibidem); the analogy only works up to a point though, because, as Bohas & Paoli have showed, there is, in general, no (compensatory) "artificial accentuation" in the recitation of Arabic poetry.

[29] According to the commonly accepted definition, that is attributed to al-Ḫalīl himself, rhyme (*qāfiya*) is the interval stretching from the end of the verse to the moving *ḥarf* coming immediately before the second quiescent one, counting from the end – the verse always ending with a long syllable, the first quiescent *ḥarf* invariably comes at the absolute end ('Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 211-215; Fāḫūrī 1987: 137-138);

not without significance that the only specificity worth mentioning, in Bohas & Paoli's experiment, was the habit, exhibited by one of the subjects, of placing the last stress of the verse in a lexically atypical manner). Rhyme is, in Arabic poetry, a sequence that requires elements of regularity going well beyond its nucleus, the *ḥarf* named *rawiyy*: for instance, the *rawiyy* can be followed by a long vowel that must be the same throughout the poem, it can be preceded by a long vowel that must always be either *ū/ī* or *ā*, there can be a long syllable, with *ā* as a nucleus, separated from the *rawiyy* by a short syllable etc. ('Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 219-250; Fāḫūrī 1987: 139-147). This high degree of regularity should induce the reciter to expect that the sequences covered by the rhyme in a poem or a poetic fragment be totally convergent, not only phonetically, but also prosodically, i.e. that the stressed positions within the rhyme be in alignment in all the verses and, if this expectation is not fulfilled, it can be expected, at least from some reciters, to artificially bring them into alignment.

In order to test this idea, we conducted a small-scale survey of our own, involving eight subjects (henceforth S1, S2 etc.) represented by native Arabic speakers from Jordan, Syria and Egypt[30]. The text used for our test belongs to the type known as *qiṭ'a* (lit. "fragment", a term used to designate a monothematic short poem) and is selected from the *Luzūmiyyāt* of 'Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (973-1058):

> *'in kunti yā warqā'u mahdiyyatan / fa-lā tubannī l-wakra li-l-'afruḫī*
>
> *wa-lā takūnī miṯla 'insiyyatin / matā yanubhā ḫādiṯun taṣruḫī*
>
> *wa-nfaridī fī baladin 'āzibin / 'annā wa-'īšī ḏāta bālin raḫī* (Naṣṣār 1992: 383)
>
> ("If you are, oh grey dove, rightly guided, do not build a nest for [your] offspring / and do not be like a human female, who shouts whenever a mishap befalls her; / stay away, in a country far removed from us, and live with a carefree mind")

In this poem composed in the meter *sarī'* (*mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u u u – / u u u – / u u –), the rhyme has the syllabic structure – u – (which means it belongs to the type of rhyme known as *mutadārika* – 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 260-261), and occupies, within its verses, the intervals *'afruḫī, taṣruḫī* and *lin raḫī*. Out of the three rhymes, it is the third that is, in principle, of interest for our test, because, if in the other two rhymes the lexical stress falls on the first syllable (*'áfruḫī, táṣruḫī*), the purely lexical stress should fall, here, on the last syllable, since the complete, non-pausal form of the adjective is *raḫíyy(un)*, "relaxed", "carefree" (root *r.ḫ.w.*, pattern *fa'īl*). In strictly phonetic terms, by looking at the other rhymes it becomes clear that the reading intended by the author is *raḫī*, with a final *yā'* serving as a *waṣl*, a *ḥarf* which, together with the preceding *ḥaraka*, equates a long vowel, in this case *ī*, coming after the *rawiyy*. The poem was submitted to the participants in the survey with the aim of observing what positions will be occupied by the stressed syllables at the end of the verses in their readings. The text was presented to them in a fully vocalized form reflecting the lection intended by the author, so as to facilitate a smooth reading and prevent their attention from being distracted by other possibly difficult elements they might stumble upon. A special care was taken not to inform them about the purpose of the survey, in order to preclude any interference that might spoil the experiment and distort its results.

---

in syllabic terms, this means that the rhyme stretches over the interval encompassing the last two long syllables of the verse and whatever short syllables may come between them.

[30] We wish to thank our student Naǧāḥ Ša'bān and our colleagues Florentina Laurenţa Pîrlog and Yousra Rouchdi for helping us in collecting the recordings for this survey.

The results obtained from the eight readings of the poem are the following:

S1 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*) and made a small pause before reading it.

S2 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*).

S3 left both syllables of *raḫī* unstressed and placed the stress, instead, on the first syllable of *bālin* (*bắlin raḫī*).

S4 stressed the penultimate syllable of both *taṣruḫī* and *raḫī* (*taṣrúḫī… ráḫī*), making a small pause before reading *raḫī*.

S5 stressed the penultimate syllable of both *taṣruḫī* and *raḫī* (*taṣrúḫī… ráḫī*).

S6 read *raḫī* with the desinential vowel *-i* and stressed the penultimate syllable, the one that becomes final in a fully pausal reading (*raḫíyyi*).

S7 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*).

S8 stressed the final syllable of *raḫī* and also uttered the final consonantal *y*, but, probably because of its final position, it is not entirely clear if it is geminated or not (*raḫíy(y)*).

No apparent influence was exerted on the reading of any subject by his/her dialectal background.

The readings presented above offer us quite a few interesting data. It has to be admitted, right from the start, that the maximal expectation, of finding a reading that aligns all the stressed positions within the theoretical confines of the rhyme (* *'áfruḫī… táṣruḫī… lín raḫī*), did not materialize. However, this does not invalidate the premise of our experiment, but only makes us question the validity of the theoretically prescribed limits of the rhyme in relation to it and admit that, at least in some cases, maybe it is not the rhyme, with its traditionally inflexible boundaries, that should be taken into account, but the final portions of the verses delineated by somewhat looser limits, provided that they always contain the last stressed syllables. In hindsight, there is one inconvenient factor that mitigates, to a certain extent, the relevance of the results, namely the fact that the placement of the stress on each of the two syllables entails, like the readings have shown, not just prosodic but also phonetic differences, which means that for further experiments of this kind one should choose samples allowing the results to be attributed, with full confidence, to exclusively prosodic factors and considerations.

Despite all these possible reservations, it is clear that stress did play a role in determining the choices made by the readers, and the sheer variety of readings proves that the prosodic asymmetry between the rhymes, or, in less technically specific terms, between the ends of the verses did make them look for ways to eliminate or at least alleviate it. From a strictly statistical perspective, the placement of the stress on the second syllable of *raḫī* is in a clear minority, as only S6 and S8, that is two out of eight subjects, opted for it. As for the other six subjects, five of them (S1, S2, S4, S5 and S7) stressed the first syllable of *raḫī*, and the hesitation of S1 and S4 before reading it suggests that they took notice of the disparity they were faced with and settled upon their solution after a moment of deliberation.

The readings of S4 and S5 exhibit an effort to align the stress in the last two verses, by placing the stress in *taṣruḫī* on the penultimate syllable; these readings acquire additional importance in light of Bohas & Paoli's observation concerning the possibility that the penultimate short syllable of the verse be stressed, because the absence of a penultimate last stress in the first verse suggests that the stressing of *taṣruḫī* on its penultimate syllable was done, most likely, not in virtue of a general tendency like the one

signaled by Bohas & Paoli, but in anticipation of *raḫī* and out of a desire to harmonize the reading of *taṣruḫī* with its reading in particular.

The most drastic solution was resorted to by S3, who not only left *raḫī* unstressed, but placed the last stress of the verse on its pre-antepenultimate syllable, i.e. the first syllable of *bālin*, and this is the reading that comes closest, in our opinion, to the maximal expectation we have described above, because it exhibits the furthest displacement of the stress away from the end of the last verse, and if it does not completely fulfil this expectation by stressing the syllable *lin*, it may be because, despite the clear metrical function that is acquired by stress in these contexts, the rules governing lexical stress can still exert their influence and prevent some of the possible options from taking shape (in this case, the rule that might have dictated the position of the stress is the interdiction of stressing the last syllable in the complete, non-pausal form of a word – see note 25). Another factor that might have prevented the stressing of the syllable *lin* is the morphological boundary separating *lin* from *raḫī* and the fact that the sequence *lin raḫī* was, for obvious morphological reasons, not perceived as a unit suitable for bearing a single stress of its own. All this means that, in a context like this, metrical stress becomes a reality, but lexical stress rules, and maybe also morphological boundaries, are still not completely superseded and ignored.

If our maximal expectation, of a total alignment of the stress in the rhyme despite lexical stress rules and morphological boundaries, was not realized in our survey, we have found proof that it can nevertheless be realized while listening to recordings of Arabic poems available on the Youtube channel. One of these recordings[31] contains a song by the Lebanese singer Fayrūz, whose lyrics are the verses of a poem by the Lebanese poet Bišāra al-Ḫūrī (1885-1968). The poem is in the meter *basīṭ*, and the syllabic structure of the rhyme is – u u – (which means it belongs to the type of rhyme known as *mutarākiba* – 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 262). The lack of stress alignment within the rhyme is found in the very first, internally rhymed, verse of the poem, i.e. its *maṭlaʿ*:

yabkī wa-yaḍḥaku lā ḥuznan wa-lā faraḥā / ka-ʿāšiqin ḫaṭṭa saṭran fī l-hawā wa-maḥā
("he cries and laughs not out of sorrow nor out of joy, / like a lover who wrote a line about love and then erased [it]")

In the intervals occupied by the rhyme at the end of the two hemistichs, *lā faraḥā* and *wā wa-maḥā*, the last positions of the lexical stress do not coincide (*lā fáraḥā, wā wa-máḥā*), and yet, at min. 0'53'', Fayruz can be heard stressing the conjunction *wa-*, "and", coming before the verb *maḥā*, "he erased", and she can be heard doing the same at min. 1'10'', 2'10'', 6'12'', because the verse is repeated, as it often happens especially with the *maṭlaʿ*, more than once during the song, including at its very end. The difference between this context and the one exhibited by the sample used in our survey is, we think, that here the morphological boundary separating the two words is much weaker, because *wa-*, like all the other particles represented by single short syllables, has a strong tendency to behave, prosodically, like a proclitic attached to the following word. This situation also makes us revisit one particular statement of Bohas & Paoli (1997:188), whereby they adamantly deny the existence of metrical stress, irrespective of the kind of performance that might be involved ('[q]uant à une éventuelle scansion métrique, psalmodie ou chant,

---

[31]   Web address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F9nOZiD-AY.

il n'y en a pas, ou plus, de traces"), as we cannot help but consider music, here, as yet another possible stimulus towards searching for this kind of prosodic harmony.

Finally, the most spectacular proof against the categorical denial of the existence of metrical stress in the recitation of Arabic poetry that we have been able to come upon so far – a proof that reinforces the idea that chanting and music really can stimulate the use of this device – comes from a number of recordings, also available on the Youtube channel, attributed to a person named 'Usāma al-Wā'iẓ, who, rather than plainly reciting Arabic poems, chants them and, in doing so, uses metrical stress quite consistently. The method that he uses predominantly in distributing the stress is the same that seems to be reflected by Nicholson's translations: he relies on the boundaries separating the hemistichs into feet and prosodically treats the sequences thus obtained as if they were words, placing the stress on the syllables that would be stressed in accordance with lexical stress rules, with no consideration for the position of the *watid* in general or of its long syllable in particular, whence it can be deduced that, contrary to Weil's theory, the *watid* is not afforded any special status.

In the remainder of our paper, we will exemplify some of the most prosodically significant features of his chanting technique.

The first verse we will be presenting, the *maṭla'* of a poem[32] by al-Mutanabbī (c. 915-965), has been chosen to illustrate al-Wā'iẓ's indifference towards the position of the *watid*:

li-hawā́ n-nufū̃/si sarī́ratun/ lā tú'lamū // 'araḍán naẓar/tu wa-ḫíltu 'an/nī 'áslamū
("the passion of the souls has an unknown inner disposition; / I had just taken a look by chance and thought I would be safe [from being stricken with passion]")

The poem is composed in the meter *kāmil* (*mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u̲ u̲ – u – / u̲ u̲ – u – / u̲ u̲ – u –; the first two short syllables of the foot alternate freely with a long one). As it can be seen above, we have segmented the verse into feet and placed accents on the vowels of the syllables stressed by al-Wā'iẓ, and it is obvious that these syllables are the ones that would be stressed in words having the syllabic structures of the feet characteristic of the *kāmil*: u u ́u –, – ́– u –. The *watid*, in this meter, comes at the end of the feet, therefore, in accordance with Weil's theory, the stressed syllables would be those coming at the end of the feet (which is not the case):

*li-hawā n-nufū́/si sarīratún/ lā tu'lamū́ // 'araḍan naẓár/tu wa-ḫiltu 'án/nī 'aslamū́

As we have mentioned before, not all the poems are stressed in this manner, and we think that, at least in some cases, the reason for this might be the asymmetrical character of the meters in question, i.e. the fact that they are composed of short and long feet alternating with each other. The following verse is the *maṭla'* of a poem[33] by 'Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī (932-968):

'arāka 'aṣiyya d-dam'i šīmatuka ṣ-ṣabru / 'a-mā li-l-hawā nahyun 'alayka wa-lā 'amru
("I see you are immune to crying and are patient by disposition; / does passion have absolutely no authority over you?")

The poem's meter is the *ṭawīl* (*fa'ūlun mafā'īlun fa'ūlun mafā'īlun*, syllabic configuration: u – u̲ / u – u̲ u̲ / u – u̲ / u – u̲ u̲) and its feet are different in size (in one

---

[32] The web address of the file containing its chanting is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6QOr3SdE_Q.
[33] The web address of the file containing its chanting is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbB2x1afhYU.

hemistich, the first and third feet are trisyllabic and the second and fourth are quadrisyllabic). This is one possible reason for which al-Wāʿiẓ does not apply here the previously mentioned method, which would have yielded the following result:

*ʾarā́ka/ ʿaṣiyyá d-dam/ʿi šī́ma/tuka ṣ-ṣábrū // ʾa-mā́ li-l/-hawā náhyun/ ʿaláyka/ wa-lā ʾámrū

Instead, he apparently divides each hemistich into two subunits, each containing two feet, and distributes the stress in a trochaic manner within them, with the exception of the last two syllables of each unit, which are left unstressed:

ʾárāká ʿaṣíyya d-dam/ʿí šīmátuká ṣ-ṣabru // ʾá-mā lí-l-hawā̆ nahyun / ʿalayká wa-lā̆ ʾamru

What makes us believe that the meter's asymmetry is the reason behind this special treatment of the poem is that, by dividing the hemistichs like he does, the chanter obtains, in a way, the meter's originally lacking symmetry, by creating, within each hemistich, two equally sized subunits. Going back to Weil's theory, we can see that the *watid*, that comes, in this meter, at the beginning of the feet, remains irrelevant even in this alternative way of partitioning the verse and distributing the stress, which is not surprising, given that the boundaries between feet have partially collapsed and, moreover, syllable quantity itself is ignored.

The last verse we will be looking at belongs to a poem[34] by ʾAbū l-ʿAtāhiya (748-826):

yabkī́ wa-yaḍ/ḥáku ḏū/ nafsín muṣar/ráfatin // wa-llā́hu ʾaḍ/ḥákahū/ wa-llā́hu ʾab/kā́hū

("someone whose soul is subjected to all sorts of changes cries and loughs, / and it is God who has made him lough, and [also] God who has made him cry")

The poem's meter is the *basīṭ* (*mustafʿilun fāʿilun mustafʿilun fāʿilun*, syllabic configuration: u̲ u̲ u – / u̲ u – / u̲ u̲ u – / u̲ u –), and it is also an asymmetric meter, with the alternation between short and long feet coming in a reversed order to that of the *ṭawīl*. As we have showed above by the partitioning of the verse into feet and the distribution of graphical accents, al-Wāʿiẓ uses, once more, the first method we have signaled, consisting in prosodically treating the feet as if they were words, in spite of the meter's asymmetry. Nevertheless, the chanting of this poem exhibits an extraordinary feature – the first syllable of the second and third foot of each hemistich (*fāʿilun*), which is originally a quantitatively variable syllable, is constantly realized as long, and for achieving this purpose the chanter does not shy away from phonetically distorting the text by lengthening the short vowels of the etymologically short syllables that occupy this position (he appears to be lengthening all the short vowels of these syllables, even when the syllables are closed and thus long, but the most audible lengthening, for us, involves the vowels of the etymologically short, open syllables), so that a phonetically more faithful transcription of the verse would actually run as follows:

yabkī́ wa-yaḍ/ḥā́ku ḏū/ nafsín muṣar/rā́fatin // wa-llā́hu ʾaḍ/ḥā́kahū/ wa-llā́hu ʾab/kā́hū (sic!)

If we were to look for an explanation, in light of the treatment of the previously cited poem in the meter *ṭawīl* and seeing as how the artificially lengthened vowels belong to the shorter of the two types of feet, we could take this phenomenon as yet another attempt, of a different kind, at compensating the asymmetry of a meter composed of differently sized feet.

The material presented so far allows us to conclude, rather confidently, that metrical stress is not totally absent from the recitation of Arabic poetry. It is certainly not an easily detectible feature – on the contrary, it is utterly marginal and one has to look hard for finding proof of its existence. But, under special circumstances like the ones described in this paper, it does come into being. These circumstances can be internal – the one that we have been able to discover is represented by rhyme, and the reaction of the reciters, readers or singers to it seems to be, in general, spontaneous, reflexive and not conditioned by theoretical expertise. Conversely, in the case of the type of chanting we have just described, the pervasive use of metrical stress appears to be heavily reliant on an in-depth knowledge of the system and a considerable degree of sophistication and artistry. All this does not tell us anything about previous stages in the evolution of Arabic poetry and its recitation, as the existence of the hitherto described phenomena can be explained within a strictly synchronic framework and, thus, we see no reason to treat them as some remnants of a formerly extant and now largely lost tradition. A more easily conceivable opening towards diachrony would be realized by considering the already mentioned possibility of the erosion of syllable quantity taking place in connection with the consolidation of stress, but this would offer a platform for projecting our interest on future rather than past developments by studying the potential proliferation of metrical stress and assessing the extent to which it can be treated as a consequence of the erosion of syllable quantity. In relation with the different theories reviewed by us at the beginning of this paper, the only element that seems to be validated is the credit given by some of them to the partition into feet as a central feature of the prosodic system. As for the marked tendency, on the part of the first generations of orientalists that have treated the subject, of constantly seeking sources of inspiration in music, it is not supported by the conditions and rules governing the use of metrical stress that we have come upon. On the contrary, we have noticed that there is a strong connection with rules already extant in the linguistic prosody of the Arabic language, i.e. the rules governing lexical stress.

Primary sources:

Naṣṣār, Ḥusayn (ed.). 1992. *Šarḥ al-Luzūmiyyāt naẓm ’Abī l-ʿAlā’ ’Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Sulaymān al-Maʿarrī, al-ǧuz’ al-’awwal*. Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb.

Online primary sources:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F9nOZiD-AY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6QOr3SdE_Q
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbB2x1afhYU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUORJT3kPSE

Secondary sources:

’Abū Ġarbiyya, ‘Iṣām ‘Īd. 2018. *Mūsīqā š-šiʿr al-ʿarabī*. Tanta: Dār an-Nābiġa.
Bohas, G., Guillaume, J.-P., Kouloughli, D.E. 2017. *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. London & New York: Routledge.
Bohas, Georges & Paoli, Bruno. 1997. *Aspects formels de la poésie arabe*. Toulouse: Publications AMAM (Analyses Monde Arabe et Méditerranée).

Daḥlān, ’Aḥmad Zaynī. 2014. *Šarḥ matn al-’Āǧurrūmiyya fī ‘ilm al-luġa al-‘arabiyya*. Beirut: Šarikat Dār al-Mašārī‘.

Ḍayf, Šawqī. 1960. *Tārīḫ al-’adab al-‘arabī – al-‘aṣr al-ǧāhilī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif bi-Miṣr.

Ewald, Heinrich. 1825. *De metris carminum Arabicorum libri duo*. Braunschweig: L. Lucius.

Fabb, Nigel & Halle, Morris. 2008. *Meter in Poetry – A New Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fāḫūrī, Maḥmūd. 1987. *Mūsīqā š-ši‘r al-‘arabī*. Aleppo: Manšūrāt Ǧāmi‘at Ḥalab.

Frolov, Dmitry. 2007. "Meter", Versteegh, Kees (general ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, vol. III. Leiden-Boston: Brill. 207-215

Guyard, Stanislas. 1877. *Théorie nouvelle de la métrique arabe*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

Halporn, James W., Ostwald Martin & Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. 1963. *The Meters of Greek and Latin Poetry*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

Ḥarakāt, Muṣṭafā. 1998. *’Awzān aš- ši‘r*. Cairo: Dār aṯ-Ṯaqāfa.

Kager, René. 2007. "Stress", Versteegh, Kees (general ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, vol. IV. Leiden-Boston: Brill. 344-353.

Karabekyan, Samvel & Yavrumyan, Marat. 2007. "*Ḥarf*", Versteegh, Kees (general ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, vol. II. Leiden-Boston: Brill. 236-239.

Larcher, Pierre. 1999. "Les incertitudes de la poésie arabe archaïque – l'exemple des *mu‘allaqāt*", Michel Quitout (ed.), *La revue des deux rives – Europe-Maghreb*, Nº 1. Toulouse: Universite de Toulouse Le-Mirail. 121-135.

Lyall, Charles James. 1930. *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry*. London: Williams & Norgate Ltd.

Lynch, Tosca. 2016. "Arsis and Thesis in Ancient Rhythmics and Metrics: A New Approach", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (December). 491-513.

Al-Maqdūd, Muḥammad al-Mahdī. 2019. *Al-‘arūḍ wa-š-ši‘riyya – baḥt fī niẓām al-wazn wa-waẓīfatihi wa-dalālatihi fī t-turāṯ al-‘arabī*. Nabeul: Zaynab.

Mion, Giuliano. 2011. "Open Questions on Stress in Arabic: Some Sociophonological Interpretations", Avram, Andrei A., Focşineanu, Anca & Grigore, George (eds.), *A Festschrift for Nadia Anghelescu*. Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti. 343-356.

Muḫtār ‘Umar, ’Aḥmad. 1988. *Al-baḥt al-luġawī ‘inda l-‘arab ma‘a dirāsa li-qaḍiyyat at-ta’ṯīr wa-t-ta’aṯṯur*. Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub.

***1986. *al-Munǧid*. Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq.

Nicholson, R. A. 2004 (1930). *A Literary History of the Arabs.* London & New York: Routledge.

Ryding, Karin C. 2005. *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stoetzer, W. 1998. "Prosody (*‘arūḍ*)", Scott Meisami, Julie & Starkey, Paul (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. London & New York: Routledge. 619-622.

aṭ-Ṭayyib, ‘Abd Allāh. 1970. *al-Muršid ’ilā fahm ’aš‘ār al-‘arab wa-ṣinā‘atihā – al-ǧuz’ al-’awwal & al-ǧuz’ aṯ-ṯānī: fī l-ǧars al-lafẓī*. Al-Khartoum & Beirut: ad-Dār as-Sūdāniyya.

aṭ-Ṭayyib, ‘Abd Allāh. 1989. *al-Muršid ’ilā fahm ’aš‘ār al-‘arab wa-ṣinā‘atihā – al-ǧuz’ aṯ-ṯāliṯ: fī r-rumūz wa-l-kināyāt wa-ṣ-ṣuwar*. Kuweit: Dār al-’Āṯār al-’Islāmiyya.

aṭ-Ṭayyib, ‘Abd Allāh. 1990. *al-Muršid ’ilā fahm ’aš‘ār al-‘arab wa-ṣinā‘atihā – al-ǧuz’ ar-rābi‘, al qism al-’awwal: fī l-’aġrāḍ wa-l-’aṭwār wa-l-maqāṣid wa-l-’asālīb*. Kuweit: Dār al-’Āṯār al-’Islāmiyya.

Weil, Gotthold. 1913. "‘Arūḍ", Houtsma, M. Th., Arnold, T. W., Basset, R. & Hartmann, R (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I (A-D). Leiden & London: Brill & Luzac & Cº. pp. 463-471.

Weil, Gotthold. 1958. *Grundriss und System der Altarabischen Metren*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Wright, William. 1996. *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*. Vols I & II. Beirut: Librairie du Liban.

II. MISCELLANEA

COUNT/MASS NOUNS AND DEFINITENESS IN PALESTINIAN ARABIC HERITAGE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

LETIZIA CERQUEGLINI

Tel Aviv University

Abstract: Definiteness correlates to a cluster of cross-linguistic semantic scalar variables, among which is countability (count/mass nouns distinction). Count and mass nouns are distinguished by definiteness markers in English, but not in Arabic. Middleton et al. (2004) proved that countability is related to cognitive individuation of discrete bounded entities. Lucy and Gaskins (2001) demonstrated that the presence of count/mass distinction directly correlates with attention to the shape rather than the substance of individual entities. I analyze linguistic and cognitive effects of the Palestinian Arabic (PA) and English (EN) definiteness systems and cognitive individuation biases in 15 PA heritage speakers of English (PAHSEs, aged 18-25). Heritage speakers understand but cannot speak a familiar heritage language (Polinsky, 2018). PA is sociogeographically and cognitively peripheral in PAHSEs' world experience. Fifteen PA and EN native speakers (aged 18-25) represent control groups. Linguistic experiments (Liu and Gleason, 2002) tested definiteness grammar of nouns with different countability properties. Semantic and cognitive experiments (Iwasaki et al., 2010) tested effects of PA countability and individuation parameters in PAHSEs. PA definiteness does not significantly affect PAHSEs' grammatical competence. PAHSEs' semantic and cognitive results converge with those of the PA control group, showing bedrock effects of heritage PA.
Keywords: *Definiteness; Count/Mass Nouns; Heritage Language; Language-to-Cognition Correlation; Palestinian Arabic.*

1. Introduction

Universally present, definiteness varies greatly across languages in terms of the reasons for it and manifestations (Lyons, 1999). Definiteness has been explored within various schools of thought in connection to specificity (Von Heusinger, 2002), uniqueness (Roberts, 2003), identifiability (Chen, 2004), ellipsis/reference tracking (Nariyama, 2003), and anaphoricity/ information triggering (Reinhart, 1983). Chesterman (2005) theorized definiteness/ indefiniteness as linguistically 'encoded' and psycholinguistically 'decoded' on the basis of a cluster of physical properties such as quantity/inclusiveness, genericity/extensivity, and countability/concreteness, all scalar properties that very cross-linguistically. Interestingly, considerations of quantity, generality, and concreteness are all semantically proximal within the bedrock of countability.

Danon (2001) observes that the use of the definite article with generics varies cross-linguistically in a way that has no possible effect on interpretation. Arabic uses definite

articles with non-count generics, unlike English. Example (1) shows that the word 'fire' has a different status of definiteness in each language, albeit the same degree of genericity, i.e., indefinite in English but definite in Palestinian Arabic (PA):

(1) When fire starts to burn, it starts to spread

(1a) *lam tabda n-naar bil-iftiʕāl, innaha tanʃur.*

Languages either allow or require nouns to appear with an overt in/definite article or allow bare nouns to appear without an article. Arabic is in the first category, i.e., it is a determiner language that requires noun phrases in argument position to be preceded by a determiner. English is a mixed type, allowing singular proper nouns and abstract, plural, and mass nouns in argument position with no determiner. Singular common, concrete, countable nouns require a determiner (definite article, classifier, number, measure). Mass nouns necessitate the use of measure phrases that contain a classifier to be countable, while count nouns do not (Chierchia, 1998). English definite and indefinite singular count nouns, bare plural count nouns, and bare mass nouns can convey genericity, while definite plurals are not allowed to express generic meaning except in the case of names of nationalities. Arabic, in classical, standard forms and most dialects, only allows definite (singular, plural, and mass) noun phrases to express generic meaning, without any difference between well-established and less well-established types and noun-level and sentence-level genericity (Krifka et al., 1995). In Arabic "the milk is good for you", has both a generic and a specific meaning.

I address here the cognitive effects of the PA definiteness system in PA heritage speakers of English (PAHSEs). In PA and English some nouns can be counted by numerals, while others need classifiers. Count nouns are perceived as possessing properties that allow them to be counted. Referents of mass nouns are considered not easily countable. Count/mass properties may vary cross-linguistically in reference to the same entity. In English, apples, biscuits, and sandwiches are usually considered countable, but wine, soup, water, pasta, and corn are not (they need a classifier to be counted, e.g., three bottles of wine).

Unlike PA and other Arabic varieties, English uses its definiteness system (the/a/0) to mark countability properties (mass/count distinction), as shown by the distribution of the definite article in examples 2 and 3:

(2) water is good for the health (2a) *il-mā mufīd l-as-siḥḥa*;

(3) bread sells well every day (3a) *il-xubz byitbīʕ kaṯīr kull yōm*.

At the deep semantic level, countability correlates with contiguous properties such as extensiveness, inclusivity, and genericity, which all surface in grammatical and syntactic definiteness (Chesterman, 2005), so that *lightning*, *mankind*, *evidence*, and *furniture* are also grammatically processed as mass nouns (Iwasaki et al., 2010):

(4) dogs bark (4a) *il-klāb btinbaḥ*

(5) uranium is a heavy element (5a) *il-yurānyum ʕunṣur ṯqīl;*

(6) apples are too expensive (6a) *it-tiffāḥ kṯīr ġāli*.

Countability properties are related to the cognitive ability of individuation and decision making concerning discrete bounded entities (Middleton et al., 2004). Lucy and Gaskins (2001) demonstrated that the presence of an inherent semantic distinction between count vs. mass nouns, such as it appears in English, directly correlates with focusing on the shape of individual entities rather than on their substance. In contrast, Yucatec Mayan speakers, who resort to classifiers to determine the status of an entity as mass or countable in context, focus their attention more on materials than on shapes of discrete entities.

On the basis of previous studies on Arabic count/mass distinction strategies (Fassi Fehri and Vinet, 2007), the cognitive behavior of PA speakers is expected to be more similar to that of Yucatec Mayan speakers than that of English speakers. Notably, count/mass values are cultural variables and vary impressively across Arabic varieties. Most edible entities and foods are mass nouns in PA and require classifiers (*ḥabbeh* for many fruits and grains, *kurrah* for meat balls, *qitˁ* for candies, *mlaffeh* or *ˁilbeh* for most traditional pastries). Due to the differences between PA and English, the semantic and cognitive responses of PAHSEs are of particular interest here.

From a linguistic point of view, PAHSEs' definiteness system reflects full mastery of the English rules of mass/count distinction, without influences from PA, which the PAHSE informants ceased to acquire at an early age (three/four), so that their experience with the language remained limited to partial comprehension and the use of some brief/routine speech productions (greetings, thanking formulas, expressions of affection or disappointment, some nouns). Yet, assuming that language does not entirely reflect cognitive endowment and experience, I hypothesized some cognitive similarities in count/mass and shape/material distinctions between PA speakers and PAHSEs. Such similarities would prove the existence of deep linguistic relativity effects and show that despite the late development of definiteness in children (Liu & Gleason, 2002), cognitive semantic features in its background are already established within the third/fourth year of age, when PA heritage language acquisition ceased among the informants of this study.

2. Definiteness and Countability in Arabic

Studies on Arabic definiteness have mainly focused on classic and standard varieties, with a few exceptions concerning dialectal data (Dickins, 2013; Testen, 1998) that focused on grammar of nunation (*tanwīn*) and the definite article *ʔal-* (plus allomorphic variants), considering them definiteness/indefiniteness markers (Holes, 1995; Badawi et al., 2004), state markers (Lyons, 1999; Retsö, 2010), or information triggers (Jarrah, 2016). According to the Arab grammatical tradition (Sakaedani, 2019; Sartori, 2019) and modern scholars (Al-Rawi 2005; Hawas 1986, Jaber, 2014) definiteness is not expressed only by *ʔal ʔat-taˁrīf*, nor does *ʔal* express only definiteness: *ʔams* 'yesterday'/*ʔal-ʔams* 'a day in the past' (Kashgary 2015). Definiteness is also acquired through annexation in construct state nominals (Shlonsky, 2004). *ʔAl-* can be: 1. nominal (*ʔism mawṣūl*); 2. definite (*ʔal- ʔat-taˁrīf*, including *ʔal ʔaḏ-ḏihniyya* for familiarity, *ʔal ʔal-ḥuḍūriyya* for contextuality, *ʔal ʔaḏ-ḏikriyya* for anaphoricity, and *ʔal ʔal-jinsiyya* for 'non-referential' definiteness (Abu-Melhim, 2013); or 3. augmented *ʔal zā'ida*, attached to demonstrative nouns, time adverbial 'now,' days of the week, singular proper names, or otherwise generally nunated. The situation is different among dialects in relation to the classic language, as nunation is absent or residual, local strategies other than *ʔal-* can be prefixed to nouns (Jarrah, 2016), and the obligatory definiteness agreement (Danon, 2008) is often violated (as in the *yom ha-šišiy* syndrome; Borg, 2000; Pat-El, 2009). However, the article system does not correlate to considerations of count/mass oppositions, genericity, and inclusiveness.

3. Definiteness and Countability in English

The English article system includes the indefinite article a(n), the definite article the, and the zero (null) article. Many have attempted to find explanations for definite/indefinite noun phrases and the semantic features beyond this distinction (Haspelmath, 1999). I embrace here Abbott's classification of definiteness semantic parameters (2004):

    1. Uniqueness (Russell, 1905): "The student arrived" (+), "A student arrived" (-);

    2. Inclusiveness (Hawkins, 1978: totality of entities or matter to which the descriptive content applies): "The students arrived" (+), "The sand is white" (+), "Some students arrived" (-);

    3. Familiarity (Bolinger, 1977): "The same people spoke" (+), "Other people spoke" (-);

    4. Strength (Milsark, 1977, quantifiers in existential sentences): "There are most/all wolves at the door" (+), "There is every/each wolf at the door" (+), "There are two/some/several/many/few wolves at the door" (-);

    5. Specificity (Haspelmath, 1997: whether or not the referent of the indefinite is known to the speaker): the sentence "John would like to marry a girl his parents don't approve of" [Partee, 1972] under effect of scope ambiguity can be (+ specific), if John has already chosen his girl and it happens to be the case that his parents do not like her, or (- specific), if John apparently wants to offend his parents by finding someone they disapprove of to marry.

    Parameters 1 and 2 clearly correlate with countability properties.

4. Linguistic Definiteness, Semantic Countability, and Cognitive Individuation

PA and English definiteness systems diverge, determining different usages of definite/indefinite articles, singular/plural, verbal tenses, adverbs, and deictic and pronominal elements. Semantic countability is expressed by the definiteness system in English, but not in PA. PA and English definiteness systems interfere with Arabic native speakers' acquisition of English as a second language (Harb, 2014; Husni and Newman, 2015). There is strong evidence of the effects of Arabic countability properties in their errors (in which countability significantly interferes with abstractness as well) (Aboras 2020; Alenizi 2013, 2017; Al-Malki et al. 2014; Naim-Bader 1988). Arabic learners of English overuse the definite article in idioms, with abstract and uncountable nouns, and in generic plural noun phrases:

    (7) *the value of the time (8) *he sell the apples at the crossroad

    (9) * the milk is nutritious to the body(10) *I went to the bed

    (11) *you cook the rice(12) *the horses are useful animals.

    The fact that Arabic-speaking learners of English find it so difficult to decide whether referents are countable (Butler, 2002; Master, 1987) implies that the count/mass opposition is language-specific and non-conceptual, i.e., to some extent arbitrary. Definiteness grammar influences the cognition of countability. The correspondence between the grammatical property (count vs. mass) and conceptual properties (e.g.,

individuation of discrete bounded entities vs. non-individuation) has been demonstrated by Middleton et al. (2004), Wierzbicka (1988), and Wisniewski et al. (2003). Several studies have investigated the effect of the numbering system (count/mass distinction) on English speakers' cognition through behavioral experimentation. Lucy and Gaskins (2001) studied the relationship between the number marking system and speakers' classifications of objects vs. substance. They argue that English speakers associate the unit of individuation with count nouns and as a result classify entities based on their shapes, which are the best indicators of individuated entities, while speakers of Yucatec Maya (an indigenous classifier language spoken in southeastern Mexico) pay habitual attention to the material composition of entities rather than their shapes.

5. Heritage Speakers

The term "heritage speakers" (HSs) has only recently gained importance in experimental linguistics, acquisition studies, and psycholinguistics. It refers to second-generation immigrants, the children of original immigrants, who live in a bilingual environment from an early age. HSs' dominant language is the language of the host country, but some aspects of the family language may still affect their linguistic abilities from the periphery of their linguistic consciousness. HSs vary widely in the degree of their receptive and productive command of the heritage language (Polinsky, 2018). The HSs considered here were born to PA-speaking parents in England. PA was heard only at gatherings of family and friends, early on becoming of lesser importance than English, which was considered necessary for education and perceived as an instrument of social integration and individual advancement. None of the PAHSEs tested here were proficient in PA and all possessed only oral comprehension abilities and basic communicative competence (beginner level).

6. Aim of this Study

I analyzed the cognitive effect of the PA parameter of countability in 15 PAHSEs aged 18-25. The parameter of countability surfaces differently in PA and English in the grammar and syntax of definiteness. I expected PAHSEs to show full mastery of the English definiteness markers in tasks entailing different countability values in the linguistic experiments and to produce the same results as the EN native speakers' control group (15 informants, aged 18-25). On the other hand, I hypothesized that PAHSEs' cognitive responses would be closer to those of the PA speakers' control group informants. In particular, I expected PAHSEs to classify known and novel objects by material and not by shape. All groups (PAHSEs, EN speakers, PA speakers) were tested using the same linguistic and cognitive tests.

7. Methodology

Fifteen PAHSEs aged 18 to 25, born and raised in England, took part in linguistic and cognitive experiments. Fifteen PA and fifteen EN native speakers aged 18 to 25 represented

the control groups and took part in the same experiments. As for the linguistic experiment, EN speakers and PAHSEs were requested to reply in English, and PA speakers in PA.

7.1. Preliminary Grammar Tests

Grammatical tests consisted of the following:
1. a fill-in-the-blank task,
2. an error correction task,
3. countability judgments of nouns in isolation,
4. countability judgments of nouns in context.

Each test included 20 entries, all elaborated *ad hoc* based on the model of Liu & Gleason (2002). These entailed countability-based oppositions that correlated with abstractness, genericity (Behrens, 2000; Dahl, 1975), extension, and inclusiveness (Carlson, 1977; Fiengo, 1987) under different conditions of numbers, tenses, existentiality, and argument structure. The EN control group and PAHSE informants received the test in English, while the PA control group received the same test to be performed in PA in order for me to be able to judge eventual PA influences in PAHSEs' performances.

7.2. Semantic Similarity Test

A semantic test was employed to determine whether the count/mass distinction has consequences for semantic representation in that words that share count or mass status are more semantically similar than words that do not share count/mass status (Vigliocco et al. 2005). The test was based on the error induction design. Speakers were first asked to name 40 high-resolution color pictures in their respective native language using either a count phrase ('a__') or a mass phrase ('some__'), to check their agreement on the property attributed to each entity. Next, I grouped the pictures in blocks of eight, subject to the constraint that each picture could occur no more than once within a block, and could not occur as the last item in one block and the first item of the next. Each picture appeared 20 times in the course of the experiment, following Vigliocco et al. (2005). Each speaker was asked to name food pictures aloud in his or her native language using single words (or a name such as 'green bean') as they appeared on the computer screen. Once the practice session was completed, the experimental blocks were presented at increasing speed. The sequences of eight pictures appeared in randomly selected positions on the screen. I analyzed only lexical errors (i.e., cases in which the word produced for a target was another word). EN speakers', PA speakers', and PAHSEs errors were analyzed according to the proportion of errors that preserved the count/mass status of the target label.

7.3. Spot the Odd One Out

In this experiment, speakers were asked to make semantic judgements on 12 triads of words (translation equivalent in the two languages). Their task was to spot the odd one out and

cross out the word less similar to the other two in terms of meaning (Garrard et al. 2004). If count/mass status affects English speakers' semantic representations, EN speakers and PAHSEs should show a greater tendency to select words that share count/mass than PA speakers. Twelve words were selected and combined in all possible triadic combinations and the order of the three words in each triad was randomized. Participants completed the task using paper and pencil.

7.4. Match by Similarity

A non-linguistic experiment from Lucy and Gaskins (2001) was replicated. It consisted of asking the informants to observe an original object and decide which of two alternative objects was more similar to it. One had the same shape as the original object, while the other had the same material composition. Each informant underwent six such tests, four with known objects and two with novel objects. According to the hypothesis that linguistic properties of countability affect cognition, EN speakers were expected to prefer the shape alternative and PA speakers the material alternative. The choices of the PAHSEs were the objects of the experimental question.

8. Results

The results of the EN speakers' and PAHSEs' grammar tests confirm that count/mass noun judgments strongly correlate with competence in definiteness rules in English. The grammatical tests will not be discussed here since the linguistic count/mass nominal parameters of PAHSEs are identical to those of EN speakers. PAHSEs indeed demonstrated native competence in English. The present analysis is therefore restricted to examining deeper influences of heritage PA countability parameters on PAHSEs' semantics and cognition. In the semantic similarity test, under increasing time stress, all groups produced a higher number of naming errors. Errors produced by the EN control group involved the count/mass distinction, so that nouns were mistakenly attributed within the same category (mass: "water" for "juice," "rice" for "corn," "flour" for "sugar," "oil" for "honey"; count: "biscuits" for "candies," "chocolates" for "meatballs," "pastries" for "meat rolls"). Only two of 23 errors violated the mass/count boundary. Interesting, despite the fact that all entities (mostly edible, processed or raw) were presented in bowls in order for shape not to interfere with categorization, the errors produced by EN speakers also involved shape-related boundaries. In line with the hypothesis, the errors produced by PA informants often crossed the count/mass distinction (in 14 of 26 errors). Thus, I obtained, for example: "rice" (*ruzz*/mass) for "eggs" (*bayḍāt*/count), "meat and rice balls" (*kafta*/mass) for "biscuits" (*baskwīt*/count), and "candies" (*ḥulwa*/mass) for "pastries" (*muʕjaneh*/count). Notably, seven of the 27 errors produced by PAHSE informants, mainly those related to nouns of processed food types, crossed the count/mass boundary. These results may depend on cultural factors that interfere with linguistic choices in PAHSEs. Indeed, PAHSE informants live in an English linguistic environment, yet food is part of the home and family

routine, being prepared, measured, served, and discussed according to inherent PA cultural criteria, influenced by mass concepts and related classifiers.

The odd-one-out triads showed similar results, with PAHSE data showing intermediate values between EN and PA. For example, given the triad showing water/rice/biscuits, 12 EN speakers spotted the water (the liquid), while 14 PA informants spotted the biscuits (the only count noun). Out of 180 triads for each group, EN speakers violated the count/mass boundary in 13 cases, PA speakers in 79 cases, and PAHSEs in 54 cases and, most interestingly, not only in food-related items. For example, in the English triplet "parquet" (mass)/"tile" (count)/"brick" (count), 12 EN speakers pointed to "parquet," the only mass noun, while PAHSEs were much less count/mass- oriented (four pointed to "parquet," six to "tile," and five to "brick"). The PA triplet was *barkē* (mass)/ *balāṭa* (count)/*qarmīd* (mass), and PA speakers did not show specific effects of count/mass distinctions. Similar results were obtained for the triplet "soap/*ṣabūn*" (mass)/"shampoo/*šambū*" (mass)/"sponge/*sfinjeh*" (count). EN speakers generally pointed to "sponge," while PAHSEs and PA speakers made different choices, not oriented by any count/mass bias.

The cognitive tests confirmed the data yielded by previous experiments conducted by Lucy and Gaskins (2001) on EN speakers in which this group opted mainly for matching the objects with the same shape (84 of 90 responses). PA speakers were more oriented toward matching objects made of the same material (78 of 90 responses). PAHSE informants produced an intermediate result; 52 of 90 responses matched objects by material and 32 by shape.

9. Conclusions

Semantic and cognitive similarities between PAHSEs and PA speakers are striking considering that PAHSEs speak only English fluently and their competence in PA is only passive and restricted to a scanty vocabulary and set of communicative tasks. PA definiteness grammar, which does not mark count/mass distinctions, does not affect PAHSEs' linguistic production. English definiteness markers are associated with countability and the expression of countability relies on their distribution. The article is one of the most frequent recurring elements in English linguistic production, so its rules are deeply embedded in the linguistic thinking of the speakers via frequency. Therefore, I expected PAHSE informants, who are native speakers of English, to have stronger biases toward the semantic count/mass opposition and cognitive individuation by shape. The lability of the count/mass opposition among PAHSEs echoes the PA semantic profile and PAHSEs' cognitive bias toward matching objects by shape is in line with PA speakers' cognitive decisions.

To sum up, the data elicited and discussed in the present study show that despite the fact that definiteness is acquired at a late age compared to other areas of grammatical competence, semantic and cognitive parameters related to it are ready to use at a very early age (three–four), when PAHSEs' acquisition of PA structures begins its decline in favor of English. Furthermore, cognition and language are not expressions of the same underlying structures; rich experience of thinking categories are stored in cognition yet are often silent or recessive in language. So, a "thinking for speaking" activity does exist (Slobin, 1992),

and it represents a small part of the whole cognitive potential of an individual. Language is not the only factor that affects cognition; PAHSE informants' life experience demonstrates that mental habits and attitudes leading to specific judgements, evaluations, and decisions are also transmitted via cultural practices. Preparing food in certain quantities and shapes and serving and consuming it in certain containers and with certain utensils can affect cognition as much as the language in which we think.

References

Abbott, Barbara. 2004. "Definiteness and Indefiniteness", Horn, Lawrence, & Ward, Gregory (eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Malden: Blackwell. 122-149.

Aboras, Afnan. 2020. "The Acquisition of Definiteness and Specificity in English: A Case Study with Saudi-Arabic Learners of English Using an Online Task", *English Language and Literature Studies* 10 (1). 13-25.

Abu-Melhim, Abdel Rahman. 2013. "The Presence or Absence of Definiteness in the Native Language and Its Impact on ESL Learning", *English Language Teaching* 7(1). 50-65.

Alenizi, Aied. 2013. *The Acquisition of the Nongeneric Uses of the English Definite Article the by Arabic Speakers of English*. MA thesis. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.

Alenizi, Aied. 2017. *Noun Countability Judgments by Arabic Speakers of English*. PhD thesis. Ball: Ball State University.

Al-Malki, Eidhah, Norazman, Abdul Majid, & Noor, Abidah. 2014. "Generic Reference in English, Arabic and Malay: A Cross Linguistic Typology and Comparison", *English Language Teaching* 7 (11). 15-27.

Al-Rawi, Maather. 2005. *The Structure of Determiner Phrases in Standard Arabic*. Ph.D. thesis. Leeds: University of Leeds.

Badawi, Elsaid, Carter, Michael, & Gully, Adrian. 2004. *Modern Written Arabic: A Comprehensive Grammar*. New York: Routledge.

Behrens, Leila. 2000. "Typological Parameters of Genericity", *Arbeitspapier, Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, Universität zu Köln* 37. 1-110.

Bolinger, Dwight. 1977. *Meaning and Form*. New York/ London: Longman.

Borg, Alexander. 2000. "Some Observations on the יום הששי Syndrome on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls". Muraoka, Takamitsu, & Elwolde, John (eds.), *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*. Leiden: Brill. 26-39.

Butler, Yoko. 2002. "Second Language Learners' Theories on the Use of English Articles", *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 24. 451-480.

Carlson, Gregory. 1977. *Reference to Kinds in English*. Ph.D. thesis. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

Chen, Ping. 2004. "Identifiability and Definiteness in Chinese". *Linguistics* 42(6). 1129-1184.

Chesterman, Andrew. 2005. *On Definiteness: A Study with Special Reference to English and Finnish*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chierchia, Gennaro. 1998. "Plurality of Mass Nouns and the Notion of 'Semantic Parameter'", *Events and Grammar* 70. 53-103.

Dahl, Östen. 1975. "On Generics". Keenan, Edward (ed.), *Formal Semantics of Natural Language*. London/New York: Cambridge University Press. 99-111.

Danon, Gabi. 2001. "Syntactic Definiteness in the Grammar of Modern Hebrew", *Linguistics* 39(6). 1071-1116.

Danon, Gabi. 2008. "Definiteness Spreading in the Hebrew Construct State", *Lingua* 118(7). 872-906.

Dickins, James. 2013. "Definiteness, Genitives and Two Kinds of Syntax in Standard Arabic", Kuty, Renaud, Seeger, Ulrich, & Talay, Shabo (eds.), *Nicht nur mit Engelzungen: Beiträge zur semitischen Dialektologie. Festschrift für Werner Arnold zum 60. Geburtstag*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. 59-72.

Fassi Fehri, Abdelkader, & Vinet, Marie-Thérèse. 2008. "Nominal and Verbal Classes in Arabic and Chinese", *Revue linguistique de Vincennes* 37. 55-83.

Fiengo, Robert. 1987. "Definiteness, Specificity, and Familiarity", *Linguistic Inquiry*. 163-166.

Garrard, Peter, Carroll, Erin, Vinson, David, & Vigliocco, Gabriella. 2004. "Dissociation of Lexical Syntax and Semantics: Evidence from Focal Cortical Degeneration", *Neurocase* 10. 353-362.

Harb, Mustafa. 2014. "A Closer Look at the English Article System", *International Journal of Linguistics* 6. 87-101.

Haspelmath, Martin. 1997. *Indefinite Pronouns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haspelmath, Martin. 1999. "Explaining Article–Possessor Complementarity: Economic Motivation in Noun Phrase Syntax", *Language* 75(2). 227-243.

Hawas, Hamid. 1986. *The Realization of Definiteness in English and Arabic: A Contrastive/Error Analysis Study*. PhD thesis. Cardiff: University of Wales.

Hawkins, John. 1978. *Definiteness and Indefiniteness*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Holes, Clive. 2004. *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Husni, Ronak, & Newman, Daniel. 2015. *Arabic–English–Arabic translation: Issues and Strategies*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

Iwasaki, Noriko, Vinson, David, & Vigliocco, Gabriella. 2010. "Does the Grammatical Count/Mass Distinction Affect Semantic Representations? Evidence from Experiments in English and Japanese", *Language and Cognitive Processes* 25(2). 189-223.

Jaber, Aziz. 2014. *On Genericity and Definiteness in Modern Standard Arabic*. PhD thesis. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.

Jarrah, Marwan. 2016. "On Definiteness and Information Trigger in Arabic", *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 7(2). 55-67.

Kashgary, Amira. 2015. "Meanings and Functions of the Arabic Article ʔal- 'the' with Reference to the Concept of Definiteness", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 60(1). 93-110.

Krifka, Manfred; Pelletier, Francis; Carlson, Gregory; ter Meulen, Alice; Chierchia, Gennaro & Link, Godehard. 1995. *Genericity: An Introduction*. Carlson, Gregory & Pelletier, Francis (eds.) *The Generic Book*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1-124.

Liu, Dilin, & Gleason, Johanna. 2002. "Acquisition of the Article 'The' by Nonnative Speakers of English. An Analysis of Four Nongeneric Uses", *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 24. 1-26.

Lucy, John, & Gaskins, Suzanne. 2001. "Grammatical Categories and the Development of Classification Preferences: A Comparative Approach". Bowerman, Melissa, & Levinson, Stephen (eds.), *Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 257-283.

Lyons, Christopher. 1999. *Definiteness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Master, Peter. 1987. *A Cross-Linguistic Interlanguage Analysis of the Acquisition of the English Article System*. PhD thesis. Los Angeles: University of California.

Middleton, Erika, Wisniewski, Edward, Trindel, Kelly, & Imai, Mitsumi. 2004. "Separating the Chaff from the Oats: Evidence for a Conceptual Distinction between Count Noun and Mass Noun Aggregates". *Journal of Memory and Language* 50. 371-394.

Milsark, Gary. 1977. "Toward an Explanation of Certain Peculiarities of the Existential Construction in English". *Linguistic Analysis* 3(l): 1-29.

Naim-Bader, Fadel. 1988. *Analysis of Error Type, Source, and Gravity in the Writing of Arabic ESL students in U.S.A. Colleges*. MA thesis. Portland State University.

Nariyama, Shigeko. 2003. *Ellipsis and Reference Tracking in Japanese*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Partee, Barbara. 1972. "Opacity, Coreference, and Pronouns", Davidson, Donald, & Harman, Gilbert (eds.), *Semantics of Natural Language*. Dordrecht: Reidel. pp. 415-441.

Pat-El, Na'ama. 2009. "The Development of the Semitic Definite Article: A Syntactic Approach", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54. 19-50.

Polinsky, Maria. 2018. *Heritage Languages and Their Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reinhart, Tania. 1983. *Anaphora and Semantic Interpretation*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor and Francis.

Retsö, Jan. 1984-1986. "State, Determination and Definiteness in Arabic. A Reconsideration", *Orientalia Suecana* 33-35. 341-346.

Roberts, Craige. 2003. "Uniqueness in Definite Noun Phrases", *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26(3). 287-350.

Russell, Bertrand, 1905. "On Denoting", *Mind* 14. 479-493.

Sartori, Manuel. 2019. "Definition and Determination in Medieval Arabic Grammatical Thought", Gioffo, Manuela, & Versteegh, Kees (eds.), *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics IV*. Leiden: Brill. 253-272.

Sakaedani, Haruko. 2019. "What is Definiteness in Arabic? Focusing on Proper Nouns for Genera and ʔasmā mubhama 'Ambiguous Nouns'", Gioffo, Manuela, & Versteegh, Kees (eds.), *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics IV*. Leiden: Brill. 233-252.

Shlonsky, Ur. 2004. "The Form of Semitic Noun Phrases", *Lingua* 114(12). 1465-1526.

Slobin, Dan. 1992. *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Testen, David. 1998. "Literary Arabic and Early Hijazi Contrasts in the Marking of Definiteness", Haeri, Niloofar, Eid, Mushira, & Benmamoun, Elabbas (eds.), *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XI: Papers from the Eleventh Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 207-225.

Vigliocco, Gabriella, Vinson, David, Paganelli, Federica, & Dworzynski, Katharina. 2005 "Grammatical Gender Effects on Cognition: Implications for Language Learning and Language Use", *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 134. 501-524.

Von Heusinger, Klaus. 2002. "Specificity and Definiteness in Sentence and Discourse Structure", *Journal of Semantics* 19(3). 245-274.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1988. *The Semantics of Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.

Wisniewski, Edward, Lamb, Christopher, & Middleton, Erika. 2003. "On the Conceptual Basis for the Count and Mass Moun Distinction", *Language and Cognitive Processes* 18. 583-624.

III. BOOK REVIEWS

Muntasir Fayez Al-Hamad. 2022. *Signs and Gestures: Non-verbal Communication in the Qatari Culture* **(translated and edited by Alreem Al-Adba). Doha: Qatar University Press. 278 pp. ISBN: 978-992-713-954-3.**

Reviewed by NAJLA KALACH

UNINT University

Language is the main means of communication for human beings, but it is not the only one. In fact, we communicate through our body movements and postures, through gestures; even the distance between bodies has a specific meaning, and the clothes and the accessories we wear, too. Ignoring the meaning of certain verbal and non-verbal languages can cause communication problems, because what it is acceptable in a culture, might not be accepted by another culture. With this in mind, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of how non-verbal communication is just as national and cultural as verbal communication.

The book under review is *Signs and Gestures: Non-verbal Communication in the Qatari Culture* by Muntasir Al-Hamad, Associate Professor of Arabic Language at Qatar University − originally published in Arabic in 2019 under the title *al-Īma'a wa al-išāra. Al-tawāṣul ġayr al-lafẓī fī al-ṯaqāfa al-qaṭariyya* − edited and translated into English by Alreem Al-Adba (2022), in order to offer an insight into this new aspect of contemporary Qatari culture to a much wider public.

The volume is introduced by a foreword by Professor George Grigore, President of AIDA (*Association Internationale de Dialectologie Arabe*), who defines this work 'unique'. It is also followed by the translator's foreword Alreem Al-Adba and a preface and introduction by Al-Hamad. In the preface (pp. xvi–xxvii), the author briefly presents the historical and linguistic context of Qatar, and then details the rigorous methodology adopted for its structure, consisting of the use 'of Grounded Theory, often adopted in Qualitative Methodology research methods' (p. xix) and the process of collecting and categorizing material. The author specifies how measuring variables (time, age, status, gender, Bedouinism and urbanisation) influence the type of dress, gestures and signs, and Al-Hamad goes on by explaining how he teamed up with specialized reviewers in linguistics and communication, Qatari advisors, focus groups, and made use of direct observations in Qatari markets, public places and TV channels. The fact of involving the common people enabled the author to review and verify the credibility of the large amount of data collected consisting of approximately 380 different gestures and signs. In the

introduction, *A General Introduction to Non-Verbal Communication* (pp. 18–25), Al-Hamad describes the path chosen for his research and points out what a challenge it has been to maintain a balance in the book between the scientific approach and the narrative style, in order to make it all easily comprehensible even to a non-specialized reader. The author then provides a brief literature review of semiotics, and scientifically presents two concepts underlying his study, namely that of communication and that of perception.

The work is divided into three chapters, the content of each being well documented by numerous images that help the reader, specialized and non-specialized, follow the author's theory in a concrete manner. The first chapter, *Clothing and Appearance* (pp. 27–100) is concerned with the Qatari identity through traditional dresses and it is divided into three sections. The first section is *Male Clothing* (pp. 29–79), and it is about all the garments and accessories worn by men, such as the *iqal*[1], the *guthra*, the *thaub*, the *bisht*, the footwear and watches. It ends with a paragraph dedicated to beard and moustache because, as Al-Hamad points out, they are associated with certain gestures and signs in the Qatari culture. The second section is *Female Clothing* (pp. 79–91), and it presents all the clothes and accessories worn by Qatari women, including the *hijab*, the *sheila*, the face covers, the *abaya*, the female *thaubs* and female footwear. What is most fascinating about both sections is the accurate description of the specific functions that each piece of clothing or accessory assumes in certain local contexts. The chapter ends with the third and short section of *Non-verbal Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic* (pp. 92–100), in which it is shown how - due to the restrictions imposed to prevent the virus spread - certain gestures have been adapted and 'globalized' as in the case of the elbow or foot greeting, becoming some of the most common in Qatari culture.

The second chapter, *Reception, Welcoming and Greetings* (pp. 101–148), is divided into five paragraphs (*Personal Space*, *Sitting Positions*, *Drinks and Food*, *Driving*, and *Pronouns*) and shows, in order: how to respect interpersonal distance in a social and intimate space, how to greet according to the degree of confidence and how to appropriately greet the opposite sex, the rules governing the act of kissing, the etiquette of positions to assume when in the presence of other people, e.g. in the *majlis*, as well as the etiquette in asking for, serving, eating and sharing drinks or food, and finally both the gestures that are most frequently used when driving and those related to pronouns to refer to oneself or third persons.

The most substantial chapter is undoubtedly the third, which is entitled *Gestures and Signs* (pp. 149–249). It offers an exhaustive overview and well-documented description of gestures and signs in Qatari culture, and for many gestures or signs the accompanying verbal language is also indicated - where possible - as if this chapter were a 'kinesics dictionary' for the reader. The chapter is divided into ten paragraphs that illustrate how gestures and signs are used according to their function and context, which are: *Commands and Requests*, *Prayers and Requests*, *Threats*, *Circumstances and Attributes*, *Feelings and Emotions*, *Bashfulness*, *Shock and Surprise*, *Impatience and Anxiety*, *Boredom*, *Affection and Endearment.*

The third chapter is followed by a short section dedicated to *The Use of e-Non-verbal Communication* (pp. 250–251), in which Al-Hamad draws the attention to the contrast

---

[1] The transliteration follows the one used in the book under review *Signs and Gestures: Non-verbal Communication in the Qatari Culture*.

between traditional means of communication and those used in social networks and Apps, in which the use of gestures through emojis and GIF stickers, often accompanied by phrases or words, emerges. Both this section and that about non-verbal Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic show how up-to-date Al-Hamad's research is. However, in order to realize how far it may have spread, the part about e-non-verbal communication needs to be deepened and broadened.

Finally, the author presents his conclusions (p. 252), where he summarizes the methodology applied in the research and emphasizes that the purpose of the volume is mainly to document gestures and signs that characterize part of the intangible Qatari cultural heritage. The publication contains a glossary (pp. 253-259) at the end, enclosing the main terms related to clothing, accessories and verbal expressions, especially useful to a non-specialized audience. Including a wider range of local terms in this section would have been an interesting thing to do, in order to give the reader a more complete idea about the topic.

In conclusion, the subject of the book is undoubtedly of great interest, as it opens a window on the Qatari intangible heritage and culture regarding gestures and signs by employing a scientific methodology. This is fascinating for both those who study linguistics, semiotics and intercultural communication as well as for those interested in the topic of non-verbal communication from a sociological and anthropological perspective. Moreover, it is useful as well as for those who are interested in familiarizing with the Qatari society or in learning more about the local identity.

While they browse through the book, the readers immediately understand the huge work behind it, and the pioneering innovation of Al-Hamad's study, which not only aims at the description of clothing, gestures and signs, but also has an intercultural and even teaching function. This book is currently the only one on a global scale about non-verbal communication in Qatar, that includes such a large number of visual instances – around 400 – accompanied by detailed descriptions of clothing, gestures and signs. Finally, it should not be overlooked that Al-Hamad's book is also precious for the younger generations, as many young Qataris often end up living or studying abroad: it enables them to preserve part of their cultural heritage, as a sort of "legacy" of the past.