



Lingue, popoli e culture

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Ethnorêma, dal greco *ethnos* ‘popolo, etnia’ e *rhêma* ‘ciò che è detto, parola, espressione’, ma anche ‘cosa, oggetto, evento’. Nella linguistica pragmatica *rema* sta ad indicare la parte di una frase che aggiunge ulteriore informazione a quello che è stato già comunicato (il *tema*).

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Ethnorêma, from the Greek words *ethnos* ‘people, ethnicity’ and *rhêma* ‘what is said, word, expression’, but also ‘thing, object, event’. In linguistics, *rheme* indicates the part of a sentence that adds further information about an entity or a situation that has already been mentioned (the *theme*).

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Minorities and linguistic rights in the Western Balkans

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the approaches to a comparative analysis of cultural rights, in particular linguistic rights, of minorities in the countries of Western Balkans. The focus is on the interconnection of cultural minority rights, reflected especially in linguistic and minority education rights, and of political rights of minorities, as well as on the dependence of the processes of democratization and post-conflict reconciliation on the status of minorities. Short overview of current state of cultural rights of minorities in the Western Balkans is given, regarding the use and preservation of minority languages and the challenges this presents in divided societies.

Keywords: *minority languages, linguistic rights, Western Balkans.*

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Cultural and linguistic rights of minorities in Western Balkans

Status of minorities was at the heart of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and continued to be a major issue also in the post-war period, as well as through the EU accession process. The EU conditionality on national minorities was introduced to Western Balkans already in 1997 as Regional approach, developing into SAP (Stabilization and Association Process) in 2001 and into Thessaloniki Agenda in 2003. Since 2005, the Chapter 23 was introduced in the accession negotiations, covering also the rights of national minorities. Apart from the external influences of the EU and the international community, the rights of minorities – both in their cultural and political aspects – have been discussed as major domestic factors of stability and peaceful intergroup dialogue. This article explores the cultural rights, in particular linguistic rights, of minorities in the countries of Western Balkans. The presumption of interconnection of cultural minority rights, reflected especially in linguistic and minority education rights, and of political rights of minorities is corroborated by many authors¹, as is the dependence of the processes of democratization and post-conflict reconciliation on the status of minorities².

Furthermore, the influence of the EU accession process on the preservation of minority languages in the Western Balkans serves as a crucial framework for this inquiry, given the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity for the European Union itself as well as for other influential international organizations, among them the United Nations and the Council of Europe. This article provides a preliminary introduction to the topic of minorities in the Western Balkans, their languages and current state of their cultural rights. The following sections are devoted to a short overview of the status of

¹ SZOCSIK Edina (2012) “The EU accession criteria in the field of minority protection and the demands of ethnic minority parties”, *JEMIE* 11: 104.

² BLONDEL Cyril and Antonija PETRIČUŠIĆ (2012) “Reconciliation in the Western Balkans: New Perspectives and Proposals”, *JEMIE* 11: 1.

minorities in this region, followed by an analysis of the aspects of cultural rights of minorities regarding the use and preservation of minority languages and the challenges this poses in divided societies.

Brief overview: Minorities in Western Balkans

It has long been acknowledged in the literature on minority rights that there exists a time lag between the legislative regulation and the implementation in practice of cultural and linguistic rights, but also that the framework of cultural rights has to be situated within a wider social and economic context in order to be effective³. Concerning general terminology, usually a differentiation is made between national minorities, ethnic minorities, and social or cultural minorities (while the research on language policies also discusses language minorities). The category of social or cultural minorities refers to new social movements – gathering newly articulated minoritarian groups such as LGBT persons or disabled people⁴. In contrast, in the UN framework the term “ethnic” minority is the broadest umbrella term available, and other terms such as “national” or “racial” minorities are considered to be included in it⁵. In addition, applying intersectional perspective to minority issues has resulted in attention to overlapping discrimination of vulnerable groups within ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities, such as women or non-heterosexual persons⁶.

In historical terms, with the end of three empires after the WWI, the new approach to protecting minority rights through law was applied to Southeastern Europe by the international community, and partially resented by the new political elites as the minority rights treaties were perceived not as a part of a universal minority rights regime but especially demanding on this region. Furthermore, historical analysis has contextualized the repression towards minorities in the post-WWI period as bound to the process of state-building, which was liberal in nature and focused on modernization, but not per-se intolerant of minorities⁷. This however will change in the first post-WWII decades, when the ethnic map of the Balkans would get completely altered once again. It is important to recall how on the eve of its breakup, Yugoslavia was the most heterogeneous country in Europe of that time⁸. The system of national rights of Yugoslavia was based on equality of “nations” instead of on ethnic representation: the system of “nations”, “nationalities” and “other nationalities and ethnic groups”.

This intricate system in which no group was actually a majority was destroyed through the dissolution of Yugoslav state and reformulated in new nation-states with different constellation of majorities and minority groups. This fragmentation of the post-1989 period has resulted in the even more complex minorities map in each new country.

³ WILLIAMS Collin H. (1992) “The cultural rights of minorities: Recognition and implementation”. In PLICHTOVA Jana (ed.), *Minorities in politics: cultural and languages rights: Bratislava Symposium, November 13-16, 1991*. Pp. 110-111. Slovak Republic: Czechoslovak Committee of the European Cultural Foundation and Ministry of Culture.

⁴ KYMLICKA Will (2011) “Multicultural citizenship within multination states”, *Ethnicities* 11.3.

⁵ GULIYEVA Gulara (2014) “Defining the Indefinable: A Definition of ‘Minority’ in EU Law”. In T.H. Malloy and J. Marko (eds), *Minority Governance in and beyond Europe*. p. 181. Leiden: Brill.

⁶ BALDWIN Clive (2010) “Do Vulnerable Groups Within Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities Need Special Standards?”. In *Double Standards Pertaining to Minority Protection*. Pp. 243-258. Nijhoff, Brill.

⁷ MAZOWER Mark (2017) “Minorities and the League of Nations in interwar Europe”. In CASTELLINO Joshua (ed.), *Global Minority Rights*. New York: Routledge.

⁸ POULTON Hugh (1998) “Linguistic minorities in the Balkans (Albania, Greece and the successor states of former Yugoslavia)”. In PAULSTON Christina Bratt and Donald PECKHAM (eds). *Linguistic Minorities in Central Eastern Europe*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

The fragmentation into new countries, national identities and “new” languages after the destruction of Yugoslavia was compounded in the post-war period by what the UNHCHR Special Rapporteur⁹ called “over-emphasis” on ethnic, linguistic and religious differences that in the long run prevent social cohesion and reconciliation.

In general and specifically for Western Balkans, it has been strongly recommended that the processes of transitional justice and reconciliation should be based on cultural-rights approaches¹⁰. Cultural rights relate to the fields of language, culture and arts in the broad sense, and imply intercultural dialogue as well as sharing narratives about the past and a focus on diversity in the present. Although mostly civil and political rights are invoked in discussions on reconciliation processes, the cultural dimensions of human rights are crucial for dialogue in divided societies as well, as discussed by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights in relation to memorialization processes in post-conflict societies¹¹.

In perspective, the long history of the international standards of minority rights has evolved from the League of Nations and the post-WWI minority treaties, followed by other essential international human rights and minority rights instruments. Although minority rights were already encompassed by the Paris peace treaties of 1919/1920, their application remained largely problematic. Essential for minority cultural rights were the CSCE meetings since 1975 Helsinki on as well as the UN instruments – such as the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. To this were added the establishment in 1992 of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities as well as the important declarations by the OSCE such as the 1999 Lund Recommendations. Particularly for language rights is of relevance the 1998 OSCE Oslo Recommendations for Linguistic Rights of National Minorities.

Status of minority languages in the Western Balkans

In this article, the topic of minorities in the Western Balkans is approached through attention to the debates on language and minority rights, which are often interdisciplinary and contentious. The contemporary formulations of the paradigm of language rights are concerned with granting the possibility to minority groups to continue using their languages and keeping them alive. On the other hand, the conflicts that are partly based also on language differences have been linked to nationalism and the consolidation of the nation-state through common language and education. One of the ways out of this impasse is reformulating the understanding of the nation-state as plural in cultural and linguistic sense as suggested in many contemporary debates in the field. To counter the tendencies to essentialize the connections between language and identity, a reformulation of the LHR (Linguistic human rights) core claims is needed so that it would acknowledge how difficult it is to speak about collective rights in connection to language since there cannot be assumed a direct correlation between ethnic and linguistic identity: «the languages we speak are not ineluctably linked to our (ethnic)

⁹ UNHCHR (2014) *Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed. Addendum Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (13 – 24 May 2013)*, A/HRC/25/49/Add.1. UN General Assembly.

¹⁰ UNHCHR (2014) *Statement by Ms. Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights at the 25th session of the Human Rights Council*, Geneva.

¹¹ UNHCHR (2014) *Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Farida Shaheed, Memorialization processes*, A/HRC/25/49. UN General Assembly.

identity»¹². In other words, also the (minority) language should be seen as constructed as much as other identity categories. In what follows, various attempts to deal with minority language policies but also the contemporary status of minority languages in the countries of the Western Balkans are briefly analyzed.

Useful for this purpose is the analysis of linguistic ideologies influencing the speakers of small ethnic groups in the Balkans. Tanja Petrović¹³ shows how the Western European language ideology that conflates «categories of ethnicity, language and nation» was a determining influence on the perception of Balkan linguists but also ordinary speakers living within a diametrically different reality of Balkan multilingualism¹⁴. Through her case study of Serbs of the Slovenian region of Bela Krajina, Petrović illustrates the pressure such Western ideological assumptions as purism in language and appreciating standard national language more than other language forms performed on this and other ethnic groups in the Balkans. In terms of minority protection policies, Edina Szocsik¹⁵ discusses the public minority language use and the education in the minority language up to the tertiary level as the «classical arenas in which additional rights for members of minorities are recognized»¹⁶. These cultural dimensions of ethnic rights are so important that she concludes, on the examples of Hungarian minority rights in Romania and Kosovo: «the more possibilities there are for using the minority language in the public sphere, the higher the level of minority protection»¹⁷.

Generally, the Western Balkans, as much as the wider Balkans region, epitomize a complex language mix. Looking at the whole of the Balkans, in use are the Slavic languages Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian(-Montenegrin), Bulgarian and Macedonian; the Romance languages – Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian; Albanian; Greek, and a Balkan dialect of Romani. BCS(M) are spoken as majority languages in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro and as minority languages in Romania and Bulgaria; Macedonian as majority language in Macedonia and as minority language in Northern Greece and Albania; while Bulgarian as a majority language in Bulgaria and as minority language in a part of Serbia. Albanian is majority language in Albania and Kosovo and a minority language in parts of Serbia and Greece; Romanian is majority language in Romania and a minority in Serbia and Bulgaria; Modern Greek is majority language in Greece and minority in a part of Albania; Aromanian, Megleni-Romanian and Romani are not majority languages anywhere but spoken by smaller communities around the Balkans (Arli Romani – around Skopje; Megleno Romanian in parts of Macedonia and Greece; Aromanian in some parts of Macedonia, Greece, and Albania)¹⁸.

The EGIDS scale – the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale was created by Lewis and Simons in 2010 to capture the current status of world languages¹⁹. While they encompass 10 levels of language status, the endangered status was further nuanced for two situations – 6b Threatened and 7 Shifting. Currently 22% of world

¹² MAY Stephen (2013) *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*. P. 9. London and New York: Routledge.

¹³ PETROVIĆ Tanja (2003) “Studying the minority groups' identities in the Balkans from the perspective of language ideology” *Balcanica* 34.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*. P. 5.

¹⁵ SZOCSIK Edina (2012) “The EU accession criteria in the field of minority protection and the demands of ethnic minority parties” *JEMIE* 11: 104.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*. P. 112.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ LEWIS Paul M., Garry F. SIMONS and Charles D. FENNIG (eds.) (2015) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.

languages are reported to have reached the endangered level²⁰. In addition, according to the UNESCO's Atlas of World Languages in Danger²¹, some 43% of around 6000 world languages are threatened.

On the 10-level EGIDS scale of the language status, Megleno Romanian is classified as an endangered language – as Level 6b, while Istro-Romanian is “shifting” – Level 7 language. Also at Level 7 (shifting) is the Ladino, language of Sephardic Jews, with most speakers in Israel but with some speakers of its Balkan dialect in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Turkey. Regarded as a disappearing language in 1992²², Aromanian is currently reported as at Level 5 of EGIDS scale (educational status) with more than 180.000 active users in six Balkan countries, and taught in primary schools in specific areas - in for example Albania and North Macedonia. In addition, Balkan Romani is reported as Level 4 (developing) language, having some 809,940 estimated speakers scattered around the Balkans, of which some 100,000 Arli Romani speakers in Albania, Greece, Kosovo and Macedonia²³.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia resulted not only in the appearance of new states but also in fragmentation of the previously shared Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian language into four different national languages. This political process, accompanied with insisting on linguistic and cultural differences, has complicated the map of minority linguistic groups in the region. However, while the four “new” national languages have gained separate political and symbolic status, they may be argued to comprise one mutually comprehensible polycentric language in linguistic and communicative terms²⁴. With this in mind, it is important to emphasize the distinction between historical (language) minority groups and such new linguistic minorities in the post-Yugoslav region. This difference is also reflected in the status of these languages on the EGIDS scale. Listed both as separate “new” national languages (Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Montenegrin) and with their old, “alternate” name (Serbo-Croatian), all four of these hold a Level 1 status of National language or statutory national language, as does Albanian²⁵. Although these languages have the status of minority languages in most of the countries of the region, their linguistic dominant status reflect the difference from the previously discussed endangered or shifting minority languages, both in terms of number of speakers and their role in consolidating national identity.

Also useful for the broader understanding of the importance of cultural rights of minorities in multination states is the discussion of social cohesion in diverse societies, both in relation to historic national minorities and new minorities such as immigrants²⁶. The aim of the multinational citizenship should not consist in homogenization; instead “successful integration” consists of «integration into ambivalent identifications and contested commitments»²⁷. In this vision, constant mediation of disagreements is inherent to a multination state, and this commitment needs to be «continually negotiated in a peaceful and democratic way»²⁸. In Western Balkans, this renegotiation of the past

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ See <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/en/statistics.html>

²² POULTON Hugh (2001) *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*. London: Minority Rights Group.

²³ LEWIS Paul M., Garry F. SIMONS and Charles D. FENNIG (eds.) (2015) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.

²⁴ KORDIĆ Snježana (2010) *Jezik i nacionalizam (Language and nationalism)*. Zagreb: Durieux.

²⁵ LEWIS Paul M., Garry F. SIMONS and Charles D. FENNIG (eds.) (2015) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.

²⁶ KYMLICKA Will (2011) “Multicultural citizenship within multination states”, *Ethnicities* 11.3.

²⁷ *Ibidem*. P. 283.

²⁸ *Ibidem*. P. 299.

and of a complex present needs to engage also the politics of memory as well as the processes of transitional justice. Regarding the tenuous position of all minorities in the reconciliation processes, it is significant that no nation in Western Balkans has built any monument to civilian victims of a minority, as pointed out in the 2012 report of the Council of Europe on former Yugoslav countries²⁹.

Impact of EU enlargement on the cultural rights of minorities

In the research on democratization in Western Balkans, it is acknowledged that the status of minorities was at the heart of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and continued to be a major issue in the post-war period, as well as through the EU accession process. This is clearly traceable in the fact that the EU conditionality on national minorities was introduced to Western Balkans already in 1997 as Regional approach, developing into SAP (Stabilization and Association Process) in 2001 and Thessaloniki Agenda in 2003³⁰. Moreover, since 2005, the Chapter 23 was introduced in the accession negotiations, regulating also the rights of national minorities³¹.

The EU conditionality has had significant effect in the accession processes as different as those of Croatia and North Macedonia, in particular the functioning of councils for national minorities in the first case and the process around the law on languages in the second case³². In a similar vein, the importance of European integrations might perhaps best be noted in examining comparatively the process of democratization and EU accession in the Western Balkans. In this sense, as Meka shows on the example of Albanian minority in Macedonia, there is a strong correlation between the protection of minorities and democratic consolidation, which he relates to European integrations³³.

While many scholars agree that the success of the EU politics of conditionality has been questionable in the Western Balkans³⁴, they would argue that in the particular area of rights and status of national minorities its influence was of major importance. This is in accordance with how Petričušić and Blondel³⁵ see the EU conditionality in the domain of minority rights as mirroring or “exporting” the fundamental values on which the EU was built to (potential) candidate countries, asking for protection of human rights, including national minorities’ rights. However, the crucial problem with this approach was the limited efficiency of conditionality in a field in which the EU did not have clear and consistent common standards of minority protection. Besides this key inconsistency, there are two other areas in which EU promotion of minority protection through conditionality in Central Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans is perceived as of limited range: namely the problems with application of the existing laws and norms, and

²⁹ KISIĆ Izabela (2013) “Transitional Justice in the Western Balkans”. *Transitional Justice—Experiences from Africa and the Western Balkans*. 63.

³⁰ KACARSKA Simonida (2019) “The Europeanization of minority policies in the Western Balkans”. In DŽANKIĆ Jelena, Soeren KEIL and Marko KMEZIĆ (eds) *The Europeanization of the Western Balkans*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ MEKA Elton (2016) “Minority Protection and Democratic Consolidation: The role of European Integration in the Republic of Macedonia”. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 10(2): 5.

³⁴ See BIEBER Florian (2011) “Building Impossible States? State-Building Strategies and EU Membership in the Western Balkans”. *Europe-Asia Studies* 63(10).

³⁵ BLONDEL Cyril and Antonija PETRIČUŠIĆ (2012) “Reconciliation in the Western Balkans: New Perspectives and Proposals”, *JEMIE* 11: 1.

of effective monitoring³⁶. Despite these limitations, Edina Szocsik shows that her case-study Serbia and other Western Balkans countries «have much more advanced minority protection legislation» than did the Central Eastern European countries in the last decade of the 20th century so that the European Union could «push for even higher levels of minority protection»³⁷. The relatively highly developed legislative protection of minorities in the Western Balkans makes even more obvious the problems with implementation and its monitoring, generally missing or inadequate.

Regarding the linguistic rights of the minorities, linguistic diversity has been advocated as a fundamental value by the European Union, but also by other international organizations such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe, expressed also through the Council of Europe's establishing of the “European Day of Languages” every 26th September, and on the other hand, through the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights³⁸. While sometimes this linguistic diversity is promoted at national or transnational levels, what is especially interesting for this overview are the cases of minority language survival accomplished through grassroots efforts, especially in post-conflict societies, such as post-war Italy and Spain³⁹, and the contemporary deeply divided societies of the Western Balkans.

Further directions

One of important insights that come out of studying the minorities and their cultural rights in the Western Balkans is the importance of continuous learning from the lessons that can strengthen the chances of reconciliation in divided societies and prevent future conflicts. Analysis of the state of minority cultural rights, in dialogue with the discussion of their political rights, indicates that despite the presence of numerous advanced legal instruments of minority rights protection and the involvement of international organizations with profound experience in minority issues, both the international community and local political elites have shown clear weakness in implementing them in contexts such as Kosovo, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most important insight, shared by many authors as well as members of local communities, might be that the minority rights are a key to democratization and reconciliation in divided societies, and that the framework of minority rights is as indispensable for Western Balkan societies as elsewhere.

Another important direction for the future research and understanding of this issue is an interest in positive examples of inter-group communication and cooperation in the field of minority cultural rights. Though a challenging field, both historically and at present, the linguistic rights and cultural rights related to education, arts and cultural life of minorities have also seen inspiring moments of intercultural encounters, which need to be understood and studied for a better future in this region and more broadly.

³⁶ SZOCSIK Edina (2012) “The EU accession criteria in the field of minority protection and the demands of ethnic minority parties”, *JEMIE* 11: 104.

³⁷ *Ibidem*. P.122.

³⁸ MCDERMOTT Philip and Mairead Nic CRAITH (2019) “Linguistic Recognition in Deeply Divided Societies: Antagonism or Reconciliation?”. In HOGAN-BRUN Gabrielle and Bernadette O’ROURKE, *The Palgrave Handbook of Minority Languages and Communities*. Pp. 159-181. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

**Asmara Theater Association (*MaTeA*) 1961-1974:
Popular Music as Instrument of Modernity and Nationalism in Eritrea**

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ABSTRACT

Popular music in Eritrea is one of the most important instruments of political and social transformations. It has served as instrument of modernization, nationalism and political resistance. Based on critical and qualitative analysis of data, the paper argues that *MaTeA*, one of the first highly organized indigenous musical and theatrical bands of Eritrea which initiated the development of modern popular music, was an outcome of a negotiation between the modern music introduced by European colonialism and indigenous music that had been developing for centuries. *MaTeA* synchronized the modern art and indigenous art without jeopardizing popular music's basic function in the society. It also used modernization and nationalism as stimulants to develop new musical genres and popularity among the Eritrean society. At the same time, it influenced the identity of the people and their relation to economic and political powers. As a tool of analysis of the social and political history of urban society, *MaTeA* reveals the relationship of music, identity and power in modern Eritrean society throughout its life span.

Keywords: *Art, Colonialism, Indigenous, Asmara*

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Introduction

In the post-independent Eritrea, the preoccupation of popular music has been modernity and nationalism. This is not to say that popular music has neglected other aspects of the society. However, numerically, popular music production tends to focus on themes of nationalism and modernity. This is because for the last twenty years, popular music has been an integral part of the state's political tools for mobilizing the society towards development and war. In the aftermath of thirty years of armed struggle, popular music in Eritrea made tremendous progress in its genres and technological advancements. This in fact can be traced to the period of the armed struggle where popular music had powerful political as well as military roles in shaping the attitudes of the freedom fighters and in increasing the consciousness of the masses. In the early period of independence (1991-1997), popular music, highly influenced by the musical genre of the armed struggle focused on expressing the euphoria of victory after the thirty years armed struggle. When another conflict with Ethiopia broke out from 1998 to 2018, popular music found a stimulating issue to farther engage itself into the nationalist agenda. With the end of the conflict in 2018, popular music returned to its old agenda of state-led development. Even though there is a growing tendency of using popular

music as an instrument of opposition in Eritrean diaspora, nationalism and modernity have resurfaced as important stimulants to further advance its genre and technology.

This historical account shows that in Eritrea both popular music on one hand and modernity and nationalism on the other hand have had a symbiotic relationship. One played a crucial role to transform the other. While popular music takes nationalism and modernity as an important agenda to pursue, people's nationalist feeling and desire of modernization, in turn, provide raw material for artistic adventures. The purpose of this article is to historicize this relationship by analyzing and unpacking the history of performance of one of the first indigenous people's music bands called *Mahber Tyatr Asmara, MaTeA*, (Asmara Theater Association) as a case study. Without historicizing the relationship between music and nationalism, it is difficult to understand the current relationship between nationalism and popular music in Eritrea. In investigating this relationship, the paper asks: what were the themes of *MaTeA* musical performances? To what extent were these performances related to modernization and nationalism? In answering these questions, the paper relies on an analysis of the lyrics, most of which gathered from private and public archives. In addition to this, secondary sources remain important throughout the paper.

Popular Culture and Society

Popular culture is one of the most powerful tools that shapes the thinking and practices of any society. Its role can be ideological, entertaining, construction of identity and manifestation of changes that take place in a particular society (Waterman 1990: 17-29). This could be through exposing injustices, settling anxieties, increasing awareness and encouraging people for actions and reactions (Perullo 2011). Moreover, music creates common desires and common objectives not to mention that it can be a form of resistance to injustices and a form of perpetuation of injustices. Be it as it may, the relationship between art and society is always "a two-way street: not only do social practices and beliefs illuminate and affect art, but art also illuminates and affects social practices" (Ben-Amos 1989: 1).

Music is part of such popular culture. It is always at the service of the society in different forms. The usage of music despite its effectiveness varies across societies and periods. It can be an instrument of social and political changes and a tool to define the power relations between the state and society. During decolonization, "black music" brought colonized people in a dialogue that created political aspiration for independence (Njoroge 2008: 102). This continued in the early period of independence when African leaders applied particular musical styles for nation-building projects (Dorsch 2010). In 2011, in the Middle East particularly in Tunisia and Egypt music contributed enormously in fulfilling the popular demands (Levine 2012). Under the neoliberal order, music industry universalized western culture by breaking cultural borders to inspire myths on global modernity (Horkheimer et al. 2001, Stokes 2004). In this manner, music serves as an instrument for the reproduction of power relationship between the centres and peripheries (Taylor 1997). This was not a simple production of music, the industry of culture had to conduct continuous rearrangements in order to perfectly merge words, images and music so that the mass has no other options but to follow what is given (Horkheimer, Adorno 2001: 97).

During colonialism, music was central in creating a new image of Africa. As a legacy of this process, one of the major problems of studying African popular culture after the

construction of new knowledge of African arts was how to separate the constructed image of African art and the authentic nature of indigenous arts. Although this fact has remained a barrier in studying African popular arts, some scholars like Karin Barber (1987) tried to create a *modus operandi* that treated African arts as the constitution of sociological and aesthetical aspects (Barber 1987: 11). Using this methodology, it can be said that in Africa popular arts are social facts, important in the lives of large number of African people. They are less class affiliated; not structured but spur-of-the-moment creations which penetrate and are penetrated by political, economic and religious institutions. No matter the way of emergence, popular arts as cumulative expression of the social, political and economic relationships are powerful communication mechanism by combining music, dance, costume, mime, song, and speech (Barber 1987: 2-3). This represents cumulative expression of diverse features of local and foreign, traditional and modern, political and economic, rich and poor, etc. (Waterman 1990: 17-29).

Development of Modern Music in Eritrea

In Eritrea popular music with modern equipment is mainly product of the influence of European culture. Historically, it goes back to the arrival of colonial powers, particularly the Italians 1890-1941. Even though the racial order denied indigenous people access to modern music and theater performances which were exclusively played by and reserved for Italian settlers only, some indigenous Eritreans somehow intermittently found way to listen and observe modern musical performances (Matzke 2010: 12). It was during British period that Eritreans began to be acquainted to modern musical works freely. These musical works were dominated by the *Imperials* mainly formed by the Italians and the *US Army Orchestras* stationed in Asmara during the Cold War. Only few Eritreans such as Abubaker Ashakih individually excelled in musical works (Ashakih 2005). Young talented Eritreans as a group took some more years to form competitive modern musical and theatrical bands. One among these bands was the Asmara Theater Association (*Mahber Tyatr Asmera, MaTeA*), which was formed in 1961. Seeking to simplify the discussion, the article uses the abbreviated name *MaTeA* throughout the paper.

MaTeA used local languages, mainly Tigre and Tigrigna as its members were dominantly from these two ethno-linguistic communities of Eritrea. Consequently, it gained popularity instantly. However, this does not mean that there existed no other theatrical associations formed by Eritreans before *MaTeA*. There were two theatrical association *Mahber Tewaso Deqebat* (The Association of Indigenous for Theater) and *Mahber Memheyash Hagerawi Bahil* (National Culture Development Association). The former was established in around 1947 by a group of young Eritreans who were members of the Unionist political party that struggled to ensure the unification of Eritrea with Ethiopia. In its nine stage plays, *Mahber Tewaso Deqebat* as a politically motivated association, praised Ethiopian history (Tessema 2006: 172-8). In 1953, it changed its name to *Mahber Muziqan Teweson Deqebat* (Association of Indigenous for Music and Theater) and worked under this name until its closure in 1959. Throughout its existence, cultural rehabilitation replaced its previous politically oriented works. In other words, *Mahber Muziqan Teweson Deqebat* became more concerned about the cultural deviation that young Eritreans used to follow. *Mahber Memheyash Hagerawi Bahil* (National Culture Development Association) was another proto *MaTeA* musical and theatrical association established by young talented Eritreans in 1957. The objective of this

association, as its name implies, was to revive the local musical culture. Even though there were unionist feelings in some of its members, it was overwhelmed by the focus on the struggle against the domination of Sudanese music in Eritrea (Tessema 2006: 192-204).

Organized musical performance by indigenous people using locally made instruments has a long history. However, these are different because of religion and ethnicity. Churches regularly teach students hymns and choirs. Musical performances vary in genres and purposes among various ethnicities of Eritrean society. In terms of objectives, however, they can be broadly classified as religious and secular. Whereas the secular music is performed in social gathering such as wedding, festivals etc. the religious music is exclusively performed in religious occasions. However, the secular music varies according to the nine ethno-linguistic communities that exist in Eritrea. Every ethnic group has a distinctive oral tradition such as poetry, story-telling, drama, music and dance. Although all share various musical performances, each community has its own distinctive musical genres, known to be used to raise collaborative duties and diligent spirit during farming, construction of houses, defense and various ceremonies. However, since the coming of European colonialism, these had been influenced to various degrees though they had never lost their authenticity as independent musical performances.

The arrival of Europeans, particularly Italians, in Eritrea brought tremendous changes in the local culture. One important change was modern urbanization and urban culture. The introduction of modern capitalist culture went side by side with the expansion of urban construction and capitalist economic activities not to mention that Eritrea was meant to accommodate Italian settlers. To this end, cities, particularly Asmara, became modernist urban centers (Denison et al. 2007: 71; Visscher, Boneses 2007). Even though music performance was subject to these changes, cities were segregated along racial laws. Laws required indigenous people to live in segregated quarters of the city and forbade them to participate in any modern music performances. “[T]he Italians were in charge of most purpose-built cinema-cum-theatre houses which hosted films and elaborate variety shows.” Eritreans used tea-shops and houses of local brewed drinks to perform music (Matzke 2010: 10). Cinemas were built for particular viewers, ‘first class’, officers and indigenous people (Plastow 2016: 6). This denial not only let the indigenous people continue to use local spaces but also local instruments like *Kerar*, *Mesenko*, *Wat'a/Chira-wat'a*, *Embelta*, *Shambeqo*, *Meleket*, *Kebero*, *Negarity* in their cultural performances until 1947, when the first association *Mahber Tewaso Deqebat* (Association of Indigenous for Theatre) was established.

After the construction of the first playhouse *Teatro di Asmara* in 1918 and the largest one in Africa at that time (Plastow 2016: 3), plays and music performances by Italians had become regular events in Asmara because all performances were only for the Italian settlers. During the British administration from 1941 to 1951, when indigenous people enjoyed a relative freedom from racial segregation, establishing a musical band was not easy. Consequently, only *Mahber Tewaso Deqebat* (Association of Indigenous for Theater) that belonged to the Unionist party did exist. As Eritrea federated with Ethiopia (1952-1962), Eritreans seized the relative freedom to form musical and theatrical associations. The Asmara Theater Association (*MaTeA*) was a product of this period. Over the next decade, it produced a number of plays in Tigrigna and Tigre and received unprecedented popularity until it was dissolved by Ethiopian authorities in 1974 because

of its strong nationalist sentiment (Connell et al. 2010: 90-1). And many of its members were labelled as political dissidents facing imprisonment and exile.

MaTeA's popularity grew rapidly between 1961 and 1974 because of three socio-economic and political developments. First, with the emergence of a working class which could be regarded as middle class, new demands evolved. Fifty years of Italian colonization (1890-1941) pursued aggressive capitalist penetration in the agrarian and pastoralist economies of Eritrean society. On one hand, capital introduced modern urbanization and new infrastructure in communication and transportation and on the other hand, it dispossessed peasants through conscription and employment. While the colonial army alone conscripted more than 130,000 indigenous Eritreans between 1890 and 1941 to fight on behalf of the colonialist power, which was ten per cent of the active labor of Eritrean society (Connell et al. 2010: 90-1), the manufacturing sector employed 13,351 indigenous workers (Hailemariam Stifanos 1997: 108).

Such capital penetration resulted in two forms of economy. While the urban and plantation areas run capitalist economy, the rural area still exercised peasantry economy. The emergence of a new proletariat class in the urban areas became the natural consequence of capitalist adventure (Riley, Emigh: 175). This new economic phenomenon increased rural-urban migration and by the end of the British Military Administration in 1952 twenty per cent of Eritrean society had already been urbanized and a significant size of it was elevated to middle class which comprised the working class and clerks. This development induced a new urban culture characterized by leisure time and entertainment demands. Having lived in town and cities with magnificent cinemas and townhalls and new social character the formation of indigenous musical and theatrical associations was largely a response to such development. Having been created under this context, where public enthusiasm for popular culture increasingly grew, *MaTeA*'s performances turned out to be congested public gatherings.

Second, the emergence of armed nationalist struggle in Eritrea against Ethiopia's occupation was a political development that increased the popularity of *MaTeA*. The struggle conquered popular music and served as stimulant to *MaTeA*'s works which dispensed its popularity in urban and to some extent in rural areas. As British Military Administration (BMA) withdrew from Eritrea in 1952, the United Nations decided Eritrea and Ethiopia be federated despite strong opposition from the majority of Eritreans. This decision brewed bitter anti-Ethiopian sentiment almost throughout the country first in the form of political movement then armed one which went on from 1961 to 1991. *MaTeA* was created and dissolved during this era and its products found to be attracted by this phenomenon. Hence, the majority of the contents of *MaTeA*'s songs invoked nationalist sentiment until Ethiopian authority eventually closed it. After its dissolution, while some of its members were either arrested or exiled, others joined the armed struggle.

Third, musical taste in the urban society of Eritrea increasingly changed. The socio-economic crisis and its subsequent political turbulence that took place between 1940 and 1960 charged new musical tastes among the youth that was highly acquainted to the western musical genres. It was a reformation in music. *MaTeA* took an objective to introduce a new musical genre that accommodates the modern rhythm with local melodies and languages. So, when it made a music that blended the western musical genre with local melody and languages, it received huge popularity not only from the

youngsters but also from the old generation who had been worried by the cultural invasion that appeared to be deteriorating the local culture (Tessema 2006: 233-36).

***MaTeA* and Its Contributions**

Mahber Tyatr Asmera, MaTeA, (Asmara Theater Association) was established in August 1961 by nineteen artists. Before its official inauguration, the four founding members Asres Tessema, Alemayu Kahsai, Tewolde Redda and Tukabo Woldemariam held four meetings regarding its formation. However, as it started, it had nineteen members. Membership size reached fifty artists by the beginning of 1970s. The core objective of *MaTeA* was promoting socio-cultural transformation in society. One important point worth noting is that *MaTeA*, unlike the previous two musical and theatrical associations, had a clear organizational structure with a proper documentation system. It keeps personal records of the members, prepares activities' reports and financial accounts on a regular basis (Tessema 2006: 204-13).

Assessing the contribution of *MaTeA*'s work in Eritrean society cannot be an easy task in anyway. This is because *MaTeA* had layers of audiences starting from the emerging elite class to ordinary peasants. *MaTeA*'s works were claimed by people of all walks of life particularly in the urban areas. Despite a manifestation of urban culture, *MaTeA*'s music, popular music for that matter, blended traditional instruments and genres with modern music and made traditional music and its instruments as important as ever. This gave the national culture continuity and a renaissance from the colonial suffocation. Consequently, artistically, it created a new genre of music and dancing performances not too far from the local traditions, particularly those of Tigre and Tigrigna speaking communities (Tessema 2006).

Thematically, *MaTeA*'s songs communicate multiple messages such as cultural modernization, nationalism, gender equality etc. Seeking to elaborate this argument, the paper takes six most popular songs that communicate several layers of messages of love and care, nationalism and gender equality, morality and humanism, as well as culture and norms. In a nutshell, *MaTeA* as a music band and organization attempted to lead to socio-political and cultural transformations in its audiences.

ነስልጥና ደረሰኝ (በኢትዮጵን ባብደራከም) Let's revive our Culture (By Osman Abderhim)

ነስልጥና ደረሰኝ
ዝከሬ መቻላ እኩ ማሸልኝ
አዲ ካልተ ከተምወኑ
ፈቻድኑ በኩፍኑና
አማካን ወጪ ውጤ ይ-በለኝ
ስኩን ምግኘል ጥኩለለትኑ

እኩ ቅንዳ አገር-ርግኝ
ዶምባባ ማር ጥኩና እና
ነበራብር ጥኩሁልኝ

የተኩን ዓርከሬ ወጪት እና
ስኩን ምግኘታት ወለደኝ
ይች ማር አዲሮ-ሽ-ም

Let's develop our Music
for not to lose our culture
do not undermine us
and our works
they disrespect our talent
while they lack it

our culture is our pride
we are causing music to blossom
and stimulating national culture

oh my friend let's embrace our talent
please my fellow Countrymen
let's inquire from our parents

አስደተኛ የዕለታዊ
ፖ.ስ እና በትርጉም
የሚከተሉም አፍልጠልሁም

ኩረ ወዳእና ተፈተዋል
ትንካድም በብካንድ
ንሰና ግኝ ተጽረቷል
የዕለታዊ አስፈላጊ
ከብኩረ ወዳእና ነይሩ አማካኝ
አብ ጽዜለ ክብ ህዝብና

what our culture resembles
for what we are grateful
and enables you to know your country

you adore foreign music
and regard everything of it
high above ours
you forgot what we are doing
but ours are not worse the foreign ones
they only lack your support

This song conveys a message that glorifies national culture and appeals to individuals and communities to respect their culture and be proud of it. It stresses that with the erosion of national culture the society will eventually be deprived of the vital elements that constitute its identity. From the singer's point of view, this mission requires collective endeavors and calls up on everyone to encourage the nascent national artistic products instead of admiring and consuming foreign musical products with which the national culture will eventually be replaced in the long term if the neglect to the national art continues. The song was a response to the growing threat developed among the young urbanites due to their tendency to be foreign music admirers. In the 1950s and 1960s, youngsters between 20 and 40 years of age were enthusiastic about playing and listening foreign rhythms and melodies (Tessema 2006: 233).

MaTeA produced many artists some of whom are legendary in the history of art and music in Eritrea. Some of the legends that *MaTeA* produced throughout its fifteen years of performance were Atewberhan Segid, Yemane Gebremichael (Barya), Alamin Abdeletif, Teberh Tesfahuney, Tewolde Redda, Osman Abderehim and many others. All have left indelible marks on the Eritrean musical history that have influenced several generations. Some talented *MaTeA* bred musicians also played at international venues as they quickly caught up with the 60s and 70s American psychedelic rock and Motown soul music styles. Some of the great *MaTeA* musicians who rose to fame include the renown guitarist Tekle Adhanom (Huwket) and keyboard master Abdella Abubeker.

The six songs that this paper analyzes attempted to reform Eritrean society in various aspects. These include breaking social taboos against women by not only recruiting young women artists but also by staging musical performances that appeal for the emancipation of women from social oppressions. One of the legendary female singers of that time was Teberh Tesfahuney. Teberh was born in Asmara in 1947. She joined *MaTeA* at the age of 16 in 1963 and became a popular member. One of her biggest hits that enabled her to gain fame was titled “*Tegezana Abi Hedmo Tukuan Qunchi MeliOmo*” (Our Lovely House is infested with bedbugs and fleas). The song went viral across all section of the society as the content of the song was a satirical voice against Ethiopia’s occupation of Eritrea. This led to the banning of it which fueled its popularity and forced its singer, Teberh, to flee to Sweden in 1970. Her exile lasted only for a few years: she returned to Eritrea and joined the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) in 1975 (Tessema 2006: 255). In the struggle, Teberh was assigned to the fighting brigades until she was seriously wounded in 1978. Nevertheless, Teberh’s songs inspired many young girls to follow her footsteps in the growing number of new musical bands in urban Eritrea. Chief among these bands was Police Orchestra.

Beside the popular nationalist song of *Our Lovely House is infested with bedbugs and fleas*, *Covered bride* is one of the most famous songs of Teberh. This song is about a Bride and Bridegroom, who had made a nuptial vow to live in warm love and respect, but after marriage she was betrayed as her Bridegroom broke the promise and began to treat her disrespectfully. In this song, Teberh made efforts to show the kind of domestic experience that an Eritrean woman has been through in the society. This is one of the songs that yet possesses popularity. One indication is that it has been remixed by various young talented female artists and still attracts the attention of the new generation for its themes and its melody.

መጋዬ መርቃት (በተበሮ ተፋህነይ)

መርቃት ተሽሏን በረቂቃቄ ዓለን (እዋወ አን)
አብ ዓራት ከፍ አለ ካሳልኝ ዽበባ
ደንድ መጋዬ አካላይ ሪሱን (እዋወ አን)
በርሃን ካላኝ ወጥጣይ ይበት
ከምዕስ ዓቶ ነይሩ ፍይም ወልልኝ
ከዲን አፍጋስክየም መሰከታዊ ነረበትና

አካልኩ ምሸኑይ ምዕስ ተረኞኝ (እዋወ አን)
መጋዬ ገዢርኩ ዓቃላይ ተጽሑስኝ
ንስኩ ከተማውር ስጋር መጋዬ (እዋወ አን)
አን ተከሳሪ በዘይኩ መጋዬ
ከምዕስ ዓቶ ነይሩ ፍይም ወልልኝ
ከዲን አፍጋስክየም መሰከታዊ ነረበትና

ስደድ ከትኋዎት በጥናል መሚት
ይኩሉ እለኩ ዓይነይ ተቀማቻት
በዚ እዝክሮ ፍይም ዕለት ከንቱበ
አን የን ስሞኑኩ በተርሱ ዓለን
ከምዕስ ዓቶ ነይሩ ፍይም ወልልኝ
ከዲን አፍጋስክየም መሰከታዊ ነረበትና

መቆልዓ ሆኖም ንግድ ካርከቡን (እዋወ አን)
አብትሶትኩ አብበ ከተም ከኩነኝ
ዘጋጀምዕወ በደ ተተርሱኝ
ከም መጠን መርቃትኩ አይተትምኝኝ
ከምዕስ ዓቶ ነይሩ ፍይም ወልልኝ
ከዲን አፍጋስክየም መሰከታዊ ነረበትና

Covered Bride (by Teberh Tesfahuney)

I am a bride veiled with robe
sitting on the bed with trouble
thick curtain covered my room
and blocked the light
was this our vow before marriage
you broke the promise we had made

I am part of your soul and body
why do you need to suffocate me
while you are going out of the door
I am jailed behind without guard
was this our vow before the marriage
you broke the promise we had made

you were playing as I looked through the window
while I am crying the whole day
you are respected by the visitors
but I am alone covered by robe
was this our vow before the marriage (2)
you broke the promise we had made

all friends' gifts I amassed
you took them and spent
what did I do to you
please respect me, I am your wife
was this our vow before the marriage (2)
you broke the promise we had made

Many *MaTeA*'s products carry political messages that aim to induce a nationalist spirit. Almost all of the nationalist songs are satirical in order to skip verbal harassments and arrests by the Authority. The process of censorship was controlled by the Cinema Administration office (Plastow 2016: 11). Prior to presentation, *MaTeA* first had to present all its products in front of the censorship committee. Once passed this process, there were two security agents of Central Investigation Department (CID) who checked the contents and any political misconduct during live public performances (Tessema 2006: 214). To simplify the process, the leadership and members of *MaTeA*

confidentially agreed to avoid any mention of Eritrea or Ethiopia in any of the dramas and songs in any way possible (Tessema 2006: 219). Singers produced satirical songs composed of nationalist sentiment in spite of strict censorship. Some of the songs purposefully make pleas the public to support and strengthen the nationalist movement and remind the youngsters of their importance in political struggle.

ገዳግማ ስምበ (በትበርሃ ተስፋሁነይ)

ጋልማት እየ አፈተት ገዳግማ ስምበ
ስርቃን ፍመድኝ'ለ ገዢርወ ለውጭ
ከምታ ድጋፍቱ መርዓት ተስፋራኝ
አፈለስ እየ አልተኩ ለፊሳ ስላን
አብ ገዢ ከደሩት ተሻልከላ ተኩረቅ ነዚ
አዱ የን አብ ዓረተደ ተጋዢሙ ተሰበረ ስደፈ

ርእስጥዋዊ የባኑ ከትክፍና
አብ ማውጣት ተስፋራ ለማዕ አጥፍና
በሞከናት ለባቢሩ ገዢ አትያኝ
መብራህቱ አጥፋኬዋን የኩዘዣኑ

መ-ጽላይ ሲተቻለይ እንተበለከው
ስተካይ ከይበሉ ንብ በይተ ሲ.የወ
እንታይ'ው ከተበር ከብተየለኝ
ፈንጠርጠር እንተበለከኝ ያመድ ከይፈለኝ
ትም እለ እንተበለከኝ ስብረዎ ከሂሳኝ
ከተመድ ተቀዘበ ከፍጋም አለው
ከ.ኩይ ወመ-ሰለይ አዱ በተለው

How a Deceitful Man (by Teberh Tesfahuney)

He loves darkness to nurture his dread and fraud
nothing is good for him other than evil
like a beautiful decorated bride
I am struggling without aid
he was prohibited to come my home
but now he is laid in my bed by ruining everything

look at him, how mischievous he is
he climbed on the table and extinguished the light
he entered my home by breaking the window
and switched off the light to raid me

when I shout him to leave my home
he continued to rob the house
I am feeble, he is powerful
if I fight, I will bleed
if I cry, my color will pale
I am left only with my wedding ring
please bring my wife back to me

The song *How a Deceitful Man* represents the political situation of the 1960s in Eritrea. The singer – Tesfahuney – represents the Ethiopian occupation of Eritrea as a woman raided by a powerful thief. Ethiopia deceitfully – in the name of federation – entered Eritrea. After Ethiopia incorporated every institution in Eritrea and put it under strict control of its monarchic system, its soldiers started to raid and kill people across Eritrea. On the other hand, the Eritrean people were incapable of resisting it because in the 1960s, the national movement was too young for resisting Africa's largest Army. It was too small to engage in conventional war. But the nationalist interpretation was understood as the main message of the song, and when this reached the authorities, Teberh – the female singer – was banned from singing this particular song on any stage.

During the mid 1960s, Ethiopian soldiers raided more than ten villages inhibited by Islamic communities and massacred the majority of its residents in a few days. Ethiopian Soldiers deliberately destroyed Muslim communities as a policy of divide and rule to break the social bond between the adherents of the two monotheistic religions, Christians and Muslims, who had lived in social harmony for centuries. These criminal actions continued in 1960s and 1970s and resulted in more than seventy thousand Eritrean refugees in Sudan and the Middle East (Ammar 1992: 66). At this time, *MaTeA* released a song that called for unity between Christians and Muslims by one of its legendary singers, Atewbran Segid. In the song, presented below, Atewbran makes a very powerful appeal to the followers of both religions, Christianity and Islam, to unite and cooperate

with each other in order to rid themselves of oppression and to get rid of the enemy that was damaging the land.

አስለማሪ ከስታኅድር (በኢትዮ-ብርሃን ስነድ)

አስለማሪ ከስታኅድር ወጪ ቅለ ይጋ
ገምኩል ጥላክ አይተኞባ የጋ
አይተኞባ የጋ ከይተከወጥን ዕቅር
እይ

ግብርና ከፈሳ ልብና ካደዳ
መረጃና ካቋድ አቶቱ ወርሱና
ቆልዎን መምጣም ነበዙ ተከዳና
እይ

አስቀልን ስረፍትን በዘመኑ ስነወጥ
አንስትን ቁልዎን ተመራወም ጽብዓት
አማካየም ላከ ጽበሰ ከይመርድና ማቀት
እይ

አሳብ ሆኖ እና አልፎ ዓይና
ንሁበዙ ዝግበር እንታይ ገዢና
ባሬይ አትኩን ጽበሰ ይተካሙና
እይ

Muslims and Christian (by Atewbran Segid)

Muslims and Christian of my country
ignore the teachings of your enemy
otherwise you will be easy prey

these bad actions hurt our hearts
dried our land and diminished our harvest
starved our children and disparaged our youth

when injustice and vice conquered our life
our children & mothers nourished tear and grief
let's pray before we perish

please think how to be gentle
for the nation and its people
stop being greedy, but be noble

Furthermore, humanism and morality were parts of *MaTeA*'s musical themes. Using monotheistic religions as the sources of morality in Eritrean society, *MaTeA* worked to strengthen morality and humanism. In addition to musical products, it organized various public shows and performances dedicated to fund charitable organizations such as local orphanages, schools for the blind, adult literacy programs etc (Tessema 2006: 222). One of *MaTeA*'s songs that conveyed a message of that sort is titled *To be a human*. This song begs all citizen to show humility to each other and to value society above temporary individual interest.

ብብ የዕድን (በተወልደ ሌሎች)

ብብ የዕድን ስም የዕድኑ
እብ ዓለም ክነበር
የዕድኑ ማስከላ
አጥቃት ክበና ታልጣኑ ፍብ ዕኑ
ኞች ወን ክበና ፍይ መራት ፍጥነት

እብ የዕድኑ ገዢ
የዕድኑ ደረሰኑ
አስቀል ስደራኑ
የዕድኑ ክላኑ

እብ አመድ ፍብ አመድ እኩ ክላ ስብ
እብ አመድ ይደለ
ወይ ይከበር ወይ ይከበር ይከርማ ይሞስሞስ
ክናይድ ፍብ መደረሳ
ጋቢቻ ታሪካ እኩ የዕድኑ ስሙ ተረፈ

ወተናድ አበደሮች
ነበረቱ ይመስላኝ
ዓስከራን የዕድኑ
እብ ጽሁፎስ ስፍራኝ

እብ መራት ክለና ትስዎ የዕድኑ ስጋ
ንዳሰብ በዋጋ
ናይ አጥቃትና ይጋ
ጠራሽና ክንመውት
እብ ዓለም ክንፍል
ቀበረ ይበዝሩ
ፈሰ የዕድኑ ካቻለ

ሀልዋት ክይቶችና
እብ አያም ፅጂሮች
ብዋጥ ዕረፍትና

To be a human (by Towelde Redda)

To be a human (2)
who lives on Earth
is to suffer
so, let's liberate ourselves from sin
and all these worldly tests

in our warm home
with all our siblings
and kind family
love should prevail

man is from earth to earth
man wants life from earth
either rich or poor, every man dies
goes to the final destination
but it is his legacy that lives behind

our life is short
we think it is eternal
we soon become corpses
to be buried beneath the soil

while on earth with flesh
we become servants of money
the source of our sin
when we die
departing from earth
we take nothing
has the corps departs for funeral

we forget we will die as we were born
starting from Adam and Eve
death is the end of our stay on earth

Along with all these aspects, almost all singers produced songs on nationalism and modernization. With the growing urban culture, modernity – the thirst for western civilization, not only the acquaintance with European fashion among the youth, served as a source of inspiration for *MaTeA*'s artistic productions. Although there are various such songs, one among of them that kept its popularity up to now is titled *Tears of Love*.

ትብዕት ፍቃድ (በትኩቡ ወልደማካርያም)

እኔ ፍቃረው መብራሱት ለቦይ
በፍቅርኬ ይችንምለጥ አን
እነበት አለጥ ይኝነ
ፍቃረው እንዲበልክ ወይ አን

በፍቅርኬ ለቦይ ቅስላ
በፍቅርኬ አምቦታይ አረገ
ለየትን ቅተርን እንዳ በልክ ለለ
እነጥ በጽሕሩ አብዛለለ

አክላ. ለቦይ አረገ ዓይተው ቅስላ
ቋዝ ፍቃድ ከዋሽለኝ አለ (2)

ከም ከኩብ ለሰላ ተስፋለ
መብራሱት ተብርሃ በጠራ
ለቦይ ተስላቢ በፍቅር
እነጥ ግዢ ይጋበልዋለ

ፍቅርኬ ጽዜያዊ ቅተሉን
አዘጋጅ ማስቀመጥ የጊዜ
ናይበው ከምባኩይድ ስጋዜኑ
በልሰነ ከምባኩማይ ከኔ

አለ. አዋጅል አለጥ ወይ አን
በፍቅር ዓይሁ ጥል ማሳኑ
ከይደ የኩረትኩ ስላይ

ዓለም ከንቱ እያ በዓንተብ
ገለ አስላን ገንዘብ ተሆነ
እምነት አለጥ ተኩበ
ድጋዋድ አብይ ከይረክቡ

ፍቅር ካብ አዘጋጅ ከይተልፏ
ከመውታት እያ መቻኑ ወጣ ከይተርፏ
ዓኩ እንዲበልክ እነጥ እድርፏ
ከሰዕ እመውታት ነብይ ተካልፏ

Tears of Love (by Tukuabo Weldemariam)

Oh my love, the light of my heart
I am suffering from your love
crying from solitude
calling you in pain

this love wounded my heart
this love wounded my body
crying day and night
pushing me to insanity

oh my love, my heart burns
this pain is consuming my life

she is up in the sky like the stars
her long hair shines brightly
my heart is enticed in her love
I am just waiting for my time to come

please, your love is killing me
the entire world is getting smaller
I do not know where to go
I can only wait for you accept me

my life lost its sense of purpose
because your love
cause me to despair

I failed to know the world
that it is unfair from the beginning
I am in deep sadness
for I could not find my love

if you do not accept me
I will eventually die
but, until that time comes
I will continue to sing in sorrow

Tears of Love as a song marks a break with the old custom regarding romantic relationship. Traditionally, exposed romantic songs were not part of the custom in Eritrean society as both the monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, discourage such relationship before any solemn marriage has taken place. The emerging modern urban culture, however, had charged youth against this norm and gradually romantic relationship became a custom. Young urbanites longed to pass through that experience. Hence songs of this kind received good public reception automatically.

The contents of the six songs discussed above reflect the preoccupation of the singers to raise consciousness on modernization and national feelings among several sections of

Eritrean society. In other words, they were calls for social transformation by inducing new feelings and aspirations in the Eritrean society, with a special focus on people living in towns and cities. Politically, although *MaTeA* did not belong to any nationalist movement group, its founders and members were sympathetic to the nationalist cause, and their musical products and stage performances regarded national political consciousness as their core objective since its inception as a modern musical band.

In a nutshell, *MaTeA* represents a social movement that tried to resist territorial and cultural invasions of Eritrea. However, it has never been consistent in its social struggle. Socially, it negotiated two opposing voices: the conservative voice and the pro modernization voice. While the former represented the majority, the latter represented part of the urbanites. When an extensive urbanization process and intensive capitalist penetration made people thirsty of modernization, it destabilized fundamental norms and values of Eritrean society. *MaTeA* through its products put a great deal of effort to reconcile these voices. Nevertheless, it never failed to confirm modernity. The fact that *MaTeA* promoted westernized costume, melodies, instruments and dancing it exemplified modernity. Later on, *MaTeA* went farther from its cultural particularity and adopted European culture in its performances. This reality turned *MaTeA* to be obedient to European cultural hegemony with some resistances when it dealt with the particular skills, messages and performances of the local people.

Such contradictory characteristics were part of the new urban identity. The emergence of an economically oriented hierarchy due to the influence of Europeans in urban areas pushed musicians to continuously try the development of new musical genres. *MaTeA* was in a persistent attempt to accommodate the needs of the emerging elites and the general public who was far from the socio-economic changes because of its cultural conservatism and insufficient capitalist penetration. In this aspect, *MaTeA* as a social space was a product of a compromise between the aspiration for modernity and preservation of locality and cultural particularity. This enabled *MaTeA* to acquire elements of universality by which it transcended its geographical limits and temporal barriers. Hence, *MaTeA*, as a social movement, can be regarded as a mode of transaction of cultural resources, negotiating between different social classes, and as a metaphor for the social order of that specific period.

These characteristics enabled *MaTeA* to promote resistance to social and political injustices. In a period where there was no political space for open and free political discussions, and social conservatism opposed changes, popular arts remained the alternative venue. *MaTeA* illuminated the society about its existing socio-economic and political conditions by mixing entertainments with social and political messages in its works. As it created a social context, in return, the social contexts illuminated *MaTeA*'s musical products. Although, *MaTeA* was hardly a source of radical change in Eritrea socially and politically, it encouraged people to act and react for or against changes. Through these actions, *MaTeA* became a social fact itself that provided an option to the society in order to develop new social and political contexts that would help the society to initiate the forging of a new self-image. Theoretically, this made of *MaTeA* a social and cultural institution that conjugated sociological and aesthetical aspects. Sociologically, it attempted to forge a social reality, which could allow the adoption of what was perceived as modern social behaviors. Aesthetically, *MaTeA*'s works struggle to create this social reality through artistic beauty by stimulating the society emotionally.

Conclusion

Popular music as an instrument of nationalism and modernization was not unique to the Eritrean society. Colonized societies in Africa deployed popular culture to similar purposes. In both circumstances, popular music was at the same time a tool for resistance and adaptation. As a tool of resistance, popular music conveyed a nationalist agenda, and as tool of adaptation, it selectively embraced colonial culture.

MaTeA, as a popular music band, provides valuable tool by which one can analyze social attitudes, for it was nothing but an artistic expression of the daily life of society. In addition to that, *MaTeA* was one of the pioneers in creating a new genre of music that mixes the modern with the indigenous, even though it found it difficult to bridge the natural contradiction between modernity and tradition. Hence, it represents two realities, whereas in the route to modernization, *MaTeA* was an expression of a divided community, in the route to nationalism, it was a manifestation of an undivided community. Be that as it may, as a popular musical band, it made a mixed contribution to the social history of the urban society of Eritrea of 1960s and 1970s. In one way or another, artistically, *MaTeA*'s musical products earned a remarkable acceptability up to now. Today, *MaTeA*'s legacy dominates many musical works and, in this way, it has become part of the national memory that continues to underpin the contemporary identity of the Eritrean urbane society.

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MONDOFOTO

Il Filzerhof di Fierozzo (Vlarotz). Un maso del 1300 nella valle dei Mòcheni

Foto e testo di Moreno Vergari – Ethnorêma

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*Der Filzerhof is an hof za denken. Der denkt de seln as do sai' augongen, de sai' galep ont de sai' störm. De seln as hon gaorbatn ont hon der vrait gahop za mochen au, za lem envir ont za lohn en de seln as kemen no', 's pest has de hon gamecht, as de hon gahop. As 's schelt olbe envirgea' 's haus, tschmoch van heib as de teitsch sai' ont vicher en doi stoll!*¹

¹ Traduzione: «Il Filzerhof è un maso per la memoria. È dedicato a coloro che qui sono nati, hanno vissuto e sono morti. A coloro che hanno lavorato e sognato per costruire, per continuare a vivere e per tramandare quanto di meglio hanno potuto, hanno avuto. Che vi sia sempre vita in questa casa, profumo in questo fiore, animali in questa stalla!». Testo in mòcheno e traduzione italiana tratte dalla cartellonistica ufficiale a cura del Kulturinstitut Bernstol – Lusérn di Palù del Fersina (Tn). NB: alcuni termini sono trascritti in maniera diversa da quanto riportato nel dizionario online di mòcheno (vedi: <http://kib.ladintal.it>).

Il Filzerhof, con i suoi quasi 700 anni di vita – le prime attestazioni lo fanno risalire al 1324² – è stato restaurato e aperto al pubblico nel 1998. Rappresenta «il caratteristico *hoffmòcheno*, il maso, luogo simbolicamente fra i più rappresentativi della comunità... non solo un edificio adibito ad abitazione, ma è il luogo in cui convergono tutti gli aspetti della vita locale, dalle attività lavorative alle relazioni sociali, dalla trasmissione della conoscenza allo svolgersi dei rituali»³

Oggi il maso è diventato oltre che un museo contadino mòcheno, anche un centro per presentazioni e mostre, come quella tenutasi nell'aprile del 2018. Una visita al maso è l'occasione per un percorso che ci porta alla conoscenza della vita e delle attività quotidiane di questa comunità germanofona, la cui principale immigrazione, favorita dai Conti di Tirolo, risale al 1200. Ancora oggi la lingua mòchena (*bersntoler Sproch o Bersntolerisch*) è ampiamente parlata in questa piccola vallata (Valle dei Mòcheni o Valle del Fèrsina, in mòcheno *Bersntol*), una laterale della Valsugana a una ventina di chilometri da Trento. Il mòcheno La lingua è ufficialmente riconosciuta con la legge provinciale del 1987.

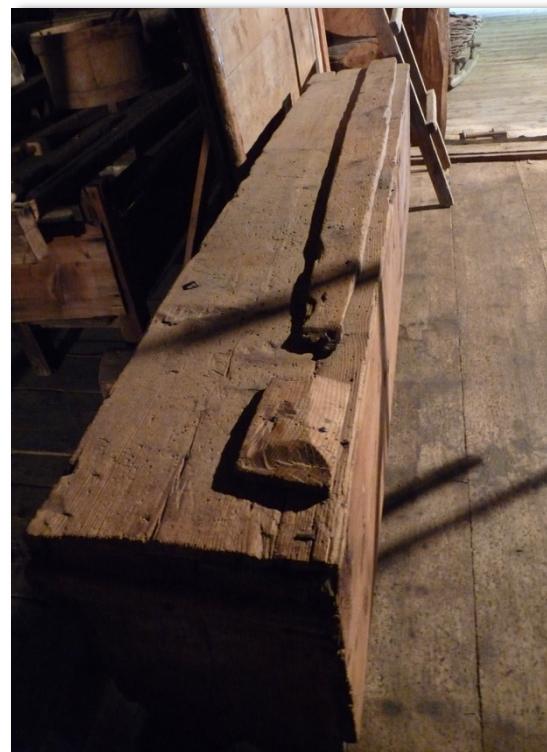


² https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maso_Filzerhof

³ Marchesoni, 2017:12



































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Per altre informazioni e pubblicazioni si veda il sito dell'Istituto culturale mocheno:
<https://www.bersntol.it>

IN ALTRE LINGUE

A Lombard Sinti ethno-text on mourning and marriage

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ABSTRACT

The ethno-text presented in this contribution concerns some cultural practices connected with mourning and marriage in use in the Lombard Sinti communities. In the landscape of Romani varieties spoken in Italy by Roma and Sinti of old settlement, the dialect of the Lombard Sinti shows a good degree of intergenerational transmission and retention of inherited Indo-Aryan morphology. Of course, as all Romani varieties, the Romani dialect spoken by Lombard Sinti presents many innovations as well, especially in the lexicon. The text is a good example of the Lombard Sinti speech characterized by frequent instances of code-switching and code-mixing. Some peculiar features and innovations of this Romani dialect, emerging here and there in the text, are shortly discussed in the final part of the paper.

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The ethno-text here published has been recorded in 2010 from a 50 year old female informant belonging to a Sinti community settled in the territory of Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna, Italy). The variety used by the informant is clearly identifiable as Lombard Sinti, a dialect of Romani belonging, as all Sinti dialects, to the North-Western Branch of the Romani dialect continuum. Although being the variety of a Romani speaking group of old settlement in Italy, Lombard Sinti has not yet been illustrated by a comprehensive study. At the end of his linguistic sketch of this Romani variety – still the only grammatical description available so far – Giulio Soravia wrote:

"However, this dialect is still too little known to give a wide and well documented overview of it, being its knowledge based only on Partisan's glossary and the mass of don Riboldi, as sole published sources." (Soravia 1977: 59)

After 43 years the sources for the study of Lombard Sinti remain rather scant, however some new documents are now available and they deserve to be listed here. First of all, don Mario Riboldi, after translating the mass (Riboldi s.d.), has provided also a Lombard Sinti translation of the Gospel of Mark (Riboldi 1990); moreover, shortly after the publication of the volume of Giulio Soravia quoted above, the journal *Rom. In cammino* has published some short tales under the name of "Oliviero Sinto Lombardo" (1978, 1980, 1981). Later other short texts, among which there are also some poems, have appeared in two anthologies edited by Santino Spinelli (Spinelli 1995 e 1996). Another long text in Lombard Sinti is represented by the guide *Tutti a scuola*, published in 2009 by the Regional Government of Lombardy and destined to Italian Roma and Sinti families living in the region. The text of this guide concerning the functioning of the school is trilingual and beside the Italian text

there are two Romani versions, one in the dialect of Roma Ha(r)vati and the other in Lombard Sinti, this latter written by Yuri Del Bar, a member of the Lombard Sinti community of Mantua. Finally, the author of this paper has recorded with a Lombard Sinti speaker the whole questionnaire of the Romani Morpho-Syntax Database. The audio track and the transcription of the whole interview, labelled as IT-011 Lombard Sinti, are available at <https://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk//rms/browse/phrases/phraselist>.

Lombard Sinti seems to display a good degree of intergenerational transmission in many Sinti communities of Northern Italy, especially in those communities that are settled in the so called nomad camps. According to a recent ethnographic survey (Tribulato 2019: 192-193 and 203; Tribulato 2020: 85-86), transmission seems to be weaker among the Sinti working in the world of the funfairs. In these families, who own merry-go-rounds and other attractions, Romani grammar is no longer mastered by many speakers and especially among young people a new variety of Para-Romani is being born (Tribulato: personal communication). In this emerging Para-Romani variety the lexicon is Lombard Sinti but the grammatical layout comes from Italian; this trend could lead to a radical change in Lombard Sinti, transforming this Romani variety into a slang, i.e. in a variety of Italian marked by the lexicon. Outside the families working in funfairs, Romani inflectional morphology in Lombard Sinti is well preserved and, compared with Early Romani, only noun inflection has been lost. The lexicon acquired before the contact with Italo-Romance dialects is still rich and stable. Of course the Italo-Romance, notably Lombard dialectal and Italian, lexemes used by Lombard Sinti speakers are very numerous. Among these lexical items, those that come from Lombard dialects can be considered as loanwords definitively acquired by Lombard Sinti, since such words are used also by speakers who do not speak neither Lombard dialects nor any other Italo-Romance dialect. More in general the linguistic repertoire of Lombard Sinti speakers for a long time included Lombard Italo-Romance dialects, but now appears to be reduced to Italian and Romani (Scala 2012: 440-443). This latter represents the we-code of the community, i.e. the endo-communitarian and strongly identitarian code, whereas the former is perceived as a they-code, notably the code of the majority community. As for the composition of the repertoire the interruption in transmission of Italo-Romance dialects among Lombard Sinti communities represents no doubt the most relevant innovation of the last 50 years.

Originally, the ethno-text proposed here has been collected, together with other materials, during a long field work in different Lombard Sinti communities; now it is proposed in phonetic transcription with glosses that make available also the morphological level of the language. At the end of the transcription some short linguistic notes have been added with the aim of illustrating some features of Lombard Sinti emerging from the text. During the interview the dialogue has been conducted in Lombard Sinti. The informant originally had been invited to speak freely about the cultural practices of her community regarding funerals, marriage and birth; she answered speaking especially about mourning and marriage, whereas she did not tell almost nothing about customs regarding birth. The reference to the past is strong and constant, and in the case of mourning the intention of indicating a discontinuity in the customs appears very clear, whereas the cultural practices connected with marriage are perceived by the informant as more stable. According to the informant the current customs about mourning, marriage and birth in the Lombard Sinti communities are characterized by lack of homogeneity and by a certain degree of variety; to some extent different behaviors are admitted and different families seem to show different choices regarding

the way to live these fundamental moments of the life. In the final part of the interview the informant claims that among the Sinti the custom of paying a price for the bride does not exist. After stating this, the informant refers in a rather general and vague manner that this practice exists among the Roma. These words have to be considered with caution. The real knowledge that the Sinti have about Roma customs is generally rather scant, but actually the willingness to stress the difference between Sinti and Roma and, of course, the moral superiority of the Sinti, drives many Sinti to overextend to the majority of Roma – if not to all Roma they know – the customs they deem reprehensible and immoral.

From a linguistic point of view the ethno-text published here represents a good example of Lombard Sinti speech and provides a documentary evidence of the high frequency of code-switching and code-mixing phenomena that characterize the utterances in this Romani dialect. It is however possible that some instance of code switching can have been triggered by the fact that the interviewer was not a Sinti, although speaking Lombard Sinti. In the transcription of the text the questions of the interviewer are in bold, and the ellipsis (...) signals hesitation. In the interlinear glosses Leipzig glossing abbreviations have been used (cfr. <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>) with the addition of IMPF "imperfect", that merges PST "past" and IPFV "imperfective".

1. ja 'molo u funa'rai ... dʒi'venas u 'luto
a time ART.PL funeral.PL bear.IMPF.3PL ART.M mourning.SG
Once the funerals ... they were in mourning
2. e u 'luto is ja 'ko a but impor'tante,
and ART.M mourning.SG be.IMPF.3SG a thing.SG very important
and the mourning was a very important thing,
3. par'ke is ta dʒi'veas=lo ... dipen'dolas
because be.IMPF.3SG COMP bear.IMPF.2SG=OBJ.3SG.M depend.IMPF.3SG
because you had to be in mourning ... it depended on
4. se 'era, se is i 'romli o u rom
if be.IND.IMPF.3SG if be. IMPF.3SG ART.F wife.SG or ART.M husband.SG
whether he/she was, whether he/she was the wife or the husband,
5. is ta dʒi'venas=lo serja'mente par ja bers
be. IMPF.3SG COMP bear.IMPF.3PL=OBJ.3SG.M seriously for a year.SG
they had to be in mourning seriously for one year
6. o pju 'aŋke, n is 'miga tʃen iŋ kumpa'ɲia,
or more even NEG be. IMPF.3SG NEG stay.SBJV.3PL in company.SG
or even more, they could not stay in the company of other people,

7. n is 'miga di'ken i televi'zjon,
 NEG be. IMPF.3SG NEG watch.SBJV.3PL ART.F television.SG
 they could not watch television,
8. n is 'miga ne'sun diverti'mento da ne'sun 'tipo,
 NEG be. IMPF.3SG NEG any amusement.SG of any sort.SG
 there was no amusement of any sort,
9. is ta 'fenas xa 'kokari,
 be. IMPF.3SG COMP stay.IMPF.3PL always alone.PL
 they always had to stay alone,
10. tʃo'e, is ta raka'renas, ma non 'molto, 'miga but.
 I mean be. IMPF.3SG COMP speak.IMPF.3PL but NEG much, NEG much
 or rather, they could speak, but not much.
11. is ta ʃi'venas=lo serja'mente,
 be. IMPF.3SG COMP bear.IMPF.3PL=OBJ.3SG.M seriously
 They had to be in mourning seriously,
12. par'ke si 'venas ta ʃi'en ke na ʃi'venas
 because if come.IMPF.3PL COMP know.SBJV.3PL COMP NEG bear.IMPF.3PL
 because if they (the others) heard that they were not
13. u 'luto, is gwai.
 ART.M mourning.SG be. IMPF.3PL trouble.PL
 in mourning, it was trouble.
14. e im'vefje a'kana u 'ko a'i=lu di'verso.
 and instead now ART.M thing.SG be.PRS.3SG=SBJ.M different.M
 But now the thing is different.
15. kon ka'mena ʃi'ven=lo, ʃi'ven=lo
 who want.PRS.3PL bear.SBJV.3PL=OBJ.3SG.M bear.IND.3PL=OBJ.3SG.M
 Those who want to be in mourning, are in mourning
16. e 'njan̩ka u 'romja ne u murs
 and neither ART.PL woman.PL NOR ART.PL man.PL
 and neither the women nor the men
17. n 'i=li 'butar ubli'gadi.
 NEG be.PRS.3PL=SBJ longer obliged.PL
 are obliged anymore.

18. ad e'zəmpjo mε, 'kwando mu'jas mur dat, mur dat,
 for example 1SG when die.PRF.3SG my.M father.SG my.M father.SG
 For example, as for me, when my father died, my father,
19. a 'parte ke jo udja'relas u 'luto,
 leaving aside COMP 3SG.NOM.M hate.IMPF.3SG ART.M mourning.SG
 leaving aside the fact that he hated the mourning,
20. par'soni 'ridi da 'bruno, asolutamente pin'das 'menge
 person.PL dress.PST.PTCP.PL of black.SG absolutely say. PRF.3SG 1PL.DAT
 people dressed in black, no way – he told us –
21. 'kwando jo ma'relas na ka'melas kek 'luto,
 when 3SG.NOM.M die.IMPF.3SG NEG want.IMPF.3SG any mourning.SG
 when he died he did not want any mourning,
22. ne di 'romli ne du tʃau.
 neither of.ART.F wife.SG nor of.ART.M son.SG
 neither from his wife or from his son.
23. e noi non 1=a'bjam 'mika por'tato,
 and 1PL NEG 3SG.OBJ.M=have.AUX.IND.PRS.1PL NEG bear. PST.PTCP.SG.M
 And as for us, we have not been in mourning,
24. ne noi ne 'mia 'mama, ne'suno.
 neither 1PL.NOM nor my.F mother.SG no one.
 neither we nor my mother, no one.
25. tʃo'ɛ a'kana u 'koa kam'bjas,
 I mean now ART.M thing.SG change.PRF.3SG
 I mean, now the thing has changed,
26. n i ar ja 'molo ke u 'koa
 NEG be.PRS.3SG as a time that ART.PL thing.PL
 it is no longer as in the old days, when the things
27. 'is=li pju serja'mente, tʃo'ɛ 'mengar ...
 be.IMPF.3PL=SBJ more seriously I mean our.PL
 were (lived) more seriously, I mean our ...
28. 'kome si='ditse? ... ar pi'nel=pi? ...
 how REFL=say.IND.PRS.3SG how say.PRS.3SG=REFL
 how should I say? ... How should I say?...

29. 'sp̩ta ... sai ke na tiŋka'ra=ma 'butar ...
 wait.IMP.2SG know.IND.PRS.2SG COMP NEG remember.PRS.1SG=REFL anymore
 wait..., you know I do not remember anymore ...
30. non mi='vjene pju in 'mente,
 NEG 1SG.DAT=come.IND.PRS.3SG anymore in mind.SG
 it does not come to my mind,
31. 'sp̩ta ... ah ... 'meŋgar tradi'sjoni, 'nostre tradi'sjoni
 wait.IMP.2SG ah our.PL tradition.PL our.PL tradition.PL
 wait ... ah ... our traditions, our traditions.
32. e im'v̩tse du spuza'risjo ... na'senas vek, 'tſenas vek
 and instead about.ART.M marriage.SG flee.IMP.F.3PL away stay.IMP.F.3PL away
 Instead, about the marriage ... they used to flee, they stayed away
33. 'pisal 'divas, poi 'venas 'kere, parduna'renas=li
 few day.PL then come.IMP.F.3PL home.LOC forgive.IMP.F.3PL=OBJ.3PL
 for a few days, then they came back home, they (the parents) forgave them
34. e poi festedža'relas=pe, 'pjenas, ki'lenas,
 and then celebrate.IMP.F.3SG=REFL drink.IMP.F.3PL dance.IMP.F.3PL
 and then they celebrated, they drank, danced,
35. an'davano a'venti ... 'džanas iŋ'glan fin i ma'tina
 go.IND.IMP.F.3PL ahead go.IMP.F.3PL ahead until ART.F morning.SG
 they went on ... they went on until the morning
36. ta xan, ta pjen.
 COMP eat.SBJV.3PL COMP drink.SBJV.3PL
 eating, drinking.
37. 'kisi 'divas 'džanas vek?
 how many day.PL go.IMP.F.3PL away
 for how many days did they go away?
38. da 'solito trin, trin 'divas.
 usually three, three day.PL
 Usually three, three days.
39. 'pisal!
 few
 Few!

40. 'pisal, tʃo'ε 'kava 'papli 'kana ka'rel=pi,
 few I mean this.M still now do.PRS.3SG=REFL
 Few, I mean: we still do this now,
41. n i ja 'koa ke kam'bjas.
 NEG be.PRS.3SG a thing.SG REL change.PRF.3SG
 this is not a thing that has changed.
42. e i 'nasita xa'jek i 'kola ke festedʒa'rena
 and ART.F birth.SG the same be.PRS.3PL that.PL REL celebrate.PRS.3PL
 And about the birth, it is the same: there are those who celebrate it
43. e 'kola ke na festedʒa'rena, dipen'dola ... du per'soni.
 and that.PL REL NEG celebrate.PRS.3PL depend.PRS.3SG from.ART.PL person.PL
 and those who don't, it depends on the individuals.
44. e 'kola ke festedʒa'rena u ka'rena?
 and that.PL REL celebrate.PRS.3PL what do.PRS.3PL
 And those who celebrate it, what do they do?
45. 'pjen ta 'xana. im'vɛtʃe 'ko a du 'luto no,
 drink.PRS.3PL and eat.PRS.3PL whereas this of.ART.M mourning no
 They drink and eat. Whereas the mourning, no,
46. ε 'una 'kɔza pju serja'mente,
 be.PRS.3SG a.F thing.SG more seriously
 this is a thing that's more serious(ly),
47. tʃo'ε 'era 'una 'kɔza pju serja'mente.
 I mean be.IMPF.3SG a.F thing.SG more seriously
 I mean, it was a thing that was more serious(ly).
48. a'deso tʃo'ε ε 'serja 'aŋke a'deso, 'solo ke a'deso,
 now I mean be.PRS.3SG serious.F still now only that now
 Now, I mean, it is still serious now, but now,
49. 'kana ʒi'ven=lo nur zi, ε impor'tante.
 now bear.PRS.3PL=OBJ.3SG.M in.ART.M heart.SG be.PRS.3SG important
 now they are in mourning in the heart, it is important
50. por'tar=lo nel 'kwore.
 bear.INF=OBJ.3SG.M in.ART.M heart.SG
 to be in mourning in the heart.

51. ar ka'rel=pi ja spuza'risjo 'kava 'divas?
 how do.PRS.3SG = REFL a marriage.SG today
 How is the marriage made today?
52. ad e'zempjo, noi ... men, tʃo'ε, 'menge i 'ko a 'kjake, 'fatʃile,
 for example.SG 1PL.NOM 1PL.NOM I mean 1PL.DAT be.PRS.3SG thing.SG so easy
 For example, we ... we, I mean, for us it is a thing like this, a plain thing,
53. par'ke i but ... i but 'sinti
 because be.PRS.3PL many be.PRS.3PL many Sinti.PL
 because there are many ... there are many Sinti
54. ke 'i=li but tradi'sjoni, ki'nen=li ... e 'paple
 REL be.PRS.3PL = 3PL.OBL many tradition.PL buy.PRS.3PL = SBJ and still
 who have many traditions, they buy ... and still
55. festedʒa'rena kun u 'riape, kun i 'gustare da 'spoza,
 celebrate.PRS.3PL with ART.M dress with ART.F ring of bride.SG
 celebrate with the wedding dress, with the wedding ring,
56. tʃo'ε, men na, i 'ko a 'kjake 'sempliʃe.
 I mean 1PL.NOM no be.PRS.3SG thing.SG so simple
 I mean, we don't, it is a thing like this, plain.
57. na'sena vek, 'vena 'pale e bon,
 flee.PRS.3PL away come.PRS.3PL back and that's enough,
 They flee away, come back and that's enough,
58. tʃo'ε, 'poi i 'kola ke festedʒa'rena, 'kola ke
 I mean then be.PRS.3PL that.PL REL celebrate.PRS.3PL that.PL REL
 I mean, there are those who celebrate, those who
59. na festedʒa'rena, par'ke 'kana n i 'butar da 'məda.
 NEG celebrate.PRS.3PL because now NEG be.PRS.3SG longer of vogue.SG
 don't, because now it is no longer in vogue.
60. e u dat e i dai perduna'rena xa?
 and ART.M father.SG and ART.F mother.SG forgive.PRS.3PL always
 Do the father and the mother forgive always?
61. Dipen'dola, se i ja per'sona si i ja tʃau
 depend.PRS.3SG if be.PRS.3SG a person.SG if be.PRS.3SG a boy
 It depends. If he is a person ... if he is a boy

62. ke 'dʒala 'lenge a 'dʒenjo, a u fa'miʃi,
 REL go.PRS.3SG 3PL.DAT to taste.SG to ART.PL family.PL
 they, the families, like him,
63. va 'bene, parduna'rena,
 go.PRS.3SG well forgive.PRS.3PL
 okay, they forgive (them),
64. altri'menti 'lena 'pale i tʃai o u tʃau, dipen'dola
 otherwise take.PRS.3PL back ART.F girl.SG or ART.M boy.SG depend.PRS.3SG
 otherwise they take back the girl or the boy, it depends.
65. e u dat i ta del 'loe?
 and ART.M father.SG be.PRS.3SG COMP give.SBJV.3SG money.PL
 And must the father give money?
66. na, men, al'menu men na uza'raja 'miga,
 no 1PL.NOM at least 1PL.NOM NEG use.PRS.1PL NEG,
 No, we, at least, we are not used (to doing it)
67. inj'vetʃe i but, u 'zlati, u ru'meni,
 whereas be.PRS.3PL many ART.PL Slav.PL ART.PL Romanian.PL
 on the contrary there are many, the Slavs, the Romanians,
68. in'soma dipen'dola, jon, u unga'rezi, 'tʃ=ano kwel ...
 in sum depend.PRS.3SG 3PL.NOM ART.PL Hungarian.PL LOC=have.IND.PRS.3PL that
 in sum it depends, they, the Hungarians, they have that way over there
69. 'i=li 'doa 'metodo doi da
 be.PRS.3PL=3PL.OBL that way.SG there of
 they have that way over there of...
70. ta ki'nen=la, ta pleska'ren, par'ke poi,
 COMP buy.SBJV.3PL=3SG.OBL.F COMP pay.SBJV.3PL because then
 that they buy her, they pay, because after that,
71. 'ja 'vɔlta ke poi ... le 'dɔne pju ke 'altro ...
 a time.SG that then ART.PL.F woman.PL especially
 then once that ...the women especially...

72. u 'romja 'i = li 'pleskardi per 'loro poi
 ART.PL woman.PL be.PRS.3PL=SBJ pay.PST.PTCP.PL for 3PL then
 the women are paid, then for them
73. non e'zistono ne'anke pju,
 NEG exist.IND.PRS.3PL either anymore
 they do not even exist anymore,
74. par'ke ε 'kome se le=a'vesero
 because be.IND.PRS.3SG as if 3PL.OBJ.F=have.AUX.SBJV.PST.3PL
 because it is as if they would have
75. ven'dute, bika'den=li, no?
 sell.PST.PTCP.PL.F sell.PRF.3PL=3PL.OBJ no
 sold them, they have sold them, haven't they?
76. e 'døpu ke 'djen=li vek ...
 and after that give.prf.3pl=3PL.OBJ away
 And after that they gave them away ...
77. si, bon, or'mai non ε ... n i 'butar
 yes, well, at this point NEG be.IND.PRS.3PL NEG be.PRS.3PL longer
 yes that's enough, ever since that time they are not ... they are no longer
78. 'koa 'lengar, non ε pju 'røba 'loro.
 thing.PL their.PL NEG be.IND.PRS.3SG longer stuff.SG their
 their things, they are no longer their stuff.

Some linguistic notes

Phonology:

- a) alternation between [-e] and [-i]: forms such as ['kokari] "alone.PL." (9) and ['gustare] "ring" (55) show an innovation in final vowels. In more conservative dialects the first would be ['kokare] and the second ['gustari]; both [-e] for the plural of an adjective and [-i] for a feminine noun ending in vowel are Indo-Aryan inherited inflectional morphemes. In Lombard Sinti there is a general trend to neutralize /i/ and /e/ in final position and the alternation between the two phonetic realizations [i] and [e] in the utterances of the speakers seems to be due to free variation, cfr. ['papple] (54) and ['papli] (40) "still, yet, again", [=pe] (34) and [=pi] (28) "REFL.3SG". The neutralization between /i/ and /e/ in final position leads to morphological syncretism between feminine singular and common plural (sensitive to gender only in few nouns indicating animate entities). The ambiguity created by this homonymy is however sustainable by Lombard Sinti morphosyntax system, mainly thanks to the article, which remains distinct ([i] for feminine singular and [u] for plural).

- b) loss of intervocalic [v], especially after [o]: the phenomenon is very common in Lombard Sinti and attested in this text in forms such as ['koal] "thing, stuff" (2), ['loe] "money" (65, used by the interviewer but genuine) and ['doa] "that" (69). More conservative variants are ['kova], ['love] and ['dova], cfr. also Piedmontese Sinti [ko'va], [lo've] and [do'va].
- c) [e] > [a] in unstressed syllable before [r]: this change is very clear in ['butar] "more, longer, anymore" (17, 29, 59, 77), cfr. Piedmontese Sinti [bu'ter]. In the case of [ka'rel=pi] "do.PRS.3SG=REFL" (40) we have an occurrence of the verb "to do" that in all Romani varieties is [ker-]. In Lombard Sinti the vowel [e] is preserved only in [ker!] "IMP.2SG" where it is stressed. Of course, it is possible to think that the underlying form of the verb root is /ker/ and that a phonological rule changes /e/ into [a] before /r/ when it occurs in unstressed syllable. But the assumption of such a rule would need more confirmation. An analogous case is that of [ma'relas] "die. IMPF.3SG" (21), cfr. in other Romani dialects the root is [mer-], Piedmontese Sinti [me'relas]. Lowering of /e/ that surfaces as [a] before /r/ is a well attested phenomenon also in the Italo-Romance dialects of Northern Italy (Rohlf 1966-1969: I 164).

Morphology

- d) -o- verb inflection: forms as [dipen'dola] "depend. PRS.3SG" (43, 61, 64, 68) and [dipen'dolas] "depend. IMPF.3SG" (3) show the productivity of the verb inflection with -o- as intransitivity marker. This inflectional pattern in Romani characterizes intransitive verbs and in many dialects it can change the valence of a transitive verb (Matras 2002: 119-128). In Lombard Sinti the inherited intransitive verbs showing -o- inflection are very few (cfr. forms such as [bi'tfos] "you are called, your name is...", [bi'tsol] "he/she is called, his/her name is...", [mol] "it costs"), but some intransitive loan verbs from Italo-Romance dialects and from Italian have been morphologically integrated in this inflectional pattern, cfr. [vi'vola] "live. PRS.3SG", [vu'lola] "fly. PRS.3SG" (cfr. e.g. It. *vivere* "to live", *volare* "to fly" and Milanese dialect [vi:f] "to live", but [vi:vum] "we live", [vu'la] "to fly").

Between morphology and syntax

- e) a modal periphrasis: in some passages of the text we find the periphrasis |inflected form of "to be" + [ta] + SBV or IMPF of the lexical verb|, cfr. e.g. [is ta ðgi'venas=lo] (5 and 11) lit. "they had to bear it (*scil.* the mourning)" (cfr. It. *portare il lutto* "to be in mourning"), [n is 'miga t'sen in kumpa'nja] "they had not to/could not stay in company (of others)" (6), [is ta raka'renas, ma non 'molto] "they could speak, but not much" (10) etc. This periphrasis clearly has a modal value and in this text it occurs as a way to express deontic modality (cfr. also 3, 7 and 9).

Syntax

- f) post-verbal negation: in addition to the Indo-Aryan inherited negation [na] (with the allomorph [n] before vowel), Lombard Sinti uses also ['miga], a negation adverb borrowed from the Italo-Romance dialects of Lombardy. The inherited [na] is regularly placed in pre-verbal position (6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 21, 26, 29, 41, 43, 59,

66, 77), whereas ['miga], as in the Italo-Romance dialects of Lombardy (Vai 1996), is a post-verbal negation (6, 7, 8, 10, 66). In Lombard Sinti the Jespersen's cycle of negation is in progress from |[na] + vb| to |[na] + vb + ['miga]| and finally to |vb + ['miga]|, but all three possibilities are still admitted by the speakers and their distribution (if existing) is not yet clear.

Lexicon

- g) ['molo] "time" (1, 26), surely from Germ. dial. *mol*, cfr. Standard Germ. *Mal*; this word is not registered by Partisani (1973), but it is attested in other Sinti varieties such as Venetian Sinti (Soravia 1981: 27).
- h) ['luto] "mourning" (1, 2, 13, 19, 21, 45) is a loanword from It. *lutto*; also many other nouns referring to important moments of the life are loanwords, cfr. [funa'rai] "funerals" (1) and [spuza'risjo] "marriage" (32), borrowed from Lombard dialects (cfr. e.g. in the dialect of Milan [fyna'rai] "funerals" and [spuza'lisi] "marriage", but in the past the rotacism of intervocalic [l] was very widespread in Milanese) and ['nasita] "birth" (42) from It. *nascita* (the phonological adaptation of [ʃ] in [s] is quite regular, cfr. Scala 2020: 90). Of course, in Lombard Sinti there are inherited verbs for talking about actions and practices related with these and other key-moments of life, but the abstract nouns designating them are currently represented by loanwords from Italo-Romance dialects of from Italian. The glossary of Partisani (1973: 14) records *bja* "marriage" (and *báro bjav* lit. "big marriage" with the same meaning), an inherited Indo-Aryan word (Boretzky-Igra 1994: 312) that seems no longer in use in many Lombard Sinti communities. In the same glossary an Indo-Aryan inherited word as *muléskero* is glossed as "funeral" (Partisani 1973: 14), but usually in Lombard Sinti this word means "cemetery".
- i) [tradi'sjoni] "traditions, customs" (31, 54) is borrowed from It. *tradizioni* with the regular phonological adaptation of [ts] in [s], because of the lack of alveolar affricates in Lombard Sinti (Scala 2020: 90). Of course, the Lombard Sinti have traditions, but they do not have any inherited word for the hyperonymic concept of "tradition".

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DOCUMENTI

An appeal for the salvation of the cultural heritage of Tigray

From the researchers and fellows of the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies at Universität Hamburg

13 January 2021

We have been following the reports on the military conflict that has erupted between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Regional Government of Tigray with great concern. In addition to continuing reports of the heavy toll that the conflict is taking on the civilian population, there are reports that the cultural property of Tigray is highly endangered and directly affected. Tigray is a part of Ethiopia that hosts an extraordinarily rich cultural heritage. The cultural heritage of Tigray has contributed to the development of the region and the entire country and has increased the visibility of Ethiopia as one of the most vibrant tourist destinations in Africa. In recent years, much has been done for its study and preservation—with newly recorded historical artefacts and manuscripts, archaeological sites, new museums, restored historical buildings, paintings and manuscripts, and collections of research data—but even more remains to be done.

Some of the recent reports have been suggesting that hostilities are taking place in close proximity to renowned cultural sites, and others mentioning that they have been plundered and damaged. In this context, sites of symbolic importance for all of Ethiopia have been referred to, such as the church at Yeha, al-Najashi Mosque, the church of Maryam Dengelat, the monastery of Dabra Abbay, the monastery of Dabra Dammo, and even St Mary Cathedral in Aksum (the city of Aksum itself is entered in the UNESCO World Heritage List). There are reports of looting of manuscripts from Tigrayan churches and monasteries, and warnings that they will sooner or later be taken out of Ethiopia to be sold at antiquities markets in other countries. It is beyond any doubt that the conflict is causing heavy damage to the cultural heritage, but since most communication lines remain cut off and the information coming from the region is minimal, it is difficult to assess the real scope of the losses.

As part of a research community that has been involved for many years in the study of Ethiopian culture, we are saddened about the plight of the civilian population. And we are increasingly concerned by the effect of the conflict on the cultural heritage of Tigray. We appeal to all parties involved to pay serious attention to the issue. We hope that the authorized state institutions will fulfil their obligations and do everything possible to protect the cultural property of Tigray from further destruction. They should investigate the cases of loss and looting reported by local communities, and make the results of the investigations public. In addition, special measures should be taken to secure the research materials accumulated in Tigray's institutions from misappropriation and dispersion. We further urgently call upon the warring parties to abstain from attacking the cultural heritage and to respect the integrity of the places, both religious and secular, where this heritage is preserved. National or international initiatives aimed at recuperation of the negative effects of the war upon the cultural heritage should be encouraged and supported, as should urgent salvation measures. We appeal to all

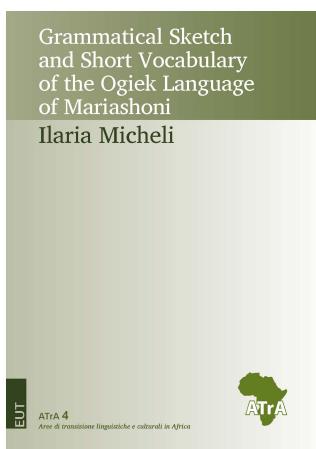
colleagues to assist, where necessary, in measures for restitution of the cultural property and assessing the damage inflicted upon it.

Leonard Bahr
Alessandro Bausi
Antonella Brita
Eliana Dal Sasso
Sophia Dege-Müller
Daria Elagina
Jacopo Gnisci
Hewan Semon Marye
Susanne Hummel
Jonas Karlsson
Magdalena Krzyzanowska
Pietro Liuzzo
Leah Mascia

Mersha Alehegne Mengistie
Denis Nosnitsin
Francesca Panini
Vitagrazia Pisani
Dorothea Reule
Salsawit Kassaye
Sisay Sahle Beyene
Eugenia Sokolinski
Solomon Gebreyes Beyene
Siegbert Uhlig

The appeal has also been endorsed by several other scholars (see <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/ethiostudies/news/appeal2021.html>).

RECENSIONI



ILARIA MICHELI, *Grammatical Sketch and Short Vocabulary of the Ogiek Language of Mariashoni*. (Aree di transizione linguistiche e culturali in Africa, 4.) Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2018. Freely downloadable at www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/12993.

The work under review provides a first lexicon and grammatical analysis of the Ogiek language as spoken in Mariashoni, Kenya. This study concentrates in particular on the language as spoken by the seven clans of the Morisionig sub-family (p.2). These Ogiek live in the Eastern Mau forest and the forest is an essential habitat for them. Hunting and gathering is part of their economic activity and central to their culture. The book under review is an important contribution to our knowledge of the Southern Nilotic Kalenjin languages. It is suggested that the group once spoke a different language. Allusion is made to a click sound. But contrary to Micheli's statement, Distefano (1990) does not attest the presence of a click in Ogiek; rather he claims Khoisan origin for the word *lan* 'horn' linking it to Khoisan *tlana* 'horn' (p.2). The click that he mentions is in Dahalo, a Cushitic language off Kenya's coast, opposite Lamu. The analysis is based on fieldwork carried out by the author in 2013 and 2014 for a period of four months. She primarily worked with two speakers of the same dialect using the questionnaire by Bouquiaux and Thomas (1992) for elicitation on grammar, and the Dictionary Development approach from SIL for the collection of lexicon.¹

Recently, König, Heine and Legère published a grammar of Akie in Tanzania (2015). The Akie of the Tanzanian Maasai plains and the Ogiek of the Mau forest have a common origin and speak roughly the same language. The research on these varieties overlapped in time and the work on Tanzanian Akie appeared after Micheli's fieldwork. She refers extensively to this work on Akie thereby facilitating comparison within Kalenjin greatly as she points out differences and commonalities. She also discusses differences with other Kalenjin languages whenever that is appropriate.

The grammar is organized in the standard manner and starts with Chapter 2 on phonology. The author refers to her publication (Micheli 2016) for this chapter. However, the 2016 article deviates slightly from this chapter. The consonant table in this chapter presents the palatal voiceless stop and the post-alveolar affricate as two different consonants, whereas the article considers the affricate as a phonetic realisation of the stop phoneme *c* and this is more likely than a phonemic opposition between the two. This leaves the postalveolar voiceless fricative as only consonant in that column and with considerations of symmetry and simplicity it could then also be placed, phonologically, in the palatal column. The velar nasal *ŋ* is represented orthographically as *ng* in the consonant table. The article represents the palatal semivowel as *y* (orthography and African convention); the table in the current book as *j* (IPA). The chapter concludes with a table containing the IPA symbols and the

¹ Available at <https://www.sil.org/language-development>

graphemes proposed in Micheli (2016) but unfortunately this table contains some imprecisions: the IPA symbol for the grapheme *ch* should be *c* (or *tʃ*) which is also given as an equivalent; the IPA symbol for the velar nasal should be *ŋ*; the IPA symbol for the grapheme *y* should be *j*. This table proposes *j* as a grapheme representing the voiced palatal stop. This equivalence is absent in Micheli (2016) and I assume that the voiced palatal is an allophone of its voiceless counterpart *c* since stops are allophonically voiced between vowels and after voiced continuants; the palatal stop / postalveolar affricate is however not mentioned for this allophonic voicing in the book chapter, but it is in the article (Micheli 2016:90). As a further step of lenition the bilabial and velar stops optionally become (voiced) fricatives intervocally. Consonant lengthening occurs in a very limited set of four words.

Ogiek has a system of ten vowels, five -ATR and four +ATR. The vowel harmony which is claimed to exist (Micheli 2016:93) is not discussed in either publication. The vowel termed schwa (Micheli 2016) but written as [ə] is limited to word initial position before nasal (but also occurs in *əsimínjait* ‘mongoose’ in the lexicon of the book under review), and no orthographic equivalent is suggested. Ogiek is a tonal language and tone is indicated in the work but has not been analysed yet.

There is an intriguing phenomenon of optional word final spirantisation (written as raised ^{gh} in Micheli 2016:92) or creaky voice realisation of the velar obstruent in plural formation of nouns (p.17). Micheli refers to creepy voice but I assume creaky voice is what is meant, written as *g(h)*. This is presented in the chapter on nominal morphology. The phonology of Ogiek warrants a deeper study.

Chapter 3 on nominal morphology presents plural formation, compound nouns, a few examples of de-adjectival nominalisations as the only productive nominal derivation. The compound nouns includes the interesting example *pàtái'mèsét* /back-of table/ for ‘on top of the table’. Using the body part ‘back’ for ‘on top of’ represents the cognitive model of the body of the cow rather than that of the human body according to Reh (1991), and is typical for languages of people for whom cattle is central in their spatial conceptualisation. However, Ogiek cannot be characterised as such a culture and there is no evidence that it has taken this conceptual frame from Maasai which has “back” = ‘behind’ evidencing a *human* body conceptual frame (Payne & Ole-Kotikash 2005).

Nominal clauses use a copula, termed *actualizer* which agrees in human/non-human to the subject. The non-human copula agrees in turn in number to the subject. (p.22-23). The forms of the non-human actualizers double as relative pronouns but then also used for human head nouns. The chapter discusses the various non-verbal word classes. It does so by providing ample examples enabling the reader to advance further analyses. Not all examples are glossed but the lexicon in the appendix enable the reader to work things out. When glosses are provided, these are unfortunately not in the standard aligned morpheme to gloss format. Where possible, comparisons are made to Akie, Nandi and Kipsigis. I find it most useful that Micheli reports on what does not exist in Ogiek, for example no time word for ‘late’ or ‘noon’ (p.25).

Chapter 4 deals with verbal morphology. Ogiek has a verb ‘to possess’ that includes the “possession” of diseases. The chapter provides the paradigms, affirmative and negative, for the various tenses and aspects, distinguishing verb stems with different initial vowels. Ogiek has an anti-passive and a causative suffix. The various modal verbs and their constructions are illustrated.

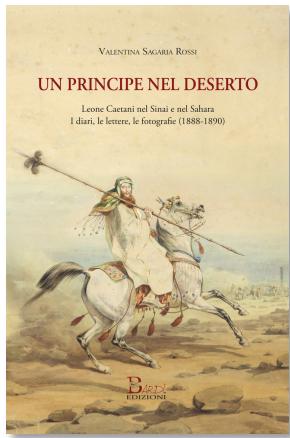
Chapter 5 deals with syntax. It is remarkable and applaudable that syntax is covered in such a sketch grammar. The language has VSO as basic order. An overview of simple sentences with all different complements is presented. Under complex syntactic structures, coordination is discussed, and subordinate clauses including relative clauses.

The book concludes with an Ogiek-English “short vocabulary” and an English-Ogiek word list. The vocabulary is not so short, consisting of 646 entries with for each an indication of word class, plural formation where applicable and sometimes additional cultural encyclopaedic information. The vocabulary is very rich and extremely valuable for comparative purposes. Only 18 items are marked as borrowing from Swahili, but there many more; to mention a few: *aību* ‘ashamed’ (Sw *aibu*), *áinù* ‘which?’(Sw. *aina* ‘kind, sort’), *bɔngileit* ‘a type of traditional bracelet’ (Sw. *bangili* ‘bracelet’), *chànga* ‘alcoholic beverage made with millet flour’ (Sw. *changa*(’a) ‘illicit strong alcoholic drink’), *chɔgu* ‘cock’ (Sw. *jogoo*), *ínet* ‘nylon wire’(Sw: *neti* ‘net’), *kààmbèt* ‘shoelace’ (Sw *kamba* ‘rope’), *kètiit* ‘chair’(Sw *kiti*), *kitambáet* ‘foulard, scarf’ (Sw *kitambaa* ‘piece of cloth’), *imágatit* ‘traditional soda salt’ (Sw *magadi*), *kitara* ‘a kind of shelf’ (Sw *kitara* ‘shelf’), *sóndugu* ‘box’ (Sw *sanduku*). Although beekeeping is one of the central cultural traditional activities of the Ogiek, one of the words for beehive is borrowed from an unknown Bantu language: *mù-ingé-t* ‘traditional log-hive’, cf. Proto-Bantu **mu-dìngà* (Bastin et al. 2002).

In conclusion, this sketch grammar with vocabulary of Ogiek is a very welcome first linguistic analysis of this language containing fascinating details which allow us a glimpse of the intriguing culture of the Ogiek whose culture has received quite some attention through their plight for the conservation of the Mau forest and the concern over the endangerment of their language and lifestyle. Their culture has been presented in numerous publications by Blackburn and Kratz, but their language which is in danger of disappearance has now received the attention it deserves. I hope this book is not the last one on the Ogiek language.

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VALENTINA SAGARIA ROSSI, *Un Principe nel deserto. Leone Caetani nel Sinai e nel Sahara. I diari, le lettere, le fotografie (1888-1890)*, Bardi Edizioni, Roma 2019, pagg. 562, ill., ISBN 9788894820288.

Questo bel lavoro di Valentina Sagaria Rossi (d'ora in poi VSR) non è solo un libro che cattura il lettore fin dalle prime pagine e non lo delude per tutto il lungo percorso in cui si dischiudono le vicende del principe orientalista Leone Caetani (1869-1935) alle sue prime esperienze del Viaggio. Ciò sarebbe limitativo perché, oltre a parlarci di un personaggio davvero speciale, che attira subito le simpatie del lettore, è scritto in una prosa priva di pedanteria e retorica, e descrive un momento della storia del nostro Paese di cui ancora si parla poco e faticosamente, spesso con reticenza, senza sollevare il sipario su momenti contraddittori e controversi.

Di fatto, con limpidezza intellettuale VSR cita fatti e personaggi che spesso abbiamo incontrato nel quadro di una retorica dell'epopea risorgimentale che celebra fasti di santi, navigatori e poeti, adattandosi al conformismo della nostra cultura o quando, al contrario, non ci mostra nei panni dei parenti poveri della cultura europea. Con sobrietà e con umana naturalezza emerge una sintesi morale e intellettuale che non fa ricorso a stereotipi e solleva interrogativi senza cercare di nascondere "difetti" e limiti del Nostro.

Dice bene nella Presentazione Mario Liverani, puntualmente convalidato dall'Autrice, che è interessante fermarsi a considerare di più il periodo della sua formazione, che non la sua attività politica e di orientalista, men che meno del ritiro canadese, lasciandogli la sua *privacy*.

Dunque, riprendiamo il discorso dal principio, lasciandoci anche sedurre dalle fotografie di un vasto album finale di cento immagini che sostanziano visivamente il mondo descritto nei diari e nelle lettere. Iniziamo così un percorso che ricostruisce lo sfondo di una pagina della nostra storia culturale che è rimasta a lungo nascosta dalla pochezza dell'Italietta fascista, ahimé priva apparentemente di sensi di colpa e intrisa di roboanti quanto insensate autoproclamazioni come modello di civiltà, stendendo un velo di foschie che ne hanno prolungato effetti negativi fin oltre la metà del secolo scorso.

Il volume si presenta in una veste elegante ma sobria come ormai se ne vedono pochi e ciò non guasta per chi apprezza il Libro nella sua totalità, dalla scelta delle carte, all'impostazione grafica che accende nostalgie di altri tempi, alla cura dei riferimenti e la ricchezza aneddotica: in tutto oltre 500 pagine suddivise in quattro ampi capitoli seguiti da una presentazione dei documenti cui fa riferimento, Diari, Lettere e Fotografie che occupano quasi due terzi del volume.

I quattro capitoli toccano aspetti della biografia del Caetani che in realtà racchiudono un profilo della società italiana di fine secolo. Il primo (*Mobiliora Nobiliora*) presenta il giovane principe nelle vesti del viaggiatore (di cui ritroviamo puntuali immagini nelle fotografie) e qui emerge la nuova concezione del significato del Viaggio, dell'orientale dove più che lo studioso scopriamo un ricercatore dell'anima di quella

terra e quella gente cui ha rapito abiti e pensieri, senza vantare le sue mimesi prive di esibizionismo. Scrive ancora VSR (p.99) citando Isabelle Eberhardt: “Liberarsi per molti giorni dalle nostre giacchette occidentali, forse abbelliti nei lunghi barracani e veli, simili a sceicchi arabi” equivaleva a lasciare “la vita moderna e la nostra intima debolezza, dove l’immobilità “sa di paura”. Infine mostrandosi direttamente negli scritti come diarista consapevole di essere un pioniere a un pubblico che immaginiamo incerto e latitante.

Poi nel secondo capitolo compaiono i diari di pietra e di sabbia. Lo sfondo è il deserto, la ricerca dell’ignoto. Diari ritrovati di recente che hanno costituito lo spunto di questo libro dove si parla di Sinai e di Sahara. Belle le pagine sul senso del silenzio (p.119 ss.). Il silenzio è possibile solo nell’immensità del deserto e schiaccia l’individuo. Ma nel silenzio le emozioni dell’alba e del tramonto diventano vivide più che mai e permettono un orientamento che non è dato solo dalle stelle.

Nel terzo capitolo si è già immersi nella sintesi tra viaggio e narrazione del viaggio, pagine che riflettono un cambiamento profondo e un panorama dominato dalla contaminazione operata da un turismo di massa che ha ucciso la nobiltà del beduino, la simbiosi tra l’uomo e la natura nella sua immensità.

Ciò che distingue Caetani è evidenziato nella presentazione di Liverani in cui Caetani appare

...ottimo esempio di quella che era allora la pratica delle grandi famiglie nobiliari o alto-borghesi, di integrare la formazione in patria con un’esperienza di viaggio in paesi diversi... in quel “Levante”... che era a ragionevole portata di mano... (p. 5)

ma con una fondamentale differenza tra il modello e l’intento del giovane esploratore e quell’orientalismo da scrivania dei professionisti degli studi.

Fin dall’inizio tale *Voyage en Orient* fu inteso diversamente dal giovane Caetani: coerentemente egli pubblicò poi gli *Studi di storia orientale* a dimostrazione che il viaggio non era stato una prassi rituale con ricadute nel vuoto.

Chi obbediva a quella pratica andava a oriente al centro di una organizzazione, che svuotava il viaggio degli incerti avventurosi facendo nascere un turismo gestito da invisibili operatori in un clima artefatto, ma tornato in patria non si occupava più se non della propria carriera che col viaggio nulla aveva a che fare.

Ironia del destino, Caetani concluse la sua vita in un viaggio a occidente nella rotazione e la rivoluzione terrestri contrarie alla sua meta orientale, il mondo islamico, in una terza rotazione, questa culturale, dalla centralità europea a quella delle Americhe e, da ultimo, questa centralità è assunta oggi dal triangolo Cina, Giappone, Corea, come sappiamo, e ricordandoci anche quel genovese che era andato “buscando el levante por el poniente”.

È il nuovo paradigma del viaggiatore che emerge dagli scritti di Caetani. Anche quella sua mancanza di veste polemica ci dice molto della persona. Ignazio Guidi colloca le terre d’origine dei semiti nello Shatt al-Arab, forte delle sue etimologie e di ricerche compiute senza conoscere la realtà del territorio. Mancanza di prospettiva storica? Caetani conosce il deserto, sa quanto una carta geografica appiattisca un territorio non potendo rilevare monti e fiumi, e neanche la desertificazione non ancora avvenuta cinque millenni or sono e puntualmente colloca le origini nella Penisola. Avrà ragione Caetani ma, maltrattato da una erudizione libresca imperante, non otterrà il plauso dei suoi contemporanei. Non pare tuttavia che il Caetani ne sia restato molto scosso. La

storia poi renderà giustizia al Nostro e si rivitalizzerà negli studi antropologici e archeologici e sulla conoscenza del divenire di climi e paesaggi. Siamo nel tempo che vede i successi dell'egittologia, delle nuove idee di Humboldt, di Franz Boas, di nuovi viaggiatori. Caetani è un dilettante, ma oggi ci pare possiamo evidenziare l'appropriatezza del titolo dell'opera di VSR: forse un dilettante, ma pur sempre un principe del deserto...

Non c'è polemica negli atteggiamenti del principe, che è se stesso perché non ha bisogno di mendicare l'attenzione dell'Accademia. Egli ha un posto che gli è dovuto per nascita e per cesso e se ne serve senza troppo clamore consci dei suoi privilegi, ma senza sentire la necessità di scusarsi per questo.

In qualche modo non viene neanche sfiorato da accuse che in quegli anni cominciano a udirsi nei confronti di quegli studiosi ritenuti collusi con governi di paesi colonialisti e che creeranno quella immagine dell'orientalista prospettata da Said ancora cent'anni più tardi. E si trova in buona compagnia, ché i tempi erano ormai maturi. Nel silenzio si svolge il viaggio in Yemen di Renzo Manzoni e Pierre Loti in Egitto poteva scrivere:

Presso noi europei si considera come verità acquisita che l'islamismo sia una religione di oscurantismo... Ciò rivela in primo luogo un'ignoranza assoluta degli insegnamenti del Profeta e secondariamente uno stupefacente oblio delle testimonianze della storia... No, i popoli di tanto in tanto si addormentano, forse per stanchezza dopo un periodo di intenso fulgore, è una legge... questa immobilità dei paesi della Mezzaluna mi era cara...
(da *La Mort de Philae*).

Un nuovo modo di viaggiare, dunque, al riparo dalle vanterie di uno scopritore, ma scopritore ancora più profondo dell'anima di gente e di luoghi.

Il deserto lo conosce, ma ci vive come il beduino. Fanno la differenza l'agenzia Cook, un turismo di massa che si intravvede nella lettera al padre dal Cairo il 1 gennaio 1889, i telegrammi. Leggiamo nelle lettere ai familiari come non risparmi critiche e osservazioni, ove sia necessario, ma senza quella mancanza di rispetto, quelle quasi buffonesche frecciate che sciupano talvolta gli scritti di appena una generazione precedente.

Ora Renzo Manzoni cita le fonti coraniche, Elio Modigliani, tra una raccolta botanica e una zoologica, trova il tempo di parlarci di Engano, l'isola delle donne, e dei Batacchi da pochi decenni non più dediti al cannibalismo e appaiono sempre più spesso le intrepide Viagiatrici come Mary Henrietta Kingsley.

Ognuno ha una sua identità e non si può più parlare di letteratura odepatica *tout court* legata a una nicchia di lettori particolari: è letteratura d'autori e basta.

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FABIANA DIMPFFLMEIER, *Il giro lungo di Lamberto Loria. Le origini papuane dell'etnografia italiana* (con una prefazione di Antonino Colajanni e una selezione di testi), CISU, Roma 2020, pp. 383, ill., ISBN 978-88-7975-697-6.

Con questo ben documentato e avvincente lavoro biografico su Lamberto Loria (1855-1913) si completa un trittico che restituisce insieme una biografia completa del viaggiatore, dell'etnologo, di un protagonista della vita culturale del suo tempo, e una sistemazione ragionata di un segmento cruciale del farsi per niente lineare di una etnologia professionale tra l'ultimo scorso del secolo XIX e il primo decennio del XX e anche di una politica culturale intrecciata con la costruzione della identità nazionale.

Avevo già recensito, con gratitudine per il notevole contributo alla storia degli studi (“Ethnorêma” 2019), il precedente e complesso lavoro dell'autrice e di Sandra Puccini *Nelle mille patrie insulari. Etnografia di Lamberto Loria nella Nuova Guinea britannica* (2018) che concludeva una lunga ricerca iniziata diversi anni prima con il ritrovamento da parte della Puccini, unica e perseverante specialista italiana della storia degli studi antropologici, dei taccuini inediti dei sette anni di Loria in Nuova Guinea depositati al Museo Nazionale “Luigi Pigorini” (oggi all’Archivio storico del Museo delle Civiltà, Roma) e che il volume insieme con le appendici on line finalmente ci restituisce.

Nel 2014 usciva a cura dell'autrice e di P. De Simonis il dossier monografico della rivista “Lares” *Lamberto Loria e la ragnatela dei suoi significati*. Ma ancor prima nel 2005 il libro della Puccini *L’Italia gente dalle molte vite. Lamberto Loria e la Mostra di Etnografia italiana del 1911* aveva restituito alla storiografia delle discipline demo-etno-antropologiche l’importante attività collezionistica, fotografica, organizzativa di Lamberto Loria per lo sviluppo professionale della etnologia italiana e fissato il suo ruolo nella impresa della prima Mostra di etnografia italiana tenutasi a Roma nel 1911. La Mostra era stata affiancata – sempre con il decisivo contributo di Loria – da un importante Convegno che segnava, in sintonia con un passaggio sociale di trasformazione pur travagliato nel paese, l’emergere di prospettive storistiche, sociologiche e riferimenti innovativi anche internazionali e accompagnava il tramonto di vecchi orientamenti evoluzionistici e folkloristici.

Mi piace ricordare anche il contributo apportato dalla nostra missione linguistica e antropologica (ACMTS = Atlante della Cultura materiale tradizionale Saho), che in gran parte ha ripercorso, nell’Eritrea orientale tra altopiano e bassopiano dancalo

(2008-2010), l'itinerario di *survey* antropologico ed etnografico compiuto in due mesi da Aldobrandino Mochi e Loria nella missione tra il 1905-1906, a fianco della parallela ricerca dei geografi O. Marinelli e G. Dainelli (dossier monografico, “Ethnorêma” 2009). La Missione contemporanea ha permesso di utilizzare, controllare criticamente e collocare in una prospettiva storica i dati linguistici e etnografici allora raccolti, soprattutto di cultura materiale e relativi alle frazioni saho; fu un supporto per noi prezioso l'edizione (2002) del Diario inedito scritto dal Mochi durante il loro itinerare, curata dal gruppo di ricerca del Museo di Antropologia di Firenze, e la minuta e preziosa schedatura degli oltre 1300 oggetti custodita nel suo Archivio storico.

Questo lungo excursus bibliografico serve per capire come questo ultimo lavoro dell'autrice possa acquistare autorevolezza, proprio perché basato su una ricchissima base documentaria e su un procedere di lavori preparatori che contengono riflessioni storiografiche e ricostruzione di passaggi e di relazioni scientifiche e istituzionali nei due decenni cruciali a cavallo dei due secoli passati. L'autoconsapevolezza disciplinare ne risulta rafforzata, la storiografia antropologica può acquistare maggiore visibilità e forse diventare più attrattiva verso le nuove generazioni di antropologi (e su questo rinvio proprio alla aggiornata riflessione dell'autrice nella sua impegnativa *Introduzione*). Non a caso il ripercorrere la vita e il lavoro del Loria viene presentato qui anche come una ricerca e sistemazione degli ‘antenati’, che ristabilisca posizioni e genealogie intellettuali, recuperi imprese di viaggio etnografico che, anche quando non influirono direttamente, finirono per essere incorporate e trovare proprie vie indirette per contribuire a un insieme disciplinare che allora iniziava a separarsi da altri campi scientifici e trovava giustificazioni per esistere non solo e tanto sul piano accademico quanto nella storia culturale del paese e in una funzione politica di riconoscimento delle differenze regionali e sociali e nella loro metabolizzazione per il progetto di uno stato compiutamente unitario.

Il presente lavoro biografico si compone, dunque, di tre parti: *Le ragioni del silenzio, Fermenti e frustrazioni, Fare antropologia in Africa e in Italia*, ognuna divisa simmetricamente in tre capitoli. Si segue così cronologicamente l'itinerario di ricerca e di esperienza di viaggio a partire dal soggiorno in due differenti viaggi in Nuova Guinea, che costituisce l'inizio della fama del Loria e insieme racchiude fascino ed emozioni più intense. Il testo è completato dalle *Appendici* (pp. 203-284) che contengono una efficace selezione, divisa in tre parti, di lettere, appunti e scritti sulla nuova Guinea e sulla colonia Eritrea, sulla fotografia etnografica, sulla museografia, che altrimenti sarebbe stato difficile trovare.

‘Le ragioni del silenzio’ è un quesito importante cui l'autrice dedica attenzione e infatti presta il titolo sia alla intera prima parte che al suo terzo capitolo. I taccuini del Loria vennero solo in minima parte trasformati in pubblicazioni e queste assunsero la forma, peraltro consueta al tempo, di testi di conferenze, reports nelle sezioni apposite delle riviste come il “Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana”, lettere sotto forma di breve reportage come quella inviata al governatore britannico Mac Gregor. Il fatto che le sue permanenze in Nuova Guinea siano state di inusuale lunghezza, non essendo egli né un missionario né un funzionario coloniale, e al tempo stesso non abbia egli adempiuto al compito che egli si era prefisso e cui si era pubblicamente impegnato, richiede di riflettere su come questa esperienza abbia comunque potuto riversarsi nella etnografia del tempo. L'autrice, analizzando l'eterogeneo insieme di

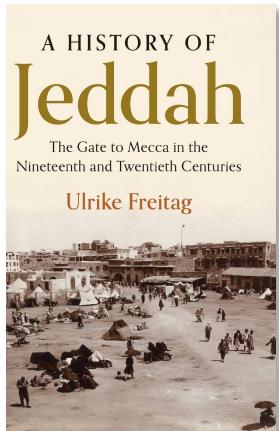
materiali, mostra come il secondo soggiorno (1894-1896) contenga un cambiamento di metodologie, una percezione più raffinata delle differenze tra i gruppi, relazioni più consapevoli con le ambiguità della intermediazione e dei passaggi linguistici, il rapporto scientifico con il Padre Giuseppe Vitali, l'individuazione di campi come la parentela su cui promette un contributo scientifico anche comparativo che non ci sarà e anche una interessante descrizione sociologica della vita di colonia. Se la sistemazione scientifica non avviene, non sono perse le acquisizioni metodologiche e i nuovi modi di stare sul campo, come la selezione degli intermediari e interpreti, perché verranno incorporati nelle sue attività successive prima in Eritrea e poi soprattutto nel piegare le urgenze di lavoro verso le alterità italiane e l'etnografia domestica.

La nota lentezza o difficoltà di passare allo scritto scientifico si spiegherebbe anche con la fase storica, nel declinare dell'interesse coloniale dopo la sconfitta di Adua e nel conseguente restringersi degli spazi di interesse e comunicazione e nell'impoverimento delle società geografiche e coloniali di cui egli era stato membro o promotore. La sua battaglia culturale e metodologica per l'uso della fotografia nella ricerca e il suo spazio strategico nella comunicazione rimangono il suo contributo più elevato agli studi etnologici e con esso la capacità collezionistica, raffinata con l'esperienza, e il ruolo di promozione e organizzazione museografica. La sezione fotografica nel volume dell'autrice ci offre insieme il fascino di una ricerca pionieristica in aree che sarebbero diventate esemplari e la capacità tecnica e sensibilità del Loria.

La *storia del se* ha un suo stimolo immaginativo e ci si può chiedere quanto sarebbe cambiata l'etnologia dell'esotico in Italia e la stessa gerarchia della ricerca etnologica sulla Nuova Guinea. Rimango convinto che Loria si fermò dinanzi al rigore anche concettuale che avrebbe richiesto dare una organizzazione comparata e complessa come egli intuiva avrebbe dovuto fare; l'alternativa narrativa e diaristica sarebbe stata anch'essa percorribile e avrebbe lasciato il segno, ma non venne praticata. Non è un caso che il suo scritto sui *Matrimoni nei villaggi del basso S. Giuseppe*, che coincide con il primo quaderno *I costumi di Innawi*, fu pubblicato solo nel 1903. Non è un caso che i suoi pochi scritti pubblicati, coincidenti in gran misura con la scrittura degli appunti, vedano l'intervento di altri per la riorganizzazione e messa in forma anche in edizione postuma come nel caso dei “*Usi matrimoniali assaortini*” (1936), che era stato oggetto solo di una conferenza veneziana nel 1907.

Come riconosce l'autrice, Loria fu, dunque, soprattutto ‘uomo d’azione’, ‘uomo del fare’ e questo gli consentì di sostenere una difficile ma fondativa esperienza in terre oceaniche e di distillarne gli insegnamenti e di riversarli in un impegno meritorio nella costruzione dell’etnologia italiana. Posso concludere con le parole dell’autrice: “non era il lontano a diventare vicino, ma il vicino a diventare lontano. Quello di Loria era a tutti gli effetti, l’ultimo passo di un giro lungo”.

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ULRIKE FREITAG, *A History of Jeddah. The Gate to Mecca in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, 391 p.
ISBN-13: 978-1108478793

Una scorsa ai nomi delle antiche famiglie di Jeddah è forse il modo migliore per cogliere la natura profondamente cosmopolita di questa città del Mar Rosso: agli innumerevoli prefissi Bā di chiara ascendenza hadrami e alla prevedibile abbondanza di al-Baghdadi e al-Isfahani, la presenza di alcuni al-Bukhari e al-Takruri svela legami con l’Uzbekistan e poi con l’Africa occidentale, ricordandoci come per secoli l’orbe terracqueo islamico abbia avuto in Jeddah un riferimento imprescindibile. Fu il primo califfo ben guidato, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, a fare di Jeddah il porto ufficiale del pellegrinaggio e da quel giorno l’identità della “porta di Mecca” è stata plasmata da questo rapporto tutto particolare col resto del mondo islamico. Se la vita di Jeddah è intimamente legata al hajj, il pellegrinaggio costituisce solo una dimensione del suo cosmopolitismo. Ugualmente importante, infatti, è stato il commercio: situata circa a metà del Mar Rosso, là dove il regime monsonico dei venti esaurisce la sua energia, questa città, che nel XIX aveva una popolazione compresa tra i 10 e i 15 mila abitanti, è sempre stata al centro di una fitta rete di commerci.

A guidarci attraverso la storia di questa città è Ulrike Freitag, direttrice del Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) e professoressa di Islamic Studies alla Freie Universität di Berlino, e con una lunga esperienza di ricerca sull’Oceano Indiano e il cosmopolitismo ottomano. L’arco temporale coperto dal volume riguarda grosso modo due secoli, ma si concentra in modo particolare sul periodo 1840-1947, ovvero dall’arrivo della navigazione a vapore nel Mar Rosso alla demolizione delle mura storiche di Jeddah, nel 1947. Una demolizione che non fu solo una drastica modificazione del suo spazio urbano, ma una vera e propria cesura nella storia di Jeddah, da quel momento alle prese con una radicale trasformazione della propria economia e delle modalità del pellegrinaggio, sempre più mediato dal trasporto aereo. I primi tre capitoli del volume ricostruiscono le vicende storiche della città e la sua geografia umana, con particolare attenzione al XIX e gli inizi del XX secolo. Un periodo che politicamente fu marcato dalla graduale ascesa della wahhabiyya che dal Najd estese progressivamente il proprio controllo all’Hijāz. Un’ascesa contrastata con determinazione dagli ottomani e dagli egiziani, per nulla disposti a rinunciare al prestigio che, nel mondo islamico, ha sempre assicurato il controllo di Mecca. Per una volta, gli europei non furono mai parte del gioco, ma Jeddah divenne il loro avamposto in una regione che da sempre si era mostrata ostile alla presenza non musulmana.

Il quarto capitolo si sofferma sullo sviluppo della città a partire dalla seconda metà del XIX secolo: anche se porti come Istanbul, Salonicco, Izmir, Beirut, Tripoli e Port Said conobbero cambiamenti ben maggiori, la navigazione a vapore e il conseguente aumento dei traffici e dei pellegrini trasformarono radicalmente anche Jeddah. L’analisi di mappe, planimetrie e fotografie testimonia l’espansione della città e la creazione di una serie di infrastrutture e servizi sempre più moderni che segnarono a fondo lo spazio urbano. La vita sociale e culturale della città viene analizzata nel quinto capitolo. Per la sfera privata, l’unità di base è individuata nella famiglia estesa,

mentre per l'amministrazione della città il capo quartiere (*'Umda*) fungeva da punto di contatto con la popolazione. Ad animare la vita sociale ed economica di Jeddah contribuivano poi una serie di associazioni etniche: la documentazione è molto frammentaria, ma la comunità hadrami, quella africane e asiatica, avevano tutti dei rappresentanti che venivano periodicamente consultati dalle autorità. Altrettanto importanti erano le associazioni professionali di cui viene illustrata la complessa organizzazione e l'importante ruolo svolto nel mercato del lavoro.

A livello culturale, Jeddah rimase fortemente ancorata alla sua identità musulmana e ai ritmi e alle esigenze del pellegrinaggio senza però particolari preclusioni nei confronti delle novità: quando la comparsa di un'editoria locale mostrò di aumentare il coinvolgimento della popolazione nella vita sociale e intellettuale della città non si frapposero limitazioni alla sua diffusione.

Commercio e pellegrinaggio ritornano al centro della narrazione nel sesto capitolo, dove l'attenzione si concentra sui mercanti e sulle guide dei pellegrini (*mutawwif*).

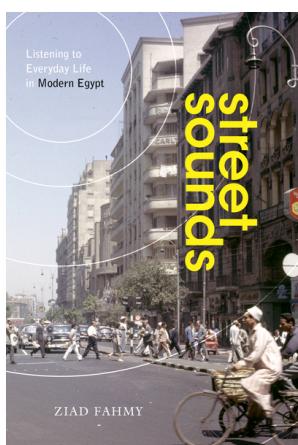
La struttura del governo e i suoi rapporti con l'impero ottomano, ma anche l'amministrazione della giustizia e l'appartenenza locale sono i temi affrontati nel settimo capitolo. In particolare, il discorso sui criteri impiegati per definire l'identità giuridica dei singoli si rivela particolarmente importante perché fu proprio nel XIX-XX secolo che ebbe luogo la graduale transizione verso il prevalere dell'appartenenza nazionale. Nel 1869, la legge dell'impero ottomano sulla cittadinanza affermò criteri molto inclusivi. In questa fase di transizione, la casistica delle eccezioni e delle anomalie si mostrò particolarmente ricca mettendo a dura prova la capacità normativa delle varie amministrazioni. Col passare degli anni la questione della cittadinanza acquistò una rilevanza sempre maggiore e quando, nel 1925, Jeddah passò sotto il controllo saudita, nel giro di sei mesi fu pronta una legge sulla cittadinanza, questa volta molto improntata però a criteri molto più restrittivi.

Il volume non ha delle vere e proprie conclusioni, nel capitolo finale viene però tentato un raffronto fra la Jeddah del passato e quella odierna, nel tentativo di stabilire se a prevalere sia stata la continuità oppure la discontinuità. La risposta di Ulrike Freitag a questo proposito è chiara: a prevalere è stata la discontinuità, e tra la Jeddah di oggi e quella di ieri esistono differenze così marcate da non sembrare più la stessa città. Tutto o quasi è cambiato, e la nostalgia che affiora in tante delle rievocazioni contemporanee è ben consapevole dell'impossibilità di ogni ritorno al passato.

Anche se il volume ripercorre le rilevanti trasformazioni di Jeddah dal 1840 al 1947, la storia politica della città rimane relegata sullo sfondo così come i legami tra Jeddah e gli altri porti del Mar Rosso: Aydhab figura nella mappa di apertura ma non nel testo; sempre sulla costa africana del Mar Rosso, Suakin e Massawa ricevono un'attenzione sporadica e lo stesso vale per Mukhā, Hudayda ed Aden. Probabilmente, lo stato attuale delle conoscenze non permette una trattazione più analitica di questi aspetti, ma è anche vero che questo volume vuole proporre in primo luogo una riflessione sul cosmopolitismo e l'appartenenza dall'epoca ottomana alla monarchia saudita. Mentre ricostruisce le vicende di Jeddah, l'attenzione dell'autrice rimane costante sul tema di come singoli e gruppi abbiano articolato le proprie strategie di inclusione e di come le autorità abbiano normato l'appartenenza. Tra gli aspetti più riusciti del lavoro vi è sicuramente un uso delle fonti estremamente ricercato: alla conoscenza pressoché completa della letteratura in lingue occidentali, questo volume affianca un uso sistematico delle pubblicazioni in arabo e poi di numerose interviste realizzate sul

campo. L'autrice riesce così ad intrecciare la storiografia araba a quella occidentale restituendoci la magia di Jeddah ma anche la complessità del farne parte.

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ZIAD FAHMY, *Street Sounds. Listening to Everyday Life in Modern Egypt*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2020, 288 p., ISBN-13: 978-1503613034

Con questo nuovo volume Ziad Fahmy prosegue la sua indagine sulla storia sociale e culturale dell'Egitto nel XX secolo. Lo sguardo di Fahmy ha sempre privilegiato la prospettiva “dal basso”, concentrandosi sui gruppi sociali meno trattati dalla storiografia tradizionale. Una scelta affascinante ma anche impegnativa e destinata a confrontarsi inevitabilmente con una prevedibile questione delle fonti. Come dare voce a gruppi che hanno sempre trovato poco spazio nelle fonti ufficiali e che raramente hanno mediato la loro rappresentazione attraverso lo scritto? Già in *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2011), l'autore aveva fornito una risposta convincente rivolgendosi alla cultura di massa, esaminata principalmente attraverso la stampa popolare e l'uso dell'arabo egiziano. In rapporto dialettico con Benedict Anderson, Fahmy aveva però anche allargato la sua analisi a tutta una serie di fonti sonore capaci di cogliere aspetti altrimenti non recuperabili della quotidianità delle masse e del loro processo di inclusione nella nazione.

In *Street Sounds* l'apertura di Fahmy alle fonti sonore trova nuova linfa grazie ad un maggiore raccordo con la *sensory history*. Per Mark Smith, autore di riferimento per questa corrente,² la realtà è il risultato di percezioni che coinvolgono tutti i cinque sensi. Da qui l'invito a ricostruire il passato dando centralità a tutti i sensi. Mentre antropologi e studiosi dei media hanno maggiore familiarità con questo approccio, gli storici si sono rivelati meno pronti ad abbracciare la dimensione sensoriale. Per quanto riguarda gli studi sul Medio Oriente, la riflessione sulla *sensory history* è ancora più recente: un primo tentativo per esplorarne le potenzialità risale al 2016 quando l'*International Journal of Middle East Studies* ha ospitato una roundtable dedicata a questo tema.³

In Ziad Fahmy la *sensory history* fornisce una serie di strumenti e tecniche che permettono di cogliere dimensioni e aspetti della vita quotidiana dell'Egitto novecentesco e in particolare il suono diviene uno strumento per comprendere il passato. Il suo interesse è chiaramente rivolto allo studio di quelle classi che tradizionalmente sono rimaste ai margini della ricerca storica. Convinto che il suono possa contribuire a pieno titolo a ricostruire il passato, Ziad Fahmy non minimizza le difficoltà che lo storico incontra al momento di includere i suoni nella sua narrazione. Apparentemente questo tipo di analisi sembrerebbe destinata a coprire un periodo molto limitato, ovvero alle sole fasi in cui le tecnologie per la registrazione sonora ci

² Mark Smith, *Sensory history*, Oxford-New York, Berg, 2007.

³ Andrea L. Stanton, G. Carole Woodall, “Bringing Sound into Middle East Studies”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 48/1, Feb. 2016, pp. 113-155.

permettono un accesso diretto ai suoni del passato: molto rare nella prima parte del '900, le registrazioni diventano più comuni a partire dal secondo dopoguerra quando i primi archivi sonori hanno cominciato a conservare le tracce uditive del passato. Ziad Fahmy sottolinea però come esista una copiosa documentazione scritta su suoni, rumori e più in generale su tutta la dimensione sensoriale. Il documento scritto, infatti, non è mai una descrizione limitata alle sole osservazioni visive; l'atto stesso di scrivere implica una sensorialità molto più estesa che coinvolge in primo luogo il tatto. Come ricordato da R. Murray Schafer, gli storici possono allora utilizzare "earwitness accounts" per ricostruire la dimensione sensoriale del passato. L'apertura del volume dimostra in maniera molto efficace questo punto: riportando un articolo comparso nell'aprile 1936 sul settimanale *Al Radiu al Misri* (la radio egiziana) e dedicato all'esposizione agricola e industriale del Cairo, Ziad Fahmy dimostra come un testo scritto possa ricreare la dimensione sensoriale di un avvenimento. Lo stesso vale per la fotografia, la stampa illustrata, i film e i documentari, tutte fonti che, se analizzate con attenzione, possono fornire importanti informazioni sulla dimensione sensoriale del passato.

I sei capitoli del volume sono organizzati in tre parti. La prima prende in considerazione i suoni della quotidianità nelle città egiziane. Le attenzioni maggiori, ma non esclusive, vanno al Cairo. I suoni considerati vanno dai rumori del traffico allo scalpiccio dei pedoni, dai suoni del mercato ai richiami dei venditori ambulanti. Spazi comunque contestati, dove l'insofferenza per le regole dei venditori ambulanti si scontrava con la volontà di normare e controllare delle autorità. Uno scontro che era in primo luogo sociale: da una parte una sovrabbondanza di persone che usavano la strada come luogo di lavoro e incontro, dall'altra una piccola – ma in costante ascesa – classe media che si sentiva in dovere di portare ordine in questo apparente caos.

La seconda parte del volume si concentra sui suoni più direttamente legati all'introduzione delle nuove tecnologie dei trasporti e poi a quella dell'energia elettrica. La comparsa delle prime strade pavimentate e poi quella dei primi veicoli motorizzati mutarono profondamente il panorama sonoro delle aree abitate. La progressiva elettrificazione dell'Egitto provocò un'altra ondata di cambiamenti radicali nella vita dei suoi abitanti: non si trattò solo dell'illuminazione dello spazio pubblico e privato durante le ore notturne, radio, elettrodomestici e altoparlanti invasero il mercato e le case egiziane.

L'ultima parte del volume si sofferma sui suoni come spazio di confronto fra lo Stato e il popolo. In primo luogo vengono presi in considerazione matrimoni e funerali, due momenti che, sebbene antitetici, giocano un ruolo fondamentale nella società egiziana. L'esuberanza con cui si celebravano queste occasioni suscitò critiche da parte dei rappresentanti delle varie comunità religiose ma anche da parte della borghesia. La volontà di contenere l'emotività che queste situazioni suscitavano indusse le classi più ricche a suggerire la moderazione e poi premere per normarle sempre di più attraverso la legge. Per manifestare la presenza dello Stato sul territorio molto spesso si ricorse alla sfera sonora. L'ultimo capitolo analizza infatti la presenza sempre più invasiva dei suoni prodotti e gestiti direttamente dallo Stato: le salve di cannone in occasione di festività e celebrazioni, le apparizioni pubbliche delle bande militari, i discorsi diffusi attraverso altoparlanti e le trasmissioni radiofoniche.

Costruito e scritto magistralmente, questo volume di Ziad Fahmy riporta alla luce un affascinante universo sonoro animato da ritmi e melodie ma anche da sibili, rumori e stridii. L'effetto d'insieme è in parte cacofonico, ma attraverso l'esame di questi suoni

l'autore riesce a narrare quasi mezzo secolo di cambiamenti nella vita degli “Ordinary Egyptians”, a dimostrare cosa sia la *sensory history* e, soprattutto, a regalarci un libro stimolante e che si legge con grande piacere.

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ALICE CRISANTI, *Giuseppe Tucci. Una biografia*, Edizioni Unicopli, Milano 2020, pp. 501, Appendice documentaria (pp. 441-485), ISBN 978-88-400-2122-5

Questa biografia di Giuseppe Tucci è il risultato conclusivo di un impegno che Alice Crisanti aveva iniziato con la tesi di laurea magistrale, e poi con la tesi di dottorato del 2017 (*Giuseppe Tucci e l'indianistica italiana tra Otto e Novecento*). Tucci da almeno un paio di decenni ha avuto nuova fortuna e attirato interessi anche e forse soprattutto al di fuori della cerchia degli “orientalisti” in una sorta di configurazione attuale di una costruzione dell’Oriente cui contribuì lo stesso studioso. Nel 2012 era stata pubblicata una corposa biografia a

cura di Enrica Garzilli, che aveva nel titolo direttamente richiamato sia l’eroismo da esploratore sia la sua discussa relazione con il potere politico, in primo luogo durante il fascismo, ma anche nel dopoguerra (*L’esploratore del Duce. Le avventure di Giuseppe Tucci e la politica italiana in Oriente tra Mussolini e Andreotti*). Su questa primo tentativo biografico valga, tra più interventi critici, l’inflessibile e severa discussione di Oscar Nalesini, *Onori e nefandezze di un esploratore*, che nel 2013 ne sottolineò i gravi limiti malgrado l’imponente numero di pagine divise in due volumi. Difetti gravi di metodo storiografico, scrittura poco sorvegliata, con eccessi di inserzioni autobiografiche, e anche debole apparato critico – bisogna ribadire – fanno risaltare il più solido approccio storiografico contenuto nella biografia della Crisanti. Devo qui sottolineare che la mia recensione muove dal lato della storiografia delle discipline etnologiche e in parte anche degli “orientalisti vicini”, soprattutto i filologi storici. Lascio ad altri più competenti come i contemporanei studiosi di indologia e del buddismo la valutazione critica del contributo scientifico dell’indologo Tucci, contestualizzato nelle mutevoli fasi storiche e disciplinari, e la discussione dei lasciti per le generazioni a lui successive. Necrologi e saggi dei suoi allievi o comunque debitori della sua ricerca, tra consensi e parziali dissensi, hanno contribuito alla sistemazione critica della sua attività scientifica; essi sono puntualmente richiamati nel ricco apparato critico (anche se sarebbe stato utile ritrovarli in una comprensiva bibliografia a fine testo, come è stato notato). Il suo ruolo storico nell’innovazione scientifica e nella organizzazione culturale viene riconosciuto anche quando se ne rimarcano i limiti e l’indologia e gli studi sul buddismo di allora hanno imboccato oggi altre strade. Diversi lavori del Nalesini ricostruiscono la sua vasta bibliografia e il lascito tangibile e fotografico depositato e ordinato oggi nel contemporaneo Museo delle Civiltà.

Il mio apprezzamento per il lavoro di Alice Crisanti nasce anche dall’interesse per le biografie intellettuali e dall’urgenza di stimolare e valorizzare ogni impresa che incrementi la conoscenza della storia di quelle che chiamerei “discipline dell’esotico”

au sens large. Non a caso in questo stesso numero di Ethnorêma (2020) compare la discussione di altri due lavori biografici, sull’etnologo Lamberto Loria e sull’arabista Leone Caetani. D’altronde la stessa categoria (un pò fuzzy) di “orientalisti” e di “orientalismo” funzionava allora come grande contenitore identificativo in grado di abbracciare aree lontane tra di loro, discipline differenti, modi diversi di stare sul terreno. Credo che le storiografie delle discipline demo-etno-antropologiche, degli studi semitisti e cuscitisti, dell’indologia e della storia delle religioni nelle proiezioni esotiche debbano interagire, confrontarsi, riconoscere e documentare ciò che le ha accomunate nelle varie fasi storiche, dalla condivisione o divaricazione di metodologie di organizzazione del viaggio e di indagine sul campo, dalle logiche di traduzioni e intermediazioni alle concettualizzazioni, fino alla intersezione dei *milieu* intellettuali e del rapporto con le istituzioni e i poteri politici. L’uso della fotografia e della ripresa filmica fu un importante elemento nella metodologia della ricerca, promosso dal Tucci, incrociando la diffusione delle nuove tecnologie degli anni Trenta, ma era stato promosso ancor prima nella ricerca etnologica italiana, oceanista e africanistica, ma anche domestica, da Lamberto Loria e in parte praticato nel 1938 da geografi e antropologi nella Missione al Lago Tana in Etiopia, per iniziativa del Centro studi sull’Africa Orientale, sotto l’egida della Accademia d’Italia, cui lo stesso Tucci apparteneva fin dal 1929. Alle riprese cinematografiche fu chiamato, per collaborare con Pietro Mele, Fosco Maraini; mentre il primo con il cortometraggio *Tibet proibito* vinse il premio alla Mostra internazionale d’arte cinematografica di Venezia nel 1949, che in seguito nel 1948, il secondo pubblico il suo reportage *Segreto Tibet*, tradotto in più lingue, con più edizioni, anche con un apparato iconografico; nella sua introduzione ricostruiva il suo rapporto con Tucci e il suo modo di stare sul campo e di rapportarsi con allievi e membri della spedizione.

Dallo stesso lavoro della Crisanti emergono, nel seguire, attraverso i sei densi capitoli, le tappe biografiche e scientifiche del Tucci, frequentazioni disciplinari, scambi o relazioni indirette mediate da un comune nodo di un network accademico o dal riferirsi alla stessa personalità come il Gentile, centrale anche per lui dal 1919, quando gli consentì di pubblicare sull’importanza degli studi di filosofia orientale, fino alla drammatica fine quando, nel 1943, Tucci gli si rivolgerà giustificando la sua decisione di non seguire l’Accademia d’Italia verso nord nel 1943 in nome della necessità di coltivare i suoi studi e difendere l’Istituto di studi che aveva promosso. Già il primo capitolo, dedicato alla formazione, che inizia con una puntigliosa ricerca di documenti scolastici e universitari, vede in scena studiosi come Giovanni Vacca e soprattutto Carlo Formichi, che accompagnò il Tucci dalla sua prima fase scientifica, con la costruzione di una relazione diretta con l’India già col primo viaggio alla fine del 1925, e nell’accoglienza diplomaticamente controversa in Italia del premio Nobel Rabindranath Tagore nel gennaio del 1925 e poi nel 1926. La relazione con Formichi, fondamentale anche nei raccordi con il regime, durò fino alle discusse e travagliate vicende dell’Accademia d’Italia soprattutto nella crisi della seconda guerra mondiale.

La costellazione delle relazioni tra orientalisti “vicini” e “lontani” passava per strutture come la Scuola orientale romana, riviste come la “Rivista di studi orientali”, gli insegnamenti universitari e nelle Scuole di specializzazione; il Tucci molto presto vi si inserisce e in esse viene cooptato. L’autrice ne documenta le vicende soffermandosi su passaggi cruciali come la nomina senza concorso alla cattedra di Cinese all’Istituto orientale di Napoli, la successiva nomina a Roma alla cattedra di Religioni e filosofia dell’India e dell’Estremo Oriente, passaggi accademici che

ritorneranno di attualità quando alla fine del fascismo la Commissione per l'epurazione dovrà ripercorrerne l'iter contestando la legittimità di quelle decisioni e imputandole a una compromissione del Tucci con il regime. La Crisanti ne tratta ampiamente, con accuratezza di dettagli e di tempi, nel quinto capitolo *La guerra e l'epurazione*, offrendo poi nell'appendice i documenti relativi alla revisione della nomina per "alta fama" e la memoria difensiva del Tucci, la perorazione in favore della reintegrazione dell'Istituto di Studi orientali di Roma e di personaggi influenti come Nitti, che richiamava lo stesso Croce, fino alla conclusione della reintegrazione comunicata dal ministro il 30 giugno 1946 alla cattedra che egli terrà fino alla collocazione a riposo nel 1969.

Si entra qui nella *vexata quaestio* del rapporto tra gli intellettuali, accademici o no, con il regime fascista. L'autrice, nel riferirsi alla ampia bibliografia storica sul tema, ancora in fieri, sceglie le proposte di Isnenghi che proponeva la distinzione tra "intellettuali funzionari" e "intellettuali militanti" e anche di Gabriele Turi che scriveva degli intellettuali dinanzi al fascismo come "soggetti" ed "oggetti" della politica: "non abdicherà alla propria autonomia di "soggetto" intellettuale, ponendosi fin dal primo progetto di fondare l'Istituto, quale "attore" in grado di servirsi a sua volta in modo strumentale del potere politico per gli scopi scientifico che si è prefisso" (p. 208). Per la Crisanti il Tucci potrebbe iscriversi tra gli intellettuali funzionari. In più passaggi della biografia viene documentato il rivolgersi diretto alle personalità del regime e allo stesso Mussolini. Anche qui si tratta di una tematica che si pone come ineludibile nelle possibili biografie di orientalisti 'vicini' come Carlo Conti Rossini, Enrico Cerulli, Martino Moreno, i quali peraltro furono alti funzionari sia nelle amministrazioni coloniali che nell'apparato statale centrale. Vale anche per il percorso nel ventennio dello storico delle religioni Raffaele Pettazzoni o dei geografi Renato Biasutti, responsabile tra l'altro della sezione *Etnologia* dell'enciclopedia italiana, e Giotto Dainelli, che dopo la morte del Gentile assunse la funzione di presidente dell'Accademia d'Italia.

L'autrice si misura con prudenza storica con la questione, documentando come la ricerca di un rapporto con le istituzioni politiche fu una costante, accrescendosi man mano che aumentava la notorietà e l'autorevolezza del Tucci, anche grazie a una sapiente e puntigliosa attività pubblicistica, che lo contraddistinguerà per tutta la vita. La costruzione della propria immagine pubblica era certamente anche piena di consapevolezza del suo sapere, anche autocompiacimento nella sua capacità di gestire relazioni e di promuoversi sulla scena nazionale e internazionale, ma non districabile dalla passione scientifica. La conclusione è che il Tucci vedeva nella relazione con il fascismo un passaggio essenziale, non evitabile, per garantirsi uno spazio di ricerca che richiedeva ingenti somme che il regime e di concerto con esso i mecenati privati potevano garantire. Se l'obiettivo scientifico diventava il costruire in Italia una salda connessione con la ricerca scientifica internazionale, ogni supporto politico sembrava giustificabile, ogni compromesso accettabile, ogni silenzio ammissibile. La stessa costituzione dell'IsMEO, come struttura stabile, fu suo indubbio merito scientifico, e le spedizioni che intraprese in Tibet occidentale nel 1933 e 1935, nel Tibet centrale nel 1937 e 1939, furono sue importanti e innovative intuizioni per documentare con nuovi ritrovamenti testuali e archeologici e tracciare nuove vie per la storia della diffusione del buddismo. Diventava essenziale una ricerca spasmodica di appoggi e risorse fino all'appello tempestivo a Mussolini, sfruttando contingenze politiche come la proclamazione dell'Impero. La storia della accettazione della nomina, nel 1938, alla

Commissione per lo studio della presenza ebraica, sia pure con imbarazzi espressi in sede privata, mentre altri studiosi declinavano con vari pretesti o ragioni, viene richiamata dall'autrice, e spiegata senza sconti verso un compromesso che sembrava evitabile.

La sua concezione di una Eurasia, di cui si impegnò a ricostruire l'unità culturale nei suoi contorni storici e contenuti, veniva congiunta con il richiamo alle utilità politiche ed economiche di una proiezione dell'Italia verso Oriente, non solo l'India ma anche il Giappone. Di certo la relazione con l'università di Śāntiniketan, le visite a Dacca e Calcutta furono presentate anche come missione politico diplomatica così come le escursioni nel Bengala, Punjab e Kashmir del 1928. Nel terzo e quarto capitolo queste vicende vengono ricostruite documentando sia le ragioni scientifiche che i contributi privati e pubblici costantemente sollecitati e giustificati con l'importanza pratica di una proiezione economica e politica verso Oriente, che riproporrà come attuale nel contesto storico rinnovato dopo il 1945. Nel sesto capitolo la Crisanti, infatti, ricostruisce la relazione politica con Giulio Andreotti, che era stata già proposta nella biografia della Garzilli; è però più cauta, ritenendo che la documentazione può essere solo parzialmente esplorata per cui si rinvia la sistemazione critica più compiuta a un successivo periodo in cui questa sarà completamente fruibile e valutabile.

A proposito di intersezioni, Giuseppe Tucci nel 1913 ai suoi esordi aveva pubblicato un articolo nella *Rivista Italiana di Sociologia* su *Totemismo e esogamia*, tema emblematico della etnologia evoluzionista e diffusionista, ripercorso attraverso la lettura di James Frazer, ma ipotizzando, rispetto a questi, la possibilità di trovarne indizi anche nella Cina antica. Ma, cosa più importante, egli entrò in contatto con Pettazzoni, attivo su più fronti nella sua battaglia per la legittimazione culturale ed accademica di una storia delle religioni. Il Pettazzoni ebbe un ruolo importante anche per il folklore: la sottosezione *Folklore* era sotto la sezione *Storia delle Religioni* di sua responsabilità nell'organigramma della Enciclopedia italiana, e il suo ruolo nel Congresso di Tradizioni popolari del 1929 fu fondamentale attraverso l'azione degli allievi Toschi e Cocchiara. La debole etnologia italiana degli anni Trenta deve anch'essa al Pettazzoni attraverso l'attivazione degli insegnamenti all'Università di Roma e la costituzione dell'Istituto di civiltà primitive. Come ricorda la Crisanti, Tucci entrò in contatto con il Pettazzoni nel primo periodo di vita della nuova rivista *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, nel 1924; non ci fu poi un seguito per le divergenze sulla concezione storico comparativa del Pettazzoni, nodo sul quale sarebbe opportuno soffermarsi. In ogni caso fu proprio sul terreno della storia delle religioni che si crearono incroci stimolanti tra le "discipline dell'esotico": vi confluirono tra gli altri Conti Rossini, ma anche Giorgio della Vida, che aveva rifiutato il giuramento universitario nel 1931.

Il sesto capitolo esamina insieme con la ripresa della sua attività accademica, dopo due anni di dibattimenti ed esami dei documenti e revisioni, la riapertura del IsMEO, la pubblicazione del suo lavoro più apprezzato, i due volumi di *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, il volume *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, le spedizioni del dopoguerra nel Tibet centrale nel 1948 e poi non più verso il Tibet, dopo l'occupazione cinese, ma verso il Nepal e l'Afghanistan, la valle di Swat in Pakistan, considerata come la terra sacra di Uddiyāna, secondo tradizione luogo nativo dello yogin Padmasambhava, che aveva introdotto Vajrayāna nel Tibet. Vi si accompagnò il fondamentale contributo dato alla archeologia dell'Iran, con gli studi su siti prestigiosi come Persepolis, e soprattutto la scoperta della città di Zarin, condotta con l'ausilio di uno dei suoi più stretti allievi,

Gherardo Gnoli. Furono tutte imprese importanti sul piano scientifico, capaci di intercettare anche fascinazioni di un Oriente immaginato dall'Occidente, ma come sempre necessitanti un importante sostegno finanziario. Tucci proseguì il suo impegno per formare delle strutture stabili, promuovendo nel 1957 la creazione del Museo Nazionale di Arti orientali a Roma e il deposito di importanti collezioni di manoscritti tibetani e di prodotti artistici, lasciti durevoli che sopravvivono alla sua morte avvenuta nel 1984.

In definitiva, questa biografia, come già affermato prima, costituisce una formativa e impegnativa lettura e un tassello per una storia complessiva delle discipline che hanno proiettato l'Italia "fuori di sé stessa" nel Novecento. Per quanto sia convinto della superiorità nelle pubblicazioni scientifiche del sistema delle note a piè di pagina in questo caso l'uso anglosassone di collocarle a fine testo avrebbe agevolato la piacevolezza della lettura, che nel genere biografia ci si aspetta più facilmente.

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