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Italian Translations of Ivo Vojnović's *Dubrovačka trilogija* (*Dubrovnik Trilogy*)

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To the Memory of Frano Čale

Following the initiative of Italian Slavist Arturo Cronia, *Dubrovačka trilogija* (*Dubrovnik Trilogy*), the most famous and the most successful work by Ivo Vojnović, was translated into Italian and published in the edition *Teatro di tutto il mondo* in the year 1965. Cronia accompanied the translation with an extensive commentary. In an earlier article, published in 1963, Cronia focuses especially on the Italian version of the first one-act play of the *Trilogy*, *Allons enfants*, which he ascribes to Vojnović himself, adducing as evidence a manuscript he found in the year 1939 in a private library in Zadar. The other two one-act plays, *Suton* (*Twilight*) and *Na taraci* (*On the Terrace*), were translated by Carmen Cronia, the scholars's wife.

This was an unusual situation, because the translator of the first part of the *Trilogy* into Italian was at the same time the author of the original work, which allowed him considerable creative independence, which usually is not permitted in cases of literary translations. It gave an excuse to Arturo Cronia to claim that the Italian version is more mature and artistically more successful than the Croatian original. Croatian scholar Frano Čale, analysing Vojnović's creative approach and emphasising the creative potential, pregnancy and evocativeness of Vojnović's language and its specific Dubrovnik character, opposes Cronia's statements about the translation that has outshined the original. Carmen Cronia, in the role of an "ordinary" translator, offered a reliable, yet not slavish translation, limited to minimal transcodification, within which she made an effort to evoke the local colour and the linguistic stratification of the original. *

Much more than almost any other Croatian author of the Pre-Modernism and Modernism period, Ivo Vojnović¹ was concerned with the ability to make a breakthrough outside the immediate reception environment to which the

* The article was published in Croatian in *Tabula*, 2003, pp. 23-36.

¹ Vojnović was undoubtedly a part of the Croatian Modernism (Modernism) inasmuch as it was a historical style, although from personal reasons he did not take part in Modernism *qua* movement. (Šicel 1981: 351-357.)

linguistic medium of his works naturally led him and of making a reputation in the broader international literary and theatre scene. The consistent efforts that Vojnović made in this direction are shown by the numerous translations of his writings that appeared in many European languages during the author's lifetime² (although they do not give a picture of the full extent of his real foreign success), as also by Vojnović's correspondence and the notes and recollections of his contemporaries. In addition, Vojnović attempted to impress a cosmopolitan stamp upon his dramatic works in a more direct and intrinsic manner – by the choice of theme and literary form (the fashionable title: *Psyche, Gospođa sa suncokretom /Lady with a Sunflower, Imperatrix* and *Prolog nenapisane drame/Prologue to an Unwritten Drama* clearly shows its divide from the domestic theatrical tradition) counting, perhaps little naïvely, that this would guarantee him access to the European and world stage.³

Vojnović's involvement in the translation of his works into the major European languages did not however lead to the desired results. The greatest and most lasting successes were achieved in the Slav countries of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Slovakia and what is now the Czech Republic, and in Poland,⁴ cultures that are peripheral as compared with the mainstream of European literature and theatre, where in the period of the crisis of the Habsburg Empire and the powerful momentum attained by the idea of Pan Slavic commonalty, Vojnović had a good reputation as a public and politically committed figure. However, his aspirations to be known and accepted in the literary and theatrical circles in Western Europe came on the whole to nothing, with the exception of rare and belated occurrences.⁵

The polyglot nature of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the multiculturalism of the majority of its parts, including Croatia, facilitated a natural linkage with languages that were actually capable of ensuring a breakthrough into broader and

² Exhaustive information about the translations of Vojnović is given by Košutić-Brozović 1981: 187-205.

³ The success that Vojnović aimed at was achieved, of all Croatian writers, only by the twenty years younger Milan Begović, who was better prepared and more sensitive to the expectations of the foreign audience, was politically less exposed, with better literary and social connections (for some time he was theatre director in Hamburg and in Vienna). Cvjetković 1981: 90.

⁴ For more detailed information cf. Choma 1981: 69-86; Černa 1981: 101-108; Rapacka 1981: 285-294.

⁵ Information about the reasons, often very diverse, from artistic faults of the pieces offered and the insufficiently good translations to the author's political stigma and the poor financial standing of the theatres he applied to, is given in Košutić-Brozović and Cvjetković 1981.

more prestigious areas of European culture, across the borders of the common political system. From this point of view the closest audience to Vojnović was in Germany or in Italy. In 1887 he started publishing short pieces of prose in the Zagreb papers *Agramer Zeitung* and *Agramer Tagblatt*,⁶ and in 1892 endeavoured to have his comedy *Psyche* performed on the stage of Vienna's Burgtheater,⁷ thinking this a gage for further success in the theatre.⁸ Nevertheless, his family background, education, the general cultural conditions in Dubrovnik and Dalmatia meant that from his earliest days he was in close contact with Italian and Italian literature, which determined a number of the essential features of his literary work.⁹ This is perhaps the reason why the first in the whole run of translations of his dramas was done in Italian. It is the translation of the first one-act play of the *Dubrovačka trilogija* (*Dubrovnik Trilogy*): *Allons enfants*, translated without any name of a translator in 1903 in the Zadar magazine *Rivista Dalmatica*,¹⁰ two years after it was published for the first time in the Zagreb review *Život* and a year after the complete edition of the *Trilogija* had come out in Zagreb.¹¹ The first Italian edition of the whole of the *Dubrovačka Trilogija* was not published until 1956, in the edition *Teatro di tutto il mondo*,¹² the credit for which goes to the well-known Italian Slavonic studies expert and professor at the University of Padua Arturo Cronia, who considered this work of Vojnović's the greatest and most important achievement of what he called "teatro serbo-croato".¹³ In the

⁶ Cf. with further details, Košutić-Brozović 1981:180, note 2, and : 188.

⁷ For further details see Cvjetković 1981: 87-90.

⁸ Interesting from this point of view is the statement in a letter to his father, Kosta Vojnović: "... if *Psyche* is performed in Vienna, then no stones for me any more". Quoted from Košutić-Brozović 1981: 188.

⁹ This topic was thoroughly and competently treated of by Čale 1968: 311-322, 323-358 and : 359-380.

¹⁰ Cf. Vojnovich 1903: 145-182. The translation was printed the next year as an offprint (to which Cronia refers in his edition). Cf. Cronia 1956:101.

¹¹ The magazine *Život* in which the parts of *Trilogija* were printed was edited by Milivoj Dežman. The one-acte *Allons Enfants* came out in 1901 (III, I : 63-78) and *Suton* (*Twilight*) in 1900 (I, I: 111-121). *Dubrovačka trilogija* was performed for the first time in Zagreb, on the stage of the Croatian National Theatre.

¹² The full title is: *Teatro serbo-croato, con un'autoversione di Ivo Vojnovic e versioni di Carmen Cronia, a cura di Arturo Cronia*, Milano 1956.

¹³ The paraphrase and quote are taken from the preface of the editor of the edition Raffaele Cantarella (Cronia 1956: 8). For the assessment of Cronia himself cf. Cronia: 83 and 86-97. As well as the Vojnović text mentioned and the editorial preface: 7-13, the publication contains contributions by the editor Arturo Cronia, *Panorama del teatro serbo-croato*: 15-77, *Ivo Vojnović*:

foreword, Cronia ascribes the anonymous Italian translation of the *Rivista Dalmatica* to the author himself, stating that this identification had been prompted by an MS that he had come upon in 1939 in the private library of “signor Andrea Relja di Zara”.¹⁴ It seems that at the time when he published the *Trilogija* Cronia did not yet know about the manuscript and printed translations of other dramas by Vojnović (mostly in Italian), kept in the Dubrovnik Science Library, among them two incomplete Italian renderings of *Suton (Twilight)*.¹⁵ Cronia does not mention the existence of these texts, and put in the complete edition of the *Trilogija* the very high quality translation of Carmen Cronia, his wife.¹⁶ Information about previously unknown translations became available to the scholarly public only in 1957, when the exhibition *The Life and Works of Ivo Vojnović, Poet of Dubrovnik* was put on.¹⁷ Cronia did not miss the event, recording it in his article *Importanza delle autoversioni*,¹⁸ an essay on three examples of auto-translation

79-97, and *Nota alla traduzione*: 101-102. Cronia presents the development of Croatian and Serbian theatre separately (*Il teatro serbo-croato o meglio, serbo e croato*) and the use of the term *serbo-croato* is a reflection of settled practice in foreign Croatian and South Slav studies of the time. Critical reviews of Cronia's *Panorama* were made by Švelec 1959: 208-210 and F. Čale and M. Zorić 1956, I: 10-11, acknowledging the author knew the material he wrote of well, but holding against him the reduction of the Croatian literature and drama of Dalmatia and Dubrovnik to a copy and imitation of Italian writing and hence a distorted perspective and an insufficient “affinity to the truth” (Švelec 1959: 210).

¹⁴ Cronia 1956: 101. The fact that Vojnović translated *Allons enfants* into Italian is also mentioned by Deanović 1957:138-140, which in the form of evocation of boyish and youthful memories puts forward some of the commonplaces of Vojnović's personal and intellectual biography. According to the note in *Rivista Dalmatica* Vojnović was only the reviewer and not the translator of *Allons enfants*. Vojnovich 1903: 148.

¹⁵ They have a single title (*Crepuscule*) and list of *dramatis personae* in French. The Italian translation corpus in the Science Library contains these MSS: *Psyche*, in three versions (two and three entitled *Amor e Psyche* are Vojnović's own works), *Imperatrix*, signed with Vojnović's pseudonym of Sergio Pustierna, *Equinozio d'autunno*, marked by another of his pen-names, Mario d'Ombra, *Prologo di un dramma non scritto*, translated by I. Gjaja (2 copies, with authorial corrections), beginning of the 4th canto of *La morte della madre de' Jugović* and two typescripts of the translation of *Lady with Sunflower (La signora del girasole, La signora dal girasole)* by Alessandro Voltolina with handwritten corrections. Cf. Kastropil 1997: 103-111. Before the complete edition of the *Trilogija*, only the second of these two Vojnović texts was printed. *Gospođa sa suncokretom (La signora col girasole, Roma 1925)* and *Smrt majke Jugovića (La morte della madre de' Jugović, Belgrado 1938)*. Cf. Čale – Zorić 1956: 93.

¹⁶ Cronia 1956: 102; Čale - Zorić 1956: 94.

¹⁷ Kastropil 1957: 1-32.

¹⁸ Cronia 1963: 128-148.

in recent Croatian literature from Dalmatia – the tetralogy *Finis Republicae* of Ante Tresić Pavičić, Vojnović's one-act play *Allons enfants* and the *Legenda o sv. Kristoforu* (*Legend of St Christopher*) and *Medvjed Brundo* (*Bear Brundo*) of Vladimir Nazor – with the remark that the exhibition had brought to light “una serie di preziosi cimeli, la cui importanza sfuggì alla critica serbo-croata”.¹⁹ And yet he did fail to see, perhaps not accidentally, the review of his edition of Vojnović by the Zagreb Italian studies experts Frano Čale and Mate Zorić, published in the journal *Dubrovnik* in the same year the book itself came out.²⁰ In a positively worded review,²¹ Čale and Zorić put forward the specific situation when the work is translated by the author himself, who has a creative liberty with respect to the original that ordinary translators cannot permit themselves. Quoting Cronia's estimate in a note to the translation that “Vojnović's free version of *Allons enfants!* ... can be considered a new version of the original text”,²² they observe that the alterations (mainly lexical substitutions or expansions) are focused on the stage directions that paint the interior of the Orsat Palace and the details of its décor, giving a characterisation of the individual characters, and only occasionally impinging on the tissue of the dialogue part. Addressing the Italian reader, and wishing to ensure his or her acceptance of the text, the author replaced or expanded certain sections of the original in order to compensate for a substantial loss of meaning because of the inability to find a direct Italian equivalent – whether it was to do with Dubrovnik local expressions or some forms not coloured by the

¹⁹ Cronia 1963: 129.

²⁰ For complete bibliographic information see n. 17.

²¹ The two authors particularly praise the translation of *Suton* and *Na taraci* (*On the Terrace*), of which the author is Carmen Cronia and mention “the warmly written preface of Raffaele Cantarella” (Čale–Zorić 1956: 93) that alluding to the just avoided armed conflict between Italy and Yugoslavia confides to the cultural community of peoples the task of building a better and juster world and coexistence among nations, anticipating the post-colonial period of literary studies and the cultural and political ideology of the same kind, although in expression and metaphor they are partially connected with the traditional imperialist view of culture: “e che l'autore abbia poi voluto egli stesso, quasi a compiere un atto di riconoscimento e di gratitudine, darne la versione... della prima parte in un eccellente italiano ... ” (Cantarella in Cronia 1967: 7). “Donde potrà anche nascere un giorno, nel senso di una tradizione che è gloriosamente “romana” cioè universale, quella comprensione reciproca fra due mondi ...” (*ibid.*: 8). By quoting these examples I would not like to be thought to be calling into question Cantarella's sincere adherence to the principles he urges.

²² Cronia 1963: 93-94 (which we do not consider a completely accurate characterisation of Vojnović's translation).

local, which in the context nevertheless called up some Dubrovnik historical or social setting. It is almost impossible, or at least very difficult, to reproduce allusive or implicit meanings of certain elements of Vojnović's language in another medium because of the lack of any objective referent of the connection created by signifier and signified in the original text. Thus *stara djevojka* became *la mite serva di casa Palmota; čiope [martin]*, one of the fundamental symbolic images of the Dubrovnik setting, is interpreted by the periphrasis *I famosi rondoni di Ragusa*; *zduri* is translated as *guardie sgangherate*. According to Čale and Zorić, these examples show that "Vojnović's original stage directions lose their poetry in the translation and move into information".²³ The authors present the opposition of evocativeness, allusiveness as against illustrativeness and redundancy by the comparison of the Croatian and the Italian version of a fragment of dialogue of Vojnović's drama (a conversation between Lady Anna and Kristina).²⁴ Thus from the outset they disputed Cronia's estimate of the Vojnović translation that he gave in the article mentioned, printed seven years after their review, which, as we have already stated, he omitted to mention, although it had come out in a journal that "is well known to him and which he quoted himself when he referred to other works printed in it".²⁵ Cronia, it would seem, was interested in unhamperedly feigning ignorance, selling the evaluation that the Italian translation was better and artistically more elaborate than the Croatian original, in harmony with his general view about Dalmatian and Ragusan Croatian literature as being an imitation and derivation of the Italian, wishing to use Vojnović too – as Čale pointed out in a sharply polemical reaction to Cronia's article – as confirmation of his anti-Croatian literary prejudices.²⁶ The dispute that thus arose, and the opposed positions of the two participants, are interesting for they touch on certain

²³ Čale – Zorić 1956: 94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Čale 1973: 174. (Cronia also omits to mention another, shorter and more critical review by the same writers published in the magazine *Republika*, also in 1956, and Švelec's review in *Filologija*. We do not have any information on which to base a conclusion whether this is accidental or deliberate.)

²⁶ Cronia's opinion of Vojnović was perfectly benevolent because he thought he could assimilate him to the Italian tradition with his translations too. What is problematic is his claim that the material from the Science Library is a proof "di quanto il Vojnović ci teneva alle autoversioni italiane della sua creazione e di quanto egli deve essere stato esperto in quest'arte". (Cronia 1963:129.) Liliana Missoni showed however through an analysis of the translation of *Ekvinocijo (Equinox)* that Vojnović was not a particularly skilled translator into Italian. For the whole of the problem, Čale 1963: 179-184.

universal matters of literary translation, quite apart from the particular occasion for it, and throw light on a period of Italo-Croatian literary and cultural relations that has on the whole, if not quite completely, been overcome. For Cronia, that is, the lexical substitutions and additions in the stage directions and to a lesser extent in the dialogue²⁷ are an expression of the author's desire to improve the artistic quality of his text – for the purposes of the comparison taking the Zagreb edition of 1902, although he knew of the existence of earlier versions of Vojnović's work. Is the focusing of the translator on the alterations of the stage directions sufficient argument for the “rational grounding” of the claim he makes in the conclusion of his article? (Nothing is changed by the few objections to the presentation of the figures of Deša and Lady Anna).²⁸ For the interventions in the dialogue are reduced to “poche e insignificanti sfumature”²⁹ because here Vojnović “resta più legato all'originale nella partitura dialogica del dramma che, nella sua scansione precisa, cesellata, non si presta a nuove modulazioni”.³⁰ Cronia remarks that in the adaptation of some of Orsat's replies Vojnović was not particularly successful and that he strayed into excessive emphasis and bombast.³¹ Such a distancing from the Italian version is really quite exceptional, for Cronia's presentation is dominated by an a priori and biased viewpoint, manifest in spite of the apparently non-categorical and “hesitant” verbal form, an approach that prevents him from adopting on the whole the kind of objective attitude appropriate to scholarship. In support of his approach, the fact that for Vojnović stage directions do have an independent literary value has a very limited weight.³² It cannot be enough reason for the dialogue to be pushed into the background – even if we unreservedly adopt the remark of R. Cantarella that in their frequency and

²⁷ The change in the place of the two replies of the dialogue between Nikša and Miho (commenting on Lucan and Ovid) as against the edition of 1902 correspond with the version from “Život” (1901).

²⁸ Cronia 1963: 133-134.

²⁹ “Diremo da copione che si riducono per tempestività e chiarezza di pronuncia, a qualche opportuna omissione o incalzanti aggiunte di brevi battute, a ripetizioni di una stessa parola, a varietà d'interpunzione e di rilievi tipografici”. Cronia 1963: 135.

³⁰ Cronia 1963: 135.

³¹ Cronia 1963: 136.

³² Čale 1973: 170. Liliana Missoni has a similar opinion: “Let us not forget that Vojnović began his literary work as a prose writer, and therefore his theatre sometimes is more appropriate for reading than for staging. His stage instructions are often fragments of artistic prose ...”. 1981: 248-249.

extent the stage directions reveal “il carattere piuttosto letterario che teatrale dell’opera”³³ – while Cronia’s view is contradictory when compared with his accent on the value of the “check on the theatre stage” in the evaluation of the translation of Carmen Cronia.³⁴ Cronia’s praise of Vojnović’s Italian work is based on a pseudo-logical, rhetorical line of argument and verbalistic colouring: through its unfaithfulness to the Croatian original, the Italian translation achieves greater faithfulness to the author’s aesthetic ideal. In the search for new and more appropriate “means of expression” Vojnović, clearly artistically more aware and more demanding than at the time of the writing of the Croatian versions of *Trilogija*, was able to a full extent to express his “internal world” thanks to the rich instrument of Italian and to provide a translation that was an artistically more successful version of the Croatian text.³⁵ The insistence of this claim is obscured (and supported at the same time) by the metaphorical language that Cronia employs: from the “aristocratic coat of arms” that graces Vojnović’s text in his “new poetic language rich with inexhaustible secret succulence” to the image of the “happy marriage” contracted between “words and the text that they accompany” (!).³⁶ Although this kind of evidentiary procedure is characteristic of a certain kind of critical, aestheticising manner widely diffused in literary scholarship at the time when Cronia was writing his account, in this situation it is a particularly useful resource for avoiding any direct analytical confrontation with the problem of the relationship between original and translation and the appropriateness of the translational choices. In his departures from the Croatian text, Vojnović certainly gives grounds for thinking about the reasons for such a procedure and the quality of the changes introduced, but not necessarily (actually, not at all) in the direction limned by Cronia. Reading the same facts from a different and we would venture to say more appropriate angle, Čale came to completely opposite conclusions. Both authors refer to “language”, but the area of reference of the term is not the same. Čale considers the language in which *Trilogija* was originally written of utmost importance, while Cronia asserts the advantages of the language of the translated version. The *Dubrovačka Trilogija*

³³ Cronia 1956: 12.

³⁴ Cronia 1956: 102.

³⁵ Cronia 1973: 130. Of course, thanks to the author having the liberty not permitted to the ordinary translator. (In this and similar remarks it is as if the considerations from the suppressed article of Čale and Zorić were being echoed). Valnea Delbianco is also critical to this view of Cronia. Cf. 2002: 221-222.

³⁶ Cronia 1963: 136.

does not interest Cronia as a language artefact on its own: the implications and further working out of such an attitude might jeopardise the one-sided approach to the language, on which he bases his axiomatic view of the superiority of Vojnović's drama as product of the Italian language as against its Croatian point of origin. In Cronia's evaluation, is implicit the understanding of Italian as expression and storehouse of a rich and prestigious literary and intellectual tradition, which is consequently naturally superior to Croatian. The only direct comment by Cronia about Vojnović's Croatian (in one of the texts accompanying the 1956 edition) ascribes to it "being steeped in Italianisms".³⁷ This entirely fits in with the viewpoint that he was to adopt in the later article, although as early as 1924 another well-known Italian Slavonic studies expert, Giovanni Maver, correctly defined the components and quality of Vojnović's language, clearly not burdened by any ideological prejudices: "L'uso magistrale del dialetto raguseo, così fino senza essere aristocratico, così popolare senza essere plebeo, e rigurgitante di parole d'origine italiana, che ora richiamano come un'eco fedele la loro patria ed ora ne conservano appena appena un leggero sapore."³⁸

Čale starts off from the concrete language of the Vojnović work, concentrating on those elements – and raising the question of how translatable they are – that determine it as the product of a well-defined historical situation, social setting and clime; on the forms and structures, syntactical schemes and lexical elements characteristic of the Dubrovnik language of everyday communication, by which it is nourished and in which Vojnović's artistic inspiration is formed and made concrete, achieving a synthesis of the documentary and creative fiction.³⁹ "Certain scenes, figures, descriptions, dialogues and atmosphere" could have been created by Vojnović "only in his native, direct and unrepeatable form of expression, and it was impossible that they could be recreated in Italian, not only in a new but even in any adequate way".⁴⁰ Along these lines of thought we can add that the amplifications and changes in the translation show his awareness of the inability and powerlessness of the new medium to evoke for a member of a different historical setting the whole complexity of the meanings that arose out of the given linguistic segments of the original text. The multiplication and

³⁷ "... linguaggio - grondante di italianismi". Cronia 1956: 90.

³⁸ Maver 1924: 9. We can also quote from the *Rivista Dalmatica*: "... pretto dialetto raguseo, che è un piacevole miscuglio di slavo-erzegovese e d'italiano". Vojnovich 1903:149

³⁹ Čale 1973: 170-171, 1968: 314-315.

⁴⁰ Čale 1968: 171.

substitution of signifiers mean an attempt to fix and make explicit certain elements of the signified that are lost in the process of linguistic transcoding. This is the basic reason, then, for Vojnović's alterations, and not the greater demands of a translator who was (as Cronia would have it)⁴¹ dissatisfied with the original. Čale rebuts Cronia's viewpoint using the translation of the adjective *tvrd* – *hard* – as characteristic of the voice of Lady Anna, which is replaced in the Italian version with the hendiadys: *secca e insistente*: “The synthetic adjective *tvrd*, depending on the whole of the context... transmits the feature of the old woman's voice better than this analytical expansion (*dry and insistent*), which occurred, as has been repeated often enough, because of the need to explicate the original expression...”⁴² In this example the problem of translatability is made more complex by the Italian expression that is equivalent to the Croatian, in its status as a lexicalized metaphor and as expressive cliché, not covering the whole range of the original form, and the corresponding Italian word not being appropriate to the context both in status and in semantics. Similarly, the lexical abundance and analytical nature of the Italian translation choices are linked with the rhetorical habits of Italian, with some of its culturally induced characteristics (neither Cronia nor Čale takes account of this aspect). Subjected to a long-lasting and systematic rhetorical “dressage”, Italian written expression, right up to the very recent time is marked by amplification and periphrasis as its primary, natural manner, even when it is being used for the mimesis of the spoken expression, while for Croatian, because of the partially different history of acculturation (and its lesser exposure to rhetorical re-workings) it is easier to express more directly the characteristics of the spoken idiom, and this means the succinctness of certain words and the degree to which they are rich with meaning.⁴³ Yet another case like the previous one is contained in the introductory stage direction of the one-act play, where one lexical item of the original is in translation projected by means of four components: *Toplo majsko sunce ulazi kroz prozor i puze se*

⁴¹ Čale 1968: 171, 168-169.

⁴² Čale 1968: 171.

⁴³ It seems appropriate here to quote a section from the preface to the *Dubrovačka trilogija* (Zagreb, 1918) of M. Lisičar: “Vojnović... lived incessantly in the emotion of the period. So in his art there is that candid magic of the moment and the true colour of expression. He uses as few words as possible, so that the action should not lose any of its passion by their excessive duration. All the power of the action is in his words; this is why he quotes them accurately, without any changes in all their local variegation – thus to preserve the heat of the moment”. (Lisičar 1918: 4).

*polako, kroz cijeli čin, s poda uzgori po tavolinu, po zidovima sve to crljenije. - Dal finestrone aperto entra il caldo sole di maggio, che lentamente scivola sul mosaico del pavimento e poi su, su, s'alza lungo le pareti, illuminando tutto del suo bagliore sempre più intenso e purpureo.*⁴⁴ The differences between the two versions in the description of the young commoner woman Kristina confirm the same opposition: *rumena kao jabuka, mlada kao kaplja - un lampo di giovinezza, di sorriso; zaustavi se i stavi ruke na srce - si ferma fra il sorriso e la paura, frenando i battiti del cuore; nekako važno i tiho - con aria di mistero e di comica importanza; nastavlja živahno, veselo - raccontandole intimamente con graziose movenze di cingallegra; zatrčala se -correndo per la stanza in uno svolazzare di cose bianche e nastri azzurri,*⁴⁵ and these bring Čale and Cronia into a particularly severe head-on conflict.⁴⁶ The first one thinks the Italian text is “just a more or less successful illustration, when it is not mere cold information, as against the succinct and inspired vividness with which this character is drawn”,⁴⁷ while for Cronia Kristina is “Ancora più viva e più fresca nella traduzione italiana”.⁴⁸ Neither of them notices the somewhat stereotyped character of Kristina's Italian attributes, or includes in his field of vision the impersonal, supra-individual conditioning of the individual style, the inventory of stylemes of the Italian literary language, and the rules of selection and combination within that inventory. Transferred into the context of Italian reception, the Kristina character is associated with a type very common in Italian literature (especially in librettos) and Vojnović to some extent was predictable in the way he gave it concrete linguistic expression, adapting the range of the Croatian original to the assumed expectations of his new audience. The description of the interior of Orsat's house, in the series of details in which the Italian version deviates from the Croatian text, can be considered as a rhetorical re-shaping (the opposition stated earlier can also be considered an example of the same type):

⁴⁴ Here, like in other places in this text, we quote the Italian text from the edition by A. Cronia: 108, and Vojnović's text from the edition *Dubrovačka trilogija*, Zagreb, 1902: 7.

⁴⁵ Vojnović 1902: 18, 22; Cronia, 1956: 117 and 120.

⁴⁶ Čale 1973: 169-170.

⁴⁷ Čale 1973: 169.

⁴⁸ Cronia 1963: 134.

“Kamara u kući Orsata Velikoga. Zidovi su pokriveni tamno crljenim damaškom. U sredini velika, bijela, monumentalna rococo-vrata. Vrati- ma na desno poredani su uza zid naslonjači Louis XVI. (crljeno, bijelo, zlato), a na lijevu naprijed veliki “bureau” Louis XIII. od ebana i bjelokosti, zatim opet isti stoli. Na “buralu” novi empire-dob- nik od alabastre-stupova s crnim i zlatnim pročeljem, a na vrhu na- poleonski zlatni orao. Njihalo ure: široka, zlatna sunčana kruglja. Po zidovima visi po koja starinska obiteljska slika. Nalijevu i na desnu bijela jednostavna vrata, ali ne tako velika ni iskićena. Prema lijevoj strani pozornice veliki “empire”- tavolin, a na njemu dvije-tri knjige i zlatna sprava sa gušćim perom za pisanje. Oko tavolina dva velika stola Louis XIV. tamnoga gobelinsa. Na desnoj strani izmegju vrata i kuta veliki otvoreni prozor. Nedaleko od tavolina zlatna “empire-console” s velikim zlatnim zrcalom i mramor- nom pločom, a na njoj srebrni luki- jernar i dvije stare grčke brončane figure: glave Agripine i Aleksandra. Pod je od mletačkoga mozaika, bez ikakvih ćilima. Salon odiše hladnim bogatstvom i redom. Velika vrata u sredini zatvorena su, vrata na desnu i na lijevu otvorena, ali zastrta tamno crljenim svilenim zavjesama. “

“Stanza nel palazzo di Orsato de’ Palmotta. Le pareti vi sono ricoperte di damasco veneziano rosso cupo a fiorami. Nello sfondo una grande porta »rococo«, bianca, monumentale, che occupa quasi tutta l’altezza della scena. Alle pareti delle sedie “empire” - bianco e oro – ricoperte dello stesso damasco ed uno stipo di ebano intarsiato di avorio. Un grande orologio, a colonne di alabastro – frontone e disco dorato – ed alcune statuette di bronzo antico verdastro posano sullo stipo. Sulla parete dello sfondo, pendono due vecchi ritratti di famiglia, incorniciati d’oro. A sinistra, due porte più semplici, con tende di seta a fiorami, che ne nascondono l’ingresso. A destra, verso lo sfondo, un gran finestrone gotico con poggiuolo e più giù, verso la ribalta, una porticina nella parete, dalla quale per un andito si passa ad un’altra ala del palazzo. Fra le due porte a sinistra “consolle” e specchio puro stile impero, tutto dorato; al di sopra delle porte, d’ambi i lati, qualche raro quadro antico o miniature di famiglia. Un po’ a destra verso il finestrone, una scrivania in vecchio mogano. Penna e calamaio d’ottone con libri e carte gettate alla rinfusa. A sinistra un tavolino pure di mogano a tre piedi con “griffes” dorate. Poltrona “Louis XIV” di vecchio cuoio e sgabello di legno. Poche sedie intorno alle pareti. Una dinanzi allo scrittoio. Il pavimento è di mosaico alla veneziana, senza tappeti. Dal soffitto pende un grazioso “lustre” di ottone e cristallo. Tutto il salotto respira fredda e pomposa signoria. All’alzarsi della tela, la scena resta vuota e deserta. La gran porta di mezzo è chiusa.”⁴⁹

Such an interpretation is suggested by Cronia himself in some elements of his evaluation: "... nella versione italiana, prescindendo da certe ridondanze architettoniche, il Vojnović risulta più raffinato ...",⁴⁹ the main objective of which, nevertheless, is to bear out his familiar thesis with further proof: "È l'artista che lavora più di cesello che di orpello e non si stanca di cercare espressioni sempre più felici per comunicare meglio la vita, l'anima delle cose morte."⁵¹ Here too the allusiveness of some of the requisites becomes meaningless in the Italian translation and substitution appropriate to the new textual circumstances is entailed, while through the explicitness of certain references to the décor (certain descriptive details also work like instructions to the set designer) and the expansion of the stage inventory a monumental effect is achieved, calculated, among other things, through the depiction of a rich and prestigious setting to impress the audience that is for the first time making the acquaintance of a world about which it knows almost nothing and about which it perhaps harbours certain prejudices.

The characteristically Ragusan layer of Vojnović's text, most visible in the markedly locally coloured lexemes and phrasemes, in some of the "images, sayings, proverbs, historical and other allusions and reminiscences"⁵² is also represented by less idiosyncratic forms that are primarily created at the syntagmatic and syntactical levels: by the characteristics of the word order and sentence rhythm, the structure and range of the syntactic units, corresponding with the general characteristics of the colloquial style. Čale encompasses expressions in which the norm of Dubrovnik talk merges with the individual and authorial manner with the label "the objective and realistic procedure" juxtaposing it to the "subjective and lyrical" component, recognisable by the greater artificiality of its rhythmical and syntactic schemes, the germs of which should be sought in some of Vojnović's literary models.⁵³ And if the Dubrovnik lexical idioms discouraged translators,⁵⁴ the level of syntactical shaping should not from the standpoint of

⁴⁹ Vojnović 1902: 7; Cronia 1973: 107-108.

⁵⁰ Cronia 1973: 132.

⁵¹ Cronia 1973: 132.

⁵² Čale 1973: 172.

⁵³ Čale 1968 (see n. 39), illustrates this contrast, i.e. the characteristics of the two stylistic procedures.

⁵⁴ Košutić-Brozović gives this as the reason for the rarity of translations of Vojnović between the two wars (1981: 192).

the translator be any kind of technical obstacle: parataxis, juxtaposition, elliptical sentences, simple or complex sentences parallelism and anaphora – these are language universals that in the typologically similar languages that are part and mediators of the same culture, and in history have been formed according to the same syntactic model, created jointly by the heritage of classical Latin and the prose of the Bible (including the share of the spoken language), and have the same denotation and an identical basic range of associations. Because of the genetic and typological kinship and the cultural affinities, the reader most commonly accepts the syntactical level completely automatically, without there being any conscious perception involved. Here is where one observes the greatest degree of transmissibility and the greatest area of contact between Croatian and Italian. And yet this does not rule out the question of whether the unobstructed reproduction with the means of another language system entails a relation of total equivalence of the cultural and stylistic implications of a given choice, or whether certain forms that are involved in the system of the second literature are to some extent nevertheless marked somewhat differently in terms of literary style and history. Their position in the new surroundings will depend on the relationship between the two literatures, on the extent of their networking within the wider European literary system, the receptive horizon of the readers and their awareness of the complex and multiplicitous intertextual relations that the text before them establishes within its own historical style, or some other previous styles, which places it in the master text of literature that it itself builds with its expressive features. Issues of this kind might inevitably occur to the Italian reader or viewer in connection with features related to Vojnović's "lyrical and subjective style" and with the decadent elements in his work: if he knows only his own, Italian, literature and does not take into consideration the entirety of the literary epoch, certain phenomena of Vojnović's text, of a formal or non-formal nature, will be read as an expression of a direct imitation of Italian authors, and not as a general feature of much broader literary areas and a consequence of his familiarity with writers such as Maeterlinck and Rodenbach⁵⁵ (whom he knew in the original and not just in translation).

At the morphological level, the problem of finding an appropriate translation surfaces in the example where the grammatical form of the word creates "special effects" in the social characterisation of the character. This is to do with the

⁵⁵ Čale 1968: 323-357; Missoni 1981: 145-251.

“vernacular, narrative use of the imperative... typical of Konavle rural speech”⁵⁶ in the reply that in the one-act play *Na taraci* (*On the Terrace*) is given by Vuko – *Eh! - kako kad! ... Vas dan trudimo, kopamo, valjamo kamenje, Bože prosti, - kako živine! Pa na večer - eh! gospode Bože! - baci se, na, i eto - zaspi, ko zaklan!*⁵⁷ and the replacement by forms typical of the colloquial and familial register: *Eh conforme! Tutto il giorno ci affatichiamo, zappiamo, rovesciamo pietre, Dio ci perdoni, come bestie! E di sera- signor Iddio! – ti butti la e ti addormenti come morto*,⁵⁸ is deprived of the marks of country speech.

In the area of lexis, the specific language mixture that so distinctively and unrepeatably characterises Vojnović’s Dubrovnik dramas, the simultaneity of Ragusan Slavonic usages, the adapted Italianisms and the unmodified loan words that mark the language of characters and author alike, becomes pointless, is diluted and cancels itself out in a translation into an idiom from which most of this material actually derives: between the two languages, a kind of tautological blackout occurs. Vojnović’s attempt to preserve for the Italian reader some of the awareness of the alloglot component in the Croatian original by putting into italics words that stem from Italian and, to a much lesser extent, from French (which was to be taken over by Arturo and Carmen Cronia, who replaced the italics with quotation marks)⁵⁹ does not seem to us to be particularly successful, for it mechanically interrupts the flow of the text that is submitted to the reader as a continuum, and is produced in the standard language (with the rare exception of the occasional archaism or dialect form).⁶⁰ From the point of view of stage performance, this kind of procedure has no value whatsoever, and completely wipes out the difference in the degree of integration of individual Italianisms (which Maver records as important), and hence its stylistic functionality, providing the Italian reader, consequently, with a distorted and incomplete picture. The problem of reproducing Vojnović’s plurilingualism would occur in a translation into any foreign language whatsoever, and in this sense Čale’s more or less

⁵⁶ Čale 1968: 314. It is a matter of doubt how much even the modern Croatian reader possesses a developed enough feeling for language to be able to perceive the distinctiveness of such expressions.

⁵⁷ Vojnović 1902, p. 145

⁵⁸ Cronia, 1956: 217.

⁵⁹ And carry it out more consistently than Vojnović.

⁶⁰ E.g. the venetianism *chicchera* in the stage direction bringing in Lucija (Cronia, 1956: 109). Cronia changed the form *giovinotti* of the first edition to *giovanotti* (1956: 117).

explicitly formulated claims that the *Trilogy* is untranslatable⁶¹ (however much polemically highlighted in order to refute Cronia's assessments, unacceptable as they are to a Croatian scholar) are not without foundation. In translation into Italian it might perhaps be thought a good idea to attempt to reproduce, at least partially, the linguistic complexity of the original with the assistance of approximately equivalent forms that might sound fairly convincing to the Italian audience, also because of the real historical analogies between the fate of the Dubrovnik Republic and the fate of certain regional major powers in the Apennine peninsula. The closest that could be imagined would be a combination of several varieties of Venetian dialect, but it would be hard to find an equivalent for the Italian in *Trilogija*. In any event such a venture would be extremely complex and the outcome uncertain, and it would also be problematic from the point of view of reception (and might arouse undesirable political and historical associations). Neither Vojnović nor Carmen Cronia embarked on an attempt to imitate the original and did not attempt to find substitutes for the lost linguistic hoard. Clearly to both of them (irrespective of all the other possible reasons) the most important goal was to provide a text that was unimpededly accessible to the contemporary Italian public, and this was assured by a translation into the standard language of that period (with rare exceptions already mentioned). For the Italian reader or audience it was important for the translation to be readable and intelligible enough to enable the perception of the universal elements of civilisation and humanity, which they could recognise according to their own immediate, or vicarious, experience of culture and civilisation, and to know and to accept with empathy and imaginative identification those whom until their encounter with Vojnović's text they had not known. (The Croatian reader too who does not belong to the clime in which Vojnović's drama is set or who does not possess a finely tuned enough set of instruments for the reading of it is in a similar position.) The reader or the audience expects from a translation primarily aesthetic coherence, the satisfaction of the requirement of internal consistence in accordance with the standards of judgement set by tradition and the expectations of the cultural and intellectual milieu to which the language or the recipient belongs. The local colouring that they are willing to accept on the basis of the postulate of the stylistic mimesis of a referential universe that is being depicted is welcome to the extent to which it aids the said effect. For the foreign reader, the only truth and only experience is that imparted by the translation. And this foreign reader, like every

⁶¹ Čale 1968: 172.

reader after all, will read it and rewrite it in line with his/her perceptiveness and sensitivity (greater linguistic and cultural propinquity will probably mean a greater correlation between authorial intention and readerly experience). Every translator will aim at a clear translation of the macrostructural relations and denotative components, while aesthetic and evocative effects will be attained to the extent that they are compatible with the aesthetic standard of the language of the recipient and the body of texts that create the pertinent literature. While the ordinary translator stays on the hither side of the artistic creative process, Vojnović as translator who is at once writer of the text ventures on larger editorial operations, and concern for the reception effect is inseparable from the examination of the creative process itself. As author, he was completely at liberty to make use of the translation situation to write another version of his own text, for a certain number of alterations undoubtedly dictated by the desire to achieve greater explicitness and comprehensibility and to create a transformation in accordance with the cultural code of the recipient, and, finally, to give concrete shape to, to provide and record some of his own stylistic quandaries and subsequent corrections. Thus here – which Cronia did not miss – depicting Orsat he did not translate the comparison with Oedipus looking at the dead eyes of the Sphinx,⁶² which does not exist in the 1901 versions, or in later editions,⁶³ and also omitted some of the components of the paroxystic stylisation of the same character: *Velika kao u mjedi salivena usta, padaju prijezirnom dubokom crtom; zagrezao grčevitim prstima u guste zavijene kose, Ruke zabo u kose.*⁶⁴ These and some other alterations are on the lines of the reduction in pathos shown by the autographs kept in the Science Library⁶⁵ with examples of changes in the syntagmatic order. In his polemical review Čale rejects the possibility that as a result of the author's intentions the text in the Italian version might be of higher artistic quality than it could be in Croatian. Cronia has a very defined, political aim: he attempts to suggest that Croatian literature is unworthy to have a text as valuable as Vojnović's. This component in the controversy of relations between translation and original, there in the case of *Allons enfants*, is cancelled by Carmen Cronia by a position different than Vojnović's. She translated the one-act plays *Suton* and *Na taraci* "faithfully,

⁶² *Koraknuo je nehotice naprijed, pak se prignuo kao Edip, da gleda mrtve zjenice Sfyngje.* Vojnović 1902: 1

⁶³ E.g., the Osijek of 1911 and the Zagreb of 1918.

⁶⁴ Vojnović 1902: 10 and 50.

⁶⁵ Čale 1968: 312.

yet not slavishly”.⁶⁶ In other words, she embarked on the minimum necessary transcoding demanded by the structure of the recipient’s language and its cultural convention. Within these limits she endeavoured to evoke local colour in some of its specific aspects and linguistically expressed class stratification (with appropriate syntax, choice of morphemes, analogous Italian phrases and proverbs). Her translation has no elements of a rewriting of the original, because her position as “ordinary” translator did not allow her this. The praise of her work from Čale and Zorić⁶⁷ is not fuzzed by comments about the untranslatability of Vojnović’s text, although the problems in this area are just the same as in the first one act play. On the other hand Cronia never utters a single word of regret that the translator did not correct some of the flaws of the original. Cronia’s critical attitude seems to have become deflated when it was no longer possible parasitically to exploit Vojnović’s endeavours, which had been primarily directed towards the removal of reception barriers in connection with the Italian audience. (Or is it a tacit recognition of the fact that in the meantime Vojnović improved as a writer? Or rather Carmen Cronia is a better translator than Vojnović, and Vojnović is a better writer than he is a translator?) Remaining closer to the original, refraining from editorial interventions, Carmen Cronia confirmed its value as final, completed work of art and the best possible option. With translatorly discipline, with a sustained effort to transmit the linguistic givens of the Croatian text into Italian in the framework of direct equivalence, not resorting to the “mitigating means” of substitution and amplification, she also confirmed the excellence of her skill as translator.

Translated by Graham Mc Master

⁶⁶ Čale - Zorić 1956: 95.

⁶⁷ “Into the Italian language, Carmen Cronia has transmitted much of the beauty of Vojnović’s poetic vision. With an excellent acquaintance with Dubrovnik speech and a deep inwardness into the world of Vojnović’s world, in her translation she has given everything that can be expected from a translator.” Čale - Zorić 1956: 95. (Still, a more detailed analysis will reveal certain awkwardnesses.)

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TALIJANSKI PRIJEVODI VOJNOVIĆEVE DUBROVAČKE TRILOGIJE

Dubrovačka trilogija, najpoznatije i najuspješnije djelo Ive Vojnovića, prevedeno je na talijanski i objavljeno na poticaj talijanskoga slavista Artura Cronije u izdanju *Teatro di tutto il mondo* 1965. godine. Prijevod je Cronia popratio opširnim komentarom, a posebno se osvrnuo, u članku *Importanza delle autoversioni* iz 1963. godine, na talijansku verziju prve jednočinke *Trilogije - Allons enfants* – koju pripisuje samome Vojnoviću – pozivajući se na svjedočanstvo rukopisa na koji je 1939. naišao u jednoj privatnoj knjižnici u Zadru. Ostale dvije jednočinke, *Suton* i *Na taraci*, prevela je Carmen Cronia, znanstvenikova supruga.

Specifična situacija da je prevoditelj na talijanski prvoga dijela *Trilogije* ujedno i autor teksta te je u odnosu na izvornik imao stvaralačku slobodu kakva prevodiocu inače nije dopuštena (pa je nije mogla imati ni Carmen Cronia), pružila je izgovor Croniji da bez pobliže analize suodnosa dvaju tekstova, zanemarujući jezičnu slojevitost izvornika i nužnost prilagodbe novom recepcijskom okruženju, na temelju razmjerno ograničenoga broja preinaka – koje u prvom redu zadiru u didaskalije, dok su minimalne u dijaloškom dijelu - talijansku verziju proglasi zrelijom i umjetnički uspjelijom od hrvatskog izvornika, bližom autorovu estetskom idealu. Analizirajući Vojnovićev stvaralački postupak i stilski izbor te njihovu jezičnu aktualizaciju, pri čemu posebno ističe demijurški potencijal,

pregnantnost i evokativnost Vojnovićeva jezika, njegov specifični, dubrovački karakter, hrvatski znanstvenik Frano Čale pobija Cronijine tvrdnje o prijevodu koji je nadmašio izvornik i njegovu pokušaju da Vojnovićev tekst – koji nailazi na njegovo estetsko odobravanje (za razliku od hrvatske književnosti Dalmacije i Dubrovnik starijih razdoblja) - posredstvom talijanske verzije otme hrvatskoj književnosti. Ambijentalna ukorijenjenost Vojnovićeva jezika ne očituje se samo u izrazito lokalno obojenim leksemima i frazemima (a znatan dio leksičkoga sloja teksta sastoji se od adaptiranih i neadaptiranih posuđenica iz talijanskoga) nego i u pojedinim «slikama, uzrečicama, poslovicama, povijesnim i drugim aluzijama i reminiscencijama», koje se ne mogu u cijelosti obnoviti u drugom jezičnom mediju. Samo u jednom slučaju – izostavivši odveć emfatični pasus – Vojnović je u prijevodu pružio bolju verziju teksta. Ostali zahvati sastoje se od leksičkih supstitucija i proširenja, kojima je svrha kompenziranje erozije značenja i ispunavanje praznina nastalih zbog jezične ili situacijske “neprevodljivosti” izvornika te pridobivanje naklonosti talijanske publike. U usporedbi s izvornikom prijevod je konvencionalniji i bezbojniji. Razlike između izvornika i prijevoda uvjetovane su isto tako (i mimo prevoditeljevih namjera) drugačijom poviješću i akulturacijskim iterom dvaju jezičnih medija te posljedično tome razlikama u njihovim izričajnim i estetskim konvencijama. Carmen Cronia, u ulozi «običnoga» prevoditelja, pružila je vjeran, ali ne ropski, prijevod, lišen redaktorskih zahvata, ograničen na minimalnu transkodifikaciju, unutar koje je nastojala evocirati lokalnu boju i jezičnu stratifikaciju izvornika. Arturo Cronia pohvalio je njezin uradak, jednako kao i hrvatski recenzenti Frano Čale i Mate Zorić. Ovaj put ni jednom riječju nije spomenuo eventualne mane izvornika i izrazio žaljenje što ih prevoditeljica nije ispravila, odnosno nije bila ovlaštena ispraviti. Znači li to da je u međuvremenu Vojnović postao bolji pisac, pa je Carmen Cronia - ostajući vjerna izvorniku - potvrdila njegovu vrijednost kao konačnog, dovršenog umjetničkog djela i najboljeg rješenja? Ili to znači da je Carmen Cronia bolji prevoditelj od Vojnovića, a Vojnović je bolji pisac nego prevoditelj?

Key words: Ivo Vojnović, *Dubrovačka trilogija*, Arturo Cronia, Carmen Cronia, Italian translations, Frano Čale

Ključne riječi: Ivo Vojnović, *Dubrovačka trilogija*, Arturo Cronia, Carmen Cronia, talijanski prijevodi, Frano Čale

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