

The Return of Epic Formulas in Various Italian Translations of *Kosovka djevojka* (The Kosovo Maiden)

Abstract: This paper makes a comparative analysis of the various Italian translations of the famous Serbian popular poem *Kosovka djevojka* [The Kosovo Maiden] and illustrates the different interpretations and consequent translations of epic formulas in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italy. The Parry-Lord oral formulaic theory, together with other important contributions in the field of oral studies, is a starting point for this analysis, which also takes into consideration the socio-cultural context in which these translations were produced. Translation solutions are therefore brought into relation with the poetics of individual translators and especially with the socio-cultural context of their time. Particular attention is devoted to the centuries-old Italian rhetorical tradition, which influenced even the greatest experts in popular poetry in their interpretation of the figures and clichés typical of oral production.

Keywords: *Kosovka djevojka*, translation, formulaic diction, Tommaseo, Nikolić, Cronia

In the study presented here, we will try to find correlations between three different Italian translations of the Serbian epic poem *Kosovka djevojka* (Vuk II, 51) and the socio-cultural context in which they appeared by devoting particular attention to the way in which the original epic formulas were conveyed. The studies of Dominique Kirchner Reill and others (Todorova 1997; Wolff 2001) will serve as a socio-cultural background for the analysis of these three translations, which were the fruit or, in the case of Cronia, the consequence of the cultural climate indicated by Reill.

The importance of Italian culture for the diffusion of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry has been widely recognised and a number of studies have been conducted on the subject.¹ In this respect, the year 1774, when the Paduan abbot and naturalist Alberto Fortis published his *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, is to be considered a key date. The chapter devoted to the customs of the inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland,

¹ Maria Rita Leto's notable and detailed research on the fortune of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy from Fortis to Kasandrić was published in two articles in the Italian journal for Slavic Studies, *Europa orientalis* (1992 and 1995). See also Stipčević 1975, as well as a recent contribution to this field by the Italian Homerist Mario Cantilena (2012), who gives an overview of the reception of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy and analyses its further influence on Homeric studies.

known as Morlaks,² aroused lively interest, which manifested itself in the prompt translation of the book into the main European languages. *Canzone dolente della nobile sposa d'Asan-aga*, Fortis's translation of the famous ballad *Hasanaginica*, reported in this chapter, sparked off interest and admiration among some of the greatest literary names of the time. It was Italy that discovered the Serbo-Croatian oral production for the world and not Germany, as Arturo Cronia (1958) proudly states, and it was Fortis on the one hand and Vico on the other who preceded Herder, and not vice versa.³ Nonetheless, and contrary to Cronia's suggestions,⁴ Italy did not maintain the same level of interest in South Slavic folk poetry as did the rest of Europe in the following decades; at least, this subject did not involve the major cultural and literary figures of the time, as happened in Germany for instance. Fortis's publication, and the stir it caused, is one of the two moments that Nikša Stipčević (1975) defines as *organic* to the Italian reception of Serbo-Croatian oral production. The second moment was the publication of *Canti popolari illirici* (1842), a highly regarded translation of Serbian epic poetry into the Italian language, produced by Nicolò Tommaseo, an Italian writer, linguist, politician and journalist, from which our first example for the analysis is taken. Surprisingly enough, between these two moments, there were no important translations, while the best German translations appeared precisely in these years.⁵ Nikola Giachich's *Carmi slavi* (1829), the only Italian collection of translations that preceded *Canti illirici*, went almost unnoticed (Leto 1992, 142–146). It was Tommaseo's anthology that was to mark

² The stir that this subject caused in Romantic Europe was described by Cronia (1958, 307–308) as “morlacomania”. For detailed research on the subject, see Wolff 2001. For the vast bibliography concerning probably the most famous text of South Slavic folk poetry, we refer to Isaković 1975.

³ “Qui, prima di Herder, sorgeva dall'estetica del Vico e alla scuola del Cesarotti, colui che può essere il primo e fortunato scopritore e rivelatore della poesia popolare serbo-croata: il Fortis.” [Here, before Herder, influenced by Vico's aesthetics and forming part of the school of Cesarotti, was born the discoverer of Serbo-Croatian folk poetry: Fortis.] (Cronia 1958, 303). It is interesting to observe that Italian culture gave yet another important contribution to this field, still not acknowledged at the time of Cronia: the first recording of a Serbo-Croatian popular poem comes from the Italian Renaissance epic poem *Lo Balzino*, written in 1497 by Rogeri de Pacienza, but published only in 1977 by Mario Marti (see Pantić 1977).

⁴ In this regard see Leto 1992, 117, whose opinion we share.

⁵ We shall limit ourselves to referring only to the early but still very reliable monograph by Ćurčić 1905, which offers a detailed analysis of the major German translations of this period.

a much more prolific epoch in this area of study: he was not only an inspiration, but also a mentor for almost all the translators that came after him (Leto 1995).

In fact, Tommaseo had a remarkable influence on the Trieste literary journal *La Favilla*, the main instrument of mediation between the Italian and Illyrian⁶ cultures at the time hosting a number of studies devoted to the folklore of the South Slavs and publishing translations of their popular poetry. Its editors, Francesco Dall'Ongaro and Pacifico Valussi, were both Tommaseo's correspondents and friends, and in terms of political and social positions, his epigones. These three figures were among the main protagonists of the movement which Reill (2012) calls "Adriatic multi-nationalism",⁷ and whose "unofficial leader" she considers to have been Tommaseo.

Since Niccolò Tommaseo is also the author of the first translation that is analysed here, it will be interesting to look at how his socio-cultural and political engagement influenced his style. *Kosovka djevojka* became in his version *Cadaveri di Cossovo* [Cadavers of Kosovo]⁸ and was included in the great collection of *Canti popolari illirici*, which brought together thirty-four poems, mostly from the second book of *Srpske narodne pjesme* [Serbian popular poems] (1823–1833) collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. With his knowledge of the differences between the Italian and Serbo-Croatian metrical systems, Tommaseo was determined to maintain the authentic meaning even to the detriment of the formal aspect of the text. His translation is thus in prose,⁹ which reproduces accurately, line by line, the structure and meaning of the original and maintains the

⁶ Tommaseo himself, in the first footnote of his Illyrian collection (1842, 2), explains that Illyrians live in the Habsburg Empire and comprise "Serbi, Bossinesi, Dalmati, Bulgari" [Serbians, Bosnians, Dalmatians, Bulgarians]. Moreover, the definition of *il-lirico* in his *Dizionario* suggests that: "della lingua, dicevasi fino ad ora, comunem. Il-lirico lo slavo meridionale" [as regards language, the South Slavic language has been commonly called Illyrian]. Illyrian may thus be considered synonymous with South Slavic in a wider sense and with Serbo-Croatian in a narrower sense.

⁷ In her inspiring work, Reill studies how the idea of "supra-national Adriatic regionalism affected local nationhood" through the work of Tommaseo and other prominent Adriatic writers of the time. Unfortunately, this idea did not last very long, as the 1848 revolutions inspired diametrically opposite movements.

⁸ On the translation of the titles see Drndarski 1989.

⁹ Various scholars have analysed the prose of Tommaseo's Illyrian and Greek translations, trying to explain its characteristics and to define it. Giovanni Pascoli, for instance, in his treatise on the neoclassical metre (1900), analyses one of Tommaseo's Illyrian poems in order to show that it is not an ordinary prose text, but a borderline case between verse and prose. Modern studies on metre would interpret these lines as verse lines, as

original line division. The myriad of theoretical works concerning South Slavic popular poetry and its verse that Tommaseo produced (especially the treatise *Sul numero* [On metre and rhythm]) demonstrates his profound knowledge of the subject, which is easily discernible both in the translation and in his editing practice (comments, introductions to every poem, notes, and so on).

The second translation that we shall deal with is a work by Giovanni Nikolić, a Dalmatian tribunal secretary, a native of the island of Hvar. Although his collection *Canti popolari serbi* [Serbian popular poems], published in 1894 in Zadar, was initially well received and republished in an amplified edition the following year,¹⁰ it had never played an important role in the history of the reception of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy.

Our third translator, Arturo Cronia,¹¹ a Dalmatian-born Italian Slavist, judged Nikolić's translation in a very sharp and wholesale manner as a "parafraasi di montiana memoria" [a paraphrase emulating Vincenzo Monti's style] (Cronia 1958, 549) without giving it any further space in his already mentioned encyclopaedic handbook *La conoscenza del mondo slavo in Italia* [Knowledge of the Slavic world in Italy].¹² On the other hand, Tommaseo was given greater attention¹³ and was certainly the greatest influence in Cronia's own translation work. Cronia's collection, *La poesia popolare serbo-croata* [Serbo-Croatian popular poetry] (1949), was meant to be a handbook and was divided into two parts: the first was devoted to theory and the second to the translations given together with the originals, and both enriched with very competent and helpful notes.

These three collections vary in composition, structure and above all in the stylistic and metrical solutions offered. They all are without any

the only parameter in distinguishing prose from verse is precisely the line division that is present in Tommaseo (and also in Cronia).

¹⁰ Leto quotes the review given by the Italian orientalist Angelo De Gubernatis (1995, 269, n.108). On De Gubernatis and Illyrian (and more widely, Slavic) culture, see Aloe 2000.

¹¹ There does not seem to have been any study on Cronia's translation work. The recently published monograph by Delbianco (2004) gives much useful information on a myriad of Cronia's studies on Croatian literature and language, but makes only passing mention of his translation, judging it (p. 198) as "almost literal (at some points also very gauche)". For a detailed bibliography of more than 400 works that Cronia produced during his prolific academic life, see Durica 1978.

¹² Nikolić's translations of authors such as P. P. Njegoš, P. Preradović and I. Mažuranić are often judged negatively; see Stipčević 2000, 100.

¹³ See also Cronia's article (1942) on Tommaseo's *Canti illirici*, the first important review of this work.

doubt products of their time and the main reason for any differences lies in the temporal distance between them (the first was published in 1842, the second in 1894 and the third in 1949), but we should not underestimate the poetics of their authors as a valid influential factor either. More than one century intervenes between Tommaseo's translations and Cronia's collection, but even so they are much closer to each other than Tommaseo's and those of Nikolić, although Tommaseo and Nikolić were near contemporaries. The scholarly profile that distinguished both Tommaseo and Cronia from their fellow translators was certainly decisive in the elaboration of their source-oriented translations. On the contrary, Nikolić elaborates a kind of translation which is target-oriented on every level and, moreover, attempts to emulate Italian translations of Homer, in the first place that of Vincenzo Monti (Cronia 1958; Leto 1995). Since this markedly neoclassical translation was produced at the end of the nineteenth century, it may appear somewhat out-of-date, and the reason for this is not only the peripheral position of Nikolić's cultural environment, but also the fondness of the archaic that had characterised the Italian literary tradition for centuries. Therefore, Nikolić's translation, being a product of these tendencies, fails to convey the original formulaic style and repetitions by creating a completely new and independent version, which might appear cumbersome at some points, but should not be considered only in relation to the source text.¹⁴

Kosovka djevojka, a poem which describes scenes taking place in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Kosovo, forms part of the centuries-old Kosovo mythology which, as Nenad Ljubinković (1990) clearly states, finds its roots in the fusion of two battles of Kosovo into a single battle, according to the oral tradition and popular imagination.¹⁵ *Kosovka djevojka* represents the shift from the heroic and male perspective to the individual and female, which may be observed through the lyrical element present in the text, a cause of much discussion about the genre of the poem.

Tommaseo (1842, 131) acutely notices these lyrical elements, discerning very well the identification of the individual (*i tre guerrieri*) with the collective (*Servia morente*): "I tre ch'ella cerca sono tre come fratelli, due de' quali avevan promesso darle il terzo in isposo, ed esserle compari alle nozze. E avevano alla fanciulla dato in passando l'addio, e lasciatole memoria di

¹⁴ Since we are studying the return of epic formulas and other epic repetitions in this translation, ignoring the source text seems hardly possible. Nevertheless, we hope to have another occasion to analyse and re-evaluate Nikolić's translation as an independent literary work.

¹⁵ Both battles were fought in the same Kosovo plain but at different times (one in 1389 and the other in 1448) and in different conditions (Ljubinković 1990).

se. Presaghi della misera fine, nelle poche parole che fanno, versano tutta la mestizia dell'anima; che paion come parole della Servia morente."¹⁶

One century later, Cronia (1949, 111) has almost the same remarks, when he states: "Qui però il dolore non è più represso e si traduce in lamento che sembra il grido disperato della nazione morente. Al canto marziale fa riscontro l'elegia, alla madre eroica, la fanciulla piangente. Resta l'emergenza del sesso femminile in questo eroico e fiero ciclo di Kosovo."¹⁷

In order better to illustrate the differences in the return of epic formulas, and the figures of parallelism that distinguish them, we have divided the poem *Kosovka djevojka* into three parts: the introduction, the speech opening with the description of the three warriors, and the final, short but powerful, exchange of words between the wounded warrior and the maiden. It was not difficult to draw a line between the different structural segments in the text, as the narrative skeleton of this poem is balanced by the inner formulas and other stylistic means. The poem opens with an initial formula, which informs us of the action and of the main character. The scene is set in the battlefield after the battle, where a young girl assists the wounded with "white bread, fresh water and red wine" (symbolism of Holy Communion) until "by chance she chances upon"¹⁸ Pavle Orlović, the standard-bearer. This formulaic verse acts as a shifter in the building of narration and, as Mirjana Detelić (1996, 224) notes, it is "a means of smooth connection between the successive segments of a poem" whose "dependence on the direct semantic environment is twofold". Therefore, it will be interesting to see how and to what extent the translators detect this shifter. Its formulaic diction is underlined not only by the usual repetitions of words, but in this case also of sounds, which "aid in the choice of words even as the syntactic patterns assist in deterring their structure. The words that are symbols of key ideas elicit a pattern of sound which clusters around them" (Lord 1956, 304). The narrative then continues in dialogue, much of which is given in a very loose form of the Slavic antithesis (the question, the negation and the delayed answer, given only after a long epic description of heroes). The final lines are characterised by the *brevitas* of dialogue from which the Maiden

¹⁶ [The three that she is looking for are like brothers, two of whom promised to give her in marriage to the third and to be his groomsmen. And, as a sign of farewell they gave the maiden gifts as a memento. In the few words they say, premonitions of a sad end, they pour out all the sadness of their souls; they seem the words of a dying Serbia.]

¹⁷ [But here, the pain is no longer repressed and becomes the lament of a desperate dying nation. War songs give way to an elegy, the heroic mother to a crying maiden. What remains is the emergence of the female sex in this heroic and proud cycle of Kosovo.]

¹⁸ The literal translation is given in order to convey the meaning and formula of the original: *Namera je namerila bila*.

of Kosovo learns her destiny, which is also the destiny of the whole people, as was acutely understood by both Tommaseo and Cronia.

Let us now consider the initial lines of the poem in all three translations, preceded by the source text and followed by the English translation.¹⁹ The elements of the formulaic diction are italicised.

<p> <i>Uranila Kosovka djevojka,</i> <i>Uranila rano u nedelju,</i> <i>U nedelju prije jarka sunca,</i> <i>Zasukala bijele rukave,</i> <i>Zasukala do beli lakata,</i> <i>Na plećima nosi leba bela,</i> U rukama dva kondira zlatna, U jednome <i>lađane vodice,</i> U drugome <i>rumenoga vina;</i> Ona ide <i>na Kosovo ravno,</i> Pa se šeće <i>po razboju mlada,</i> <i>Po razboju čestitoga kneza,</i> Te prevrće <i>po krvi junake;</i> Kog junaka u životu <i>nađe,</i> Umiva ga <i>lađanom vodicom,</i> Pričešćuje <i>vinom crvenijem</i> I zalaže <i>lebom bijelijem.</i> <i>Namera je namerila bila</i> Na junaka Orlovića Pavla, (Vuk) </p>	<p> <i>S'alzò per tempo in dì di domenica,</i> <i>Domenica, prima del chiaro sole,</i> <i>Raccolse le maniche bianche,</i> Le raccolse fino alle <i>bianche gomita:</i> In ispalla reca <i>pan bianco,</i> Nelle mani due calici <i>d'oro;</i> In uno <i>fresc'acqua,</i> Nell'altro <i>vermiglio vino:</i> Ella va <i>di Cossovo sul piano,</i> E scende sul campo la giovane donna, <i>Sul campo dell'inclito conte;</i> E rivolta nel sangue i guerrieri. Qual guerriero in vita ella trova, Lavalò con <i>fresc'acqua,</i> Conforta con <i>vino vermiglio</i> E ristora con <i>pane bianco.</i> <i>Per ventura s'avvenne</i> Nel prode Orlovic Paolo (Tommaseo) </p>
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¹⁹ On a Sunday early in the morning/ The Maid of Kosovo awoke to brilliant sun / And rolled her sleeves above her snow-white elbows;/ On her back she carries warm, white bread,/ And in her hands she bears two golden goblets, /one of water, one of dark red wine./ Seeking out the plain of Kosovo, / She walks upon the field of slaughter there/ Where noble Lazarus, the Tsar, was slain,/ And turns the warriors over in their blood;/ Should one still breathe she bathes him with the water/ And offers him, as if in sacrament,/ The dark red wine to drink, the bread to eat./ At length she comes to Pavle Orlovich,/ Standard-bearer of his lord the Tsar (this and other quotations that will be provided are taken from the translation by John Matthias and Vladeta Vučković, *The Battle of Kosovo*, Swallow Press, 1987).

Non albeggiava ancora, e già pel
 campo
 Di Cossovo fatal sola movea
 La giovinetta. Nella manca mano
 Un'anfora di vin, nella diritta
 Una d'acqua teneva, ed un canestro
 Di *bianco* pane alle *robuste* spalle.
 Per la strage si aggira, e se taluno
 Vivo ancor vede, con attenta cura
 Pria coll'acqua lo lava, indi di pane
 Lo ristora e di vin. Così le morte
 Salme la mesta, rivolgendo, il caso
 La condusse dappresso al valoroso
 Orlovich Polo, [...]
 (Nikolić)

S'alzò di Cossovo una fanciulla,
s'alzò per tempo *di domenica*,
di domenica prima del cocente sole.
 Rimboccò le *bianche* maniche,
 rimboccò fin ai *bianchi* gomiti;
 in ispalla porta *bianco* pane,
 nelle mani due *dorate* anfore,
 nell'una acqua *fresca*,
 nell'altra vin *vermiglio*.
 Ell'andò al piano di Cossovo
 e, giovane, si aggira per il campo.
 per il campo dell'*onorato* principe,
 e rovista nel sangue i guerrieri.
 Qual guerriero in vita trova,
 lo pulisce con *fresc'*acqua,
 gl'amministra il vin *vermiglio*,
 gli imbecca il pane *bianco*
 Per ventura s'imbattè
 nel prode Paolo Orlovich,
 (Cronia)

In this cluster of descriptive elements that can be understood as a theme,²⁰ we immediately notice that Nikolić's translation is shorter and that it does not conform to the original line division. Being a proper paraphrase, it respects neither word order nor repetitions, and it introduces stylistic nuances that are completely alien to oral production. Regular enjambment, to be found in almost every line, is typical of classical Italian authors, whom Nikolić strives to emulate, in this way mangling the beauty of the simplicity of oral expression. None of the original figures of repetition is reproduced (such as anadiplosis, anaphora, epistrophe), thus leaving the two initial formulas without a proper form. However, it should be pointed out that the absence of formulaic phraseology from Nikolić's translation is caused mainly by his choice of register: the traditional Italian poetic language recommends variation, as one of the main prescriptions.

By contrast, Tommaseo and Cronia employ the line-by-line method in translation in order to convey both the structure and the formulaic style of the original. Tommaseo's prose is, in his opinion, a response to the impossibility of conveying the rhythm of the Serbian decasyllabic verse into the Italian language. Inspired by his predecessor,²¹ Cronia employs a similar strategy, and with very similar results, but without any poetic

²⁰ According to Lord's definition (1960, 68), themes are "the groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song".

²¹ "È così bello procedere sulla sua [di Tommaseo] luminosa scia!" [It's so fine to follow his bright path!] (Cronia 1949, 2).

pretensions. Namely, Tommaseo's translation is strongly determined by its poetic language, which very often reflects the centuries-old Italian rhetorical tradition. This translation can actually be considered a conjunction between Italian literary tradition and oral style,²² while the other two translations seem to be more univocal. Cronia simply transmits the oral style following Tommaseo (sometimes literally word for word), whereas Nikolić favours traditional rhetoric. This is why only Nikolić's translation is produced in verse; more precisely, in unrhymed hendecasyllables, the Italian verse of epic expression par excellence and, what is even more significant, the typical verse of the Italian translation style: a choice that carries clear connotations. As it is the only one of the three to have a metrical component, it may also be the only one to have preserved all the aspects of the epic formula as it is defined by Milman Parry: "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea";²³ while the other two might maintain only the syntactical part of the formula. Nonetheless, Nikolić does not take the formulaic expression of the source text into account and so in his version all the formulaic lines are lost. Moreover, he completely omits four and a half lines, mostly those that give repetitions (on the whole, his version omits as many as forty-one lines). Unlike him, Tommaseo and Cronia render all the formulas and figures of parallelism that mark the oral style. The first three lines of the original text give three of the four main formulas, according to Parry-Lord's classification.²⁴ In the first line we find the formulas of action and character presentation, while the second verse contains anaphora in the first hemistich (that is, a repeated formula of action) and the formula of time in the second hemistich. The third line repeats the formula of time in the length of the whole verse. Within these three lines, we find figures such as anaphora, anadiplosis, figura etymologica, periphrasis, thus all figures of parallelism, which Tommaseo and Cronia successfully convey in their versions. Nevertheless, they both fail to convey the pleonastic figura etymologica (*uranila rano*), as Italian does

²² We have already studied this union of *sublime* and *popolare* in Tommaseo's translation of Serbian epic poetry (see Bradaš 2013). For Tommaseo, only the major poetical expressions, such as Dante's *Comedy* or Homer's epics, can make these two poetical expressions flow together in the same literary work.

²³ We follow Parry's definition despite the vagueness of its third part ("given essential idea"), as it still remains the only functional definition in oral studies. In this regard, see Detelić 1996, who offers some valuable elucidations. See also Ljubinković 1991 for an interesting critique of Parry-Lord's method.

²⁴ "The most stable formulas will be those for the most common ideas of the poetry. They will express the names of the actors, the main actions, time, and place" (Lord 1960, 34).

not have a single word to say “to rise early” (and neither does English); so they simply use “to rise” (*s'alzò*) and add “early” only as a modifier, thus failing to convey the pleonastic meaning of the original. The only difference between the two authors lies in the fact that Tommaseo succeeds in conveying the alliteration of the original verb phrase. Not being able to render it within the same phrase, he uses the expression *dì di domenica* [a Sunday day] and in this way achieves the *d* alliteration within the formula of time. In translation of the shifter-line, known also as “boundary line” (Foley 1990), *Namera je namerila bila* [By chance she chanced upon], only Tommaseo succeeds in rendering the figura etymologica and alliteration of the source text. By translating *Per ventura s'avvenne*, Tommaseo once again employs the stylistic nuance of the old Italian tradition, to which the verb *avvenirsi* belongs, in order to convey a typical oral expression, but also to maintain the alliteration. This verb in the meaning employed here [run into, chance upon] occurs in Dante and Boccaccio,²⁵ but not so often in the authors of Tommaseo's epoch, and is completely absent in this form from contemporary Italian.

Some of the most frequent epithets in Serbo-Croatian epic poetry, such as *bijeli* [white], are regularly reproduced in Cronia's and Tommaseo's translations, and almost completely omitted in that of Nikolić. Tommaseo reproduces the same word order as the source text, in which epithets can be placed before or after a noun, while in Cronia an adjective is almost always followed by a noun. This procedure makes Cronia's style even more formulaic than that of the bard. An interesting example is found in the translation of *dva kondira zlatna* [two gold goblets]. In the original, the adjective follows the noun, and this order is maintained in Tommaseo's translation, which also appears to conform more to the original meaning (*due calici d'oro*). Unlike this, Cronia places the adjective with a synonymic meaning (*dorate anfore*) before the noun.

Another epithet translation that is a good illustration of the difference between the translators is *čestitoga kneza* [honourable prince]: the translations *inclito* (Tommaseo), *almo* (Nikolić) and *onorato* (Cronia), with different lexical connotations, indicate the translators' different approaches and poetics. Tommaseo's *inclito* is a literary term, commonly used in poetic language. By translating *inclito conte* Tommaseo is probably paying homage to Annibal Caro's translation of *Eneide*, where this epithet appears, forming the noun phrase *inclito Sire*, which Tommaseo uses regularly in other Illyrian

²⁵ The Tommaseo-Bellini Italian *Dictionary* gives examples from these two authors; *GDLI*, e.g., marks it as no longer in use.

translations of the same collection.²⁶ Nikolić's choice has a similar literary connotation, but with a slightly different meaning (*almo* derives from the Latin verb *altĕre*, meaning "to feed", and the adjective has also maintained the same meaning of "feeding", "giving life"). This epithet combined with the noun "Sire" has had a certain literary fortune in the Italian language, especially in translations of Greek epics and tragedies.²⁷ Both adjectives have a classical background, unlike Cronia's solution, which is less literary and thus more suitable for the translation of popular poetry.

More examples of this kind can be found in the second part of the poem, where the Maiden of Kosovo describes three heroes whom she met before the battle, one of whom was to marry her if he returned from the battle (Milan Toplica), while the other two would be his groomsman (Miloš vojvoda) and best man (Kosančić Ivan) respectively. The conversation is introduced by the speech-opening formula and starts, according to the rules, with an apostrophe, and continues with questions and negative answers (the two first parts of the Slavic antithesis, as we have already mentioned). Here follows the entire portion of the original text, but only the translations of the formulas:²⁸

Progovara Orloviću Pavle:
 "Sestro draga, Kosovko djevojko!
 Koja ti je golema nevolja,
 Te prevrćeš po krvi junake?
 Koga tražiš po razboju mlada?
 Ili brata, ili bratučeda?
 Al' po greku stara roditelja?"
 Progovara Kosovka djevojka:
 "Dragi brato, delijo neznana!
 Ja od roda nikoga ne tražim:
 Niti brata niti bratučeda,
 Ni po greku stara roditelja;"
 (Vuk)

²⁶ Under the entry *inclito* in his *Dictionary*, Tommaseo quotes the lines from Caro's *Eneide*. For other examples of this noun phrase in Tommaseo's translation, see Tommaseo 1842, 129–130.

²⁷ E.g., Felice Bellotti's translations of Aeschylus' tragedies.

²⁸ Pavle Orlovich revives and speaks: "Maid of Kosovo, my dearest sister, / What misfortune leads you to this plain / To turn the warriors over in their blood? / Whom can you be looking for out here? / Have you lost a brother or a nephew? / Have you lost perhaps an aging father?" / And the Maid of Kosovo replies: "O my brother, O my unknown hero! / It is not for someone of my blood / I'm searching: not an aging father / Neither is it for a brother or a nephew."

<p><i>Dice Orlovic Paolo:</i> <i>Sorella cara, fanciulla di</i> <i>Cossovo</i> [...] <i>Parla di Cossovo la fanciulla:</i> Caro fratello, incognito guerriero. (Tommaseo)</p>	<p>E alla vergine pia, che lo soccorre: - Quale, <i>esclama</i>, sciagura il cuor ti preme, <i>O giovinetta</i>, che a vagar ti spinge [...] <i>La vergine commossa in questi accenti:</i> - Né un mio germano, <i>o buon guerriero</i>, ricerco [...]. (Nikolić)</p>	<p><i>Prende a dire Paolo Orlovich:</i> “Sorella cara, <i>di Cossovo fanciulla</i>, [...] <i>Parla di Cossovo la fanciulla:</i> “Fratello caro, ignoto cavaliere. (Cronia)</p>
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As the examples show, Nikolić does not convey any of the formulaic expressions, but it is surprising that neither Tommaseo nor Cronia maintain the parallelism of the same *verbum dicendi* (*progovara*) at the beginning of the speech-opening formula, since they both use different verbs. It is also curious that Tommaseo does not regularly employ the inversion *di Cossovo fanciulla*, formed without doubt intentionally to convey the original word order. This is understandable, however, if we bear in mind the traditional inclination of Italian poetic language towards variation. We only give the description of the first hero, due to the limited space and because the other two are almost identical in the original (the lines that are repeated in all three descriptions are italicised).²⁹

Kad se šeta vojvoda Milošu,
Krasan junak na ovome svetu,
Sablja mu se po kaldrmi vuče,
Svilen kalpak, okovano perje,
Na junaku kolasta azdija,
Oko vrata svilena marama,
Obazre se i pogleda na me

Quando passa il voivoda Milosio
De' più be' prodi del mondo:
La spada per la strada gli strascica:
Serico berrettone, metallica piuma;
Indossogli screziato mantello,
Al collo pezzuola di seta.
Volgesi e guarda in me;

²⁹ As Milosh Obilich passed grandly by/ There is no fairer warrior in this world/ He trailed his saber there upon the stones/ And on his head he wore a helmet made/ Of wound white silk with feathers intertwined/ A brightly colored cloak hung down his back/ And round his neck he wore a silken scarf./ As he passed he turned and looked at me/ And offered me his brightly colored cloak, / Took it off and gave it to me, saying:/ ‘Maiden, take this brightly colored cloak/ By which I hope you will remember me/ This cloak by which you can recall my name:/ Dear soul, I’m going out to risk my life/ In battle for the great Tsar Lazarus;/ Pray God, my love, that I return alive,/ And that good fortune shortly shall be yours.

S' sebe skide kolastu azdiju,
 S' sebe skide, *pa je meni dade*
Na, devojko, kolastu azdiju,
Po čemu ćeš mene spomenuti,
 Po azdiji *po imenu mome:*
Evo t' idem poginuti, dušo,
U taboru čestitoga kneza;
Moli Boga, draga dušo moja,
Da ti s' zdravo iz tabora vratim
A i tebe dobra sreća nađe
 (Vuk)

Del tempio al limitar meravigliata
 Riguardava Milosse. Oh, quanto bello,
 Quanto fiero l'eroe unico al mondo!
 Al mutar de'suoi passi acuto un suono
 Sbattendo al suolo, il brando suo mettea;
 Sul berretto di seta alto di struzzo
 Ondeggiava una penna, e intono al collo
 Un aureo velo; agli òmeri un mantello
 Avea di fregi ricamente adorno,
 Aurati fregi. Egli mi vide, il prode,
 E dal dorso togliendo il ricco manto,
 Con questi accenti me lo porse: - tieni,
 O mia bella fanciulla, e questo dono
 Di me ti faccia ricordar: io vado,
 Vado in guerra a morir; ma tu gentile
 Prega intanto il Signor che salvo io rieda
 (Nikolić)

Si leva lo screziato mantello,
 Sel leva e a me lo dà:
 Ecco fanciulla, lo screziato mantello,
 Al qual di me ricordati,
 Al mantello, ed al nome mio.
 Ecco ti vo' a perire, o diletta,
 Nel campo dell'inclito conte.
 Prega Iddio, dolce anima mia,
 Che salvo dal campo i' ti torni:
 E anco a te buona fortuna tocchi.
 (Tommaseo)

Quando passa il capitano Milosse,
 magnifico guerriero a questo mondo:
 la spada sul selciato gli si strascica,
 di seta il berretto, adorno il pennacchio,
 indosso a lui un variopinto manto,
 intorno al collo uno scialle di seta.
 Volsè lo sguardo e a me guardò,
 tolse da sè il variopinto manto,
 se lo tolse e lo diede a me:
 «Ecco, fanciulla, il variopinto manto,
 al quale ti ricorderai di me,
 al mantello e al nome mio.
 Ecco, io ti vo', o cara, a perire
 sul campo dell'onorato principe.
 Prega Iddio, anima mia cara,
 che salvo dal campo io ti torni
 ed anche a te buona ventura tocchi.
 (Cronia)

Expectedly, Nikolić is the only translator who does not give literal repetitions from the original. Moreover, he abridges the description of the second hero and completely omits the third one, violating in this way the very nature of the oral style. Repetitions from this part of the song are fundamental not only as a means of *ritardatio* of action, but also because they actually contribute to the force of the *brevitas* that the final lines carry (see below). Without them, the effect of the Maiden's and thus of Serbia's tragedy would not be the same. Hence, the translator not only transgresses the laws of the oral style, but also, by arriving to the concluding exchange of words too quickly, alters the meaning of the poem. Moreover, by repeating the very same description for all the three warriors the bard intends to underline the same fate that will befall them all. The three of them, but also all the other warriors in the Field of Kosovo, are destined to die in the battle, and through this repetition the bard actually forecasts their shared fate. Translating in the way he does, Nikolić loses all the nuances present in the original text, whereas Tommaseo and Cronia reproduce, almost with devo-

tion, all the repetitive lines and nearly in the same way. The extraordinary similarity between these two translators is also shown by the initial group of lines. Cronia follows Tommaseo's version probably because they both seem to share the same poetic theory regarding the translation of the oral style. But this confirms the modernity of Tommaseo's version, whose decision to render the original verse in prose is to be seen as almost revolutionary if we consider the trends in the Italian literature of the time, and especially in translation practice, which was dominated by the neoclassical ideas of Melchiorre Cesarotti, Vincenzo Monti and Ugo Foscolo. Another common characteristic of Tommaseo's translation, which confirms its source-orientation, is the presence of loanwords. The first line of the hero's description contains an epithetic noun, *voivoda* [captain], taken from the original and only slightly altered to fit into the Italian phonetic system. Similar examples, such as *vila* [fairy], *budovano* [mace], and *svati* [wedding guests] can be found frequently in other poems in Tommaseo's anthology.

The only difference in the description of the heroes is influenced by different roles they were supposed to play in the Maiden's life after the battle. This is the reason for the three different gifts they give the Maiden as a symbol of their solemn promise: a many-coloured mantle, a gold ring, and a veil. This part of the description has caused much discussion among the scholars of Serbian oral epic, ever since Vuk Karadžić received it from Lukijan Mušicki, a Serbian neoclassical poet.³⁰ The song was recorded from a female singer from Srem, who was unable to explain the meaning of two words which confused Vuk himself: *koprena* [veil], which is a gift that the groom presents to his bride, and *stremen* [literally stirrup] from the final lines. Vuk immediately asked Mušicki for an explanation, but was not really satisfied with it, as he found it unacceptable that the groom should present a veil and not a ring. So he defined this word as a ring in the first edition of his *Dictionary*, and thus Tommaseo, confused by Vuk's definition, translated it erroneously.³¹ It is interesting to observe that Nikolić goes so far as to invert the gifts, as he must also have found it strange for the groom to present the bride with a veil, and not with a ring. Probably considering it a mistake, he offers a translation that is a "correction" of the original:

D'aurati fregi. A me donando *il velo*
 Così parlomi il bel Cosanci: - il dono
 [...]
 Io stesso all'ara vò guidarti sposa
 Del mio prode Toplizza. A questo dire,

³⁰ For this, see Banašević 1960, and Matić 1964.

³¹ Tommaseo received a copy of Vuk's *Srpski rječnik* (*Serbian Dictionary*) as a gift from his friend and Illyrian teacher, Špiro Popović; see Zorić 1989.

Tratto da ditto un ricco *anel* Milano:

[...]

E l'*anello* mi diede.

Unlike Nikolić, Tommaseo and Cronia offer more regularity, but different lexical solutions:

<p>In ditogli <i>corniola nell'oro</i>. Volgesi e guarda in me: Di man si leva la <i>corniola nell'oro</i>, [...] In ditogli <i>anello d'oro</i>. Volgesi e guarda in me, Di man si leva l'<i>anello dell'oro</i> (Tommaseo)</p>	<p>dalla man si tolse <i>il dorato anello</i>, se lo tolse e lo diede a me: "Ecco, fanciulla, l'<i>anello dorato</i>, [...] dalla man si tolse <i>il velo</i>, se lo tolse e lo diede a me: "Ecco, fanciulla, <i>il vel trapuntato d'oro</i> (Cronia)</p>
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As these examples show, Cronia is the only one to give an accurate translation of the original noun phrases. Tommaseo was confused by Vuk's misinterpretation, and Nikolić intervened on the text by inverting the gifts. The bardess of Srem, who recited this song, might have made a mistake. It is highly likely that she did, as she probably did not memorise the song properly, or she actually received it in that form without asking herself about the meaning of all the words. Cronia corrected Tommaseo's mistake as he had at his disposal the instruments that Tommaseo had not. Besides the differences in the translation of particular words, there is also in Tommaseo's translation an interesting syntactic structure: *in dittoagli* meaning literally "on the finger to him" that was meant to render the possessive use of the dative of the original *na ruci mu*, "on his hand" (or literally "on the hand to him"). This union of a noun and an enclitic pronoun into one word is a completely alien syntactic pattern in contemporary Italian, but was occasionally used in the Italian literary language until the middle of the nineteenth century (Migliorini 1975; Serianni 1989).

The third and final part of the song, according to our division, contains a higher level of formulaic phraseology compared to the other two. Here we find the speech-opening formula, the subject of one of the first comparative studies on formulas in Greek and South Slavic poetry (Parry 1971), usually followed by an apostrophe, as in this case:

<p><i>Al' besedi Orloviću Pavle:</i> "Sestro draga, <i>Kosovko djevojko!</i> Vidiš, dušo, ona koplja bojna Ponajviša a i ponajgušća, Onde j' pala krvca od junaka Ta dobrome konju <i>do stremena,</i> <i>Do stremena i do uzendije,</i> A junaku do svilena pasa,</p>	<p><i>Or dice Orlovic Paolo:</i> Sorella cara, <i>fanciulla di Cossovo,</i> Vedi, diletta, quelle aste guerriere Vie più alte e più fitte. Lì corse il sangue de' prodi, Al buon destriero infino <i>alla staffa,</i> <i>Alla staffa e allo sprone;</i> E al guerriero, al serico cinto.</p>
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<p>Onde su ti sva tri poginula, Već ti idi dvoru <i>bijelome</i>, Ne krvavi skuta ni rukava.” Kad devojka saslušala reči Proli suze niz <i>bijelo</i> lice, Ona ode svom <i>bijelu</i> dvoru Kukajući iz <i>bijela</i> grla: “Jao jadna! ude ti sam sreće! Da se, jadna, za <i>zelen</i> bor vatim, I on bi se <i>zelen</i> osušio.”³² (Vuk)</p>	<p>Li tutti e tre ti perirono. Ma tu vanne alla <i>candida</i> casa; Non insanguinare i lembi e le maniche. Quando la fanciulla udì le parole, Versa lagrime dal <i>bianco</i> viso. Ella va alla <i>bianca</i> sua casa Lamentando dal <i>bianco</i> petto: Ahi misera! mala sorte la mia! Se, misera, a un <i>verde</i> pino m'apprendo, Anch'esso, verde com'è, seccherebbe. (Tommaseo)</p>
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<p>[...] Vedi là, proruppe, Il ferito guerrier quell'alto ingombro Di cadaveri monchi e di spezzate Spade e di lancie? O giovinetta il sangue A torrenti là corse, e sì che l'onda Allo sprone giungea dei cavalieri. Ivi caddero i forti. Alla paterna Casa adunque ritorna, e non volere Buttar più a lungo la tua <i>bianca</i> veste. A que'detti la pia dirottamente Lagrimando lasciò l'infausto campo. (Nikolić)</p>	<p><i>Or favella Paolo Orlovich:</i> “<i>Sorella cara, di Cossovo fanciulla,</i> vedi, diletta, quelle guerresche lancie, le più alte e le più dense, lì è corso il sangue degli eroi del buon cavallo <i>infino alla staffa,</i> <i>infino alla staffa e alla coreggia</i> ed al guerriero fino al serico (suo) cinto. Li tutti e tre ti son periti, Ma tu vanne alla <i>bianca</i> casa, non insanguinare lembi e maniche!” Quando la fanciulla i detti intese, lagrime versò pel <i>bianco</i> volto. Ella se ne va alla sua <i>bianca</i> casa lamentando dalla <i>bianca</i> gola: “Ahi, misera! Ben amara è la mia sorte! Se, misera, m'appiglio a un <i>verde</i> pino, anch'esso verde, (mi) si seccherebbe.” (Cronia)</p>
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We immediately notice the difference in the length of the translations: Nikolić's is shorter, while the other two are the same in length and sense and almost even in the choice of words. The initial formula is conveyed in practically the same way, apart from the inversion *di Cossovo fanciulla* [of Kosovo the Maiden] employed by the two translators in order to render the original word order. It is also a construction typical of the Latin style, which probably was an equally important motivation for Tommaseo. Cronia tends

³² Pavle Orlovich then spoke and said: / “O my dearest sister, Maid of Kosovo! / Do you see, dear soul, those battle-lances / Where they're piled the highest over there? / That is where the blood of heroes flowed / In pools higher than the flanks of horses, / Higher even than the horses' saddles- / right up to the riders' silken waistbands. / Those you came to find have fallen there; / Go back, maiden, to your white-walled dwelling. / Do not stain your skirt and sleeves with blood. / When she has heard the wounded hero's words / She weeps, and tears flow down her pale face; / She leaves the plain of Kosovo and walks / To her white village wailing, crying out: - / “O pity, pity! I am cursed so utterly / That if I touched a greenly leafing tree / it would dry and wither, blighted and defiled.”

to always maintain the same constructions, even when the bard himself employs variation, while Tommaseo sometimes opts for variation, translating even the omnipresent epithet in South Slavic epic poetry *bijeli* [white] (see Detelić 2008) as *bianco*, *candido*, *biancheggianti* without any perceptible regularity. In fact, this may be observed in the poem analysed here. Tommaseo maintains the formulaic value of the epithet in its sequence of three, by always repeating the same adjective and in the same position. The only exception is the inversion of two adjectives *svom bijelu dvoru*: Tommaseo, instead of translating it as *sua bianca casa*, offers the inversion that is much more similar to the Italian literary style than to the Serbian epic expression, *bianca sua casa*. However, only three lines above, he offers *candida casa* for the same noun phrase. It is difficult to find a reason for this variation, as we cannot call upon the metrical laws, of which Tommaseo's translation, as we have already mentioned, is intentionally stripped. The only possible explanation that we can offer has to do with Tommaseo's literary formation and interests, which were both classical and popular. He could find the same literary values and strength in Dante and in the Illyrian epics (Tommaseo 1968, 1062), both of which represented an encounter of the popular and the sublime.

Within these final lines, it is also interesting to observe various returns of anadiplosis and tautology, both of which are italicised. Tommaseo offers a perfect transposition of both; Nikolić's fondness of the neoclassical style and traditional *variatio* leads to his decision not to convey either of the two; while Cronia even amplifies the parallelistic value of anadiplosis by repeating two prepositions instead of only one. Once again we can notice that Nikolić is not only altering the style, but also the meaning, since he does not insist on the omnipresent white colour in the poem, nor does he mention the green pine, an important symbol of life and hope. It is interesting to find these two colours at the end of a poem that began with the symbolism of the Holy Communion:³³ the white as a symbol of chastity and holiness and the green as a symbol of life that triumphs over death. The complete absence of hope expressed by the picture of a withering green pine is not to be found in Nikolić's translation and this omission does affect the meaning.

Despite the differences, and the entirely different approach in the case of Nikolić, we can hardly say that the discourse that Maria Todorova named "Balkanism" can be applied to any of these three translators, as they all came from Dalmatia and were in direct contact with Illyrian culture and the language from which they were translating. Quite the contrary: their transla-

³³ Along with the third colour in this poem (red), they symbolise the three theological virtues. In this way, the circle of religious *motifs*, present in the initial lines as well, is closed.

tions had a mediating character in approaching one culture to another. In the case of Tommaseo, we may say that the same union of the Italian and Illyrian worlds that we can find in his commitment to the “multi-Adriatic movement”, as ably portrayed by Reill, is also discernible in *Canti popolari illirici*. Moreover, it is interesting that Tommaseo even had the opportunity to criticise others for their prejudices and different expressions of “Balkanism”. M. R. Leto reports Tommaseo’s ironical criticism of Fortis’s understanding of Illyrian folklore (1992), and similar examples may be found in Reill’s work (2012), especially with regard to Tommaseo’s relationship to his protégé Francesco Dall’Ongaro. Dall’Ongaro’s play *I Dalmati* (1845) was, according to Tommaseo, “a story that reinforced age-old stereotypes belittling Slavic speakers, their language and their culture” (Reill 2012, 103). The influence that Tommaseo exerted on his contemporaries and on the generations that came afterward has not yet been duly evaluated, but we hope that Dominique Reill’s book will influence our new perception of the writer from Šibenik, and that his struggle for the “brotherhood of nations” will be linked to his literary works and vice versa. This analysis has highlighted the modern relevance of the solutions adopted by Tommaseo in his Illyrian collection of translations. For the time in which he lived and worked, translating verse into prose was quite unimaginable, and Tommaseo paved the way for others to follow. Unfortunately, not many of them come close to the modernity of his approach.

UDC 821.163.41-13=131.1
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