

TRANSLATIONS

VARNA
BAPHA
VARNA

VISEU
Visitai Viseu...com Almeida Moreira
Visit Viseu...with Almeida Moreira

VOLOS
Ζαχαρίας Σκριπ
Zaharias Scrip

NAPLES
Caponapoli
Caponapoli

ÇANAKKALE
Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası
The Memory of the Windy City

PORTO
Um olhar libertário
A libertarian gaze

TIRANA
Kulla e Sahatit
The Clock Tower

DURRËS
Murgu
The Monk

SALZBURG
Schokoladentage
Chocolate Days

ZRENJANIN
Aveti iz jednog malog grada
The Ghosts from one Small City

LOULÉ
**Sobre o Confinamento e o Zé,
Do Postigo**
On the confinement and Zé,
from the Postigo Café

LISBON
Regras de Isolamento
Lockdown Rules

OSIJEK
Sat pjevanja
Singing Lesson

PLOVDIV
Колко струва любовта?
How much is love worth?

THE HAGUE
Tijdelijke halte
Temporary stop

OTHER DESTINATIONS

Translating the Mid-sized European City

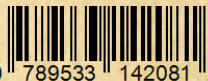
OTHER DESTINATIONS

Translating the Mid-sized European City

edited by
Michael G. Kelly, Jorge Mejia Hernández,
Sonja Novak, Giuseppe Resta



Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek



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Introduction

From Place to Place. Intermediate European Cities in Translation

Michael G. Kelly, Jorge Mejía Hernández, Sonja Novak, Giuseppe Resta

1.

In 1993, the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco published a collection of essays entitled *La Ricerca della Lingua Perfetta nella Cultura Europea*, issued two years later in English translation as *The Search for the Perfect Language*. Both Italian original – where the European context was explicit in the title – and English translation reflected on the proliferation of different European languages allegedly stemming from a common Indo-European root, and on the central importance of this diversity within an imagined unity for the cultural and political emergence of Europe itself.¹ Ranging chronologically from an ideal Adamic original tongue up until the Esperanto experiment, Eco's survey suggests that the linguistic proliferation that still characterizes European culture embodies a perennial tension. That tension is between national identities built upon local dialects or idioms understood as discrete, on the one hand, and the imagined horizon of a consolidated continental federation through the recourse to a single, pan-European tongue, on the other.² Feeding this tension – in Eco's account – are age-old narratives that describe an original state of unity and grace, followed by a corruption-induced 'fall' coextensive with lived multi-lingual reality.³

In addition to being an origin story of linguistic diversity, the Babel myth is an architectural parable. The narrative of language is at the same time a narrative of built space. In this vein, the architectural historian Joseph Rykwert has noted in his book *On Adam's House in Paradise* how said univocal origins and intractable Gods are inseparable from inexorable fates.⁴ It is against such determinism that authors like the French architect E.-E. Viollet-Le-Duc have opposed a diversity of context-specific origins for every human achievement. Narrated by the angels Doxi and Épergos, Viollet-Le-Duc's 1875 *History of Human Dwelling* had combatted the illusion of a single 'primitive hut,' taking us through a series of evolving human habitats created by very different people for very different contexts.⁵

The particularities that define each context, the architect suggests, inevitably lead to idiosyncratic and yet equally powerful ways of understanding and expressing reality, thus confirming our capacity for self-determination and life without prescribed ends.

The importance of the local 'terrain' to the integrity of an architectural project can easily translate, in this respect, to an equation of 'local' language and 'place'. The city – however – is understandable as that 'place' where such direct and univocal linkages are both intensified and challenged. This is implicit in the Babelian myth, but is all the more urgently the case in the context of the contemporary city. Building on Emily Apter's 2006 revision of the discipline of comparative literature in terms of a 'translation zone'⁶, and on the explicitly spatial account of translation it sets up, Michael Cronin and Sherry Simon have projected this theoretical metaphor onto the city itself – understood as a space of increasingly intense contact and transfer between different languages.⁷ Characterising that reality as 'translational' instead of 'multilingual', they suggest a chronologically deeper characteristic of urban reality as bound up in processes of translation:

Translation becomes a key to understanding the cultural life of cities when it is used to map out movements across language, to reveal the passages created among communities at specific times. All cities are translational, but there are historical moments when language movements are key to political or cultural reversals.

This 'translational' characteristic, which challenges any easy identification of individual cities with a single language, is a salutary consideration in the present context. Not only because it problematises that territorial indexing that can have exclusionary and distorting effects on urban representations – but also, because it re-injects into the act of translation a revised problematic of 'place.' It requires that we revisit the etymology of the word itself, which, as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) reminds us, has as its *etymon* (i. e. origin) a term in an earlier and still un-dead European vehicular language concerned in the first instance with a movement from one place to another:

[C]lassical Latin translātōn-, translātō action of moving a thing from one place to another, change of position, [...] in post-classical Latin also removal to heaven by death (3rd cent.), removal (of Enoch) to heaven (Vulgate), transfer of a bishop from one see to another, action of moving a saint's relics from one place to another (4th cent.), translated version of a text (6th cent.)⁸

The city as a translational reality implies then a superposition, layering, or interference of 'places' within the very paradigm of 'urban place' that informs the work of the research network *Writing Urban Places. New Narratives of the European City* from which the present work emerges. Further, it places translation in the specifically linguistic and textual senses at the heart of a problematic of urban place(s) and, *a fortiori*, their textual representations. One line of reasoning in this revised problematic of place is to deepen the analogy between the individual and the collective urban subject in terms of a cosmopolitan ethos and practice. This can go to the extreme of challenging the parameters and norms of a given language within 'literary' practice.⁹ But it equally reframes 'cosmopolitanism' as a potentially organic critical position, resistant to the metropolitan and (quasi-) imperial elitist tendencies inherent in the position of a universally dominant language. In an earlier intervention, Cronin had termed this position 'micro-cosmopolitan', with an implicit connection to othered or minorised urban places and practices – this time on an inter-territorial plane, i.e. as between 'polities':

The micro-cosmopolitan dimension helps thinkers from smaller or less powerful polities to circumvent the terminal paralysis of identity logic not through a programmatic condemnation of elites ruling from above but through the patient undermining of conventional thinking from below. Indeed, if one of the recurrent criticisms of cosmopolitan approaches has been the charge of cultural, economic and political elitism, then a micro-cosmopolitan awareness is vital to a proper democratization of inquiry and response.¹⁰

Eco's 1993 account appears to support this line of thinking in relation to language specifically, by showing how the many attempts to enforce preeminent symbolic status for any *lingua franca* run up against the ineluctable difference(s) of peoples and cultures through history.¹¹ Ironically enough, the term we habitually use to articulate the distinction between the universal and the local comes from the now spectral *lingua franca* already mentioned – and again carries telling baggage with it. From the Latin *verna* (designating 'a home-born slave, a native'¹²) comes vernacular, a word that expresses tension between the local and the universal, while being back-lit by a history of violence and exploitation. The popular Italian sentence that equates translators with traitors can be understood to attach moral blame to this arguably structuring tension, while inferring that there are aspects of a given reality that can only be approached through locally-evolved, rather than allegedly universalising instruments.¹³ While languages in this latter category (i.e. Latin, and more recently French or English, *inter alia*) have proven critically important to the business of communi-

cation across borders, it is also clear that these remain at a certain remove from aspects of reality that come to life most fully in the languages, dialects, accents – and their singular accommodations with silence – of the place. To come within view of such a distinction – or supplement – is to advance in an understanding of what might be termed human habitation, of which the city is the complex figure. But to do so via the act of translation – we could argue – is equally to make of the reading encounter a question of human co-habitation, and to activate the question of both actual and possible communities more generally. ‘In serving domestic interests, a translation provides an ideological resolution to the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text’, writes translation theorist Laurence Venuti, before continuing:

*Yet translating is also utopian. The domestic inscription is made with the very intention to communicate the foreign text, and so it is filled with the anticipation that a community will be created around that text – although in translation. In the remainder lies the hope that the translation will establish a domestic readership, an imagined community that shares an interest in the foreign, possibly a market from the publisher’s point of view. And it is only through the remainder, when inscribed with part of the foreign context, that the translation can establish a common understanding between domestic and foreign readers. In supplying an ideological resolution, a translation projects a utopian community that is not yet realized.*¹⁴

Knowledge, or the set of concrete experiences that we can abstract, simplify, and systematize in relation to our previous experiences (and those of others) seems translatable, at least to some degree; but understanding – our direct, unmediated experience of reality – remains extremely hard to grasp and communicate, even within a single language.¹⁵ Far from an obstacle, disparate performances between widespread and little-spoken, or globalizing and locally rooted languages, can serve as a humbling reminder that others understand and speak of the world in ways that will remain foreign to us, unless we learn to see it as they do, meaning through their language. In the meantime, the translated text can help us keep in focus at some level – to echo Venuti – the utopia of a shared understanding to come.

2.

The present collection of translations arises from our work with *Writing Urban Places*, a network of researchers interested in the different ways in which citizens appropriate meaningful built environments through stories, and in doing so are also better able to integrate with others.¹⁶ A guiding premise of *Writing Urban Places* has been that, beyond a few world-renowned metropolitan centres

which have often operated a cultural shorthand for both national and international cultural developments (i.e., Paris, London, Berlin or Rome), it is critically valuable that European culture and society be approached and re-envisioned as a constellation of territories and cultures that produce and develop knowledge and understanding of the world in a large number of languages and in respect of a wide variety of local realities. A key locus in this respect is what our network has termed the ‘mid-sized’ [or ‘intermediate’] European city. Often afforded only cursory attention in the discussion of both culture and society, overlooked in favour of more usual suspects, such urban places allow for a more de-centred, and on occasions regionally focused, view of urban practices, even as they play host to a significant element of contemporary European life and experience.¹⁷ Beyond network members’ different disciplinary focuses on the relations that exist between citizens and their built environments, the quest for meaningfulness and appropriation of the urban environment through co-creative, adaptive, and transformative processes (many of which have a textual quality) became central to the theoretical framework of this initiative. Between the individual places in which such processes could be observed and documented, we hypothesized, arises the problem of intermediation – the move from place to place, and its techniques. Translation, more than a textual practice among others, emerged as a structuring consideration of the project at a European scale.¹⁸

In 2021, an invitation was thus extended to all network participants to identify recent, original, broadly literary texts emerging from ‘intermediate’ cities of this kind, from across the full range of languages used in the network – with a view to producing a volume of translations into English.¹⁹ Identified texts then became the focus of individual translation projects, as participants (sometimes the original proposers, on occasions other translators, or a collaboration of both) worked towards presentable English versions of these texts, with a view to further reworking towards publication. It is the outcome of this collective process that is presented here, offering entry into this work to an English-language readership for the first time. Our hope is that, even as they bring their cities of origin somewhat closer to a new readership, those readers will themselves be uprooted and moved some distance in the direction of these ‘other destinations.’

*

Sudden, unforeseen changes erode the basis of meaning, and leave us with the sensation that somehow we no longer belong in the place we used to call home. Such is the case of the excerpt ‘A libertarian gaze,’ from *The City of Lifeless Bookshops* by Francisco Duarte Mangas; which captures Porto’s turn from a relatively peripheral

city into one of Europe's main touristic destinations.²⁰ In a series of quick movements we are taken from the city's provincial past to the makeshift domesticity of Airbnb architectures, social media monuments, ad-hoc businesses, and locals' struggles to keep pace with ever-elusive sources of income. Smartphones replace the typewriters that replaced fountain pens; libraries and grand hotels give way to IKEA interiors, leftover books, and bare café tables prepared for the selfsame irritating plague that also provides for the residents who refuse to desert the city.

In a radically different reading of the role of tourists in contemporary Europe, the extract from *Havra* by Zachary Karabashliev takes us to a Janus-faced version of the Bulgarian beachfront in Varna.²¹ Via a quick-fire sequence of items we get a glimpse of a sunny resort where watered-down traditions, desires, contradictions, and banalities become molten in the dog days. Inseparable from that city is another, empty, cold place, where those who stay after the sun and the visitors have left face a crushing sense of desolation, emptiness, and despair.

This sense of meaninglessness and loss reappears in the short piece from *The Ghosts from one Small City*, by Ivan Ivanji, which takes us on a nostalgic walk along the banks of the river Bega in the city of Zrenjanin (formerly Grossbetschkerek or Petrovgrad).²² Locals are presented to us as ghosts, while the places that used to root them have disappeared and yet loom heavily over the city's present, as stark reminders of the tragedies and hardships that underlie the apparent banality of their lives.

Two more coastal cities, also thick with layer upon layer of history, are presented to us in a fragment from Artan Fuga's book *The Monk*²³, as well as in several excerpts from *Caponapoli*, by Massimo Siviero.²⁴ In the first instance we approach the Albanian city of Durrës by sea, but also through the archived records of the many armies that left their imprint on this place through war and conquest. The city is at once a mirage at the end of an Odyssey, a crossroads, a melting pot of different cultures, but most importantly, a strategic position conquered by Greeks, Romans, Norman crusaders, Venetians, and Turks, as part of their imperial strategies.

Siviero, by contrast, takes us straight into the city's underbelly. Peeling off layers of the Greek, Roman, Christian, modern, and contemporary cities that are interwoven under Naples, we wind along labyrinthine catacombs and meet some of the city's current makers: tourists and immigrants, as much as businesspeople, bureaucrats, scholars, and detectives. Formal, social, and legal structures pile atop each other here, and eventually reveal themselves in strange words

that emerge from this tightly knit reality like bones from a forgotten necropolis, accidentally unearthed by unaware constructors.

Bringing together many of these different layers is everyday life, as we can infer from the poem *Temporary Stop*, from the collection *Tongue and Step* by Erik Lindner.²⁵ The Schilderswijk area of The Hague is shown to us here, not only a series of bars, butcheries, hair-salons, trams, and supermarkets, but – most importantly – as the many things people do in these places every day, and the way they are perceived by the poet. Animal blood on the street, a woman dancing and a sudden flash of light reflected in the buckle of her belt – is that not also the city?

Adding to this delicate perception of the places we inhabit, other texts offer us warmer visions of homeliness. Despite a painful scar in the city's history, two fragments from *The Singing Lesson*, by Nenad Rizvanović, take us through Osijek, in Croatia, at different speeds.²⁶ The first is a swift summer bike ride towards the river Draava, punctuated by mundane landmarks and leading to the promise of big fun in the swimming pools open for the season. The second is a much more paused stroll, in which an errand turns into a chance encounter, but also into a reflection about difficult memories shared by many European cities – even by those that can claim to have “been nothing but a giant railway station to and from which people and things were coming and going, quickly and forever.”²⁷

From rivers and streets, we move to the compact scale of the neighbourhood. The fragment entitled *How much is love worth?*, from Desislava Gramadnikova's book *The Collector of Words*, takes us to the Kapana neighborhood in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv.²⁸ A child's voice describes to us traditional urban life as a collection of characters and crafts that come together in different shops and homes and streets. It is not the streets, though, but love which appears as the binding element of this tightly knit urbanity of failing bookstores and busy bakeries, small houses, park benches, side streets, and a school.

From *Chocolate Days*, by Gabriele Diechler, comes an intimate scene of Salzburg, captured within the small and delicately decorated rooms of a tiny apartment – part of a building that is home to a small and diverse community of tenants and their old, now absent landlady.²⁹ Compared to life in a tiny flat in a huge city like Tokyo, which one of the characters describes as a place where one goes to sleep or numb oneself watching TV only, the dainty home where this narrative takes place literally blooms as it opens up to the traditional city, with its church towers and domes, old rooftops, and a castle.

*Visit Viseu...with Almeida Moreira*³⁰ may be described as a type of an urban chronicle about a city that has recently often been considered as one of Portuguese cities with an increase in the overall quality of life. In this piece of travel writing Luís Fernandes pays tribute to Almeida Moreira and his intervention in the city. Moreira contributed greatly to the modernization of Viseu and the requalification of public spaces. His influence was decisive to the representation of the city in posters, brochures and other materials about Viseu. Moreover, he was one of the first to introduce the representation of episodes of city life on walls covered with the famous Portuguese tiles that are still considered signature features of the city. He also introduced the so-called ‘glorietta’ or ‘glória’, small spots in public spaces where tribute was paid to artists and writers.

Ardian Vehbiu’s *The Clock Tower*³¹ emphasizes the symbolism of Tirana’s Clock Tower and the Et’hem Bey mosque’s minaret, which standing almost side by side to each other, paradoxically evoke a feeling of isolation despite being almost paired up, obsolescence despite successfully defeating time, lack of freedom even though they rise high above the skyline. The text also raises the question of modern interventions into the city’s urban environment such as the architectural changes to the city centre, the erection of the Skenderbeg Monument and the construction of the Palace of Culture.

Karakitsos Dimitris’ *Zacharias Scrip*³² describes the mid-sized city of Volos, in the central-eastern part of Greece. This satire is set in the 20th century, yet despite this anachronism, it becomes clear that the work criticizes the current social and political situation of Volos, through the way the city deals with the problem of garbage-collection and the CO2 emissions from a concrete factory at its outskirts. The selected pages from the novel capture elements of the city in relation to the socio-political conditions in such a way that the fictional elements of the novella criticize the actual contemporary conditions in the city.

In *Lockdown Rules*, the authors Djamilia Pereira de Almeida and Humberto Brito simultaneously take us to the town of Sao Joao da Madeira, but also to the Sacavem neighbourhood and other central areas of Lisbon.³³ Physically apart, these areas are connected via online communication by people who have never actually met in real life, and who remain confined to their own homes, isolated despite being surrounded by many others in the city. Nature continues its course while people adjust their routines and lose their senses of place time, due to forced lockdowns.

Closing the collection, two fragments sourced from non-traditional publishing that highlight different ways of narrating the built envi-

ronment via new media. Namely, one blog post, *On the confinement and Zé, from the Postigo Café* by Salvador Santos and one excerpt from the podcast series *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* [The Memory of the Windy City] by Özge Doruk. Salvador Santos renders everyday life rituals in Loulé, a town in the southern part of Portugal, while facing the confinement that everyone experienced in recent times³⁴. The text has similar premises to Djamilia Pereira de Almeida and Humberto Brito’s extract, with a more nostalgic nuance referring to a form of collective memory made of gossip, meetings at the café, and bookstore wanderings. Özge Doruk focuses on stories of people and places of Çanakkale,³⁵ which is also the Turkish mid-sized cities that hosted a fieldwork event organized by *Writing Urban Places*. This ongoing podcasting project harvests stories that explain how individual biographies contribute to the formation of the memory of a city. One extract is about wind and how its strength shapes the way families decide to settle, one is with an activist documentary film-maker recording poor living conditions on the outskirts of the city, and the third is the story of the renovation of a building in the Jewish neighborhood entwined with an archaeology of affection. All are hidden narrations worthy of sharing because they are at once local and universally relatable.

3.

For anyone who does not understand the source languages in which these texts were originally written, translation into a (variably) shared ‘common’ language still makes it possible to grasp most of the content described above. Readers of English can certainly have a sense what these texts offer in their treatments of their cities of origin. For instance, many of us can imagine an urban-scape of pitched tiled or shingled rooftops and church domes and towers seen from above, or we can remember how empty beach resorts look in winter, when the sun and most beachgoers are gone. Either from personal experience, or through movies or other information we’ve previously received, we can also envision a port that comes closer and closer as our boat sways with the waters, or a series of battles between different armies that temporarily take over a strategic enclave. Many of us have either seen or actually been caught in a typical tourist trap too, with its cheap decoration, overpriced coffee, and the relatively disoriented look in the eyes of tourists asking for a wifi connection.

Much less likely, though, is that we can really understand a number of nuances and particularities that just won’t fit within the shelves of what we know; simply because they refer to things unlike anything else we’ve seen or done before, or because they convey such a specialized understanding of singular aspects of reality that they become genuinely untranslatable. Only locals will understand, for example, why the ‘Golden Anchor’ cafe is nicknamed ‘The Lounge,’

why it's funny to pass that name on to a poetry magazine, or how this relates to a bookstore called 'The Flea.' Are these metaphors for tourists, or do they refer to leisure or the arts as parasitic, even irritating activities? True, many of us might have heard something close to 'turbofolk' music, but could we ever understand what a well-played gadulka sounds like, the taste of palachinki and banitsa, or how it feels to be slightly intoxicated with boza? Likewise, unless one is familiar with the way Italian is spoken in Naples, the term *ccá* might not point in the required direction. And even if you speak perfect Dutch, you will most probably remain unaware of the subtle differences that exist between the general use of that language in the province of South Holland, and the specificities that characterize its use in The Hague, where part of the population sees the world in *hagenaar*, and the other does so in 'hagenees' – as the author of the poem included in this collection seems to see it. The way it feels to bike down to the riverfront of the Drava, specifically via *Vlašičeva* and turning at the former theater *Papuk* in *Osijek*; the distinct atmosphere that can be perceived in specialized ironworkers, fur-coaters, and goldsmiths' streets in a Bulgarian neighbourhood; the precariousness of certain *Çanakkale* neighbourhoods their names evoke; and the animosities that arise every time the song *Grândola, Vila Morena* sounds in Lisbon, will most probably remain foreign to us, despite their concreteness as places and events.

These concrete experiences, the places where they take place, and the human beings who not only know but also get to understand them, offer us yet another vision of the Europe we have been trying to study. It is a rich, kaleidoscopic vision, made up of many fragments that make sense together in many different, mostly beautiful ways. Movement is essential to this kaleidoscopic vision. It is only by turning the instrument that light can reach different points within; allowing objects (insignificant on their own) to organize themselves in intricate patterns, and revealing how the structures in which those objects can be organized emerge and disappear.

We can equate this kaleidoscopic vision to Eco's research on medieval Europe. Before the unifying Renaissance discovery of (single-vanishing-point) mathematical perspective, an elaborate patchwork of local cultures and dialects spoken in tiny nation states across the continent already laid the foundations for the intellectual and spiritual revolutions that followed. The collapse of Babel, which in this case was also the dissolution of Latin as *lingua franca* and the consolidation of dozens of languages and hundreds of dialects, coincides with the fall of the imperial capital and the blooming of a myriad cities that assembled themselves into regional clusters rather than as periphery.

Amid this centre-less construction, turning the kaleidoscope also means being able to see how many points may be creatively organized into different constellations. Constellation may also be understood, in this context, as a translation of sorts, in that it implies trying to find meaning by passing from one element to another and trying to identify meaning in the cumulative set of passages. On these grounds, the choice of topic and title for the keynote lecture Umberto Eco gave in Arles the same year that he published *The Search for the Perfect Language* should not come as a surprise. Probably owing to his reflections on the abovementioned perennial tension that exists between local and pan-European languages, his talk was entitled 'The language of Europe is translation.'³⁶

- 1 Umberto Eco, *La Ricerca della Lingua Perfetta nella Cultura Europea* (Bari, Roma: Laterza, 1993). Published in English translation as: Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, trans. by James Fentress (Cambridge (MA): Blackwell, 1995).
- 2 Currently, the European Union recognizes a total of twenty-four official languages, namely: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. This belies operative hierarchies in which three ‘working’ or ‘procedural’ languages – English, French and German – coexist with a wider de facto dominance of English as vehicular language, irrespective of the linguistic anchoring of parties. One effect of this dominance is, arguably, a relative invisibility and inaudibility of other languages – as languages and as life-worlds – to subjects for whom English is their first language.
- 3 The cover illustrations used in the different editions of Eco’s book (a crumbling Tower of Babel; a falling Icarus) speak of higher, unified orders that mustn’t be challenged; but they also speak of human beings’ never-ending quest for emancipation and progress. This tendency of the origin narrative of linguistic diversity to mirror the ‘original sin’ of human transgression against a divine order is the starting point – equally – of George Steiner’s influential discussion of translation – in particular literary translation – *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation*, Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- 4 Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam’s House in Paradise* (Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1981).
- 5 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, *Histoire de l’habitation humaine depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated, 1875). Published in English as: *The Habitations of Man in All Ages*, trans. by Benjamin Bucknall (Boston (MA): James R. Osgood & Co., 1876).
- 6 Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone. A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 7 Michael Cronin and Sherry Simon, ‘Introduction: The City as Translation Zone’, *Translation Studies* (Special Issue – *The City as Translation Zone*), 7:2 (2014), pp. 119-132.
- 8 OED online <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/204844?redirectedFrom=translation#eid>> [accessed 23 March 2023].
- 9 See, for example, Michael G. Kelly, ‘Poetic Utterance and the Cosmopolitan Indisposition: On Ghérasim Luca’ in *The Cause of Cosmopolitanism. Dispositions, Models, Transformations (Cultural Identity Studies)*, ed. by Patrick O’Donovan and Laura Rascaroli (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 271-91.
- 10 Michael Cronin, *Translation and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 16.
- 11 Interestingly, while the OED defines a *Lingua franca* as ‘[a]ny language that is used by speakers of different languages as a common medium of communication; a common language’, its first, historically based definition emphasises its emergence as a pidgin – ‘drawing its lexicon mainly from the southern Romance languages and formerly used as a trading language’, <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/327283?redirectedFrom=lingua+franca#eid>> [accessed 23 March 2023]. The *Lingua franca* is thus not simply a single territorially-anchored idiom that has achieved preeminence among other such idioms, but a goal-related hybrid emerging in the contact between places and peoples. This again undermines the quasi-imperial connotations of the contemporary usage.
- 12 See the OED online <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222608?redirectedFrom=vernacular#eid>> [accessed 23 March 2023]
- 13 We refer to the saying ‘traduttore, traditore,’ attributed (among many others) to the Tuscan Giuseppe Giusti, *Raccolta di Proverbi Toscani* (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1853). In a similar vein the aphorist Nicolás Gómez Dávila argues that ‘we have only understood that which we deem untranslatable,’ in *Escolios para un Texto Implícito* by Gómez Dávila (Girona: Atalanta, 2021), p. 880.
- 14 Lawrence Venuti, ‘Translation, Community, Utopia’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 468-488 (p. 485).
- 15 Aldous Huxley, ‘Knowledge and Understanding’ in Aldous Huxley, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, and other Essays* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), pp. 33-68. In Britain, the book was published under the title *Adonis and the Alphabet*.
- 16 This network has been supported by the EU funded COST Action 18126 *Writing Urban Places. New Narratives of the European City*. See www.writingurbanplaces.eu.
- 17 A similar premise had already been developed within the network in *Vademecum: 77 Minor Terms for Writing Urban Places*, ed. by Klaske Havik et al. (Rotterdam: Nai/010 publishers, 2021).
- 18 The present project was originally conceived by Michael G. Kelly, and developed within the second working group (WG2) of the Action, tasked with developing its Theoretical Framework, led by Sonja Novak,

- Angeliki Sioli, and Giuseppe Resta. See: <https://writingurbanplaces.eu/about/team/wg-2-theoretical-framework/>.
- 19 The original call encouraged submissions of a broad range of short texts, mainly of literary nature, including essays, chronicles and reportages, short stories, excerpts from novels, and poetry which had not yet been translated into English. For the original call, see: <https://writingurbanplaces.eu/call-wup/other-destinations-translating-the-mid-sized-european-city/>.
 - 20 Source text: Francisco Duarte Mangas, *A Cidade das Livrarias Mortas* (Porto: Teodolito, 2017), pp. 10-21. Translated by Clara Sarmento, Sandra Ribeiro, and Luisa Álvares.
 - 21 Source text: Zahari Karabashliev, *Havra* (Sofia: Ciela, 2017), pp. 121-129. Translated by: Traci Speed and presented by Yordanka Stoyanova-Toneva.
 - 22 Source text: Ivan Ivanji, *Aveti iz jednog malog grada* (Zrenjanin: Gradska narodna biblioteka Zrenjanin, 2009), pp. 215-220. Translated by Nevena Daković, Maja Marsenić and Jana Živkić, and presented by Nevena Daković.
 - 23 Source text: Artan Fuga, *Murgu* (Tiranë: Papyrus, 2016), pp. 319-324. Translated by Marisa Kerbizi.
 - 24 Source text: Massimo Siviero, *Caponapoli* (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2012), pp. 94-96 and 150-152. Translated by Asma Mehan.
 - 25 Source text: Erik Lindner, 'tijdelijke halte' in Erik Lindner, *Tong en trede* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 2000). Translated by Francis R. Jones and presented by Klaske Havik.
 - 26 Source text: Nenad Rizvanović, *Sat pjevanja* (Zagreb: Dpkm, 2009), pp. 1-2 and 14-16. Translated by Sonja Novak.
 - 27 Ibid.
 - 28 Source text: Desislava Gramadnikova, *Събирачът на думи. Разкази* (Sofia: Biblioteka Bulgarija, 2020). Translated by Stela Todorova and Desislava Gramadnikova.
 - 29 Source text: Gabriele Diechler, *Schokoladentage*. (Berlin: Insel Taschenbuch Verlag, 2019), pp. 17-21. Translated by Iris Spajić.
 - 30 Source text: Luís da Silva Fernandes, 'Visit Viseu...with Almeida Moreira,' *Revista Bica*, 1 (2017), pp. 208-210. Translated by Adriana Martins.
 - 31 Source text: Ardian Vehbiu, *Kulla e Sahatit* (Tiranë: Çabej, 2018), pp. 15, 19, 37, 47, and 51. Translated by Dorina Pllumbi and Elona Pira.
 - 32 Source text: Karakitsos Dimitris, *Zaharias Scrip* (Athens: Potamos, 2019), pp. 39-41. Translated by Elisavet Kiourtsoglou, Angeliki Sioli, and Vincent Cellucci.
 - 33 Source text: Djamilia Pereira de Almeida and Humberto Brito, *Regras de Isolamento* (Lisboa: Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2020), pp. 23-25, 28-31 and 83-86. Translated by Noemi Alfieri.
 - 34 Source text: Salvador Santos, 'Sobre o confinamento e o Zé, do Postigo,' *CIDADES_D_ESCRITAS* (2020), <<https://cidadesdescritas.blogspot.com/2023/04/sobre-o-confinamento-e-o-ze-do-postigo.html>> [accessed 11 April 2023]. Translated by Maria José Marques.
 - 35 Source text: Özge Doruk, 'Lodosçulardan mısınız?,' *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* (2021), <<https://www.fugamundi.org/ruzgarli-kentin-hafizasi>> [accessed 12 April 2023]; Özge Doruk, 'Beyrut'tan kaleye rüzgarın taşıdığı bir hikaye,' *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* (2021), <<https://www.fugamundi.org/ruzgarli-kentin-hafizasi>> [accessed 12 April 2023]; Özge Doruk, 'Alternatif bir hafıza mekanı: Bordo Bina,' *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* (2021), <<https://www.fugamundi.org/ruzgarli-kentin-hafizasi>> [accessed 12 April 2023]. Translated by Berna Göl.
 - 36 Umberto Eco, 'The language of Europe is translation,' lecture given at the conference of *ATLAS Assises de la traduction littéraire* in Arles, 14 November 1993. Once more, the aphorist Gómez Dávila seems to agree: 'Literary cosmopolitanism ends up forcing everyone to write in translation.' (op. cit., p. 1301).

VARNA

Yordanka Stoyanova-Toneva

Zahari Karabashliev is a Bulgarian novelist and playwright, born in **Varna** in 1968. He has a Masters degree in philology from the University of Shumen. He started writing as a student with critical texts. He is the author of short story collections, and numerous articles and essays, published in both Bulgarian and English. He has lived and worked in Sofia since 2014.

His best-selling first novel "18% Gray" (2008) was republished in Bulgaria 25 times and translated into numerous languages. This was followed by "Havra" (2017) which won the national Novel of the Year award of the "13th Century Bulgaria" Foundation. The novel intertwines two storylines: one criminal and one dramatic. It is a novel about love and justice. After thirty years living in America, Nikola returns to his hometown of Varna for the funeral of his father, who allegedly died in an accident. Nikola begins his investigation, which embroils him in a dark web of interests, conflicts, and dangerous revelations. In parallel, this leads him to a manuscript detailing late 19th century love affair between the young Russian aristocrat, Vera Elegina, and an American military journalist. Their dramatic path to truth and freedom forever connects their lives with the story of the Bulgarian people, and becomes an intrinsic part of Nichola's life, changing his destiny.

"Havra" skilfully transports us between present and past, between suspense and lyricism, and between the vices of a morally rotten world and the power of love and forgiveness. The author paints word pictures of the world: both small and momentous battles; and personal and national freedom. The novel also topographises the author's memories and feelings about his hometown of Varna. In 2018, Zahari Karabashliev was included in the prestigious American anthology of "Best European Prose".



ВАРНА

by Zahari Karabashliev, Havra

(p. 127-129)

За туристите Варна съществува само през лятото. За туристите Варна е миризмата на влак рано сутрин, крясъци на гларуси, боза на крак, горещи следобеди, къси сенки и дълги крака на момичета, прохладата на Морската градина и презрамки на розови потници, разтопени сладоледи, вафлени кофички, разпилени пуканки, миризма на пържена цаца, пухчета във въздуха, падащи кестени, гърмящи ауспуси, слънчогледови семки във фуния от вестник, миризма на плажната топка, докато я надуваш, горещ асфалт, когато пресичаш бос, препълнени кошчета за боклук, лакоми момчешки погледи, баница, притоплена на микровълнова фурна, сухо небе без облаци, некролози по портите, щайги за плодове, цикламени червила, надписи „Гараж. Не паркирай!“, шадраваните пред театъра (когато работят), полицаи, чоплещи тиквени семки, налягали бездомни кучета, сборичкани в прахта врабчета, котки по оградата, хавлии по терасите, разкривени антени, миризма на печени чушки в следобед, дини от зяпналите багажници на лади комбита, миди на тенекия, изтръскан на паркинга пепелник, сплескан домат на тротоара, празната кутия от копърка, самотният рев на лъва в зоопарка, гъдулката, синджирът и мечката, потта на връщащите се от лозе в автобуса, истинският Джулай морнинг на вълнолома на Южния плаж, зеленясалите кубета на катедралата, дъждът по капандурата, незатварящата се врата на асансьора, деца, хванати на влакче, пресичат улицата, шлеп под Аспаруховия мост, ръждясалите баржи покрай езерото, евтино горчиво кафе в пластмасова чашка, брошури за стриптииз, акордеонистът на входа на Морската градина, фойерверките вечер, фарът на нос Галата, разчекнати вили по свлачищата, пътят към Златни пясъци в ремонт, миризмата на развалени яйца на Калните бани, възрастните двойки под ръка в Морската, разревани деца, басът от дискотеките след полунощ, вятърът от морето нощем, плющенето на дъжда по колата, студената бутилка бира, летният коварен грип, треволяците в Римските терми, хладният пясък между пръстите по нощния плаж, белите триъгълници на уиндсърфовете, изгрев над кроткото море, изсъхващи зелени водорасли, треперещи от студ колене, морави устни на увити в хавлии момчета, морето

VARNA

by Zahari Karabashliev, Havra (Sofia: Ciela, 2017), pp. 121-129

Translation by Traci Speed

(p. 127-129)

For tourists, Varna only exists in the summertime. For tourists, Varna is the smell of a train early in the morning, the screech of the seagulls, drinking boza standing up, hot afternoons, the short shadows and long legs of the girls, the coolness of the Sea Garden and the straps of pink tank-tops, melted ice-creams, waffle cones, scattered popcorn, the smell of fried sprats, puffs of poplar seeds in the air, falling chestnuts, back-firing exhaust pipes, sunflower seeds in newspaper cones, the smell of a beachball while you're blowing it up, hot asphalt when you're crossing it barefoot, overflowing trash-cans, the greedy looks of boys, banitsa reheated in a microwave oven, a dry cloudless sky, obituaries pasted on gates, crates of fruit, cyclamen-pink lipsticks, the words Garage. No parking! sprayed on gates, the fountains in front of the theater (when they're working), policemen picking at pumpkin seeds, homeless dogs lolling about, sparrows flapping in the dust, cats on the fences, towels on the balconies, crooked antennas, the smell of roasted peppers in the afternoon, watermelons in the gaping trunks of Lada station wagons, mussels baked on a sheet of tin, ashtrays emptied out in the parking lot, splattered tomato on the sidewalk, empty sardine tins, the desolate roar of the lion in the zoo, the gadulka player with his dancing bear on a chain, the sweat of people returning from their vineyards in the bus, the real July Morning celebration on the breakwater of the South Beach, the copper domes of the cathedral turning green, the rain on the dormer windows, elevator doors that don't close automatically, children forming a train to cross the street, a tugboat under the Asparuh Bridge, the rusting barges along the lake, cheap bitter coffee in a plastic cup, fliers for striptease shows, the accordionist at the entrance to the Sea Garden, the fireworks in the evening, the lighthouse on Galata Cape, cottages pulled apart by landslides, the roadwork on the way to Golden Sands, the rotten-egg smell of the Mud Baths, elderly couples walking hand-in-hand in the Sea Garden, bawling children, the bass beat from dance-clubs after midnight, the wind off the sea at night, rain pelting the car, a cold bottle of beer, the treacherous summer flu, weeds at the Roman Baths, the cool sand between your toes along the night-time beach,

по миглите на мокри момичета, сламеноруси глави на русначета с шнорхели, мъже с шкембета в „плувки“, лелите с цели бански, баби без сутиени, плажният дюшек, който изпуска, рибари с бради и моряшки фланелки, лодката до „горизонта и обратно“, варена царевица от тенджера, търчащи по морското дъно рачета-отшелници, кожа от скумрия на електрическата скара, чушкопечите, чирозът по терасите, шумните сешоари, изгубените пили за нокти, цракащите в тихия следобед нокторезачки, спящите в колички бебета по ресторантите, съборените от вятър чадъри, целувки с вкус на риба и червило, дъвки по корите на дърветата, късметчета „Любов“ с кафето, попфолк постери, турбофолк билбордове, тъмни и изпонадраскани подлези, Варна на несподелени любови, на гъсеницата, лазеща по косата, на изхарчените стипендии, на палачинките с мед и орехи (и парченца черупки), на случайни срещи с бивши приятели, на повърнато преди изгрев, сок от праскова по мръсните ти пръсти, на кльоцавите проститутки сутрин, на антикварните магазинчета с китайски стоки, градът на добрите намерения, на кученца с панделки, на гуреливи просячета, градът на вечните обувки-мрежички, на най-старото злато в света, на летни театрални халтури, на непълнолетни Мис конкурси, на ниски заплати и скъпи коли, шкембе чорба на разсъмване, на рибена чорба на трета буна, Варна – изронени фасади на достолепни домове, оси, накацали смокинята, палми в саксии на колелца, паметници на партизани, сергиите с лакирани рапани (внос от Турция), балерини и бръшлян в Летния театър, джаз в музея, евтина мента в пластмасова чаша, литнали в небето балони и скъсани обещания, увяхващите божури във венци пред паметници, градът на спасените делфини, на лебеди в морето през зимата, на музиканти, които се връщат, на моряци, на които никак не им се тръгва, на разведени бармани, израелски комарджии, на стари гърци, на украински сводници, на пропаднали англичани, на арменски златари, на турски предприемачи, на арабски собственици на магазини, на пенсиониранни германци, на руски староверци, на някогашни белогвардейци...

Но градът сега, преди това лято, бе в основен ремонт и сякаш беше ничий. Пъплека багери, лазеха валяци, насам-натам щъкаха работници във фосфоресциращи жилетки – този град се дълбаеше, строеше, павираше, засяваше, копаеше, ровеше, канализираше, запълваше, павираше, изпразваше, асфалтираше, озеленяваше, осветяваше, електрифицираше, билбордираше. Този град – той чу вчера някакъв политик да казва по радиото – щял да бъде един различен град. Този град вече нямало да бъде същият. Но какво значи различен? А какво значи същият?

the white triangles of the windsurfers, sunrise over the placid sea, dried out green seaweed, knees trembling with cold, the purple lips of boys wrapped up in beach towels, the sea on the eyelashes of wet girls, the straw-blond heads of Russian kids with snorkels, beer-bellied men in speedos, middle-aged women in one-piece swimsuits, the inflatable raft that leaks, fishermen with beards and striped sailor t-shirts, boats “to the horizon and back,” boiled corn from a pot, hermit crabs running along the seabed, mackerel skin on the electric grill, electric pepper roasters (Bulgaria’s greatest invention), fish drying on the balconies, loud hairdryers, nail-clippers clicking in the quiet afternoon, babies sleeping in their strollers in restaurants, umbrellas torn down by the wind, kisses tasting of fish and lipstick, gum on the tree trunks, getting “Love” on the fortune that comes with your coffee, popfolk posters, turbofolk billboards, dark and graffiti-sprayed underpasses, the Varna of unrequited loves, of the caterpillar crawling along her hair, of spent student stipends, of palachinki with honey and walnuts (and pieces of the shells), of chance meetings with former friends, of vomiting before sunrise, peach juice on your dirty fingers, the skinny prostitutes in the morning, the little antique shops with Chinese merchandise, the city of good intentions, of puppies with ribbons, of rheumy-eyed beggars, the city of the eternal mesh shoes, of the oldest gold in the world, of two-bit summer theater, of the Junior Miss contests, of low salaries and expensive cars, of tripe soup at dawn, of fish stew on the third breakwater. Varna; peeling façades of dignified houses, wasps, fallen figs, potted-palms on wheels, memorials to partisans, kiosks with varnished conch shells (imported from Turkey), ballerinas and ivy at the Summer Theater, jazz in the museum, cheap crème de menthe in a plastic cup, balloons flying away and promises broken, wilting peonies in front of monuments; the city of rescued dolphins, of swans in the sea in winter, of musicians making comebacks and sailors who never want to leave, of divorced bartenders, Israeli gamblers, of old Greeks, of Ukrainian pimps, of failed Englishmen, of Armenian goldsmiths, of Turkish developers, of Arab shop owners, of German retirees, of Russian Old Believers, of former White Army officers... But the city now, before this summer, was undergoing a general overhaul, and it seemed like it was no one’s. Excavators rumbled, rollers rolled, construction workers potted around in fluorescent vests – the city was being hollowed out, built up, paved, planted, dug, channeled, filled in, emptied out, asphalted, landscaped, lit, electrified, billboarded. This city – he’d heard some politician saying on the radio yesterday – would be a different city. This city would no longer be the same. But what does different mean? And what is the same?

(p. 675-677)

За туристите този град съществува единствено през лятото. Но този град не е просто плаж, този град си е тук цяла година. Това е градът на най-студените улици, на подлия вятър в пресечките, на заледени бордюри, на сняг по северните тераси; този град е разпилени панелни квартали, найлонови торбички по дърветата, размазаното коте на булеварда, някогашната „Козирка“ и пропуснатите срещи по нея, измръзнали от чакане крака в обувките, старците с увисналите слипове на „топлата вода на Офицерския“, градът на най-добрите намерения (неосъществени), на най-гениалните идеи (незапочнати), градът на бокса лека категория, на каратистите (киокошинхай), на волейбола (мъже) и шпигатите (женски и мъжки), най-добрият град за разделяне, градът на загубата, Варна е Ватерло на Владислав III Ягело, разгромът на кръстоносния поход, който можеше да бъде последен. Варна е градът с дупката в центъра, дупката за стадион, дупката в челото на олигарх, на изронените фасади и незавършените ремонти, на вечните схеми, на планове, които никога не стигат доникъде, а животът постоянно изтича, на незаконното строителство, на законните несправедливости, на пустотата на кораба „Дръзки“, на художници, които никой не колекционира, поети, които никой не чете, на неканените сватбени фотографии, на кейове в мъгли над сивото море, на лебеди в заледен залив, на тъгата на провинциалния актьор, играещ всичко, солта по палубата, Рибарското мостче (съборено), фарът на Ветеран (срутеният), спряната комета, снегът по плажа, сковано в лед море, черни забрадки в църквите, на притеснените бащи пред родилния дом, на най-ниските облаци, градът на най-сивото небе, на закъсняващи влакове, на замогнали се измамници, на наивни пенсионирани комунисти, на бързи финансови пирамиди, град на измами, на санжета и обещания, на Гръцката махала през януари, на безработните сервитьорки, на недоизмитите чаши, на неочаквано ранната слана, на безсмислените разговори, на неизпълнимите планове, неразрешените спорове за наследство, остъклените тераси, олющената дограма, на студените класни стаи, на изхвърлените край боклука елхи.

Варна е град като всички останали. Непостоянен, рядко усмихнат, най-често сърдит, сух и тъжен, нелогичен, избухлив, красив, шизофреничен като всеки друг, когато е студено. Като морето, което наричали и Pontus Axenus (негостоприемно), и Pontus Euxinus (гостоприемно) – навярно според каквото там всеки е искал да каже, а накрая го кръстили „черно“, каквото всъщност не е.

Но този град, мислеше Никола сега, все още помни своето старо и по-истинско име – Одесос (градът на Одисей?) – градът на тези, които се завръщат.

(p. 675-677)

For tourists, this city exists only in the summer. But this city isn't just a beach: this city is here all year long. It's the city of the coldest streets, of nasty wind at the intersections, of frozen curbstones, of snow on the north-facing balconies; this city is scattered concrete-paneled apartment buildings, plastic bags in the trees, the flattened kitten on the road, missed meet-ups, feet frozen in their shoes from waiting, old people with slack underwear in the warm mineral water at the Officer's Beach, the city with the best of intentions (unfulfilled), of the most brilliant ideas (not yet started), the city of lightweight boxing, karate masters (Kyokushinkai), and volleyball; it's the best city for break-ups – Varna was Władysław II Jagiełło's Waterloo, the defeat of a Crusade that could have been the last.

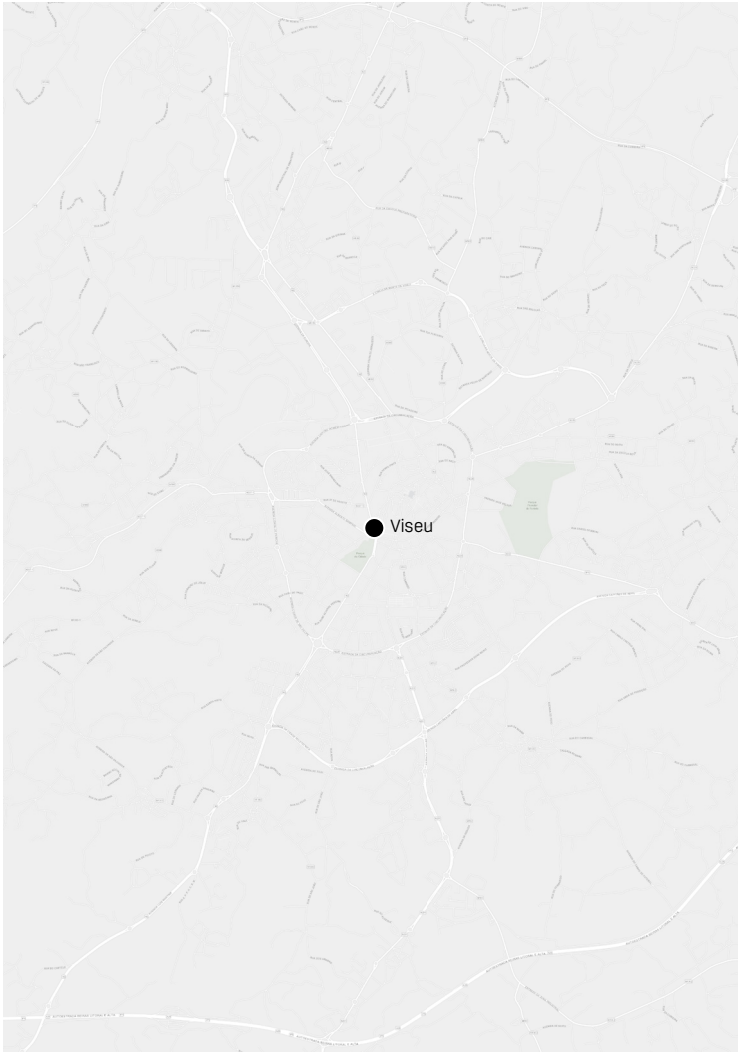
Varna — the city with a hole in the centre – the hole for a stadium, the hole in the forehead of the oligarch, of crumbling façades and unfinished repairs, of eternal schemes, of plans that would never get anywhere, with life constantly running out; the city of illegal construction, of legal injustices, of the empty the Drazki Ship-Museum, of artists no one collects, poets no one reads, of uninvited wedding photographers, of jetties in the fog over the gray sea, of swans in the frozen bay, of the sorrow of the provincial actor playing in every production, of salt on the deck, the Fisherman's Pier (demolished), the Veteran's Lighthouse (razed), of snow on the beach, ice in the sea, black headkerchiefs in the churches, nervous fathers in front of the maternity hospital, of the lowest clouds, the city of the grayest sky, of trains behind schedule, of wealthy conmen, of naïve retired communists, of quick financial pyramids, a city of fraud, of shortchanging and promises, of out-of-work waiters, half-washed glasses, of the unexpected early frost, pointless conversations, unrealizable plans, unresolved inheritance disputes, glassed-in balconies, peeling window frames, cold classrooms, of Christmas trees thrown out beside the dumpsters.

Varna, a city like every other. Inconstant, rarely smiling, most often angry, insensitive, and sad, illogical, hot-tempered, beautiful, schizophrenic when it's cold. Like the sea, which they called both Pontus Axenus (inhospitable) and Pontus Euxinus (hospitable) – probably according to whatever each one had wanted to say there, and they finally called it “black,” which it actually is not. But this city, Nikola was thinking now, still remembers its old and truer name Odessus (the city of Odysseus?) the city of those who return.

Visit Viseu... with Almeida Moreira

Adriana Martins

The text “Visit Viseu...with Almeida Moreira” by Luís da Silva Fernandes invites the reader to visit **Viseu**, an old and historical city situated in the central part of Portugal, about 70 km from the border with Spain. The city of Viseu currently has around one hundred thousand inhabitants, and is perceived to offer the best quality of life in contemporary Portugal. Fernandes’s text pays tribute to Almeida Moreira, an eminent 19th century Viseu-born citizen who dedicated his life to the development and tourist promotion of the city, not only as a politician, but also as someone who valued and supported the city’s heritage. In this text, Fernandes focuses on Almeida’s intervention in the city through the famous Portuguese tiles, and draws the reader’s attention to a novelty of the 1930s: the ‘glorietas’. These ‘glorietas’, a new type of urban furniture, invited passersby to enjoy moments of conviviality in the city parks.



Visitai Viseu... com Almeida Moreira

by Luís da Silva Fernandes

O ano de 2017 foi declarado “ano oficial para visitar Viseu” pela autarquia da cidade. O desafio dirige-se não só aos visitantes mas também aos viseenses que, por estes dias, reforçam as suas competências como anfitriões da cidade.

Há 90 anos, Viseu também se preparava para receber visitas.

Aliás, todo o país esperava visitas. A aproximação da abertura da Exposição Ibero-Americana de Sevilha (1929-1930) agitava Portugal. Acreditava-se que milhares de viajantes americanos de-sem-bar-ca-ri-am em Lisboa a caminho de Sevilha. E, antes ou depois da visita à exposição, dizia-se, não deixariam de visitar terras portuguesas.

O jornal O Século tinha inclusivamente iniciado uma campanha nacional a favor do turismo, com artigos de opinião e inquéritos, face às oportunidades proporcionadas pela exposição sevilhana. Governantes, empresários e as recém-criadas comissões de iniciativa e turismo locais investiram em melhoramentos e na promoção turística. A realidade dos números não correspondeu às expectativas criadas e, em 1936, Aquilino Ribeiro ainda ironizava: «Quem se não lembra do milhão a dois milhões de americanos que desembarcariam em Lisboa, mal descerrasse portas a exposição de Sevilha?». Todavia, alguns americanos visitaram mesmo Portugal durante a exposição. Um desses turistas foi Alexander Lawton Mackall, que viajou com a esposa por terras portuguesas em 1929, publicando depois do seu regresso aos EUA um precioso relato dessa experiência (Portugal For Two, Nova Iorque, 1931).

Viseu mereceu a visita do casal americano. Instalados no hotel do Buçaco, viajaram de automóvel até Viseu. Chegados em dia de feira semanal, apreciaram a agitação, passearam pela Praça da República (vulgo Rossio), visitaram o mercado de louças, a Sé e o Museu Grão Vasco. Aproximando-se a hora do almoço, procuram um local onde fazer um piquenique. O motorista que os acompanhava não conhecia um local adequado. Dirigiram-se então à sede da Comissão de Iniciativa e Turismo, junto ao Rossio, solicitando informação sobre um sítio ao ar livre para a tal merenda. A funcionária, perplexa com o pedido, acabou por conduzi-los à residência de um dos

Visit Viseu... with Almeida Moreira

by Luís da Silva Fernandes

‘Visit Viseu...with Almeida Moreira,’ Revista Bica, 1 (2017), pp. 208-210

Translation by Adriana Martins

The local City Hall declared 2017 “the official year to visit Viseu”. The announcement addressed not only visitors, but also challenged those born in Viseu to polish up their skills as town hosts. Ninety years earlier, Viseu had also prepared to receive visits. As a matter of fact, the whole country waited for visits. The arrival of the Ibero-American Exhibition of Seville (1929-1930) energised the nation as it seemed that thousands of American travellers would disembark in Lisbon on their way to Seville. People firmly believed that either before or after visiting the exhibition, travellers would not miss out on the opportunity to visit Portugal.

With the prospects provided by the Seville exhibition in mind, the O Século newspaper had soon begun a national tourism campaign of opinion articles and surveys. Leaders, businessmen, and the recently created local Committees of Initiative and Tourism, invested in extensive improvements and tourist promotion. As it turned out, the actual numbers failed to meet expectations, and in 1936 Aquilino Ribeiro still mocked: “Who does not remember the one to two million Americans that would disembark in Lisbon as soon as the doors of the exhibition in Seville were open?”. Nonetheless, many Americans did visit Portugal during the exhibition. One such tourist, Alexander Lawton Mackall, who travelled with his wife to Portugal in 1929, published a charming account of his experience (Portugal for Two, New York, 1931) on his return to the US.

Viseu deserved the visit of the American couple. Lodged in the Buçaco Hotel, they travelled to Viseu by car. Having arrived on the day of the weekly fair, they observed the excitement, walked around the Square of the Republic (also known as Rossio), and visited the tableware market and the See and the Grão Vasco Museum. As lunchtime approached, they looked for a place to picnic. As the driver who accompanied them could not suggest a suitable spot, they went to the headquarters of the Committee of Initiative and Tourism near Rossio for advice. Perplexed by the request, the officer took them to meet one of the Committee’s directors nearby.

dirigentes da Comissão, nas proximidades da sede. Era a Casa do Soar, propriedade de Almeida Moreira, diretor do Museu Grão Vasco, que os recebeu à porta, convidando-os a almoçar em sua casa, enquanto saía para proferir uma conferência sobre arte. O seu fiel mordomo põe o almoço na mesa, sendo o farnel dos visitantes visivelmente acrescentado

com acepipes da casa e vinho da produção de Almeida Moreira. Enquanto esperava, deliciado com a amabilidade do seu anfitrião improvisado, o casal deslumbrou-se com a magnífica coleção de arte espalhada pelas diversas divisões da casa.

Regressado da sua conferência, Almeida Moreira leva o casal a conhecer o casarão e as ruas do centro histórico, assinala detalhes de construção, dá a conhecer azulejos de igrejas, fala das cerâmica e da cestaria tradicional da região. Há ainda tempo para uma olhadela ao mercado de gado e uma visita à Cava de Viriato, que impressiona vivamente os visitantes.

Terminada a visita, Lawton Mackall regista: «Custa-nos deixar uma cidade tão fascinante e uma tão hospitaleira mina de informações como o sr. Almeida Moreira».

Mas quem era então este verdadeiro anfitrião de Viseu?

O Capitão Francisco António de Almeida Moreira (1873-1939) é, sem dúvida, uma figura fora do comum e incontornável na história contemporânea viseense. Foi um homem multifacetado, militar de carreira, passou à reserva em 1916. Possuidor de formação artística e amigo de artistas como Columbano, tornou-se conhecido a nível nacional como organizador e primeiro diretor do Museu de Grão Vasco. Paralelamente, foi professor do Liceu Alves Martins e pedagogo inovador, nomeadamente no que respeita à educação física. Foi artista amador, crítico e colecionador de arte, organizador de eventos, dirigente desportivo e associativo, sócio de várias agremiações científicas, tendo obtido diversas condecorações.

Como autarca, integrou diversos executivos municipais (1918-1934), atuando continuamente como vereador responsável pelo urbanismo e pelos espaços ajardinados da cidade, com plena aceitação dos notáveis locais, pelo que desempenhou também o cargo de Vice-Presidente. Em simultâneo, exerceu funções diretivas na Comissão de Iniciativa e Turismo de Viseu (entre 1927 e 1936). Nesse âmbito, foi decisivo para a modernização de Viseu e para a sua promoção como destino turístico. Salienta-se a requalificação de espaços públicos como o Rossio e o Parque do Fontelo ou a revitalização da Feira de S. Mateus, reanimada como Feira-Exposição e Feira-Festa.

A sua obra escrita é abundante e está dispersa por jornais, revistas, guias e monografias e inclui a crónica social ou desportiva, o relato das suas muitas viagens pela Europa, a divulgação turística de Viseu e da

This was the Casa do Soar, home of Almeida Moreira, the director of the Grão Vasco Museum. He received them at the door and invited the couple to have lunch at his place while he left to deliver a lecture on art. His devoted butler served lunch, and the visitors' picnic food was augmented by house delicacies and wine from the Moreira vineyard. While they waited and enjoyed the host's impromptu kindness, the couple was enchanted with the magnificent art collection on display throughout the house. When he returned from his lecture, Almeida Moreira escorted the couple around the buildings and through the streets of the historic centre, pointing out the details of buildings, tiles of the churches, and the traditional pottery and basketry of the region. There was also time to take a look at the cattle market and to visit the impressive Cava de Viriato. Reflecting on the visit, Lawton Mackall later wrote: "It is difficult to leave such a fascinating town and such a hospitable mine of information as Mr. Almeida Moreira".

But who was this host of Viseu?

Captain Francisco António de Almeida Moreira (1873-1939) was a singular and celebrated figure in the contemporary history of Viseu. A multifaceted and artistic man, who followed a military career and entered the Reserves in 1916, he befriended artists such as Columbano, and became nationally renowned as the organizer and first director of the Grão Vasco Museum. At the same time he became an innovative physical education teacher in Alves Martins High School. In light of his success as an amateur artist, critic and art collector, event organizer, sports and associate manager, and partner in several scientific associations, he received several awards. As a member of local government, he also took part in many municipal executives (1918-1934) as the city councilor responsible for urbanism and landscaped garden spaces. Esteemed by local notables and even also accepted the role of adjunct mayor, when managing the Committee of Initiative and Tourism between 1927 and 1936, he advanced a decisive mandate of modernizing and promoting Viseu as a tourist destination. These included the restoration of public spaces, such as Rossio and the Park of Fontelo and the revitalization of the São Mateus Fair, now known as Fair-Exhibition and Fair-Festivity.

His abundant writings were widely disseminated in newspapers, guides and monographs, and included social and sports chronicles, accounts of his many European trips, tourist promotion of the Beira Alta region, and studies on the artistic heritage of Viseu. The benefit of his efforts for Viseu was fundamental to a

Beira Alta, bem como estudos sobre o património artístico viseense. O seu labor em prol de Viseu foi fundamental numa cidade em pleno processo de reconfiguração urbana. A ação concertada do executivo municipal e da Comissão de Iniciativa e Turismo local, produzia melhoramentos a nível do mobiliário urbano, dos espaços ajardinados e dos arruamentos da cidade.

A par da qualidade de vida dos seus habitantes, perspetivava-se também uma pioneira estratégia de promoção da cidade como destino turístico, definida em larga medida por Almeida Moreira. A secular Feira de S. Mateus conhecia desde 1927 um processo de renovação que a afirmava como atração turística. A produção de materiais de promoção turística começava também a projetar uma determinada imagem da cidade. Entre esses materiais estavam os primeiros cartazes turísticos da cidade, com um apelo insistente: «Visitai Viseu, o seu museu e os seus monumentos».

Afirmou-se, pois, nesse período um processo de composição de um discurso representacional da cidade, no qual a imagem teve um papel determinante: cartazes, postais e filmes turísticos, bem como guias e folhetos turísticos profusamente ilustrados. Todos tinham a marca de Almeida Moreira, que tanto convencia os seus concidadãos a apoiar tais iniciativas, como coordenava ativamente a produção de tais materiais, delineada pelos seus textos e guiões, e concretizada com a participação dos melhores artistas nacionais da época, atraídos por si a Viseu.

Viseu assumiu-se então como porta de entrada para um mundo onde conviviam as tradições ligadas à província e a uma certa ruralidade pré-industrial, o património artístico e monumental secular e, simultaneamente, uma certa modernidade urbana.

Um dos eixos dessa reconfiguração assentou numa estratégia de colocação de azulejos artísticos em espaços públicos, cuja iconografia remete para a cultura e história local. Almeida Moreira foi também o protagonista dessa ação. Um dos exemplos mais notáveis é o monumental painel de azulejos (1931), da autoria de Joaquim Lopes, instalado numa curva da sala de visitas da cidade, a Praça da República, onde se situa a Câmara Municipal e a agência do Banco de Portugal. Aí foram representadas diversas cenas alusivas ao mundo rural beirão e a feiras tradicionais, num conjunto de elevado valor artístico, que ainda hoje é um dos ícones de Viseu mais fotografados pelos turistas.

Em simultâneo, é introduzida uma nova tipologia de mobiliário urbano, a «glorieta» ou «glória», diretamente inspirada nos pequenos recintos homenageando artistas instalados no Parque Maria Luísa em Sevilha. Sabemos pela documentação

existente que foi o próprio Almeida Moreira que, tendo visitado Sevilha na época da Exposição Ibero-Americana de 1929, trouxe o modelo

town undergoing a process of urban re-configuration. The concerted action of the municipal executive and the local Committee of Initiative and Tourism culminated in improvements at the level of street furniture, landscaped areas, and Viseu's streets. In addition to improving Viseu inhabitants' quality of life then, Almeida Moreira also largely devised the pioneering strategy of promoting the town as a tourist destination. The secular São Mateus Fair which had been held since 1927 was revamped as a tourist attraction while promotional tourist materials projected inviting images of the town. Among these were the town's very first tourist posters, which insistently urged travellers to "Visit Viseu, its museum and monuments".

During this period, the representational discourse of the town was established and determinedly asserted through images as the posters, postcards, tourist films, guides and richly illustrated tourist leaflets. All of them had Almeida Moreira's mark. Along with persuading his fellow citizens to support various initiatives, he coordinated the production of an array of tourist materials including texts and guides which attracted the cream of contemporary national artists to visit Viseu. Viseu therefore became the doorway to a world in which traditions connected to life in the province and a certain pre-industrial rurality co-existed with the secular artistic and monumental heritage and a relatively urban modernity. One axis of this re-configuration was displaying artistic tiles in public areas where iconography was related to local culture and history. Almeida Moreira was a strong proponent of this strategy, and one of the foremost examples was the installation of Joaquim Lopes's 1931 monumental panel of tiles in a curve of the town's "living room"; the Square of the Republic, where the City Hall and the branch office of the Bank of Portugal are located. With high artistic value, the panel offers scenes of the Beira's region rural world and traditional fairs, and even today, remains one of Viseu's most photographed icons. Around the same time, a new typology of urban furniture was introduced: namely, the "glorieta" or "glory" directly inspired by the small enclosures that pay tribute to the artists installed in the Park Maria Luísa in Seville. Documents indicate that having visited Seville during the Ibero-American Exhibition in 1929, Almeida Moreira brought the model back to Viseu. His influence on the Committee of Initiative and on the municipal executive led both entities to support the installation of this furniture. Thus, since 1931, in the new Garden Tomás Ribeiro, also located in the Square of the Republic, a "Glorieta according to Tomás Ribeiro" is set in a circular blueprint, featuring a central body

para Viseu. A sua influência na Comissão de Iniciativa e no executivo municipal levou a que ambas as instituições apoiassem a instalação desse mobiliário.

Assim, em 1931, no novo Jardim Tomás Ribeiro, igualmente na Praça da República, surge a Glorieta a Tomás Ribeiro, com planta circular, corpo central apresentando o retrato em azulejo do poeta e estadista (da autoria de Jorge Colaço) e pequenas estantes para os livros do homena-geado, e bancos em granito revestidos com azulejos artísticos que registam os diversos títulos das obras de Tomás Ribeiro. Num outro espaço ajardinado e emblemático da cidade, o atual Parque do Fontelo, foi instalada a Glorieta a Grão Vasco (1933), com um painel em azulejos (da Fábrica de Louças de Sacavém), reproduzindo o afamado «S. Pedro» de Grão Vasco, obra-prima que ainda hoje ocupa um lugar central no Museu Nacional de Grão Vasco. Rodeando o painel, um conjunto de estantes e bancos, onde os visitantes poderiam ler obras sobre a história da cidade e guias turísticos locais.

A par do novo mobiliário urbano, saliente-se também a colocação de artísticas placas toponímicas em azulejo (encomendadas à conhecida Fábrica Constância) precisamente nas principais artérias que configuram o percurso turístico do centro monumental e histórico da cidade. Entre as personalidades presentes nessas placas estão figuras locais, mas de âmbito nacional, ligadas à literatura, ao teatro ou à pintura.

Num tempo em que os cartazes turísticos da cidade convidavam os turistas a visitar os seus monumentos e o seu museu, veiculando simultaneamente novas mensagens como «Viseu, cidade jardim das Beiras» (ainda hoje ativa), os azulejos artísticos inseridos em espaços públicos reforçavam um discurso representacional em construção. Presentes nos principais pontos de interesse turístico da cidade, valorizavam a fruição da arte e conjugavam tradição e modernidade. Almeida Moreira faleceu em 1939. No seu testamento, o Capitão legou a sua Casa do Soar, a coleção de arte e a biblioteca pessoal à cidade de Viseu, para a criação de um «pequeno Museu-Biblioteca». Tal desejo seria concretizado em 1940, com a abertura ao público do “Museu-Biblioteca Almeida Moreira”, inaugurado no dia em que tinha início mais uma edição da Feira de S. Mateus. Atualmente, após diversas remodelações, ostenta o nome de “Museu Almeida Moreira” e integra a Rede Municipal de Museus.

A Casa do Soar, que tanto encantara o casal Mackall em 1929, tornou-se efetivamente um ícone turístico da cidade, lembrando até aos nossos dias o homem que fez questão de colocar Viseu no mapa do turismo nacional.

presenting the portrait of the poet and politician made in tile (and whose authorship is due to Jorge Colaço) with benches made of granite and covered with artistic tiles that echo the various titles of Ribeiro’s works. In another emblematic landscape garden of the town, the current Park of Fontelo, the 1933 “Glorieta according to Grão Vasco” was installed with a panel of tiles from Fábrica de Louças de Sacavém (Chinaware Factory of Sacavém), reproducing the famous Grão Vasco’s “Saint Peter”: a masterpiece that now occupies a central place in Grão Vasco National Museum. The panel is surrounded by a number of shelves and benches where visitors can read works about the town’s history and local tourist attractions.

In addition to the new urban furniture, it is worth noting that the placement of tile toponymical plates (ordered to the well-known Fábrica Constância) form the main arteries of the tourist route of the monumental and historical centre of the town. Among the personalities depicted in the plates are local figures with national reach related to literature, theatre, or painting. In a period when tourist posters of the town invited tourists to visit Viseu’s monuments and museum, via messages such as “Viseu, garden-town of the Beiras’s region” (until active nowadays), the artistic tiling of public spaces reinforced a representational discourse under construction. Moreover, as the main focus of the town’s tourist interest, they elevated the fruition of art through an articulation of tradition and modernity.

Following his death in 1939, Almeida Moreira bequeathed the Casa do Soar, art collection and personal library to the town of Viseu, so that a small “museum library” could be created. This wish became a reality when the “Museum-Library Almeida Moreira” was opened to the public in 1940. It was inaugurated on the day when the annual São Mateus Fair started. Nowadays, following several improvements, it bears the name of “Museu Almeida Moreira” and is part of the municipal network of museums. Indeed, the Casa do Soar which had so delighted the Mackall couple in 1929 is now a tourist icon of the town, and continues memorialize the man who was determined to put Viseu on the international tourism map.

Zaharias Scrip

Elisavet Kiourtsoglou, Angeliki Sioli, Vincent Cellucci

Volos is an “intermediate European”¹ port-city in central Greece, located between the sea and Mount Pelion. At the beginning of the 20th century, it experienced a great industrial boom, which declined drastically in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, the city still maintains industrial activities. During the economic crisis of 2009 and the subsequent memorandums in 2015, some of the Volos’ remaining factories—one producing concrete and other steel and located at a very short distance from the city centre—began using garbage and plastic waste, imported from Europe, as a cheaper fuel to keep its furnaces working. Despite the protests of the citizens, an acrid smell of plastic continues to linger in the air of the city during the early morning hours even today. Proposed measures by various agencies and citizen movements have as yet been unable to resolve this serious environmental pollution issue. Dimitris Karatistos’ literary text, via the image of the halva vendors—late 1960s and early 1970s figures who are not present in the city anymore— satirises this 21st century urban problem, while also raising awareness on issues of labour exploitation and contemporary forms of power between the centre and the periphery of Europe.



Ζαχαρίας Σκριπ

by Karakitsos Dimitris

Ας πάμε εις το ψητό...

Σας αρέσει ο σιμιγδαλένιος χαλβάς; Εγώ τον απεχθάνομαι. Ήταν όμως μια περίοδος που ο τόπος μου λούστηκε τον χαλβά. Τα πεζοδρόμια της οδού Δημητριάδος είχαν καταληφθεί από πλανόδιους χαλβατζήδες και οι δημότες σχημάτιζαν ουρές για να γευτούν το δεκατιανό τους με ή χωρίς σταφίδες. «Πάμ' για κάνα χαλβαδάκι», λέγαν οι αχθοφόροι μετά από κάποιο βαρύ χαμαλίκι στα ποστάλια. «Πάμε κι εμείς», μουρμούριζαν οι караβοκύρηδες πίσω απ' την αγέλη των χαμαλαραιών. Το απόγευμα οι χαλβατζήδες έσερναν τα καρότσια τους στην παραλία για να γλυκάνουν τους περιπατητές. Όμως επειδή και εκεί σχηματίζονταν ουρές, το να χάνουν την ψυχραιμία τους άνθρωποι κύρους και περιωπής και να δέρονται στη μέση του δρόμου σαν κουτσαβάκηδες, ήταν στιγμιότυπα βαλμένα πλέον στην ημερήσια διάταξη. Ούτε οι γαβριάδες δεν έβριζαν έτσι!

Τα βράδια όταν έκλεινε η εφημερίδα, οι αέρηδες παγιδεύονταν μεταξύ της θάλασσας και του Πηλίου κι όλη η πόλη βρωμοκοπούσε καβουρδισμένο σιμιγδάλι. Κανείς δεν χλευάστηκε τότε όσο ο γιατρός που προειδοποίησε για τις αποβλακωτικές συνέπειες του σιροπιασμένου αέρα, κάποιος μάλιστα είπε: «Ο μολυσμένος αέρας δεν βλάπτει, απλώς βρωμάει, υπομονή». Αλλά η πόλη είχε χαινωθεί για τα καλά, κι ήταν πλέον ζήτημα τιμής το να μην ακούγονται άσχημα λόγια περί χαλβά στον δημόσιο λόγο. Δεν είναι τυχαίο ότι ο «Beadeker» του 1914 αναφέρει τον Βόλο ως «Η πόλη με τους καλούς χαλβάδες».

«Και οι εφημερίδες τι λένε;» με ρώτησε ένα απόγευμα ο Ζαχαρίας Σκριπ.

«Κοίτα, Ζαχαρία, είναι μία ομάδα που δεν θέλει τους χαλβάδες στην πόλη μας, κάποιοι ερασιστές κινδυνολόγοι, και για αυτό οι εφημερίδες έβαλαν τους επιστήμονές τους να προβούν σε επιστημονικές αναλύσεις και επιστημονικά πορίσματα μετά από επιστημονικούς ελέγχους, σύμφωνα με τα επιστημονικά πρωτόκολλα».

Zaharias Scrip

by Karakitsos Dimitris

Zaharias Scrip (Athens: Potamos, 2019), pp. 39-41.

Translation by Elisavet Kiourtsoglou, Angeliki Sioli, Vincent Cellucci

Let's cut to the chase...²

Do you like semolina halva³? I detest it. Though there was a period when my hometown was drenched with halva. The sidewalks of Dimitriados street had been taken over by roaming halva vendors and the citizens were lining up to taste their midmorning snack, with or without raisins. "Let's go for a little halva," would say the porters after a heavy lift at the liners. "Let's go too," would murmur the captains behind the pack of the heavens. In the afternoon, the halva vendors were dragging their carts on the seafront, a sweet for the walkers. Because the long lines formed even at the seafront, even people of status and authority were losing their composure, fighting with each other in the middle of the street like some sort of tough guys; these scenes happened on a daily basis. Not even rascals would swear like that.

Nights, after the newspaper would close down, the winds would get trapped between the sea and Mount Pelion and the whole city would stink of roasted semolina. Nobody was laughed at more than the doctor who warned that the syrupy air would make you stupid; somebody even said: "The polluted air is not harmful, it just stinks, patience." But the city had gone dull for good, and it was a matter of honor not to insult halva in public. It is not a coincidence that the 1914 edition of "Beadeker"⁴ mentions Volos as "The city with the good halvas."

"And what do the newspapers say?" Zaharias Scrip asked me one afternoon.

"Look, Zaharias, there is a faction that wants the halva out of our city, scaremongers the lot of them, and for this reason the newspapers had their scientists proceed with scientific analyses of scientific results, after scientific controls, according to scientific protocols."

«Προσοχή με την επιστήμη – μην το παρακάνετε. Και αν τα πορίσματα διαψεύσουν τους ερανοστές, η πόλη θα τραβήξει κάνα μαγουλάκι τότε – σωστά;»

«Ακριβώς, αγαπητέ!»

Ο παρακάτω διάλογος έλαβε χώρα αργά σε μια αποθήκη του λιμανιού.

Ο Ζαχαρίας παρατηρούσε το σύννεφο κανέλας, και τότε με σήκωσε από τους ώμους για να πετάξουμε.

«Θα σε πάω να δεις».

Και φτάσαμε στον Σαρακινό, σε κάτι ετοιμόρροπες εγκαταστάσεις με φαρδιά καζάνια.

«Ξέρω ότι δεν σ' αρέσει ο χαλβάς», είπε ο Ζαχαρίας Σκριπ, «αλλά σε έφερα εδώ για να δεις τι συμβαίνει».

«Τί είναι εδώ;»

«Σε λίγο ξημερώνει, θα δεις. Φαντάζομαι ότι κανείς δεν ομιλεί περί της πραγματικής κατάστασης στη χαλβαδοποιία».

«Δηλαδή;»

«Κοίτα: έχουν οχτώ σκλάβους από δουλεμπορικά της Αιγύπτου και τους ξεπατώνουν στη δουλειά. Τα καζάνια κοντεύουν να λιώσουν κι ένας κακόμοιρος ταΐζει τη φωτιά με σκουπίδια. Οι δεξαμενές είναι τόσο βρώμικες που οι αρουραίοι τις προσπερνούν σφυρίζοντας κλέφτικα. Αλλά κάτσε πρώτα να δεις το αφεντικό, και θα καταλάβεις πώς γίνονται οι σωστές δουλειές. Πάντα δια το καλόν της πόλεως...»

Και έμεινα κόκαλο. Γιατί κατά τις επτά, βρίζοντας τον αμαξηλάτη να βιαστεί, ένας δικηγόρος, γνωστός για τις δοσοληψίες του με εναγόμενους πολιτικούς μηχανικούς, ευαισθητοποιημένος κατά τα άλλα με τα της δημοκρατίας, της ευνομίας, της καπιταλιστικής προόδου και της καλής λειτουργίας των θεσμών, έβγαλε το χέρι του από το παράθυρο της άμαξας, φασκέλωσε έναν Αιγύπτιο αποκοιμισμένο στα τσουβάλι και έκανε νόημα στον επιστάτη να ανοίξουν οι θύρες.

«Μην μου πεις;»

«Δεν θα σου πω τίποτα, κρίνε μόνος σου», είπε ο Ζαχαρίας και με σήκωσε στους αιθères σαν πούπουλο.

“Careful with the science – do not overdo it. What if the outcomes negate these scaremongers, then the city will pinch some cheeks – right?”

“Exactly right, dear!”

The above dialogue took place late in a port warehouse. Zaharias was observing the cinnamon cloud, and then he picked me up from the shoulders so that we could fly.

“I will take you there, so you can see.”

And we arrived at Sarakino, at some ramshackled facilities with wide cauldrons.

“I know you don’t like halva,” Zaharias Scrip said, “but I brought you here so you can see what’s going on.”

“What’s here?”

“Dawn’s coming, you will see. I imagine that nobody talks about the real state of the halva business.”

“Meaning?”

“Look: they have eight slaves from Egyptian slave-trade boats and they break their backs.” The cauldrons themselves are about to melt and one sad sap feeds the fire with garbage. The deposits are so dirty that rats pass by them whistling innocence. But wait until you see the boss, and you will understand how things are done right. Always for the good of the city...”

And I froze. Around dawn, someone bad-mouthing the coachman to hurry up, a lawyer, one known for his transactions with the accused civil engineers, sensitive supposedly on issues of democracy, the rule of law, capitalist progress and the proper function of the institutions, pushed his hand out of the coach window gesturing disapprovingly at an Egyptian half-asleep on the sacks and signalled the supervisor to open the gates.

“You don’t say?”

“I’m not saying anything, judge for yourself,” Zaharias said and raised me like a feather in the ether.

1 For more on the term “intermediate European city” – a term that is more inclusive and expanded than the usual mid-sized European city – please see: Angeliki Sioli, Sonja Novak, Giuseppe Resta, “Intermediate European Cities: Conditions between Metropolises and Towns” in *WritingPlace: Special Issue 8-9*, Rotterdam: nai010publishers, 2023.

2 Author’s Disclaimer: The characters of this work are fictional. For first and last names, I consulted the “Guide of the city of Volos, Magnesia County” (1901).

3 Halva: a traditional pastry from the Middle East, very popular in Greece.

4 Baedeker: popular 19th and early 20th century travel guide.

Caponapoli

Asma Mehan

Nowadays there is a general acknowledgment of the importance of place in Italian crime novels. In Caponapoli, Massimo Siviero articulates a narrative way in which he approaches the structures, city, and the built environment to reflect the society, cultural relations, transformations and dysfunctions of contemporary **Naples**. Joe Pazienza, the private detective, has been seen by him recently before he was a reporter. When hired by his first client, Nada Mormile, someone with all the requirements of the dark lady in the right place, he immediately smells “serious” trouble. There is a strange message full of threats at stake, and the construction sites of a substantial building, soon found “suicidal” with his head inside a bag. There is also someone who does not appreciate Joe’s new job as too nosy and goes out of his way to make him understand. Also, there is the Caponapoli. The health complex around which all the mysteries of a violent and fascinating city seem to gather.

Short biographical note (adapted from an interview with Massimo Siviero/April 2022):¹

My parents were Neapolitans, I was born in Rome and I live in Naples. When I was a child I wanted to be a diplomat or a doctor. Then I had the good fortune to read “Of Mice and Men” by John Steinbeck and two days later I obtained “The Grapes of Wrath”. A few months later, a classmate of mine gave me “Death in the Afternoon” and “Across the River and Into the Trees” of Hemingway and I realized that the craft of writing would become my great love. I liked knowing the facts of the day. I read many newspapers and began to attend the drafting of a newspaper. I started writing articles and at age 19 I went as an envoy on the football fields and I studied at university. Then I became a reporter. One day I was struck by news of crime: a double murder. The bodies of a man and a woman were found in the garden of a restaurant in Naples: it transpired that they were drug couriers. Until then Naples was seen mainly in the imagination as the city of mandolins and songs, pizza and hospitality. In addition to the neighbourhood thugs. A wrong way of relating to the former European capital of the Enlightenment. I realized that the city had dramatically changed and had become an important crossroads of crime. Although in more than two thousand years of history it had



Caponapoli

by Massimo Siviero

Original Excerpt I (Chapter 27, pages 94-96)

Da una ventina di minuti continuavo a camminare con la torcia accesa nel sottosuolo di Montecalvario. Avanzavo con la rivoltella puntata nella semioscurità, il cunicolo in declivio con una curva a gomito proseguiva sulla mia sinistra. A occhio e croce dovevo trovarmi sotto via Chiaja, più o meno all'altezza del ponte borbonico. Era la strada del ciclo continuo dello shopping a buon mercato, sempre affollata d'indigeni e di turisti. Il mio doveva essere un itinerario parallelo a cisterne e gallerie utilizzate come ricoveri antiaerei.

Fine della corsa. Il passaggio era sbarrato da una porta d'acciaio. Feci pressione con la mano e la lastra di metallo scricchiolò sui cardini arrugginiti: non era chiusa. La meraviglia che seguì fu ancora maggiore. Allungai la mano con la torcia per far luce ed entrai in un'ampia sala dalla quale si scendeva per una rampa. Percorsi una decina di gradini larghi e sconnessi. Sbucai in un

been a place of philosophers and scientists, writers and poets (Giambattista Della Porta invented the telescope before Galileo...). So, I decided to write my first crime novel, "Il diavolo giallo" which was published in 1992. There followed "Il terno di San Gennaro" "Un mistero occitano per il commissario Abruzzese", "Vendesi Napoli", "Mater munnezza" and in 2012 "Caponapoli" published in the historic editorial series Il Giallo Mondadori. In 2015 I published the detective novel "Scorciatoia per la morte". I wrote several essays, including "How to write a Neapolitan crime novel" ("Come scrivere un giallo napoletano"). In this manual I revealed that the first Italian crime novel was written in Naples in 1852. Several of my books have been published in convenient eBook editions that I see as an effective instrument of freedom of authors and readers.

Caponapoli

by Massimo Siviero, *Caponapoli* (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2012), pp. 94-96 and 150-152

Translation by Asma Mehan

Translated Text I (Chapter 27)

For about twenty minutes, I had been walking with the torchlit in the subsoil of Montecalvario. I advanced with the revolver aimed in the semi-darkness; the sloping tunnel with a sharp bend continued on my left. At a guess, I must have found myself under via Chiaia, more or less at the height of the Bourbon bridge. It was the street of the continuous cycle of cheap shopping, always crowded with natives and tourists. Mine was to be a parallel route to tanks and tunnels used as anti-aircraft shelters.

End of the line. A steel door barred the passage. I pressed with my hand, and the metal plate creaked on the rusted hinges: it was not closed. The astonishment that followed was even more significant. I reached out my hand with the flashlight to shed some light and entered a large room from which one went down a ramp. I walked about ten significant and bumpy steps. I emerged in a not very large room that opened on to others. It pro-

ambiente non molto grande che si apriva sugli altri. Produceva l'effetto di un ipogeo molto lungo, anche se la visibilità era scarsa. In ciascuno di questi vani, su ogni lato c'erano due nicchie ricavate nel tufo. Su una sporgenza di pietra c'erano tre statuine poggiate su dei piatti e due ceramiche, una dipinta su vernice scura con linee geometriche, l'altra con graffiti. Alle pareti frammenti di marmo e diversi solchi che dovevano essere stati occupati da altrettante lastre. Distruzione del tempo o di predatori come pozzari e cavamonti, i tombaroli di queste parti? Mi colpì una terracotta tagliata a metà che custodiva un piccolo scheletro. In un altro angolo c'era un'anfora di vetro con puttini di un azzurro intenso. Istinivamente pensai al Vaso blu rubato al Museo. La disposizione ordinata di quegli oggetti mi convinse che erano stati allineati in quel modo in epoca recente. Del resto, la porta blindata ne era una testimonianza. Come detective mi sentivo un po' ridicolo e a disagio nei panni dell'archeologo e speleologo. Mi trovavo in una necropoli, della quale però non si parlava e mai nessuno.

riferiva l'esatta ubicazione. Era sempre stata una notizia vaga, stava diventando una leggenda, e qualche minuto dopo capii il perché. La fiamma della torcia ondeggiava da un lato, segno che c'era una presa d'aria, verso la quale mi diressi. Il cimitero del sottosuolo sbucava in un pozzo asciutto invaso da colonie di topastri con le ali che con il loro squittio mi sconcertarono non poco. Cannolicchio doveva essere sparito da questa via di fuga. Ma come, se il coperchio della botola era rimasto abbassato? Mi ricordai del tappeto rimosso. Salii per un'altra scala a pioli appoggiata alla parete dello scavo artesiano. Alla sommità c'era una specie di lucernario con sbarre di ferro e il lucchetto aperto. Lo sollevai e sbucai in uno scantinato, dal quale finalmente uscii su un cortile.

Non era un palazzo d'epoca, ma un brutto edificio. Una colata di cemento degli anni '50, nel pieno della fame di case del dopoguerra, sulla più antica necropoli. Lo scoprii uscendo in via Nicotera. Gli abitanti ignoravano l'esistenza della loro miniera d'oro del turismo. Senza volerlo ero sbucato a due passi da via Egiziaca, dove c'era la casa di Nada Mormile.

Le mie domande suscitavano interesse tra i bottegai della zona. Tutti più o meno sapevano che nelle viscere di quei palazzi c'erano pagine di vicende molto antiche. Notizie vaghe e niente di più. Presi dal portatessera il numero dell'Anacronistico. Rispose dopo una ventina di squilli. Mi spiegò velocemente che il casermone di via Nicotera era stato costruito nel '53 al posto di una vecchissima costruzione che era stata abbattuta. Immaginai, tra il silenzio generale. Esitò. Certo che era venuta fuori una necropoli. Mi disse di non sapere altro. Di

duced the effect of a very long hypogeum, even if the visibility was poor. In each of these rooms, on each side, there were two niches carved into the tuff. On a stone ledge were three figurines resting on plates and two pottery, one painted on dark paint with geometric lines, the other with graffiti. On the walls, fragments of marble and various grooves that as many slabs must have occupied. Destruction of time or predators such as Pozzari and Cavamonti, the grave robbers of these parts? I was struck by a terracotta cut in half that held a tiny skeleton. In another corner was a glass amphora with deep blue cherubs. Instinctively I thought of the Blue Vase stolen from the Museum. The orderly arrangement of those objects convinced me that they had been aligned that way in recent times. After all, the armored door was a testimony of this. As a detective, I felt a little ridiculous and uncomfortable as the archaeologist and speleologist.

However, I was in a necropolis, which was never talked about, and never anyone reported the exact location. It had always been vague news, it was becoming a legend, and a few minutes later, I understood why. The torch flame swayed to one side, a sign that there was an air vent towards which I headed. The underground cemetery emerged into a dry well invaded by colonies of rats with wings that with their squeak quite disconcerted me. Razor clam must have disappeared from this escape route. But how, if the hatch lid was left down? I remembered the removed carpet. I went up another ladder leaning against the wall of the artesian excavation. At the top were a kind of skylight with iron bars and an open lock. I picked it up and emerged into a basement, from which I finally stepped out onto a courtyard.

It was not a period building but an ugly building. A casting of concrete from the 1950s, in the midst of the hunger for post-war houses, on the oldest necropolis. I discovered it by exiting in via Nicotera. The inhabitants were unaware of the existence of their tourism gold mine. Unwittingly, I had emerged a stone's throw from via Egiziaca, where Nada Mormile's house was.

My questions aroused interest among the shopkeepers in the area. Everyone more or less knew that there were pages of very ancient events in the bowels of those buildings—vague news and nothing more. I took the number of the Anachronist from the cardholder. He answered after about twenty rings. He quickly explained to me that the barracks in via Nicotera had been

più non disse, cioè, niente. Mi sembrava evidente che la città dei morti sopra la quale ora mi trovavo era il cimitero di Parthenope, l'insediamento fondato due secoli prima di Neapolis. Ritornai verso la casa dei misteri di Montecalvario. Con la torcia sempre accesa che avevo lasciato a terra, rifeci il percorso dell'andata. Alla fine del tragitto alzai il coperchio della botola e poggiai i piedi sul pavimento. Quel figlio di puttana del secco mi faceva sentire il suo orribile fiato sul collo, non riuscivo a mettergli le mani addosso in modo definitivo. Mi sarebbe piaciuto incontrarlo per chiedergli un giudizio sulla gittata dei miei pallettoni. Accesi la luce, ed ebbi un mezzo sussulto quando vidi che il corpo del grassone lasciato a pancia all'aria non c'era più. Sparito come la pozza di sangue nella quale doveva essere affogata la sua lurida vita.

Avrei voluto darmi qualche pizzico sulla faccia, ma non ci volle molto a capire che non sognavo. La necropoli di Palepoli non era un sogno, la telefonata all'archeologo Miceneo non era un sogno e quello schifo di edificio di via Nicotera era più di una realtà. Come lo erano le due sagome che entrarono in un terraneo vicino alla casa dei misteri. Quello della donna nera che aveva l'abitudine di spiare. Uscendo li seguii e bussai alla portafinestra. Aprì la signora, dietro di lei c'era il watusso con il muso infettato ai due angoli.
— Guarda ccà — disse l'afropartenopeo.
— C'incontriamo sempre nel momento sbagliato? — gli rinfacciai, ed entrai.

E fa un vano spazioso abitato da un mezzo esercito di africani. Tutti inquilini del mio amico Mimi. Da quella moltitudine capii che mi trovavo in una miniera di quattrini. Calcolai a occhio che doveva fruttare non meno di milleottocento euro al mese, seicento per ogni nucleo familiare. Una ragione di più per convincermi dell'eternità dei bassi di Montecalvario. Il geometra Astolfo forse non lo sapeva, sera così sicuro della loro riconversione.

Il costo della pigione me lo confermò la ricciuta brutta copia di Tina Turner, mentre i due giganti neri mi portavano un infuso di erbe ancora in macerazione. Mi sembrò poco gentile chiedere ragguagli sull'intruglio e bevvi d'un fiato.

Mi dissero che lavoravano per Mimi. Si chiamavano Alhaj Shugar e Wadi Kordofan, erano profughi del Darfur. Si erano trasferiti con i familiari nel villaggio di Mornay prima di fuggire. Etnia Fur, tipi svegli di tribù poliglotta. Capii perché avevano dimestichezza con

built in '53 in place of an ancient building demolished. I imagined, amid the general silence. Of course, a necropolis had come out. He told me he didn't know anything else. In other words, he said nothing more. It seemed clear to me that the city of the dead over which I now stood was the Parthenope cemetery, the settlement founded two centuries before Neapolis.

I returned to the house of the mysteries of Montecalvario. With the torch still on that, I had left on the ground; I retraced the path of the outward journey. I lifted the hatch cover at the end of the ride and put my feet on the floor. That dry son of a bitch made me feel his horrible breath on my neck, I couldn't put my hands on permanently. I would have liked to have met him to ask him for an opinion on the range of my buckshot. I turned on the light, and half gasped when I saw that the body of the fat man left on his stomach was gone. Gone like the pool of blood in which his filthy life must have been drowned.

I wanted to pinch myself on the face, but it didn't take long to realize I wasn't dreaming. The necropolis of Palepoli was not a dream. The phone-call to the Mycenaean archaeologist was not a dream. That disgusting building in via Nicotera was more than reality, as were the two figures who entered land near the house of mysteries. That of the black woman who used to spy.

As I went out, I followed them and knocked on the French window. The lady opened it, behind her was the Watusi¹ with the infected face at the two corners.

— Watch ccà²- said the Afro-Neapolitan.

— Do we always meet at the wrong time? - I blamed him, and I entered.

It was a spacious room inhabited by half an army of Africans. All tenants of my friend; Mimi. From that multitude, I understood that I was in a money mine. I worked out that he had to earn no less than eighteen hundred euros a month, six hundred for each family unit. One more reason to convince me of the eternity of Montecalvario's bass. Perhaps the surveyor Astolfo did not know; he was so sure of their conversion.

The cost of the rent was confirmed by the rough draft of Tina Turner, while the two black giants brought me an infusion of herbs still in maceration. It seemed unkind to ask about the concoction and drank in one gulp.

They told me they worked for Mimi. They were called Alhaj Shugar

le lingue. E capii che era stato il mio amico ad affidare ai due neri il cartello sandwich in difesa dei bassi. Spezzoni di fatica a chiamata. Scaricare bottiglie al bar e incarichi di fiducia: riscossione di canoni e qualche lavoretto. In cambio di pochi euro che Mimì si riprendeva con l'affitto multiplo: 'o pesane, come mi disse quello con l'infezione agli an - Ti guardiamo le spalle. goli del muso. Chiesi al sudanese senza le buccaglie il significato della frase pronunciata fuori dalla farmacia: "Abbiamo un nuovo incarico". Grottesca la risposta: — Ti guardiamo le spalle.

Original Excerpt II (Chapter 42, pages 150-152)

Colpiva l'uniforme vecchiezza del rione, più compatto e monolitico di un organismo vivente. Anche se di vivente dopo un po' rimase il sottoscritto: l'intera zona era scivolata in un silenzio surreale da Ferragosto. Immobile e surreale. I marciapiedi erano diventati all'improvviso deserti.

Nel pallone a forma di testa pronto a esplodere, non so come mi venne un'idea. Internet mi aveva confuso ancora di più, tanto valeva tentare con i mezzi tradizionali. C'era comunque un problema, bisognava cominciare da un argomento. La ricerca web invece consentiva di partire anche da una parola chiave. In un vicolo di Toledo mi fermai a un internet point gestito da indiani. Digitai "calcolo": niente. Google mi propose: "Forse cercavi calcolo". Provai con "agoreuterio". Bingo! "Nel fretrion v'era un agoreuterio. Napoli come Atene e qualche altra città della Grecia era divisa in fratrie." Avevo l'argomento della ricerca su carta. In dieci minuti raggiunsi la biblioteca. Parcheggiai nella piazza, attraversai il viale. Prima di entrare feci il numero che mi aveva dato il professor Bo per informarlo dell'esito della bonifica ambientale. Gli dissi che sarei tornato il giorno dopo. Salii le scale della biblioteca, nella testa mi rimbombavano quelle frasi misteriose da decifrare. Nel salone degli schedari, ordinati per autore e per argomento, dalla ricerca generale passai a quella tematica. Dopo un'ora buona trovai un granello di sabbia nel deserto e non sapevo neppure a che cosa mi sarebbe servito.

and Wadi Kordofan, and they were refugees from Darfur³. They had moved with family members to the village of Mornay before fleeing. Fur⁴ people ethnic group; a type from the polyglot tribes. I understood why they were familiar with languages. And I realized that it was my friend who had entrusted the two blacks with the sandwich cartel in defense of the bass — on-call pieces of fatigue. Unloading bottles at the bar and trustworthy assignments: a collection of fees and a few jobs. In exchange for a few euros that Mimì recovered with the multiple rent: 'o pesante, as the one with the infection in the corners of the muzzle told me. I asked the Sudanese without the mouth opening the meaning of the sentence pronounced outside the pharmacy: "We have a new assignment". Grotesque⁵ responded: - We watch your back.

Translated Text II (Chapter 42)

It struck the uniform old age of the neighborhood, more compact and monolithic than a living organism. Although I was still alive after a while, the undersigned remained: the whole area had slipped into a surreal silence since August 15th. Still and surreal. The sidewalks had suddenly become deserted.

In the head-shaped balloon ready to explode, I don't know how I got an idea. The Internet had confused me even more, and I might as well try traditional means. However, there was a problem; we had to start with a topic. The web search, on the other hand, also allowed starting from a keyword. In an alley in Toledo, I stopped at an internet point run by Indians. I typed "calcologist"⁶: nothing. Google proposed to me: "Maybe you were looking for calculation." I tried with "agoreuterium"⁷. Bingo! "In the Fretrion, there was an agoreuterium. Naples like Athens and some other cities in Greece were divided into phratries⁸." I had the topic of paper research. In ten minutes, I reached the library. I parked in the square, crossed the avenue. Before entering, I dialed the number that Professor Bo had given me to inform him of the outcome of the environmental remediation. I told him I would be back the next day. I went up the stairs of the library. In my head, those mysterious phrases to be deciphered were echoing. In the hall of the filing cabinets, sorted by author and subject, I moved from public research to thematic research. After an hour, I found a grain of sand in the

Mi ero procurato due testi. Da una scheda all'altra arrivai a Bartolomeo Capasso. L'altro libro era di un anonimo. L'ultimo aiuto di Internet aveva fatto un po' di luce sulle parole senza senso registrate sul telefono di Bo: "Confermare la presenza del calcologo nell'agoreuterio".

Capasso, uno storico locale morto nel 1900, aveva lasciato più di cento pubblicazioni. Aprii il volume Napoli greco-romana, uscito postumo nel 1905. Lessi velocemente e annotai prendendo appunti anche dalle pagine dell'altro libro.

Quando credi di sapere tutto, non sai niente. Appresi che la città, sul modello di Atene e di altre polis, era stata suddivisa in fratrie, associazioni religiose e politiche chiamate *fratanze* in lingua neapolitana.

Ne facevano parte le famiglie unite dalla comune discendenza, dallo stesso quartiere e dagli stessi interessi. Il *fratriarco* o *fretarco* era il capo di ogni associazione. Amministratori erano i *dioceti*, il tesoriere si chiamava *calcologo*. Ogni gruppo si riuniva nel *fretrion* e nell'*agoreuterio*, luoghi per pregare e discutere di affari. Erano uniti da un legame di solidarietà.

Insomma una via di mezzo tra le parrocchie, i partiti e la massoneria. *Calcologo*, *fretrion*, *agoreuterio*, *apaturie*, *dioceti*, *fretarco*: parole incomprensibili che mi stavano diventando familiari. Mi fermai, riflettei. Nella lettera estorsiva di Mormile la parola "fratr" doveva avere un nesso. Forse stava per *fratria*.

La festa principale delle fratrie era quella delle *apaturie* e durava tre giorni. Gli adepti venivano mostrati alla *fratria* appena nati, a cinque e a diciassette anni, l'età minima per l'iscrizione. Ogni associazione celebrava sacrifici e banchetti anche in occasione delle nozze dei suoi membri.

Attraverso documenti e lapidi superstiti si sapeva che le *fratanze* erano state dieci o forse dodici. Secondo alcuni avevano dato origine ai *Sedili*, i consigli circoscrizionali dell'epoca.

Dello studio di Capasso mi colpirono in particolare alcuni passi che confrontai e integrai con il libro anonimo di storia partenopea. Il sepolcro degli *Eunostidi* era nelle caverne di tufo dei *Vergini*. La zona era così chiamata per la presenza della *fratria* dedicata al culto di *Eunosto*, dio della temperanza e della castità. L'estrazione di tufo giallo e pozzolana aveva prodotto caverne adoperate nella zona come sepolcri.

Nel vallone attiguo della Sanità, ai piedi della collinetta dov'era la chiesa di San Gennaro extra moenia, c'era stata la *fratria* degli *Eumelidi*. Mi ricordai delle parole del farmacista. *Eumelo* fondatore di *Parthenope* e *Aristodemo* di *Neapolis*: i *Romolo* e *Remo* nostrani. Notizie vaghe e contraddittorie che sconfinavano in altri quartieri.

desert, and I didn't even know what it was going to do for me. I got two texts. From one card to another, I came to Bartolomeo Capasso. The other book was written by an anonymous person. The latest help from the Internet shed some light on the nonsense words recorded on Bo's phone: "Confirm the presence of the calcologist in the agoreutium".

Capasso, a local historian who died in 1900, had left over a hundred publications. I opened the volume on Greco-Roman Naples, published posthumously in 1905. I read quickly and took notes, also taking notes from the pages of the other book.

When you think you know everything, you know nothing? On the model of Athens and other poleis⁹, I learned that the city had been divided into *phratries*, religious and political associations called brotherhoods (*fratanze*) in the Neapolitan language.

The families united by the commune were part of its descent from the same neighbourhood and the same interests. The *fratriarco* or *fretarco*¹⁰ was the head of every association. Administrators were the *dioceses*; the treasurer was called *calcologist*. Each group met in the *Fretrion* and *Agoreuterio*, places to pray and discuss business. A bond of solidarity united them.

In short, a middle ground between parishes, parties, and Freemasonry. *Calcologist*, *Fretrion*, *Agoreuterium*, *Apaturias*¹¹, *dioceses*¹², *fretarch*: incomprehensible words that were becoming familiar to me.

*Adepts*¹³ were shown to the *phratry* as soon as they were born, the minimum age for enrollment at five and seventeen. Each association celebrated sacrifices and banquets also on the occasion of the wedding of its members. Through surviving documents and tombstones, it was known that there had been ten or perhaps twelve brotherhoods. According to some, they had given rise to the *Seats*, the district councils of the time.

I was particularly struck by some passages from Capasso's study, which I compared and integrated with the anonymous book of Neapolitan history. The tomb of the *Eunostidi* was in the tuff caves of the *Virgins*. The area was so-called due to the *phratry* dedicated to the cult of *Eunosto*, God of temperance and chastity. The extraction of yellow tuff and pozzolana had produced caves used in the area as tombs.

In the adjacent valley of the Sanità¹⁴, at the foot of the hill where the church of San Gennaro, outside the walls of the city was in the *Eumelidi*¹⁵ criteria. I remembered the pharmacist's words. *Eumelo*, founder of *Parthenope* and *Aristodemo*¹⁶ of *Neapolis*: the *Romulus* and *Remus* of our own. Vague and contradictory news that bordered on other neighbourhoods. Perhaps the brotherhood was located

La fratanza forse era stata ubicata tra Forcella e via San Paolo. La chiesa omonima con le colonne corinzie l'avevano costruita sul tempio greco dei Dioscuri. La strada del simbolismo pitagorico si apriva a forma di Y come una forcina: la biforcazione tra virtù e piacere sfociato nella cronaca nera. Saltai questa parte.

Lessi velocemente l'elenco che proseguiva con Eubei (nell'area di San Gregorio Armeno intorno al tempio dei Santi Filippo e Giacomo), Alternisi (vicino alla basilica di Pietrasanta al Tribunale), Kretondi (nel vicolo a destra della chiesa verso il mare), e poi Aristei (tra gli Orefici e piazza Mercato), Pancleidi (la zona tra San Pietro in Vinculis e San Giuseppe), Kumei (a Santa Chiara o nei pressi di Santa Maria della Rotonda a Mezzocannone), Ermei (tra San Biagio dei Librai e San Giovanni a Mare), Antinoiti, Oiononei. Quasi niente, infine, si sapeva dei Theotadi.

Collegai subito queste informazioni con la piantina trovata a casa di Donna Collins e con il foglietto che stava nell'agenda di Mormile. La linea dell'evidenziatore, dal Gesù a San Gregorio Armeno alla chiesa dei Santi Filippo e Giacomo, indicava l'area degli Eubei. Il tratto giallo segnato da Donna Collins era diretto alla fratria dei Kretondi verso il mare. La freccia verso il basso poteva anche indicare i Theotadi. Visto che di questa fratria non si sapeva niente, poteva andar bene tutto e il contrario di tutto.

Scesi più ancora nei particolari. Dal confronto di questi fogli con le notizie raccolte in biblioteca, accertai altre due cose. Il pezzo di carta trovato addosso al cavaliere indicava la Sanità, i Vergini e i Miracoli, e ora sapevo che nell'area della basilica di San Gennaro extra moenia si riunivano gli Eumelidi. Le piccole croci nere segnate dalla Collins indicavano il punto esatto della necropoli. La zona cerchiata in rosso aveva finalmente un nome: erano i Vergini, il sito degli Eunostidi. Intanto capii perché il foglietto sgualcito di Mormile stava nell'agenda tascabile alla lettera F di fratrie.

Per potersi ricordare e nascondere agli altri il senso di quelle parole. Mi sembrò evidente che la Collins aveva disegnato una piantina dei siti per avere sottomano il quadro completo delle fratrie. Un bel casino.

Lasciai la biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele e ritornai nella Valle dei Morti.

between Forcella and via San Paolo. The church is homonymous with the Corinthian columns they had built on the Greek temple of the Dioscuri. The path of Pythagorean symbolism opened in the shape of a Y like a hairpin: the bifurcation between virtue and pleasure that resulted in the crime news. I skipped this part.

I quickly read the list that continued with Eubie (in the area of San Gregorio Armeno around the temple of Saints Philip and James), Alternisi (near the basilica of Pietrasanta al Tribunale), Kretondi (in the alley to the right of the church towards the sea), and then Aristei (between the Orefici and Piazza Mercato), Pancleidi (the area between San Pietro in Vinculis and San Giuseppe), Kumei (in Santa Chiara or near Santa Maria della Rotonda in Mezzocannone), Ermei (between San Biagio dei Librai and San Giovanni a Mare), Antinoites, Oiononei. Finally, almost nothing was known about the Theotadi.

I immediately linked this information with the map found at Donna Collins' house with the piece of paper in Mormile's notebook. From Jesus to San Gregorio Armeno to the church of Saints Philip and James, the highlighter line indicated the Eubei area. The yellow line marked by Donna Collins was headed for the Kretondi fratria towards the sea. The down arrow could also point to the Theotadi. Since nothing was known about this phratry, everything and the opposite of everything could be acceptable.

I went further into details. By comparing these sheets with the information collected in the library, I ascertained two other things. The piece of paper found on the knight indicated Health, Virgins, and Miracles. Now, I knew that the Eumelids gathered in the area of the Basilica of San Gennaro extra moenia. The small black crosses marked by Collins indicated the exact spot of the cemetery. The area circled in red finally had a name: Virgins, the site of the Eunostids. Meanwhile, I understood why Mormile's crumpled piece of paper was in the pocket diary under the letter F of fratrie. To be able to remember and hide the meaning of those words from others. It seemed clear that Collins had drawn a map of the sites to have the complete picture of the siblings at hand. A nice mess.

I left the Vittorio Emanuele library and returned to the Valley of the Dead.

- 1 The Tutsi people of Africa collectively, whose traditions include spectacular dance.
- 2 Neapolitan-Italian word. Literally means there (qua).
- 3 Region in the Western Sudan.
- 4 The name of Darfur comes from the name of this ethnic group and means "the home of the Fur".
- 5 Outlandish characters in a strange or unnatural way (especially in a novel or painting)
- 6 Calco literally means tracing.
- 7 Agoreuterium is a Greek word literally means speech.
- 8 In ancient Greece, a phratry was a group containing citizens in some city-states. Their existence is known in most Ionian cities and in Athens and it is thought that they existed elsewhere as well.
- 9 Plural form of Greek polis
- 10 Fratriarchy is rule of the brothers. It's this idea that if you get a group of young men together - teenagers, men in their 20s - there's a competitive form of masculinity and they're performing for each other.
- 11 Apaturia were ancient Greek festivals held annually by all the Ionian towns, except Ephesus and Colophon. At Athens the Apaturia took place on the 11th, 12th and 13th days of the month of Pyanepsion, on which occasion the various phratries, or clans, of Attica met to discuss their affairs.
- 12 Diocese, in some Christian churches, a territorial area administered by a bishop. The word originally referred to a governmental area in the Roman Empire, governed by an imperial vicar.
- 13 An adept is an individual identified as having attained a specific level of knowledge, skill, or aptitude in doctrines relevant to a particular author or organization.
- 14 This quarter is near the National Archaeological Museum, north of the main street, via Foria.
- 15 Greek frateria
- 16 Aristodemus was a Spartan warrior, one of the many sent to the Battle of Thermopylae. He was one of only two Spartan survivors, as he was not present at the last stand.

The Memory of the Windy City

Berna Göl

The following text is an excerpt from the podcast series *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* [The Memory of the Windy City] by Özge Doruk based on stories of people and places “whether mythical or not, about the city **Çanakkale** and its urban memory”. While the series is an ongoing project, the three excerpts are from the year 2021. Each episode is an interview with a person and their take on their everyday life in the mid-size city of Çanakkale on the Dardanelles Strait. The first piece talks about the past forty years of the city from the perspective of the buildings and the wind. The second is about a documentary film-maker’s perspective of both the centre and the outskirts of the city. The final one is a small answer to the complaints of the former interviewees, about Bordo Bina, a building in the old Jewish neighbourhood of the city, restored by its new tenants from scratch to serve as a vegetarian cafe and a home to its new makers. The wind of the city is inseparable from its topography, its old and new neighbourhoods, its people, its animals, the trees, the sea, the coastline, the gardens and the buildings. It is possible to trace how Çanakkale has become a new destination for people to live in, with their escape from the megacity of Istanbul. Yet, what they were looking for and what they ended up living in makes their stories worthwhile. The podcasts are transcribed, edited and translated for this project.



Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası

by Özge Doruk

Lodosçulardan mısınız?

Sahi rüzgarın bu kente kattığı nedir? Yaşam tarzımızı, düşünce biçimimizi nasıl etkiler? Çocukluğumuzun rüzgarlı anıları zihnimize işlemiş de biraz eşelemek lazım sanki. Bu haftaki sohbetimiz Çanakkaleli akademisyen Yaprak Aydın ile anıları üzerinden bir kentin hafızasını keşfetmeye dair oldu. Rüzgar, kentin kendine has kokuları, bir kenti yürüyerek tanımak, Yalı Han... Kent bizimle şekillenirken biz de kente göre yoğuruyoruz hayatlarımızı.

Yaprak Aydın: Buraya gelmeden önce düşündüm. Çanakkale'nin rüzgarlı olduğu sohbetlerde geçer ama özellikle rüzgar temelli mesela rakı masası sohbetlerimiz hiç olmadı. Hep içinde olduğumuz için rüzgar meselesi ekmek su gibi.

Babam ve ailesi Çanakkaleli. 1993'te emekli oldu. Ondan önce anne memleketi Kıbrıs'ta yaşıyorduk. Babam subaydı. Tatillerde, özel günlerde, düğünlerde, cenazelerde Çanakkale ile bir baş vardı ama tam teşekküllü Çanakkale'ye yerleşmek 1993'te oldu. İlkokul ve ortaokulu burada okuma şansına sahip oldum. Ablamın hayatı mesela daha kopuk kopuk her şehirde geçiyordu. Geldik. Şimdi o dönemin trendi kooperatifte bir evimiz var, bitmiyor. Şimdiki Banş kordonu mu, ikinci kordon, oradaki sitede bir evimiz vardı ve bitmedi o. Üç yıl falan sürecek ama biz tabii bunu kestiremiyoruz. Batık kooperatifçilik falan. Şimdiki Esenler'de Özgürlük parkının oradaki Banşkent'in orada bir apartmana kiracı olarak girdik. Oraya bir geldik, daha 6-7 yaşındayım, İt Durmaz tepesi deniyor, oradan ev alınır mı, orada oturulur mu, diyor babamın akrabaları. Kulağımda o var. Bugün aile içinde o günleri konuşursak, bakan zamanında bizi hor görmüşünüz, gidip itin durmadığı yerde oturuyorlar, Çanakkaleye gelmişler... Şimdi bakıyorsun, Özgürlük parkının orası belki de kentin belki de en yaşanılır, en sosyal mekanı.

Ö: O parktan aşağı yürürken baktım, apartmanlar eski ve aralarından deniz gözüküyor. Esenyurt.

Y: O dönem Banşkent yeni yapılmıştı ve tek siteydi, füze gibi çıkan. Etrafta küçük küçük bahçeli evler ya da kopuk kopuk apartman-

The Memory of the Windy City

by Özge Doruk, 'Lodosçulardan mısınız?', 'Beyrut'tan kaleye rüzgarn taşıdığı bir hikaye,' 'Alternatif bir hafıza mekanı: Bordo Bina,' *Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızası* (2021), <<https://www.fugamundi.org/ruzgarli-kentin-hafizasi>>

Translation by Berna Göl

Are you one of the Southwesterners?

What does this wind do for this city, really? How does it shape our living and thinking? Windy memories from childhood have made their place in our minds apparently, so why not dig deeper... This week's podcast is about discovering the memory of a city, with Yaprak Aydın from Çanakkale. The wind, the particular smell of the city, getting to know the city by walking, Yalı Han... As the city is being shaped along with us, we are kneading our lives around it.

Yaprak Aydın: The Çanakkale wind is a topic for chit-chat but we have never had a rakı table conversation based on the wind. Since we are always in it, it is like bread and water.

My father is from Çanakkale. Until he retired in 1993, we lived in my mother's hometown in Cyprus. My father was an army officer, but we had bonds with Çanakkale and visited on holidays. In 1993, we settled in Çanakkale. I was lucky enough to go to primary and secondary school here, unlike my sister, who had to study in numerous cities. When we arrived, we had an apartment in a building cooperative, the trend in those days, but it was not done yet. We were going to have an apartment in the current *Banş* [Peace] *Kordonu* [waterfront promenade], the second *kordon*. It was going to take about three years, but we couldn't be sure, as the cooperative could go bankrupt halfway. So, we rented an apartment in *Banşkent* [Peace City], near the *Özgürlük* [Liberty] Park, which is now Esenler. It was called *İt Durmaz* [a place not even fit for dogs] Hill at the time. My father's family objected, saying, "Who buys an apartment and lives there?" I can still hear them repeat those words. Today, when this topic comes up in the family, we remind them of how they used to look down on us back then, that we lived in *İt Durmaz*, whereas today, *Özgürlük Parkı* is perhaps the most lively and social part of the city.

Ö: I see the apartment buildings there [in Esenler] are old, and you can see the sea through them.

lar vardı. Onlardan bir tanesinde oturuyorduk biz de. Şimdiki kadar sempatik görünmediği gibi bu kadar çok yapılaşma da yoktu. O yüzden rüzgar rüzgardı yani. Jandarmadan ya da Havacıların oradan aşağı Cevatpaşa'ya inen dehşet bir yokuş vardır ya, kışın orası çıkılabilir bir yer değildi. O kadar çok apartman yoktu ve o rüzgar seni ya arkadan koşturdu ittiğinde, ya da öndense gözlerin akardı yürürken. Hele çocuksan, uçuran bir şeye dönüştü. Orayı öyle hatırlıyorum. Çocukluğumda rüzgar bir sorun değildi. Soğuk rüzgarda yanakların yanar ya, öyle bir çocukluğum oldu, dışarıda oynarken fotoğraflar var. Sonra evimiz bitti, biz diğer kordona taşındık. Yine orada da çok fazla apartman yoktu. Yeni Kordon sitesi vardı, bizimki vardı, arkada madenciler sitesi yapılmıştı, hep inşaat alanları idi. Ama çocuklar için çok yaratıcı oyun alanlarına dönüşebiliyordu. Daha fazla işde ağacı vardı. Oranın esas adı İdelik sokaktı. Kordonun orası bir sokaktı eskiden, araba geçen bir yerdi. Daha çok işde ağacı vardı ve yazları işdenin gölgesini kapma gibi bir challenge vardı. Tabii evin kapısından çıkıp, yirmi metre, elli metre yürüyüp denize girmek muazzam bir lükstü yani. Sonra, önce trafiğe kapandı. Orada rüzgarla ilgili şey vardı. Bu arada Çanakkale'de rüzgar hem bir bereket hem de bir bela. Bereket çünkü havayı temizler. Dedemler oh esti mis gibi der. Dedem çiftçilik de yapmıştı zamanında ve o üretim sürecinde rüzgarın gerekliliğine inanılır, bir sevilirdi. Bir yandan da bence kaçma sebebi. İt Durmaz tepesinde daha çok Poyrazla haşır neşirsin çünkü orası Kuzeye bakıyor, Esenler'in orası. Hep derler yanağıma vuruyor. Poyrazcılık vardı orada.

...

Beyrut'tan Kaleye Rüzgarın Taşdığı Bir Hikaye

Bu haftaki konuşumuz için rüzgar onu bu şehre taşımış diyebilir miyiz? Beyrut'tan İstanbul'a en sonunda da yolu Kale'ye düşen Najla Osseiran ile kentteki hayatı üzerine sohbet ediyoruz. Aktivist bir belgesel yapımcısı olan Osseiran bizi Çanakkale'de yaşanan ekolojik yıkımdan kentin çeperlerindeki hayatlara kadar götürüyor. Ve kentin 'görünmeyen' mekânlarını onun belleği aracılığı ile dinliyoruz.

Ö: Seni fotoğraf ve belgesellerinden tanıyorum aslında ve bayağıdır konuşmak istiyordum. Bu program bir vesile oldu. Sen de kendini biraz tanıtmak ister misin? Napıyorsun? Çanakkale yolculuğun nasıl başladı?

N: Çanakkale'ye 2015'te geldim. Daha doğrusu kaçtım, diyebiliriz. Yirmi beş sene İstanbul'da yaşadım. Çok sevdiğim bir şehir olmasına

Y: At the time, Başkent was the only newly-built community, one that stuck out like rocket. There were either little houses with little gardens or random apartment blocks around. We lived in one of the blocks. The place was not as popular, so there were not many buildings back then. So the wind was a thing! There is a terrifying slope descending from the military base down to Cevatpaşa. It was impossible to climb it during wintertime. The wind would either push you from behind and speeded you up, or it would blow right onto your face and gave you runny eyes. Especially for kids, it could turn into something that hurtled them along. But we did not mind it. Our cheeks would burn in the cold wind. Then our apartment was ready and we moved to the other waterfront. There were not many buildings there at the time either. There was the *Yeni Kordon* [The New Waterfront] Community, then there was ours, there was a miners' housing along with many construction sites, which could turn into a great playground for children. There used to be a lot of silverberry trees. The place used to be called *İğdelik* [silverberry grove] Street. The waterfront used to be open to traffic. During the summer, there would be a challenge of grabbing a place in the shade under the trees. Indeed, it was a tremendous luxury to go out of the house, walk 20-30 meters and swim. Later, the street was closed to traffic. It was something to do with the wind.

The wind is both a fortune and a misfortune in Çanakkale. A fortune, because it cleans the air. For instance, my grandparents would sigh with relief in the breeze. My grandfather was also in farming back then, and the wind was seen as necessary and treasured. But on the other hand, the wind could also be a reason to run away. On the *İt Durmaz* hill, in Esenler, you could get more of the northeastern wind, since the hill faces the north. People there always say "Oh, it hits my cheek". They were all Northerners.

...

From Beirut to the Castle: the Wind Carries a Story

For our guest this week, we could perhaps say that the wind has carried her to this city. We had a conversation about her life in the city [of Çanakkale] with Najla Osseiran, who came from Beirut to İstanbul and ended up in [Çanak]Kale [the castle]. Osseiran, an activist documentary film-maker, takes us from the ecological destruction in Çanakkale to the lives on the outskirts of the city. And we listen to the "invisible" spaces of the city through her memories.

rağmen, kentsel dönüşümden dolayı şehrin dokusunun bozulmaya başlaması, çok kalabalıklaşmasıyla çok gerilimli bir şehir olmaya başladı benim için. Dedim ki bu hayat böyle geçmez. Benim daha sakin bir yere gitmem lazım. Çanakkale'ye gelişim bayağı bir tesadüftü aslında. Burayı çok iyi bilmiyordum. Galiba daha çok İstanbul'dan gitmek istiyordum. Dolayısıyla kendimi Çanakkale'ye attım, diyebiliriz. Aslen öğretmenim. Boğaziçi (Üniversitesi)'nde öğretim görevlisi olarak çalışıyordum. İngilizce hocalığı yapıyordum. Emekli olduktan sonra bir süre İstanbul'da kaldım. Ondan sonra bu belgeselleri çekmeye başladım. Buna daha fazla ağırlık vermek istediğime karar verdikten sonra İstanbul'dan gitmeye karar verdim ve buraya taşındım. Sonra buraya geldiğimde çok sevdim Çanakkale'yi. Hiç bu kadar seveceğimi düşünmemiştim aslında. Hatta ilk taşındığımda, ay ben naaptım, acaba sevecek miyim ben burayı diye düşünmüştüm. Neyse çok sevdim.

Ö: Neyi sevdin mesela?

N: Sakinliği, huzuru İstanbul'dan sonra o kadar iyi geldi ki. Yani, medeni oluşu. Klakson çalmıyor fazla. İnsanlar kibar, rahat. En çok onu sevdim. Rüzgarlı kent... rüzgarını çok sevdim. Çanakkaleli olup rüzgardan nefret eden var. Burada sürekli rüzgar esiyor. Benim de o kadar çok hoşuma gidiyor ki o rüzgar, bir iş için Ankara'ya girmiştım. Çok zor geçmişti dört beş gün. Döndüm, otobüsten indim, böyle rüzgar vurmaya başladı. Oh yaşasın dedim, memlekete geldim ki buraya taşınalı daha bir sene bile olmamıştı. Bu rüzgarın bir şeyi var herhalde, bir büyü mü var. Bilmiyorum, çok seviyorum buranın rüzgarını...

Ö: ...burada Rum mahallesi var, Ermeni mahallesi var, Yahudi mahallesi var..d. Bir yandan gittiler, gönderildiler. Tarihsel bağlamda aynı (bir yeri var), ama şu anki durumda, bağlamda, burada kimler yaşıyor? Senden takip ettiğim kadıyla Romanlar var, Romanlar mahallesi var. Onların yaşayışlarını nasıl gözlemliyorsun? Çanakkale'de görünürler mi, değişler mi?

N: Eski bir mahalle var, Fevzi Paşa Mahallesi. Onu çok iyi bilmiyorum. Gittim bir kaç kere. Orada fotoğraf çektim, fakat asıl gözlerden irak başka bir Roman mahallesi var, Atatürk Mahallesi. Oraya tesadüfen gittim. Çanakkaleliler bile doğru dürüst bilmiyor. Zor şartlarda yaşıyor oradaki insanlar. Daha çok geri dönüşüm uğraşıyorlar. Atatürk mahallesi Fevzi Paşa kadar eski değil. Öok kötü şartlarda yaşıyor insanlar. Bayağı bildiğimiz teneke evler, karton evler... biraz binalar da var. Orada da kentsel dönüşüm başlamış vaziyette. Bir şekilde o insanlar oradan gitmek zorunda kalacaklar. Orada epey çekim yaptım, iki sene gittim

Ö: I know you from your photographs and documentaries, and I have wanted to talk to you for a while. This podcast has been an opportunity. Would you like to introduce yourself? What do you do? How did your journey to Çanakkale begin?

N: I came to Çanakkale in 2015. Or rather, we can say I fled here. I lived in Istanbul for twenty-five years. Although it is a city that I love very much, it started to become a very stressful city for me as the texture of the city began to deteriorate due to urban transformation and overcrowding. I said to myself, things cannot go this way. I needed to go to a quieter place. My arrival in Çanakkale was a bit of a coincidence. I didn't know the place well. I guess I mainly wanted to escape from Istanbul. So, we could say I threw myself in here to Çanakkale. I am actually a teacher. I was working as a lecturer at Boğaziçi [University], teaching English. After I retired, I stayed in Istanbul for a while. Then, I started filming documentaries. As I decided to focus more on documentaries, I left Istanbul and moved here. When I arrived, I really loved Çanakkale. I never thought I would love it this much. In fact, when I first moved here, I doubted and wondered if I would ever like this place. And I did.

Ö: What did you like about it?

N: Its calmness and peace felt so good after Istanbul. That is, being human. Cars do not honk as much. People are kind, relaxed. I loved that. The windy city... I loved its wind. There are people from Çanakkale who hate the wind. The wind here blows constantly. I like it so much that when I went to Ankara for work and after a very difficult four or five days, I returned here and got off the bus, and the wind started to blow. I thought, "Oh my goodness, I came home". It hadn't even been a year since I had moved here. This wind must have something to it, is it magic? I don't know, I just love the wind here.

Ö: ...[In Çanakkale] there used to be a Greek neighborhood, an Armenian neighborhood, a Jewish neighborhood... They either left or were sent away. Historically many people settled and left this place, but in the current context, who lives here? As far as I follow you, there are Romani people, there is the Romani neighborhood. What do you think about their lives? Are they visible in Çanakkale, or perhaps not?

N: There is an old neighborhood, Fevzi Paşa Mahallesi, which I do not know that well. I visited the place a few times and took pictures there. However, there is another Romani neighborhood, Atatürk Mahallesi, a very secluded place in which I accidentally found myself. Even

geldim. Hatta orayla ilgili de bir belgesel çalışmam oldu, daha bitmedi. İnsanlar resmen çöplerin içinde yaşıyor. Evlerde neredeyse çöpten yapılmış. Çok ilginç bir yer. Sürreal bir yer ve zaten yapmak istediğim belgesel de biraz o yönde olacak. Çünkü orada yaşlı bir kadın buldum. Buranın eskisini anlat bana dedim. Biraz anlatmaya başladı. Sonra boşver ben sana anlatmayayım, gel ben sana masal anlatayım, dedi. Anlattığı masal da çok ilginç bir masaldı. Ve o masal üzerinden bir belgesel yapmayı düşünüyorum. Öyle bir yer yani.

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Ö: Peki burada başka hikayesini kovaladığın ne vardı? Kadınların hikayesini toplama vardı sanırım.

N: Onu bir arkadaşım Semra yapmak istiyordu. Çanakkale’de yaşamış bir kaç kadın üzerinden, mesela Rum bir kadın, sokağa ismi verilmiş başka bir kadın. Sonra ne oldu bilmiyorum.

Ö: Burada senin için vazgeçilmez olan mekan var mı? İnsanlarla birlikte yaşadığını gördüğün bir mekan veya senin için değerli olan bir mekan?

N: Yalıhan mesela, şu anda bulunduğumuz yer. Benim için çok özel bir yer. Hem insanların toplandığı, buluştuğu bazen toplantıların da olduğu çok sevdiğim tarihi bir yer. Avlu biçiminde olması da çok hoşuma gidiyor. Sanırım çocukluğumdan bir şeyler hatırlattığı için. Mesela okulum. Beyrut’taki okul avlu biçimindeydi. Çok huzurlu bir yer. Sakin bir yer. Sanıyorum en vazgeçilmez yer burası benim için. Yani buradan gitsem en çok özleyeceğim yer burası.

Ö: Bir diğer şans, sanırım, olduğu haliyle kalmış ya, çok restore edilip abuk bir biçim verilmeden, işlevi dışına çok çıkmadan, gayet herkesin gündelik hayatlarında kullanabildiği bir kamusal mekan. Ben de çok seviyorum.

N: Her seferinde biraz içim acıyarak şey yapıyorum, ya burası da değişirse, dönüşürse, diye.

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Alternatif bir hafıza mekanı: Bordo Bina

Çanakkale Yahudi Mahallesinde geçmiş ile şimdiki bir araya getiren mekan Bordo Bina. Segah Atay ile bir yandan Bordo Bina’nın var olma sürecini bir yandan ise onun kente dair hikayesini, çanakkaleliği konuştuk.

the people of Çanakkale have not heard of it. The people there live in quite difficult conditions. They rather survive via recycling. Atatürk Mahallesi is not as old as Fevzi Paşa. People live in very bad conditions, in tin houses, cardboard houses and a few buildings. Yet, urban transformation has already begun. Somehow, those people will be displaced. I filmed a lot of footage there for two years. I even made a documentary about it; still not finished. People are literally living in garbage. Houses are made of garbage. It is a very interesting place. It is a surreal place and the documentary I want to make will be in that direction. I found an old woman there and I asked her to tell me about the old times. She started talking, but eventually changed her mind; “Let me tell you a tale instead”, she said. The tale was very interesting. And I’m thinking of making a documentary based on that very tale. That is such a place.

...

Ö: Is there a place here that is indispensable for you? A place where you see people living with you or a place you treasure?

N: Yalıhan, where we are now, is a very special place for me. It is also a historical place that I cherish. This is where people gather and meet each other. I also like that it is in the form of a courtyard, I guess also because it reminds me of something from my childhood. The school in Beirut was in the form of a courtyard. It’s a very peaceful, quiet place. I think this is the most indispensable place for me.

Ö: Another chance, I think, has remained as it is. It is a public space that everyone can use in their everyday lives, without being restored and given a crude form, without changing the original function much.

N: I feel a little worried each time that this place may change, or be transformed.

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An Alternative Place of Memory: The Maroon Building

The place in the Jewish neighborhood of Çanakkale that brings the past and the present together is the Maroon Building. We talked with Segah Atay about how the Maroon Building came to exist, and its story about the city Çanakkale.

Özge Doruk: Segah, thank you for coming.

Segah Atay: Thank you.

Özge Doruk: Segah, davetimi kabul ettiğin için teşekkür ediyorum.

Segah Atay: Ben teşekkür ederim.

Ö: Rüzgarlı Kentin Hafızasına hoşgeldin. Seninle ilk halk bahçesinde tanışmıştık, hikayeni anlatmıştın. Yanımızda Isaac vardı. Bordo Bina'ya gelince de hayranlık duydum, gerçekten hayranlık duyulacak bir yer. Hikayeni dinlemek beni heyecanlandırıyor. Senin Çanakkale'ye gelişin nasıl oldu, yolun buraya nasıl düştü?

S: On dört yaşında Eskişehir'den Çanakkale'ye ailemle birlikte taşındım. Lise ikiyi ve üçü burada okuyup İstanbul'a gittim. Orada okumaya gittim ama okumadım ve alaylı bir şekilde istediğim mesleği yapmaya başladım, kostüm ve sahne dekor gibi şeyler. Yedi sene kadar İstanbul'da kaldım ve Isaac'e çok benzeyen başka bir köpek arkadaşım Astro'yu aniden kaybedince, İstanbul Balat'ta yaşıyorken, bir Çanakkale'ye gideyim, bir kafamı toplayayım, dedim. Yol arkadaşımı gitti çünkü ve bir depresyona girip buraya geldim. Uyudum uyandım, bir buçuk yıl geçmişti, anlamadım yani. Bir buçuk senenin sonunda tamam ben burada kalıyorum, İstanbul'a hiç dönmek istemiyorum diyip gidip evimi kapatıp buraya geldim. Bir iki kışı Bozcaada'da geçirdim ama sonra Çanakkale'de avare avare dolaşırken bu binayla karşılaştım. Aslında bu binayla daha önce de karşılaşmıştım. Ona da Astro vesile olmuştu. Buraya, annemin yanına geldiğimizde hasta olmuştu ve bir veteriner arıyordum, burayı bulmuştum. Ve büyülenmişim, burası nasıl bir veteriner olabilir? İki katlı kocaman bir taş bina, tek bir odayı veteriner olarak kullanıyorlar... Büyülenmişim, ama sonra İstanbul'a gidip unuttum bu binanın varlığını.

Çanakkale'ye kesin dönüş yaptığımda Bordo Bina'yal karşılaştım. Kiralık diyordu. Kapısı açıktı, hemen içeri girdim. Aslında kapısı açık olmuyormuş genelde. Hole kadar yürüyebildim. Ve büyülendim. Ben bu binada kök salmak istiyorum deyip, kolları sıvayıp, bordo binayı kiraladım ve birkaç arkadaşımınla beraber kollektif bir şekilde burayı restore ettik. Yani içeri hiç usta girmedim. Çünkü bir yandan paramız da yoktu. Sıva yapmayı öğrenmek, kaynak makinasını tutmak, duvarları kazımak, her yerı kompresörlemek, zımpara işleri gibi bir sürü iş yaptık.

Ö: Ustalık öğrettirmiş...

S: Aynen, elimde altın bileziğim var yani şu an, bir gün bir şey olursa. Bu esnada abim fayans döşemeyi öğrendi, sağolsun çok yardım etti. Ve aslında ailem çok tedirgindi. Sen kafayı mı yedin, çünkü burası çok metruk bir yer, çok masrafı var, sen delirdin mi, ne yapıyorsun falan

Ö: Welcome to the Memory of the Windy City. When we first met, you told me about your story, we had Isaac with us. I was fascinated when I saw the Maroon Building. It is truly a place to be admired. Your story fascinates me. How did you come here to Çanakkale?

S: I moved from Eskişehir to Çanakkale at fourteen. After completing my high school here, I went to Istanbul to study, but I didn't, and as a self-thought worker, I started doing the job I wanted, like costumes and props. I stayed in Istanbul for about seven years. When my other dog friend Astro, who looked just like Isaac, suddenly passed, I thought I should leave Balat in Istanbul where I was living and go to Çanakkale to take a break. I came here because my companion was gone and I was depressed. It had already been a year and a half before I even knew it. And then I decided to stay here. I did not want to go back to Istanbul, so I closed my house and moved here. I spent a couple of winters in Bozcaada, but then I came across this building while wandering around Çanakkale. In fact, I had run into this building long before. Astro had a part in that, too. Long before, I was visiting my sick mother here in Çanakkale. I found this place while looking for a vet. I was fascinated: How could this place be a vet's office, a huge two-story masonry building? They were only using its one single room as a veterinarian clinic. I was fascinated, but then I went to Istanbul and forgot all about it.

Then, when I moved back to Çanakkale, I came across the Maroon Building. It was for rent. The door was open, so I went right in. I found out later that the door usually should not really be open. So, I could walk all the way to the hall. And I was mesmerized thinking how I wanted to settle here in this building. So I rolled up my sleeves and rented the Maroon Building, and together with a few of my friends, we restored it collectively. That is, we did not hire anyone. Since we didn't have any money, we had to learn and do a lot of work; to plaster, to use a welding machine, to scrape walls, to use compressors, to sand etc.

Ö: So it taught you some skills...

S: Exactly. I have the necessary skills now in case something happens. Meanwhile, my brother learned how to lay tiles, he has been a great help. And in the beginning my family was quite worried, saying this was a very derelict place. They would say it would cost a lot, asking if I was crazy. When my mother saw the upper floor, she left the place in tears. But then they saw how determined I was and came back to help with trowels in their hands.

deyip, annem üst katı görünce özellikle buradan gözyaşlarıyla çıktı gitti. Ama benim azmimi görünce, bir hafta sonra elinde spatulalarla yardıma geldiler.
Peki ne yapabiliriz buradan? Bir sürü hikaye vardı kafamda. İstanbul'da yaptığım işin burada hiçbir karşılığı yok.

...

Tabii, uyku falan yok. Eve gidemiyordum ki, ne anlamı var çalışmanın. Köpeğim o yüzden hep evde yalnızdı. Astro da ölünce dedim ki napıyorum burada şimdi. Kafa dinlemeye gelmişim aslında. Bordo Bina olmasa bu kadar uzun sürer miydi Çanakkale hikayem emin değilim. Binaya ilk girdiğimde hissettiğim şey. 1950'lerde miyim, 2000'lerde miyim, İspanya'da mıyım, Türkiye'de miyim. Yersiz ve zamansız bir şeyi var Bordo Bina'nın ben öyle hissediyorum.
(5:40)

Ö: binanın ilk sahiplerini biliyor muydun?

S: Evet, çok araştırdık. Biraz zor bilgi edindik ama... Kasap Sinto Levi ve ailesinin eviymiş burası. Ve kalabalık bir aile. Üst katta ailenin bir kısmı, alat katta ailenin bir kısmı yaşıyormuş. Anladığım kadıyla o dönemin varlıklı ailelerinden. Bu salon kadar büyük hiç bir salon yokmuş burada ki evlerde. Bu yüzden bütün nişanlar nikahlar falan bu evin salonunda yapılmış. Öyle bir bilgi var. Bir fotoğraf var sadece. Kalabalık bir aile. Burada doğan biriyle tanıştım. Ama çok az şey hatırlıyor. Yedi yaşına kadar burada kalmış çünkü. Sonra Türkiyeli bir aileye satıp gidiyorlar. Şey evlerden değil... Kaçıyoruz biz Türkiye'den, değil de... Bir kısmı Amerika'ya gitmiş, bir kısmı İsrail'e gitmiş gibi bir bilgi var elimde. Ne kadar doğru bilmiyorum ama.
(6:35)

Ö: Burası, tam Bordo Binanın olduğu yer, bir Yahudi mahallesi aslında. Zaten eski bir bina, bir hikayesi var, bir ruhu var, görüyorsun ama seninki de biraz ekstra. Sen buraya yerleştikten sonra o hikaye devam ediyor gibi.

So, what were we going to do here? I had a lot of scenarios in my head. The work I did in Istanbul was unrelated to anything here.

...

I am not sure if my Çanakkale adventure would have lasted so long without the Maroon Building. It is about how I felt the moment I entered the building. Was I in the 1950s, in the 2000s; was I in Spain or in Turkey? There is something out of place and timeless about the Maroon Building; at least that is how I feel.

Ö: Do you know who the former owners of the building were?

S: Yes, we did a lot of research. After some searching, we just managed to find some information. This was the house of the butcher Sinto Levi and his large family. Part of the family lived upstairs, and part downstairs. As far as I understand, it was one of the wealthy families at the time. Houses wouldn't have parlors like the one in this house. So all engagements, weddings, etc. were held here in this house. There is only one photo of the big family. Though I met someone who was born here, he remembers very little. He stayed here until he was seven years old. They later sold it to a family from Turkey and left. Their case was not about fleeing Turkey. I guess some went to America, some to Israel.

Ö: Here is actually a Jewish neighborhood where the Maroon Building is located. It's an old building, it has a story, it has a soul, it is apparent, but yours is something else. It seems like the story continues with the way you have made this place come back to life.

A Libertarian Gaze

Clara Sarmento, Luísa Álvares, Sandra Ribeiro

“A Libertarian Gaze” (“Um Olhar Libertário”) is one of the twenty short stories and essays that comprise *The City of Lifeless Bookshops* (*A Cidade das Livrarias Mortas*) (2020) by Portuguese journalist, professor, and writer, Francisco Duarte Mangas (Vieira do Minho, 1960). A journalist for several decades, Francisco Duarte Mangas is now exclusively dedicated to writing narrative works, poetry, and children’s literature. His fictional work often reflects on the intersection of literature and reality, contemporary Portuguese history (the dawn of the Republic, the dictatorship of Estado Novo, the transformations brought by democracy), and culture, books and reading. The selected excerpt presents the first-person discovery of the city of **Porto** through the eyes and words of a man who had only known it through his grandfather’s memories. As he wanders through the city, his thoughts and words create two contrasting portraits of Porto. One describes the modern city, overtaken by crowds of foreign tourists seeking temporary local accommodation, attractions of dubious historical and cultural value as advertised on social media, and the cheap entertainment of the esplanades. The other evokes the city that has disappeared: a place of intense political, cultural, and literary debate in cafes and bookshops, and which now seem to survive only in marginal writing events and dusty antiquarian bookstores. The portrait of a city undergoing an accelerated transformation which threatens to eradicate its genuine identity, pervades the entire text of *City of Lifeless Bookshops*.



Um olhar libertário

by Francisco Duarte Mangas

O meu avô paterno trabalhou no Teatro São João. E só a morte lhe diluiu da lembrança o desempenho do célebre ator Taborda, no final de oitocentos, durante um espetáculo de beneficência para a Associação dos Jornalistas e Homens de Letras abrandar a penúria das viúvas de escritores e publicistas desajudados de haveres. Era um tempo de pessoas generosas, de furiosos republicanos a guerrear a caridade jesuítica. Um camaroteiro guardaria segredos da fina flor da cidade, lotava o teatro na temporada lírica. O meu avô legou ao filho as memórias agradáveis ou as mais perturbadoras. A cidade, quase toda, trazia a revolta nas veias, a insurreção da Comuna de Paris teria aportado na Ribeira e propagado na forma de epidemia ao Porto culto, para usar a expressão de Sampaio Bruno. O meu avô conheceu Bruno. Um dia, junto da Brasileira, assiste a um episódio repugnante a olhar de republicano. Republicano não só por servir a nobreza pelintra e uma burguesia de palito no dente a assistir à récita. Junto da Brasileira, o sossegado Bruno, a doença atormentavalhe o movimento, é agredido pelo antigo camarada Afonso Costa: irrompe da chusma e, sem palavras, de soqueira de aço desfere-lhe o golpe, como se o alvo fosse o último inquisidor. Bruno, aturdido, sangra do rosto, Costa e os capangas desaparecem com a presteza de lume das bruxas.

Chego de comboio, no Alfa. Atrasou-se além do aceitável. Mas só eu, afeito a viajar com motorista, me espanto do desacerto de horários. Conforme as indicações, da estação de S. Bento à casa, reservada pelo *Airbnb*, na Rua Mártires da Liberdade, demora oito minutos a pé. Sigo o caminho indicado pelo dono do alojamento local, e logo a Livraria Lello me faz abrandar: a fila cosmopolita na rua, meus olhos confirmam, afasta a dúvida. Escrevinhador das redes sociais é como o «gado servil», remota metáfora de Horácio a fustigar poeta plagiador. Os autores clássicos, embora seja inútil e desleal atirar juízos de valor ao passado, quedariam satisfeitos perante o frenesim, por tamanha paixão dos livros. A comprovar a falsidade dos rumores basta esta imagem extraordinária, a da Europa de férias em voos de baixo custo, peregrinos dos caminhos de Santiago sobre as nuvens, atraída pelo encanto da palavra impressa.

A libertarian gaze

by Francisco Duarte Mangas, *A Cidade das Livrarias Mortas* (Porto: Teodolito, 2017), pp. 10-21

Translation by Clara Sarmento, Luísa Álvares, Sandra Ribeiro

My grandfather, the father of my father, worked at São João's Theatre. It was only as he was laid to rest that the memory of the famous actor Taborda vanished from his mind, in his performance of eight-hundred and something, at a charity play of the Association of Journalists and Literati for the widows of writers and journalists in dire need. It was a time of great generosity; a time when furious republicans battled Jewish charity. An usher of the opera boxes would hold dear the secrets of the city's upper class, who sold out the theatre during the lyric season. My grandfather bequeathed to his son the pleasant or the more disturbing memories. The city, almost in its entirety, carried the force of the rebellion in its veins, the insurrection of the Paris Commune had landed on the docks of Ribeira and spread as an epidemic to the cultured Porto, to use Sampaio Bruno's expression. My grandfather had met Bruno. One day, next to the *Brasileira*, he witnessed a repulsive episode to the eye of a republican. Republican not only because he served the indigent nobility and the bourgeois who carried a toothpick in their mouth while watching the performance. Next to *Brasileira*, the quiet Bruno, his movements tortured by sickness, is attacked by his old comrade Afonso Costa: he bursts from the crowd and, without saying a word, punches Bruno with his iron knuckles, as if his target were the last inquisitor. Bruno, stunned, has blood running down his face, Costa and his henchmen disappear as quickly as the fire in a witch's brew.

I arrive on the Alfa train. It's late beyond acceptability. Only I, accustomed to travelling with a chauffeur, am astonished with the mismatched schedules. As indicated, from São Bento station to the house, booked on *Airbnb*, in Rua Mártires da Liberdade, is only an eight-minute walk. I follow the route indicated by the owner of the local accommodation, but the Lello Bookshop immediately slows my stride: the cosmopolitan queue on the street, which my eyes acknowledge, dissipates any doubts. Social media scribblers are like "servile livestock," an ancient metaphor used by Horace to chastise plagiarist poets. Classic authors, albeit useless and disloyal to judge the past, would be satisfied with this frenzy, with such unrestrained passion for books. This extraordinary image is enough to prove that the rumours are false: Europe on holidays on low-cost flights, pilgrims of the Camino de Santiago over the clouds, attracted by the charm of the written word.

O alojamento fica no terceiro andar. Uma casa asseada, limpa, agradável terraço na parte da frente. Na rua estreita, um mendigo fala alto e ninguém o ouve. Há gaivotas nos telhados, os seus gritos espicaçam o crepúsculo. A subir a rua, num espaço de cem metros, três alfarrabistas de porta aberta: podia agora mesmo escrever o relatório e enviar ao ministro. As redes sociais infestam-se de notícias falsas, de vaidades imprevisíveis, de famosos morrendo muitas vezes. Na parede da sala, uma estante envidraçada exhibe distintos gatos de barro, de cartão, outros de madeira. O dono cultivará o colecionismo e, para este apartamento, trouxera espécimes repetidos ou de menor valor: se os hóspedes levarem algum, enfim, não será perda dolorosa. A pequena coleção e o móvel-estante que a acolhe impõem um ambiente delicado, assim como a mesa e o armário de elegantes linhas, anos sessenta, quando se esperaria mobiliário Ikea. Uma engenhosa escada de madeira, pelo interior, leva-me a uma espécie de mezanino, e outro terraço surge. Na divisão superior encontro uma estante, livros em várias línguas. Pouco manuseados, noto. Os hóspedes ou desprezam os livros ou, o mais certo, usam a casa apenas para pernoita, e por poucas horas - a vida noturna, pressinto, é intensa, a bebida barata. Um olhar nas lombadas: paro em *Vida Litterária*. Terá o camaroteiro conhecido João Chagas, o autor da obra, agora nas minhas mãos, publicada no ano sexto do século vinte? Do autor pouco sei. Lendo-o talvez o liberte das grilhetas do silêncio cego. Desço as engenhosas escadas, acomodo-me no sofá da sala. Da rua ainda a voz do mendigo e o burburinho das aves, soma abundante a toldar esta parte da cidade à beira da noite. Observo melhor a capa da *Vida Litterária*, de um verde esbatido. A gravura do rosto de uma mulher bonita num círculo; por cima, círculos mais pequenos, um ponto negro no interior, lembram outros olhos da mulher perscrutando o leitor. Como resistiu mais de um século um livro de capa brochada, sem badanas? Por que razão veio exilar-se na biblioteca de efémeros viandantes, de distintos idiomas? Serei, talvez, dos primeiros portugueses a habitar a casa, pode acolher até seis pessoas (duas dormem no sofá onde me sento), wi-fi e a colorida coleção de gatos. Nem vi a cozinha, em serviço não se fazem refeições em casa. A mulher da capa continua a enlear-me pelos olhos de hidra melancólica. Avanço. *Vida Litterária (ideias e sensações)*, Coimbra, França Amado - editor; na página seguinte: 1904-1905. Nada mais. Nem prefácio, nem nota biográfica do autor. O primeiro texto centra-se numa desalinhada opinião de Tolstói. Um escritor francês, Georges Bourdon, fizera longa viagem até Yasnaya Polyana para entrevistar o «romancista e publicista russo». Falaram de variados assuntos, e desse encontro surgira o livro *En Écoutant Tolstói*. Na conversa, a

The accommodation is on the third floor. It is a simple and clean house, with a pleasant balcony in the front. In the narrow street, a beggar speaks loudly, and nobody listens to him. There are seagulls on the rooftops and their cries prick the twilight. Walking up the street, within one hundred meters, three second-hand book-sellers have their door open: I could write my report right away and send it to the Minister. Social networks are plagued by fake news, by unexpected vanities, by famous people dying repeatedly. On the living room's wall, a glass shelf showcases distinct cats, made of clay, of cardboard, some of wood. Perhaps the owner is a collector, and, to this room, he has brought repeated models or those of less value: if the guests take any, at least the loss won't be painful. The small collection and the glass shelf that shelters it instill a delicate atmosphere, as do the elegant silhouettes of the table and the cabinet from the sixties, when one would expect Ikea furniture. An ingenious wooden staircase, on the inside, takes me to a sort of mezzanine and another balcony emerges. On the upper level, I find a bookshelf, books in several languages. Barely handled, I notice. The guests either despise books or, more probably, only use the house to stay the night, and for a few short hours – nightlife, I suspect, is intense and drinks are cheap. I examine the spine of the books: I stop at *Vida Litterária*. Has the usher met João Chagas, the author of the book I now hold in my hands, published in the sixth year of the twentieth century? I know little about the author. By reading his book I may perhaps free him from the shackles of blind silence. I walk down the ingenious staircase, and settle on the sofa in the living room. I still hear the beggar's voice and the tumult of the birds, an abundant sum veiling this part of the city as the night edges closer. I observe the cover of *Vida Litterária*, in faded green. The engraving of a beautiful woman's face in a circle; above, two smaller circles, a black dot in the middle, bring to mind other eyes of the woman scrutinizing the reader. How did this paperback, without cover or flaps, survive more than one hundred years? Why did it come to exile itself in this library of ephemeral wanderers, of different languages? I am, perhaps, the first Portuguese person to stay in this house, designed for up to six guests (two sleep on the sofa where I am sitting), wi-fi and the colorful collection of cats. I haven't seen the kitchen yet, when on duty meals are not made at home. The woman on the cover continues to enthrall me through her eyes as a melancholic Hydra. I continue. *Vida Litterária (ideias e sensações)*, Coimbra, França Amado – editor; on the next page: 1904-1905. Nothing else. Neither a preface, nor author's bio-note. The first text focuses on a misguided opinion by Tolstoy. A French writer, George Bourdon, had taken the long journey to Yasnaya Polyana to interview the "Russian novelist and journalist". They talked

dado momento, irrompe outra figura das letras. E o autor de *Guerra e Paz* assombra o francês: o génio e a obra de Shakespeare «são um equívoco universal». De toda a sua obra, «ressalta um aborrecimento mortal. Mas ninguém pensa nisto e os que o poderiam dizer, não ousam fazê-lo». O livro de Bourdon fascina, sem dúvida, João Chagas, que cativa pela sua prosa o inesperado leitor do porvir. Esboça-se um retrato de Chagas enquanto vou lendo a sua escrita ágil, de publicista talvez, próximo das ideias do escritor russo. Se admirava Tolstói em 1904, Chagas integraria, por certo, o grupo dos republicanos, dos carbonários. O avô camaroteiro, sem o manifestar em serviço, caminhava nessas águas sem medo de molhar os pés. Até onde li, todavia, Tolstói é evocado enquanto zurze no criador de *Hamlet*: o génio e a sua glória, sublinha o russo, «são um exemplo inaudito de sugestão universal». A grita das gaivotas embrandece na noite. Está na hora de sair, de procurar restaurante, tenho uma lista de nomes de alguns, recomendados por amigos. Mas as cidades descobrem-se.

A porta do primeiro andar direito abre-se brusca, no momento em que desço: um homem de bigode aparado, maçãs do rosto rubras, avisa-me, «Não se esqueça de fechar a porta da rua! E não façam barulho, chamo a polícia!». Os meus amigos são sossegados... Aqui por perto, há algum restaurante? O homem do bigode, um pé dentro de casa outro fora, mastiga a animosidade a observar-me. «Restaurantes? O Porto é uma manjedoura! Aqui ao lado (olha para a relógio de pulso) uma barbearia transforma-se em bar e petiscaria. O senhor de onde é?» De Lisboa. «Conhece algum barbeiro que ao fim da tarde arruma pentes e tesouras e começa a aviar taliscas de presunto, vinho, bebidas frescas?» Não. Boa noite. «Feche a porta.»

Na rua, cruzo-me com turistas, bagagem à trela. O ruído dos rolagamentos, das rodinhas, esvoaça por entre o alarido das aves marinhas e essa miscigenação dá uma certa harmonia à noite. Minha fome é fácil de calar. O café tem mesas antigas de madeira, juntas e alinhadas, como se estivessem nessa disposição à espera de grupo excursionista. Na esplanada bastantes clientes, no interior, a esta hora, meia dúzia de pessoas. Sento-me. Na mesa ao lado estão dois homens, idades diferentes; sobre a mesa um pacote de revistas, papel branco, tamanho A4 dobrado, acabamento artesanal. Imagem dissonante, diria dos anos setenta do outro século. O título: *Piolho*¹. E uma gravura do parasita roda na capa. Pergunto a um dos homens, o mais novo, se a publicação é para vender. «Venda direta, quatro euros» - responde o mais velho. Fazemos negócio, compro dois exemplares. O mais novo, enquanto dou um primeiro

about several issues, and that interview gave way to the book *En Écoutant Tolstoi*. Sometime during the conversation, another man of the arts comes to the fore. And the author of *War and Peace* shocks the French man: the genius and the work of Shakespeare “are a universal mistake”. From all his work “mortal boredom flows. But nobody thinks about it and those who could say something, do not dare.” Bourdon’s book fascinates, without a doubt, João Chagas, who enraptures his prose as the unexpected reader from the future. The image of Chagas emerges as I read his agile writing, as a journalist perhaps, close to the ideas of the Russian. If he admired Tolstoy in 1904, Chagas would definitely be part of the republican group, the Carbonari. My grandfather, the usher, unsuspected at work, walked among those waters without worrying about wetting his feet. Until the part where I stopped reading, however, Tolstoy is recalled while scolding the creator of *Hamlet*: the genius and his glory, emphasizes the Russian, “are an example of an unheard-of universal suggestion”. The cries of the seagulls ease during the night. It is time to leave, to search for a restaurant, I have a list of some names recommended by friends. But cities are to be discovered.

The door on the first floor, to the right, opens abruptly the moment that I walk down the stairs: a man with a trimmed mustache, flushed cheekbones, warns me, “Don’t forget to close the front door! And don’t make any noise, I’ll call the police!”. My friends are quiet... Nearby, is there any restaurant? The man with the mustache, one foot inside his house another foot outside, chews on his animosity while he stares at me. “Restaurants? Porto is a manger! Right next door (he looks at his wristwatch) a barber’s shop transforms itself into a pub and snack bar. Where are you from?” From Lisbon. “Have you heard of any barber who puts down combs and scissors and starts selling slices of ham, wine and cold drinks by sunset?” No. Goodnight. “Close the door.”

On the street, I come across tourists, pulling their luggage. The noise of the wheels webs amongst the cries of the sea-birds and this amalgamation creates a certain harmony in the nightfall. My hunger is easy to appease. The café has old wooden tables, close together and lined up, as if waiting for a touring group. The café terrace is full of clients; inside, at this hour, half a dozen people. I take a seat. Two men sit at the table next to me, different ages; on the table, a stack of magazines, white paper size A4, folded, handmade finish. A jarring image, I would say, of the seventies of the previous century. The title: *The Lice*¹. And an imprint of the parasite revolves on the cover. I ask one of the men, the younger, if it is for sale. “Direct sale, four Euro,”

olhar na revista, informa-me, «O diretor e editor é o António, muda de nome quando assina poesia. Você também é da arte?». Sou da arte, enquanto leitor.

O poeta ilumina-se num olhar libertário, a história jamais o conseguirá espavorir. O outro, mais novo, seguirá a mesma escola, Como poetas, acham possível, por sugestão universal, um autor tornar-se num génio? O diretor da revista abre mais os olhos de ave de rapina, pasmado, como quem meditara noutra ocasião sobre idêntico assunto, todavia num exercício solitário, íntimo, «Depende da grandeza do país. Os atuais génios da literatura autóctone são-no por sugestão paroquial. Antes de fundar a *Piolho*, fui proprietário de uma livraria: A Pulga». Vendeu-a?, indago. Sorri, o poeta mais novo. E faz a pergunta que o outro andava a armadilhar, «Além de leitor, o meu amigo é perguntador?». Trabalho no Ministério da Cultura. Agora de férias, na cidade onde nasceu o meu avô. «O seu avô também era leitor?» Camaroteiro, António. Vendeu A Pulga? «A cidade é um cemitério de livrarias. Se fosse uma padaria... a Padaria Gorgulho, ainda hoje teria a porta aberta. A fome do espírito é treta. Não deixe arrefecer o prego...»

Prego em pão, tenro. Um copo de cerveja na temperatura justa. Estudantes ruidosos, as mãos ocupadas por esses aparelhos de comunicação instantânea, vão compondo as mesas, «Se estiver interessado noutros números da revista, a coleção toda, o preço fica mais em conta». Obrigado. Cemitério de livraria... Passei na Lello e, faz tempo, não via tanta gente a disputar a entrada numa casa de livros! A minha observação espevita o riso no poeta mais velho, como se eu dissesse um piropo desajeitado; o outro, o poeta jovem, imita-o, expõe o sorriso trocista ao pato bravo lisboeta, «A Lello, meu amigo, converteu-se em museu, num escadório, campo de treino de fotógrafo amador. De rodo o modo, é a livraria mais antiga do Porto: pela sua especificidade arquitetónica, e seguindo as regras da sugestão universal do capitalismo, abocanha o momento. Ainda não tenho sessenta anos, e vivi várias cidades tendo a cidade o mesmo nome. Nos anos oitenta, quando fiz as Conferências do Inferno, o Porto seria uma das mais provincianas da Ibéria. Parávamos no Majestic, em Santa Catarina. O Majestic, decrépito no seu esplendor, era o café de qualquer um, do povo, de estudantes, de putas esfomeadas, de artistas sem dinheiro... Agora também se forma fila à porta e num café e uma água das pedras gasta-se quase um rendimento mínimo. A doença dizima as livrarias como as palmeiras, ouviu falar disso no Ministério da Cultura?, anda aí uma praga a devorar a copa das palmeiras: perdem os ramos, ficam

answers the older man. We make a deal. I buy two copies. The younger man, while I peruse the work, tells me, "The director and editor is António, who changes his name when he signs poetry. Are you also from the Arts?" I am from the Arts, as a reader.

The poet lights up in a libertarian gaze, history will never daunt him. The other fellow, younger, will follow the same school. As poets, do you think it is possible, under a universal suggestion, for an author to become a genius? The director of the magazine widens his gaze as a bird of prey, astonished, as if, at some other time, he too had pondered something similar, though in a solitary, intimate exercise, "It depends on the grandeur of the country. The current geniuses of native literature are so per suggestion of the parish. Before founding *The Lice*, I owned a bookshop: The Flea." Did you sell it?, I ask. The younger poet smiles. And he asks what the other one was luring, "Besides a reader, is my friend a questioner?". I work in the Ministry of Culture. I am now on holiday in the city my grandfather was born. "Was your grandfather also a reader?" An usher, António. Did you sell The Flea? "The city is a cemetery of bookshops. If it were a bakery... Bakery The Weevil, it would still be open today. The hunger of the spirit is rubbish. Don't let your *prego* get cold..."

A *prego*, a steak on bread, tender. A glass of beer at the right temperature. Rowdy students, their hands busy with those instant communication devices, are settling down at the tables. "If you are interested in other editions of the magazine, the entire collection, the price is cheaper." Thank you. A cemetery of bookshops... I walked by Lello and I hadn't seen so many people jostling to get into a book-house in a long time! My observation entices the older man to laugh, as if I had just managed a clumsy joke; the other, the young poet, imitates him, giving the wild duck from Lisbon a mocking smile, "Lello, my friend, has become a museum, a stairway, a training field for the amateur photographer. Anyhow, it is the oldest bookshop in Porto: because of its unique architectural structure, and under the rules of the universal suggestion of capitalism, it is snatching the moment. I am not sixty yet and I have lived in several cities in the city of the same name. In the eighties, when I took part in the Conferences from Hell, Porto was one of the most provincial cities in the Iberia. We would stop by at the Majestic in Santa Catarina. The Majestic, in its ramshackle splendor, was a café for everyone, common people, students, hungry whores, penniless artists... Now there is also a queue at the door and for a bottle of water and an espresso you pay almost the minimum wage. Disease decimates bookshops just like palm trees, have you heard about it in the Ministry of Culture? There is a plague

como ananases solitários. Imagem pobre, não cultivo devaneios de poeta copinho de leite, a linguagem deve ser fodida como as nossas vidas. Palavras verdadeiras, tendo vísceras e afetos, são as que trazemos nos bolsos. As habituais, portanto; delirantes, sem dúvida. Da peste das livrarias lhe falava: não foi a *nova cidade* a agravar o seu estado de saúde: elas vão morrendo segundo a mesma razão que extinguiu A Pulga: a cidade abandonou-as, como está a abandonar as lojas de ferragens na Rua do Almada. A peste é o abandono. A Livraria Leitura, a famosa Leitura, não definiu por ter mudado de proprietário, isso é conversa. Foi sitiada de abandono». Do abandono nasce húmus renovador das cidades? - questiono, peço cerveja para mim e para os poetas. O mais novo, atento, ouve o mestre. O discurso será recorrente, mas ele escuta-o como da primeira vez: pode sobrevir uma palavra nova, uma linha de fuga a soldar ideia errática. Uma contradição, pouco provável, a atizar fogo na rebeldia do ideólogo das Conferências do Inferno, «É uma maneira de dizer. Por sugestão europeia, pela guerra noutros destinos, o Porto irrompe outra cidade. Repovoa-se de personagens novas o abandono». O poeta mais jovem, acaba de enrolar um cigarro. Junta vocábulos seus às palavras do amigo, «A doença das livrarias é como a doença que atacou as máquinas de escrever». Pergunto: Algum de vocês leu João Chagas? O diretor da *Piolho*, queixo levantado, o mesmo olhar de ave de altanaria em época de defeso, retoma a conversa, «Como diz o meu amigo, a doença das máquinas de escrever é como a peste que atacou as canetas de tinta permanente. Esse Chagas, sei, esteve ligado à Revolta do 31 de Janeiro, de 1891. Dos seus livros, não li nenhum. O esquecimento nacional é a maior causa de passamento dos escritores mortos».

devouring the palm trees' canopy: they lose their branches and look like lonely pineapples. A poor image, I don't cultivate daydreams of a glass-of-milk poet, language should be screwed up like our lives. Real words, with guts and affection, is what we carry in our pockets. Thus, the usual words; outrageous, undoubtedly. I was talking about the plague of the bookshops: it was not the *new city* that worsened their health condition: they are dying for the same reason that killed The Flea: the city abandoned them, just like it is abandoning the hardware stores in Rua do Almada. Desertion is the plague. Leitura, the famous bookshop Leitura, did not languish because it changed owner: that's bullshit. It was besieged by desertion." Does desertion breed a humus that renovates cities? - I ask, and summon for a beer for me and the poets. The younger one, attentive, listens to the master. The speech may be recurrent, but he listens to him as if it were the first time: a new word may arise, an escape line welding an erratic idea. An unlikely contradiction fanning the flames of rebellion in the ideologist of the Conferences from Hell, "It is a manner of speaking. By suggestion of Europe, because of war in other destinations, Porto erupts as one other city. Desertion is repopulated with new characters." The younger poet finishes rolling a cigarette. He adds his own words to those of his friend, "The illness of bookshops is the same one that attacked the typewriters". I ask: Has any of you read João Chagas? The director of *The Lice*, his chin lifted, the same gaze of a restrained bird of prey, picks up the conversation, "As my friend is saying, the illness that attacked the typewriters is the same plague that infected the fountain pens. That Chagas, I know, was connected to the Rebellion of the 31st of January of 1891, in Porto. His books, I did not read. National oblivion is the biggest cause of death of dead writers".

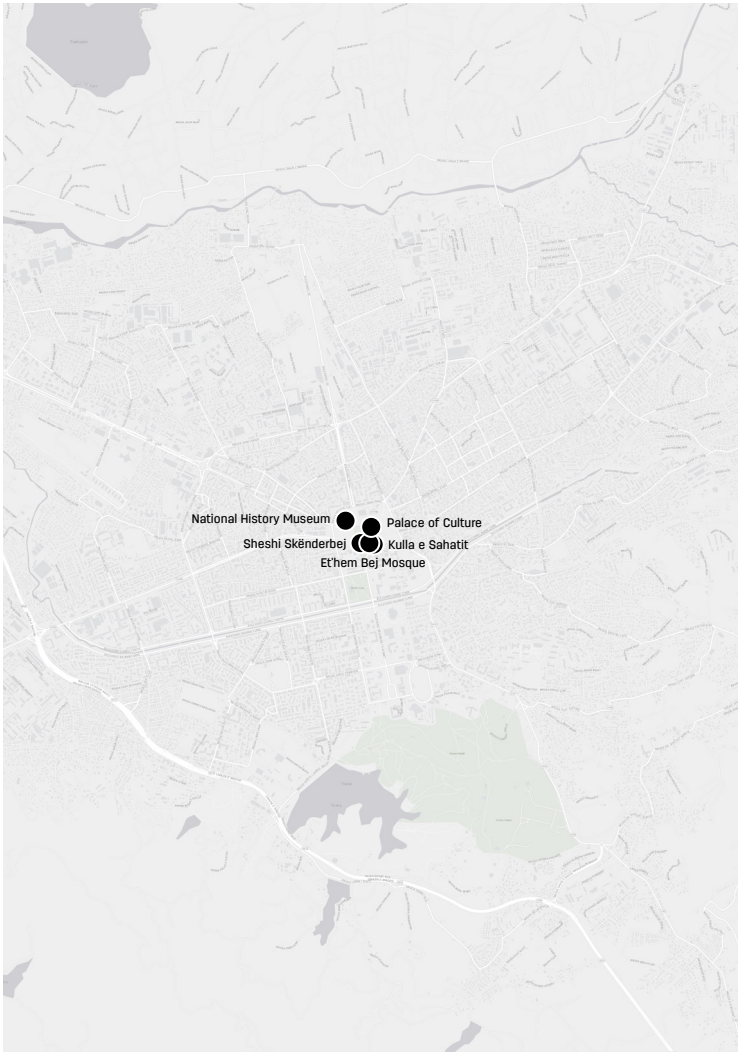
1 *The Lice*, in Portuguese, *O Piolho*, is also the popular name of Âncora D'Ouro, one of Porto's most renowned and oldest cafes, whose description resembles the one of the café the narrator is sitting in.

The Clock Tower

Dorina Pllumbi and Elona Pira

Kulla e Sahatit, by Ardian Vehbiu, is a book-length essay that delves into the historical and cultural significance of the Clock Tower in the heart of **Tirana**, Albania. Drawing on personal reflections and collective memories, it offers a nuanced and multi-faceted exploration of this architectural landmark, illuminating its evolving relationship with the horizontally expanding city that surrounded it. “Kulla e Sahatit” invites readers to consider the ways in which architecture can shape and reflect cultural identity, as well as the complex interplay between urban development and historical memory.

Vehbiu’s work takes readers on a journey through the tower’s storied past, illuminating its role as a symbol of national identity and as a witness to Albania’s complex political history. Originally built during the Ottoman era, the Clock Tower served as a central point of orientation for the emerging cityscape, establishing a sense of place and community in the midst of urban growth. However, the tower’s symbolic dimensions were later dwarfed by the monumentalizing architecture of the communist period: a shift that Vehbiu thoughtfully considers within the context of Albania’s complex political history. Through a meticulous analysis of the tower’s historical and cultural context, Vehbiu demonstrates the ways in which the tower transcends its physical dimensions becoming a site of hope, which served as a powerful symbol of Albanian identity, endurance, and resilience in the face of political upheaval and societal change.



Kulla e Sahatit

by Ardian Vehbiu

Faqe 15

Të pafuqishëm për ta përvetësuar Kullën, komunistët bënë atë çka dinin të bënin me kë nuk i bindej vullnetit të tyre totalitar: e izoluan. Deri edhe portën e hyrjes, të pluhurosur dhe të mistershme në pakomunikueshmërinë e vet të drunjtë, e kyçën me një dry të përbindshëm, gati-gati dekorativ post-modern. Në dukje dryni duhej të pengonte kureshtarë e turiste për t'u kuturitur brenda, por ne thelb lajmëronte burgosjen e vetë Kullës.

Andej e tutje, Kulla e Sahatit sikur fitoi një përmasë të re, brendësinë, që deri atëherë i kishte munguar. Paradoksalisht, ishte dryni që ia dha këtë përmasë, të cilën as edhe porta nuk kishte arritur t'ia jepte. Dryni ishte shenjë e pakundërshtueshme e një pranie të brendshme, e një hapësire të fshehtë që vdekatarët nuk ishin më të lejuar ta eksploronin. Mijëra fëmijë kureshtarë (e mbase jo vetëm fëmijë) do të kenë ëndërruar për sekretin e mbyllur aq teatralisht me dry. Katërkëndëshi i madh i bazës së Kullës, aq afer gjithçkaje që ndodhte (e që nuk ndodhte) në qendër të Tiranës, i ngjante tanimë gjithnjë e më tepër një burgu, por ndryshe nga hapsanat e tjera, me të cilat ishte plot Shqipëria, ky bashkonte, si me magji, nën të njëjtën shenjë, burgun dhe të burgosurin.

Për shumëkënd, kulla u kthye kështu në monument të lirisë evropiane të humbur. Enver Hoxha me të vetët, që nuk ishin të pandjeshëm ndaj simbolizmit të vetëvetishëm në arkitekturë, do ta toleronin këtë përshenjim të ri, përderisa – sipas vlerësimit të tyre – frika se mos liria e humbur ishte gjithnjë *më e paktë* sesa liria që *ende* mund të humbej, do ta tregonte veten më të fortë sesa revolta e brendshme për një monument të lidhur me pranga në qendër të qytetit (e për një ide, por njëlloj ishte). Ata nuk i dhanë rëndësi dinjitetit, sado modest, të Kullës gjatë ditës, dhe mençurisë subversive që ajo rrezatonte mbrëmjeve; sfidës së saj, aq syptatrembur dhe unike, ndaj përvetësimit ideologjik të simboleve; dashurimit të së gjithëve pas saj, vetmisë së saj, dhe nevojës së saj për kuptim.

Faqe 19

I vetmi partner i natyrshëm i Kullës mbetej minareja e xhamisë së Et'hem Beut, edhe ajo udhëtar i lodhur, i mbërritur deri në komunizëm nga epoke e, pas gjasë, nga një përmasë e kithtë. Një dry i përngjashëm me atë të kullës do t'u fliste shkoqur edhe kureshtarëve që çdo ditë mblihdeshin rreth xhamisë, ndonjë syri mund t'i kapërcente

The Clock Tower

by Ardian Vehbiu, *Kulla e Sahatit* (Tiranë: Çabej, 2018), pp. 15, 19, 37, 47, and 51.

Translation by Dorina Pllumbi and Elona Pira

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Powerless in appropriating the Clock Tower, the communists did what they did best with anyone who did not obey their totalitarian will: they isolated them. Even the entrance gate, dusty and mysterious in its wooden silent nature, was locked with a monstrous, almost decorative post-modern padlock. At first look the padlock was intended to prevent curious tourists from sneaking inside, but in essence it served to announce the imprisonment of the Tower itself.

From then on, the Clock Tower seemed to gain a new dimension, an interiority, which until then had been missing. Paradoxically, it was the padlock that endowed it with this dimension, which somehow even the door had failed to give. The padlock was now an undeniable sign of an inner presence, and of a forbidden space that mortals were no longer allowed to explore. Thousands of curious children (perhaps not just children) will have dreamed of the secret that the padlock so theatrically locked away with. The large quadrangle Tower base, so close to everything that happened (and didn't happen) in the centre of Tirana, came to resemble more and more a prison; but unlike the other prisons, of which Albania was full, this one united, as if by magic, under the same sign, the prison and the prisoner.

For many, the Tower thus transformed into a monument of a lost European freedom. Enver Hoxha and his coterie, who were not insensitive to the inherent symbolism in architecture, would tolerate this new reference, since - in their assessment - the fear of a lost freedom was always *less* than the freedom that could *still* be lost, which might show itself stronger than a potential internal revolt for a handcuffed monument in the centre of the city. They paid no attention to the dignity, however modest, of the Tower during the day; or to the subversive anger that it radiated in the evenings; or to its unflinching and singular resistance to any potential ideological appropriation of its symbols; or to everyone's affection for it, its loneliness, and its need for meaning.

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The minaret of the Et'hem Bey Mosque was the only remaining natural partner of the Tower; it, too, a weary traveller to communist times, a vestige of a skewed era, and likely, dimension as well. A padlock similar to the one on the Tower would emphatically confront the curious people who daily gathered around the mosque, even if an eye

kangjellat e të endej i lirë nëpër afreskët e arabeskat, madje mund edhe të kuptonte fatin që i bashkonte të dy monumentet. Kulla e Sahatit dhe minareja ishin dy vetmitarë që e ndienin më shumë se kurrë nevojën e shoku-shokut. Fakti që askush nga vdekatarët nuk mund të depërtonte në brendësinë e tyre – atje ku një përmasë lirie e mbijetuar digjej në heshtje, si fitil i pafundmë, falë mbrojtjes së dyfishtë të drynit – sikur ua shtonte shenjtërinë. Netët e ritualeve gjigante të festave rrapëllimtare të komunistëve, të dy kullat braktiseshin në gjysmerrësirë, teksa dritat e rregjimit, nuk i kursenin lux-et, dhe lajkat, për Heroin e Madh të së Gjithë Epokave, Skënderbeun të zbrazur nga kuptimet, domethëniet dhe përshënjetimet. Në të vërtete, Skënderbeu do ta kishte pasur vendin ideal pikërisht në mes të së dyjave, si prijësi që, ndonëse në kohën e vet nuk arriti t'i mbante shqiptarët në Evropë, ua bëri mundin më të lehtë atyre që, katër shekuj më vonë, e nxorën më në fund Shqipërinë nga bunaca otomane.

Hisotrikisht, dhe jo vetëm në Shqipëri, kullat janë shoqëruar ndonjëherë me burgimin, izolimin, heqjen e lirisë. Në vështirim të parë, kjo mund edhe të duket paradoksale, përderisa kulla, si çdo ndërmarje arkitektonike e ekzagjeruar, realizon njëkohësisht edhe ëndrrën e njeriut për të qenë i lire, ose të paktën për t'u çliruar sadopak nga trysina dypërmasore e hapësirës ku graviteti na detyron të jetojmë në të shumtën e kohës. Megjithatë, sipas një interpretimi tjetër, me tokësor, liria hapësimore do të kuptohej si liri për të lëvizur pikërisht në këtë botë dypërmasore, ku lartësia do të mendohej si pak a shumë mishërim i autoritetit.

Këtu është e lehtë të shpjegohet pse dukshmëria, prania e pashmangshme e kullës në fushat pamore të qytetarëve, do të merrte domethënie politike: aq sa kulla do të simbolizonte vetë shtetin, në atë masë që ky të imponohej si tutor i lirisë së qytetarëve të vet, dhe në atë masë që një hierarki thjesht gjeometrike do të shndërrohej në metafore të hierarkisë politike.

Në këtë kontekst, edhe kulla e Sahatit nuk mund të mos përshënjonte burgimin, izolimin, "heqjen e lirisë", jo vetëm për shkak të vetmisë së saj metafizike, por edhe, e sidomos, ngaqë në të nuk mund të hyhej lirisht, siç e shënjonte me elokuence dryni në portat e saj, të përhitura nga njëfare pluhurosjeje e vjetër, pothuaj shekullore. Çfarëdolloj qënieje a entiteti ishte ngujuar aty, kishte kohë që e kishte këmbyer, jo me dëshirën e vet, lirinë e qiellit (të sjellë aq pranë nga lartësia) me ftohtësinë e errët të trupit të Kullës. Ndryshe nga xhamia fqinje, e cila u defunksionalizua, për t'u kthyer në element skenografik në mos folklorik, në teatrin kombëtar të sheshit "Skënderbej", kulla e Sahatit, në dukje, nuk u pengua në misionin e vet parësor: kumtimin e kohës. Sa për xhaminë, mjaftonte

could climb the railings and wander freely through the frescoes and arabesques, and perhaps come to understand the fate that brought these monuments together.

The Clock Tower and the minaret were two desolate loners that needed each other more than ever. The fact that no mortals could penetrate their interior—where thanks to the extra protection of the padlock, a flicker of surviving freedom burned silently, like an endless wick, —seemed to add to their divinity. On nights when the massive rituals of the communists' boisterous holidays took place, both towers were abandoned in a half-darkness, as the lights of the regime spared no luxury or flattery, for the Great Hero of All Ages, Skanderbeg - long emptied of meaning, significance, and connotation. In truth, Skanderbeg's ideal place would have been precisely between the two towers, as the leader who, despite not managing to keep the Albanians in Europe in his time, made it easier for those who, four centuries later, would finally take Albania out of the Ottoman rule. Historically, and not just in Albania, towers have sometimes been associated with imprisonment, isolation, deprivation of liberty. At first glance, this might seem paradoxical, since the tower, like any exaggerated architectural enterprise, simultaneously fulfils the human dream of being free, or to at least to be temporarily free from the tyranny of two-dimensional space that gravity forces us to live in most of the time. However, following another, more earthly interpretation, spatial freedom would be understood as the freedom to move precisely in this two-dimensional world, and where height would be thought of as the embodiment of an authority.

This way it is easy to explain why the visibility, and the inevitable presence of the Tower seen by citizens in every backdrop, would come to take on political significance: the Tower would symbolize the state itself, to the extent that this state would impose itself as the guardian of the freedom of its citizens, and to the extent that a purely geometric hierarchy would be transformed into a political hierarchy metaphor.

In this context, even the Clock Tower could not but symbolize imprisonment, isolation, "removal of freedom", not only because of its metaphysical solitude, but also, and especially, because it could not be entered freely, as signified eloquently by the padlock on its door, weathered by some old, almost century-old dusting. Whatever kind of being or entity was imprisoned there, it had long since traded, not willingly, the freedom of the sky (immanently close via height) for the coldness and darkness of the body of the Tower.

Unlike the neighbouring mosque, which was rendered defunct, by becoming a scenographic, if not folkloric element, in the national theatre of "Scanderbeg" square, the Clock Tower was, seemingly, not

pak djallëzi interpretative për të mbërritur në përfundimin se e kishin lënë aty si për t'i kujtuar Skënderbeut se, megjithë heroizmin e padiskutueshëm, ndërmarrja e tij anti-osmane gjithsesi kishte dështuar. Në të vërtetë, Skënderbeu ishte sjellë në shesh pas xhamisë, në kuadrin e një 500-vjetori të vdekjes të kremtuar pothuajse në delir, e vetëm një vit pasi kishave e xhamive të Shqipërisë, në rastin më të mirë, u ishte vënë dryni. Në kushtet e mbylljes me dhunë të institucioneve fetare, çdo orvatje për ngritje monumentesh nuk do të mund të merrej veçse si orvatje për të përnxitur një alternativë të feve tradicionale, ose më mirë, një fe alternative. Ndërsa kultura kombëtare, të paktën që prej Rilindjes e këtej, ishte ngritur vërtetë mbi mitin e Skënderbeut, statuja e sjellë me aq bujë në qendër të Tiranës i kishte rrënjët në një zbrazëti kulturore të frikshme, të krijuar sidomos pas radikalizmit kulturor të mesit të viteve '60. Pasi iu vërsulën me kazmë traditës, fanatikët e frymëzuar prej invektivave antikonservatore të Enver Hoxhës, kërkuan pastaj të shlyenin fajet me gjestin, në dukje paradoksal, të përlavdimit të një heroi me të cilin tradita kombëtare ishte identifikuar prej kohësh. Politikisht kjo mund të interpretohej si masë e mençur për të rivendosur pak drejtëpeshim, qoftë edhe vetëm në ndërgjegjen kombëtare të përçudnuar. Por kulturorisht, interpretimi duket të jetë pak më i ndërlikuar. Duke filluar nga viti 1966, ishte jashtëzakonisht oportune të flitej për "kufizime" të këtij apo atij autoriteti të traditës: përkatësia klasore dhe politike, pikëpamjet fetare, etj. të personaliteteve nga më të adhuruarit iu nënshtruan analizave sociologjike sa të hollësishme, aq edhe të cekëta. Gjergj Fishta, i dënuar dikur për hir të miqësisë "vëllazërore" me fqinjët e Veriut, tashmë u zhvarros edhe një herë, për t'u ridënuar si katolik, reaksionar, konservator e pro-fashist. As Naim Frashëri nuk do t'i shpëtonte kritikës "marksiste", për shkak të vizioneve të tij panteiste, frymës ekumenike të predikimeve të tij letrare dhe pacifizmit social. Në këtë atmosferë, shkëlqimi i sforcuar që shoqëroi kremtimin e 500-vjetorit të vdekjes së Skënderbeut pati vërtetë një pasojë pozitive, në atë masë që u ngadalësoi sado pak galopin radikalëve të Enverit – tepër të zënë, në atë kohë, duke iu vënë zjarrin bibliotekave, duke përdhosur afresket e ikonat, e duke shqepur me sqepar kutitë e shenjtja të relikeve. Natyrisht, përlavdimi i Skënderbeut i shërbente, tërthorazi, politikës së re autarkike e izolacioniste që Enver Hoxha e Mehmet Shehu kishin paraparë për Shqipërinë (e tyre). Luftërat e heroit kombëtar kundër perandorisë osmane në shekullin XV vlenin për bukuri si metaforë për konceptet e reja që po bëheshin gati të mbilleshin në bahçet e truve shqiptare: rrethimi imperialisto-revizionist, psikoza e të qenët në kërcënim të pandërprerë, uniteti kombëtar, Shqipëria – fanar ndriçues i socializmit në Evropë, mbështetja në forcat e veta, etj. Në

hindered in its main mission: the marking of time. As for the mosque, with a bit of devilish interpretation it was enough to arrive at the conclusion that they had left it there as if to remind Skanderbeg that, despite his indisputable heroism, his anti-Ottoman enterprise had still failed. In fact, Skanderbeg came to the square long after the mosque, in the context of the 500-year anniversary of his death celebrated almost deliriously, and just one year after churches and mosques in Albania were, at best, locked up.¹ Against this backdrop of violent closure of religious institutions, any attempt to erect new monuments could only be interpreted as an attempt to promote an alternative to traditional religions, or better, an alternative religion. Although the national culture, at least since the Renaissance, was essentially founded on the myth of Skanderbeg, the statue that was brought with so much fanfare in the centre of Tirana had its roots in a harrowing cultural void, that particularly followed the cultural radicalism of the mid-60s. Fanatics, after taking a pickaxe to tradition, inspired by the anti-conservative invectives of Enver Hoxha, then sought to atone for their guilt with the seemingly paradoxical gesture of glorifying a hero with whom the national tradition had long identified. Politically, this could be interpreted as a shrewd move to restore some balance, even if only in an alienated national consciousness. Culturally however the interpretation seems to be a little more complicated. Starting in 1966, it was extremely opportune to talk about the "limitations" of this or that representative of tradition: class and politics, religious views, etc. of some of the most exalted figures were subjected to both detailed and subtle sociological analyses. Gjergj Fishta, once convicted for the sake of a "brotherly" friendship with a Northern neighbour, was exhumed once more, to be re-convicted as a Catholic, a reactionary, a conservative and as pro-fascist. Not even Naim Frashëri would escape the "Marxist" critique, on account of his pantheistic visions, the ecumenical spirit of his literary sermons and social pacifism. In this atmosphere, the forced grandeur that accompanied the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the death of Skanderbeg truly had a positive effect, to the extent that it slowed down the gallop of Enver Hoxha's radicals – who were too busy, at that time, setting fire to libraries, desecrating frescoes and icons, and axing the sacred boxes of relics. Of course, the glorification of Skanderbeg served, indirectly, the new autarkic and isolationist policy that Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu² envisioned for (their) Albania. The wars of the national hero against the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century were considered a good metaphor for the new concepts getting ready to be planted in the gardens of Albanian minds: the imperialist-revisionist siege, the psychosis of being in constant threat, national unity, Albania - shining beacon of socialism in Europe, reliance in its own forces, etc. In the

bazë të kësaj histerie të re qëndronte pa dyshim miti kombëtarist i paranojës shqiptare, i ringjallur në trajtat moderne të Shqipërisë së vogël si atdhe i kombit, përkufizuar historikisht nëpërmjet përplasjeve të saj perandoritë e mëdha të së keqës historike.

Statuja ekuestre e Skënderbeut, në Tiranë, ishte tribut i vonë për heroin tonë kombëtar, por edhe e njëkohësisht shërbeu si shenjë e normalizimit të kryeqytetit shqiptar si qytet evropian; në kuptimin *edhe ne*. Kjo vjen e bëhet më e qartë po të kemi parasysh rrethanat e jashtëzakonshme kur u vendos statuja në Tiranën e vitit 1968 – ose në vitet e izolimit të Shqipërisë, të frikës nga pushtimi i mundshëm prej Traktatit të Varshavës dhe të epilogut të "revolucionarizmit" të jetës së vendit. Edhe vetë fakti që monumenti kushtuar një feudali mesjetar që kish luftuar, mes të tjerash, edhe për Krishtërimin dhe Papën e Romës, ia zuri vendin Stalinit, dëshmon për kthesën dramatike të punëve, ose ri-orientimin e regjimit të Hoxhës drejt kombëtarizmit.

Që nga ajo kohë, shumëçka ka ndryshuar e ndërruar në shesh, por vetëm monumenti i Gjergjit nuk është vënë ndonjëherë në diskutim; rreth tij është shkatërruar, gërmuar dhe ndërtuar sërish, janë prerë pemë dhe pastaj janë mbjellë prapë, është shtruar rruga me pllaka dhe pastaj me asfalt, është hedhur zhavorr dhe është mbjellë bar, janë ulur me mijëra e mijëra tiranas dhe të ardhur, kanë ardhur rrotull me mijëra e mijëra makina; por vetë monumenti jo vetëm nuk ka lëvizur, por edhe ka qenë i detyruar të mbetet i barabartë me vetveten, për të mundësuar normalitetin e një konteksti aq të paqëndrueshëm.

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Nga pikëpamja arkitektonike, Pallati i Kulturës do të shënonte fillimin e zbatimit të një plani që unë do ta kisha quajtur plan të *dekontekstualizimit* të Kullës. Ndërtesa të vjetra, por jo të vjetëruara, u shembën për t'u lënë vend hapësirave boshe, ku edhe zogjtë përtonin të fluturonin; dhe rrugëvë të gjera, me dy-tri pemëza anemike anash, që sikur e theksonin edhe më pikëllimin e trafikut të rrallë. Në të vërtetë, çdo ndërtesë që shembej, përfntonte shqetësimin se ç'do të bëhej me atë që kish qëndruar e fshehur prapa të parës dhe që tani zbulohet papritmas. Shtëpitë e ulëta tiranase, me oborre të ngushta, fiq, pula e jaze, e jetuan për pak ditë lavdinë e të qenit mu në qendër të kryeqytetit shqiptar, ballë për ballë me Skënderbeun. Ky plan shkatërrimesh pati si pasojë të pallogaritur rrafshimin e qendrës, me zbrazëtinë që u hap në skalp të Tiranës si ndonjë lloj tejet agresiv alopecie. Në pllangat e mbetura djerrë shfaqeshin tek-tuk ngrehina të rasti, parqe lojërash, kioska pararendëse, që ndryshe nga këto të tashmet parapëlqenin këndet e drejta, metalin e hollë, dhe mugëtirën e llambave inkandeshente. Një lloj bari i egër, i çregullt, i zverdhur zuri

centre of this new hysteria was without a doubt the nationalist myth of Albanian paranoia, revived in the modern forms of a small Albania, homeland of the nation, historically defined through its confrontations with great empires of historical evil.

The equestrian statue of Skanderbeg in Tirana was a belated tribute to our national hero, but it simultaneously acted as a sign of the normalization of the Albanian capital as a European city; in the sense of *us too*. This becomes clearer if we consider the extraordinary circumstances in 1968 when the statue was placed in Tirana – it was the years of Albania's isolationism, fear of a possible invasion from the Warsaw Treaty and the epilogue of the "revolutionization" of life in the country. Even the fact that a monument dedicated to a medieval feudal lord who had fought, among other things, for Christianity and the Pope of Rome, took Stalin's place, attests to the dramatic turn of events, or the re-orientation of the Hoxha regime towards nationalism. Since that time, many things have changed and been altered in the square, but the monument of Skanderbeg has never been in question; all around it things have been destroyed, dug up and rebuilt, trees have been cut and then planted again, the road has been paved with tiles and then with asphalt, gravel has been laid and grass has been planted, thousands and thousands of Tirana residents and newcomers have come, thousands and thousands of cars have circled it; but the monument has not only not moved, it has also been forced to remain equal to itself, to enable the normalization of an otherwise unstable context.

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From an architectural point of view, the Palace of Culture would mark the beginning of an implementation of a plan that I would have called a plan to *decontextualize* the Tower. Old but far from obsolete buildings were demolished to make way for empty spaces, where even birds were too lazy to fly; and wide roads, with two or three anaemic trees on the sides, which seemed to emphasize even more the agony of the spare traffic. In reality, every building that was demolished brought about the concern of what will happen with the other building once hidden behind and now suddenly revealed. For just a few days, Tirana's low houses, with their narrow courtyards, figs, chickens, and swale drains lived out the glory of being right in the centre of the Albanian capital, face-to-face with Skanderbeg. This plan of destruction had as an incalculable consequence the flattening of the centre, with an emptiness that spread in Tirana's scalp like a very aggressive type of alopecia. Random structures, playgrounds, forerunner kiosks appeared here and there on the gaping plains, which, unlike the current ones, preferred 90-degree corners, thin metal, and the twilight of

të mbinte anash monumenteve; i vetmi që guxoi ta merrte seriozisht këtë çrrudhje të qendrës nga ana e urbanistëve me gisht në gojë të regjimit.

Duket paradoksal fakti që regjimi totalitar – që përndryshe ia arriti të mbjellë ankthin e rrënimit total në vetëdijen kolektive të mbarë shqiptarëve – kërkoi gjithsesi këmbëngultas që ta shprehte vetveten, në rrafshin simboliko-mitik të kësaj vetëdijeje, nëpërmejet ndërtimeve si vokacion dhe si praktike. Dhe këtu nuk është fjala vetëm të metafora zyrtare (gati frank-masonike) e *ndërtimit* të socializmit, që u rrek të na kthente të gjithëve, idealisht, në muratorë e mjeshtër me mistri në dorë; por edhe të zelli sistematik me të cilin regjimi iu përvesh transformimeve urbanistike në qendrat e qyteteve, duke filluar me Tiranën vetë. Nuk është pa lidhje me këtë mani ndërtimeve edhe mosbesimi dyshues më të cilin u trajtuan të gjitha strukturat qytetëse të trashëguara, që e kishin zor t'u përshtateshin skenografive dhe koreografive të reja staliniste për qendrën: primati i publikes ndaj privates, turmës ndaj individit, fishekzjarreve festive ndaj xixëllonjave (ose qirinjve ose yjeve), parakalimit me hap ndaj procesionit fetar, drurëve koniferë ndaj drurëve gjetherënës. Në sferën qytetëse shkatërimi i pamëshirshëm i ekzistueses u përlligj si parakusht për ndërtimin e së resë, sadoqë jo rrallë kjo e re nuk ishte veçse rrasë në varrin e së vjetrës. Asgjësimi i qendrës së vjetër të Tiranës, i pafalshëm nga pikëpamja ngushtësisht funksionale, ishte në të vërtetë akt brutal i përvetësimit simbolik të hapësirës, i barazvlershem me një shpronësim semiotik.

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Në çdo rast, anulimi i qendrës së vjetër të Tiranës nuk ishte thjesht operacion plastik, një "lifting" në emër të një modernizimi sa abstrakt, aq edhe të varfër në ide. Shkatërimi i atyre pak lavdive të dikurshme të këtij kryeqytetit që, gjithsesi, ishte më i moshuar se republika, ndoshta mbahej po aq domethënës sa edhe përgatitja për afirmimin e gjeometrive të reja, të bardha si dopiopetët e kepecët e Enverit gjatë epokës autarkike të viteve 70-80. Së bashku me lokalet e vjetra plot tym të athët bërçollash, fuçi të nginjura birre e piktura *kitsch* të varura shtrembër në muret e nxira; së bashku me dyqanet e vogla dhe butikat, plot mallra sa të dashura aq dhe të panevojshme, me ndonjë qilim tigrash me fytyra prej fëmije të hedhur kujdesshëm mureve për të mbuluar ekzemat e lagështirës, ishte një art i tërë të jetuarit që u detyrua të varrosej në pluhurin e vet. Si shpendë të vrazhdë, por të ndrojtur, njerëzit e dëbuar nga foletë e tyre të padëmshme e pothuajse të fshehta, filluan të enden së koti nëpër hapësirat e reja, aq refraktare për kuptimet e reja. Herët a vonë, këta njerëz, a pasardhësit e tyre

incandescent lamps. A kind of wild, untidy, yellowed grass began to grow along side of the monuments; the only one who dared to take seriously this shrinking of the centre by the thumb-sucking urbanists of the regime.

It seems paradoxical that the totalitarian regime - which otherwise managed to implant the anxiety of total destruction in the collective consciousness of all Albanians - still persistently sought to express itself, in the symbolic-mythical plane of this consciousness, through construction as a vocation and as a practice. And here we are not talking only about the official metaphor (almost Franc-maçonnerie) of *building* socialism, which sought to turn us all, ideally, into master masons with trowels in hand; but also, the systematic zeal with which the regime undertook urban transformations in the city centres, starting with Tirana itself. Not unrelated to this construction mania is the suspicious mistrust with which all inherited city structures were treated, and that had difficulty adapting to the new Stalinist scenographies and choreographies for the centre: the primacy of the public over the private, the crowd over the individual, festive firecrackers over fireflies (or candles or stars), marching over religious procession, conifers over deciduous trees. In the urban sphere, the merciless destruction of what existed was justified as prerequisite for the construction of the new, although not infrequently this new was nothing more than a slate on the grave of the old. The destruction of the old centre of Tirana, inexcusable from a strictly functional point of view, was in fact a brutal act of symbolic appropriation of space, equivalent to a semiotic expropriation.

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In any case, the cancellation of the old centre of Tirana was not just a plastic operation, a "lifting" in the name of a modernization, as abstract, as it was poor in ideas. The destruction of even those few old glories of this capital, which, in any case, was older than the republic, was probably considered as meaningful as the preparation for the assertion of new geometries; white just like Enver Hoxha's double breasted jackets and shoes during the autarkic era of the 70s-80. Along with the old cafeterias full of the pungent smoke of steaks, bursting beer barrels and *kitsch* paintings hanging crooked on tanned walls; along with the small shops and boutiques, full of goods both loved and unnecessary, with some rugs of tigers with baby faces carefully thrown on the walls to cover the eczema of dampness, it was a whole art of living that was forced to be buried under its own dust. Like rough but timid birds, people expelled from their harmless and almost hidden nests began to wander in vain through the new spaces, so refractory to new meanings. Sooner or later, these people,

edhe më të palumtur, do të mësoheshin ta shuanin në rrugë zjarrin e pasionit për të ndenjur bashkë, ashtu siç do të mësoheshin çiftet të dashuroheshin paqeve, e pleqtë t'i konsumonin diskutimet e tyre të përsëritura ulur në parapetet ndanë statujave.

Regjimi u përpoq, vërtetë seriozisht, ta shlyente nga kultura e vetvetishme e kryeqytetasve idenë e qendrës si vend ideal për t'u socializuar. Ishte koha kur, ende në vazhdë të revolucionit kulturor kinez, koha e lirë shihej me dyshim, si mbijetoje jo e domosdoshme e një konceptimi borgjez të punës si mundim; qytetarëve prandaj po u kërkoheshin të socializoheshin në shkollë, në fabrika, në qendra pune, në mbledhje lagjeje, në zборе, në gjyqe popullore, në olimpiada teatrosh amatore e në aksione me punë vullnetare, atje ku vetëdija e grupit mund të manipuloheshin me shumë lehtësi nga komisarët, sekretarët dhe tempullarët e tjerë. Paradoksalisht, ky atentat kundër kohës së lirë çoi në krijimin e një turme që e gjente dhe e shijonte vetveten në rrugë, spektatore e heshtur e kryqëzimit të qytetit të vet. Pas një vërtitjeje gjithnjë e më problematike – për shkak të kantierizimit të qendrës – në zemrën e lashtë të Tiranës: rruga e Dibrës, rruga e Barrikadave, rruga e Postës, turma do disiplinoheshin, të paktën fizikisht, duke u devijuar në basenin artificial të Bulevardit të Madh.

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Shkatërrimi i qendrës e kishte edhe një pikësynim, si të thuash, social, përdërisa zemra tregtare e Pazarit të Vjetër mendohej, nga administrata komuniste, si vatër jetësore e një shtrese që ishte e destinuar të zhdukej. Bonifikimi i dhunshëm dhe masiv i rrugëve të ngushta, prishja e dyqaneve, pijetoreve të vogla, qebaptove, këndeve ku njerëzit ishin mësuar të takoheshin e të shkëmbenin dy fjalë, ishte edhe fillimi i ofensivës ndaj një klase fryma e së cilës e kishte karakterizuar Tiranën që prej themelimit të saj. Dalëngadalë erdhën e u bënë gjithnjë e më të rrallë, për t'u venitur plotësisht, teneqexhinjtë, furrxhinjtë, rrobaqepësit, sahatçinjtë, poçarët, qelesharët, kafexhinjtë, shambarët, shitësit e nallaneve, çertexhinjtë, sarafët, argjendarët, marangozët, lustraxhinjtë, jorganxhinjtë, opingarët, mballomatarët, bozaxhinjtë, xhambazët, nallbanët, kafsharët, hekurxhinjtë, sekserët, kallajxhinjtë, hamenjtë, kazazat, drumepretë, tapicierët, mbledhësit e vjetërsirave, hallvaxhinjtë, gegët e embëlsirave, bakejtë, qymyrrxhinjtë, arixhinjtë, qoftexhinjtë, qerestexhinjtë, xherahët e kuajve, vozaxhinjtë, kalldremxhinjtë, numraxhinjtë, shitësit e sheqerpareve, kallpazanët, meraklinjtë, kujunxhinjtë dhe bejtexhinjtë. Justifikimi standard për këtë kirurgji qytetëse kaq rrënjësore ishte nevoja për modernizim, por prapa këtij justifikimi fshihej dëshira aspak e pafajshme për ta tredhur Tiranën, në mënyrë që kjo të mos mund të ofronte asnjë rezistencë kur regjimi të orvatej ta modelonte sipas trajtës e

or their even more unhappy descendants, would learn to use the street to quench their desires to be together, just as couples would learn to fall in love in parks, and old people to consume their repetitive discussions seated on the concrete border along the statues. The regime tried, in earnest, to erase from the inherent culture of the capital city residents the idea of the centre as an ideal place to socialize. It was a time when, still in the wake of the Chinese cultural revolution, free time was viewed with suspicion, as an unnecessary survival of a bourgeois conception of work as toil; citizens were therefore being asked to socialize in schools, factories, workplaces, neighbourhood gatherings, *zbor*³, public trials, amateur theatre olympiads and voluntary work, where the consciousness of the group could be more easily manipulated by commissioners, secretaries and other templars. Paradoxically, this attack on free time led to the creation of a crowd that found and enjoyed itself on the street, silent spectator to the crucifixion of its own city. After problematically counting to bounce around – due to the construction in the centre, in the ancient heart of Tirana, Dibra Street, Barricade Street, Post Street - the crowd would finally be disciplined, at least physically, by being channelled to the artificial basin of the Big Boulevard.

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The destruction of the centre also had a social objective, so to speak, since the commercial heart of the Old Bazaar was considered by the communist administration as the vital home of a layer that was destined to disappear. The violent and massive reclamation of narrow streets, the demolition of shops, small pubs, kebab shops, corners where people had learned to meet and exchange small talk, was also the beginning of the offensive against a class whose spirit had characterized Tirana since its establishment. Slowly becoming rare, to eventually fade completely were the tinsmiths, furnace keepers, tailors, watchmakers, ceramists, fes makers (*qelesharet*), coffee makers, shambars, clog sellers, haberdasher, money traders (sarafs *sarafet*), goldsmiths, carpenters, shoe polishers, quilters, *opinga* makers, show repairers, *boza*⁵ makers, *xhambaz*⁶, farrier, *kafshare*⁷, blacksmiths, realtors, pewter, loaders, silk makers (*kazazat*), cutters of wood for fire, upholsterers, antique collectors, *hallvë*⁸ maker, *gegë*⁹ of sweet, grocers (*bakejtë*), charcoal makers, *arixhinjtë*¹⁰, meatball makers, lumberjacks (*qerestexhinjtë*), healers (*xherah*) of hourses, rowers, cobblestone makers, trick players, sellers of *sheqerpare*¹¹, money forgers (*kallpazanet*), attentive masters, jewellers, and folk-street poets (*bejtexhinjte*)¹². The standard justification for this radical city surgery was the need for modernization, but behind this justification was hidden the not so innocent desire to castrate Tira-

shëmbëlltyrës së vet. Ideja qendrore e këtij putsch-i urbanistik mund të përmbliidhej kështu: kontaktet njerëzore duheshin privuar nga konteksti i tyre i vetvetishëm, në mënyrë që pastaj të ishte e lehtë të mund të mbareshin nën kontroll absolut.

na, so that it could not offer any resistance when the regime tried to model it in its own image. The central idea of this urban putsch could be summed up like this: contact between humans had to be deprived of context, so that it would be easy to keep it under absolute control.

- 1 The majority of the religious buildings were demolished when the constitution was modified in 1976 to declare Albania the first atheist country in the world. (all the footnotes are added by the translator)
- 2 Mehmet Shehu served as the 23rd Prime Minister of Albania from 1954 to 1981. He was considered the second most powerful man after Enver Hoxha. Unofficial sources maintain he was murdered on orders from Hoxha in 1981, but the official version of his death is suicide.
- 3 *Zbor* was military training of the civilian population.
- 4 *Opinga* is the name for Albanian traditional leather shoes.
- 5 *Bozë* is a soft drink made with millet or corn flour. m
- 6 *Xhambaz* is the person who breeds and trains horses.
- 7 *Kafshar* is called the caregiver of the animals.
- 8 *Hallvë* is a dessert with fried flour, sugar and fat.
- 9 *Gegë* is local resident of the northern and middle provinces of Albania or originating from these provinces. The author here refers to specific *gegë* whose trade is candy making and selling. They typically came from the Mati in the Krujë region.
- 10 *Arixhi* is a wandering gypsy, part of Roma community.
- 11 *Sheqerpare* is a dessert with flour, fat, and eggs, baked and sweetened with syrup.
- 12 *Bejte* is a poem with two-line stanzas in the poetry of the East, which spread in Albania in the c. XVII-XV III; lyrical or humorous poem that is woven on the spot. Source: www.fjalorthi.com

The Monk

Marisa Kerbizi

Murgu ("The Monk"), a contemporary novel by the academic Artan Fuga, offers a deep reflection on man's relationship with money, spirituality, morality, and religion. Through a compelling story that interweaves fiction with philosophy, the drama of two main characters is played out. One is the monk, Martin, who lived in a monastery in the Middle Ages and was executed as a heretic by the Inquisition. The other, Tristan Bardhi, is an archaeologist who lives in the beautiful coastal city of **Durrës** in Albania. The destiny of two characters is interlinked by two robberies: one in the Middle Ages; the other in contemporary times. The first theft took place centuries ago, in the monastery of a medieval town. Two paintings, completely unique in terms of their aesthetics and message, disappeared without trace, within the religious institution. Likewise, in an apartment by the sea, thousands of Euros have been stolen. This money was income after the sale of a real estate inherited from the ancestors of Tristan Bardhi. The whole novel rests on a hermeneutic code intended to solve two mysteries and find the authors of the thefts. Tristan Bardhi finds himself slowly abandoning the concerns of his life to immerse himself in the previous life of the Monk to solve the mystery of the sensational theft in the Middle Ages. Dramatically, he finds out that there is no real difference between two thefts; a whole system (which has changed so little since the Middle Ages) is slowly revealed the theft of man's life by unscrupulous institutions that revere money. The narrative lines of past and present converge into a single tale and Tristan Bardhi finds himself plunged into the fate of the monk Martin, who was executed after revealing the truth that money is the paramount consideration even in religious institutions.



Murgu

by Artan Fuga

Që kur lundron në Adriatik dhe afroresh në bregun e tij, ndjen se Durrësi të shfaqet si një qytet që për nga madhështia është, ose më mirë, ka qenë, krejt i veçantë. Anija jonë ishte e tipit venecian, vinte ovale në formën e saj mbi det, e pajisur me tri vela të mëdha që era i gufonte lirshëm dhe bollshëm, por edhe me tridhjetë rremtarë, të paguar nga pronari i anijes, çka i jepnin kësaj të fundit një shpejtësi që nuk mund të mos të mahniste. Hymë në brendësi të qytetit duke marr fillimisht drejtimin për nga Veriu. U futëm në kanal in mbushur me ujë të kripur që hyn pas kodrave drejt e në zemër të qytetit.

Një pamje madhështore e natyrës të përshëndet. Midis kanalit hyrës dhe detit Adriatik ngrihen disa kodra që më duken si vullkanike, në kreshtat e të cilave duken banesa të vogla fshatarësh, ndonjë kullë fisniku, si dhe shumë tempuj që mbizotërojnë në majat e tyre. Kodrat janë të mbuluara me shkurre që japin një gjelbërim mesdhetar çka e përforcojnë ullinjët, vreshtat, si edhe fiqtë e detit, në një pamje ku deti, toka e gjelbëruar, qielli i kaltër, të gjitha, nën bashkimin e dritës së diellit që vjen nga malet e anë s lindore, i ngjajnë një parajsë tokësore. Pulëbardhat mbi det shfaqen si mesazhe shprese nën një bardhësi që shkëlqen në një sfond të kaltër. Mbi dallgët e buta ngrihur nga një puhizë ere e lehtë që na përkë dhelte fytyrën, ne shijoni kështu paqe e harmoni, e cila është prova e ekzistencës së Fuqisë Hyjnore.

Lexoj me kujdes të gjitha dokumentet që gjej në bibliotekën e Arqipeshkvisë. Shqyrtoj demografinë e qytetit, gjenealogjinë e familjeve, lidhjet martesore, gith=ka që regjistrat e Kishës sonë shënojnë me aq kujdes dhe saktësi. Të vjen keq vetëm se këto të dhëna kanë të bëjnë veçse me bashkësinë tonë fetare, dhe jo me të gjithë popullsinë e qytetit, gjithsesi një dritë hidhet edhe mbi të. Lexoj me kujdes raportet e klerikëve të Kishës sonë rreth monumenteve helenike dhe romake që trashëgon qyteti, të cilat, duhet thënë se janë goxha të dëmtuara, ca nga rrë shqitjet e tokës, ca nga tërmetet, dhe ca nga koha që bën punën e vet dhe gërryen gjithçka. Nisur prej atyre, kuptoj format dhe pasuritë monumentale të mbetjeve arkeologjike që kam. Akvaduku i kohës së Hadrianit, tempujt e Minervës dhe të

The Monk

by Artan Fuga, *Murgu* (Tiranë: Papyrus, 2016), pp. 319-324

Translation by Marisa Kerbizi

While you sail on the Adriatic Sea and approach its shore, you feel Durrës emerging as a city that in terms of grandeur is, or rather has been, quite special. Our ship was of the Venetian type, with its oval shape over the sea, equipped with three large sails that blew loosely and abundantly in the wind, but also with thirty oars, paid for by the owner, which gave this ship a velocity that could not but amaze. Entering the city from a northerly direction, we followed a canal filled with saltwater that flows from behind the hills straight into the heart of the city.

A magnificent view of nature greets us. Between the entrance channel and the Adriatic Sea, there are several hills, probably of volcanic origin, on the ridges of which are small peasant dwellings and, a noble tower, as well as many temples that dominated at their peaks. The hills were dense with bushes that highlight Mediterranean greenery reinforced by olives, vineyards, as well as sea figs, in a view in which the sea, green land, and blue sky, are united in the sunlight coming from the mountains on the east side, to resemble an earthly paradise. Over the sea, gulls appear as messengers of hope under a whiteness that glowed on a blue background. Sailing on gentle waves and buffed by the light breeze blowing on our faces, we are enjoying peace and harmony, which is proof of the existence of the Divine Power.

I carefully read all the documents I had found in the library of the Archdiocese. I examined the demographics of the city, the genealogy of the families, the marital ties, and all that our Church carefully and accurately records. It is such a pity that such data only deals with our religious community, and not the entire population of the city. However, some light is shed on that as well. I scrutinized the clerical reports of our Church about the Hellenic and Roman monuments of the city, which, it must be said, are quite damaged, some by landslides, some by earthquakes, and some by the passage of time that devours and erodes almost everything. From them, I understand the monumental forms and heritage of the archaeological remains. The aqueduct of Hadrian's time, the temples of Minerva

Dianës, mozaiku në qendër të qytetit, amfiteatri që nga përmasat e tij dëshmon demografinë e qenësishme të qytetit në kohët e veta të lavdishme janë monumente që kanë tërhequr vëmendjen time.

Pres nga ju të më thoni nëse duhen përshkrime të hollësishme për to ose jo. Ndonëse nuk kanë lidhje me qëllimin e misionit që më keni ngarkuar, përsëri, në kohën e lirë mund t'i kushtohem edhe kësaj pune nese interesi i Kishës sonë e kërkon atë. Pastaj këqyr bibliotekën antike, banjat romake me të gjitha ndarjet e tyre dhe që pajtonin kaq bukur rehatinë e kë të qytetërimi me forcën dhe krenarinë luftarake romake. Lexoj raportet e shkruara në shekuj nga besnikë të Kishës sonë mbi stelat e varreve, studime të plota mbi mbishkrimet dhe figurat në to, dhe ndjej sesa e jashtëzakonshme ka qenë urtësia e tyre, sa i madh durimi që kanë pasur, sa i mprehtë vështrimi i tyre, në analizat që na kanë lënë në dokumentet e tyre, shkruar me një kaligrafi si ajo e skribëve tanë, shoqëruar me harta, skica dhe portrete të riprodhuara nga ato që kanë gjetur mbi gur.

Nuk ka dyshim se qyteti aktualisht nuk ka madhështinë monumentale që ka pasur ndërkohë që ka qenë koloni helene, ose në kohën e sundimit romak mbi të. Rënia e dy vatrave të qytetërimin europian dhe botëror është ndjerë edhe në Durrës sepse qyteti sigurisht humbi energjinë që i vinte prej andej. Humbi madhështia greko-romake në fushën e kulturës, artit, sporteve, dyluftimeve, humbi energjia e skllëverve, u larguan gradualisht legjionet që i sillnin qytetit madhështinë me paradat dhe fortifikimet e veta. E gjithë paraaja e vënë në qarkullim nga qendrat e qytetërimeve të mëdha, si nga bota helenike, pastaj nga ajo romake, me rënien e tyre, nuk ushqente më kanalet financiare që gjallëronin Durrësin.

Durrësi dallon shumë nga vebdvanime dhe qytete të tjera evropiane. Ndoshta është nga të rrallët që ka qenë kaq pranë Athinës dhe Romës. Qytetet gjermanike, franke, angleze, ato të Europës Qendrore, sado të kenë pasur dinamikat e tyre, nuk e kanë ndjerë kaq afër ndikimin heleniko - romak, i cili, qysh nga shekulli i shtatë para Krishtit deri në shekullin e pestë pas Krishtit, me rënien e Romës, pra për dymbëdhjetë shekuj rresht u përplas dhe hodhi valët, rrezet e dritës, të ndriçimit, por dhe egërsinë e veprës emancipuese, më pas evangjelizuese, mbi popullsinë autoktone këtu.

Këta sot quhen arbër, dhe dikur quheshin ilirë. Unë i has, pjesën katolike të tyre, në meshat dhe lutjet tona si në katedralen e madhe të Arqipeshkvisë, ashtu edhe në qelat përreth, të cilat shtrihen në kodrat anash kanalit ujqor hyrës në qytet deri te cepi i tyre, i quajtur

and Diana, the mosaic in the centre of the city, and the vast amphitheatre caught my attention and testified the grandeur of the city in its glorious past.

I expect you to tell me whether detailed descriptions are further needed. Although they have nothing to do with the purpose of the mission entrusted to me, in my spare time, I can devote myself to this work if the interest of our Church requires it. Then I look at the ancient library, and the Roman baths with all their divisions, which so beautifully reconciled the comfort of this civilization with the strength and pride of Roman warfare. I read the reports written over the centuries on the tombstones by faithful members of our Church, the thorough studies of the inscriptions and figures on them. I feel profoundly how extraordinary their wisdom has been, how steadfast their patience, and how sharp their gaze; their analysis left to us in documents, written in calligraphy like that of our scribes, accompanied by maps, sketches, and by portraits reproduced by what they have found on the stone.

There is no doubt that the city has lost the monumental splendour it had as a Hellenic colony, or when it was under Roman rule. The fall of the two hearths of European and world civilization left their mark on Durrës: the city certainly lost the energy that came from there. Greco-Roman greatness was also lost in the fields of culture, art, sports, and fighting, while the energy of slaves was lost and the legions that brought greatness to the city with its parades and fortifications gradually left. Following their fall, the wealth circulating the Hellenic and Roman civilizations, no longer fed the financial channels that sustained Durrës.

Durrës differs considerably from many other European settlements and cities, as one of the few being close to Athens and Rome. The Germanic, French, English, and Central European cities, no matter how dynamic they were, did not feel the Hellenic-Roman influence from the seventh century BC to the fifth century AD with the fall of Rome, for twelve centuries in a row. Such influence collided and threw the waves, rays of light, and the enlightenment, but also the savagery of the emancipatory, then evangelistic work, on the autochthonous populations here.

Once called Illyrians, today these are called Arbër. I find them, especially the Catholic part of them, in our masses and prayers both in the great cathedral of the Archdiocese and in the surrounding cells, which lie on the hills by the water channel entering the city to the

Bishti i Palit, deri në anën e kundërt të gjirit, pra drejt vendit që quhet Kepi i Rodonit. (...)

Durrësi ka qenë dhe mbetet një qytet ku ndërthuren interesa, influenca, ngjarje, aspirata, ambicie, prirje, që i kalojnë shumë përmasat e krahinës së lirisë së Bizantit, dhe në disa raste, marrin madje pa e tepruar edhe një rëndësi kontinentale, që shtrihen edhe më larg Europës. Kisha jonë padyshim e ka njohur dhe e njeh këtë shtrirje të përmasave ushtarake, ekonomike, financiare të Durrësit, por bashkësitë tona fetare të Veriut të Europës Perëndimore, ne, pra, kemi nevojë të bëhemi të përgjegjshëm për to.

Drejtimet e këtyre influencave kryqëzohen duke ndjekur dy vija pingule me njëra-tjetrën. E para është Jug-Veri, e dyta është Lindje - Perëndim. Lëvizja Jug - Veri, në të vërtetë, ndjek paralelisht vijën bregdetare. Ajo ka qenë aktive qysh në kohët e lashta helenike dhe vazhdon edhe sot të jetë aktive. Në kohërat helenike, në shekullin e pestë përpara Jezut Krishtin tonë, luftërat e Peloponezikut u kundërvunë me njëri-tjetrin për dekada me radhë qytete-shtete më të mëdha të Greqisë, Sparta dhe Athina, patën si nisje pikërisht synimet e tyre për kontrollin mbi Durrësin. Një luftë civile në Durrës, sigurisht edhe me përfshirjen e popullsisë periferike urbane ilire, hodhi jashtë mureve të qytetit oligarkët e tij. Kërret e rrëzuar të kolonise greke, Epidamit, i cili ishte formalisht nën kontrollin e Korfuzit, nuk gjetën mbështetje atje, prandaj edhe iu drejtuan për ndihmë Korintit.

Por, Korfuzi kërkoi ndihmë të Athinës për ta mbajtur Korintin larg Durrësit. Duke lexuar Thucydiden, kam ndjekur me kujdes fjalimet e krerëve të Korintit përpara ekleziasë së Athinës ku argumentonin rëndësinë e Epidamit në ekuilibrin e qyteteve-shtete greke. Atje, kuptohet, nuk bëhet fjalë thjesht për një koloni greke si gjithë të tjerat. Durrësi antik, sikurse Apollonia, Orichuum-i, ishin pika strategjike nevralgjike për helenët dhe mbeten të tilla edhe për të gjitha kohërat e sotme dhe të ardhshme. Historia e tyre nuk ka mbaruar. Betejat të mëdha strategjike mendoj se do të bëhen për të marrë kontrollin e këtyre pikave nga fuqitë e mëdha të çdo kohe.

Edhe pak shekuj më parë, aty nga viti 1048, ekspedita e Normandëve të Jugut, anzhuinëve, po t'u besohet shkrimeve të vajzës së Perandorit bizantin Aleks Komnenit, Ana-s, pasi erdhi nëpër det mbështetur nga një flotilje gjigande anijesh lufte, u nis nga Valona, nëpërmjet vijës bregdetare, paralel me të, dhe sulmoi Durrësin, duke u përballur me forcat ushtarake të Perandorit të Bizantit, prej të cilit edhe u thye.

corner labelled as "Bishti i Palles", to the opposite side of the bay, towards the cape by the name "Cape of Rodon". (...)

Durrës is a city where interests and influences, events and aspirations, ambitions and tendencies once intertwined, and which by far exceed the dimensions of the province of Byzantine freedom. And, in some cases, without exaggeration, have a continental presence, which extends away from Europe. Our church undoubtedly recognized and continues to acknowledge this extension of the military, economic and financial dimensions of Durrës. Therefore our religious communities of Northern Western Europe need to become very much aware of them.

The directions of these influences intersect following two perpendicular lines. The first is South-North and the second is East-West. The South-North line which runs parallel to the coastline, has been active since ancient Hellenic times, and continues to be so today. In Hellenistic times, in the fifth century BC, the largest city-states of Greece, Sparta, and Athens, opposed each other for decades in what is broadly referred to as the Peloponnesian Wars concerning the control of Durrës. A civil war in Durrës, certainly with the involvement of the Illyrian suburban population, threw its oligarchs out of the city walls. The overthrown leaders of the Greek colony, Epidamnus, which was formally under the control of Corfu, found no support there, so they turned to Corinth for help.

But Corfu sought help from Athens to keep Corinth away from Durrës. Reading Thucydides, I carefully analyzed the speeches of the Corinthian leaders before the Athenian church wherein they argued the importance of Epidamnus in maintaining balance among Greek city-states. It is, of course, not just a Greek colony like any other. Ancient Durrës, like Apollonia and Orichuum, was a strategic point for the Hellenes and remain so for the present and future times. Their story is not over. Major strategic battles may yet be waged to take control of these points by the great powers of all time.

According to the writings of Anna, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus, around 1048, a sea expedition of the Southern Normans, the Anjouans, supported by a giant fleet of warships, set out from Valona, parallel to the coastline attacked Durrës. But this expedition faced the military forces of the Byzantine Emperor, and was broken.

Mos të harroj të vendos përpara vëmendjes tuaj të ndritur, gjithashtu, se edhe në kryqëzatat tona që kanë tronditur botën dhe kanë zhvendosur masa të mëdha luftëtarësh të Krishtit drejt Jeruzalemit, Durrësi ka qenë dhe do të mbetet një pikë kyçe, sipas vijës Veri-Jug. Kryqëtarë të shumtë kanë mbërritur në Durrës duke ardhur me anije nga Trieste. Ata kanë kaluar këtej duke pasur si pikënisje me anijet e tyre detin e Veriut dhe Skandinavinë. Pasi mbërrinin në Durrës dhe strehoheshin në të gjitha hanet e qytetit, ngrinin edhe cadra apo bujtin te banorët autoktonë, merrnin me qira anije venedikase për t'u nisur më pas drejt Lindjes, për të kaluar ngushticën e Bosforit, dhe mbërritur në Aleksandri, ose në destinacionin final të përpjekjeve të tyre të shenjta, në Jeruzalem.

Një pjesë e kryqëtarëve mbërrinin në Durrës edhe nga toka duke kaluar territoret e Europës Qendrore dhe ndjekur të njëjtën rrugë si të parët e tyre deri në Jeruzalem. Sipas raporteve të vëllezërve klerikë të këtu, muajt kur kryqëtarët ia behnin në Durrës kanë qenë krejt të veçantë. Popullsia e qytetit rritej katër ose pesë herë më shumë sesa zakonisht, me dhjetëra anije ankoroheshin në Port, një pështjellim i madh trondiste qytetin, gjuhë dhe zakone të ndryshme përziheshin midis turmave që iknin tutje drejt vendeve të shenjta duke tërhequr pas gra, fëmijë, armë kuaj, bagëti, etj. Edhe kur ktheheshin, ata shpesh ishin të lodhur, por mbartnin me vete robinja, pasuri, edhe gjithçka tjetër që u kishin marrë të pafeve. Një pjesë e ish-kryqëtarëve, pas kthimit nga vendet e shenjta, mbeti dhe u ngujua këtu.

Vija tjetër është ajo Perëndim-Lindje. Roma, sidomos pas shekullit të tretë përpara Jezu Krishtit, të lënduar në jetë të jetëve nga zemrat tona të lënduara për padrejtësinë martirizuese që njerëzit i bënë Zotit të tyre, dhe veçanërisht në shekullin e katërt para Krishtit, e rriti presionin dhe kontrollin mbi Durrësin. Ai konsiderohej prej romakëve si kryeqyteti i Epirus Nova. Le të përmend se përgjatë konflikteve që mbushën me gjak Republikën Romake, një nga betejat më të mëdha u bë në vitin 48 përpara Jezu Krishtit, Birit të lënduar të Atit tonë në Qiell, në një kodër këtu pranë Durrësit. Pompei dhe forcat e tij, të cilat kontrollonin qytetin, u ndeshën me forcat e Çezarit që kishte arritur fitore të mëdha në Afrikë dhe Spanjë. Pompei e theu Cezarin, i cili u largua për në Jug.

Rruga Egnatia që lidh Romën me Thrakinë dhe Maqedoninë e ka hyrjen në Durrës, i cili do të mbetet portë kalimi e Perëndimit për në Europën Lindore dhe më tej drejt viseve të Orientit të Mesëm dhe më larg akoma. Normandët e Jugut dhe mbreti Anzhu i Napolit, pak vite më parë, në 1392, sipas shënimeve që kam në dorë, rimerr kontrollin ndaj qytetit. Por, sundimi i tij nuk është i qetë. Sikurse edhe më parë

I do not allow myself to forget and so bring to your attention, that even in our crusades that have shaken the world and displaced large masses of Christ's warriors towards Jerusalem, Durrës has been and will remain a key point along the North-South line. Many crusaders reached Durrës by sailing from Trieste. Their ships embarked in the North Sea and Scandinavia. Soon after reaching Durrës and taking refuge in the inns of the city, they also set up camping tents or lodged with the indigenous inhabitants, rented Venetian boats to head East, cross the Bosphorus Strait to arrive in Alexandria, or the ultimate destination of their sacred endeavors, Jerusalem.

Some Crusaders arrived in Durrës by land, crossing the territories of Central Europe and following the same route as their predecessors to Jerusalem. According to reports of clergymen, the months when the Crusaders came to Durrës were very special. The population of the city grew four or five-fold, with dozens of ships anchored in the Port, great zest the city, and different languages and customs intermingled among the crowds fleeing further to the holy places in caravans of women and children, weapons horses and cattle, and so on. On return, they were often tired, but carried slaves, wealth, and everything else they had taken from the infidels. Many former Crusaders remained in the city and put down roots here.

The other line is the West-East. Rome, especially after the third century BC, was praised by our hurting hearts for the injustice that people did to their Lord, and especially in the fourth century BC, increased the pressure and control over Durrës. The Romans considered the capital to be Epirus Nova. Let me underline here that during the blood-filled conflicts that the Roman Republic underwent, one of the greatest battles took place in the year 48 BC, on a hill near Durrës. It was here that the Pompeian forces, which controlled the city, encountered Caesar's heroes of Africa and Spain. Pompey broke Caesar, who fled south.

The Egnatia Road, which connects Rome with Thrace and Macedonia, passes through Durrës: a city that remains the gateway from the West to Eastern Europe and further to the Middle East and beyond. According to the records at hand, in 1392, the Southern Normans and King Anjou of Naples, regained control of the city, but his rule was anything but smooth. As before with the Venetians who call the capital of Regnum Albania, Durrës was variously controlled by them and by local nobles and vassals,

me venecianët që e quanin kryeqytet të Regnum Albania, Durrësi herë kontrollohet prej tyre, herë ka prije të kontrollohet nga fisnikët vendas, vasalët, sidomos nga Topiajt ose Balshajt, që edhe ata rivalizojnë midis tyre.

Ndërkohë, sikur të mos mjaftonin të gjitha këto, në trevat ilire, nga toka dhe nga deti, po mbërrijnë njësitë e para luftarake të turqve otomanë. Ata kanë thyer princërit vendas, kanë shtyrë tutje në det ushtritë vendikase dhe të Napolit dhe kanë synimin të vendosin sundimin e tyre mbi qytetin dhe të gjitha trevat rreth tij. Kuptohet, të mbështetur nga sistemi i pronës mbi tokën, turqit otomanë, nëse arrijnë te vendosin sundimin e tyre, do t'i bëjnë popullsitë arbërore ta harrojnë lidhjen e tyre me detin, t'i harrojnë eksplorimet e tyre në det, peshkimin, kontrollin e anijeve që kalojnë në këtë vijë detare. Arbrit do të bëhen popullsi vetëm tokësore.

Ky është konteksti i sotëm në të cilin jeton popullsia arbërore në kryeqytetin e Ilirisë Bizantine, ose në atë që ka filluar të quhet Arbëri nën kontrollin e Topiasve e që shtrihet nga Semani deri në Mat. Brenda kësaj situatë jetojnë edhe besimtarët e fesë sonë këtu.

Këtu perënditë greke dhe ato romake mbijetojnë së bashku duke ndryshuar emrat e tyre. Minerva dhe Athinaja gati pothuajse e një jta gjë me dy emra të ndryshëm, Diana dhe Artemisi gjithashtu. Nga gjetjet e nëndheshme dalin të dyja sipas epokave. Paganizmi dhe politeizmi ndikojnë monoteizmin. Thyerjet kulturore shoqërojnë historinë e ketij qyteti. Kalimi nga mitet greke te ato romake duket qartë. Pastaj kalimi nga kultura politeiste, pas pranimit nga Perandoria romake të fesë sonë krishterë, te kultet dhe besimet tona monoteiste, çka shihet në gurët e varreve që herë pas here gjenden me shumicë në vendbanime të dikurshme. Dhe të gjitha këto, në rivalitet me mite dhe besime pagane kur arbrit betohen për diellin, yjet, dheun, bukën, sidomos.

Durrësi është qytet me përzjerje të fortë të popullsive të ndryshme. Ndoshta atij ia kalon në këtë pikë vetëm Florenca, Venediku, Ragusa, Selaniku, Aleksandria, Kostandinopoja, e ndonjë tjetër, pra qytetet e sotme më universale që njihen në Mesdhe. Kurse qytetet e tjera në Mesdhe dhe në Europën Qëndrore, madje edhe më në Veri, nuk janë veçse vendbanime të mbyllura brenda vetes krahasuar me të. Durrësi nga kjo pikëpamje i ngjan qyteteve hanseatike të Veriut, Anverpit, Bruzhit, Këlinit, Rigës, dhe krahasohet me to si nga shumëllojshmëria e kulturave që e përshkujnë ashtu edhe nga hapja e tyre drejt një kulture materialiste, ku paraja dhe interesi material kanë prioritet mbi besimin.

especially the rivalling factions of the Topia or Balsha.

As if all this were not enough, the first combat units of the Ottoman Turks emerged in the Illyrian territories, both by land, and by sea. They defeated the local princes, pushed the Venetian and Neapolitan armies further into the sea, in order to establish their rule over the city and the surrounding territories. Supported by the system of land ownership, established Ottoman Turks, ruled the Arbër population who abandoned their connection with the sea and explorations, fishing, and control of ships passing on their seashores and became a purely terrestrial population.

This is the context in which the Arber population lives today in the capital of Byzantine Illyria, or what has come to be called Arber under the control of the Topia and extends from Semani to Mat. In this situation the believers of our religion continue to live.

Here the Greek and Roman gods survive together by changing their names. Minerva and Athena are the same Goddesses with two different names, just as Diana and Artemis. Paganism and polytheism influence monotheism. Cultural breaks accompany the history of this city. The transition from Greek to Roman myths is clear. The transition from polytheistic culture, after the acceptance by the Roman Empire of our Christian religion, to our monotheistic cults and beliefs, can be seen in the tombstones occasionally found in abundance in former settlements. All this was in rivalry with pagan myths and beliefs when the Arbërs swear by the sun and the stars, the earth, and especially by the bread.

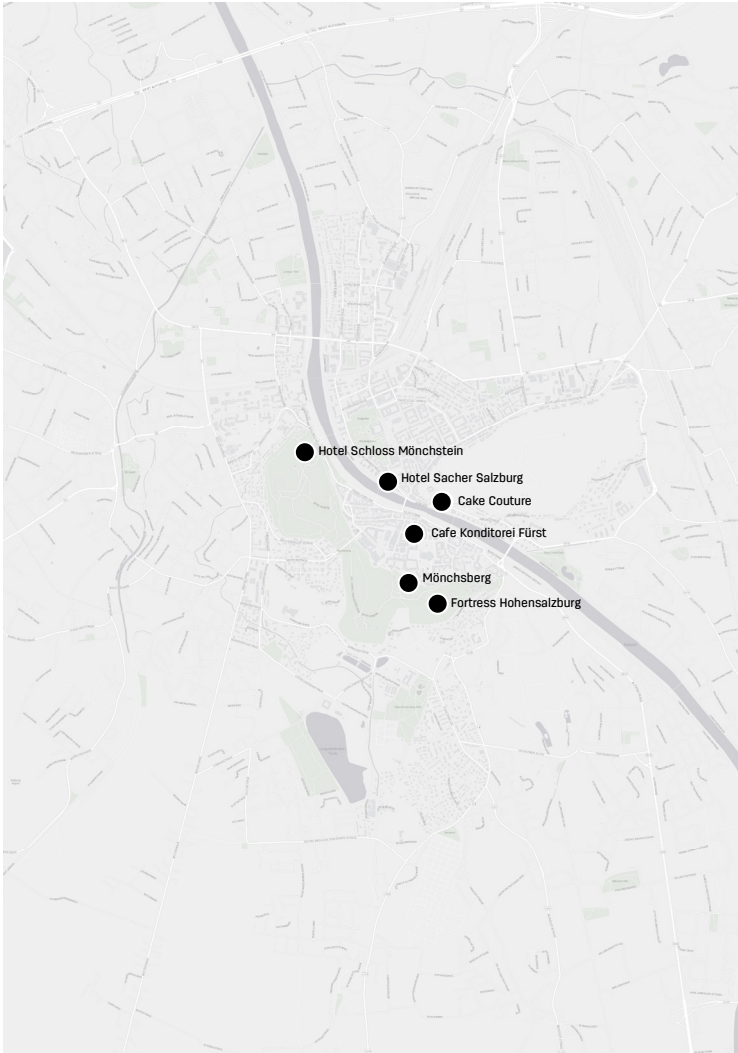
Durrës is a city with a strong mix of different populations. Perhaps only Florence and Venice, Ragusa, Thessaloniki, Alexandria, and Constantinople, the most universal cities known in the Mediterranean today, surpass it in this way. Other cities in the Mediterranean and Central Europe, and even further north, are merely closed settlements compared to Durres. In this respect, it resembles the Hanseatic cities of the North, Antwerp, and Bruges, Cologne, and Riga, and is comparable to them both in the variety and openness to a materialist culture, where money and material interests take precedence over faith.

Chocolate Days

Iris Spajic

Gabriele Diechler is a German novelist, screenwriter and dramaturge who lives in Salzkammergut, Austria. She started writing when she was 14 when she wrote down her thoughts and experiences in her diary. Her oeuvre examines love and life in terms of difficulties and fears, as well as positive aspects and possibilities.

Diechler's novel *Schokoladentage* is set in **Salzburg**, Austria, in the *Cake Couture* cake shop, and tells a story of two friends, Alwy and Tina. The novel focuses both on professional and personal aspects of their lives as they get their business up and running while trying to break even in terms of finance, and deal with their love lives, as well as other highs and lows of life. Throughout the novel readers are immersed in the city of Salzburg and have the opportunity to explore its beautiful places, history, and culture.



Schokoladentage

by Gabriele Diechler

3. Kapitel

Die vordere Häuserreihe wies zur Imbergstraße, einer der Hauptverkehrsstraßen. Die hintere zur Steingasse, einer Gasse mit felsigen Abhängen, die steil bergauf ragten. Zwischen diesem *Hinten* und *Vorne* suchten Alwy und Tina sich ihren Weg durch die Stadt, die ein Relikt aus einer längst vergangenen Zeit zu sein schien. Zwar gab es einige mit Glas verkleidete Hochhäuser, doch moderne Bauten blieben die Ausnahme.

Grundsätzlich wurde Salzburgs Stadtbild von jahrhundertealten vier- bis fünfstöckigen, in hellen, verblichen wirkenden Farben gestrichenen Häusern und vor allem von unzähligen Kirchen dominiert.

»Ziemlich eng hier ... als würde man einem ausgetrockneten Flusslauf folgen.« Auf Alwy wirkte die Steingasse wie ein Graben, in dem jedes Haus ein pastellfarbener Tupfer auf dem Grau des Kopfsteinpflasters war; es schien als bildeten die Häuser einen Schutzwall.

»Häuser so nah beieinander vermitteln mir ein Gefühl von Geborgenheit, dazu die schroffen Felsen ... das hat was.« Tina strich sich eine hellbraune Haarsträhne, die sich aus ihrem Zopf gelöst hatte, hinter das Ohr. Aufgeregt deutete sie auf ein Haus, das durch einen zartrosa Anstrich im unteren Bereich geradezu herausstach. »Da vorn ist es. Steingasse 41.«

»Zuckerrosa ...?!« Alwy schüttelte amüsiert den Kopf.

»Wieso nicht? Das hebt uns von den übrigen Fassaden ab.« Tina schloss die Eisentür neben der weiß gestrichenen Ladentür auf und wies in den Flur. Vorsichtig trug Alwy das gerahmte Bild ihrer Tante über die Schwelle und lehnte es an die Wand. Sie blinzelte, um sich an das Dunkel zu gewöhnen, und als sie aufsaß, entdeckte sie die enge, sich steil nach oben windende Treppe.

Tina fing den Blick der Freundin auf und lachte. »Fitness hast du hier inklusive«, versprach sie. »Komm, gib mir das Ungetüm.« Sie schnappte sich die Holzkiste, die Alwy gerade hochheben wollte. In dieser Kiste bewahrte ihre Freundin schon immer ihre Gewürze und Rezepte auf. Damit und mit dem Rucksack, den sie Alwy ebenfalls abnahm, ging sie die ersten Stufen voran.

Tina hatte nicht übertrieben: Die Treppen zu erklimmen, erinnerte tatsächlich an Fitness. Auf halbem Weg nach oben blieb Alwy, außer Atem, vor dem Klingelschild zu einer der Wohnungen stehen. »Wer wohnt eigentlich noch im Haus, außer dir?«

Chocolate Days

by Gabriele Diechler, *Schokoladentage*.
(Berlin: Insel Taschenbuch Verlag, 2019), pp. 17-21

Translation by Iris Spajic

Third Chapter

The front row of houses faced the Imbergstraße, one of the main roads. The back row faced the Steingasse, an alley with rocky slopes rising steeply uphill. Between this *back* and *front*, Alwy and Tina made their way through the city, which seemed to be a relic of a bygone era. Although there were some high-rise buildings clad in glass, modern buildings were an exception. Basically, Salzburg's cityscape was dominated by centuries-old, four-to five-storey houses painted in light, faded colours and, above all, by countless churches.

'It's rather narrow here... like following a dry riverbed.' To Alwy, Steingasse seemed like a ditch, in which each house was a pastel dab against the grey cobblestones; it seemed as if the houses formed a protective wall.

'Such tightly packed houses give me a sense of security, plus the jagged rocks... there's a certain charm about it.' Tina pushed a strand of light brown hair that escaped her plait behind her ear. Excitedly, she pointed to a house that virtually stood out due to a soft pink paint coat on the lower area. 'It's over there. Steingasse 41.'

'Candy pink...?!' Alwy shook her head in amusement.

'Why not? That sets us apart from the rest.' Tina unlocked the iron door next to the white-painted shop door and gestured to the hallway. Alwy carefully carried her aunt's framed picture across the threshold and leaned it against the wall. She squinted to adjust her eyes to the darkness and looked up to see the narrow staircase winding steeply up.

Tina caught her friend's eye and laughed. 'Fitness is included here,' she promised. 'Come on, give me that monster.' She grabbed the wooden box that Alwy was about to pick up. Her friend always kept her spices and recipes in this box. With that and with the rucksack, which she also took from Alwy, she climbed the first few steps.

Tina wasn't exaggerating: climbing the stairs truly required fitness. Halfway up, out of breath, Alwy stopped in front of one of the apartments' doorbells. 'Who else lives in the house besides you?'

»Außer uns, meinst du wohl?« Tina zwinkerte ihr zu. »Im ersten Stock wohnt Elisa. Sie ist noch keine dreißig und arbeitet als Rezeptionistin im Hotel ›Schloss Mönchstein‹, oben am Mönchsberg. Sie liebt Pralinen aus Zartbitterschokolade. Die kauft sie jede Woche bei mir.« Tina sah auf die Tür, vor der Alwy stand. »Und hier im zweiten wohnt Ralf, Typ Teddybär mit kleinem Bäuchlein. Er verkauft online Mützen, Schals und Ponchos, alles aus Wolle von glücklichen Schafen hergestellt.«

»Aufgrund deines Grinsens vermute ich mal, dass Ralf mehr hergibt, als diese schlichte Info.«

Tina zuckte die Schultern. »Wenn du Ralf siehst, kämst du nie drauf, dass ausgerechnet er kuschelige Mützen verkauft. Eher würdest du ihn schraubend unter einer Harley vermuten. Du wirst ihn mögen, allerdings bekommst du ihn nicht allzu oft zu Gesicht. Wenn er nicht vor dem PC sitzt und arbeitet, trampelt er ins Museum. Er ist fanatischer Kunstliebhaber und verlässt jedes Museum immer als Letzter. Nimm dich in Acht und frag ihn nie nach einem Kunstwerk, das könnte dauern.«

»Also eine funktionierende Hausgemeinschaft«, fasste Alwy zusammen.

»Absolut. Ralf ist eine Seele von Mensch, Elisa ebenso. Ich hab Glück mit den beiden.« Sie gingen weiter und kamen – Alwy den Trolley in der einen und das Bild in der anderen Hand – im dritten Stock an.

»Über meiner Wohnung befindet sich noch eine weitere, die von Irmgard Walter, sie ist die Besitzerin des Hauses. Eine nette ältere Dame. Seit März ist sie in Italien bei ihrer Schwester. Sie leidet unter Arthrose und gönnt ihren Gelenken ein bisschen Wärme.« Tina stieß die Tür auf und machte eine einladende Handbewegung in einen schmalen Flur, der durch einen pfirsichfarbenen Anstrich Fröhlichkeit und Zuversicht ausstrahlte.

»Willkommen in meinem Zuhause, das jetzt auch deins ist!«, sagte sie. Alwy stellte das Gepäck ab und sah aus dem Fenster neben der Garderobe.

»Meine Güte, was für ein schöner Ausblick. Ich komme mir vor wie in einem Vogelnest hoch oben im Baum.« Sie blickte auf Kirchtürme und -kuppeln, auf unzählige hellgrau schimmernde Dächer und ein Stück babyblauen Himmel – es war, als schaue sie in eine andere Zeit.

Tina trat neben Alwy. »Genauso ist es mir bei der Besichtigung der Wohnung ergangen. Zuerst das Gefühl von Enge und dann dieser Blick, der einen regelrecht in Bann zieht.« Einige Sekunden genossen die beiden Frauen den Ausblick, dann fuhr Tina fort: »Fünfundachtzig Quadratmeter, aber die Räume sind gut geschnitten, dadurch wirkt die Wohnung größer.«

Die Wohnung war ein charmantes Sammelsurium: Überall standen Vasen mit frischen Blumen und Reisemitbringsel auf Tischen und Fensterbänken, lagen aufgeschlagene Bücher herum und hingen gerahmte Rezepte an der Wand. »Ich hab sowohl eine Schwäche fürs Dekorieren

'Besides us, you mean?' Tina winked at her. 'Elisa lives on the first floor. She's not yet thirty and works as a receptionist at the Hotel Schloss Mönchstein, up on the Mönchsberg. She loves dark chocolate pralines. She buys them from me every week.' Tina looked at the door in front of which Alwy was standing. 'And Ralf lives here on the second floor. He's a teddy-bear type with a small tummy. He sells hats, scarves, and ponchos online, all made from wool from happy sheep.'

'Judging by your grin, I assume that there's more to Ralf than this simple piece of information.'

Tina shrugged. 'When you see Ralf, you would never guess that he of all people sells fuzzy hats. You would rather imagine him working under a Harley. You'll like him, but you won't see much of him. When he's not sitting and working in front of the computer, he's hitchhiking to the museum. He is a fanatical art buff and is always the last to leave every museum. Be careful and never ask him about an art piece because that could take a while.'

'So a functioning house community,' Alwy summed up.

'Absolutely. Ralf is a sweetheart, Elisa as well. I'm lucky with those two.' They went on – Alwy holding the trolley in one hand and the picture in the other – and arrived on the third floor.

'There is another apartment above mine, the one in which Irmgard Walter, the owner of the house, lives. A nice elderly lady. She has been staying with her sister in Italy since March. She has osteoarthritis and likes to keep her joints warm.' Tina pushed the door open and gestured to a narrow hallway that was painted in a peach colour to convey cheerfulness and confidence. 'Welcome to my home, which is now yours, too!' she said.

Alwy put the luggage down and looked out the window next to the cloakroom. 'My goodness, what a beautiful view. I feel like I'm in a bird's nest high up in a tree.' She looked at church towers and domes, at countless shimmering light grey roofs and a piece of baby blue sky – it was as if she were looking into another era. Tina stepped forward next to Alwy. 'I felt the same when I viewed the apartment. First it felt cramped, but then this view that leaves you mesmerized.' Both women enjoyed the view for a few more seconds, then Tina continued: 'Eighty-five square meters, but the rooms have a good layout, which makes the apartment seem larger.'

The apartment was a charming hodgepodge: vases with fresh flowers as well as souvenirs were placed all over the tables and windowsills, open books were lying around, and framed recipes were hanging on the wall. 'I'm as fond of decorating as I am of hoarding.' Tina held up her fingers as in giving an oath. 'Guilty as

als auch fürs Aufbewahren.« Tina hob die Finger zum Schwur. »Schuldig im Sinne der Anklage, Euer Ehren.« Mit einem leisen Knarren öffnete sie die Tür zum Gästezimmer. »Und das ist ab sofort dein Reich.«

Alwy blickte in einen Raum – kaum größer als zehn Quadratmeter –, der mit einer gewagten Kombination aus flaschengrünen Wänden und pink gestrichenen Holzmöbeln wie eine überdimensionale Bonbonschachtel wirkte. Unterstrichen wurde dieser Eindruck durch liebevolle Details, wie einen pinkfarbenen Quilt und passende bunte Kissen auf dem Bett. Tina hatte das Zimmer ausgesprochen originell eingerichtet.

»Das Bett hab ich vom Trödel, und weil Dunkelbraun nicht meine Traumfarbe ist, hab ich das Kopfteil kurzerhand pink gestrichen. Alles oder nichts war mein Motto bei diesem Zimmer.«

»Es ist entzückend. Einfach zauberhaft.« Alwy trat näher und betrachtete den moosgrünen Schirm der Nachttischlampe, der perfekt zum Holzbett passte. Hier würde sie sich wohlfühlen.

Tina zog Alwy ans Fenster. »Schau mal ... dort ist das Wahrzeichen der Stadt, die Festung Hohensalzburg.«

Alwy sah eine Burg einschließlic Basteien, die sich dramatisch vom Grün des Berges abhob. Auf einer der Zinnen flatterte eine rotweißrote Fahne im Wind. Die Imposanz der Anlage, die inmitten der Mauern ein ganzes Dorf beherbergte, erzeugte eine unglaubliche Atmosphäre.

»Hohensalzburg ist Europas größte Burganlage, ihre Geschichte reicht bis ins 11. Jahrhundert zurück«, erzählte Tina mit Stolz in der Stimme. Alwy konnte den Blick kaum von der Festung lösen. »Und wir sind Burgfräulein, die am Abend von gutaussehenden Rittern entführt werden«, schwärmte sie.

»Bisher hat sich leider kein Ritter hierher verirrt«, Tina grinste verschmitzt. »Aber was nicht ist, kann ja noch werden.« Sie verschwand in den Flur und kam mit der Kiste mit den Gewürzen und Rezepten zurück, schob sie unters Bett, trat erneut neben Alwy und legte den Arm um sie.

»Ein Ladenlokal mit einer Wohnung drüber, dazu der Ausblick auf die Stadt ... sind das nicht zwei gute Gründe, sich hier niederzulassen? Was die Backkunst anbelangt, es gibt die bekannten Größen, wie das ›Hotel Sacher‹ und die Original-Mozartkugeln von ›Fürst‹ und noch ein paar andere. Aber davon lassen wir uns höchstens inspirieren.« Tina deutete in den Flur. »Das Bad ist hinten links. Die Tür klemmt, kurz anheben, dann kommst du rein. Ich hab dir ein Regalfach freigeräumt. So, und jetzt lasse ich dich auspacken. Ich bin in der Küche. Komm, wenn du so weit bist.«

Kaum hatte Tina das Zimmer verlassen, setzte sich Alwy erst mal auf den Hocker vorm Schreibtisch. Das Zimmer war bei näherem Hinsehen noch kleiner, als sie anfangs vermutet hatte. Allerdings war es so einzigartig, dass sie sich kaum daran sattsehen konnte.

charged, Your Honour.' With a soft creak she opened the guest room door. 'And this is your kingdom from now on.'

Alwy cast a glance at the room – barely larger than ten square meters – that looked like an oversized candy box with a daring combination of bottle-green walls and pink-painted wooden furniture. This impression was emphasised by charming details, such as a pink quilt and matching colourful pillows on the bed. Tina furnished the room in a very original way.

'I got the bed at the flea market, and since dark brown isn't really my favourite colour, I just painted the headboard pink. All or nothing was my motto for this room.'

'It's lovely. Simply magical.' Alwy stepped closer and looked at the moss-green shade of the bedside lamp, which perfectly matched the wooden bed. She'll be happy here.

Tina dragged Alwy to the window. 'Look... there is the city's landmark, the Hohensalzburg Fortress.'

Alwy saw a castle with bastions, which were in a dramatic contrast to the green hills. A red, white, and red flag fluttered in the wind on one of the merlons. The imposing nature of the complex, which housed an entire village within the walls, created an unbelievable atmosphere.

'Hohensalzburg is Europe's largest castle complex, its history goes back to the 11th century,' said Tina proudly.

Alwy could hardly take her eyes off the fortress. 'And we are damsels who are kidnapped by handsome knights in the evening,' she romanticized.

'Unfortunately, no knight has strayed here so far,' Tina grinned mischievously. 'But that which is not, may yet be.' She disappeared into the hallway and came back with the box of spices and recipes, pushed it under the bed, returned to Alwy and put her arm around her.

'A shop with an apartment above it, plus the view of the city... aren't those two good reasons for settling down here? As far as the art of baking is concerned, there are the well-known giants, such as the 'Hotel Sacher' and the original Mozartkugeln from 'Fürst', and a few others. But we'll only let that inspire us.' Tina gestured into the hallway. 'The bathroom is in the back on the left. The door tends to get stuck, so lift it a little bit, then come in. I cleared a shelf for you. Alright, and now I'll let you unpack. I'll be in the kitchen. Come when you're ready.'

As soon as Tina left the room, Alwy sat down on the stool in front of the desk. When she observed it more closely, the room was even smaller than she had initially thought. However, it was so unique that she could hardly get enough of it.

Von Tokio war sie winzige Räume gewohnt. Bei knapp zehn Millionen Einwohnern zählte jeder Quadratmeter. Von früh bis spät eilten die Menschen hin und her. Alwy hatte dort den ganzen Tag über das Klirren des Backgeschirrs, das Piepen der Küchenuhr und das Gerede unzähliger Menschen gehört. Nach Feierabend hatte Harald sich am liebsten vor den Fernseher gesetzt und sich durch die Kanäle gezappt. Oft waren sie selbst dazu zu müde gewesen und gleich ins Bett gefallen, und mehr als einmal war ihr der Gedanke gekommen, dass Harald nicht nach Europa zurückwollte, schon gar nicht, um sich dort endgültig niederzulassen. Er lebte, wie er es sich immer gewünscht hatte. Stets auf dem Sprung und bereit für Neues. Er schien diese Anspannung zu brauchen.

Alwy klappte den Trolley auf und hingte ihre Hosen und Röcke in den Schrank. Als sie das Wichtigste ausgepackt hatte, ging sie in die Küche, wo Tina gerade Tee aufgoss.

»Danke, dass ich fürs Erste hier wohnen darf.« Ihr Zimmer war als vorübergehende Unterkunft gedacht, doch es fühlte sich nach einem Zuhause an.

Tina drehte sich nach ihr um und runzelte die Stirn. »Dein Einstieg bei ›Cake Couture‹ ist ein Geschenk des Himmels. Ich hab mich riesig gefreut, als du zugesagt hast. Das Glück ist also auf meiner Seite.« Sie stellte die Kanne auf den Tisch und begann Sahne zu schlagen.

»Apropos Beteiligung:

Wie lange gibt Harald uns, bevor wir Insolvenz anmelden?« Tina hob Puderzucker unter die geschlagene Sahne, sah dabei jedoch zu Alwy hinüber.

»Ein Jahr. Im besten Fall. Aber weißt du was ...? Wir zeigen ihm, dass Visionen sich auszahlen.« Alwy griff nach einem Löffel, kostete von der Sahne und überlegte. »Eine Prise Salz und Vanille zur Abrundung? Was meinst du?« Sie spürte plötzlich eine unangenehme Leere im Magen. Höchste Zeit, dass sie etwas zu sich nahm.

Tina machte eine abwägende Handbewegung, als sie ebenfalls gekostet hatte, schließlich mischte sie eine Spur Salz und Vanilleschote unter, bevor sie die Sahne in ein Glas füllte. »Ich vermute, Harald hat sich seit unserer gemeinsamen Zeit in München kaum verändert, oder?« Vor Jahren hatten sie im Hilton Seite an Seite gearbeitet, und schon damals war Harald geradezu besessen von der Arbeit gewesen.

»Harald ist, wie er ist, aber er unterschätzt unsere Hartnäckigkeit. Es wird nicht einfach werden, ›Cake Couture‹ zum Erfolg zu führen, aber ich habe nicht vor, zu scheitern.«

»Das will ich wohl meinen.« Tina deutete auf den Küchentisch, wo neben einem Strauß Wiesenblumen eine Mohntorte stand. »Die magst du hoffentlich immer noch gern?«

Erst jetzt nahm Alwy den schwachen Mohnduft wahr. Die Luft des

She was used to tiny rooms in Tokyo. With almost ten million inhabitants, every square meter counted. People rushed back and forth from dawn to dusk. All day long Alwy had heard the clinking of the bakeware, the beeping of the kitchen clock and the chatter of countless people. After work, Harald liked to sit in front of the television and flip through the channels. They were often too tired even for that and would go straight to bed, and more than once it had occurred to her that Harald didn't want to go back to Europe, especially not to settle down permanently. He lived as he had always wanted. Always on the go and ready for something new. He seemed to need that tension.

Alwy opened the trolley and hung her pants and skirts in the closet. When she had unpacked the most important things, she went into the kitchen, where Tina was just making tea.

'Thanks for letting me stay here for now.' Her room was meant for temporary accommodation, but it felt like home.

Tina turned to her and frowned. 'You coming to the 'Cake Couture' is a godsend. I was tremendously happy when you agreed. So I'm the lucky one.' She put the jug on the table and began to whip the cream. 'Speaking of participation: How long does Harald give us before we declare bankruptcy?' Tina scooped powdered sugar into the whipped cream while looking over at Alwy.

'A year. Best-case scenario. But you know what...? We'll show him that dreams are worth fighting for. Alwy picked up a spoon, tasted the cream and pondered. 'A pinch of salt and vanilla for a finishing touch? What do you think?' She suddenly felt an uncomfortable emptiness in her stomach. It was high time she ate something.

Tina waved her hand as she tasted, adding a dash of salt and vanilla bean before pouring the whipped cream into a glass. 'I take it Harald hasn't changed much since we were together in Munich, has he?' Years ago, they had worked together at the Hilton, and even then Harald had been obsessed with the work.

'Harald is the way he is, but he underestimates our persistence. It won't be easy to make Cake Couture a success, but I don't intend to fail.'

'I should think not.' Tina pointed to the kitchen table, where a poppy seed cake was standing next to a bouquet of meadow flowers. 'I hope you still like it?'

Only now did Alwy notice the faint scent of poppies. The air in the room was filled with the aroma of the ingredients: warmed butter, ground poppy seeds, grated lemon peel, rum and cherry jam. 'I could die for poppy seed cake.'

Tina cut a piece and handed her friend a plate and fork. While standing, Alwy let the delicate glaze of the poppy seed dough and

Zimmers war erfüllt vom Aroma der Zutaten: erwärmte Butter, gemahlener Mohn, geriebene Zitronenschale, Rum und Kirschmarmelade. »Für Mohn torte könnte ich sterben.«

Tina schnitt ein Stück ab und reichte ihrer Freundin Teller und Gabel.

Noch im Stehen ließ Alwy sich den zarten Schmelz des Mohn teigs und die Marmeladenfüllung auf der Zunge zergehen.

»Und? Was sagst du?«

Alwy nickte begeistert. »Meisterhafte Backkunst ...wie zu erwarten.

Inklusive eines Quäntchens Liebe. Genauso hätte Helene es gemacht.«

Tina klopfte sich selbst anerkennend auf die Schulter. »Der Name deiner Tante in Verbindung mit einer meiner Torten ... ich muss wirklich gut sein.«

the jam filling melt in her mouth.

'So? What do you say?'

Alwy nodded enthusiastically. 'Expert baking... as expected. Including a pinch of love. That's exactly how Helene would have done it.'

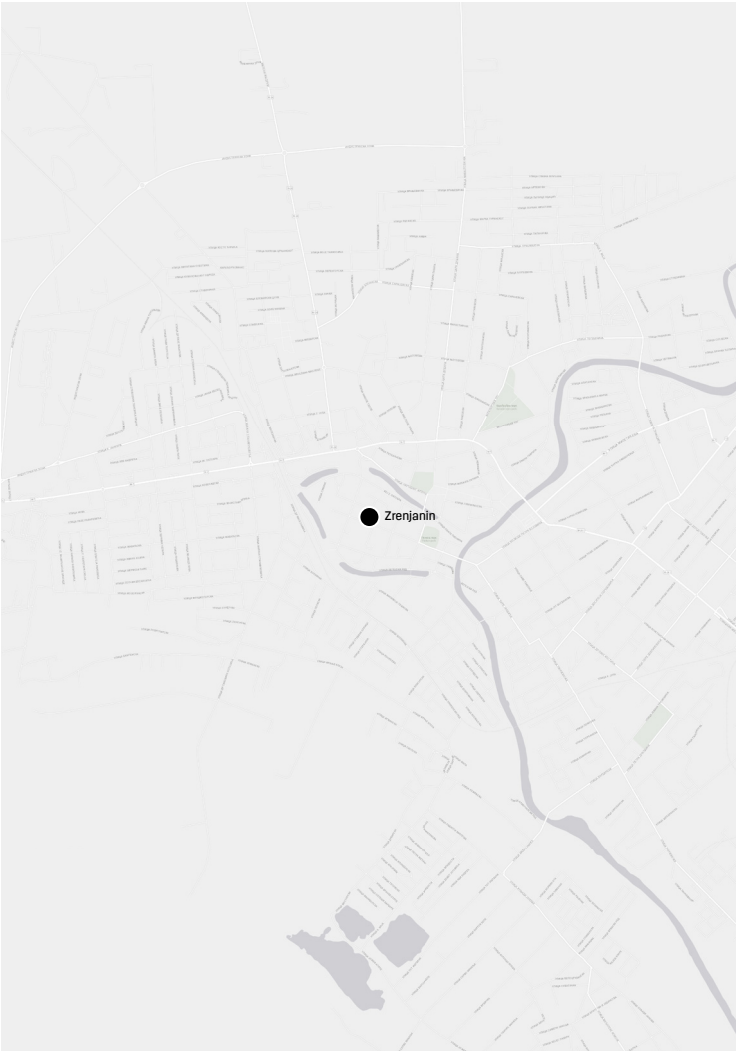
Tina patted herself on the back appreciatively. 'Your aunt's name associated with one of my cakes... I must be really good.'

The Ghosts from one Small City

Nevena Dakovic

Ivan Ivanji (1929) was born to a wealthy, well-known, and respected Jewish family in **Zrenjanin** (Betschkerek) in the Banat. He is a survivor from Auschwitz and Buchenwald (1944 and 1945) where he was taken as the 15 year-old boy. He was an official interpreter for German language for Josip Broz Tito, lifelong president of SFRY and secretary general of the Yugoslav Writers' Union (1982-1988). He is also, a popular writer and journalist with the oeuvre focused both on (auto)biographical and historical fiction. He writes in Serbian and German and translates his own works. In April 2020, he was made an honorary citizen of Weimar.

His book *Aveti iz jednog malog grada/The Ghosts from one Small City/Geister aus einer kleinen Stadt* was first published in Austria in 2008 and appeared in Serbian translation in 2009. As a poetic, biographical and fictionalized account of his pre-World War II experiences in Zrenjanin, the story also covers the destinies of various citizens, friends, and acquaintances during and after the war. The author features as the embedded narrator who revisits his birthplace after many decades. As the homodiegetic narrator, he walks through the city and remembers the past after the toponyms he walks by.



Aveti iz jednog malog grada

by Ivan Ivanji

„Ovde je bila sinagoga. Srušiše je. Mene nije zanimala. Da li da se sad stidim zbog toga? Zašto se ne stidim? Zbog toga se zaista ne stidim. Vidim, na nju podseća spomen-ploča. U redu. Pored nje je bio bioskop. Nema više ni njega, mada su ga sigurno uklonili iz nekih drugih razloga. Za takve institucije nema spomen-ploče, shvatam, ali mene su, kad sam bio dete, zaista više interesovali filmovi od službi Božjih. Mene zaista nikakva religija nikad nije zanimala, osim preko muzike, koju je inspirisala, a još uvek me ne zanima, iako ću uskoro umreti. Posle ću da vidim ima li ipak Boga. Ili neću videti ništa...”

Još uvek je govorio sam za sebe, ali dosta glasno. Niko iz njegove pratnje nije znao šta da kaže, novinari bi ponešto zabeležili, ali nisu postavljali potpitanja.

„Ovo je bila moja gimnazija. Nisam bio dobar učenik. Mrzeo sam matematiku i prirodne nauke... A ovde sam četiri godine išao u osnovnu školu. Ništa se nije promenilo, sve je baš kao što je bilo...” Iznenada je viknuo: „Ama, nije! Pa šta se dogodilo sa rekam? Zar ovde nije bila reka?”

Jeste, potvrdila je sveznalica, gospođa iz gradske uprave. Radi se zapravo o vodotoku koji se često menjao stvarajući kroz meku oranicu sve nove krivine, pa već vekovima voda ne teče kako bi to priroda sama htela, jer se ljudska ruka umešala. Sredinom osamnaestog veka, pod caricom Marijom Terezijom je za rečicu, koja je doticala iz Rumunije, iskopan novi pravac, a 1820. godine sistem kanala je proširen. U vreme kada je sin modiskinje išao u školu, na zemljopisnim kartama oznaka su bile dve tanke, gotovo prave, plave linije, dvostruki kanal. U školi se obavezno govorilo o kanalu, jer je tok bio veštački iskopan, ali inače su svi tvrdoglavo govorili o reci, kao da je sramota živeti u varoši bez reke.

Sin modiskinje je prihvatio:

„Kad danas razmišljam o tome, čini mi se gotovo neverovatnim da se nismo samo mi, deca, kupali u toj mutnoj vodi, nego su u njoj plivali i odrasli ljudi. I moja majka takođe. Pred sam rat počela je da prodaje i kupače kostime, gumene patike i kapice za kupanje, pa je sve to htela i javno da pokaže. Igrala je manekenku za sopstvenu radnju. Ja mislim da je moja mama bila lepa žena, ali ne znam da li sinovi išta mogu da kažu o lepoti svoje majke, ako su je u kamionu ugušili plinom pre nego što je stigla da proslavi četrdeseti

The Ghosts from one Small City

by Ivan Ivanji, *Aveti iz jednog malog grada*

(Zrenjanin: Gradska narodna biblioteka Zrenjanin, 2009), pp. 215-220.

Translated by Nevena Daković, Maja Marsenić and Jana Živkić

‘There was a synagogue here. It has since been torn down. I didn’t care much for it. Should I be ashamed of it now? Why am I not ashamed? That’s really not something I am ashamed of. I see, there’s a memorial plaque dedicated to it. That’s fine. Next to it there was once a movie theatre. Now it, too, is gone, although they must have destroyed it for a different reason. There is no memorial plaque for such institutions, I realize that, but when I was a child, I was really more interested in films than in the services of God. I’ve never really been interested in any religion, except through music that was inspired by it, and even though I’m about to die, I’m still not interested in it. Soon, I’ll see if there is a God after all. Or I will see nothing...’

He was still murmuring to himself, but quite loudly. No one in his entourage knew what to say, the press made some notes, but they didn’t ask any more questions.

‘This was my high school. I wasn’t a good student. I hated maths and science... And here I went to elementary school for four years. Nothing has changed, everything is exactly as it was...’ Suddenly he shouted: ‘No, it’s not! What happened to the river? Wasn’t there a river here?’ Yes there was, confirmed the know-it-all lady from the city hall. Actually, it is a riverbed that is constantly changing, creating new bends through the soft farmland. For centuries, the water hasn’t flowed as nature would have it, because of the interference of the human hand. In the mid-eighteenth century, under Empress Maria Theresa, a new riverbed was made for the river, flowing in from Romania, and in 1820 the canal system was expanded. At the time when the modiste’s son went to school, the geographical maps had two thin, almost straight, blue lines representing a double canal. At school, we had to call it the canal, because it was a man-made waterway, but otherwise everyone would stubbornly talk about the river, as if it was a disgrace to live in a town without a river.

‘When I think about it today, it seems unbelievable that not only us, children swam in that muddy canal, but the grown-ups as well’, admitted the son of the modiste. ‘My mother, too’. Shortly before the war, she started selling bathing suits, rubber shoes and swimming caps, and she wanted to exhibit them for everybody to see. She was a model for her own store. I think my mom was a beautiful woman. Although I don’t know if sons can say anything about the beauty of their mothers: if she had not been killed in a gas wagon before she could

rođendan... Ne znam da li se to može znati, da li se išta može znati..." Stari gospodin se izgubio. Bojao se da će zamucati ako nastavi, ali je uspevao da priča kao da prosto samo izveštava o varoši pre šezdesetak godina.

„Imali smo dva kupališta. Zvali smo ih štrand. Nasut je čisti pesak da bi deca mogla da se igraju, da grade kule od peska. Pred rat ja sam još čeznuo da učestvujem u tome, ali već me je bilo sramota, smatrao sam da sam isuviše odrastao... Kao i mnogi drugi klinici, imao sam čamac na vesla i vozio se gore, dole..."

Šetali su duž obale, ali ta voda sad zaista nije bila nikakva reka, nije čak ni kanal, napravili su nekakav niz veštačkih jezera isprekidan nasipima koji povezuju obale. Onaj glavni kanal, kojim se obavlja prevoz brodovima i baržama, sada je vodio oko grada.

„Ma ovde je bio veliki most. Tako smo ga zvali. Baš je bio lep. Molim vas, zar ga nije projektovao onaj isti slavni inženjer Ajfel, koji je sagradio i čuvenu kulu u Parizu?"

Dama, koja je predstavljala grad kao njihovog domaćina, potvrdila je i objasnila da je taj most postao isuviše uzan za automobilski saobraćaj, zbog toga je stotinak metara uzvodno sagrađen novi, betonski most, a stari je demontiran. Međutim, posle se ispostavilo da je baš tamo, gde je stajao, poželjno da može da se sa jedne obale na drugu prelazi peške, pa je podignut novi, pešački most, koji vodi taman do stare pivare koja, doduše, više ne proizvodi pivo...

„Ali tu se sada nalazi baš zgodan restoran, ako biste slučajno želeli, mogli bismo da navratimo... Da niste već gladni?"

Gost ili nije ni čuo predlog, ili se prosto nije obazirao na njega:

„Kad sam bio dete, ovuda su prolazili brodovi na paru ili motorni brodovi. Barže su vukli remorkeri, tegljači. Dimnjaci su mogli da se obore da bi se lakše prošlo ispod mostova, ali i sam most se mogao podići i to ručno, snažni muškarci su na četiri mesta kurbalama dizali konstrukciju. Onda bi, naravno, saobraćaj preko njih morao da stane. Ja sam to rado posmatrao. Pevalo se o bečkerečkoj čupriji, o četir' konja debela, koja su prešla preko Begeja... Sada nema rečnog saobraćaja, samo pešaci prelaze s jedne na drugu stranu vodotoka, ali onaj stari most bi bio mnogo lepši, nego ovaj bezlični..."

Stari gospodin je sve brže koračao niz šetalište pored obale, žene i novinari su žurili za njim kao ovice za ovmno predvodnikom. Žena koja je prevodila, šapatom je upitala njegovu suprugu:

„Da li je uvek takav?"

„Pa, zapravo nije. Čini se da mu susret sa prošlošću pada veoma teško..."

„Da, naravno, to može da se razume..."

Gospođa iz gradske uprave predložila je da se ovde pređe na drugu obalu da bi se stiglo do kalvinističke crkve, ali gost nije hteo, insistirao

have celebrated her 40th birthday... How could you even know that, or anything at all.'

The old gentleman got lost in his thoughts. Afraid he would stammer if he continued he managed to carry on as if he was simply reporting on what the town was like sixty years ago.

'There were two beaches. We called them strands. They were covered with sand so that children could play and build sand castles. Before the war I still longed to play with them, but I was too ashamed, I thought I was already a grown-up... Like a lot of other kids, I had a rowboat and I rowed up and down...'

They walked alongside the river bank, but this water wasn't really a river now, it wasn't even a canal, they turned it into some kind of chain of artificial lakes interspersed by embankments connecting the banks. That main canal, the one used for transport by ships and barges, now ran around the city.

'There was a big bridge here. That's what we called it. It was really beautiful. Pardon me, was it not designed by that same famous engineer Eiffel, the one who built the famous tower in Paris?'

The lady, who was leading the tour around town confirmed and explained that the bridge had become too narrow for car traffic, which is why a new concrete bridge was built about 300 feet upstream, and the old one was dismantled. However, it later turned out that right there, where it once stood, it would be convenient to be able to cross from one side to the other on foot So, a new pedestrian bridge was built, which led just to the old brewery, that, truth be told, no longer produced beer...

'But there's a really nice restaurant here now, if you'd like, we could stop by... Are you, by any chance, hungry?'

The guest either didn't hear the suggestion, or simply ignored it.

'When I was a child, steamboats and motorboats used to pass through here. The barges were towed by tugs, towboats. The chimneys could be lowered down to make it easier to pass under the bridges, but the bridge itself could also be lifted manually. It required strong men to lift the construction by rotating four cranks. The traffic over the bridges would then, of course, have to stop. I would watch eagerly. There was this song about the Big Bridge, and about four fat horses crossing the Bega river!... Now there is no river traffic, only pedestrians cross from one side of the watercourse to the other, but that old bridge would have looked much nicer than this indistinctive one ...'

The old gentleman walked faster and faster down the promenade along the bank, the women and the press rushing after him like sheep after their shepherd. The lady that was in the tour, whispered to his wife:

'Is he always like this?'

rao je da se ide dalje, sve dok se ne stigne opet do vode, pa da se pređe preko drugog mosta, kojeg su zvali malim.

„U moje vreme ovuda je tekla reka. Dabome, govorili smo da je reka, iako smo znali da je kanal. Svakako nismo mogli peške da pređemo preko, a da ne budemo kao Isus na jezeru Genezaret...”

Ćutke su prešli preko malog mosta. Nadesno, duž obale, vodila je popločana staza.

„To je bio moj krug pored reke! Peške ili biciklom!”

Stari pijanista je i dalje žurio napred prvi, kao da po svaku cenu negde želi da stigne na vreme, ali povremeno se osvrtao i tvrdio da je park levo od njih nekada gušće bio zasađen kestenovima, da se igrao plodovima kestena, nabadao ih na čačkalice ili zašiljene šibice, pravio od njih figure, a onaj paviljon je u njegovo vreme bio tenis-klub.

Predstavnica grada bi rado rekla da je to još i danas, tenis se verovatno igra i više nego ranije, ali nije uspela da prekine svog uvaženog gosta, jer je on nastavljao da priča da je u toku zime ovde bilo klizalište, i on se klizao, što su zvali „šličugati se”, jednom je pokušao figuru, takozvani kadetski skok, pa je pao pravo na nos. To je strahovito bolelo. Posle toga više nikada nije hteo da se bavi bilo kakvim sportom.

„U Holivudu su me nagovarali da naučim da igram tenis ili bar golf, ali nisam hteo, baš nisam hteo!”

Na ovom mestu, objašnjavao je, trebalo bi da se krene nalevo i nastavi duž obale, ali to danas više nije moguće. Obale više nema, jer nema više ni kanala koji bi se mogao smatrati rekom, ništa više ne teče na levo, ništa ne teče bilo kuda, ovo je sad stajaća voda. Jezero. Jezerce. Bara. Ovo je kraj. Mala varoš više ne leži čak ni na kanalu, a kamoli na reci. Osujećeni su svi pokušaji da se krene stazama detinjstva.

To je normalno. Hajde da se ne zavaravamo. Nemoguće je vratiti se u svoje detinjstvo. Nemoguće je vratiti se kući. Možda nije nemoguće izgraditi nove kuće. Stara je mudrost da ne možeš dva puta da se okupaš u istoj reci, jer sada protiče nova voda, stara je prosto otekla. Uvek nanovo će poteći nove reke, nova će voda krenuti između nepouzdatih obala u susret nepoznatim morima. Mi ne poznajemo ono more, do koje nas nosi struja, ali znamo kako se zove ušće na kraju. Povratak kući nije uspeo. Sin modistkinje nije mogao da nađe varoš u kojoj je proveo detinjstvo, ni ulice, ni reku, koja je zapravo bila veštački iskopani kanal, ni ljude, ni pse, a nije čak bio ni tužan, samo se osećao nekako prazno i tupo i rekao je sebi da to nije ni dobro, ni loše, nego prosto tako.

Normalno.

‘Well, not really. He seems to be really affected by this encounter with the past..’

‘Yes, of course, that’s understandable..’

The lady from the city hall proposed to cross here to the other side in order to get to the Calvinist church, but the guest refused. He insisted on moving on, until they got to the water again, so that they could cross ‘the Small bridge’, as they called it.

‘Back in those days, there was a river flowing through here. Of course, we called it a river, even though we knew it was a canal. Naturally, we couldn’t cross it without looking like Jesus in the Lake of Gennesaret...’ They crossed the Small bridge in silence. To the right, along the bank, there was a paved path.

‘That was my usual route alongside the river! Either on foot or by bike!’ The old pianist still rushed ahead first, as if he had to get somewhere on time, but he would occasionally look back and explain that the park on the left, once, had many more chestnut trees; that he used to play with chestnuts, stake them with toothpicks or pointy matches; make them into figures. He claimed that, back in his day, that pavilion used to be a tennis club.

The representative of the city wanted to say that the pavilion had remained a tennis club to this day, because tennis is probably even more popular than before, but it was impossible for her to interrupt her distinguished guest, as he kept talking that there was a skating-rink here during the winter, where he used to skate, and that he once tried to do a certain figure, the so-called Waltz jump, but he fell right on his nose. That was incredibly painful. After that, he never wanted to play any sports again.

‘In Hollywood, they tried to persuade me to learn to play tennis or, at least, golf, but I didn’t want to, I really didn’t want to!’

‘Here is where we would have turned left and continued alongside the bank’, he explained, ‘but today that is no longer possible’. The bank is gone, because there is no longer a canal that could be considered a river, now nothing flows to the left, nothing flows anywhere, this is now still water. A lake. A pond. A puddle. This is the end. The little town doesn’t even have a canal any longer, let alone a river. All attempts to follow the paths of childhood have been thwarted.

And that’s normal. Let’s not fool ourselves. It’s impossible to go back to one’s childhood. It’s impossible to go back home. Maybe it’s possible to build new homes. A wise man once said that you can’t step in the same river twice, because now there’re new waters flowing, while the old ones have simply flown away. There will always be new rivers flowing. New waters will be flowing between wavering banks to meet the unknown seas. And even if the sea that the currents carry us to is unknown, we still know the name of the estuary at the end.

We failed to return home. The modiste's son could not find the town where he spent his childhood, nor the streets, nor the river, which was actually an artificially excavated canal, nor the people, nor the dogs. That didn't even make him sad, he just felt somewhat empty and dull, and he told himself that was neither good, nor bad, it just was.

Normal.

- 1 In the song it is called *Begej* while *Bega* river is the Roumanian version of the name used by the narrator.

On the confinement and Zé, from the Postigo Café

Maria José Marques

Salvador Santos lives and works in **Loulé**, Algarve (Portugal). His job includes the dissemination of culture in all its artistic forms, especially literature and visual arts. He is also a keen observer of people, and a sensitive listener to the stories that can be found surrounding him. He is, first and foremost, a writer. He has published two books of poetry which epitomise his unique way of looking into people and places, events, details, sorrows, colours, joys, and solitudes. Salvador Santos's texts are characterised by a clean style, where every word has a precise, powerful, poetic, insightful, weight and meaning, as in the text about the town of Loulé reproduced here. Collective memory should not be erased, no matter how difficult the events involved. This text explores everyday details of living with fear during the pandemic lockdown. The silent streets. The shutting down of businesses and souls. The gossip of small towns. And the tales recalled and told by people gathering over a cup of coffee.



Sobre o Confinamento e o Zé, Do Postigo

by Salvador Santos

A cidade dormida, ainda. Loulé a começar. No Postigo, as portas derramavam Led Zeppelin sobre a letargia da manhã. Lá dentro o Zé apressava-se nas limpezas. Já havia gente encostada às paredes. Clientes, tão urgentes como a manhã, à espera de um café.

Foi nessa manhã, uma manhã a cair para o frio de novembro, que pensei quando, na última hora antes do confinamento, me sentei no último degrau das escadas que dão para o terraço.

Antes disso passei pela Fnac para ver se encontrava um livro do Juan José Millás que me fora recomendado, mas cujo título esquecera. Abasteci-me de cimentos e outros materiais de construção para pequenos arranjos domésticos e ainda aproveitei as poucas horas que me restavam para livrar do bolor um mapa que se inundou, na editora.

Quando cheguei a casa subi até ao terraço como um prisioneiro a quem se concede a última mão de liberdade antes dos calabouços e fiquei lá em cima a olhar para a cidade apagada. As janelas acesas nos prédios vizinhos. O nevoeiro de claridade que paira sobre os telhados nas ruas em que os edifícios são mais baixos. As nuvens, silenciosas e longínquas, que passavam como esquadrões de guerra, iluminadas pela lua.

Depois, não sei por que razões do pensamento, lembrei-me daquela manhã. Do Postigo de portas abertas, mas ainda encerrado. Nós ali à volta e o Zé... O Zé entre a esfregona e um cigarro a contar os percalços da noite anterior. Ainda faltavam 10 minutos para abrir. Um convite para jantar, uma garrafa de champanhe que o dono do restaurante abriu e, de copo em copo, a cama, às 4 da manhã. Antes de entrar no novo confinamento a minha cabeça recuou àquela manhã. De certa forma poderia entender esse reflexo como se o Postigo, e o Zé, fossem o quotidiano que mais falta me fariam. Um afastamento difícil de aguentar. Poderia ser essa a razão, mas a verdade é que não sou um cliente assim tão assíduo. As razões para os acontecimentos daquela manhã desfilarem na minha cabeça como se fossem projetados no escuro que cobria a cidade tinham certamente razões mais profundas.

On the confinement and Zé, from the Postigo Café

by Salvador Santos, 'Sobre o confinamento e o Zé, do Postigo,' *CIDADES_D_ESCRITAS* (2020), <<https://cidadesdescritas.blogspot.com/2023/04/sobre-o-confinamento-e-o-ze-do-postigo.html>>

Translation by Maria José Marques

The town asleep, still. Loulé beginning. At the Café the doors spilled Led Zeppelin over the lethargy of the morning. Inside, Zé hurried with the cleaning. People were already leaning on the walls. Clients, as urgent as the morning, waiting for a cup of coffee.

It was that morning, a morning declining into the November cold, that I thought about, as I sat, an hour before lockdown, on the last step of the stairs that led to the terrace. Before that, I had stopped by Fnac bookstore trying to find a book by Juan José Millás that someone had recommended, but whose title I had forgotten. I bought cement and other building materials for minor domestic repairs and also took advantage of the few hours I had left to shake away the mould of a map, damaged with the flood on the publishing house. When I arrived home, I climbed to the terrace like a prisoner to whom the last hand of freedom before the calaboose had been granted, and I stood upstairs looking into the darkened town. The illuminated windows on nearby buildings. The fog of clarity that hovers on the roofs on the streets where buildings are low. The clouds, silenced and afar, strolled by as brigades, lighted by the moon.

Then, I do not know for what reason of thought, I recalled that morning. The Café with open doors but still shut. Us gathering around and Zé ... Zé among the mop and a cigarette telling about the mischiefs of the night before. Still 10 minutes to opening time. An invitation to dine, a bottle of champagne the owner of the restaurant had opened and, one glass after another, the bed, at 4 a.m. Before entering one more lockdown my thoughts went back to that morning. In a way, I could have understood that reflection as if the Café, and Zé, would become the daily routine I would miss the most. A withdrawal hard to endure. That could have been the reason, but the truth is, I am not much of a regular customer. The reasons why the events of that morning were parading in my head as if projected in the dark that laid down over the town, certainly had deeper causes.

Há casas com alma e há pessoas que são a alma das coisas. O Postigo é subsidiário das duas circunstâncias. À importância que a taberna ganhou na vida da cidade não é indiferente a personalidade do Zé. Basta atender à diversidade de pessoas que a sua maneira de receber lhe permite congrega para percebermos o fenómeno de uma casa onde se mistura «água e azeite».

Não estou a dizer que ele é o melhor empregado do mundo, nem sublinhar os seus predicados de anjo, ou a defender-lhe um lugar à direita do criador pelas suas boas ações. Nada disso. Cada um tem as suas faltas... e o Zé carrega as dele.

Por vezes é difícil aguentar as cidades de província, cheias de funcionalismo público e camarário. Pequenos quadrados de ignorância cheios de presunção e inchados das misérias do poder. Os trocos dos empregos e das adjudicações. O falatório. Os joguinhos de sacristia. A estratégia das sedes.

Loulé não foge a essa regra e, quando o cosmopolitismo da Praça da República deixa o ar impregnado com o odor dos oportunistas, analfabetos diplomados, avençados, e outros serviçais açaimados pela mediocridade partidária, pela barriga vazia ou pela cobiça, desvio para a Rua 9 de Abril. Não procuro o Postigo, ou a invocação desses lugares antigos de homens ao balcão, vinho e ócio burro.

O que procuro é o Zé. Há nele uma inteligência que me interessa. Uma largueza onde cabem todos os desertos.

Não vou até ao Postigo para que me oiça. Sabemos que os empregados que servem álcool estão sujeitos a que os tomem por uma espécie de confesores laicos. E é certo e sabido, também, que não faltam bebedeiras a fazer dos balcões um ouvido para as frustrações e misérias da vida.

Vou ao Postigo para ouvir o Zé. Para lhe perguntar como vai a cidade. Para lhe ouvir as histórias que tem sempre para contar. Tanto de situações da sua vida como outras que lhe trazem.

Aprecio a sua conversa fácil e apurada ao longo dos muitos anos que serve a cidade. São tantas as vezes que ouço o Zé com a mesma satisfação e proveito com que leio um romance.

Escolho sempre os intervalos entre os primeiros cafés e cervejas da manhã e os clientes depois do almoço. É nessa altura que o expediente lhe permite trocar ideias com quem lá vai.

Raramente vou ao Postigo nos entardeceres épicos de sábado.

Aqueles em que o Palhó, e companhia, dão chapadas nos candeeiros do balcão e os fazem voar, como moscas cegas pela luz, sobre o rosto fechado e mudo do Zé. Imagino que no meio de tanto desvario líquido se sinta como uma chaleira de água sobre as brasas. Cada gesto alcoólico é um madeiro atirado para o fogo em que ferve.

There are houses with a soul and people who are the soul of matters. The Café embraces both circumstances. To the importance the tavern had gained in the life of the town, Zé's personality is no accident. It suffices if one attends to the assortment of people that his way of hosting allows to gather, to understand the phenomenon of a house in which "oil and water" actually mix.

I am not claiming he is the best employee of all time, nor am I emphasizing his angelical traits, or advocating his place at the right hand of the Creator for his good deeds. None of the sort. Everyone has their flaws... and Zé carries his own.

Sometimes it is hard to endure provincial towns, filled with civil and municipal servantry. Small squares of ignorance bursting with presumption and swollen from the miseries of power. The exchange of jobs and grants. The gossip. The offstage matchups. The strategies of headquarters.

Loulé is no different. And as the cosmopolitanism of República Square fills the air with the scent of opportunists, illiterates with a diploma, obliged by agreements, and other servants muzzled by party mediocrity, by empty stomachs or by greed, I take a detour to 9 de Abril Street. I do not seek the Café, or the enchantment of those places with men by the counter, wine, and frivolous leisure.

What I look for is Zé. There is a certain percipience about him that interests me. A wideness in which all deserts find their place. I do not go to the Café to be heard. We know that employees who serve alcohol are often mistaken for laicly confesors of some sort. And, as sure as night follows day, there is no shortage of drunkenness to make the counter an ear to frustrations and miseries of life. I go to the Café to listen to Zé. To ask him about the town. To listen to the stories he always has to tell. Both of conditions from his life and of the lives brought to him. I appreciate his easy talk, refined by many years waiting on the town. Many are the times I listen to Zé with the same pleasure and benefit I take from reading a novel.

I always choose the breaks between the first morning cups of coffee and beers, and the clients after lunch. It is on those times that work allows the exchanging of ideas with those who go there. I seldom go to the Café on the epic dusking of Saturdays. Those in which Palhó and the like, punch the lamps on the counter and make them fly as flies blinded by the light, over the closed and mute face of Zé. I imagine that among such liquid ravings he feels like a teapot placed over the embers. Each gesture of alcohol is a

Por vezes, aos sábados a loucura é tanta que há raparigas a caírem de bêbadas. Já aconteceu, numa tarde, estatelarem-se três não chão como pássaros abatidos por chumbo de zagalote. Raparigas absolutamente tomadas pela bebida a tombarem literalmente de costas. Como se cada cerveja fosse um soco do Mike Tyson. Uma luva e outra a repetirem-se na cara até ao KO final.

Na última noite, antes do confinamento, subi ao telhado para responder a um chamamento que não sei definir. Enquanto olhava a cidade recordei uma manhã, no Postigo, pelo frio diria que era novembro, enquanto o Zé acabava as limpezas e algumas pessoas se iam aproximando como gatos vadios ao pressentirem as mãos que lhes trazem a comida. A cidade a acordar lentamente. Eu à espera do calor negro de uma chávena quente.

log thrown into the fire that boils within him. Sometimes, on Saturdays, such is the madness that there are girls falling down drunk. It has happened, on an afternoon, that three of them plunged to the ground like birds blasted by a buckshot. Girls hopelessly taken by drink, literally plummeting onto their backs. As if each beer was a punch from Mike Tyson. A glove, again and again on the face, until the final knock-out.

On the last night before the lockdown, I climbed on the terrace to respond to a call I cannot define. As I looked to the town, I recalled one morning, at the Café, by the cold I would say it was November, as Zé finished cleaning and some people were closing in like stray cats anticipating the hand that brings them food. The town slowly awakening. And I, waiting for the black warmth of a hot cup.

Lockdown Rules

Noemi Alfieri

In *Regras de Isolamento*, the combination of Djamilia Pereira de Almeida's text and Humberto de Brito's photos reveal how the couple, their neighbours and their friends lived, felt and thought during lockdown, as well as what they felt and thought. Whether in *Margem Sul*, directly across the Tagus River and its bridges - so often depicted in images of **Lisbon** -, or in *São João da Madeira*, the autonomous region of Portugal by the Moroccan coast, people found their own way to deal with an uncertain and troubled period.

Regras de Isolamento comprises snapshots of regular people and their daily lives, about hope and care. They encourage us to reflect upon inequalities and fears, the weight of societal structures, and the barriers and divisions between the urban and the suburban. In Portugal, colonial inheritance is reflected in the city, its monuments, and its configuration. This shapes feelings and thoughts about the city itself and the idea of being present in it, and wander through it, while also feeding the fears of a young inhabitant of the peripheral neighborhood, *Quinta do Mocho*, confronted with the grandeur and urban oppression of a hostile city centre.

So, who does this space belong to, and who belongs to the urban space? In a local square that echoes a panopticon, Djamilia Pereira de Almeida reminds us: "The walk is evidence of belonging to a place, a sign one is a part and admitted to it: no one walks in the garden less at ease than the sick and marginalized people of the neighborhood. It seems while Nature belongs to everybody, it belongs to some more than others" (pp. 23-25).

While we critically engage in those issues, we are often taken back to the permanence of daily life: the frogs' croaking in a tank, the music of a concert resonating in a building, or the daydream of swimming naked in the Tagus River.



Regras de Isolamento

by Djamilia Pereira de Almeida and Humberto Brito

(pp. 23-25)

Em São João da Madeira, onde nunca fomos, um casal amigo, Daniel e Sofia, cultiva uma horta. Vivem numa casa velha. Ele é pintor, ela faz banda desenhada. Nunca nos vimos. Trocamos postais, imagens, cliques de som, por correio e por telefone. Vivem tempos de incerteza: com pouco dinheiro e depois de tudo ter sido cancelado. Nesta Primavera, vi serem plantados os nabos e as batatas e a chegada das joaninhas ao quintal. De vez em quando, estarão tristes e passam dias sem nos dizerem nada.

Como serão as suas caras? Sei que ele é alto e louro e ela morena, e que usa óculos. Só falámos ao telefone uma vez e a voz dele não batia certo com a voz dele que tinha dentro de mim. Do Daniel, conheço apenas a caligrafia, as fotografias e os desenhos, que nos envia. Da Sofia, menos ainda: alguns livros, perfis desfocados, o traço dos seus desenhos.

Questiono-me, quando penso nestes amigos, se a condição de sermos amigos não é que nunca nos tenhamos conhecido cara a cara: se a distância não é, às vezes, a condição da amizade. Tantos amigos próximos desbaratados, que quase parece castigo que o entendimento surja com aqueles cuja voz raramente ouvimos, cujas mãos nunca tocámos.

O Daniel cultiva a horta e partilha comigo desenhos dos legumes e dos frutos. São linhas verdes, azuis, amarelas, lilases, desenhos feitos «numa única respiração», conta-me. Vou olhando para os desenhos e sonhando com eles, com a sua horta, com a sua vida. Gostava de os ver e, ao mesmo tempo, não queria vê-los nunca, que bom seria tê-los por perto, almas gêmeas das nossas, e, ao mesmo tempo, que bom tê-los longe e saber que ao longe atranjam tempo para pensar que talvez gostássemos de saber o que andam a fazer. Sem alguma vez os ter visto, tenho saudades dos nossos jantares e dos nossos almoços, que nunca aconteceram. Gostava de os voltar a receber em minha casa, onde nunca estiveram, saudades de ficarmos até às tantas na varanda, a gastar horas e cigarros jamais fumados, nem sei se eles fumam.

Lockdown Rules

by Djamilia Pereira de Almeida and Humberto Brito,
Regras de Isolamento
(Lisboa: Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2020)
pp. 23-25, 28-31 and 83-86

Translation by Noemi Alfieri

(pp. 23-25)

In São João da Madeira, a place we have never been, a couple of friends, Daniel and Sofia, grow a vegetable garden. They live in an old house. He's a painter; she does comics. We have never met. We exchange postcards, images and audio messages, both by e-mail and phone. They are experiencing times of uncertainty, with little money and everything cancelled. This spring, I saw turnips and potatoes being planted and the arrival of ladybugs in the yard. From time to time, they probably feel sad, and days go by without them engaging in conversation.

What do their faces look like? I know he's tall and blond and she's brunette, and that she wears glasses. We only spoke on the phone once, and his voice didn't match the one I had inside me. I only know Daniel's handwriting, the photographs and the drawings which he sends us. Sofia's, even less than that: some books, blurry profiles, her drawing lines.

I wonder, when I think of these friends, whether the condition of us being friends is related to the fact we have never met face to face. I wonder if distance is not, sometimes, the condition of friendship. So many close friends are so wrecked, that it almost seems a punishment we get along with those whose voice we rarely hear, whose hands we have never touched.

Daniel tends the garden and shares drawings of vegetables and fruits with me. Green, blue, yellow, lilac lines; drawings made "in a single breath", he tells me. I look at the drawings and dream about them, about their garden, about their life. I would like to see them and at the same time, I would not. Ever. How good it would be to have them around, our soulmates, and, at the same time, how good it is that they are far away, and to know that, in the distance, they can find time to think that we might like to know what they are doing. Without having ever seen them, I miss our dinners and our lunches, that never happened. I'd like to welcome them back to my house, where they have never been. I miss us hanging out on the balcony until late, wasting hours and cigarettes we have never smoked, I don't even know if they smoke.

Do interior dos meus amigos, agora que temem pelo futuro, vejo, à distância, muito pouco. A sua horta cultivada chega-me como a sua esperança derradeira: cultivam-na para sobreviver, não para estarem entretidos. Por vezes, rasgam os desenhos feitos no fim-de-semana, como nós rasgamos, talvez não saiam da cama por uns dias, como também nós não saímos. Depois, acordam. Mostram-nos a fotografia de uma batata ou o desenho da rama de uma cebola; enviam-nos um texto ou a maquete de um livro. Talvez os meus amigos se ponham, também, nos meus sapatos. O que vêem eles do pouco que lhes mostro? Só o que imaginam, tanto quanto conheço deles, ou ainda menos? Lembramo-nos uns dos outros como nos lembramos de um sonho, depois de termos acordado, sem sabermos bem os caminhos por onde andámos durante a noite.

Mais do que a sua vida imaginada, ou do que a sua voz, que mal conheço, penso nas raízes da nossa amizade e se essa planta sobreviveria se vivêssemos perto uns dos outros. Se estivéssemos perto, podíamos partilhar o pão e a água. Assim, não podemos: às vezes, os desenhos deles são desesperançados, ou o seu silêncio demasiado prolongado. Vislumbro a sua mesa, as pragas que ameaçam o quintal, a chuva que não vem, ou que arrasa tudo.

Apetece-me enviar-lhes por correio uma panela de comida, um copo de água, ou uma manta, ou um afago. Ou talvez não precisem de nós, quem sabe? Talvez seja eu que sonho que podia matar-lhes a fome e a sede, aquecê-los e embebedarmo-nos juntos.

Não nos conhecemos a tempo de a vida nos ter tornado distantes, a tempo de os filhos, os empregos, a rotina, a idade nos terem apartado aos poucos e nos terem apartado do que julgávamos que éramos. São amigos que se fazem como se fazem alguns desenhos: sem sabermos como os fizemos, depois de os termos feito, como se tivessem sido feitos por outra pessoa. Passa uma, passam duas semanas, a horta do Daniel e da Sofia muda a cada hora, ou eles não ouvem o telefone, ou nós andamos cabisbaixos- e, depois, regressam, como os fantasmas regressam.

Nem escolhemos as pessoas com que nos entendemos, nem tão-pouco o tempo em que elas chegam à nossa vida e, mesmo assim, sem que o mereçamos, elas vivem. Chego a pensar que São João da Madeira não existe e é o nome de um lugar sonhado, que nunca houve horta, nem Daniel, nem Sofia, nem joaninhas, nem nabos, nem sequer desenhos. E que a sorte de nos termos encontrado é mesmo castigo por todos os amigos que não regámos.

My friends now fear for the future. I see, from a distance, very little. Their cultivated vegetable garden comes to me as their ultimate hope: they nurture it for survival, not entertainment. Sometimes, they tear up the drawings made at weekends, like we did: maybe they don't get out of bed for a few days, just like us. Then they wake up. They show us a photograph of a potato or a drawing of the branch of an onion. They send us a text or a book mockup. Maybe my friends put themselves in my shoes, too. What do they see from the little I show them? Just what they imagine, as much as I know of them, or even less? We remember each other as we remember a dream we have awoken from, without really knowing the paths we walked during the night.

More than their imagined life, or their voices, which I barely know, I think of the roots of our friendship, and whether this plant would survive if we lived closer to each other. If we were close, we could share bread and water. This way, we cannot. Sometimes, their drawings are hopeless, or their silence lasts too long. I glimpse their table, the plagues who threaten the yard, the rain that doesn't come, or that destroys everything. I feel like sending them a pot of food, a glass of water, a blanket, or a cuddle, by airmail. Or maybe they don't need us, who knows? Maybe it's me who dreams that I could kill their hunger and thirst, warm them up and get drunk together with them.

We haven't known each other enough in time for life to make us distant, in time for the children, the jobs, the routine, the age to have separated us little by little; to have separated us from what we thought we were. They are friends you make as you make some drawings: without knowing afterwards how you did them, as if they had been made by someone else. One week goes by. Two weeks go by. Daniel and Sofia's vegetable garden changes at every hour. Either they don't hear the phone, or we are crestfallen. And then, they come back, like ghosts do.

We neither choose the people we get along with, nor the time when they come into our lives, and yet, without us deserving it, they live. I even think São João da Madeira does not exist and it is the name of a dreamed place where there never was a vegetable garden, Daniel or Sofia, or ladybugs, or turnips, or even drawings. And that the luck we had in meeting each other is the same punishment for all the friends we didn't water.

(pp. 28-29)

A caminhada enquanto indício de pertença a um lugar, sinal de que se faz parte e se é admitido: ninguém caminha no jardim com menos à-vontade do que os doentes e os inadaptados do bairro. Parece que a Natureza é de todos, mas é mais de uns do que de outros. O vizinho triste caminha como quem foge das árvores e do vento, revelando o jardim como jaula e não como estrada aberta, lugar plantado pela mão humana e não um lugar deixado ao exercício da liberdade. O desenho circular do espaço, circundado por prédios que o vigiam, é, diante do trajecto do doente pelo meio da relva, não um campo aberto, mas um panóptico de cujas janelas todos vigiam o aleijado que, aos cinquenta anos, ainda vive com os pais. Também o caseiro negro e velho olha por cima do ombro quando se aproxima dos canteiros para deitar fora sacos de folhas secas.

Talvez a alienação de Robert Walser fosse a anestesia que lhe permitia farejar a rua como um cão vadio, ou a autoconsciência do velho caseiro cabo-verdiano seja indício da sua percepção de que o lazer, o vento nas folhas dos choupos, o coaxar das rãs no tanque, a relva verde, a Natureza, não estão aí para todos.

Quem interage com o quê durante a caminhada? Será essa interacção uma relação entre o passeante e a paisagem ou entre o seu lugar no mundo e o espaço-tempo ocupado por ele enquanto caminha, não terra-de-ninguém mas lugar político? Nenhuma caminhada é grátis. Quando saímos à rua, levamos a nossa cara e a nossa posição na ordem das coisas. Ou é preciso que a paisagem nos embebede, nos faça esquecer essa posição, nos cubra com um véu de ignorância, se é que tal é possível, e que caminhemos como sujeitos nulos, e não como gente com tamanho, cor e altura. Vejo os ocupantes do jardim da janela nos seus passeios higiénicos como se observasse fugitivos. Fugiram de casa, do tédio, do desespero, da capital, da sua vida, e entregam-se ao feitiço do sol, como girassóis. Mas vejo-os da janela, não me atrevo ir lá abaixo, não interajo, não partilho da sua coragem. Estou viva, como eles, mas não o suficiente para me perder no jardim nem para me esquecer da minha cara.

(p. 30)

Nunca tinha reparado que a mão direita de dona Laura parece uma barbatana, quando ela levantava as persianas e nos dizia adeus da janela do terceiro andar, ou quando a ajudávamos a carregar as compras. Mas o polegar e o indicador estavam colados por uma membrana de pele.

(pp. 28 – 29)

The walk as evidence of belonging to a place, as a sign one is a part of it and is admitted to it: no one who walks in the garden is less at ease than the sick and marginalized people of the neighbourhood. It seems while Nature belongs to everybody, it belongs to some more than others. The sad neighbour walks like someone fleeing from the trees and the wind, revealing the garden to be a cage and not an open road: a place planted by human hands and not a place left to the exercise of freedom. The circular design of the space, surrounded by the buildings guarding it, is, to the eyes of the sick person in the middle of the grass, not an open field, but a panopticon whose windows watch the fifty-year-old cripple who still lives with his parents. The black and old housekeeper also looks over his shoulder while going towards the seedbeds to throw bags of dry leaves away.

Perhaps Robert Walser's alienation was the anesthetic that allowed him to sniff the street like a stray dog, or the Cape Verdean old man's self-awareness is indicative of his perception of the fact that leisure, the wind on the poplar leaves, the frogs' croaking in the tank, the green grass, Nature is not there for everyone.

Who interacts with what during the walk? Is this interaction a relationship between the walker and the landscape, or between his place in the world and the space-time occupied by him as he walks? Not a no-man's-land but a political place? No walk is free of charge. When we go out to the street, we bring our face and our position in the order of things. Or it is that the landscape makes us drunk, makes us forget this situation, covers us with a veil of ignorance, if that is even possible, and that we walk as null subjects, and not as people with a size, colour and height. I see, from the window, the occupants of the garden on their daily walk as if I were watching escapees who ran away from home, from boredom, from despair, from the capital, from their lives, and surrendered to the charm of the sun, like sunflowers. But I see them from the window, I don't dare going down there, I don't interact, I don't partake of their bravery. I'm alive, like them, but not enough to either get lost in the garden, or to forget my face.

(p. 30)

I'd never noticed that Laura's right hand looked like a fin when she was raising the blinds and waving goodbye to us from the third-floor window, or when we helped her to carry the groceries. But the thumb and forefinger were glued together by a skin membrane.

Na casa de Cinita, ao lanche, debaixo do jarro de vino di verano, lê-se, no paninho bordado em ponto pé-de-flor, O Sonho da Cinita. «Qual é?», pergunto. E, sobre os olhos da senhora, ainda agora alegres e vivos, abate-se uma noite misturada com sono. Boceja, diz-se cansada, desaparece na cozinha.

(p. 31)

Subindo a Rua Nova do Almada com Marlon, habitante da Quinta do Mocho, num dia de Inverno

Marlon: Isso tudo aqui, Chiado, Rossio, Baixa, esses prédios, esses cafés, esplanadas, faz-me impressão. Dá-me pele de galinha. Mete respeito.

Djaimilia: Respeito ou medo?

Marlon: (Silêncio) Podemos falar de outra coisa?

(p. 33)

A viúva espreita pela janela, antes de vir à rua deitar o lixo no caixote do jardim. Quando o terreno está livre, desce. Traz sempre dois saquinhos apertados com um nó. Olha para a direita. Olha para a esquerda. Deita os saquinhos no caixote. Volta ao prédio. Sobe a escada. Vai à janela confirmar que ninguém a viu. Fecha as cortinas. Baixa as persianas. Lava as mãos. Acende a luz. Será que deita fora o irmão com quem vivia, congelado na arca, cortado aos bocadinhos, que nunca mais ninguém viu? No tanque, as rãs coaxam. São as únicas testemunhas do ritual da viúva; e, também, o seu embalo quando se deita na cama, lavada.

O amolador passa, em Janeiro: H. diz-me: «Lembra-me a infância. Parece que lá fora, quando ele passa, ainda são os anos 80.» No começo do Verão, quando a relva está alta e viçosa, passa o jardineiro guineense a cantar o espiritual negro a que nos habituámos. Canta mais alto do que o cortador de relva. Parece que lá fora, quando ele passa, ainda é uma plantação de algodão.

(pp. 83-84)

Nas noites sem vento, ouvem-se os apitos dos cruzeiros. Nunca pensamos que não nos levam dentro deles, que ficámos em terra, enquanto passam, em direcção a outros lugares, ao desconhecido. Picámos em terra e, de certo modo, ficar aqui é despedirmo-nos todos os dias de alguma coisa. Tem sido isto a casa, o nosso bairro. Primeiro, do corpo, que já não é como era quando aqui entrámos: estamos mais feios, mais gordos e mais velhos. E, também, da cidade,

In Cinita's house, at snacktime, one reads, under the *vino di verano* jar, on the fabric embroidered in floral stitch, *O Sonho da Cinita*. "Which is it?" I ask. And, over the eyes of the lady, that just a few moments ago were cheerful and alive, a night mixed with sleep falls. She yawns, says she's tired, and disappears into the kitchen.

(p. 31)

Going up Rua Nova do Almada with Marlon, an inhabitant of Quinta do Mocho, on a winter day.

Marlon: All of this here, Chiado, Rossio, Baixa, these buildings, these cafes, terraces, they make me feel weird/ IMPRESS ME. It gives me goose bumps. It instills respect.

Djaimilia: Respect or fear?

Marlon: (Silence) Can we talk about something else?

(p. 33)

The widow peeks out the window, before going to the street to throw the trash in the garden bin. When the coast is clear, she goes down. She always brings two tightly knotted bags with her. She looks to the right. She looks to the left. She throws the bags in the bin. She goes back to the building. She goes up the stairs. She goes to the window to make sure no one saw her. She closes the curtains. She rolls down the blinds. She washes her hands. She turns the light on. Does she throw away the brother she used to live with, frozen in the ark, cut into little pieces, that no one has ever seen again? The frogs croak in the tank. They are the only witnesses to the widow's ritual; and, furthermore, her lull when she goes to bed, washed.

The grinder passes by. In January: H. tells me: "It reminds me of childhood. It seems that outside, when he passes, it is still the 80 's." At the beginning of the summer, when the grass is high and lush, the Guinean gardener passes, singing the Black Spiritual we have become used to. He sings louder than the lawnmower. It seems that out there, when he passes by, it is still a cotton plantation.

(pp. 83-84)

In the nights with no wind, you can hear the cruises whistling. We never think how they won't take us inside them, that we are kept on land, as they pass towards other places, towards the unknown. We stayed onshore and, in a way, to stay here means saying goodbye to something every day. This has been the house, our neighbourhood. First, from the body, as it is not how it was when we came in here

que deixámos para trás e da imagem da vida a que ela dera lugar. Despedimo-nos dos avós, tios mortos. Despedimo-nos da ideia de ter filhos e ganhámos consciência de que depois disto, desta mesa para dois, nada restará. Não é preciso que não haja vento para se ouvirem as motos na via rápida, ao longe.

Calculamos que sejam apostadores que correm a dinheiro. Ouvimos-os no que parece, à distância, o esplendor da coragem física, a imortalidade. Cada vez nos deitamos mais cedo e jantamos mais cedo, cada vez mais parecidos com outros casais sem filhos que conhecemos. «Lê o Memorial de Aires», diz-me o H., «os Aguiares não tinham filhos e o Machado de Assis também não». Ponho-me à porta, quando as três crianças sobem a escada com a mãe, vizinhos do andar de cima. Os seus pulos e birras de sono na escada do prédio enchem-me de vida e alegria.

Era Tomas Tranströmer quem, em menino, sonhava com a vida na casa por cima da sua quando, de noite, o vizinho sorumbático com que costumava cruzar-se na escada do prédio ria às gargalhadas e abria garrafas de espumante. As rolhas saltavam, Tranströmer sonhava. A diferença entre a figura do vizinho e o som do vizinho, chegado à sua casa através das paredes, punha o pequeno Tranströmer em expectativa ansiosa, abrindo-lhe as portas da imaginação. Os barulhos dos vizinhos de cima que chegam à nossa casa são o nosso contacto diário, mundano, com a origem da literatura. A casa tem horas certas, dadas pelo cão, que nós disciplina e nós põe a caminho da cozinha às 19h38 em ponto.

Nas noites de Primavera, as rãs coaxam no tanque e o som faz eco nos prédios, tornados câmara de ressonância. Mas dura poucas semanas e logo se calam. Em dias de festival de Verão, os concertos chegam à varanda, distorcidos pelo vento, distinguem-se os aplausos, os gritos de *encore*, a algazarra. Nas noites de tempestade, quando o vento ameaça deitar abaixo um dos ramos do pinheiro, ouve-se o mar contra as rochas, na praia, ao fundo da vila. Ape-tece-me atirar-me às águas. Morrer, não. Mas nadarmos nus pelo Tejo de madrugada.

anymore: we are uglier, fatter and older. And, also, from the city, that we left behind, and from the image of the life to which it had given way.

We have said goodbye to our dead grandparents and uncles. We have said goodbye to the idea of having children and we have become aware that after this, after this table for two, nothing will remain. There doesn't have to be any wind to hear, at a distance, the motorbikes on the highway.

We think they might be money gamblers. We can hear them in what seems, from a distance, the magnificence of physical bravery, of immortality. We go to bed earlier and earlier, we have dinner earlier, more and more like other childless couples we know. "Read the *Memorial de Aires*," H. tells me, "the Aguiares had no children and neither did Machado de Assis". I stand at the door, when three children, neighbours from the upper floor, get up the stairs with their mother. Their jumps and tantrums in the building stairs because of lack of sleep fulfill my life of joy.

It was Tomas Tranströmer who, as a child, dreamed of life in the house above his own, when, at night, the depressed neighbour used to cross the stairs, burst out laughing and open bottles of sparkling wine. The corks were popping, Tranströmer was dreaming. The difference between the figure of the neighbour and the sound of the neighbour who arrived at his house through the walls, fostered an anxious expectation in young Tranströmer, opening the doors of his imagination. The noises that reach our house from the neighbours living upstairs are our daily, mundane, contact with the origin of literature. The house has its own schedule, established by the dog, who disciplines us and puts us on the way to the kitchen at 7: 38 pm exactly.

On Spring nights, the frogs croak in the tank and the sound resonates in the buildings, that have become an echo chamber. But it lasts a few weeks, they become quiet afterwards. On summer festival days, concerts arrive through the balcony, distorted by the wind. You can discern the applause, the shouts of *encore*, the racket. On stormy nights, when the wind threatens to bring down one of the branches of the pine tree, you can hear the sea against the rocks, on the beach, down the village. I feel like throwing myself in the water. Dying, no. But for us to swim, at dawn, naked in the Tagus.

(pp. 85 – 86)

Não conseguimos ver a cara do velhote da casa do lado, quando ele vem à janela fumar um cigarro. E o patriarca de uma família de três gerações de bombeiros voluntários. Na varanda, estamos separados por uma parede. Só o fumo dos nossos cigarros se conhece e conversa, enquanto fumo do lado de cá, o senhor fuma do lado de lá. Imagino a sua cara, pouco o vejo, porque está acamado e quase não sai de casa. Anda sempre de pijama. Veio para casa da filha esperar pela morte. O nosso começo e o seu fim convivem no tempo e no espaço, embora nunca tenhamos trocado duas palavras. O seu fim de vida também coincide com a independência da neta, que se tornou uma mulher, aliás bem bonita, desde que viemos para cá. Sentirei a sua morte quando ele morrer e os meus cigarros à varanda serão mais sozinhos.

No dia 25 de Abril de 2020, a *Grândola, Vila Morena* ecoou pelo bairro. Foi comovente. Os mais jovens foram à janela com os filhos, alguns cantaram ou bateram palmas. Duas varandas ao nosso lado, um vizinho bradava que se calassem, «filhos da puta, cabrões do caralho, metam o 25 de Abril», etc. Não percebemos de que janela saía a voz. Pensámos em *After Virtue*, de Alasdair MacIntyre: como o castigo daquele vizinho é viver a vida que leva, mergulhado no seu ódio, e não por odiar o 25 de Abril, mas por nos odiar sem nunca nos ter visto. Odiar é o seu castigo, porque a vida que estamos a viver é tudo aquilo com que contamos. No 13 de Maio de 2020, passou o padre da paróquia com um grupo de escuteiros, num carro descapotável. Foi comovente vê-lo rezar o terço com os vizinhos que foram à janela, abençoar os prédios, dar força e coragem às pessoas enclausuradas.

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- 2 Neighborhood of Sacavém, under the Loures district, in a peripheral area of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon.
- 3 Three of the main neighborhoods of the city centre of Lisbon.

(pp. 85 – 86)

We can't see the face of the old man next door, when he comes to the window for a cigarette. He's the patriarch of a family of three generations of volunteer firefighters. On the balcony, we're separated by a wall. Only the smoke from our cigarettes meets and talks, while I smoke on this side, the man smokes on the other side. I imagine his face. I hardly see him because he is bedridden and hardly leaves the house. He's always in his pyjamas. He came to his daughter's house to wait for death. Our beginning and his end coexist in time and space, although we have never exchanged a word. The end of his life also coincides with the independence of his granddaughter, who has become a woman, quite a beautiful one actually, since we came here. I will mourn his death when he dies and my cigarettes on the balcony will be lonelier.

On the 25th of April 2020, *Grândola, Vila Morena* echoed through the neighbourhood. It was touching. The younger ones went to the window with their children, some sang or clapped their hands. Two balconies beside us, a neighbour shouting at them to shut up, "motherfuckers, motherfuckers, put the 25th of April in your...", etc. We could not work out which window the voice came from. We thought about *After Virtue* by Alasdair MacIntyre: how that neighbour's punishment is to live the life he leads, plunged in his hatred, and not because he hates the 25th of April, but because he hates us without having ever seen us. To hate is his punishment, because the life we're living is all we're counting on. On the 13th of May 2020, the parish priest passed by in a cabriolet, together with a group of Boy Scouts. It was touching to see him praying the rosary with the neighbours who went to the window, blessing the buildings, giving strength to the confined people.

- 4 Last novel written by one of the greatest Brazilian writers, Machado de Assis, in 1908.
- 5 Swedish poet and translator.
- 6 Portuguese song written by José Afonso (known as Zeca Afonso, or simply Zeca) and that became the himn on the Carnation Revolution, for being chosen by the MFA (Movimento das Forças Armadas) as the signal to start a militar coup that overturned the Estado Novo dictatorship, on the 25th of April 1975. Grândola is a city of Alentejo, in the Southern part of the country, known for its resistance to the dictatorship and for land reform.

Singing Lesson

Sonja Novak

Even though the novel *Sat pjevanja* [*Singing Lesson*] mainly focuses on the topic of the music preferences of the main character who, as opposed to his family's expectations and wishes, prefers modern and pop music to classical, the plot is set in **Osijek**, the fourth largest city in Croatia and reflects 1980s urban life there. Descriptions of the city dominate the first chapter, but are very much present throughout the whole novel, evoking the city's cultural and urban past and present.



Sat pjevanja

by Nenad Rizvanović

1.

Čvrsto si stiskao kapke sve dok se sitne narančaste točkice nisu raspršile na tamnom nebu. Stopalo je već na biciklističkoj pedali dok otvaraš oči. Suho duguljasto stablo ispred tebe vinulo se sve do prozora na drugom katu. Sve su prodavaonice otvorene – pekara Sloboda, Foto Husak, Zlatarnica Krasnići, Plavi radion i na ulici ljudi, uvijek drugi i nepoznati ljudi.

To je tvoj trenutak, jednom kad je bicikl na ulici, trenutak koji nitko ne vidi, koji nije sumnjiv ili čudan, i zato i jest tvoj, i samo tvoj, samo ti i valovi tišine što se spuštaju prema rijeci.

Svijet je drukčiji s bicikla: trgovci i elastičarnice rastavljaju se u retrovizoru, obitelji putuju u grad načičkane u karoserijama; motori, čak i automobilske sirene, u ovakvim toplim popodnevim drijemaju poput mačaka u provinciji.

Poznata je ruta kojom ćeš se spustiti do rijeke, najprije Vlahovičevom do kina Papuk, potom dalje do sporog i mutnog mora. Pored rijeke se sve čini bistrijim: na drugoj strani obale šire se oranice, na čijim rubovima, iz vječitih izmaglica, izranjanju seoske kuće. Grad i selo se mirno gledaju preko rijeke, bijeli viseći pješački most elegantno je preskočio obalu.

Uputio si se prema sportsko-rekreacijskom centru Copacabana na lijevoj strani Drave. Možda već pune olimpijski bazen! Što ako je ljeta već neprimjetno doputovalo? Moraš hitno kupiti nove plivačke naočale, sezona samo što nije započela.[...]

7.

Bulevar kojim se vraćao iz škole bio je filmski dugačak. Oto je hodao i hodao, a onda bi iznenada Blok centar izvirio iza kitnjastih kuća poput nasmiješenog psa. Blok centar – barem mu se sviđalo kada bi to izgovorio, kao i Supermarket, uostalom, što god značilo, a ako Ota pitate ni jedno ni drugo nije značilo ništa, iako je zvučalo odlično.

Oto je pomilovao zidove kuća u Blok centru kao što se miluju dječje kovrče, taj Blok centar je malo zbrkan, brzopleto sastavljen, što ne primjećuju jedino stanari, slični likovima iz jedne

Singing Lesson

by Nenad Rizvanović, *Sat pjevanja*
(Zagreb: Dpkm, 2009), pp. 1-2 and 14-16

Translation by Sonja Novak

Upper Town

1.

You would squeeze your eyelids until the little orange dots dispersed all over the dark sky. Your foot is already on the bicycle pedal as you open your eyes. The lanky dry tree in front of you is soaring all the way to the second storey window. All the shops are open: the bakery "Sloboda", Foto Husak, Goldsmith's Krasnići, Plavi radion and the streets are full of people, always different and unfamiliar people.

This is your moment, once the bicycle is in the street, the moment that nobody sees, the moment that is never filled with doubt or strangeness, and that is what makes this moment yours and only yours; it's just you and the waves of silence descending towards the river.

The world is different when you are on your bicycle: the squares and ice-cream shops drift apart in the rear view mirror, families ride to the city in their cars all dressed up: during these warm afternoons the bikes and even car-horns take their long afternoon naps, much like cats in the province.

The route you are taking to descend towards the river is familiar: first you take Vlašičeva 'til you reach the Papuk cinema, then you continue down to the slow and murky water. Everything seems clearer when you are next to the river: the fields expand on the river's other bank to allow some village houses to emerge from the eternal mists of their edges. The city and the village seem to be looking at each other peacefully from their separate banks; the white pedestrian bridge jumps elegantly across connecting them. You are headed towards the Copacabana recreational centre on the left bank of the River Drava. Maybe they're already filling the big pool with water! What if the summer has already arrived without having been noticed? You need to buy a new pair of diving glasses as soon as possible, the season is about to start. [...]

7.

The boulevard he took to get home was endlessly long. Oto was walking and walking when suddenly the Block centre quarter

Otove stare slikovnice na njemačkom jeziku, u kojoj se uvijek netko proteže na balkonu u poderanoj pidžami, netko pije iz prljave boce, na prozoru laje pas, djeteta urla, žena diže nogu da bi odjenula suknju... Utješno je da ovaj svijet nalikuje slikovnici na njemačkom, što valjda znači da ljudi nisu između sebe pretjerano različiti.

Tu svoju slikovnicu je zatvorio u Vrtu Jagode Truhelke, jer mu je mama naložila da na povratku iz škole preuzme njezinu suknju od krojačice, sretna je okolnost da je Vrt Jagode Truhelke lijepo mjesto u čijem središtu stoji krasna velika nova zgrada, koja pomalo podsjeća na tvrđavu ispred koje se nalazi park, što je uobičajeno kad je riječ o tvrđavama, samo što je ovaj park minijaturan, sastavljen od stabala ringlova.[...]

Vani, iznad ringlova, oblaci su plovili spokojno kao da je dan tek svanuo, Oto je bio na svojoj omiljenoj ruti, pravac stara pošta i dalje prema Domu zdravlja i rezidencijalnom naselju. Već sama riječ "rezidencijalno", sastavljena od komadića misterija, palila je u njemu fantastične misli. Židovski i njemački građani nekada su stanovali u tim kućama koje su trunule tiho i neprimjetno, čak je Oto poznavao poneko dijete sa židovskim prezimenom ili je to možda bilo njemačko prezime, možda židovskonnjemačko, većinu tih prezimena je bilo teško razlikovati, kad su bila tako slična, ako već ne i ista.

U kupki sunčanog dana činilo se nemogućim da je itko ikada patio, bilo je nezamislivo da su ljudi i djeca nasilu odvođeni, potom mučeni i ubijani, takve misli su se topile na sunčanim zrakama, ali on ih je i dalje želio biti svjestan, među visokim zgradama i visokim prozorima, možda su se to duhovi židovski i njemački vraćali na popodnevni čaj, koji ih na stolu čekao još od dana kad su odvedeni.

Osijek je često bio golema željeznička stanica na koju se dolazi i odlazi žurno i zauvijek, sve dok konačno nije postao grad duhova, kad je broj onih koji su otišli ili nestali nadmašio one koji su ostali. Prognani bi kasnije pomišljali kako bi morali biti sretni što su pobjegli, pogotovo ako nisu završili u nekom od koncentracijskih logora, no rijetko su se vraćali nakon ratova, bojali su se svega što bi ovdje mogli zateći, zapravo se i nisu imali kamo vratiti, premda su kuće i zgrade bile iste, bolno iste, ali to više nije bio isti grad, neki novi ljudi, posve novi i nepoznati ljudi dovedeni su na mjesto poznanika, prijatelja i rođaka i, na kraju krajeva, njih samih. Neki su drugi ljudi živjeli njihove živote.

[...]

appeared behind the lavish houses, like a smiling dog. The Block centre – well, at least he loved saying this name as much as he liked saying the name 'Supermarket' – whatever that meant. And if you asked Oto, neither actually meant anything, even though they sounded great.

Oto caressed the walls of the houses of the Block centre as you would caress a child's curls. This Block centre was a bit mixed up, put together very quickly. This remains unnoticed only by its tenants who resemble the characters from one of Oto's old German picture-books: the ones that always contain a character stretching on the balcony in a pair of ripped pyjamas or somebody drinking from a dirty bottle or a dog barking in the window, a baby screaming, or a woman lifting her leg to put on a skirt... The fact that this world resembles a German picture-book is comforting, because this, in turn, means that people are not so different from each other after all.

Oto closed this picture book in his mind as he arrived at Jagoda Truhelka Garden because his mom told him to pick up her skirt from the tailor's on his way back home from school. Luckily Jagoda Truhelka Garden was a nice place, in the centre of which there is a nice new building that looks like a fortress with a park in front of it, as it is usually the case with fortresses. Only this park is minuscule and has cherry plum trees.

[...] Outside, above the cherry plum trees, the clouds were hovering as peacefully as if it were just daybreak. Oto was on his favourite route towards the old post office and from there further on towards the Healthcare Centre and the residential area. The word "residential" in itself was made up of little pieces of mystery and inspired his imagination. The Jewish and German citizens used to live in these houses that were now rotting quietly und unnoticed. Oto even knew some kids with Jewish family names or maybe those were German family names, maybe Jewish-German, most of those family names were difficult to distinguish anyway; they were so similar to each other, if not practically the same.

When bathed in such a sunny day, it felt impossible to Oto that anyone could have ever suffered; it was unthinkable that people and children were taken by force, tortured and killed. Thoughts like these melted away in the rays of the sun, but he wanted to remain aware of them, among the tall buildings and high windows. Maybe it was the Jewish and German spirits returning to have their afternoon tea that was waiting for them since the day they were taken away.

Osijek has often been nothing but a giant railway station to and from which people and things were coming and going, quickly and

forever, until finally it became a city of ghosts when the number of those who went away or were missing surpassed the number of those who stayed. Those who were banished from their homes would later think how lucky they must have been to be able to escape, especially for not ending up in one of the concentration camps. But they would rarely return after the wars. They were afraid of everything they might find here and they actually didn't have anywhere to return to. Even though the houses and the buildings were the same, painfully the same, it wasn't the same city anymore. The people were new and completely unfamiliar, they were people who were now there instead of their acquaintances, friends and relatives. In the end, instead of themselves, some other people were living their lives.

[...]

How much is love worth?

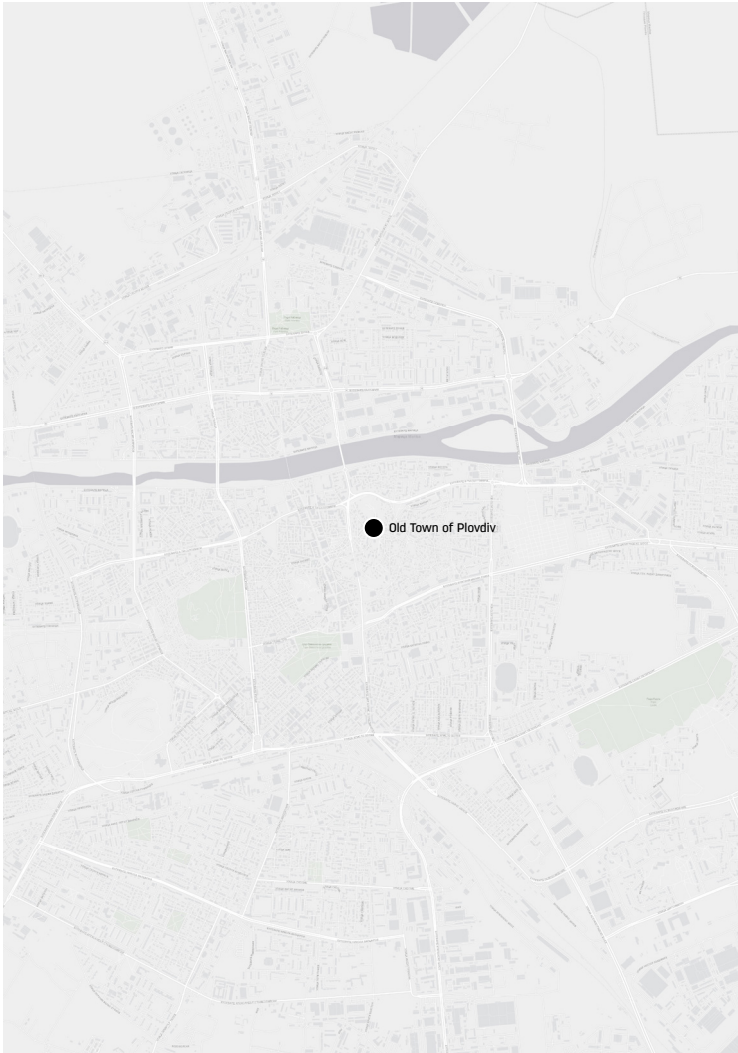
Stela Todorova

Do you remember the hometown and the quiet neighbourhood street with the bakery on the corner, the colourful cafes and the studios for handmade jewelry, dolls and souvenirs? And mom's eyes? Or that sad square with the gloomy bell tower and the melancholy people and trees?

Desislava Gramadnikova is a Bulgarian writer and photographer who lives and works in **Plovdiv**. Her short story "How much is love worth?" is an excerpt from her debut book "The Word Collector".

In a collection of short stories called "The Collector of Words", Desislava Gramadnikova manages to house a dozen memories related to Plovdiv and the original neighbourhood "Kapana", with her photography studio and some of its strange visitors, and even with that "bay of sirens" – as imaginary as it is real. She, like a true "collector of words", creates exquisite pieces of life from her memories: sometimes warm and inspiring: other times, dark and frightening.

This interesting debut consists of twenty-three short stories collected and told with much love by Desislava Gramadnikova. So that then, quite naturally, comes the question: "How much is a love, an ordinary love?" The author answers quite specifically in one of her stories - "Ordinary love costs exactly eighteen leva and seventy-seven cents, at a delivery price. And then... then you will make her priceless." Yes, the pricelessness of love comes from the infinite value of our memories, memories that we collect throughout our lives.



Колко струва любовта?

by Desislava Gramadnikova

В Пловдив има квартал, който се нарича „Капана“. Намира се в самото сърце на града и гостите казват, че времето в него тече различно. Той е магична плетеница от малки калдъръмени улички, носещи имената на занаятите, които са се упражнявали там – „Железарска“, „Кожухарска“, „Абаджийска“, „Златарска“. Това е било преди век, а сега, по модерному, го наричат „средище на творческите индустрии“.

Не, това не е туристически справочник за Пловдив, просто искам да придобиете по-ясна представа за мястото, в което живея.

Къщата ми е сбутана между две други, почти в средата на квартала и принадлежи на семейството ми от две поколения насам. Дядо ми я е купил като сватбен подарък за жена си. Преди е била пълна с хора, но сега тук живеем само двете с мама. Къщата е стара и всичко в нея въздиша – вратите, дъските на пода, че дори и водопроводните тръби. Долу е малкото ни магазинче, а вътрешни дървени стълби водят към горния етаж, където има две стаи, чиито прозорци гледат към улицата. Тясно е, но на мен ми харесва, особено в магазина. Когато не съм на училище, помагам на мама, защото има дни, в които е пълно с купувачи. Най-натоварено е по празниците, всеки иска да си купи любов, за себе си или за подарък. Да, правилно чувте, в нашия малък, пъстър магазин продаваме любов – в красиви кутии с панделки или в ръчно изрисувани буркани с капаци на винт. Стоката ни е първокачествена и подредена красиво на дървени рафтове покрай стените. Ето, например, само за двацет и пет лева и трийсет и четири стотинки може да получите краткотрайна страстна любов за лятото, опакована в моркосиня хартия с жълти краища, тя е най-продавана. Имаме и специални предложения, но тях рядко ги търсят, защото са скъпи.

Мама се е научила да разпознава клиентите и още от вратата им предлага точно това, което им трябва. Казва, че уж хората са различни, но всъщност всеки се нуждае от любов и споделеност. Сигурно съди по себе си, защото знам, че е самотна, всяка вечер го виждам в очите ѝ. Тъгата е втората ѝ природа, която тя умело прикрива с ослепителна усмивка и чар. Всички я обожават, но аз

How much is love worth?

by Desislava Gramadnikova, (Sofia: Biblioteka Bulgarija, 2020)

Translation by Stela Todorova and Desislava Gramadnikova

There is a neighbourhood in Plovdiv called „Kapana“. Located at the very heart of the city, visitors say that time flows differently in the magical tangle of tiny, cobbled streets bearing the names of the „Zhelezarska“, „Kozhuharska“, „Abadzhiyska“, „Zlatarska“ trades practiced there a century ago. Today Kapana it is the modern „centre of creative industries“.

No, this is not a tourist guide for Plovdiv, I just want you to get a clearer idea of the place where I live.

Our house is sandwiched between two others, almost in the middle of the neighbourhood, and has been in my family for two generations. My grandfather bought it as a wedding present for his wife. It used to be full of people, but now it's just me and mom living here. The building is old and everything in it sighs; the doors, the floorboards, even the water pipes. Downstairs is our little shop, and an internal wooden staircase leads to the upper floor, where there are two rooms with windows facing the street. It's a tight squeeze but I like it, especially in the store. When I'm not at school, I help mom because there are days when it's full of customers. It's busiest during the holidays: everyone wants to buy love - for themselves, or as a gift. Yes, you heard that right. In our small, colourful shop we sell love; in pretty boxes with ribbons or in hand-painted jars with screw-on lids. Our merchandise is premium quality and beautifully arranged on wooden shelves along the walls. Here, for example, for only twenty-five leva and thirty-four cents you can get a short-lived passionate love for the summer, wrapped in sea-blue paper with yellow edges. It is the best-seller. We also have special offers, but they are rarely sought after because they are expensive.

Mom understands customers and right from the door offers them exactly what they need. She says that people are supposedly different, but in fact, everyone needs love and sharing. She must be basing this on herself because I know she's lonely. I see it in her eyes every night. Sadness is a second nature which she skillfully conceals with a dazzling smile and charm. Everyone

добре я познавам. Когато бях малка, тя все ми повтаряше колко много ме обича. И тогава, с детската си наивност, приех, че любовта е образа на мама. Образ, който няма лице, възраст или характер, а е изтъкан само и единствено от обич, най-чистата и неискаща нищо емоция. Но после пораснах и осъзнах, че това прекрасно чувство има много измерения и начини, по които да стигне до сърцето. Вече знам, че през всичките тези години, когато мама се грижеше за мен, е имала нужда от още някого до себе си, който да я обича като жена, някой, който така и не намери. Ирония на съдбата, ще кажете, жена, която продава любов да живее без нея, но животът понякога си прави шеги с нас.

В „Капана“ всички се познаваме. На ъгъла до нас има малка хлебопекарница, чийто аромат на прясно изпечен хляб се носи по цялата улица. Собственичката, леля Жана, е жена на възраст, с чисто бяла коса, която обгръща като ореол лицето ѝ. Престилката ѝ винаги е изцапана с брашно, но тя е най-милият човек, когото познавам. Почти всеки ден, когато ме види, че тръгвам за училище, ми маха отвътре и ми дава кифличка с мармалад или баничка, завити в хартия.

Отсреща пък уютно се е разположила единствената книжарница в квартала. На прозорците ѝ висят табели за намаление на цените, но въпреки това не влизат много клиенти. За мен обаче, това място е като кутия с бонбони, защото много обичам книгите. С г-н Марков, бивш учител по история, който по цял ден седи на един дървен стол отпред, четейки и пушейки лула, често обсъждаме прочетените романи. Книжарницата е негова, но напоследък се оплаква, че бизнесът не върви и ще дойде ден, в който ще зареже всичко и ще замине оттук. Дано не е скоро.

В квартала има също и цветни кафенета, където приготвят домашна лимонада, чаена къща, в която има стотици видове чай от всяко кътче на света и няколко ателиета за ръчно изработени бижута, кукли и сувенири. Да, „Капана“ наистина е едно пъстро и много приятно място, не само за пловдивчани, но и за гостите на града.

Но аз всъщност исках да ви разкажа за нашето шарено магазинче. Тук влизат най-различни хора. Понякога идват с молба да върнат някоя стока, защото нещо се е объркало или не са си я представяли такава, каквато е, но мама търпеливо им обяснява, че не приемаме рекламации. Нали разбирате, любов е все пак. Други пък, напротив – стават ни редовни клиенти, защото са доволни. Някои дори споделят, че са срещнали човека на мечтите си, благодарение на нас. Тогава сме щастливи – какво по-хубаво от това да зарадваш някого и

adores her, but I know her well. When I was little, she kept telling me how much she loved me. So, with my childlike naivety, I assumed that love was a mom. An image that has no face, age or character, but is woven always and only from love; the purest and most undemanding emotion. But then I grew up and realized that this wonderful feeling has many dimensions and ways to reach the heart. I now know that all those years when Mom took care of me, she needed someone else by her side to love her like a woman: someone she never found. Irony of fate, you will say, a woman who sells love to live without it, but life sometimes plays tricks on us.

In “Kapana” we all know each other. On the corner next to us is a little bakery whose aroma of freshly baked bread wafts across the street. The owner, Aunt Jeanne, is an elderly woman with pure white hair that surrounds her face like a halo. Her apron is always dusty with flour, but she is the nicest person I know. Almost every day when she sees me leaving for school, she waves me inside and gives me a bun with marmalade or a patty wrapped in paper. The only bookstore in the neighbourhood is conveniently located on the other side. There are price reduction signs on the windows, as not many customers come in. For me though, this place is like a box of candy because I love books so much. With Mr. Markov, a former history teacher who sits all day on a wooden chair in front, reading and smoking a pipe, we often discuss the novels we have read. The bookstore is his, but lately he’s been complaining that business isn’t going well, and the day will come when he’ll drop everything and get out of here. Hopefully not too soon. The neighbourhood also has colourful cafes where they make homemade lemonade, a tea-house that has hundreds of teas from every corner of the world, and several ateliers for hand-made jewelry, dolls, and souvenirs. Yes, „Kapana” is really a colourful and very pleasant place, not only for Plovdiv residents, but also for visitors to the city.

But I actually wanted to tell you about our shop. All kinds of people come in here. Sometimes they come asking to return an item because something went wrong or they didn’t imagine it as it is, but mom patiently explains to them that we don’t accept complaints. You see, it’s still love. Others, on the contrary, become our regular customers because they are satisfied. Some even say they met the man of their dreams thanks to us. Then we are happy. What could be better than making someone happy and giving them what they want? But from these meetings with people

да му дадеш желаното. Но от тези срещи с хората все повече се убеждавам, че чувствата са сложно нещо.

Ето, миналата седмица мама имаше рожден ден. Ние не ползваме продуктите, които продаваме – политика на фирмата, но този път реших да наруша правилата и да я изненадам, като ѝ подаря нещо именно от нашия магазин. Докато я нямаше, се зарових между кашоните в склада и намерих една любов точно за нея. „Романтична, нежна и без особени усложнения“ – така пишеше на етикета. Беше доста престояла, на кого в днешно време му трябва романтика и нежност, всеки търси нещо по-силно и разтърсващо. Но си помислих, че на мама ще ѝ се отрази добре. Отворих пакета внимателно, но въпреки изтеклия срок на годност, отвътре ме лъхна миризма на горски цветя. Хареса ми и поисках да запазя този аромат, затова побързах да преместя блестящото вързопче в тумбестия буркан, специално приготвен за случая. После завързах панделка в подходящ цвят и добавих едно от нашите малки, червени сърчица. Стана хубав подарък. Любовта сияеше зад стъклото, а аз бях доволна, че ще зарадвам най-скъпия ми човек.

Но когато ѝ го подарих, тя само ме прегърна, без да казва нищо и се разплака. Не разбрах дали ѝ хареса или само я натъжих повече. Дълго мислих след това и стигнах до извода, че емоциите на възрастните са абсолютна мистерия за мен, поне засега. На сутринта, когато, излизайки, намерих букетче с диви теменужки пред вратата и бележка с маминото име, осъзнах, че нещо се е променило, и то само за една нощ. Подозирах от кого може да са, но по-късно същия следобед, когато се прибирах от училище и видях колелото на майстора-кожар отпред, вече бях съвсем сигурна, че цветята са от него. Той е приятен мъж, с дълга коса и небрежен вид. Ателието му е в другия край на квартала, но той често се заседява в нашия магазин, помага на мама да нарежда стоката, а тя винаги се усмихва глуповато, когато е наблизо. В следващите няколко дни започнах да ги виждам все по-често заедно. Разхождаха се по „Главната“, ядяха сладолед на „Копчетата“, а веднъж дори ги засякох на пейките в градинката на „Джумаята“. Той я беше прегърнал през рамо и ѝ шепнеше нещо в ухото, а тя се смееше и оправяше кокетно косата си. Така е вече цяла седмица. Дали се харесват? Не зная, но много ми се иска да съм права. Макар че, както споменах, нищо не разбирам от чувства.

Мога обаче да ви кажа колко струва любовта. Обикновената любов струва точно осемнайсет лева и седемдесет и седем стотинки, на доставна цена. А после... после вие ще си я направите безценна.

I am more and more convinced that feelings are a complicated thing.

Well, last week mom had a birthday. We don't use the products we sell - company policy - but this time I decided to break the rules and surprise her by giving her something from our store. While she was out, I dug through the boxes in the warehouse and found a love just for her. „Romantic, gentle and without particular complications“ - that's what it said on the label. It was well out-of-date. Who needs romance and tenderness these days? Everyone is looking for something stronger and more rocking. But I thought Mom would be fine with it. I opened the package carefully, but despite the expiration date, the smell of wild flowers wafted out. I liked it and wanted to keep this fragrance, so I hastened to move the shiny bundle into the tumbled jar specially prepared for the occasion. Then I tied a ribbon in a matching colour and added one of our little red hearts. It was a nice gift. Love was shining behind the glass, and I was happy to please my dearest person.

But when I gave it to her, she just hugged me without saying anything and cried. I didn't know if she liked it or if I'd just made her sadder. I thought for a long time after that and came to the conclusion that the emotions of adults are an absolute mystery to me, at least for now. In the morning, when I went out to find a bouquet of wild violets outside the door and a note with my mother's name on it, I realized that something had changed, and only overnight. I suspected who they might be from, but later that afternoon when I was walking home from school and saw the tanner's wheel out front, I was pretty sure the flowers were from him. He is a nice man, with long hair and a casual look. His studio is on the other side of the block, but he often hangs out at our store, helping mom sort the merchandise, and she always has a goofy smile when he's around. Over the next few days, I started seeing them together more and more often. They were walking along „Glavna“, eating ice cream at „Kopchetata“, and once I even spotted them on the benches in the „Jumayata“ garden. He had his arm around her shoulder and was whispering something in her ear as she laughed and fixed her hair neatly. It's been like this for a week now. Do they like each other? I don't know, but I really wish I was right. Although, as I mentioned, I don't understand anything about feelings.

However, I can tell you what love is worth. Ordinary love costs exactly eighteen leva and seventy-seven cents, at a delivery price. And then... then you make it priceless.

Temporary stop

Klaske Havik

The Hague, the Dutch city at the Northsea coast which is home to the Dutch parliament, is a bourgeois city of green boulevards lined with elaborately ornate buildings. The city has abundant parks, spacious residential neighbourhoods and well-to-do residents. Internationally oriented and boasting an abundant cultural life, the sophistication of city famously depicted in the 19th century novels of Louis Couperus, still resonates today. However, there is another side of the Hague: a rough city with its own dialect and street culture. This is the city of labourers, vagabonds, and sometimes, of squatters, artists, and musicians. Historically, the social divide in The Hague arose from its geographical position along the sea: on the sandy ridges, where the ground was stable, the rich would build their castles, manor houses, and residential neighbourhoods; on the lower stretches of peat that lay in between, the meagre homes of labourers and servants took root. It is in this rough part of The Hague that the protagonists of Erik Lindner's poem reside. The work depicts the challenges of the socio-economically deprived neighbourhood, Schilderswijk, and evokes an image of local culture, in which particular urban places - a swimming pool, a shop or a local bar - form the setting for occasionally absurd social encounters.



Tijdelijke halte

by Erik Lindner

1 Is dit een stad? Huizen en trams
raken los van elkaar de straat.

Dit is een luifel. Een marmeren zuil.
Een kapsalon die nog ruikt naar jus.

Hier is een zwembad. Een glazen pui.
Een winkelstraat waar het verkeer niet past.

Ze bukt niet als ze door het kikkerbad waadt
en met haar vingers de kruin van het kind aanraakt.

Bij elke beweging aan het fotokopieerapparaat
schiet de schuifdeur van de supermarkt open.

Zo verklaart een passant wat passeren is:
een stad die je verlaat terwijl je er blijft.

Temporary stop

by Erik Lindner, 'tijdelijke halte' in Erik Lindner, *Tong en trede*
(Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 2000)

Translated by Francis R. Jones, with thanks to Hanneke Jones-Teuben
and Erik Lindner for their help with the translations

1 Is this a city? Houses and trams
touch the street at separate points.

This is an awning. A marble pillar.
A hair salon still smelling of orange juice.

Here's a swimming pool. A glass wall.
A shopping street where the traffic won't fit.

She doesn't bend down as she wades through the toddlers' pool
and touches the top of the child's head with her fingers.

At every move beside the photocopy machine
the supermarket's sliding door springs open.

This is how a passer-by explains what passing is:
a city you're leaving while you're staying there.

2 Niemand zwijgt langdurig in Bar Ernst.

De vriendin van de uitbater danst
in het midden van de zaak, weerkaatst
multicolore in de gesp die haar taille
oplicht en verengt. Alles draait om haar.

Het zilver boven de bar op de spiegel
de projectie door de rook bloemstukken
in het raam halfgeopend het diascherm
aan lussen lage gordijnen, omwoners

die schichtig voorbijgaan.

2 No-one stays silent for long in Bar Ernst.

The landlord's girlfriend is dancing
in the middle of the café, reflected in technicolour
by the buckle lighting up and tightening
her waist. She's the centre of everything.

The silver over the bar on the mirror
the projection through the smoke bouquets
in the window half-open the slide screen
and low curtains hanging on loops, locals

shyly passing by.

3 Kijk naar het bloed in die bak met lamslever.
De olijfolie in blikken. De ispanak in een krat.

Het televisiescherm dat dobbert in de gracht.

Twee mensen die een gesprek voeren –
hun voorhoofden tegen elkaar geleund.

Bij de man aan het schafijs kleeft
tussen snor en baard een vloeitje
terwijl hij in de tabak graaft.

Kijk toe hoe het bloed
van het vlees spoelt.

3 Look at the blood in that tray of lamb's liver.
The olive oil in tins. The ispanak in a crate.

The TV screen floating in the canal.

Two people having a conversation –
their foreheads propped against each other.

The man at the shaved ice stand has a cigarette paper
stuck between his moustache and beard
while he dredges through the tobacco.

Watch the blood
flowing from the meat.

4 Het is niet waar
je staat maar
stil voor een ruit
is de plaats haast af
als kwam het beeld door
dat je langskwam.

Je moet koud zijn
om iets te tonen
in taal verklaar je
het glas aan de straat
de man en zijn papieren
temperament.

4 It isn't true
you're just standing
still before a window
the place is almost complete
as if the image came about
because you came along.

You need to be cold
to show something
in language you explain
the glass to the street
the man and his paper
temperament.

OTHER DESTINATIONS

Translating the Mid-sized European City

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New Narratives of the European City**

Writing Urban Places proposes an innovative investigation and implementation of a process for developing human understanding of communities, their society, and their situatedness. By recognising the value of local urban narratives – stories rich in information regarding citizens socio-spatial practices, perceptions and expectations – the Action aims to articulate a set of concrete literary devices within a host of spatial disciplines; bringing together scientific research in the fields of literary studies, urban planning and architecture; and positioning this knowledge vis-à-vis progressive redevelopment policies carried out in medium-sized cities in Europe.