

# A Translation of a Short Story from the Italian Language to the English Language and a Comparison with the Translation from the Italian Language to the Croatian Language

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SVEUČILIŠTE U RIJECI  
FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA ANGLISTIKU

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**A Translation of a Short Story from the Italian Language to the  
English Language and a Comparison with the Translation from  
the Italian Language to the Croatian Language**

DIPLOMSKI RAD

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UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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**A Translation of a Short Story from the Italian Language to the English Language and a Comparison with the Translation from the Italian Language to the Croatian Language**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the M.A. in English Language and Literature and Italian Language and Literature at the University of Rijeka

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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, with the topic being the short story “La mummia”, written by Stefano Benni and published as a part of the collection of stories called *Cari mostri*, the main goal is to point out some of the major problems related to the translations of the short story into the Croatian language and into the English language. After the short overview of the author’s life and the important information about the short story and the book *Cari mostri*, follows the main body which comprises the source text and both translations, into Croatian and into English. This is followed by the analyses of both translations, underlying some of the problems encountered in the process of translation. After the analyses, there is the comparison of two translations with focus on syntax, grammar, vocabulary and style.

**Keywords:** analysis, *Cari mostri*, comparison, Croatian language, English language, Italian language, “La mummia”, short story, Stefano Benni, translation

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## Introduction

In this thesis I will translate the short story “La mummia”, which is a part of the collection of short stories entitled *Cari mostri*, written by the Italian author Stefano Benni, into the English language and compare it with the translation into the Croatian language. I will compare the two translations considering the elements of syntax, grammar, vocabulary and style. Each translation will be analyzed following the same points of analysis (The translation of the title and the initial quote, terms related to museology, the choice of adjectives among the various synonyms, technical terms and those related to the renovation of the museum and other problems encountered during the translation).

Translation is, according to definition from Cambridge Dictionary, the activity or process of changing the words of one language into the words in another language that have the same meaning<sup>1</sup>. However, it is not as simple as it seems, especially when it comes to literary translation. There is more than simply turning words from one language to another.

In literary translation, language has more than a communicative, or social and connective purpose. The word functions as the “primary element” of literature – that is, it has an aesthetic function. Between the inception and the completion of a creative work of translation, a complex process takes place – the “trans-expression” (A. S. Pushkin’s term) of the life captured in the fabric of imagery of the work being translated. Therefore, the problems of literary translation are within the sphere of art and are subject to its specific laws.<sup>2</sup>

As explained by the author of the article, a person who is translating literary text will have to put much more effort into their work. There are many things that need to be borne in mind, such as the aesthetic function of the words in literature.

This thesis consists of the title page, the abstract, the table of contents, the main body and the conclusion. The main body consists of introduction, the source text together with the two translations and their analyses as well as of the comparison of two translations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/translation> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>2</sup> "Literary Translation." The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition. 1970-1979. The Gale Group, Inc. 9 Jun. 2021 <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Literary+Translation> Accessed: June 2021

For the analysis of the source text in the Italian language I have followed a method which focuses on 12 points of analysis. These are genre, source, audience, purpose of writing, authenticity, style, level of formality, layout, content, cohesion, sentence patterns and terminology of the subject. This analysis serves to become familiarized with the source text before the actual translation.

**1. Genre:** short story

**2. Source:** This is a short story “La mummia” which is a part of collection of short stories entitled *Cari mostri*, written by Stefano Benni, published in 2015 by Feltrinelli Editore.

**3. Audience:** The text is written for younger audience, especially children and young people. The audience can also be people who like fantasy stories. The readers will gain insight into the work at the museum and acquire knowledge related to mummification and things related to ancient Egypt.

**4. Purpose of writing:** The purpose of this text is to tell the fantasy story about mummification and to introduce the terminology related to the work at the museum and to Egyptology. The purpose is also to tell the story about how good triumphs over evil.

**5. Authenticity:** The text is not authentic because we know the author.

**6. Style:** The style of the text is literary.

**7. Level of formality:** The level of formality is semi-formal.

**8. Layout:** The text is a part of collection of short stories. It consists of seven pages. At the beginning of the story, under the title, there is a quote *Don't get mad. Get even.* by Aerosmith. The paragraphs differ in length and there is indentation of the first lines of most paragraphs. Apart from the paragraphs there are many dialogues.

**9. Content:** Professor Antonietta works as a guide and researcher at the museum. When new director tells her about the reorganisation of the museum, by which he implies complete modernization and selling of all the artifacts, she tries to convince him not to do that. She tried that by showing him a new mummy which can attract many visitors, but he arrogantly refuses and she has to take care of it herself.

**10. Cohesion:** Lexical cohesion is created by the repetition of the key words such as *museo*, *professoressa Antonietta*, *professor Gardenia*, *direttore*, *sala*, *reparto*, *mummia*, *gieroglifici* etc.

**11. Sentence patterns:** The sentences in the text are of various lengths. The sentences contain many terms related to the work at the museum and Egyptology. The past tenses and active voice are mostly used.

**12. Terminology of the subject:** The terminology in the text contains the terms from the field of work at the museum and Egyptology.



## 1. The author and the collection of short stories

The short story “La mummia”, written by Stefano Benni, is a part of the collection of short stories entitled *Cari mostri*, published for the first time in 2015 by Feltrinelli editore. In the following paragraphs of this thesis the life of the author and the introduction to both the book and the short story will be briefly presented.

### 1.1. Stefano Benni

For thirty years, every time someone would ask Benni for his biography, he would invent a new one. Since no one went to check them, the author has come up with at least twelve different biographies. The following is one of those which are almost true.<sup>3</sup>

Benni was born in Bologna in 1947, but spent his childhood in the Apennine Mountains, where he made his first literary discoveries. His nickname – Lupo (Wolf), dates back to that period, due to his habit of walking around at night howling like his dogs. He attended classical high school, but without exceptional results. He also changed two or three faculties and in the meantime began to write. He started acting and writing articles for some newspapers. Two of his great friends encouraged him to become a writer. At the age of forty he became a father, at forty-five he returned to the theater. He collaborated with the newspaper *la Repubblica* and the literary magazine *Lo straniero* and returned to acting.<sup>4</sup>

He has written more than twenty books which have been translated into many languages. *Baol. Una tranquilla notte di regime*, *Margherita Dolce Vita* and two short stories that are part of the collection *Sport Bar Duemilla* have been translated into Croatian. Among the first books written there are *Terra* and *Comici Spaventati Guerrieri*. His favorite is *Blues in sedici*, while the latest published is *Prendiluna*. Benni currently lives in Rome.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2. *Cari mostri*

*Cari mostri* is a collection of 25 horror short stories belonging with elements of humor. The author uses irony, elements of the grotesque and the comic to present a variety of monsters which represent certain types of people from the real world. These are different in each tale: Hansel and Gretel abandoned in the woods, Wenge – a mysterious creature with the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stefanobenni.it/biografia/> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

body of a dog and the head of a fish, the police cat Mitch, the director who wants to downsize an Egyptian museum by challenging a vengeful mummy.<sup>6</sup> The latter will be one of the main characters of the short story which is, as already mentioned, the topic of this thesis.

“Fear is a great passion, if it is true it must be boundless and growing. One must die of fear. The rest are small disturbances, living room scares, splashes of blood to be cleaned with a handkerchief. The abyss has no comfortable steps.”<sup>7</sup> These words could be an introduction to every single story, igniting the interest and imagination of the reader. Fear is one of the main topics of Benni’s stories. The author himself states that literature, reading and writing are the perfect means to understand the fears that are hidden in our mind and heart.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3. “The Mummy”

“The Mummy” it is the seventh and longest story of the collection *Cari mostri*. The main character is Antonietta, professor and Egyptologist, who works as a researcher in the Darwin Museum. The author describes her as one of the most experienced in the world. All his colleagues at the Darwin Museum agree. Equally, they all agree that professor Gardenia, the new director of the museum, is the most hateful, presumptuous and arrogant person.<sup>9</sup> One day Gardenia tells Antonietta his intention to reorganize and reform the whole museum, sell all the artifacts and fire some of the people who work there. She tries to change his mind by explaining that this would not be the right decision, especially as she was trying to uncover the secrets of a very interesting and mysterious mummy at the time. Gardenia, however, does not want to listen to her, so Antonietta decides that she must do something to prevent him in his intention.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.stefanobenni.it/cari-mostri/> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>7</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, back cover.

<sup>8</sup> Buzzo, G., *Passione “paura”, con Stefano Benni* <https://www.loppure.it/passione-paura-con-stefano-benni/> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>9</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 83.

## 2. The source text in the Italian language

“La mummia”

*Don't get mad*

*Get even.*

AEROSMITH

Non c'era donna più mite e amabile della professoressa Antonietta, egittologa insigne, tra le più esperte del mondo. Tutto il personale del Museo Darwin era d'accordo. Tutti le volevano bene e si davano da fare per aiutarla. Ugualmente, tutti convenivano che non c'era persona più odiosa, presuntuosa e arrogante del professor Gardenia, nuovo direttore del museo, politicante insigne ed esperto di null'altro che di intrallazzi.

Quella sera Antonietta stava spiegando a una classe delle medie i misteri delle mummie. Erano in una delle cinque sale del suo reparto, la Sala dei Re, la più grande e antica. Alle pareti erano appese lastre di geroglifici, e quattro sarcofaghi facevano da sentinelle ai lati. Decine di reperti antichissimi dormivano nelle teche. La professoressa parlava dietro a un tavolo su cui erano disposti gli ingredienti, da lei ben conosciuti e studiati, necessari alla mummificazione egizia. Il catrame del Mar Morto, la mirra, l'olio di cedro. Come una sacerdotessa, spiegava ai bambini affascinati e un po' impauriti la ricetta per preparare una mummia.

– Prima bisogna eliminare tutta l'acqua possibile – diceva con dolcezza. – Si deve perciò aprire il corpo, liberarlo dalle interiora, il cervello, i tessuti molli e i liquidi, e poi richiuderlo. Quindi il corpo viene lavato con cura, cosparso di sali e lasciato asciugare per quaranta giorni. Come sapete, ragazzi, i sali assorbono l'acqua e infatti spesso si mettono gli alimenti “sotto sale” proprio per conservarli a lungo. Poi...

Una campanella suonò fragorosamente. Una voce all'altoparlante annunciò che il museo stava per chiudere e bisognava sgomberare.

– Ma non sono ancora le sei, – disse Antonietta a Rolando, il custode del reparto – mancano dieci minuti. Avevo chiesto al direttore se potevo restare un poco di più. Non riuscirò neanche a terminare la spiegazione...

Il custode scrollò le spalle e indicò con un'occhiata i piani alti, da cui era partita

l'ingiunzione.

Antonietta si guardò intorno e gli alunni l'avevano già dimenticata. Chiassosamente, si radunarono attorno alla loro insegnante e ingobbiti dagli zainetti lasciarono la sala.

La professoressa sospirò e rimise a posto i vasi e le bottigliette di oli profumati. Radunò i suoi appunti in una cartella e poi, in modo quasi furtivo, aprì una porticina su cui era scritto Prossima apertura. Entrò nella Sala De Valentin. Così era chiamata una saletta quasi buia, dove erano ammassati reperti ancora da catalogare, sarcofaghi in restauro, ossami e decine di teschi che la salutarono ghignando. Antonietta si diresse verso un angolo dove c'era una forma coperta da un telo. Lo scostò. Apparve una piccola mummia scura, in una teca di vetro. La professoressa la guardò con interesse quasiamoroso.

– Tu – disse sottovoce – sei davvero un mistero. Un affascinante mistero... se solo riuscissi a decifrare...

Ma il suo colloquio col passato fu interrotto dalla voce rauca dell'altoparlante. Era l'odiosetta Ranetta, segretaria del professor Gardenia.

– La professoressa Antonietta è desiderata urgentemente nell'ufficio del direttore. Ripeto, urgentemente...

Sospirando, l'egittologa lasciò il reparto e facendo risuonare i suoi passi nel vasto corridoio si incamminò su per lo scalone, salutando le scimmie imbalsamate e il pitecantropo di cartapesta, fino a arrivare al piano degli uffici.

Incrociò la Ranetta che usciva di corsa, truccandosi, verso chissà quale peccaminosa serata.

– Svelta, la sta aspettando – le soffiò in faccia.

Piccola ruffiana, pensò Antonietta. Ma subito si pentì del pensiero, perché come abbiamo detto era dolce e incapace di cattiveria. In fondo l'odiosetta Ranetta faceva il suo lavoro.

Riprese fiato, si sistemò i capelli grigio topo e bussò alla porta del direttore. Al suo "avanti!" imperioso, entrò quasi con un inchino.

Il boss era lì, sulla regale poltrona di pelle, i piedi sulla scrivania. Piccolo e tronfio, con la barbetta ben curata e i capelli tinti color birra. Era vestito con una giacca cremisi che lui trovava irresistibile ma che gli dava un'aria da presentatore da circo. Aveva arredato l'ufficio col peggio reperibile nel museo. Un gran fallo di maiolica, quattro lampadari pomposi, una tigre strabica impagliata. Ma soprattutto dietro a lui incombeva, occupando l'intera parete, un enorme quadro fine Ottocento. Era una tela di Jean Merighi, pittore francese esotista-troppista-

pompierista, intitolata La cour d'Aménophis. Vi era ritratto il faraone letteralmente farcito di oro e gemme, tra cortigiani e danzatrici, in una reggia favolosa quanto improbabile. Il quadro era talmente pieno di errori e anacronismi da risultare ridicolo. Nessun palazzo egizio era mai stato simile a quello, un incrocio tra una Versailles da cinema, l'atelier di una costumista delle Folies Bergère e un Mtv Award. Le ballerine erano sinuose e paffute, con bikini tigrati e stivali. Il faraone aveva scarpe e trucco da drag queen. Ma a Gardenia piaceva follemente. Era un perfetto ignorante, ma conosceva le mode. E sapeva vendere.

– Professoressa, come è andata la lezione? – chiese con uno sbadiglio a piene fauci.

– Oh, gli alunni erano molto interessati... certo, avevo ancora tante cose da spiegare... mi sarebbe bastata mezz'ora.

– Secondo lei – disse con malgarbo Gardenia – dovrei tenere aperto il museo mezz'ora in più per quindici ragazzetti? Sa cosa costa mezz'ora in straordinari, illuminazione, riscaldamento eccetera?

– Capisco – mormorò mestamente Antonietta.

– Professoressa, parliamoci chiaro – disse Gardenia. – Le visite al suo reparto questo mese sono state circa duemila. È poco, anzi pochissimo. Bisogna fare qualcosa per far entrare più gente. Non siamo qui per pochi esteti, ho un bilancio da far quadrare. Il settore egizio è un lusso, uno spreco...

– Ma è molto... conosciuto... è anche un centro di ricerca, abbiamo dei reperti nuovi... d'altronde il mese scorso ha già licenziato un mio collega e dimezzato il budget...

– Ecco il punto – disse Gardenia seccato. – Ho tagliato i costi, ma non basta. Lei è una brava e stimata scienziata, ma qua non siamo al Nobel, siamo in un grande museo che costa un sacco di soldi, e il mio compito è far tornare i conti. Gli sponsor non sono contenti. Il suo reparto non attrae visitatori, non funziona. La galleria degli animali funziona, il reparto dei gioielli antichi funziona, il nuovo reparto Moda nei Secoli funziona, la vendita dei gadget funziona. Dobbiamo cambiare, dobbiamo modernizzare. Mettere schermi, video, interattività. Questo è ciò che piace adesso. Ha visto che successo il Godzilla col megaschermo?

– Certo, ma non è scienza, è...

– È un dinosauro fotogenico, è stata un'idea vincente. Ce ne vorrebbe qualcuna per il suo vetusto dipartimento...

– Io... posso pensarci... – disse Antonietta.

– Me lo auguro, professoressa. Il suo reparto è sempre uguale da anni, è... la mummia del museo, non si offenda. Se non troviamo un'idea per rilanciarlo, al prossimo consiglio d'amministrazione dovrò chiuderlo. O quantomeno, ridurlo a una o due sale.

– Oh no, – disse Antonietta – cinquanta mummie in due sale, non si può.

– Ah sì? E cosa faranno? Una manifestazione sindacale di cadaveri? – rise Gardenia. – Una o due sale basteranno. Nelle altre tre metteremo dei video. Che ne so? Film sui faraoni. Animazioni, un videogioco Trova la Tomba. Al posto del custode, due belle ragazze vestite da Nefertari... Non mi guardi con la faccia stralunata, le sto salvando il posto di lavoro... ci vuole qualcosa di nuovo.

– Oh, c'è una cosa nuovissima – disse Antonietta con entusiasmo. – L'ultima mummia arrivata...

– Sai che novità – sospirò Gardenia.

– No direttore, mi ascolti. Questa è particolare... enigmatica...

– In che senso? – disse il direttore, con fievole interesse.

– Be', è stata trovata il mese scorso in una tomba anomala a Deir el-Bahari. Si ritiene appartenga alla xviii dinastia, 1550-1525 a.C. Gli anni del grande faraone Amenofi.

– Quello del mio quadro – disse Gardenia, con un lampo di interesse.

– Esatto. Mi complimento con lei. Be', quando Amenofi morì per cause oscure, gli succedette Tutmosi i. Ma non sappiamo perché, né in che modo. In realtà non conosciamo nulla di quest'uomo, tranne che intorno a lui stavano due donne misteriose, Senseneb e Ahmose. La tomba appena scoperta è collegata alla supposta tomba di Tutmosi, ma è stata... nascosta. Solo con gli ultrasuoni sono riusciti a scoprirla. È ben venti metri sotto la prima tomba, si raggiunge attraverso un cunicolo strettissimo ed è... un enigma...

– In che senso? Tipo arca perduta?

– Più o meno. Le pareti sono piene di immagini di Anubi, il dio dei Morti. Ci sono poche suppellettili. Il bendaggio è diverso da quello di una mummia normale. Ha le braccia legate sul petto da una specie di gioiello-manetta, e tra le mani tiene una tavoletta incisa. Le scritte per ora sono molto difficili da decifrare, ma sicuramente si tratta di una maledizione. La mummia è definita “colei che sa fare del male” e “la nera maga”. Però il sarcofago è ricchissimo, come quello delle regine.

– Be', perché le hanno fatto una tomba così ricca, se era una specie di strega? E perché hanno fatto di tutto per nasconderla?

Antonietta capì che Gardenia si stava incuriosendo.

– La mia ipotesi è che il faraone si sia liberato di lei, ma non abbia avuto il coraggio di negarle una sepoltura regale. Forse perché l'amava... o la temeva...

Gardenia giocherellò col fallo di ceramica. Chissà quali idee ultramoderne gli frullavano per la testa. Ma sembrava interessato.

– Uhm, – disse infine – cerchi di decifrare il più possibile. Forse potremmo trovare una storia avvincente. Amore, morte, vendetta. Non le solite scempiaggini storiche e le sfilze di dinastie...

– Oh sì, mi dia questa possibilità – disse Antonietta.

– Va bene, domani sera verrò a vedere la mummia, – disse Gardenia – ma non le prometto niente. Ripeto che per me il suo reparto deve essere ridimensionato, o cancellato. Qui comando io.

– Come un vero faraone – disse Antonietta.

– Proprio così – disse Gardenia soddisfatto.

Tutto il giorno dopo Antonietta lavorò al suo computer, nel piccolo ufficio attiguo alla Sala dei Re. Cercava di decifrare, ingranditi sullo schermo, i geroglifici della tavoletta. Non aveva mai visto niente di simile. Un primo strato di segni, tracciati con precisione, era comprensibile. Ma poi era stata sovrapposta una seconda serie di segni, incisi rozzamente. Qualcuno aveva scritto sul già scritto. Forse la stessa mano, o mani diverse? E perché si era deciso di rendere tutto così difficile da interpretare?

Entrò nella Sala De Valentin e si sedette vicino alla mummia, come al capezzale di un malato. Stava per aprire la teca quando all'improvviso ebbe un capogiro, quasi uno svenimento, e sentì come se un fiume in piena la invadesse. Un fiume di immagini, di rumori, di odori acri e penetranti. Si sentì mancare. Pensò che era stata troppo tempo concentrata davanti al computer. E le sembrò anche di sentire una voce, un lamento lontano di donna. Si riprese, respirò con calma e aprì la teca. Sfiò la mummia con una mano. Di nuovo la testa le girò, il fiume la invase e sentì distintamente un grido, un urlo di sconfinato terrore. Ebbe paura, chiamò il custode.

– Rolando, c'è qualcuno ingiro?

– No professoressa, – disse il custode – qualcosa non va? La vedo pallida.

– Credo sia solo stanchezza – disse Antonietta, prendendosi la testa tra le mani.

– Sta lavorando troppo. Tra poco vedrà il direttore? Crede che chiuderanno il reparto? Dovrò cercarmi un altro lavoro?

– Non saprei Rolando, non disperiamo. Dipende da stasera. Sa se oggi viene il dottor Gomma?

– Non lo so... non ha orari quello.

Il dottor Gomma aveva ventisei anni, occhiali fosforescenti, capelli fucsia, ed era l'esperto di computer. Un nerd geniale che le dava una mano nel decifrare le iscrizioni. Gomma era sicuro che gli egiziani fossero marziani. Avevano già inventato il computer, ma avevano rinunciato a usarlo per non farsi scoprire dai terrestri. I geroglifici erano i resti di un linguaggio iconico-informatico, e le piramidi erano state costruite col teletrasporto o con gru azionate da astronavi.

Come dubitarne?

Erano le otto, due ore dopo la chiusura, e Antonietta era rimasta sola al pianterreno. Il museo era pieno di echi e fruscii, parecchi topi abitavano i corridoi e le biblioteche.

Di nuovo guardò la mummia, e le mani legate sul petto.

– Cara amica, ho poco tempo per inventarmi una storia interessante e orrificata per il dottor Gardenia. Aiutami tu.

L’aveva appena pensato che un nuovo mancamento, più forte dei precedenti, la stordì. Forse svenne, forse si addormentò. Quando si svegliò sentì uno strano profumo di mirra e bitume. Si mise al computer come in trance, e scrisse. Lavorava frenetica e neanche si accorse che alle sue spalle era arrivato Gardenia, insieme a un tipo allampanato, con gli occhiali neri e i capelli lunghi da rocker.

– Ecco la professoressa che fa gli straordinari, come sempre! – esclamò il direttore. – Be’, vediamo cosa ha trovato per convincerci. Le presento il dottor Casaletto, della Virtual, la ditta di animazioni che si occupa dei nostri filmati e della robotica. Ed è anche... un nostro grande sponsor.

– Piacere – disse Casaletto, porgendole una mano inanellata.

– Allora, ci fornisca una bella sceneggiatura – disse Gardenia. – Questa è la sua mummia? Sembra come le altre.

– Non lo è, – disse Antonietta – e la sua storia potrebbe essere questa. Torniamo a Amenofi... il suo collega faraone...

Gardenia sorrise compiaciuto.

– Be’, quattromila anni fa il grande Amenofi muore, Tutmosi i sbuca dal nulla e diventa re.

Come e perché? Una delle tante ipotesi è che Amenofi sia stato avvelenato. Tutmosi era medico e stregone, e sua madre Senseneb era esperta di erbe. In tutto questo, il ruolo più misterioso è quello della regina Ahmose. Non era una principessa, al contrario di quello che si è pensato fino a qualche anno fa. I suoi unici titoli sono “Moglie del Re” e “Sorella del Re”. Che potrebbe voler dire amante o chissà cosa.

– È lei la nostra mummietta?

– Sono sicura di sì. Ma i misteri sono tanti. I geroglifici della sua tomba sono invocazioni a Anubi il dio dei Morti e in uno di essi si legge la frase “a te viene lentamente portata la strega”. Ma credo che le scritte più importanti siano quelle incise sulla tavoletta tra le mani ammanettate. Ho decifrato alcune parti:



e io scelsi la maga più oscura... nelle vostre mani il sangue di Amenofi... maledetta tu sia, per quanto ti ho desiderato... che tu muoia amata come una regina e maledetta come la peggiore delle donne... nascosta qui, inferiore perché nessuno...

– Abbiamo bisogno di tutto il testo! – disse Gardenia. – Cosa facciamo, un audio a singhiozzo?

– Se mi lascia tempo, posso decifrare il resto.

– Be', però sembra una vera storia di amore morte e vendetta, – disse Gardenia – un vero drammone. Che ne pensa, Casaletto?

Il rocker annuì.

– Proviamo a immaginare la storia – proseguì Antonietta con foga. – Probabilmente Ahmose insieme a Senseneb aiutò Tutmosi a liberarsi di Amenofi e a divenire faraone, ma subito dopo congiurò contro di lui. O forse voleva confessare il delitto... E Tutmosi la uccise, pur amandola ancora. Le diede una sepoltura regale, ma non insieme a lui, sotto la sua tomba, dentro le profondità “inferiori” della terra. E sulla tavoletta ci sono altri segni che non riesco a decifrare, sono come... deformati rispetto ai geroglifici normali... solo uno è chiaro e dice: Vendetta.

– Direi che non è male – disse Casaletto, che stava prendendo appunti.

– Quindi le interessa? – disse Antonietta.

– Venga nel mio ufficio – disse Gardenia, con piglio deciso.

Era ormai notte, salirono lo scalone in silenzio. Il direttore la fece accomodare e le offrì persino da bere. Parlava all'orecchio di Casaletto e rideva. Antonietta era nervosa.

– La sua è una bella storia, – disse infine Gardenia – secondo me ce l'ha anche un po'

astutamente romanzata. Ma raccontata a voce non funzionerebbe. Vero, Casaletto?

– No, – disse Casaletto – però potrebbe essere la base per un ottimo video. Cartoni animati, o usando una bella attrice, tutto in digitale. I livelli delle tombe mi ricordano i videogiochi. Si potrebbe intitolare: La maledizione di Amosia.

– Ahmose.

– Quello che è... Insomma, potrebbe essere uno dei video del nuovo reparto.

– Non capisco.

– Professoressa. Tutto sta per cambiare. Non è curiosa?

– Curiosa di cosa?

– Abbiamo un grande progetto – disse Gardenia. – Dopodomani parto per New York, starò via una settimana a studiare i musei di ultima generazione. Tornerò e tra due settimane presenteremo il nuovo piano Darwin Two, il museo verrà completamente ristrutturato.

Abbiamo trovato nuovi sponsor. Tre quarti del museo saranno spostati su supporti digitali. Schermi e video interattivi. Il suo reparto si chiamerà Storie dell'Antico Egitto.

– Ma... i materiali, i reperti?

– Verranno filmati, i visitatori li vedranno ancora. La maggior parte naturalmente la venderemo. I tedeschi e i cinesi hanno fatto ottime offerte. Le sue mummie faranno un bel viaggio.

– E io? – disse Antonietta, trattenendo a stento una lacrima.

– Lei resterà come consulente per le sceneggiature, – disse Gardenia con un sorriso perfido – cioè ci aiuterà a realizzare tante bellissime storie come quella che ha appena raccontato...

– E il resto del museo?

– Verrà quasi tutto digitalizzato – disse Casaletto con improvviso tono da padrone. – Ovviamente ci sarà grande risparmio di spazio e metà, l'ala nord, verrà venduta a privati... forse un albergo, forse una casa di moda. Questo rilancerà il Darwin e...

– Non è una buona idea – lo interruppe a sorpresa Antonietta. – Una cosa è vedere una mummia dal vero e una cosa assistere a una storia improbabile sullo schermo. Una cosa è sentire gli odori dell'imbalsamazione, vedere le tecniche antiche, e altra cosa è farci un video...

– Buona idea, – disse Casaletto – un video sull'imbalsamazione... un po' pulp, molti dettagli. La professoressa Antonietta non riuscì a trattenere la rabbia.

– Insomma avete deciso... è tutto finito.

– Tutto ricomincia – disse Gardenia. – Il museo si modernizza, il bilancio è salvo, gli sponsor restano. E lei potrà lavorare da casa... tanto tra due anni sarebbe andata in pensione, no?

– E chi si occuperà del trasloco? Chi avrà cura di queste cose preziose?

– Non si preoccupi. Arriveranno gli esperti tedeschi o cinesi... penseranno a tutto loro.

– Mi preoccupo! – urlò di colpo Antonietta, quasi stupita dal suo stesso impeto. – Sono secoli di storia, sono oggetti, corpi e segreti che hanno attraversato le epoche... cancellare tutto questo grida vendetta!

– Professoressa, – disse Gardenia – si calmi! Non l'ho mai vista così.

Era vero. Sembrava un'altra persona, si era alzata in piedi scarmigliata e ansimava.

– Lei – disse facendo un passo in avanti – è... un assassino... Gardenia restò senza fiato. Poi parlò gelido.

– Farò finta di non aver sentito, professoressa. Domani per favore porti via tutte le sue carte e il computer e vuoti l'ufficio. A sera verrò a salutarla e mi consegnerà le chiavi del reparto. E mi darà qualcosa di scritto sulla storia della mummia, se vuole. Adesso se ne vada, io e Casaletto dobbiamo parlare di budget.

– La saluto, faraone – disse Antonietta sbattendo la porta.

Antonietta non dormì. Era dispiaciuta di aver perso il controllo. Era come se qualcuno avesse parlato attraverso di lei. Tutta la notte sognò di soffocare, si svegliava col fiato mozzo e l'alba la trovò inquieta e spossata. La mattina arrivò tardi al museo e cominciò a radunare le sue cose in uno scatolone, sotto l'occhio triste di Rolando. Poi cercò di lavorare ancora un po'. Era l'ultima volta, pensò, che vedeva quelle stanze in cui aveva lavorato per quarant'anni. Un'eternità.

– Quarant'anni mi sembrano lunghi... – disse guardando la mummia. – Ma che dire di te, sorella, che mantieni il tuo mistero da quattromila anni?

Si sentiva triste, e ancora piena di rabbia. Quando si avvicinava alla mummia di Ahmose provava una specie di scossa elettrica, un morso nell'anima. Era come se udisse una voce troppo lontana per capire le parole. Doveva fare qualcosa ma non sapeva cosa. Non aveva ancora deciso se consegnare a Gardenia la “sceneggiatura”. Forse era meglio che il mistero di Ahmose rimanesse inviolato. Ma sì, gli scriverò due pagine, pensò infine... Da sempre ci sono stati faraoni e sudditi, re e amanti, delitti e ingiustizie. Adesso come quattromila anni fa. Che senso aveva pensare a quell'unica parola – Vendetta – che aveva decifrato dai geroglifici del secondo strato? Già, i geroglifici misteriosi. Stava per mettere via nello scatolone i fogli stampati del computer.

Ci posò sopra gli occhiali e attraverso le lenti vide i segni ingranditi e deformati. Avevano un nuovo aspetto. Subito il suo sguardo corse alla mummia, come se questa la chiamasse, chiedesse attenzione... Guardò le mani ammanettate. Chiuse gli occhi, vide.

E capì, in un attimo.

Chiamò subito al telefono il giovane Gomma. Sapeva che era nel suo ufficio, sentiva i bassi del suo gruppo rock preferito rimbombare nel corridoio. Il genio dei computer si presentò, coi capelli fucsia sconvolti e una sigaretta in bocca.

– Licenziano anche me, – disse – vogliono cambiare tutto, i bastardi. Rovineranno il nostro museo per farci una sala videogame. Preistoria! E pensano di essere moderni! Cosa possiamo fare?

– Non tutto è perduto. Aiutami, ho scoperto qualcosa.

– Sono qua, baby – disse Gomma.

– Non siamo mai riusciti a decifrare il secondo strato dei geroglifici. Sono... eccentrici, per così dire. Ma mi è venuta un'idea. Immagina che tu debba scrivere sdraiato sulla schiena, a pancia in su. Non puoi alzarti e non puoi muovere la testa. E non puoi muovere bene le mani, e neanche

tenere alto il foglio. Come scriveresti allora?

– Sdraiato senza alzare la testa e con le mani impedito? Be', non sarebbe facile. Dovrei scrivere senza vedere quello che scrivo. Tenere il foglio sulla pancia e immaginare quello che scrivo.

– Esatto... senza riuscire a vedere... come diventerebbe allora la tua scrittura?

– Be', sicuramente modificata... diciamo che probabilmente ne verrebbe fuori una deformazione dei segni, una prospettiva allungata... più o meno un'anamorfose.

– Esatto... allora prendi i geroglifici misteriosi. Sei in grado di interpretarli come se fossero soggetti a una leggera anamorfose?

– Sì, forse ho un programma grafico per farlo.

– E quanto ti ci vuole?

– Un tempo egizio. Diecimino.

Gomma lavorò febbrilmente. I segni misteriosi mutarono, la loro forma si rivelò.

– Per Tutankhamon, – disse Gomma – ora sono diversi. Sono assolutamente, chiaramente...

– Interpretabili – disse Antonietta. – Grazie.

– Vuoi che resti?

– No. Ora tocca a me – disse Antonietta.

Passò meno di un'ora. Antonietta telefonò a Gardenia.

– Direttore, venga giù nel reparto – disse. – C'è qualcosa di nuovo, che rende la storia straordinaria e affascinante per i suoi progetti... si fidi.

– Non è un trucco per perdere tempo? – rispose Gardenia.

– Venga. C'è una sorpresa.

Erano trascorsi cinque giorni. Antonietta era regolarmente al suo posto di lavoro, nella Sala De Valentin. La mummia di Ahmose era al centro della stanza, e la teca era aperta. Su un tavolo erano disposte boccette e anfore da cui provenivano odori intensi. Una montagna di sale brillava in un vaso di vetro. Antonietta stava apprestandosi a qualche particolare intervento su un reperto. Spalmò una benda di mirra odorosa, e riempì di liquido una siringa.

– Mi ci è voluto un po' di tempo, direttore, – disse allegra – ma alla fine ci sono riuscita. Il secondo strato di geroglifici era stato scritto in una situazione difficile da immaginare. Questo me li faceva sembrare illeggibili. Ma una volta risolto il mistero, li ho decifrati. La scritta dice:

La mia accusa è ingiusta. Non ho commesso alcun delitto. La mia vendetta attraverserà i secoli.

Madfunahajia.

Non mi chiede cosa vuol dire madfuna hajia? Stia attento, sto per svelarle la soluzione: i segni sulla tavoletta sono di mani diverse. I primi sono stati incisi per ordine del faraone e contengono i motivi per cui Ahmose venne uccisa, e la sua ira di amante tradito.

Gli altri segni... be', lei non ci crederà, ma sono stati scritti da Ahmose. Con un anello d'oro appuntito che le ho trovato al dito, quando ho aperto le bende. L'anello forò il tessuto e lei li incise, con grande sforzo e senza poterli vedere. Li graffiò con le mani incatenate, sdraiata, avvolta nelle fasce. Capisce adesso? Madfuna hajia significa: sepolta viva.

Sì, la crudeltà del faraone fu tale che Ahmose fu avvolta nelle bende e fatta morire lentamente in quella tomba. Infatti la mummia presenta i segni di una doppia fasciatura. La prima, molto stretta, che porta traccia di residui organici e liquidi, fu fatta quando lei era ancora viva. Il secondo bendaggio fu fatto dopo la morte, quando il mummificatore terminò l'opera. Non si accorse, o non volle accorgersi, che Ahmose aveva raccontato la sua fine nella tavoletta. Una storia davvero crudele e spaventosa, direttore. Sarebbe straordinario metterla nei suoi nuovi video. A proposito, come mai tutti la cercano e ogni decisione sembra sospesa? Dicono che lei sia scappato con la cassa a New York. Ma non è vero, io so cos'è accaduto veramente. Io e Ahmose lo sappiamo.

Ahmose in questo momento è a casa mia, l'ho spedita insieme alle altre casse quando ho sgomberato l'ufficio. Avrò tutto il tempo per studiarla. Perché vede, non ho la minima intenzione di contestare le sue decisioni, non voglio restare ancora al Darwin. Ma devo finire un lavoro. Il mio lavoro è lei. Mi scusi se per prepararla meglio le ho offerto quel tè con laudano e artemisia.

Probabilmente anche gli egiziani usavano queste erbe per stordire le vittime. Forse anche Ahmose fu drogata così, quando la calarono viva nella tomba.

Ma ora abbiamo mezzi moderni. Adesso le farò un'iniezione che la calmerà. È la sola deroga al protocollo egizio.

Il resto sarà tutto proprio come è accaduto quattromila anni fa, si fidi della mia esperienza di studiosa. Mi dispiace se lei ci metterà un po' a morire, ma la vendetta è una cosa seria, e Ahmose vuole così. Quindi ora chiuderò la teca di vetro e aspetterò con pazienza, solo io ho le chiavi di questa sala. E quando mi accorgerò che lei è... tranquillo, eternamente tranquillo, le farò una mummificazione degna... di un faraone. È contento direttore? Non risponde? Ma già, anche se riuscisse a parlare o gridare, bendato com'è, chi la potrebbe sentire? Ma a respirare ci riesce, vero? Sono stata brava a fasciarla?

Dalla mummia venne un gemito e una mano si contrasse.

– Tornerò domani. Madfuna hajia, direttore – disse Antonietta. – Buonanotte.

Spense la luce, chiuse la porta, e i suoi passi risuonarono sul pavimento del museo deserto, insieme a un grido strozzato.

### 3. The translation to the Croatian language

„Mumija“

*Don't get mad*

*Get even.*

AEROSMITH

Nije bilo blaže i simpatičnije žene od profesorice Antoniette, ugledne egiptologinje, jedne od najcjenjenijih na svijetu. Sve osoblje Muzeja Darwin slagalo se s time. Svi su je voljeli i trudili se da joj pomognu. Jednako su se tako svi slagali da nema morskije, uobraženije i arogantnije osobe od profesora Gardenije, novog ravnatelja muzeja, naglašenog politikanta i stručnjaka ni za što drugo osim spletki.

Te je večeri Antonietta objašnjavala razredu starijih osnovnoškolaca tajne mumija. Bili su u jednoj od pet dvorana njezina odjela, u Dvorani Kraljeva, najvećoj i najstarijoj. Na zidovima su bile ploče s hijeroglifima, dok su četiri sarkofaga stražarila u kutovima. Deseci drevnih artefakata spavali su u vitrinama. Profesorica je govorila iza stola na kojem su bili postavljeni sastojci potrebni za egipatsku mumifikaciju, a koje je ona dobro poznavala i proučila. Katran iz Mrtvog mora, smirna, cedrovo ulje. Poput svećenice, objašnjavala je fasciniranoj i pomalo uplašenoj djeci recept za pripremu mumije.

– Najprije treba istisnuti svu moguću vodu – rekla je nježno. – Stoga je potrebno otvoriti tijelo, ukloniti iznutrice, mozak, meko tkivo i tekućine, a zatim ga ponovno zatvoriti. Onda se tijelo pažljivo opere, posipa solima i ostavi sušiti četrdeset dana. Kao što znate, djeco, soli apsorbiraju vodu i zapravo se često hrana stavlja u sol upravo kako bi se očuvala dugo vremena. Zatim...

Zvono je gromoglasno zazvonilo. Glas iz zvučnika najavio je da se muzej zatvara i da ga posjetitelji trebaju napustiti.

– Ali još nije šest, rekla je Antonietta Rolandu, kustosu odjela, deset je minuta do šest. Pitala sam ravnatelja mogu li ostati malo dulje. Neću uspjeti ni objasniti sve do kraja...

Kustos je slegnuo ramenima i pokazao očima na više katove koji su odredili zabranu.

Antonietta se osvrnula oko sebe, ali učenici su je već zaboravili. Okupili su se žamoreći oko svoje učiteljice i nespretno ponijevši ruksake napustili prostoriju.

Profesorica je uzdahnula i vratila na mjesto staklenke i bočice mirisnih ulja. Skupila je svoje bilješke u mapu, a potom je potajice otvorila vrata na kojima je pisalo „Otvaramo uskoro”.

Ušla je u dvoranu De Valentin. Tako se zvala gotovo mračna prostorija u kojoj su bili nagomilani predmeti za katalogiziranje, sarkofazi u restauraciji, kosti i desetci lubanja koje su je pozdravljale cerekanjem. Antonietta se uputila prema kutu gdje se nazirao neki obris pokriven platnom. Odmaknula ga je. U vitrini se pojavila mala tamna mumija. Profesorica ju je pogledala gotovo zaljubljeno.

– Ti – rekla je šapćući – prava si tajna. Začudna tajna... kad bih samo mogla dešifrirati...

Ali njezin razgovor s prošlošću prekinuo je promukli glas zvučnika. Bila je to odvratnica Ranetta, tajnica profesora Gardenije.

– Profesorica Antonietta neka hitno dođe u ravnateljev ured. Ponavljam, hitno...

Uzdišući, egiptologinja je napustila odjel i uputila se prema stubama dok je golemim hodnikom odzvanjao zvuk njenih koraka, pozdravljajući balzamirane majmune i pitekantropusa od kaširanog papira, sve dok nije stigla do kata na kojem su se nalazili uredi. Naletjela je na Ranettu koja je užurbano koračala, šminkajući se, prema tko zna kakvoj grešnoj večeri.

– Brzo, čeka vas – puhnula joj je u lice.

Mala ulizica, pomislila je Antonietta. Ali odmah je požalila zbog toga, jer, kao što smo rekli, bila je draga i nesposobna za zlobu. Uostalom, odvratnica Ranetta radila je svoj posao.

Došla je do daha, popravila svoju sijedu kosu i pokucala na ravnateljeva vrata. Na njegovo zapovjedno „naprijed!“ ušla je gotovo s naklonom.

Šef je bio tamo, u kraljevskoj kožnoj fotelji, s nogama na stolu. Malen i uobražen, s urednom bradom i obojanom kosom boje piva. Bio je odjeven u grimiznu jaknu koju je smatrao neodoljivom, ali u kojoj je zapravo izgledao kao voditelj cirkusa. Ured je ukrasio najgorim stvarima dostupnim u muzeju. Velikim keramičkim falusom, četirima pompozim lusterima, prepariranim razrokim tigrom. Ali posebno se iza njega isticala, zauzimajući cijeli zid, golema slika s kraja devetnaestoga stoljeća. Bila je to slika Jeana Merighija, francuskog slikara, predstavnika egzotizma, tropske umjetnosti i akademizma, pod naslovom *La cour d'Aménophis*. Portret je prikazivao faraona doslovno prekrivena zlatom i draguljima, među dvoranima i plesačicama u bajkovitoj i nevjerojatnoj palači. Slika je bila toliko puna pogrešaka i anakronizama da je izgledala smiješno. Nijedna egipatska palača nikad nije bila



slična ovoj, spoju filmskoga Versaillesa, ateljea kostimografkinje u Folies Bergère-u i dodjele MTV-jevih nagrada. Punašne balerine s oblinama bile su u bikinijima tigrastog uzorka i čizmama. Faraon je imao cipele i šminku poput transvestita. No, Gardeniji se slika strašno sviđala. Bio je savršeni neznanica, ali pratio je modu. I znao je prodavati.

– Profesorice, kako je prošlo predavanje? – upitao je zijevajući širom otvorenih usta.

– Oh, učenici su bili vrlo zainteresirani... naravno, mogla sam objasniti još toliko stvari... bilo bi mi dovoljno pola sata više.

– Po vama, rekao je drsko Gardenia, trebao bih produljiti radno vrijeme muzeja za pola sata za petnaestoro djece? Zna li koliko stoji pola sata prekovremenog rada, rasvjete, grijanja i tako dalje?

– Razumijem – promrmljala je žalosno Antonietta.

– Profesorice, neka bude jasno – rekao je Gardenia. – Vaš je odjel ovoga mjeseca imao otprilike dvije tisuće posjeta. To je malo, čak premalo. Moramo učiniti nešto kako bismo privukli više ljudi. Nismo ovdje za nekoliko esteta, imam proračun koji moram provesti. Egipatski je sektor luksuz, nepotrebni trošak...

– Ali vrlo je... poznat... a to je i istraživački centar, imamo neke nove arheološke predmete... s druge strane, prošli ste mjesec već otpustili jednog kolegu i smanjili proračun za pola...

– Evo u čemu je stvar – rekao je Gardenia ljutito. – Smanjio sam troškove, ali to nije dovoljno. Vi ste dobra i cijenjena znanstvenica, ali ovdje nismo u Nobelu, mi smo u velikom i skupome muzeju, a moj je posao poravnati račune. Sponzori nisu zadovoljni. Vaš odjel ne privlači posjetitelje, ne služi svrsi. Životinjski tunel služi svrsi, odjel antičkog nakita služi svrsi, novi odjel Moda kroz stoljeća služi svrsi, prodaja suvenira služi svrsi. Moramo nešto promijeniti, moramo se modernizirati. Postaviti ekrane, videozapise, interaktivnost. To je ono što se ljudima sada sviđa. Jeste li vidjeli uspjeh Godzille na velikom platnu?

– Naravno, ali to nije znanost, to je...

– To je fotogeničan dinosaur, bio je to pun pogodak. Trebat će nam neka takva ideja za vaš staromodan odjel...

– Ja... mogu razmisliti o tome... – rekla je Antonietta.

– Nadam se da hoćete, profesorice. Vaš je odjel godinama isti, to je... muzejska mumija, bez uvrede. Ako ne smislimo kako ga poboljšati, na sljedećem upravnom odboru morat ću ga zatvoriti. Ili barem smanjiti na jednu ili dvije dvorane.

– O ne, – rekla je Antonietta – pedeset mumija u dvije dvorane, to nije moguće.

– Ne? A što ćemo napraviti? Sindikalni prosvjed leševa? – Gardenia se smijao. – Bit će dovoljna jedna ili dvije dvorane. U preostale tri staviti ćemo videozaslone. Što ja znam?

Prikazivati filmove o faraonima. Animacije, videoigru Pronađite grobnicu. Umjesto kustosa, dvije lijepe djevojke odjevene kao Nefertari... Ne gledajte me s toliko čuđenja, pokušavam vam sačuvati radno mjesto... potrebno je nešto novo.

– Oh, ima jedna novost – rekla je Antonietta s oduševljenjem. – Posljednja mumija koja je stigla...

– To nije nikakva novost – uzdahnuo je Gardenia.

– Ne, ravnatelju, slušajte me. Ova je posebna... tajanstvena...

– U kojem smislu? – rekao je ravnatelj sa slabim zanimanjem.

– Pa, pronađena je prošlog mjeseca u neobičnoj grobnici u Deir el-Bahariju. Vjeruje se da pripada XVIII. dinastiji, oko 1550.-1525. prije Krista. Godinama velikog faraona Amenofisa.

– Faraona s moje slike – rekao je Gardenia s bljeskom interesa.

– Točno. Svaka čast. Pa, kad je Amenofis umro iz nejasnih razloga, naslijedio ga je Tutmozis I. Ali ne znamo zašto ni na koji način. U stvari ne znamo ništa o tom čovjeku, osim da su uz njega bile dvije tajanstvene žene, Senseneb i Ahmose. Novootkrivena grobnica povezana je s navodnom Tutmozisovom grobnicom, ali je bila... sakrivena. Uspjeli su je otkriti tek ultrazvukom. Nalazi se čak dvadeset metara ispod prve grobnice, a do nje se može kroz vrlo uski tunel i... pravi je misterij...

– U kojem smislu? Poput izgubljenog sarkofaga?

– Više-manje. Zidovi su puni slika Anubisa, boga mrtvih. Pronađeno je malo drugih predmeta. Zavoji se razlikuju od onih kod normalnih mumija. Ruke su joj vezane na prsima nekom vrstom nakita-poveza, a u rukama drži ispisanu pločicu. Tekst je za sada vrlo teško dešifrirati, ali sigurno se radi o nekakvoj kletvi. Mumija je opisana kao „ona koja zna činiti zlo“ i „crna vještica“. Ali sarkofag je vrlo raskošan, poput onih koje pripadaju kraljicama.

– Pa zašto su napravili tako raskošni grob, ako je bila nekakva vještica? I zašto su učinili sve kako bi je sakrili?

Antonietta je shvatila da se Gardenia zainteresirao.

– Moja pretpostavka jest da je se faraon riješio, ali joj se nije usudio osporiti kraljevski pokop. Možda zato što ju je volio... ili je se bojao...

Gardenia se igrao keramičkim falusom. Tko zna kakve su mu ultramoderne ideje prolazile kroz glavu. Ali činio se zainteresiranim.

– Hm – konačno je rekao – pokušajte dešifrirati što je više moguće. Možda uspijemo otkriti neku uzbudljivu priču. Ljubav, smrt, osveta. A ne uobičajene povijesne gluposti i nizanja dinastija...

– O, da, dajte mi priliku – reče Antoinetta.

– U redu, sutra navečer doći ću vidjeti mumiju – rekao je Gardenia – ali ništa vam ne obećajem. Ponavljam da vaš odjel mora biti smanjen ili zatvoren. Ovdje ja zapovijedam.

– Kao pravi faraon – rekla je Antoinetta.

– Upravo tako – rekao je Gardenia zadovoljno.

Cijeli je idući dan Antonietta radila na svom računalu u malom uredu pokraj Dvorane kraljeva. Pokušavala je protumačiti, uvećane na zaslonu, hijerogliffe s pločice. Nikada nije vidjela ništa slično. Prvi sloj znakova, precizno ispisanih, bio je razumljiv. Ali tu je bio i drugi sloj grubo ispisanih znakova, koji se preklapao s prvim. Netko je pisao na već napisanome. Možda ista ruka, ili različite ruke? I zašto se odlučilo učiniti sve tako teško razumljivim.

Ušla je u Dvoranu De Valentin i sjela pokraj mumije, kao na bolesnički krevet. Spremala se otvoriti relikvijar kad joj se iznenada zavrtilo, gotovo se onesvijestila i osjetila kao da ju je rijeka preplavila. Rijeka slika, zvukova, kiselih i prodornih mirisa. Osjećala je da gubi svijest. Pomislila je da je previše vremena bila usredotočena ispred računala. Činilo joj se također da čuje neki glas, neko udaljeno žensko naricanje. Pribrala se, mirno udahnula i otvorila relikvijar. Jednom je rukom dotaknula mumiju. Ponovno je osjetila vrtoglavicu, rijeka ju je preplavila i jasno je čula krik, vrisak bezgraničnog terora. Prestrašila se i pozvala čuvara.

– Rolando, ima li nekog u blizini?

– Nema, profesorice, – rekao je čuvar – nešto nije u redu? Vidim da ste blijedi.

– Mislim da je to samo umor – reče Antoinetta, primivši glavu rukama.

– Previše radite. Hoćete li uskoro vidjeti ravnatelja? Mislite li da će zatvoriti odjel? Hoću li morati potražiti drugi posao?

– Ne bih znala, Rolando, ne očajavajmo. Ovisi o večeras. Zna li dolazi li danas profesor Gomma?

– Ne znam... taj nema radnog vremena.

Profesor Gomma ima dvadeset šest godina, fluorescentne naočale, kosu boje fuksije i računalni je stručnjak. Brilljantni štreber koji joj je pomagao u dešifriranju natpisa. Gomma je bio uvjeren da su Egipćani bili Marsovci. Već su bili izmislili računalo, ali su odustali od njegova korištenja kako bi izbjegli da ih stanovnici Zemlje otkriju. Hijeroglifi su bili ostaci ikoničko-informatičkoga jezika, a piramide su bile izgrađene teleportiranjem ili dizalicama kojima upravljaju svemirski brodovi. Kako možemo sumnjati u to?

Bilo je osam, dva sata nakon zatvaranja, a Antonietta ostala je sama u prizemlju. Muzej je bio pun odjeka i šumova, a povećani broj miševa naseljavao je hodnike i knjižnice.

Opet je pogledala mumiju i njezine ruke vezane na prsima.

–Draga prijateljice, nemam mnogo vremena smišljati neku zanimljivu i užasnu priču za gospodina Gardeniju. Pomozi mi ti.

Upravo je razmišljala o tome kada joj se opet zamračilo pred očima, jače nego prije. Možda se onesvijestila, možda je zaspala. Kad se probudila, osjetila je čudan miris smirne i bitumena. Sjela je za računalo kao u transu i počela pisati. Mahnito je radila pa nije ni primijetila da joj je Gardenia prišao s leđa, zajedno s nekim slabašnim čovjekom s crnim naočalama i dugom kosom poput ropera.

–Evo profesorice koja radi prekovremeno, kao i uvijek! – uzviknuo je ravnatelj. – Pa, da vidimo što je našla da nas uvjeri. Upoznat ću vas s gospodinom Casalettom, iz Virtuala, animacijske tvrtke koja se bavi našim filmovima i robotikom. On je i... naš veliki sponzor.

–Drago mi je – rekao je Casaletto, pružajući joj prstenovanu ruku.

–Dakle, ispričajte nam neki dobar scenarij – rekao je Gardenia. Je li to vaša mumija?

Izgleda poput ostalih.

–Ali ona to nije, – rekla je Antonietta – a ovo bi mogla biti njezina priča. Vratimo se Amenofisu... njezinu kolegi faraonu...

Gardenia se zadovoljno nasmiješio.

–Pa, prije četiri tisuće godina veliki Amenofis umre, Tutmozis I. pojavljuje se niotkud i postaje kralj.

Kako i zašto? Jedna od mnogih pretpostavki jest da je Amenofis bio otrovan. Tutmozis je bio liječnik i čarobnjak, a njegova majka, Senseneb, bila je stručnjakinja za bilje. U svemu tome najmisterioznija je uloga kraljice Ahmose. Nije bila princeza, suprotno od onoga što se mislilo do prije nekoliko godina. Njezine su jedine titule „Kraljeva supruga“ i „Kraljeva sestra“. Što može značiti ljubavnica ili tko zna što.

–Je li ona naša mumijica?

–Sigurna sam da je. Ali mnogo je misterija. Hijeroglifi iz njene grobnice predstavljaju prizivanja Anubisa, boga mrtvih, a u jednome se od njih nalazi rečenica „vještica je polako dovedena k tebi“. Ali mislim da su najznačajniji zapisi oni na ploči koju drži između zavezanih ruku. Išćitala sam neke dijelove:

*i izabrala sam najtamniju čarobnicu... na vašim rukama krv Amenofisa... prokleta bila, koliko sam žudjela za tobom... da umreš voljena kao kraljica i prokleta kao najgora od svih žena... skrivena ovdje, podređena da nitko...*

- Trebamo čitav tekst! – rekao je Gardenia. – Što da radimo, zvučni zapis s preskakanjima?
- Ako mi date vremena, mogu odgonetnuti ostatak.
- Ali izgleda kao prava priča o ljubavi, smrti i osveti, – rekao je Gardenia – prava drama. Što mislite, Casaletto?
- Roker je kimnuo.
- Pokušajmo zamisliti priču – nastavila je Antonietta zaneseno. – Vjerojatno je Ahmose zajedno sa Senseneb pomogla Tutmozisu da se riješi Amenofisa i postane faraon, ali se odmah zatim urotila protiv njega. Ili je možda htjela priznati zločin... A Tutmozis ju je ubio, iako ju je i dalje volio. Priredio joj je kraljevsku sahranu, ali ne s njim, već pod njegovom grobnicom, na većoj dubini zemlje. Na pločici postoje i drugi znakovi koje ne mogu odgonetnuti, oni su kao... izobličeni u usporedbi s normalnim hijeroglifima... samo je jedan jasan i kaže: *Osveta*.
- Rekao bih da nije loše – rekao je Casaletto, zapisujući bilješke.
- Dakle, zanima vas? – rekla je Antonietta.
- Dođite u moj ured – rekao je Gardenia odlučno.
- Bila je već noć, popeli su se stubama u tišini. Ravnatelj ju je posjeo i čak joj ponudio piće. Govorio je Casalettu na uho i smijao se. Antonietta je bila nervozna.
- Vaša je priča dobra – napokon je rekao Gardenia – mislim da ima i nekih lukavo izmišljenih dijelova. No, ovako ispričana na glas ne bi valjala. Zar ne, Casaletto?
- Ne, – rekao je Casaletto – ali mogla bi biti osnova za sjajan videozapis. Za crtiće ili koristeći neku lijepu glumicu, sve u digitalnom obliku. Razine grobnica podsjećaju me na videoigre. Mogla bi se zvati: *Prokletstvo Amozije*.
- Ahmose.
- Kako god... Ukratko, to bi mogao biti jedan od videa novog odjela.
- Ne razumijem.
- Profesorice. Sve će se promijeniti. Niste li znatiželjni?
- Znatiželjna u vezi čega?
- Imamo veliki projekt – rekao je Gardenia. – Prekosutra odlazim u New York, ostat ću tjedan dana kako bih proučio najnoviju generaciju muzeja. Vratit ću se pa ćemo za dva tjedna predstaviti novi kat Darwin Two, muzej će biti potpuno obnovljen. Pronašli smo nove sponzore. Tri četvrtine muzeja bit će prebačene na digitalne medije. Zaslone i interaktivne videe. Vaš odjel zvat će se Priče drevnog Egipta.
- Ali... materijali, arheološki predmeti?

– Oni će biti snimljeni, posjetitelji će ih svejedno moći vidjeti. Većinu ćemo naravno prodati. Nijemci i Kinezi dali su izvrsne ponude. Vaše će mumije otići na lijepo putovanje.

– A ja? – Rekla je Antonietta, jedva zadržavajući suze.

– Vi ćete ostati kao konzultant za scenarije – rekao je Gardenia s podlim osmijehom – koji će nam pomoći ostvariti mnoge lijepe priče poput one koju ste upravo ispričali...

– A ostatak muzeja?

– Bit će skoro sve digitalizirano – kazao je iznenada pokroviteljski Casaletto. – To će, naravno, dovesti do velike uštede prostora, pa će polovica, sjeverno krilo, biti prodana privatnicima... možda nekom hotelu, možda nekoj modnoj kući. Ovo će dati novi zamah Darwinu i...

– Nije to dobra ideja – Antonietta ga je iznenada prekinula. – Jedno je vidjeti mumiju uživo, a drugo gledati neku nevjerojatnu priču na zaslonu. Jedna je stvar osjetiti mirise balzamiranja, vidjeti drevne tehnike, a druga napraviti video o tome...

– Dobra ideja, – rekao je Casaletto – video o balzamiranju... malo kiča, s puno detalja. Profesorica Antonietta nije mogla zadržati bijes.

– Dakle, odlučili ste... sve je gotovo.

– Sve počinje iznova – rekao je Gardenia. – Muzej se modernizira, proračun je siguran, sponzori ostaju. A vi ćete moći raditi od kuće... ionako biste za dvije godine otišli u mirovinu, zar ne?

– A tko će se pobrinuti za preseljenje? Tko će se pobrinuti za sve ove dragocjene stvari?

– Ne brinite. Doći će njemački ili kineski stručnjaci... oni će se pobrinuti za sve.

– Brinem se! – odjednom je uzviknula Antonietta, gotovo zapanjena vlastitim zanosom. – To su stoljeća povijesti, predmeti, tijela i tajne koje su prošle kroz stoljeća... izbrisati sve znači tražiti osvetu!

– Profesorice, – rekao je Gardenia – smirite se! Nikad vas nisam vidio ovakvu.

Bila je to istina. Izgledala je poput neke druge osobe, ustala se raščupana dašćući.

– Vi ste... – rekla je koračajući naprijed – ubojica... Gardenia je ostao bez daha. Onda je hladno progovorio.

– Pretvarat ću se da to nisam čuo, profesorice. Sutra, molim vas, uzmite sve svoje papire i računalo i ispraznite ured. Navečer ću vas doći pozdraviti pa ćete mi predati ključeve odjela. I dat ćete mi nešto zapisano o priči o mumiji, ako želite. Sada odlazite, ja i Casaletto moramo razgovarati o proračunu.

– Pozdravljam vas, faraone – rekla je Antonietta zalupivši vratima.

Antonietta nije spavala. Žalila je što je izgubila kontrolu. Kao da je netko govorio kroz nju. Cijelu je noć sanjala da se guši, budila se bez daha i zoru je dočekala nemirna i iscrpljena. Ujutro je kasno stigla u muzej i počela skupljati svoje stvari u kutiju, pred tužnim Rolandovim očima. Tada je pokušala još malo raditi. Bio je to posljednji put, pomislila je, da vidi prostorije u kojima je radila četrdeset godina. Vječnost.

– Četrdeset godina čini mi se mnogo... – rekla je gledajući mumiju. A što reći za tebe, sestro, koja čuvaš svoju tajnu četiri tisuće godina?

Osjećala se tužno i još uvijek puna gnjeva. Kad se približavala Ahmosinoj mumiji, osjećala je neku vrstu električnog šoka, poput ugriza na duši. Kao da je čula glas previše udaljen da bi razumjela riječi. Morala je nešto učiniti, ali nije znala što. Još nije bila odlučila hoće li dostaviti „scenarij“ Gardeniji. Možda bi bilo bolje da tajna o Ahmose ostane netaknuta. Ali da, napisat ću mu dvije stranice, pomislila je... Uvijek su postojali faraoni i podanici, kraljevi i ljubavnici, zločini i nepravde. Sada kao i prije četiri tisuće godina. Kakva je svrha razmišljanja o toj jednoj riječi – *Osveta* – koju je iščitala iz hijeroglifa drugog sloja?

Da, tajanstveni hijeroglifi. Spremala se staviti papire ispisane s računala u kutiju.

Položila je na njih naočale pa kroz leće vidjela uvećane i izobličene znakove. Drukčije su izgledali. Odmah joj je pogled pao na mumiju, kao da ju je zvala, tražila pozornost... Pogledala je njene zavezane ruke. Zatvorila je oči, vidjela.

I u trenutku je shvatila.

Odmah je nazvala mladog Gomu na telefon. Znala je da je u svom uredu, čula je odzvanjanje basova njegova omiljenog rock benda hodnikom. Računalni se genije pojavio s razbarušenom kosom boje fuksije i cigaretom u ustima.

– Otpustili su i mene – rekao je – žele promijeniti sve, kreteni. Uništiti će naš muzej kako bi od njega napravili igraonicu. Prapovijest! I oni misle da su moderni! Što možemo učiniti?

– Nije sve izgubljeno. Pomozi mi, otkrila sam nešto.

– Ovdje sam, baby – rekao je Gomma.

– Nikad nismo uspjeli dešifrirati drugi sloj hijeroglifa. Oni su ... bizarni, da tako kažem. Ali pala mi je na pamet jedna ideja. Zamisli da moraš pisati na trbuhu dok ležiš na leđima. Ne možeš ustati i ne možeš micati glavu. I ne možeš dobro micati ruke, ili čak držati papir visoko. Kako bi onda pisao?

– Ležeći bez podizanja glave i sa zavezanim rukama? Pa, ne bi bilo lako. Trebao bih pisati bez da vidim ono što pišem. Držati papir na trbuhu i zamišljati što pišem.

– Točno... ne bi mogao vidjeti... kakvo bi onda postalo tvoje pisanje?

– Pa, svakako izmijenjeno... recimo da bi znakovi vjerojatno postali deformirani, izdužene

perspektive... nekakva anamorfoza, više ili manje.

– Tako je ... uzmi onda tajanstvene hijeroglifne. Možeš li ih interpretirati kao da su bili podložni blagoj anamorfozi?

– Da, možda imam grafički program za to.

– A koliko ti vremena treba?

– Egipatsko vrijeme. Deset minuta.

Gomma je grozničavo radio. Tajanstveni su se znakovi promijenili, otkrili su svoj oblik.

– Za Tutankamona, – rekao je Gomma – sada su drugačiji. Apsolutno se mogu, jasno...

– Protumačiti – rekla je Antonietta. – Hvala.

– Želiš da ostanem?

– Ne. Sada je moj red – rekla je Antonietta.

Prošlo je manje od jednog sata. Antonietta je nazvala Gardeniju.

– Ravnatelju, dođite dolje na odjel – rekla je. – Ima nešto novo, što priču čini izvanrednom i zanimljivom za vaše projekte... vjerujte mi.

– Da to nije neki trik kako bih gubio vrijeme? – odgovorio je Gardenia.

– Dođite. Imam iznenađenje.

Prošlo je pet dana. Antonietta je redovito bila na svojem radnom mjestu, u Dvorani De Valentin. Ahmosina je mumija bila u središtu prostorije, a relikvijar otvoren. Na stolu su se nalazile bočice i amfore iz kojih su izlazili intenzivni mirisi. Gomila soli sjajila je u staklenoj posudi. Antonietta se pripremala za neki poseban zahvat na jednom od artefakata. Umočila je zavoj u mirisnu smirnu i napunila špricu tekućinom.

– Trebalo mi je neko vrijeme, ravnatelju – rekla je veselo – ali sam na kraju uspjela. Drugi sloj hijeroglifa bio je napisan u teško zamislivoj situaciji. Zbog toga su mi se činili nečitkima. Ali jednom kad je misterij riješen, dešifrirala sam ih. Natpis kaže:

*Moja je optužba nepravедna. Nisam počinila nikakav zločin. Moja će osveta trajati stoljećima.*

*Madfuna hajia.*

Nećete me pitati što znači *madfuna hajia*? Pažljivo slušajte, sve ću vam objasniti: znakove na pločici napisale su različite ruke. Prvi su bili ispisani po faraonovoj naredbi i sadrže razloge zbog kojih je Ahmose ubijena, te njegov gnjev izdanog ljubavnika.

Drugi znakovi ... pa, nećete vjerovati, ali napisala ih je Ahmose. Šiljastim zlatnim prstenom koji sam joj našla na prstu kad sam odmotala zavoje. Prsten je probio tkaninu i ona je njime



ispisala znakove, velikim trudom i bez mogućnosti da ih vidi. Urezivala ih je zavezanih ruku, ležeći, omotana u zavoje. Razumijete li sada? *Madfuna hajia* znači: pokopana živa.

Da, okrutnost faraona bila je takva da je Ahmose bila umotana u zavoje i polako umirala u toj grobnici. Zapravo, mumija pokazuje znakove dvostrukog zamatanja. Prvi sloj zavoja, kojim je čvrsto stisnuta, nosi tragove organskih i tekućih ostataka, a stavljen joj je dok je još bila živa. Drugi sloj zavoja stavljen joj je nakon smrti, kada je mumifikator dovršio posao.

Nije primijetio, ili nije htio primijetiti, da je Ahmose ispričala svoj kraj na pločici. Radi se o vrlo okrutnoj i zastrašujućoj priči, ravnatelju. Bilo bi fantastično staviti je u vaše nove videozapise. Nego, kako to da vas svi traže i da se svaka odluka čini odgođenom? Kažu da ste pobjegli s novcem u New York. Ali to nije istina, ja znam što se stvarno dogodilo. Ja i Ahmose to znamo.

Ahmose je u ovom trenutku u mojoj kući, poslala sam je zajedno s ostalim kutijama kad sam ispraznila ured. Imat ću dosta vremena proučiti ju. Jer, vidite, nemam ni najmanju namjeru osporavati vaše odluke, niti želim više ostati u Darwinu. Ali moram završiti posao. Moj ste posao vi. Oprostite ako sam vam, kako bih vas bolje pripremila, ponudila čaj s opijumom i pelinom.

Vjerojatno su čak i Egipćani koristili ove biljke kako bi omamili žrtve. Možda je čak i Ahmose bila ovako drogirana kad su je živu spustili u grobnicu.

Ali sada imamo suvremena sredstva. Sada ću vam dati injekciju koja će vas smiriti. To je jedina razlika u odnosu na egipatski protokol.

Ostalo će se odvititi kao i prije četiri tisuće godina, vjerujte u moje iskustvo znanstvenice. Žao mi je ako će proći neko vrijeme dok umrete, ali osveta je ozbiljna stvar, a Ahmose želi da bude tako. Dakle sada ću zatvoriti stakleni relikvijar i strpljivo čekati, samo ja imam ključeve ove sobe. A kad se uvjerim da ste... mirni, vječno mirni, napraviti ću vam mumifikaciju dostojnu... faraona. Jeste li sretni ravnatelju? Ne odgovarate? Ali da, čak i kad biste mogli govoriti ili vikati, ovako zamotanog u zavoje, tko bi vas mogao čuti? Ali disati uspijevate, zar ne? Jesam li bila dobra u zamatanju?

Mumija je zajecala i trznula ruku.

– Vratit ću se sutra. *Madfuna hajia*, ravnatelju – rekla je Antonietta. – Laku noć.

Ugasila je svjetlo, zatvorila vrata, a koraci su joj odzvanjali podom pustog muzeja, zajedno s vapajem gušenja.

## 4. Translation analysis

In the analysis of the source text some characteristics of the style of the story were exposed, which is fundamental when comparing the source text and the translation. This section offers the translation commentary, which will show the main issues that arose, but also the technical side of translation production.

Therefore, in the next paragraphs the translation choices made are explained. Different solutions or possibilities for translating a term are presented and commented on and then the final choice is explained. As already mentioned, this does not mean that the translation choices presented are the only possible or right ones.

### 4.1. The translation of the title and the initial quote

To translate the title – “La mummia”, no particular explanation is needed because it can be rendered simply with the literal translation – *mumija*. In this case the title is very clear and there are no other translation possibilities. On the other hand, there may be cases in which the literal translation of the title would lose the meaning in the target language, especially if it is an abstract concept or not known in the relevant culture and language.

The title of a book, or in this case the translated short story, represents the first contact of the work with the potential reader. If the title is not effective and does not invite him or her to read further, the reader will surely not consider it. Reading, therefore, deeply depends on the title. Here, however, the title looks very attractive and inviting. In this case it is not a metaphor but the term «mummy» is used in the proper meaning of «corpse embalmed with the mummification system used in ancient Egypt, where the body, after a series of treatments aimed at its preservation, was generally wrapped in linen bandages and closed in the sarcophagus.»<sup>10</sup> Since the meaning of the word *mummy* and the connotations that are often linked to it are well known, we can hypothesize that it is an interesting, mysterious, enigmatic and, above all, fascinating story.

The title is followed by a musical quotation preceding the actual text of the story: *Don't get mad, Get even. AEROSMITH*. These words, which are the title of Aerosmith's song, are said to a person who is angry for a certain reason. They advise the person not to get angry for the wrong they have suffered, but to do something to take revenge. The Italian translation

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/mummia/> Accessed: February 2021

would be *Non arrabbiarti, vendicati.*, but it is better to leave the verses in English, since they refer to a true song and Benni also quoted them from the original.

#### 4.2. Terms related to museology

As far as the translation of the short story is concerned, some terms referring to the museology, i.e., to the work at the museum, were a bit difficult to translate, but doing a detailed search in the dictionaries and on the Internet it is possible to find suitable solutions.

The first problem was the term *direttore*. According to the definitions of the “Hrvatski jezični portal”<sup>11</sup>, for the Italian term *direttore* there are three terms in Croatian: *direktor*, *upravitelj* i *ravnatelj*, all three synonyms. Doing a deeper search in the dictionaries, it can be found that the term which is usually used for museums is *ravnatelj*, that is *ravnatelj muzeja*. Thus, for the sentence “[...] nuovo direttore del museo, politicante insigne ed esparto di null’altro che di intrallazzi.”<sup>12</sup> the Croatian equivalent would be “[...] novog ravnatelja muzeja, naglašenog politikanta i stručnjaka ni za što drugo osim spletki.”

Another example is that of the Italian term *sala*. In Croatian *sala* and *dvorana* are synonyms, *soba* is similar to the first two terms with the difference that it indicates a room in an apartment, in a house or in a building in general, intended for living room, work or rest<sup>13</sup>, while *prostorija* is a very general term which is hyponym with respect to all three terms mentioned previously. Thus, the translation of the sentence “Erano in una delle cinque sale del suo reparto, la Sala dei Re, la più grande e antica.”<sup>14</sup> is this: “Bili su u jednoj od pet dvorana njezina odjela, u Dvorani Kraljeva, najvećoj i najstarijoj.” Here, for the Italian term *sala* the term *dvorana* was chosen because this term is usually used in such context.

For the Italian term *reperto* there are two corresponding terms in Croatian, *artefakt* and *nalaz*. *Nalaz* is a very generic term that indicates something that has been found, but it also has other completely different meanings, i.e., this is a polysemic term, so it cannot be used in this context. *Artefakt*, on the other hand, does not exactly correspond to Italian *reperto*. It is therefore necessary to use a descriptive phrase, such as *arheološki predmet*, which is used very often in these contexts and which successfully shows which object it is, as *predmet*

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<sup>11</sup> Digital dictionary of the Croatian language. <http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=main> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>12</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. <http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>14</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

means *oggetto*. Thus, the translation of “[...] è anche un centro di ricerca, abbiamo dei reperti nuovi...”<sup>15</sup> is “[...] a to je i istraživački centar, imamo neke nove arheološke predmete...”

The Italian term *budget* has its Croatian equivalent *budžet*, but it is a borrowed word from English, so it would be better to use the Croatian word *proračun* which has the same meaning. Therefore, “[...] d'altronde il mese scorso ha già licenziato un mio college e dimezzato il budget [...]”<sup>16</sup> has been translated as “[...] s druge strane, prošli ste mjesec već otpustili jednog kolegu i smanjili proračun za pola [...]”

Another example that can be noted is the term *teca* which corresponds to Croatian *relikvijar*, which, however, has two other synonyms, *moćnik* and *spremnic*. The first is the actual synonym of *relikvijar*, while the second is a bit ambiguous since it has three other very generic meanings. It is better, therefore, to use the first term which is known to all and has no ambiguous connotations. So, “Stava per aprire la teca quando all'improvviso ebbe un capogiro [...]”<sup>17</sup> has been translated as “Spremala se otvoriti relikvijar kad je iznenada osjetila vrtoglavicu [...]”

The last of the examples is that of the term *vaso*, or *vaso di vetro*. In Croatian there are numerous equivalents of this word, such as *staklena vaza*, *posuda*, *tegla*, *staklenka*. The last two words indicate, according to “Hrvatski jezični portal“, the object used to store fruit and vegetables and therefore is not suitable for this context. *Vaza* is a term that is often used in connection with flowers and as such it does not seem acceptable either. Although the term *posuda* is very general, it is the only one that defines *il vaso di vetro*. Hence the sentence, “Una montagna di sale brillava in un vaso di vetro.”<sup>18</sup> has been translated as “Gomila soli sjajila je u staklenoj posudi.”

### 4.3. The choice of adjectives among the various synonyms

Choosing between two or more synonyms for a foreign term is not easy, especially for someone who is not a native speaker. Often it is a matter of slight nuances of meaning between synonyms, but the translator is always required to make a choice.

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<sup>15</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

“Come una sacerdotessa, spiegava ai bambini affascinati [...]”<sup>19</sup> The Croatian terms *fascindirani*, *zaintrigirani*, *zadivljeni* correspond to Italian term *affascinati* and all three might be acceptable in this case. However, given the context, the first turns out to be the most appropriate because it is stronger and it best shows how the students felt while they were listening to the professor. So, the translation is: “Poput svećenice, objašnjavala je fasciniranoj i pomalo uplašenoj djeci [...]”

For the term *tronfio* there are numerous more or less corresponding adjectives in Croatian, such as *ohol*, *napuhan*, *arogantan*, *uobražen*, *umišljen*... Doing a thorough search in the dictionaries, it can be found that *ohol* has other correspondents in Italian with a slightly different meaning. The same goes for *napuhan* since these are two real synonyms. Furthermore, *arogantan* has its correspondent in *arrogante*. *Uobražen* and *umišljen* are very similar in meaning and are interchangeable. Hence, both could be used in this context. For the sentence “Piccolo e tronfio, con la barbetta ben curata e i capelli tinti [...]”<sup>20</sup> in this case the first one was chosen because it is less strong than the other and, therefore, the translation is as follows: “Mali i uobražen, s urednom bradom i obojanom kosom [...]”

“Punašne balerine s oblinama [...]” – this is the translation of the sentence that begins with “Le ballerine erano sinuose e paffute [...]”<sup>21</sup> The term *paffute* has more correspondents in Croatian, for example *punašne*, *okrugle*, *debele*, *pretile*, *krupne*, *bucmaste*, *gojazne*. However, among all these only the term *punašne* is not derogatory and offensive.

For the term *sconfinato*, the Croatian correspondents are for example: *beskrajan*, *bezgraničan*, *neograničen*, *beskonačan*. All of these terms are synonyms and are interchangeable in most contexts. In this case, *bezgraničan* was chosen as a translation since the Italian term *sconfinato* literally means *bezgraničan* in Croatian, that is, without borders, without delimitations. Furthermore, in the root of the word itself, in both languages, there is the value of “confine” or “granica”, for which the translation of the sentence “[...] sentì distintamente un grido, un urlo di sconfinato terrore.”<sup>22</sup> is “[...] jasno je čula krik, vrisak bezgraničnog terora.”

For the term *straordinario* there are also several Croatian equivalents: *izvanredan*, *poseban*, *jedinstven*, *nevjerojatan*, *dojmljiv*, *fantastičan*. However, *poseban* is not strong

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<sup>19</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

enough and cannot stand in place of *straordinario* in translation. *Jedinstven*, as well as *poseban*, has the closest meaning to that of *unico* and *eccezionale*; *dojmljiv* has the closest meaning to that of *impressionante*, while *nevjerojatan* is the term closest to the meaning of *incredibile*. When describing a story, however, the adjective *nevjerojatan* is used very frequently and therefore can be a right solution for translation. The translation of the sentence “C’è qualcosa di nuovo, che rende la storia straordinaria e affascinante per i suoi progetti [...]”<sup>23</sup> will therefore be “Ima nešto novo, zbog čega bi priča bila nevjerojatna i zanimljiva za Vaše projekte [...]”

#### 4.4. Other problems encountered during the process of translation

Some of the terms belonging to the semantic fields related to technology have been a bit difficult to translate. The first of these is *megaschermo* given that in Croatian there are three more or less equivalent terms: *veliki zaslon*, *veliki ekran*, *veliko platno*. With a detailed search in the dictionaries one will find that (*veliki*) *ekran* and (*veliki*) *zaslon* are two true synonyms, but as this is a very large museum, it is preferable to use (*veliko*) *platno*, which is better suited to a large museum room and to the image of the big screen (*megaschermo*). Thus, “Ha visto che successo il Godzilla col megaschermo?”<sup>24</sup> has been translated as “Jeste li vidjeli uspjeh Godzille na velikom platnu?”

The term *rilanciare* has more equivalents in Croatian: *povećati*, *uvećati*, *podići*, *oplemeniti*, *obnoviti*, *poboljšati*... The first three do not mean what the term refers to in the sentence: “Se non troviamo un’idea per rilanciarlo, al prossimo consiglio d’amministrazione dovrò chiuderlo.”<sup>25</sup> In this context *rilanciare* means to give back relevance, importance, interest to something.<sup>26</sup> *Oplemeniti*, therefore, cannot be used as it is closer to the meaning of *elevare* and *nobilitare*; *obnoviti* and *poboljšati* can be used in this context, but *poboljšati* in the sense of *migliorare* fits better since it is an improvement of the museum’s activities in general and not its physical renewal (meaning that would be closer to that of *obnoviti*). Professor Antonietta and professor Gardenia argue that the department should be improved, perfected. Hence, the sentence in question has been translated as “Ako ne smislimo kako ga poboljšati, na sljedećem upravnom odboru morat ću ga zatvoriti.”

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<sup>23</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=relaunch> Accessed: February 2021

When it comes to other problems encountered during the process of translation, the term *anamorfosi* needs to be mentioned. In the sentence “[...] diciamo che probabilmente ne verrebbe fuori una deformazione dei segni, una prospettiva allungata... più o meno un’anamorfosi.”<sup>27</sup>, the part “ne verrebbe fuori una deformazione dei segni” cannot be translated with the same word order as in Italian. In Croatian, the sentence will be “[...] recimo da bi znakovi vjerojatno postali deformirani, izdužene perspektive... nekakva anamorfoza, više ili manje.” In Croatian, then, there is no equivalent of the expression “ne verrebbe fuori” and therefore the verb used was *postati*, with the meaning of *diventare*. The Italian noun *deformazione* was also rendered in Croatian with the adjective *deformirani*.

The expression “*Prossima apertura*” in the sentence “[...] e poi, in modo quasi furtivo, aprì una porticina su cui era scritto Prossima apertura.”<sup>28</sup> could be translated in several ways: *Uskoro otvorenje*, *Otvaramo uskoro*, *Skoro otvorenje*... The choice, however, fell on *Otvaramo uskoro* because this is the phrase that is most often seen on shop doors or on posters when you want to signal that some business will soon be inaugurated. Thus, the whole sentence would be: “[...] a potom je potajice otvorila vrata na kojima je pisalo Otvaramo uskoro.”

The sentence “Aveva arredato l’ufficio col peggio reperibile nel museo.”<sup>29</sup> was first translated as “Ured je namjestio najgore u cijelome muzeju.”, but then I noticed that the meaning was not full. The term *reperibile* equals to *disponibile*, which refers to the things available in the museum. Thus, the translation was finally integrated as follows: “Ured je ukrasio najgorim stvarima dostupnim u muzeju.”

For the phrase *idea vincente* in the sentence “È un dinosauro fotogenico, è stata un’idea vincente.”<sup>30</sup> there are several possible solutions, such as: *dobra ideja*, *odlična ideja*, *pobjednička ideja*, *dobitna ideja*... In Croatian there is a real equivalent, the phrase that corresponds to the Italian more than all the others, even if it does not have the same literal meaning: in fact, its literal translation would be *pieno centro/colpo*. That is *pun pogodak* which is often used in this context. The sentence thus became: “To je fotogeničan dinosaurus, bio je to pun pogodak.”

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<sup>27</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

At a certain point in the story, professor Antonietta tells professor Gardenia: “Oh, c’è una cosa nuovissima [...] L’ultima mummia arrivata...” / “Sai che novità – sospirò Gardenia.”<sup>31</sup> At first glance, a person of Croatian mother tongue reading this last sentence for the first time might assume that Gardenia believes hers really is a big news, but in reality it is exactly the opposite. In fact, he ironically tells her that this is not new. The irony in his tone can also be seen from the sigh that follows his statement. Therefore, for the Croatian translation the modulation procedure was chosen and the sentence was rendered as: “To nije nikakva novost – uzdahnuo je Gardenia.”, which literally means “questa non è nessuna novità”.

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<sup>31</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.



## 5. The translation to the English language

“The mummy”

*Don't get mad*

*Get even.*

AEROSMIT H

There was no more meek and lovable woman than professor Antonietta, a distinguished Egyptologist, one of the most experienced in the world. All the staff at the Darwin Museum agreed. Everyone loved her and worked hard to help her. Equally, everyone agreed that there was no more hateful, presumptuous and arrogant person than professor Gardenia, the new director of the museum, a distinguished politician and expert in nothing but intrigue.

That evening Antonietta was explaining the mysteries of mummies to a middle school class. They were in one of the five halls of her department, the Hall of the Kings, the largest and oldest. Slabs of hieroglyphics hung on the walls, and four sarcophagi served as sentries on each side. Dozens of ancient artifacts slept in the display cases. The professor was speaking behind a table on which the ingredients, well known and studied by her, necessary for Egyptian mummification, were arranged. Tar from the Dead Sea, myrrh, cedar oil. Like a priestess, she explained the recipe for preparing a mummy to fascinated and somewhat frightened the children.

–First you have to get rid of all the possible water – she said gently. – You must therefore open the body, free it from the entrails, brain, soft tissues and liquids, and then close it again. Then the body is carefully washed, sprinkled with salts and left to dry for forty days. As you know, guys, salts absorb water and in fact often food is put “in salt” just to preserve it for a long time. Then...

A bell rang loudly. A voice on the loudspeaker announced that the museum was about to close and needed to be emptied from visitors.

–But it is not yet six o'clock, – Antonietta said to Rolando, the curator – there are ten minutes left. I had asked the director if I could stay a little longer. I won't even be able to finish the explanation...

The curator shrugged and glanced at the upper floors from which the injunction had come.

Antonietta looked around and the pupils had already forgotten her. Noisily, they gathered around their professor and, hunched over by their backpacks, left the room.

The professor sighed and put back the jars and bottles of perfumed oils on their place. She gathered her notes in a folder and then, almost stealthily, opened a small door that read *Opening soon*. She entered the De Valentin hall. This was the name of an almost dark hall, where artifacts still to be cataloged were piled up, sarcophagi under restoration, bones and dozens of skulls that greeted her with a grin. Antonietta went to a corner where there was a shape covered in a cloth. She removed it. A small dark mummy appeared in a display case. The professor looked at her with almost loving interest.

– You – she said under her breath – are really a mystery. A fascinating mystery... if only I could decipher...

But her conversation with the past was interrupted by the hoarse voice of the loudspeaker. It was the odious Ranetta, professor Gardenia's secretary.

– Professor Antonietta needs to come urgently in the director's office. I repeat, urgently...

Sighing, the Egyptologist left the department and, echoing her footsteps in the vast corridor, she walked up the staircase, greeting the embalmed monkeys and the papier-mache pithecanthropus erectus, until she reached the office floor.

She ran into Ranetta who was running, while putting on makeup, towards who knows what sinful evening.

– Quick, he's waiting for you – she blew in her face.

Little servant girl, Antonietta thought. But she immediately regretted the thought, because as we said she was sweet and incapable of malice. After all, the odious Ranetta was doing her job.

She caught her breath, smoothed her mouse-gray hair and knocked on the director's door. At his imperious "come in", she entered almost with a bow.

The boss was there, in the royal leather chair, his feet on the desk. Small and pompous, with a well-groomed beard and beer-colored dyed hair. He was dressed in a crimson jacket which he found irresistible but in which he was looking like a circus presenter. He had furnished the office with the worst exhibits from the museum. A large ceramic phallus, four pompous chandeliers, an embalmed cross-eyed tiger. Above all, behind him, occupying the entire wall, an enormous late 19th century painting loomed. It was a canvas by Jean Merighi, a French exoticist-troppist-firefighting pumpist, entitled *La cour d'Aménophis*. It depicts the pharaoh

literally covered with gold and gems, between courtiers and dancers, in a palace so fabulous it seems unreal. The painting was so full of errors and anachronisms that it was ridiculous. No Egyptian palace had ever been like this, a cross between Versailles of cinema, the studio of a costume designer from the Folies Bergère and the MTV Award. The dancers were curvy and plump, with tiger patterned bikinis and boots. The pharaoh wore drag queen shoes and makeup. Gardenia, who was a perfect ignorant and knew the trends, liked him madly. He was also a great sales person.

– Professor, how did the lesson go? – he asked yawning widely.

– Oh, the pupils were very interested... of course, I still had a lot of things to explain... it would take me another half an hour.

– In your opinion – Gardenia said rudely – I should keep the museum open for an extra half hour for fifteen pupils? Do you know what half an hour costs in overtime, lighting, heating, etc.?

– I understand – Antonietta murmured sadly.

– Professor, let's face it – Gardenia said. – There have been about two thousand visits to your department this month. That's scarce, very scarce. Something needs to be done to get more people in. We are not here for a few aesthetes, I have to make ends meet. The Egyptian sector is a luxury, a waste...

– But it is very... famous... it is also a research center, we have new artifacts... besides, last month you already fired a colleague of mine and cut the budget in half...

– That's the point – Gardenia said annoyed. – I've cut costs, but that's not enough. You are a good and reputable scientist, but we are not at the Nobel, we are in a large museum that costs a lot of money, and my job is to settle accounts. The sponsors are not happy. Your department doesn't attract visitors. It doesn't work. The animal gallery works, the antique jewelry department works, the new Fashion in the Centuries department works, the sale of gadgets works. We have to change, we have to modernize. Put screens, videos, interactive content. This is what they like now. Did you see the success of Godzilla shown in the museum on the large screen?

– Sure, but it's not science, it's...

– It's a photogenic dinosaur, it was a winning idea. We would need some for your old-fashioned department...

– I... I can think about it... – said Antonietta.

– I hope so, professor. Your department has been the same for years, it's... the mummy of the museum, don't be offended. If we don't find an idea to revive it, I'll have to close it at the

next board of directors. Or at least, reduce it to one or two halls.

– Oh no, – said Antonietta – fifty mummies in two halls. That will not work.

– Oh, really? And what will they do? A union protest of corpses? Gardenia laughed. – One or two rooms/halls will do. In the other three we will put videos. I don't know? Film about the pharaohs. Animations, a video game Find the Tomb. Instead of the caretaker, two beautiful girls dressed as Nefertari... Don't be so dazed, I'm saving your job... something new is needed.

– Oh, there's something very new – said Antonietta enthusiastically. – The last mummy arrived...

– That's nothing new – Gardenia sighed.

– No director, listen to me. This one is particular... mysterious...

– What do you mean? Said the director, with the faintest interest.

– Well, it was found last month in an unusual grave in Deir el-Bahari. It is believed to belong to the 18th dynasty, 1550-1525 BC. The years of the great pharaoh Amenhotep.

– The one from my painting – Gardenia said with a flash of interest.

– Exactly. Congratulations. Well, when Amenhotep died of obscure causes, he was succeeded by Thutmose I. But we don't know why, or how. We don't really know anything about this man, except that around him were two mysterious women, Senseneb and Ahmose. The newly discovered tomb is connected to the supposed tomb of Thutmose, but has been... hidden. Only with ultrasound were they able to discover it. It is twenty meters below the first tomb, it can be reached through a very narrow tunnel and it is... an enigma...

– In what sense? Like the lost ark?

– More or less. The walls are filled with images of Anubis, the god of the Dead. There are few furnishings. The bandage is different from that of a normal mummy. Its arms are tied at its chest by a kind of jewel-cuff, and in its hands it holds an engraved tablet. For now, the writings are very difficult to decipher, but it is certainly a curse. The mummy is defined as “the one who knows how to do evil” and “the black witch”. But the sarcophagus is very rich, like that of the queens.

– Well, why did they make such a rich grave for her if she was some kind of witch? And why did they go out of their way to hide it?

Antonietta realized that Gardenia was becoming curious.

– My guess is that the pharaoh got rid of her, but didn't have the courage to deny her a royal burial. Maybe because he loved her... or feared her...

Gardenia was playing with the ceramic phallus. Who knows what ultramodern ideas were going through his head. But he seemed interested.

–Um, – he finally said – try to decipher as much as possible. Maybe we could find a compelling story. Love, death, revenge. Not the usual historical nonsense and the strings of dynasties...

–Oh yes, give me a chance – said Antonietta.

–Okay, tomorrow evening I'll come to see the mummy, – said Gardenia – but I won't promise you anything. I repeat that, as far as I'm concerned, your department must be downsized, or canceled. I'm in charge here!

–Like a real pharaoh – said Antonietta.

–That's right – Gardenia said satisfied.

The whole following day Antonietta worked on her computer in the small office close to the Hall of the Kings. She was trying to decipher, enlarged on the screen, the hieroglyphs of the tablet. She had never seen anything like it. A first layer of marks, precisely drawn, was understandable. But then a second set of roughly engraved markings had been overlapping. Someone wrote on the already written. Maybe the same hand, or different hands? And why had it been decided to make everything so difficult to interpret?

She entered the De Valentin hall and sat down next to the mummy, as if at the bedside of a sick person. She was about to open the case when she suddenly felt dizzy, almost faint, and felt as if a raging river invaded her. A river of images, of noises, of sharp and penetrating smells. She felt dizziness. She thought she had been concentrating in front of the computer for too long. And she also seemed to hear a voice, a distant wail of a woman. She pulled herself together, took a slow breath and opened the case. She touched the mummy with one hand. Again her head turned, the river flooded her and she distinctly heard a scream, the scream of boundless terror. She was afraid, she called the curator.

–Rolando, is there anyone around?

–No professor, – said the curator – is something wrong? You are looking pale.

–I think it's just tiredness – said Antonietta, taking her head in her hands.

–You are working too hard. Will you see the director soon? Do you think they will close the department? Will I have to look for another job?

–I don't know Rolando, let's not despair. It depends on tonight. Do you know if doctor Gomma is coming today?

–I don't know ... he doesn't have a timetable.

Doctor Gomma was twenty-six, with phosphorescent glasses, fuchsia hair, and he was the computer expert. A brilliant nerd who helped her decipher the inscriptions. Gomma was sure that the Egyptians were Martians. They had already invented the computer, but they had given up using it so as not to be discovered by the Earthlings. The hieroglyphs were the remains of an iconic computer language, and the pyramids were built by teleportation or cranes operated by spaceships. How could we doubt it?

It was eight o'clock, two hours after closing, and Antonietta was left alone on the ground floor. The museum was full of echoes and rustles, several mice inhabited the corridors and libraries.

Again she looked at the mummy, and her hands tied on her chest.

–Dear friend, I have little time to come up with an interesting and horrifying story for Gardenia. Help me.

She was just thinking about that when a new faint, stronger than the previous ones, stunned her. Maybe she fainted, maybe she fell asleep. When she woke up she smelled a strange scent of myrrh and bitumen. She went to the computer as if in a trance, and wrote. She was working frantically and didn't even notice that Gardenia had arrived behind her, along with a lanky guy with black glasses and long rocker hairstyle.

–Here is the professor who works overtime, as always! Exclaimed the director. – Well, let's see what she found to convince us. Let me present you Casaletto, from Virtual, the animation company which takes care of our films and robotics. And it's also... our big sponsor.

–Pleased to meet you – said Casaletto, holding out a ringed hand.

–So, give us some interesting background – Gardenia said. – Is this your mummy?

It looks like the others.

–But it's not, – said Antonietta – and this could be her story. Let's go back to Amenhotep... her colleague pharaoh...

Gardenia smiled smugly.

–Well, four thousand years ago the great Amenhotep dies, Thutmose I comes out of nowhere and becomes king.

How and why? One of the many hypotheses is that Amenhotep was poisoned. Thutmose was a doctor and sorcerer, and his mother Senseneb was an expert on herbs. In all of this, the most mysterious role is that of queen Ahmose. She was not a princess, contrary to what was thought up until a few years ago. Her only titles are "King's wife" and "King's sister". Which could mean lover or who knows what.

– Is she the mummy we’re talking about?

– I’m sure she is. But there are numerous mysteries. The hieroglyphs from her tomb are invocations to Anubis, the god of the dead, and in one of them there is the phrase “the witch is slowly brought to you”. But I think the most important writings are those engraved on the tablet in the handcuffed hands. I have deciphered some parts:

*and I’ve chosen the darkest sorceress... in your hands the blood of Amenhotep... cursed you are, for how much I have desired you... die loved as a queen and cursed as the worst of women... hidden here, inferior because no one...*

– We need the whole text! – Gardenia said. What should we do? Have an audio that is missing some parts?

– If you give me time, I can decipher the rest.

– Well, it seems like a true story of love, death and revenge, – said Gardenia – a real drama. What do you think, Casaletto?

The rocker nodded.

– Let’s try to imagine the story – Antonietta went on eagerly. – Probably Ahmose together with Senseneb helped Thutmose to get rid of Amenhotep and to become pharaoh, but soon after she plotted against him. Or maybe she wanted to confess the crime... And Thutmose killed her, even though he still loved her. He gave her a royal burial, although not with him, but under his tomb, within the “lower” depths of the earth. On the tablet there are also other signs that I cannot decipher, they are like... deformed compared to normal hieroglyphs... only one is clear and says: *Revenge*.

– I’d say it’s not bad – said Casaletto, who was taking notes.

– So are you interested? said Antonietta.

– Come to my office – Gardenia said decidedly.

It was already night, they went up the staircase in silence. The manager made her sit down and even offered her a drink. He spoke into Casaletto’s ear and laughed. Antonietta was nervous.

– It’s a good story – finally said Gardenia – I think there are also some cleverly fictionalized parts. But narrated verbally it wouldn’t work. True, Casaletto?

– No, – said Casaletto – but it could be the basis for an excellent video. Cartoons, or using a beautiful actress, all digitally. The levels of the tombs remind me of video games. It could be called: The Amosia’s curse.

- Ahmose.
- Whatever it is... In short, it could be one of the videos of the new department.
- I don't get it.
- Professor. Everything is about to change. Aren't you curious?
- Curious about what?
- We have a big project – Gardenia said. – The day after tomorrow I am leaving for New York, I will be away for a week studying the latest generation museums. I will be back and in two weeks we will present the new Darwin Two floor, the museum will be completely renovated. We have found new sponsors. Three quarters of the museum will be digitalized. Interactive screens and videos. Your department will be called Histories of Ancient Egypt.
- But... the materials, the artifacts?
- They will be filmed, visitors will still be able to see them. We will of course sell most of them. The Germans and the Chinese have made excellent offers. Your mummies will have a nice little trip.
- And what about me? – said Antonietta, barely holding back a tear.
- You will remain as a consultant for the scripts, – said Gardenia with a malicious smile – that is, you will help us to realize many beautiful stories like the one you just told...
- What about the rest of the museum?
- Almost everything will be digitized – Casaletto said with a sudden bossiness. – Obviously there will be great space savings and half of the museum, the north wing, will be sold to private individuals... perhaps a hotel, perhaps a fashion house. This will give Darwin a new boost and...
- That's not a good idea – Antonietta interrupted him surprisingly. – It is one thing to see a real mummy and one thing to see an unlikely story on screen. It is one thing to sense the smells of embalming, to see the ancient techniques, and quite another to make a video about it...
- Good idea, – said Casaletto – a video on embalming... a little *pulp*, many details. Professor Antonietta could not hold back her anger.
- In short, you have decided... it's all over.
- Everything starts again – said Gardenia. – The museum is modernized, the budget is saved, the sponsors remain. And you can work from home... so in two years you would have retired, right?
- And who will be responsible for the move? Who will take care of these precious things?
- Don't worry. The German or Chinese experts will arrive... they will take care of everything.



–I worry! – suddenly yelled Antonietta, almost astonished by her own impetus. – These are centuries of history, objects, bodies and secrets that have crossed the ages... erasing all these shouts for revenge!

–Professor, – said Gardenia – calm down! I’ve never seen you like this.

It was true. She looked like another person, she had stood up disheveled and was panting.

–You – she said taking a step forward – are... a killer... Gardenia was breathless. Then he spoke coldly.

–I’ll pretend I haven’t heard it, professor. Tomorrow please take away all your papers and computer and empty the office. In the evening I will come to greet you and you will give me the keys of the department. And you’ll give me something written about the story about the mummy, if you want. Now go away, Casaletto and I need to talk about the budget.

–I greet you, pharaoh – said Antonietta, slamming the door.

Antonietta did not sleep. She was sorry she had lost control. It was as if someone had spoken through her. All night she dreamed of suffocating. She woke up out of breath and the dawn found her restless and exhausted. In the morning she arrived late at the museum and began to gather her things in a box, under the sad eye of Rolando. Then she tried to work a little bit more. It was the last time, she thought, that she had seen those rooms in which she has worked for forty years. An eternity.

–Forty years seem long... – she said looking at the mummy. – But what about you, sister, you who have kept your mystery for four thousand years?

She felt sad, and still full of anger. When she approached Ahmose’s mummy she felt a kind of electric shock, a bite to the soul. It was as if she heard the voice which was too far away to understand the words. She had to do something but she didn’t know what. She has not yet decided whether to give Gardenia the “script”. Maybe it was better that Ahmose’s mystery remained untouched. But yes, I’ll write him two pages, she finally thought... There have always been pharaohs and subjects, kings and lovers, crimes and injustices. Now as four thousand years ago. What was the point of thinking about that one word – Revenge – which she had deciphered from the hieroglyphs of the second layer?

Yes, the mysterious hieroglyphs. She was about to put the computer printouts away in the box.

She placed her glasses on them and saw the enlarged and deformed marks through the lenses. They had a new look. Her gaze ran immediately to the mummy, as if it was calling her, asking for attention... She looked at the handcuffed hands. She closed her eyes and saw.

And she understood, in an instant.

She immediately called young Gomma on the phone. She knew he was in his office, because she heard the bass of his favorite rock band booming in the hall. The computer genius showed up with disheveled fuchsia hair and a cigarette in his mouth.

– They fired me too, – he said – they want to change everything, the bastards. They will ruin our museum to make a video game room. Prehistory! And they think they are modern! What can we do?

– Not everything is lost: Help me, I found something.

– I'm here, baby – said Gomma.

– We have never been able to decipher the second layer of the hieroglyphs. They are... eccentric, so to speak. But I have an idea. Imagine that you have to write lying on your back, with your belly up. You can't get up and you can't move your head. And you can't move your hands well, and you can't hold the paper up. How would you write then?

– Lying down without lifting your head and with your hands tied? Well, it wouldn't be easy. I should be writing without seeing what I write. Hold the paper on my stomach and imagine what I am writing.

– Exactly... without being able to see... what would your writing become then?

– Well, certainly modified... let's say that it would probably result in a deformation of the signs, a lengthened perspective... more or less an anamorphosis.

– That's right... then take the mysterious hieroglyphs. Are you able to interpret them as if they are subject to a slight anamorphosis?

– Yes, maybe I have a graphics program to do it.

– How long does it take?

– Ten minutes, Egyptian time.

Gomma worked feverishly. The mysterious signs changed, their shape revealed itself.

– For Tutankhamen, – said Gomma – now they are different. They are absolutely, clearly...

– Interpretable – said Antonietta. – Thanks.

– Do you want me to stay?

– No. Now it's my turn – said Antonietta.

Less than an hour passed. Antonietta phoned Gardenia.

– Director, come down to the department – she said. – There is something new, what makes the story extraordinary and fascinating for your projects... trust me.

– Isn't that a trick to waste time? – Gardenia answered.

– Come. I have a surprise.

Five days have passed. Antonietta was regularly at her workplace, in the De Valentin hall. Ahmose's mummy was in the center of the room, and the case was open. On a table there were bottles and amphorae from which intense smells came. A mountain of salt glistened in a glass jar. Antonietta was preparing to do some particular intervention on an artifact. She dipped a bandage into fragrant myrrh, and filled a syringe with liquid.

– It took me some time, director, – she said cheerfully – but in the end I succeeded. The second layer of hieroglyphs was written in a situation that was difficult to imagine. This made them seem illegible to me. But once the mystery was solved, I deciphered them. The writing says:

*My accusation is unfair. I have not committed any crime. My revenge will last for centuries.  
Madfunajia.*

Won't you ask me what *madfunajia* means? Be careful, I'm about to reveal the solution: the signs on the tablet were written by different people. The first ones were engraved by order of the pharaoh and contain the reasons why Ahmose was killed, and his anger of a betrayed lover.

The other signs... well, you won't believe it, but they were written by Ahmose. With a pointed gold ring I found on her finger when I removed the bandages. The ring pierced the fabric and she engraved the signs with it, with great effort and without being able to see them. She engraved them with her hands tied, lying down, wrapped in bandages. Do you understand now? *Madfunajia* means: buried alive.

Yes, the pharaoh's cruelty was such that Ahmose was wrapped in bandages and left to die slowly in that tomb. In fact, the mummy shows the signs of a double bandage. The first, very narrow, which bears traces of organic and liquid residues, had been made when she was still alive. The second bandage was made after death, when the mummifier finished the work. He did not notice, or did not want to notice, that Ahmose had told her end on the tablet. A truly cruel and frightening story, director. It would be amazing to put it in your new videos. By the way, why is everyone looking for you and every decision seems suspended? They say you ran off with the money to New York. But that's not true, I know what really happened. Ahmose and I know it.

Ahmose is at my house right now, I sent it along with the other boxes when I emptied the office. I'll have plenty of time to study it. Because you see, I have no intention of challenging

your decisions, I don't want to stay at Darwin any longer. But I have to finish a job. You are my job. I am sorry if I offered you that tea with laudanum and mugwort to prepare you better. The Egyptians probably also used these herbs to stun victims. Maybe Ahmose was drugged like that too, when they lowered her alive into the grave.

But now we have modern techniques. Now I'm going to give you an injection to calm you down. It is the only exception to the Egyptian protocol.

The rest will all be just as it was four thousand years ago, trust my experience as a scholar. I'm sorry if it will take you a while to die, but revenge is a serious thing, and Ahmose wants it that way. So now I will close the glass case and wait patiently, only I have the keys to this room. And when I realize that you are... calm, eternally calm, I will mummify you as if... you were a pharaoh. Are you happy, director? You are not answering? But yes, even if you could speak or scream, bandaged as you are, who could hear you? But you can breathe, right? Was I good at bandaging you?

A groan came from the mummy and its hand twitched.

– I'll be back tomorrow. *Madfunna hajia*, director – said Antonietta. – Good night.

She turned off the light, closed the door, and her footsteps echoed on the floor of the deserted museum, along with a strangling cry.

## 6. Translation analysis

The following paragraphs will focus on the analysis of the translation from the Italian language to the English language by focusing on the same or similar points in order to have two translation analyses which will be compared later on.

Like the previous section, this section will also offer translation commentary which will show not only the result of the translation, but also the path followed to make it. The translation choices will be explained and justified together with different solutions or possibilities for translating a term. In the end, the final choice will be explained.

### 6.1. The translation of the title and the initial quote

As already explained in the previous section, which focused on the analysis of the translation from Italian into the Croatian language, to translate the title – “La mummia”, no particular explanation is needed since it can be literally translated as “The Mummy”. The title is very clear and there are no other translation possibilities. Furthermore, the meaning of the title was also previously explained and the dictionary definition was provided. The title and its connotations attract reader’s attention.

The title is followed by a musical quotation preceding the text of the story: *Don’t get mad, Get even. AEROSMITH*. These words are already written in English so there is no need for translation. As previously explained, they refer to a true song. It needs to be restated that the quotation leads us to assume that revenge is the main argument of this short story.

### 6.2. Terms related to museology

Some terms referring to the museum, or rather to the work at the museum were a bit difficult to translate, but by doing a detailed search in the dictionaries and on the Internet, it is possible to find suitable solutions.

The first problem was the term *sala*. *Room* and *hall* are the two possibilities for translating this term in English. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term *room*<sup>32</sup> means an extent of space occupied by or sufficient or available for something, while

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/room> Accessed: February 2021

one of the definitions for the term *hall*<sup>33</sup> is the following: a large usually imposing building for public or semipublic purposes. It can be concluded that the first term, *room*, is very general in its meaning and can refer to any room in the house or any other building. The term *hall* has more definitions and one of them is provided in this paragraph. Its meaning is also narrower and it refers to the place in the building for public or semipublic purposes, for example the museum. Since the main topic of this thesis is the museum, the second term is a better translation option. Thus, the translation of the sentence “Erano in una delle cinque sale del suo reparto, la Sala dei Re, la più grande e antica.”<sup>34</sup> is the following: “They were in one of the five halls of her department, the Hall of the Kings, the largest and oldest.”

For the Italian term *reperto* there are many corresponding terms in English, for example *find*, *finding(s)*, *discovery*, *evidence*, *artifact*. The first term to be excluded is *evidence* because by doing a thorough research, it can be concluded that this term cannot be used in this context since it does not bear the same meaning. *Evidence* generally refers to something that furnishes proof, and specifically refers to something legally submitted to a tribunal to ascertain the truth of a matter.<sup>35</sup> Another term is *discovery* which is sometimes used in contexts similar to this one, however, it has a very general meaning. According to Macmillan dictionary, it is something that is found, or something new that is learned.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, terms *find* and *finding(s)* are also very general, the definition of the first being a good or valuable thing or a special person that has been discovered but was not known about before<sup>37</sup>, and the definition of the second term being a piece of information that is discovered during an official examination of a problem, situation, or object.<sup>38</sup> It can be concluded that neither of the two terms is suitable for this context and we have to take a look at the last term, *artifact*. It refers to a usually simple object (such as a tool or ornament) showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural object, especially an object remaining from a particular period.<sup>39</sup> It is also used in contexts like this one. Thus, the translation of “[...] è anche un centro di ricerca, abbiamo dei reperti nuovi [...]”<sup>40</sup> would be “[...] it is also a research center, we have new artifacts [...]”

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hall> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>34</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evidence> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/discovery> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>37</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/find> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>38</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/finding?q=findings> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/artifact> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>40</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 37.

Another example that can be noted is the term *custode* which corresponds to English *custodian*, *guardian*, *guard*, *keeper*, *curator* all of which generally have the same meaning, however there are slight differences. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term *custodian* refers to one that guards and protects or maintains especially one entrusted with guarding and keeping property or records or with custody or guardianship of prisoners or inmates.<sup>41</sup> It can be excluded because it cannot be used in this context. Another term is *guardian*, a synonym to the first one, the meaning of which is the following: one who has the care of the person or property of another.<sup>42</sup> This term can also be excluded because of the context in which it is mostly used. Another term is *guard* with the following definition: someone whose job is to look after a place of a person so that no one causes damage, steals anything or escapes.<sup>43</sup> However, this term is usually used in other contexts, for example when we are referring to army or police officers. The next possible solution is *keeper* the definition of which is someone who is an expert in and responsible for a particular group of objects in a museum.<sup>44</sup> The last term is *curator* and its definition leads us straight to the solution to this problem: someone whose job is to look after the objects in a museum.<sup>45</sup> The definition itself confirms that this is the right term for this context, however, the term *keeper* could also be used. Therefore, “Ma non sono ancora le sei, – disse Antonietta a Rolando, il custode del reparto – mancano dieci minuti.” was translated as “But it is not yet six o’clock, – Antonietta said to Rolando, the curator – there are ten minutes left.”

### 6.3. The choice of adjectives among the various synonyms

Choosing between two or more synonyms for a foreign term is not easy, especially for someone who is not a native speaker. Often it is a matter of slight nuances of meaning between synonyms, but the translator is always required to make a choice.

When it comes to English equivalents for the Italian adjectives, it can be concluded that it is easier to find the equivalent in English than in Croatian. The English language has more direct translations of Italian terms than Croatian because the majority of the words in English originate from Latin and thus these languages have similar roots. For example, it is obvious that the translation of the term *affascinanti* in the sentence “Come una sacerdotessa, spiegava

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/custodian> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/guardian> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/guard\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/guard_1) Accessed: February 2021

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/keeper> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/curator> Accessed: February 2021

ai bambini affascinati [...]”<sup>46</sup> is *fascinated* and the sentence would be: “Like a priestess, she explained the recipe for preparing a mummy to fascinated and somewhat frightened children.” Another example is the term *straordinario* in the sentence “C’è qualcosa di nuovo, che rende la storia straordinaria e affascinante per I suoi progetti [...]”<sup>47</sup> The term is translated into English as *extraordinary* which again confirms the similarity in forms between English and Italian. Thus, the sentence is translated as follows: “There is something new, what makes the story extraordinary and fascinating for your projects [...]”

However, this is not always the case and the translator has to opt for the most suitable equivalent. For example, the term *sconfinato* was problematic both in Croatian as well as in the English translation. The English equivalents are *boundless*, *limitless*, *endless*, *borderless*, *unconfined* and many others. Since the Italian term *sconfinato* literally the same meaning as *unconfined* it seemed as a good choice at first. However, after doing research in the dictionaries, I found out that its definition is the following: (of a feeling of pleasure) without any limit; very great.<sup>48</sup> This means that the definition does not correspond to the meaning in the context: “[...] sentì distintamente un grido, un urlo di sconfinato terrore.”<sup>49</sup> *Borderless* cannot be used in such context since, according to Collins dictionary, it is used to describe a situation in which the border between countries is not important, usually in relation to the movement of goods, people, etc.<sup>50</sup> According to Collins dictionary, if we describe something as *limitless*, we mean that there is or appears to be so much of it that it will never be exhausted<sup>51</sup>, so its meaning is closer to the meaning of *infinite* and it does not suit the context. The term *endless* has the same meaning as *limitless*, so it is *boundless* that remains and it has the closest meaning to the Italian term.

Another term is *paffute* in the sentence “Le ballerina erano sinuose e paffute [...]”<sup>52</sup> English equivalents are *chubby*, *fat*, *plump*, *puffy*, *stout*, *overweight* etc. The first one, *chubby*, is an informal word and therefore cannot be used. According to Macmillan dictionary, a person or animal that is *fat* has too much flesh on their body and weights too much.<sup>53</sup> It is not polite to call someone fat, says the same dictionary. To be *overweight* means to be heavier

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<sup>46</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/unconfined> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>49</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 38.

<sup>50</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/borderless> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/limitless> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>52</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/fat\\_1#fat\\_1\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/fat_1#fat_1_1) Accessed: February 2021



than you should be<sup>54</sup> and it does not mean what the Italian term *paffute* means in the given context. According to Cambridge Dictionary the definition of the term *stout* is the following: (especially of older people) fat and solid-looking, especially around the waist.<sup>55</sup> This meaning does not completely correspond to the meaning of the Italian term because the dancers from the sentence were not described as older and fat around the waist, but as curvy. Thus, the appropriate translation would be the term *plump* which means large and round in an attractive way<sup>56</sup>. The sentence would be translated as “The dancers were curvy and plump [...]”

#### 6.4. Other problems encountered during the process of translation

Although some of the terms belonging to the semantic fields related to technology have been a bit difficult and complex to translate into Croatian, the translation of these terms into English did not pose a problem. However, there were some other difficulties. For example, the Italian term *sgomberare*. It has few English equivalents, for example *to clear*, *to empty*, *to abandon*. In the sentence “Una voce all’altoparlante annunciò che il museo stava per chiudere e bisognava sgomberare.”<sup>57</sup> the term means that everyone needs to leave the museum because it is about to close. According to Cambridge dictionary *to clear* means to remove or get rid of whatever is blocking or filling something, or to stop being blocked or full<sup>58</sup> and this term cannot be used in this context because its meaning does not correspond to what it was intended in the Italian language. The term *to abandon* has its equivalent in the Italian term *abandonare* and therefore cannot be used in this context. The term *to empty* can be used for both people and things and its meaning is the closest to the one in Italian, so it seems the most appropriate one to use in this context, however, it should be followed by a prepositional phrase “from visitors”. The translation of the sentence is the following: “A voice on the loudspeaker announced that the museum was about to close and needed to be emptied from visitors.”

One of the first things one can learn when they start learning Italian is that the English pronoun “you”, which is used for addressing someone both formally and informally, is not

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<sup>54</sup> [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/overweight\\_1#overweight\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/overweight_1#overweight_1) Accessed: February 2021

<sup>55</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stout> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/plump\\_1#plump\\_1\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/plump_1#plump_1_1) Accessed: February 2021

<sup>57</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/clear> Accessed: February 2021

used in the same way in Italian. Italian has two different pronouns, “tu” e “Lei”. The first one is used in the same way as it is usually used in English, while the second one is used to refer to a person to whom we want to show respect, for example a professor in the school. Another point is that “lei” (which is similar in its form to “Lei”, but not the same) is an equivalent of English “she”, so it is even more confusing sometimes. This is important to bear in mind when translating so to avoid incorrect translations. Thus, the sentence “Lei è una brava e stimata scienziata [...]”<sup>59</sup> is translated as “You are a good and reputable scientist [...]”

The Italian term *mummietta* means *little mummy* in English, but has to be translated with a descriptive adjective because the English language does not have suffixes for diminutives as Italian (*-etta*). However, in the sentence “È lei la nostra mummietta?”<sup>60</sup> it does not have to be emphasized that the mummy is little because this wasn’t the aim of the Italian sentence and Italian speakers will often use diminutives, even when it is not necessary, so the translation would simply be the following: “Is she the mummy we’re talking about?”

Another sentence worth mentioning is “Avevo chiesto al direttore [...]”<sup>61</sup> in which the Italian «al direttore» needs to be translated into English without using the preposition as in Italian (*al*) because in the English language prepositions are not used in these type of sentences and contexts. To explain this I would provide a literal translation: “I had asked to the director [...]” This translation is incorrect, but it was used to show how the Italian language uses prepositions in contexts like this. So, the correct translation is: “I had asked the director [...]”

The last thing that needs to be pointed out is the importance of doing research when it comes to terms such as names of pharaohs, the names of dynasties and similar. For example, what in the Italian language is Amenofi (Amenofis in Croatian), in English is Amenhotep. Thus, the translation of the sentence “Gli anni del grande faraone Amenofi.”<sup>62</sup> had been translated as “The years of the great pharaoh Amenhotep.”

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<sup>59</sup> Benni, S., *Cari mostri*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2015, p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

## 7. The comparison of the translation from the Italian language to the English language with the translation from the Italian language to the Croatian language

### 7.1. Syntax

I supposed that more syntactical changes would be necessary during the process of translation. However, apart from the examples which will be explained in the following paragraphs, there have not been other changes regarding syntactic order. In the following examples some slight changes in word order within the sentences were necessary, but still least than expected. The Italian sentence “[...] Quattro sarcofaghi facevano da sentinelle ai lati.” was translated into English in the same way “[...] four sarcophagi served as sentries on each side.”, but Croatian translation required slightly different word order with different wording than in Italian and English: “[...] dok su četiri sarkofaga stražarila u kutovima.” There is another example in which Croatian translation required different wording with word order remaining the same: “Ci sono poche suppellettili.”, “There are few furnishings.” and “Pronađeno je malo drugih predmeta.” The reason is that the Croatian language does not have expressions such as “Ci sono” which is an Italian equivalent for the English “There are”.

In the following example, English translation has slightly different word order with the object in the medial position of the sentence. Italian and Croatian sentences have the object at the end. “Come una sacerdotessa, spiegava ai bambini affascinati e un po’ impauriti la ricetta per preparare una mummia.”, “Like a priestess, she explained the recipe for preparing a mummy to fascinated and somewhat frightened children.” and “Poput svećenice je objašnjavala fasciniranoj i pomalo uplašenoj djeci recept za pripremu mumije.” Here is another example of different word order in English. In the Italian sentence “[...] mormorò mestamente Antonietta.” and in Croatian sentence “[...] promrmljala je žalosno Antonietta.” the subject of the sentence is at the end, while in English it is at the beginning of the sentence: “Antonietta murmured sadly.” This is yet another example with English word order slightly different from Italian and Croatian. The adverb in the English sentence is not at the beginning. “In realtà non conosciamo nulla di quest’uomo [...]”, “We don’t really know anything about this man [...]” and “U stvari ne znamo ništa o tom čovjeku [...]” The following sentence is the example of translation in which an expression can be translated into English in less words than into Croatian. In this sentence, the adverb “widely” is an equivalent of Croatian expression “širok otvorenih usta”. The example is as follows: “[...] chiese con uno sbadiglio a piene

fauci.”, “[...] he asked yawning widely.” and “[...] upitao je zijevujući širom otvorenih usta.” In fact, the Croatian translation is closer to the source sentence than the English translation.

There are also cases in which both English and Croatian translations are different than the source sentence in Italian. For the source sentence “Le visite al suo reparto questo mese sono state circa duemila.” there are two different word orders: “There have been about two thousand visits to your department this month.” and “Vaš je odjel ovoga mjeseca imao otprilike dvije tisuće posjeta.” Another example with the same explanation is the following: “Apparve una piccola mummia scura, in una teca di vetro.”, “A small dark mummy appeared in a display case.” and “U vitrini se pojavila mala tamna mumija.” However, not taking into consideration the aforementioned examples, all three languages have the same sentence structure, which is SVO (subject – verb – object).

## 7.2. Grammar

The first difference regarding grammar is the usage of the passive voice in the English and Italian language. As opposed to that, passive sentences in the Croatian language should not be used in literary translations. Therefore the sentences of this type have to be translated differently into the Croatian language. The example is the following: “La professoressa parlava dietro a un tavolo su cui erano disposti gli ingredienti, da lei ben conosciuti e studiati, necessary alla mummificazione egizia.”, “The teacher was speaking behind a table on which the ingredients, well known and studied by her, necessary for Egyptian mummification, were arranged.” and “Profesorica je govorila iza stola na kojem su bili postavljeni sastojci potrebni za egipatsku mumifikaciju, a koje je ona dobro poznavala i proučila.”

There is another difference that I came across while analyzing these texts. While Italian often uses many impersonal verbs and Croatian does sometimes too, with English this is not the case. Here are the examples: “Prima bisogna eliminare tutta l’acqua possibile.”, “First you have to get rid of all the possible water.” and “Najprije treba istisnuti svu moguću vodu.” When translating into English it is more appropriate to use this form of a verb than to use impersonal verbs which sound unnatural. Another example with the same explanation is the following: “Si deve perciò aprire il corpo [...]”, “You must therefore open the body...» and «Stoga je potrebno otvoriti tijelo [...]”

However, the following example shows that English can attain a certain degree of impersonality by using a passive voice: “Quindi il corpo viene lavato con cura [...]”, “Then the

body is carefully washed [...]” and “Onda se tijelo pažljivo opere [...]” Another example of passive voice in the source sentence is the following, but in this case it cannot be used in Croatian because it would sound very unnatural, so it had to be translated differently, i.e., with the use of the imperative form. If this sentence was translated into English using the passive voice, it would sound unnatural as well. So, in order to translate this sentence from Italian, different grammatical forms were applied for translation into English and into Croatian: “La professoressa Antonietta è desiderata urgentemente nell’ufficio del direttore.”, “Professor Antonietta needs to come urgently in the director’s office.” and “Profesorica Antonietta neka hitno dođe u ravnateljev ured.”

The following example shows the difference between the possessive forms in these three languages. The Italian language uses the preposition to indicate possession, English uses the possessive “s” while Croatian indicates the possession with case adjustments. “Era l’odiosetta Ranetta, segretaria del professor Gardenia.”, “It was the odious Ranetta, professor Gardenia’s secretary.” and “Bila je to odvratnica Ranetta, tajnica profesora Gardenije.”

### 7.3. Vocabulary

When it comes to the translation of vocabulary, particular attention should be paid to false friends between the two languages. According to Cambridge Dictionary, false friends are words that are often confused with words in another language with a different meaning because the two words look or sound similar.<sup>63</sup> The example of these in my translations is the following: *tavoletta*, *tablet* and *pločica*. When asked for a Croatian translation, one would think of *tablet*, but the word *tablet*, according to Hrvatski jezični portal, has completely different meaning which is not close to “a thin, flat, often square piece of hard material such as wood, stone, or metal”<sup>64</sup>, but refers to “a small, flat computer that is controlled by touching the screen or by using a special pen” or has another meaning as Hrvatski jezični portal defines it<sup>65</sup>. Another example of false friends are the words *ufficio*, *office* and *ured* in the following sentences: “Venga nel mio *ufficio* [...]”, “Come to my office [...]” and “Dođite u moj *ured* [...]” Again, Croatian has a word *oficij*, which has the same root

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<sup>63</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/false-friend> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>64</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tablet> Accessed: February 2021

<sup>65</sup> <https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search> Accessed: February 2021

and could be mistakenly used as an equivalent, but it has a different meaning according to Hrvatski jezični portal<sup>66</sup>.

Let us now take a look at the words which have similar or the same form in all three languages. For example, there are the cases in which the words with the same root are used in all three languages, such as: *lusso*, *luxury* and *luksuz* in sentences “Il settore egizio è un *lusso* [...]”, “The Egyptian sector is a *luxury* [...]” and “Egipatski je sector *luksuz* [...]” Another example are words *geroglifici*, *hieroglyphics* and *hijeroglifi* in the following sentences: “Alle pareti erano appese lastre di *geroglifici* [...]”, “Slabs of *hieroglyphics* hung on the walls [...]” and “Na zidovima su bile ploče s *hijeroglifima* [...]” Let us mention one more example: in *restauro*, under *restoration* and u *restauraciji* in the following sentences: “[...] sarcofaghi in *restauro* [...]”, “[...] sarcophagi under *restoration* [...]” and “[...] sarkofazi u *restauraciji* [...]”

However, there are many examples of words which have similar or the same form in Italian, English and Croatian, but in Croatian there is another word which is more “Croatian”, that is, not borrowed from another language. For example *budget*, *budget* and *proračun* in the following sentences: “Adesso se ne vada, io e Casaletto dobbiamo parlare di *budget*.”, “Now go away, Casaletto and I need to talk about the *budget*.” and “Sada odlazite, ja i Casaletto moramo razgovarati o *proračunu*.” The word *budžet* is also used in Croatian, but it is preferable to use the word *proračun* which is not borrowed from another language, in this case English. Another example is *esperta*, *expert* and *stručnjak(inja)* in the following sentences: “[...] e sua madre Senseneb era *esperta* di erbe.”, “[...] and his mother Senseneb was an *expert* on herbs.” and “[...] a njegova majka, Senseneb, bila je *stručnjakinja* za bilje.” In the Croatian language there is also a word *ekspert*, but it is borrowed from another language and its usage should be avoided because there is a Croatian word for it.

#### 7.4. Style

When it comes to style, there are not many differences in translation. In fact, the biggest difference is that the source text in Italian sounds harsher when negative feelings are expressed. For example: “Non riuscirò neanche a terminare la spiegazione [...]”, “I won’t even be able to finish the explanation [...]” and “Neću uspjeti ni objasniti sve do kraja [...]” The translations into English and Croatian sound softer when read aloud. Also, when positive

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<sup>66</sup> [https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search\\_by\\_id&id=eFpkWRg%3D](https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&id=eFpkWRg%3D) Accessed: February 2021

feelings are expressed, these are stronger in the source text than in English or Croatian translation: “Oh, c’è una cosa nuovissima – disse Antonietta con entusiasmo.”, “Oh, there’s something very new – said Antonietta enthusiastically.” and “Oh, ima jedna novost – rekla je Antonietta s oduševljenjem.” The reasons are probably the general way of expressing feelings in Italian and the usage of the superlative forms, such as “nuovissima”, in order to emphasize the feelings, in this case, enthusiasm. It can be concluded that Italians seem more opened and direct when expressing emotions and feelings. When it comes to the level of formality, there are no differences in the translations. The style used in the source text and translations is semi-formal and there are no particular differences between these three languages.

The following example demonstrates how the irony was translated in the same way in both languages: “Secondo lei – disse con malgarbo Gardenia – dovrei tenere aperto il museo mezz’ora in più per quindici ragazzetti? Sa cosa costa mezz’ora in straordinari, illuminazione, riscaldamento eccetera?”, “In your opinion – Gardenia said rudely – I should keep the museum open for an extra half hour for fifteen boys? Do you know what half an hour costs in overtime, lighting, heating, etc.?” and “Po vama, rekao je drsko Gardenia, trebao bih produjiti radno vrijeme muzeja za pola sata za petnaestoro djece? Zate li koliko stoji pola sata prekovremenog rada, rasvjete, grijanja i tako dalje?” It can be concluded that, when it comes to the translation of irony, there aren't any differences.

Last but not least is the question of politeness. In the source sentence “Non lo so... non ha orari quello.” the demonstrative pronoun was used to indicate the person who was not there at the moment of speaking. The Croatian translation used the same demonstrative pronoun “Ne znam... taj nema radnog vremena.”, but it was translated into English with the personal pronoun, not the demonstrative because the level of politeness is a bit higher: “I don’t know ... he doesn’t have a timetable.”

To sum up the comparison, it can be concluded that all three languages share the same sentence structure, that is, SVO. Considering all the examples previously mentioned, the Croatian syntax is much more similar to the Italian than the English one. Although the Croatian language shows many examples of inversion, English features a greater number of these and many sentences had to be translated with different word order than the usual SVO. On a grammatical level, there are not many similarities between languages, so it cannot be said that either English or Croatian are closer to the Italian language. Each of these languages has its own grammatical rules, for example, the usage of passive voice is preferred in the English language, but it is not very often applied in Croatian. As opposed to that, active and

passive voice are equally used in the Italian language. Another example is the difference between the possessive forms in these three languages. The Italian language uses the preposition to indicate possession, English uses the possessive “s” while Croatian indicates the possession with case adjustments. In terms of vocabulary, Italian and English have more similarities because both languages have many word roots from Latin, while Croatian tends to avoid loanwords. Regarding stylistic characteristics, there are not any obvious differences, apart from the fact that the Italian language expresses emotions and feelings in a slightly stronger way than other two languages by implying, for example, the superlative forms, such as “nuovissima”, in order to emphasize the feelings.



## **Conclusion**

Firstly, I would like to emphasize that the translation process is a complex task. As pointed out in the introductory part, translation is not simply turning words from one language to another, but is much more than that, especially when translating literary texts. In literary translation language has more than a communicative purpose and words have also an aesthetic function. Thus, the problems of literary translation are largely within the sphere of artistic consideration.

The translator is very important in creating bridges between languages and cultures. The translator is not only the mediator of the language message, but also of the cultural message, so the reader who is outside the context of the original text can understand both the text and the context thanks to the art of translating.

From the analyses carried out it emerged that, although there are several solutions or possibilities for translation of one term, this does not mean that all possibilities are equally acceptable because not all the terms can be used with the same meaning in the same context. Therefore, some of the possible solutions have been commented on. Finally, the results of these analyses are two adequate translations in the Croatian and the English language.

After thorough analyses of the translations from Italian into Croatian and English, some conclusions regarding the comparison of the two translations need to be drawn. Considering all the examples mentioned in the previous section of this thesis, it can be concluded that the Croatian syntax is more similar to the Italian than the English one. On a grammatical level there are not many similarities between languages, so it cannot be said that either English or Croatian are closer to the Italian language. In terms of vocabulary, Italian and English have more similarities because both languages have many word roots from Latin, while Croatian tends to avoid loanwords. Regarding stylistic characteristics, there are not any obvious differences, but it can be concluded that the Italian language expresses emotions and feelings in a slightly stronger way than the other two languages.

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