

Han Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana / Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjë*, Padova, CLEUP-[Han Steenwijk], 1994, 73 pp.; Han Steenwijk, *Grammatica pratica resiana. Il Sostantivo*, Padova, CLEUP, 1999, XX, [2], 237 pp.

In the volume entitled *Ortografia resiana / Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjë* the author treats the graphic criteria for the Resian standard as well as for four local dialects, San Giorgio/Bila (SG), Gniva/Njüwa (G), Oseacco/Osoanë (O) and Stolvizza/Solbica (S). The work is divided into five chapters with the following titles: 1. General Principles; 2. The Resian Standard; 3. The Four Local Dialects; 4. The Resian Standard and the Four Local Dialects; 5. Two Simplified Prescriptions for the Resian Standard. The central treatment is then followed by an alphabetical List of Words Cited and the Appendix: The Italian *z* or the Slovene *One*?

The accomplishment of this enormous normative project, which includes also a practical grammar, follows in-depth field research, conducted with the most refined linguistic tools. Before confronting normative matters, a careful phonological analysis of the spoken varieties was undertaken, a fundamental premise of any project of this type.

It is worth noting at the start the inventory of the proposed letters for consonants: *b, c, č, ć, d, f, g, ğ, ğ́, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, š, t, v, w, z, ž*. As can be seen, it is necessary to employ special diacritic marks to render the Resian phonemes. In addition to the letters *č, š, ž*, used also in the closely related languages Slovene and Croatian, there is also *ğ*, that, together with the letter *ć* used in the Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian alphabets, forms a voiced-voiceless pair (from an articulatory point of view equivalent to Friulian *gj, cj*), *ğ* being the voiced partner of *č*. The inventory of vowel letters is as follows: *a, ä, e, ë, i, ï, o, ö, u, ü*. The choice of the diaeresis to indicate the typical Resian dark vowels corresponds to the common phonological characteristic of the Resian vocalic system represented by the fundamental phonemic opposition between centralized and non-centralized vowels. This diacritic is used primarily for the stressed vowels and in part for unstressed vowels. In addition it is worth noting the Oseacco variant, where the letter *ä* may occur also in syllable-final unstressed position. For the localities of San Giorgio and Stolvizza *y* represents a new letter with respect to the inventory of the standard given in the account above.

From a practical point of view, in learning the written language, for example, the use of the letters that mark the centralized or “dark” vowels could present somewhat of a further difficulty, given the complexity inherent in the entire system. The native speaker naturally recognizes the dark vowel and in writing does account for them, the evidence for this being the fact that in most cases in which Resians spontaneously write their language, the dark vowels are not identified as such. In the codified texts in which these vowels are indicated are quite rare, being used only sporadically and without systematic criteria. The two major local writers, Renato Quaglia and Silvana Paletti, both of whom write poetry, in fact do not mark the dark vowel. The consonantal letters of the new spelling proposal coincide nevertheless with nearly everything used by these two authors. The only newly coined symbol, *ğ*, adopted recently also by Silvana Paletti, was designed in a coherent manner with the same diacritic mark that marks the voiceless correspondent *č*.

The resulting alphabet is quite functional and systematic, with a high degree of isomorphism between graphemes and actual pronunciation. It is perhaps worth assessing the graphic impact of the new Resian spelling codification as it appears in a text treated in the book, “Ta prawā pravicā od liscā od Rezija” (p. 14):

Lisicā anu Gardinicā

Tadej, ko na sa ömužilä, ta-döw Osoanëh, lisicā na mälä pa ta maja. Anu na löpu ji dāržalä kont, anu na löpu ji gledalä anu dan din na sa wzelä, na mäla karjē fūčec anu pōwjuw, tej ni so mäle prit ka ni niso vijawale anu so mäle prät, anu bögä lisicā na šlä prat nutëw potök.

The fox and the Gardiniza

Then, when she was married in Oseacco, the fox had a litter of cubs. She protected them and watched over them with care. One day, as she had many diapers to wash—because in the old days they did not throw diapers away, but they had to wash them—she went down to the stream.

Some discussion is given to the rendering of the speech of Oseacco, which, as has already been pointed out, among other peculiarities of this variety, requires the employment of the standard letter *ä* in final unstressed syllables as well. As has already been indicated, the spelling might be viewed as an unnecessary redundancy, but it is perhaps worth observing, with a view to the future, that this usage could represent a tool for phonological preservation. Thus it is not an excessive worry to be preoccupied with graphic isomorphism, for what today seems excessive caution may tomorrow be a tool to safeguard the phonological individuality of the language. The linguistic behavior of the Resian speakers themselves in fact reveals a strong tendency towards a decline in competence, both as concerns active and passive knowledge of the language. Rather, one can express some reservations on the need to represent with a grapheme the reflex of **b* in the combination **br*. For example the word *pärstän* ‘ring’ in the standard appears in the variant dialect pronunciations as SG, S *pyrstän*, G *parstän*, O *pärstän*. The functional load of this sign is revealed in a combination where the reflex of **b* is realized automatically in each dialect. On the other hand it is true that Gniva realizes this phoneme with the full vowel *a*. To fail to account for this reality would be able to be misleading from the point of view of the role of the spelling as a guide to the articulatory behavior of future speakers. In reality, the graphic choices were dealt with logically, compelling one to consider the modern reflexes of **b*, as well as in the combination **br*, and of other vowels that had developed into **ə* (e.g., standard *vilek* ‘big’, SG *vlyk*, O *valek*, S *valyk*, as independent phonemes, represented by a single grapheme.

The complexity of the Resian (socio)linguistic situation presents us with a multi-faceted task, namely, to elaborate a standard system similar to that of all national languages, where the whole community recognizes a single linguistic code, taking into account also of the variation of four dialects as they differ from the standard. The construction of the Resian standard means therefore the elaboration of a supradialectal language—one that does not exist in reality—across a system of cor-

respondences between the dialects. Four variants are referred to, as mentioned in the beginning, as well as the village dialect of Lipovaz/Lipovac, which is located in the center of the valley and displays a characteristic mixture of features. In certain cases the choice of the standard form is unproblematic, e.g., the headword SG *krej*, G *kraj*, O *krej*, S *krej* ‘side, part; area’, the standard form is *krej*. In other cases difficulties arise because the attestations are different in every locality. For example, one is confronted with a word that presupposes the reflex of **b*: SG *dyž*, G *daž*, O *däž*, S *dež* ‘rain’, which in the standard will be *däž*, as the reflex in Lipovaz is *däž*, as well.

In the graphic elaboration of this code it was unfortunately impossible to account for the further linguistic reality encountered the valley. Here one may mention the subsystems of the localities Coritis/Korīto and Ucceja/Učja, belonging to the Oseacco dialect. Ucceja in particular offers us the phonological distinction of yet a further, fifth Resian reflex of **b*, namely, *ā*; the realization of final **q* as *u*; and, sporadically, the voiced fricatives *b*, *d*, together with *γ* as the normal reflex of *g* in western Slovene. The decision to ignore these two sources of data can be justified by the fact that in Coritis there is no longer any permanent settlement, and Ucceja, although more populous in the past, no longer has more than twenty inhabitants.

A special note in an appendix is devoted to the topic “The Italian *z* or the Slovene *One*?” In it the possibility of using an alternative for the signs *z* in place of *c*, or *s* in place of *z*, is discussed. This leaves open the possibility of maintaining, in some cases, the Italian tradition, and thus facilitating to a degree the acquisition of the code and, consequently, the use of the Resian language. It should be kept in mind that the Resians, with a few exceptions, do not know the graphic and linguistic system of the Slovene standard, as the public education system demands the official use of the Italian language and Slovene does not figure as part of the curriculum, even as a foreign language subject. For this reason, Resians in general find themselves reticent and confounded in accepting such a graphic system for an extra-linguistic reason, too, namely, the lack, or at least the difficulty, of identification with the Slovenes across the border and consequently also of the reception of a graphic code considered to be a type of Slovene.

The intention of developing a (practical) Resian grammar nevertheless arose wholly within the local environment and was promoted by the local administration of Resia while Luigi Paletti was in office. Now with the new administration the project should continue. The financial support for the realization of this and other linguistic projects has been come largely from the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, on the basis of a special law on the border areas, as well as from the Province of Udine and the Community of Resia. Law no. 482/1999 pertaining to minority languages in Italy, but above all the law protecting of the Slovenes in Italy no. 38/2001, with respect to previous legislation, recognize the greater right of the Slovene-speaking community in the province of Udine. It is hoped that these laws will have a positive effect on the cultural life of these communities.

The publication of the volume dedicated to Resian spelling carries significant meaning for Resian cultural history. The normative rules support those who intend to concern themselves with written Resian. Nevertheless they do not provide for full mastery of the written code, as one would require illustrations primarily of the

morphological part demonstrated in the paradigms of the various grammatical categories, particularly those of the noun and the verb. Also in this sense the variation evidenced in the four dialects present a picture of particular complexity. Towards the codification of the entire Resian grammatical system, a continuing project after the publication of the volume on orthography, we assisted in 1999 with the publication of the first true grammar, which appears under the title *Grammatica pratica resiana*. The conceptual structure that forms the basis of this project is present in this work, which, of course, accounts both for the standard language as well as that of four local dialects.

In the treatment of the work pertaining to the noun the intent has been to offer an important and quite complex chapter on the linguistic system Resian. After an analytical index presented in 12 pages, including the abbreviations and symbols, the work is divided into seven chapters: I. Introduction; II. Alternations; III. 1st Masculine Declension; IV. 1st Neuter Declension; V. 2nd Declension; VI. 3rd declension; VII. Pluralia tantum; Alphabetical List of Words Cited. In the second chapter is presented a review of the frequent alternations in the different grammatical classes for the Resian standard and the four dialects. Each of the following phenomena are treated: vocalic alternations, vowel raising, final reduction, insertion and other vocalic alternations, consonantal alternations with the behavior of the glide, i.e., the glides *w*, *j*, palatalization and assibilation. As far as vocalic alternations are concerned, two different phenomena divide the Resian speech territory into two: San Giorgio and Gniva are characterized by regressive assimilation, traditionally called vowel harmony, while Oseacco and Stolvizza are characterized by pretonic vowel reduction. The standard accepts the rule for regressive assimilation, but not pretonic vowel reduction. In this sense, therefore, the feature of the western dialects prevails.

Observing the result of these two phenomena we can account nevertheless for the fact that in some cases the shapes correspond. For example, let us examine the alternation *ë ~ i ~ a* as it is treated in the case of regressive assimilation in standard *blëk*, *blikuw*, *blakä*, *blaköwji/blakövi* ‘rag, patch’ and the alternation *ë ~ a* of Oseacco (similar to Stolvizza), with pretonic vowel reduction: *blëk*, *blakuw*, *blakä*, *blaköwje/blaköve*, respectively, for the cases nom. sg., gen. pl., gen. sg., nom. pl., and we can thus account for the coincidence of the gen. sg. and nom. pl.

The Resian nominal category is subdivided into three declensions. The first declension consists of masculine and neuter nouns; the second and third are feminine, except the masculine noun *ocä* ‘father’, belonging to the second declension. The grammatical description demonstrates the shapes with respect to the accentual classes “a”, “b” and “c” that characterize the first two declensions, while only “a” and “c” occur in the third. The shapes exhibited here under like example pertain the Resian standard and indicate the registered cases and singular genitive. The vowel rendered with the diaeresis indicates that the vowel corresponds to centralized, representing always the place of accent in the Resian standard. If two dark vowels appear, the first one always is stressed.

The 1st masculine declension. The shape of both the animate and inanimate declensions is treated here. The sole difference between these two declension resides in the accusative singular. For inanimates this case is the same as the nominative, while for animates it is the same as the genitive. The class to with *kjüč*, *kjüča* ‘key’

and *děd*, *děda* ‘grandfather, old man’ is characterized from the scarcity of accent in the endings. In class “b” with *blěk*, *blakä* ‘rag, patch’ and *könj*, *konjä* ‘horse’ the ending is always stressed, if this is -ø then the accent falls on the syllable immediately preceding, for example *platanäc* ‘basket’, *dwör* ‘courtyard’. In this class there are irregular cases like the basic *otrok*- ‘child’. The fundamental characteristic of the class “c” with *zob*, *zoba* ‘tooth’ and *čärw*, *čärwa* ‘worm’ is the mobility of the accent in the paradigm. Also here irregularity of cases appear with the stems *muž*- ‘husband, man’ and *šin*- ‘son, boy’.

The 1st neuter declension. The feature is the genitive singular in -a/-ä. The three accentual classes are exemplified by: *jabulku*, *jabulka* ‘apple’; irregular cases are illustrated the plural of *öku* ‘eye’ and *wühu* ‘ear’; *rašatö*, *rašatä* ‘seive’, where the position of the accent always occurs on the ending; in class “c” the accent occurs on the ending in the singular, e.g., *oknö*, *oknä*, as well as *writina* [writína] or *wratanöwji* nom. pl. of *wratanö*, *wratanä* ‘spindle’. For this reason class “c” could have been confused with class “b”.

The 2nd feminine declension is characterized by the ending -e [-è] in the genitive. The accentual class “a” is represented by *lipa*, *lipa* ‘linden tree’ with the irregular type *mati*, *matara* ‘mother’; for class “b” is represented by *kozä*, *koze* [kozè] ‘goat’, with the irregular case *ocä* ‘father’, between the masculine other of type; the class “c” is exemplified by *göra*, *gore* [gorè] ‘mountain’ (1st group) and *rič*, *rače* [račè] ‘thing’ (2nd group). An irregular case is *cirkuw* [církuw], *carkve* [carkvè] ‘church’.

The 3rd, feminine-only, declension, with the gen. sg. in -i, is represented by *racjun*, *racjuni* ‘prayer’; a special declension with the formant -ust, i.e., *zdrawjust*, *zdrawjustil/zdrawjusta* ‘health’; and class “c” by *meš*, *miši* ‘mouse’.

Although they do not impair the scientific value of the work, in the *Grammatica pratica resiana. Il sostantivo*, errors and imperfections in the Italian language usage may be noted. These can perhaps be explained by the fact that the work was apparently not reviewed by an Italian native speaker.

After only seven or eight years from the publication of the Resian spelling proposal there are indications that the longed-awaited development of the written language is being effected according to the new rules, for example, in local printing (above all in the weekly one of the Slovenes in the province of Udine, *Novi Matajur*), in the publications issued by the Community of Resia, the cultural Circle “Rozajanski Dum” and, more rarely, in the Parochial Bulletin of Resia. According to the published texts it is understood that the speakers and potential writers prefer to use the proper variant that can be identified with one of the four main dialects. In messages aimed at the entire population the use of the Resian standard is admitted. As was noted above, there is an increase in texts written also in other individual variants, the native speakers are perhaps responding to the proposal as one they are not yet prepared to accept. In any event, this cannot but indicate the vitality of the situation, of the positive dynamics, given that the oral culture, prevalent in its time in Resia, is now giving way to the increasing use of writing.

Naturally, it is still premature to be able to expect to gauge the full impact of this normative project, the only one of its kind in the Slovene linguistic area. Steenwijk’s studies on Resian grammar are undoubtedly an important step forward in the field of Resiology. The analysis to date allows us, at least for those aspects

treated so far, to obtain a much clearer view of the linguistic situation of spoken Resian, both with respect to its variation as well as its commonalities. It represents therefore a valuable tool for further scientific studies in the linguistic field, both interdisciplinary and applied.

The potential application of the normative rules in two texts if used in Resian-language pedagogy requires nevertheless a proviso. The work, which without a shadow of doubt is a fundamental one as such, must still be adapted to the needs and skills of the intended users. Some initiatives in this sense have already been undertaken by the Resian community. At present the vast majority of the potential local users is not in a position to use these tools, despite the systematicity and the precision that characterize them, without the help of a current pedagogical expert. There is therefore a palpable need to test channels of application of the linguistic norm for areas such as language pedagogy in compulsory school, in addition to other contexts of public or private life. Already varied experiences have been observed, particularly the Resian language course organized presently by the Cultural Circle "Rozajanski Dum" and by the Community of Resia with the support of the International Center on Multilingualism at the University of Udine, which has endeavored for some years to disseminate the rules of the Resian standard and the dialects. Such a course is directed primarily at the linguistic education of the teaching personnel of kindergarten and elementary schools (unfortunately those having Resian as their mother tongue are exceedingly rare) as well as to all possible users of written Resian. Pedagogical material supporting the teaching of the Resian was published from 1999 to 2001 in the weekly *Novi Matajur* by the Slavist from Gorizia Matej Šekli, in his capacity as a teacher of the Resian language adhering to the new rules (cf. the rubric "Kotič za dan liwči jazek"). In addition in kindergarten, elementary and middle schools, certain projects are expected (thanks also to the financial support granted by the current laws) that agree, although with limited space, to introduce in the curriculum also education in the local language and culture.

It has been our pleasure to have assisted with the publication of books for children, including [Elena di Lenardo] *Ta prawä pravicä od liscä od Rezija / La vera storia della volpe di Resia* (Resia 1997), published by the Resian Cultural Circle "Rozajanski Dum"; R. Dapit et al., *Po näs. Primo libro di lettura in resiano*, (Resia: Comune di Resia, 1988). Immediately after these were all republished by the Community of Resia, as well as three other booklets: *Ditidò za otroke*, edited by L. Negro, C. Quaglia (Resia 1999), with linguistic exercises, *Le o le kë na jë*, edited by L. Negro (Resia 1999), popular traditional texts, and, finally, *Wärtac. Raccolta di testi e disegni dei ragazzi della Val Resia dal 1975 al 1999 / Pisanja anu dizinjavi od tih rozajanskih utruk od lëta 1975 dardu lëta 1999*, edited by L. Negro, C. Quaglia (Resia 1999). In three of the five books the new orthographic proposal is used in rendering the four dialects, while the spelling standard occupies, for the moment, a more limited space. This certainly reflects the intense connection of the Resians with their actual place of origin and therefore the degree of perceived linguistic identity with the territorial minority beyond that to the level of the entire community. Also, it may be noted, among the more recent initiatives, we assisted in the birth of a Resian dictionary on the Internet, conceived by Han Steenwijk as a reference for the utilization of the orthographic form (for which, in fact, there is a website available: <http://www.maldura.unipd.it/resianica/docs/dictiona.jsp>).

So that Resian studies at present are not at risk of becoming an enterprise without practical application, albeit with high scholarly and cultural value, it is a positive sign that the target audience and users can acquire the tools that they have themselves have commissioned. According to a survey of the linguistic skills of children, conducted in 2000 in the main school, the results indicate that the number that use the Resian language actively and passively represent the exception. The language capability of the youngest generations is therefore alarming and it is difficult at present to expect the future course of events without a well-defined language policy. The factors that determine the linguistic and cultural development of the Slovene area in the province of Udine are naturally multi-faceted and quite complex. Two laws of the Italian State, cited above, provide for the protection of the Slovenes in Italy and among the diverse community this includes also the Slovene-speaking community of Resia. Its future will certainly depend on local as well as global conditions. Moreover, there are factors of clearly historical and economical import, as well as other variables present in this territory, that are no less significant, of both a political and social nature.

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