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MATERNITY: AN EXAMPLE OF A MOROCCAN FEMALE SOCIOLECT (MARRAKESH)

LA MATERNIDAD: UN EJEMPLO DE UN SOCIOLECTO FEMENINO MARROQUÍ (MARRAKECH)

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Abstract

This contribution compiles a transcribed text resulting from the analysis of thirty minutes of female oral corpus in vernacular Arabic from Marrakesh. Besides the transcription, the text is translated into English and accompanied by several explanatory notes, mainly of sociolinguistic and anthropological nature. The main topic is maternity. The main source describes how it currently takes place through linked aspects such as pregnancy (including the belief in the baby asleep in his mother's womb), cravings and the name-giving festival.

Resumen

La contribución aquí presente recoge un texto transcrito, fruto del análisis de treinta minutos de corpus oral femenino en árabe vernáculo de Marrakech. Además de la transcripción, el texto se acompaña de su traducción al inglés y de puntualizaciones, principalmente de corte sociolingüístico y antropológico. El tema principal es la maternidad, sobre el que la informante principal nos describe cómo transcurre en la actualidad a través de aspectos relacionados con ella, como el embarazo (incluida la creencia del niño dormido en el vientre de su madre), los antojos o la fiesta de imposición del nombre.

Keywords: Arabic dialectology, Morocco, Marrakesh, Female speech, Maternity.

Palabras clave: dialectología árabe, Marruecos, Marrakech, discurso femenino, maternidad.

In Moroccan culture, the most significant social rituals celebrate three vital events: circumcision, marriage and maternity. In the case of women, marriage and later the step from 'wife' to 'mother' grants them one of the most highly acknowledged values in society.

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Thus, we propose to look into one of these three events linked to Arab women: maternity. To this end, we have analyzed a fragment of the female oral corpus, recorded in February 2010.

We were in Marrakesh in Žāmīla's house. She was our main source of information and her profile shall be detailed next. The suitability of the choice of this source derives from the fact that we have lived together in the same house for long periods of time and are thus able to put in context the different uses made in the recording, after lengthy hours of direct observation and conversations with her which have served to write this article.

The conversation, lasting about thirty minutes, took place in a relaxed atmosphere, favourable for obtaining faithful material in terms of the dialect spoken by our source, without deviations which could have been propitiated by a less casual situation. Nevertheless, we shall indicate when a use which is not considered common is detected, probably due to the presence of a recorder. It should not be forgotten, in any event, that our source was talking to someone close to her but of the opposite sex, which prompted some interesting linguistic attitudes. These will also be highlighted and commented on.

At the time of the recording Žāmīla is forty years old. She is married and has four children, three daughters (21, 11 and 7 years old) and one son (17). She is functionally illiterate because of very poor schooling. This results, as we shall see, in complete ignorance of classical Arabic¹, or standard Arabic², at least from the point of view of the passive skills. She was born in Marrakesh and has always lived in this city, although her parents come from Tārūdānt (a town about 80 kilometres east of Agadir), from where they emigrated about six decades ago. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that most of her close family lives in Marrakesh, she has emotional links with the Amazighs and has a good command of their dialectal variation, *tāšəlḥīt*³. According to the social status rating used in Sadiqi 2003: 207-208, whose classifications are economy (rich/poor), place of origin (urban/rural), level of studies (with / without studies), occupation (working / housewife) and descendants (mostly sons/daughters/childless), our main source could be classed on the 35th position of a total of 54 levels depending on the social status of women in Morocco: a poor woman in an urban environment, illiterate, housewife and with children (one son amongst them).

ʔĀsma, another of our sources, takes part at times. She is a very close friend of the family, 21 years old, single and from Marrakesh (several generations of her family come from this city). She has an average level of studies.

The house is located within the city, in the popular quarter of Bāb Dūkkāla, to the west. Its population is usually of scant or very scant financial resources, with

¹ She helps (with difficulty) her seven year old daughter to memorize the Koran's verses for school.

² Her contact with written Arabic is very scarce. She understands quite well the news on the radio or television (in standard Arabic), but has serious difficulties in reading, for instance, the subtitles in a film or television programme.

³ Yet, we have observed that she uses *tāšəlḥīt* almost exclusively with her mother and mother-in-law (both of them are Berber speakers), who have serious difficulties in having a fluent conversation in Arabic.

very few exceptions. As is common in most poor quarters (although this is much more frequent outside the city), Amazigh families live along with Arab families, whether they come from Marrakesh or not. It should be borne in mind that ever since its foundation, Marrakesh has been the economic centre of this area and has acted as a centre of attraction for new dwellers. Hence, the variety of its population is as old as its very existence.

We considered it relevant to include some explanatory notes in order to compare the information (of an anthropological type) provided by this text to what doctor Françoise Légey compiled in her work on Moroccan folklore (Légey 1926). This French doctor, who had lived in the early 20th century in Algeria, was the promoter of modern medicine to treat pregnant women in Morocco, where she arrived in 1910. She provided healthcare to women and children in the city of Marrakesh. She lived in Morocco for over twenty-five years and thanks to her direct contact with the indigenous population, especially women, she compiled a considerable amount of information which she used in the work from which we derive some of the information regarding past practices which have disappeared nowadays or have not been compiled in our corpus.

Abbreviations and signs

[] Our interventions during the interview are in English —since they are not the subject of the study— in order to facilitate understanding.

(*husband*) Clarification included to facilitate the understanding of the text, remaining as faithful as possible to a translation close to the original version.

gmāṭa We chose to print in italics words which have no suitable equivalent in English. The appropriate explanation will be given in the corresponding footnote.

xxxx Unintelligible fragment, generally, due to the intervention of two or more sources at the same time

CIAr. Classical Arabic.

Text in vernacular Arabic

Žāmīla (Ž.): *f əl-lūwwəl mni tā-ṭkūn, tā-ṭkūn, tā-ṭkūn ḥāmla l-mṛa k̄a-təmši ſānd əṭ-ṭbīb, k̄a-ygūl⁴ liha rāh... tā-tḍīr... smītu... ət-ṭəḥlilāt. tā-ygūl liha rāk nṭi ḥāmla, k̄a-tzi ḥiyya fəṛḥāna.*

⁴ The most frequent preverb in Marrakesh (in most southern Morocco) is *tā-*, although *k̄a-* can also be perceived, though less frequently. Due to certain influence because of our recorder, our source uses more often *k̄a-*, because according to our observation she almost always uses *tā-*. It is actually difficult to hear *k̄a-* spoken by Marrakshis, except in very specific cases. This preverb is typical of Hillalian dialects. It can be found in Marrakesh, Meknes (partially, since it converges with *k̄a-*; see Heath 2002: 544, map 4.2), the centre of the country (its current presence along with *k̄a-* is remarkable in Casablanca), south and

[And the doctor knows just by...]

Z.: *b əl-fūhūṣāf, ət-təhlilāf, ət-təhlilāf ət-təbbīyya kā-yxūrž liha billa hāmla. mən bāšd, mni tā-tzi tā-ṭgūlha l žūž⁵ dyālha, ṭā-ykūn tərḥān ṭā-ygūlu l l-ṣāʔila⁶ dyaļu rāh āna ḡa nqāddəm likūm əl-mṛa dyaḷi, ḡādi ngūl likūm wāhəd əl-xābār zwīn, ḡa yfərṭūḥkūm. ṭ-ygūl lihūm rāh əl-mṛa dyaḷi rāh hāmla. ṭ-yfərṭu. w ṭā-yiṭmānāw dāk əl-māwlūd⁷, kulla šḥār kā-tzīd əl-kərs, šwiyya b šwiyya, šwiyya b šwiyya. mni tā-ṭqārṛāb əl-hməl dyaḷha f tsəf šhūr, kā-yistfāddu n-nās l... dīk əs-siyyda bāš təmši l ət-ṭbīb, bāš tūləd. mni tā-yəddīrwha l əs-šbīṭār, lōpīṭāl⁸, hūwwa lli kā-yiṭkəlləf biha hiyya bāš tūləd. kā-yiṭzād əl-bēbe, kā-yəqtūf liha əl-būt, kā-yḥiyydū liha əl-x^wlās. mūmkīn tūwləd ṣāḍīyya, mūmkīn tūwləd b əl-ḡ^wrāz, mūmkīn tūwləd b əl-ḥīḥ⁹. dāk əš-ši ʔla ḥāsāb... əl-mṛa kifāš dəyrīn dāk¹⁰ dyāwəlha, wāš dīyyqa, wāš ṣāḍīyya, wāš ṭəfl məzyān, ṣāḍi, ḡādi yītzād məzyān. kāyən əlli kā-ykūn māši ṣāḍi, fhəmti?*

[Yes.]

Z.: *əl-mūhīmm, mni kā-tūwləd əl-mṛa, kā-yfərṭu l-ṣāʔila, tā-yəmsīw ṣāndha l əs-šbīṭār, ṭ-yīddīr liha əl-mākla dyaḷha, kā-yzəmṣu ṣāndha f əs-šbīṭār, məbrūk, məbrūk. təqdār tgəls təlṭ iyyām, təqdār tgəls rḃāf iyyām, ʔla ḥāsāb l-ūlāda dyaḷha...*

[How long was Šūfyā?]

southeast of Morocco (except the most southerly area, where the dialects are of *hassāniyya* type and do not have the preverb, *cf.*: Cohen 1963: 111-116). In the early 20th century, the Zṣīr only knew this preverb (see the corpus in Loubignac 1952), as may have probably happened at the time with Marrakshi Arabic.

⁵ She tries to approach the CIAr. term of *zawḡ* “husband” but finally uses this word as *žūž* “two”. We should bear in mind the tendency of the dialect of Marrakesh, southern urban Moroccan, to use monophthongs in syllables which in other close vernacular variations present diphthongs (the Jewish dialect in the city, *cf.*: Lévy 2009: 356, or a large part of northern Moroccan dialects, *cf.*: Vicente 2000: 35 and Heath 2002: 197-198).

⁶ There are indications that lead us to presume that in Marrakshi Arabic this word is a neologism, because other terms such as *ḥbāb* “dears” have traditionally been used to refer to the members of the same family. In the older generations (especially amongst women) we have noticed the loan of *fāmīla* “family”, rare amongst middle aged natives, men of any age and the youngest people of both sexes, or *ṣāyḷa*, without the glottal phoneme (the latter is less recurrent and used in northern Moroccan Arabic with the meaning of “girl”).

⁷ In Marrakesh this word had only been seen to date with monophthong, that is, *mūlūd*, *māwlūd*, therefore, it has a superstratic influence from CIAr.

⁸ Our source includes this word in French, (*l’hôpital* “the hospital”), basically to try to give more credibility to the story, as she is aware that the person recording her knows this language. Nonetheless, her knowledge of French, first language of social status in Morocco, is practically non-existent except for basic words which can easily reach everybody’s ears in a modern urban context.

⁹ *ḥīḥ*, or its affricate variation *ḥīḥ* has in this dialect the meaning of “operation”, which in the context of birth means “caesarean”. Women with some level of French would use, a sign of belonging to a higher social status, the French word *césarien*: *wūldāt césarien* “she gave birth by caesarean”.

¹⁰ Mistake made by the source, the correct morphological concordance should be *dūk*, in plural.

- Ž.: *təqrībān r̄bāš ʔyyām, yāk?*
 ʔĀ.: *āh, r̄bāš ʔyyām.*
 [Four days, since Sunday?]
 Ž.: *əs-səbt b əl-līl.*
 [Ah, I thought it was since Sunday.]
 ʔĀ.: *gəlsāt mʔa t-tmənya, tta nhār... nhārāš xrəžna?*
nhār ət-tlāš¹¹.
 ʔĀ.: *nhār ət-tlāš mʔa l-wūħda fāš xəržāt.*
 [The day before yesterday.]
 Ž.: *r̄bāš ʔyyām.*
 [Four days.]
 Ž.: *r̄bāš ʔyyām. līʔānna kānt ʔāndha hīyya l-ūlāda šwīyya šf̄tba, dāk əš-ši ʔlāš*
hīyya gəlsāt r̄bāš ʔyyām. hīt...
 [What happened to her?]
 Ž.: *hīt... wqāš līha... bnāḍəm ma hbəḥ-š līha, bqa hna f fūmm əl-gəlb. māšī.. ma*
mqābbəl-š, ma ʔādi-š.
 ʔĀ.: *w ma fīha-š l-ūžəf.*
 [She had no contractions, nothing?]
 Ž.: *āh! ma kāyən-š l-ūžəf.*
 ʔĀ.: *w f dīk l-ūqīta ntāš t l-ūlāda.*
w f hād l-ūqīta ntāš l-ūlāda. hūma sāsduha b dāk əl-f̄t̄h. wūldāt b əl-f̄t̄h. l-
hāmdu llāh dzāt əl-bnīyya bīxīr w ʔla xīr.
 Ž.: *əl-hāmdu llāh dāz dāk əš-ši məzyān. w fəḥna līha, dāba rāh mšāt l əḍ-dār*
d̄yālha. w nhār təlḥ ʔyyām ḥ-yḍīru... ḥ-yḍīru l-gmāḥa.
 [What does it consist of?]
 Ž.: *əl-gmāḥa, hīyya ḥ-yšəddu d-dərri, tā-ybəddblu līh, tā-yləbsu līh ḥwāyəž ždād.*
kūll šī žḥīd. w ḥ-ygəmm̄t̄ūh f wāḥəd əz-zīf. w ḥ-ygəmm̄t̄ūh bḥāl hākka, tta ykūn
mgəmm̄t̄¹².
 ʔĀ.: *bḥāl šī kūmīra.*
 [I saw it.]

¹¹ The affrication of /t/ and /d/ is very frequent in the dialect of Marrakesh when one of these phonemes precedes /i/; also, when it is the last element of the word. However, this affricate production is never consistent, since at times a favourable context does not necessarily involve its affrication. As regards the profile of the source, who tends more to the affrication of /t/ and /d/, whereas it is true that in the generations of children and teenagers it is done with a frequency and intensity which reminds us of northern Moroccan dialects (where it is a very common feature, see Aguadé / Elyacoubi 1995: 28 (who point out the big differences as regards affrication in the south of Morocco compared to the north of the country), Moscoso 2003: 39, Vicente 2000: 40; while in southern Moroccan dialects it is less prevalent), in the middle-aged generations this feature is more common amongst women and less frequent amongst men and especially with a lower degree of affrication. In the oldest generations it is hardly registered, as well as amongst middle-aged men.

¹² In the dialect of Marrakesh there is a tendency for /t/ and /d/ to lose emphasis and to be pronounced as their equivalent affricate phonemes. Amongst the native population of middle age (such as our main source) a stronger tendency to lose emphasis is noticed amongst women than men (see, regarding this, Kahn 1975 for Egyptian vernacular Arabic).

- Ž.: *bḥāl šī kūmīra. bḥāl ḥākkāk, ṭā-ygəmmṭūh, ṭā-ygūlu l-gmāṭa. kā-yṭibu t-trīd.*
 [The *gmāṭa*.]
 Ž.: *əl-gmāṭa, āh. w ṭa-yḡīru t-trīd b əd-džāž w tā-tzməf l-ṣāʔila, küll šī l-ṣāʔila. w ṭā-yḡīru wāḥəd ət-tbəq kbīr, fih əl-lüz, w l-gərgāʔ w t-tməp w ṭā-yḡīru ʔlīh l-ṣākkār, əl-kʰəl, əs-swāk ṭā-ykəḥḥlu l-bēbe w ṭā-yḡīru līh ḥād... əl-ḥəžbān. ṭ-yʔəlmū līh dūk əl-ḥlāyəs fīn ba ynūḡ līh dāk əš-ši.*
 [But if it is a boy, is it the same?]
 Ž.: *bḥāl, bḥāl. bāš ykūn ṭ-yīḡi.*
 ʔĀ.: *əl-wəld ma tā-ytdār līh-š əl-ṣākkār.*
 Ž.: *tā-yḡīru līh bāš küll šī ṭā-yīḡīh. ḥīt ḥūwwa, ṭ-ygūl līk rāh ma dərna-š l wəldna əl-ḥənnā, ma kā-yḥəmməḥa-š, ma dərna-š līh l-ṣākkār, ma kā-yḥəmmu-š f mīʔtu. nsīna, ma dərna-š līh. mātālān. xāššək, ʔla dərṭi līh žmīʔ əl-ḥāžāt, ṭa-ykūn t-yḥəbbḥūm. ʔla kān dərri, kā-yḥəbbḥūm f əl-mṛa dyālu, ʔla kānt əl-bənt, kā-ṭḡi ḥīyya rāsha. fhəmti?*
 [Yes.]
 Ž.: *kā-y... məlli kā-yḡīru l dāk ət-təfl küll šī, dāk əš-ši dyālu, mən bāʔd tā-yḥəṭtu dāk ət-tbəq tta tzi l-ṣāʔila. kā-ykəḥḥlu ʔmīhūm, ka-yʔəkkru...*
 [What happened yesterday?]
 Ž.: *ḥna l-bārḥ, ma zāl ma kāyən-š küll šī, ən-nās. klāw hi¹³ t-trīd. dāba xəll... ʔxxru dāk əš-ši, tta l s-sbūʔ, mūmkīn yḡīrūh.*
 ʔĀ.: *tta tūwlli Ṣūfya šwīyya.*
 Ž.: *mīḡa.*
 [So she can be well with us.]
 Ž.: *āh! əl-mūhīmm, ṭā-yḡīru dāk əš-ši, kā-tnūḡ əl-ṣāʔila, küll šī tā-ṭkəḥḥəl ʔnīha. küll šī ṭā-yḡīru... dāk əl-mākyāž dyāl dāk ət-təfl. w mən bāʔd tā-yfəṛṛqu ḡīk əl-fākya l ən-nās, w ṭ-ynūḡu ṭa-yīʔāššāw. ṭ-yḡīru, ṭ-yāklu dāk ət-trīd w ṭā-yīzḡəṛtu. nḥār bəʔda kān tā-tzi tūwləd, tā-yītzḡəṛt tlāta t¹⁴ əz-zḡīṭāt.*
 ʔĀ.: *mni tā-ytūwləd.*
 Ž.: *mni tā-ytūwləd ḥīt tā-yzi l əḡ-dār, kā-tzḡəṛ tlāta t əz-zḡīṭāt.*
 ʔĀ.: *w ṭ-ywūddən līh šī rāžəl kbīr f wūdnīh.*
 Ž.: *w ṭ-ywūddən līh f... f wūdnīh.*
 [Then, that's why you were asking whether the Faqih had said that to the baby.]
 ʔĀ.: *āh!*
 Ž.: *āh! ṭ-ywūddən līh, ṭ-ygūl līh: “rāh kāyna l-mūt...”*
 [He didn't, he forgot.]
 Ž.: *ḥīt, ma ʔārft-š kifāš ṭra līh, wālākīn mni mšāt ʔāndu l əḡ-dār, dār līha dāk əš-ši. āna, mni žāt ʔāndi, ḥīt ma ʔāndi-š āna rāžəl kbīr, wūddənt līha, wūddənt līha āna f blāšṭ rāžəl kbīr.*
 [An elderly man, is it not a problem?]

¹³ *hi* and *hīr* are variations of *ḡīr* “just, only” very frequent in the dialect of Marrakesh.

¹⁴ *t* is one of the multiple forms of analytic genitive in vernacular Arabic of Marrakesh, the same as *d*, *dyāl*, *nāʔ* and the corresponding forms in female and plural.

Ž.: māši mūškīl, ſādi. əl-mūhimm, xāšša tāſrəf, hīt kā-ſwūddən līha hīt bəhra tdzāt əl-bniyya¹⁵, kā-ſgūl līha: “līlāhu ākbār, līlāhu ākbār, āšhādu la ilāh illā... mūhāmməd rāsūl līlāh, hāya ſla ſ-šālāt, hāya ſla l-ſālāh, qād qāmāti ſ-šāla” əl-mūhimm, bhāl l-ſādān dyaal əs-šāla. mni kā-ſkməl, kā-ſgūl līha: “rāh kāyna l-mūt w kāyna l-hāyāt w kāyən l-ſādāb w kāyən...” küll ſi dāk əš-ši ſ-ykūn f əd-dənya kā-ſ... kā-ſgūlu līha f wūdniha.

[The first time she hears it.]

Ž.: āh! xāšsha tsməf billa kāyna hād əš-ši f əl-hāyāt. kāyən küll ſi. kāyən... māšākīl, kāyən əl-ſārāh, kāyən əl-hūzn, kāyən... bəzzāf t əl-ḥwāyēz kāynīn f əl-hāyāt. wāxxa hīyya təfla bhāl hākkak, māla?yka¹⁶ ſgīra, līlāh ſūbhānāh ila hūwwa hādāk əl-klām əlli kā-ſgūl līha kā-t... kā-ſrəf ſnu gəlſi līha, wāxxa hīyya hākk^wa. lī?anna wūddənſi līha b əl-ſādān dyaal līlāh. w līlāh əlli xəlqha, fhəmſi dāba? ſāfi, mni kā-ſwūddən līha kā-ſ... kā-ſſīlāh l-ḥlīb dyaalha wəlla trəddſa nḥmāha w kā-tſəs. w mən bəſd, mni ſā-ykūn əs-sbūf rāh sbəf ſyyām kā-yzibu n-nās əl-kəbš. ila kānt əl-wəlda l-lūwwla rāh bāba ſ... bāba t əl-bənſ w māma t əl-bənſ hūma lli kā-yəddſi līha l-kəbš. w hūma lli tā-yiſtſāddu, ydſiru ſlilu w ydſiru l-ḥəlwa, ſla ḥāsāb l-ſſīſā¹⁷ dyaalḥūm, ſla ḥāsāb l-ſſīſā. ila kānu la bās ſlīhūm rāh yəqdſu ydſiru līha s-sbūf küllu.

[It's like in any celebration, it depends on the means.]

Ž.: āh! əs-sbūf dāba, s-sbūf əl-lūwwəl dyaal əl-bənt...

ſA.: ſ-ykūn ſla māma t...

Ž.: māma t...

ſA.: ſmḥ t əl-bənt, māma t lā-ſrūsa.

Ž.: māma t lā-ſrūsa.

[If it is the first-born son.]

Ž.: ila kān əl-bikər. mən gīr əl-bikər ydəbhər rāsu, hūwwa lli xāšsu ydſir əs-sbūf rāsu, māši... ſlāh? nta bitī külla sālā? gādi dīma yūwləq, ſā-ygūl līh: “rāh nſibſi ba tđſir līyya əs-sbūf” zwīn ſlīh! bəzzāf! əl-bikər əl-lūwwlāni, kā-təddi, kā-tſri l-ḥwāyēz, əl-bikər əl-lūwwlāni. kā-tſri l-ḥwāyēz, w kā-tſri l bənſək əl-piſāma wəlla ſi pənwar. w ſ-təfl, təſri līh əl-ḥwāyēz dyaawlu kāmīn, yāk? w dāk əs-šāk dyaalu. w tſri l-kəbš, tſāyb əl-ḥəlwa. hādu l ən-nās əlli ſāndḥūm əl-flūs məzyāna. w kā-thəzz b əd-dzāz dyaalu b... küll ſi... əs-sbūf küllu. w tā-ḥsəb ſhāl d ən-nās ſāndək, bhāl

¹⁵ The use of the diminutive, which is not exclusive to women according to our observations, has a different reading as regards its meaning depending on the gender. While men use it in the literal meaning, or (especially in the sociolect of the youth) with humorous or ridiculing connotations, women use it also with affection. Our source very frequently uses it when addressing her two younger daughters (in particular in adjectives, a morphological category where its use is more linked to the female sociolect, see Sadiqi 2003: 154). Her husband uses it much less frequently. An excessive display of affections in men, which is not socially acceptable, is closely linked to these uses (Trabelsi 1991: 89-90).

¹⁶ This word, which is actually in plural (although the source uses it as a singular, as she refers to the newborn), is a loan from CIAr. which belongs to the religious sphere (*malāʾika* “angels”). Its use in the plural is quite probably due to the ignorance of the singular (in Moroccan vernacular Arabic it is only used in the first name *Mālāk*), or due to a mistake and/or influence of the final phoneme *a*, linked to the female gender in the singular.

¹⁷ Loan by superstratic influence from CIAr.

əš-škəl dyāl l-ʕərs. kā-tʰsəb ən-nās kā-tqūm b āsmītu. ma ʕändək-š, kā-təmši, kā-tgūl l dāk əs-siyyəd əlli dżūwwəž əl-bənt ɖyālək, kā-tgūl līh: “āna gādi nḏir līk ɖbiha w slīlu” mātālān bhālna. dərt līhūm əl-bārəḥ. əd-ɖbiha ʕla ḥsābi, w slīlu. w dāk əš-ši ɖyāl slīlu w dāk əš-ši, hūwwa lli f l-ʕtītāʕa ɖyāli, āna gādi nḏiru līkūm. mən gīr dāk əš-ši, ma ʕāndi-š, kəmmmlu nḏuma mən ʕāndkūm. līʔanna āšnu hūwwa l-mūhīmm, hūwwa d-ɖbiha, əs-smīyya, əl-kəbš. hūwwa lli mūhīmm. ši ḥāza “xra ma ʕānd... ši ḥāza “xra, māši bəzzəz mənnek bāš tḏir līhūm. ʕla ʕändək, rāh māši krəḥti, bəntək hāḏik. əl-wəlda, l-bīkəḥ ɖyālha māši mūškīl, wālākīn āna ma ʕāndi-š. əd-ɖbiha lli kā-tsālīni w ḥiyya wāzība bāš nḏirha līha xāšni nšūf kīf nḏir wāxxa... ʕnsān ydəbbār, yʕārf kīfāš yḏir ɖīk əd-ɖbiha qūddām¹⁸ ən-nās w qūddām əl-ʕāʔila w dāk əš-ši. kā-təddi ɖīk əd-ɖbiha, kā-tzməʕ əl-ʕāʔila kāmīla mni tā-tbi tədbəḥ ɖīk əd-ɖbiha. t-yḏiru dūk əl-qwīʕtāt. t-yīkṭbu fīhūm smīyyāt. nta tāʕtīni smīyya, mārsya tāʕtīni smīyya, hāḏīk tāʕtīni smīyya. t-ykūn nāšāʕ. t-ykūn əd-dāḥk. t-yīkṭbu dūk əs-smīyyāt w ʕā-yḏiru līhūm bhāl hākka f wāḥəd əs-šwīniyya w ʕ-yzību ši bnīyya šgīra, t-ygūl līha: “rāh ḥəzzi ši wārqa”, fhəmṭi? kā-thəzz ši wārqa, tā-yḥəllūha, t-yəʕlqāw mātālān līna wəlla lāyla wəlla... ʕā-ygūlūha: “ha s-smīyya lli lqīna”. tā-tgūl līh: “āh, əs-smīyya ɖyāli āna lli xəzāt ɖyāli”, fhəmṭi?

[Yes.]

Ž.: tlāta t əl-mārrāʕt kā-yḏiru bhāl hākka^wāk. ət-tālṭa, ḥiyya lli kā-ʕqbəl, fhəmṭi? ət-tālṭa ḥiyya lli kā-ʕqbəl ɖyāl s-smīyya. šāfi. ʕla hūma ʕrāḏāw ʕlīha rāh ḥiyya hāḏīk. ma t... ma ʕrāḏāw-š ʕlīha, w l “bhāʕ hūwwa lli kā-yīkəlləf. əl-mūhīmm, dāru ɖīk əl... l-ləʕba lli kā-yḏiru f... f əl-ʕāʔila. ɖāḥku n-nās w bəṣtu w kā-yṭību n-nās əd-dzāz, w ʕ-yzību dūk ət-tbāšəl t əl-ḥəlwa. kā-yšāybu dāk əš-ši, kā-tzi l-ʕāʔila, kā-tzməʕ, tā-yāklū n-nās, tā-yšərbu ātāy, t-yfəḥṭu b ɖīk əs-slīlāt əlli šrīt dyāwəl slīlu l əl-ʕāʔila f əl-āxxār.

ʔA.: w f əd-ɖbiha¹⁹, ʕla ba yədbəḥ t-y... t-yḏkūr smīyyət... smīyyət əl-bənt. ʕla bā y... ʕla ba yədbəḥ əl-kəbš tā-yḏkūr smīyyət əl-bənt. bīʔanna ɖīk əl-kəbš ntāʕt ɖīk əl-bənt, ʕla smīyya ntāʕta, fhəmṭi?

Ž.: “līna, bənt rāšīd...” hākka t-y... t-yšəll l-mūs b əs-smīyya ɖyāl l-bənt w “bhāha, ʕād, ʕā-yḏbəḥ. ɖīk... əl-kəbš ɖyāl ɖīk əl-bənt. līʔanna hādāk əl-kəbš ɖārūri hūwwa ʕla qbəl l-ʕīd əl-kbīr. ʕla ma ʕändək-š f l-ʕīd əl-kbīr, sāməḥ līk əllāh.

[Really? The most important.]

Ž.: w hāda ɖyāl ət-ʕīlāḏ ma yəmkəm-š yəməḥ līk əllāh, xāšək təšri s-smīyya ɖyālu, əl-bənt ɖyāl wəlla l-wəld ɖyālək. f küll l-ūlada, māši ʕəzma ḥīr əl-bīkəḥ.

[For each birth.]

Ž.: āh! küll ūlada xāšək, wāzība²⁰ bāš təšriha. wāzība ʕla l-ʕīd, wāzība ʕla l-ʕīd, təšri l hādāk ət-ʕəfl bāš tsəmīni līh əs-smīyya ɖyālṭu b əd-ɖbiha. ɖārūri. līʔanna l-ʕīd əl-kbīr rāh ḥīr sūnna māši xxxx.

Ḥāyāt: əl-kəbš nī.

¹⁸ When not talking in front of a microphone, this word has been more frequently observed with the voiced occlusive velar phoneme, that is, *gūddām* “in front of”.

¹⁹ Traditionally, on the occasion of the birth of a boy, at the moment of the sacrifice at the name-giving festival, a group of children held over their heads a velvet bag full of straw so that the newborn would be generous and rich and to ensure plentiful crops. (Légey 1926: 95).

²⁰ *wāzba* would have been the correct term if our source had not used this loan from ClAr.

Ž.: *āh! b əl-kəbš, ma kāyən-š, əl-kəbš. w ıla ma dbəh-š, kə-tsāli lih.*

XXXX

ǾĀ.: *w ıla kbərṭi, w ıla kbərṭi, w wālīdīk ma kānu-š f stīṭāṯthūm, tā-tšri ıla rāsək w tā-tdbəhīh ıla smīyytək, wāxxa kbərṭi, tā-tdəbḥīh ıla smīyytək.*

Ž.: *tā-ygūlu lik wālīdīk: “rāh ma səmmīna-š, ma dərna-š lik əd-dbīḥa. ma ʔāndna-š”. k-yīṯtārṯu lik bīlla hūma ma dəbḥu-š.*

ǾĀ.: *ma dəbḥu-š.*

Ž.: *bḥāl sālma dāba. ḥna kānu ʔānd... kānt ʔāndna wāḥəd l-ʔāzma²¹ dīk əs-sāʔa w āna wlədt. w kānu dīk əs-sāʔa, ʔlāh yəstər ya ʔābbi s-sālāma, məxxṯūna š-šūffāra, fhəmṯi?*

[In the shop.]

Ž.: *f əl-ḥānūt, w kānt ʔāndna ʔāzma, ma kānt-š ʔāndna tta šī ḥāža. dzāt ʔĀsma, ma dbəḥna-š liḥa. w li ḥədḍi l ʔān, bāqi kə-tsənnā l-kəbš ḍyālha. wūqtəmma tā-ngūlu liḥa: “ḥna kə-tsālīna l-kəbš ḍyāl... nḥār yəshəl ʔlāh ḡādi nšrīw lik əs-smīyya w nḍəbḥu ıla smīyytək, nṯīyya”. fhəmṯi dāba? tā-tsālu lik. šəṯṯi ḡāʔ ʔəkbəṯ w tdžūwwəž mātālān ka-tsāl ḥāḍīk əs-smīyya.*

[Compulsory.]

Ž.: *āh!, dāṯūrīyya. līʔānna kə-ḥāsəb bīḥa ʔānd ʔlāh. fhəmṯi dāba?*

[I have heard talking about something which may be only done in the north of Morocco, the *rāgəd*.]

Ž.: *ər-rāgəd ḥūwwa... ḡūli lih.*

ǾĀ.: *əl-wəld ər-rāgəd.*

Ž.: *kāyən, kāyən...*

[Does it exist also here, in Marrakesh or is it only in the north of Morocco?]

ǾĀ.: *la, kāyən, wālākīn, wālākīn, ʔ-ykūn qlīl.*

[What is it?]

ǾĀ.: *ʔ-y... dāba tā-ṯkūn, nṯi ḥāmla w ʔ-yḡəls lik əl-bəbe ʔām. yəqdəṯ yḡəls lik f kəšək. ʔām yəqdəṯ yḡəls lik. ma... ma tūwldi-š f ūqītu. ʔā-yībqa, ʔā-yībqa ḥākkāk.*

Ž.: *ḥəṯṯa təlt snīn, ḥəṯṯa təlt snīn.*

ǾĀ.: *āh! tā-yībqa lik...*

[Up to three years?]

Ž.: *āh! ʔā-yḡūl lik: “rāh nāḍ līyya r-rāgəd”.*

[Is that what you say?]

Ž.: *āh! nāḍ līyya r-rāgəd. ʔlāš? kə-ydīru ḥād əs-sbūb ḍyāl l-ʔārb, ḥād əš-ši sxūn, w l-ʔšāb w tā-təmsī ʔānd əṯ-ṯīḥə əš... əš... əš-šəʔbi...*

ǾĀ.: *tādāwi b əl-ʔšāb.*

Ž.: *ḥād əš-ši. w kə-tḍīru. w ʔā-yḯīb ʔlāh ət-tīsīr w tā-ynūd.*

[Isn't that what sorcerers do?]

Ž.: *la.*

[Isn't it?]

ǾĀ.: *la.*

Ž.: *la.*

²¹ This word, a loan from ClAr, is currently widely used given the world's situation, where the “crisis” is the topic of many conversations. In sources whose level of exposure or command of French is lower, they generally use *ʔāzma* “crisis” instead of *crise* (from French).

- ?Ā.: *tādāwi b əl-ʕšāb. fhəmṭi?*
 Ž.: *bhāl škal əz-zāʕtār.*
 ?Ā.: *bhāl gəlna fərmāsyān, wālākīn ntāʕ l-ʕšāb.*
 Ž.: *hiṭ hūwwa rāgəḍ, nəʕəs. hūwwa hi, wālākīn səxfān. ma fih-š əz-zyāda, ma fih wālu. hākkāk, rāgəḍ, fhəmṭi? əṛ-ṛūh kāyna, wālākīn ma fih-š... rāgəḍ.*
 ?Ā.: *ma ʕā-yīzdād-š.*
 Ž.: *ma ʕā-yīzdād-š.*
 [But, is there a body, even though it's a small one?]
 Ž.: *āh!*
 [Or there's nothing, just the soul?]
 Ž.: *hīr əṛ-ṛūh, yəqdār ykūn gədd hākka.*
 ?Ā.: *tā-ʕkūn ši žlīda, tā-ʕkūn bhāl hākka ši žlīda.*
 [But it can't be seen.]
 Ž.: *ma bāyn-š.*
 ?Ā.: *la, ma bāyna-š.*
 Ž.: *ma bāyn-š.*
 ?Ā.: *ma tā-yīzdād-š. ʕ-yībqa lik hākkāk f kərsək, ma tā-yīdzād-š.*
 [Up to three years?]
 Ž.: *ygləs təlt snīn w ynūd, ər-rāgəḍ.*
 [Do you know anybody who had this happened to her?]
 Ž.: *āh. kān wqāʕ. wqāʕ l wāhəd lə-mṛa. wqāʕ liha r-rāgəḍ f kərsħa. təlt snīn w hūwwa f kərsħa. dārt hiyya l-māru, l-māru tā-yītbāʕ mʕa l-iqāma. w šərbātu. ʕəbxātu f əl-bərrād w šərbātu. təlṭ iyyām tā-tšərbu küll sbāh ʕla r-ṛīq. bnādəm ma gləs-š dāk... təlṭ iyyām, mūra təlṭ iyyām, sbəʕ iyyām wüllat tā-tħəss b... b... tā-ydrāb, tā-ydrāb. bqāt hākkā, šwīyya, b šwīyya, šwīyya, b šwīyya, tta nād bnādəm. nād. wülla kā-ydārba.*
 ?Ā.: *wülla ʕā-yīkbəṛ.*
 Ž.: *wülla tā-yīkbəṛ. w gāl... ʕā-ygūlū liha rāh hūwwa wəld rāgəḍ. təlt snīn w hūwwa rāgəḍ f kərs ʕmṃu. bīxīr dāba. bīxīr w ʕla xīr. dāba rāžəl w wəld ulādu dāba.*
 [With no problems?]
 Ž.: *ma ʕāndu tta müškīl.*
 [Health problems...]
 Ž.: *küll ši məzyān. əl-hāmdu llāh hiyya kā-ʕgūl dīk əs-sāʕa, dīk əl-mṛa...*
 [And when she has the rāgəḍ, everything in her is normal?]
 Ž.: *ʕāḍiyya, ʕāḍiyya.*
 ?Ā.: *bhāl la (ila) ma hāmla-š.*
 Ž.: *bhāl la ma hāmla-š. yəqdār tziha lēṛēgəl²² w hiyya hāmla. təqdār ma tziha-š, mātālān.*

²² Our masculine presence makes her use the loan *lēṛēgəl*, from the French *les règles* “the period, the menstruation”, with less negative connotations (bearing in mind that it is a taboo topic) than *əd-dəmm* “the blood (lit.), the period”, the term generally used amongst women and never or hardly ever used in the presence of a man (in fact, this topic is generally avoided). The French loan is in this case a resource which gives the discourse more prestige in such a sensitive issue, which could have been faced with the euphemism *hāqq əš-šħār* “menstruation”, although our source opted to use the loan in the prestige language, quite

[Can that be so?]

Ž.: *mūmkīn tẓīha w hūwwa fiha r-rāgəḍ.*

[Then, at that time, if she doesn't have her period, she may know that she has the *rāgəḍ*]

Ž.: *w ma bgāt-š hiyya tḥiyydu. hit kāyən əlli kā-yḥiyydu b kūrṭāž*²³.

[How?]

Ž.: *əl-kūrṭāž, tā-təmsi l ət-tbīb, tā-ykərrtu [F.II] liha.*

ǾĀ.: *tā-yḍīr lik ſāmālīyya.*

[And it isn't legal.]

Ž.: *ah! xāyb.*

ǾĀ.: *w ḥārām.*

Ž.: *w ḥārām.*

[Even in your village some people carry out abortions?]

Ž.: *la, ḥna māši ḥna f əl-blād. əl-blād, la.*

[There aren't any.]

Ž.: *ma kāyən-š.*

[Only in the city.]

Ž.: *hīr f əl-mḍīna. wāš āxūr?*

[Is there any disease typical of women?]

ǾĀ.: *mārād? fāqār əd-dəmm, fāqār əd-dəmm. āktār mārād tā-tṣāb bih əl-mṛa l-ḥāmla fāqār əd-dəmm.*

[What is it?]

ǾĀ.: *fāqār əd-dəmm. ki tṣā-ygūlu lih...? ma ſārft-š.*

Ž.: *ma fiha-š əd-dəmm, nāqṣa mən dəmm.*

Hāyāt: *wālākīn dāk əš-ši tā-tṣāb küll ši, māši hīr əl-mṛa...*

ǾĀ.: *la, əl-mṛa l-ḥāmla... l-āktārīyya. āktārīyya l-mṛa l-ḥāmla tā-tṣāb bih. ḥāda hūwwa l-mārād əlli yaqdār t-ykūn xāṭər ſla qbəlha. ḥāda hūwwa l-mārād əlli yaqdār ykūn xāṭər ſla qbəlha. t-ykūn sāḥəl bāš tā-tṣāb bih.*

[What happens to her?]

Ž.: *tā-yxəṣṣha l-kālsyūm, tā-yxəṣṣha əl-ḥḍīḍ, tā-yxəṣṣha bəzzāf d l-ḥwāyəž. mni kā-təmsi l ət-tbīb, kā-yxərrəž liha d-dwa ḍyāl nāqəṣ əd-dəmm, nāqəṣ əl-kālsyūm, dāk əš-ši, əl-fānīd ntā? əl-ḥḍīḍ. t-ygūl liha: "rāh ḥād əl-fānīd xāṣṣək tā-kūli ḥətta tūwḍi, bāš ət-tīlāḍ ma yzi-š nāqəṣ... fāqār... ma ſāndu fāqār əd-dəmm". w mūmkīm ma y... ma y... ma yṣḍəq-š liha gāf. mātālān. li?anna d-dəmm əlli ba²⁴ yəkfīha hiyya, w yəkfī ət-təfl bāš yṭrəḥḥa f əl-kərs, ma ſāndha-š. təqdār təsxəf. təqdār... hiyya tā-tḥəmməl w ſāndha fāqār əd-dəmm w ma šāyfa-š ət-tbīb, xāṣṣha... təqdār tīh, təqdār tẓīha ši səxfāt.*

ǾĀ.: *tā-twūlli ṣīra.*

[Poor thing, she feels dizzy.]

possibly because even the euphemisms in Arabic also have negative connotations (Sadiqi 2003: 82). As stated in Trabelsi 1991: 890-91, "Obscene words do not shock us or shock us less when uttered in a foreign language, even if we understand it perfectly well. Our moral sensitivity is less delicate for other languages" (our translation).

²³ From the French *curetage* "scrape, curettage".

²⁴ In Marrakshi Arabic the loss of the phoneme /g/ in this verb is frequent. In this context, the verb has a clear sense of future.

Ž.: *āh! bhāl dāk əš-ši. kāyən əlli tā-yži, lli tā-ykhüb. kāyən əlli tā-tkūn fih dik əl-kühba, əl-kühba, əs-şdəṛ. kāyən əlli tā-yhməl biha. tā-yəbda yəkhüb, yəkhüb tta ʔā-tūwləḍ. kāyən əlli tā-yhəzz biha. w l-māṛḍ l-ʔādi ɖyāl l-mṛa l-hāmla kə-trədd. kāyən əlli kə-yži r-rəddān bəzzāf w kə-tšha. w l-mākla, ma tā-tākül-š. əyy mākla žəbṫiha liha f əl-māhäll ɖyālha ma tā-ṫbi, tā-ṫbi l-mākla d əz-zənqa, mātālān. wəlla tziḫ liha ši hāža m əz-zənqa.*

[She has cravings.]

Ž.: *āh, tā-twūhḥəm. bhāl dāba ila... wəlla ši həd f žirānha tṫləbhūm, ʔṫiwha ši hāža tākülha, ma tākül-š ɖyāltha. w kāyna lli kə-tziḫa l-ūlada ʔəḍṫiyya. tā-tākül əyy hāža, ma kə-trədd, ma tā-yžiha tta hāža. w kāyna l-mṛa lli ma tākül-š əl-mākla ɖyāl ɖārha, əl-ma, əl-ma ɖyāl əḍ-dār ɖyālha ma kə-ṫhəmmulu-š. kāyna əlli ma tā-ṫhəmməl-š rāžəlha. kə-ykūn mṫa hiyya w yāh müškil. tā-tgūl lih: “nta xānəz, ma zwīn-š”. b əs-şāḥḥ nīt, tā-nāhdār mṫāk. ma kə-ṫhəmmulu-š. kāyən əṛ-ṛāžəl əlli kə-yiṫṫhəm hāḍik əl-hāḍra, kə-yqbəlha. kə-yṫārṫu biḫa hāḍik əl-mṛa māši b xāṫra. kə-yiṫṫhəmmula, ʔā-yṫi... ʔā-yiṫṫārmha... ʔā-yiṫṫārmha, ʔā-yiṫṫārmə əl-qārārət ɖyāwlha. həṫta tā-tfūt hāḍik əl-mārḥāla²⁵. w kāyən əṛ-ṛāžəl w ma ʔā-yiṫṫhəmməl-š hādūk, dūk əl-hārākāt ɖyāwəl ɖik əl-mṛa ʔā-yiṫṫhəbu hüwwa wāš ʔā-tḍir hākkāk. ʔ-yūwqṫu f māšākil. rūbbāma ywūşlu gāʔ l ʔ-ṫlāq. wūşlu gāʔ l-ṫṫāq. hiṫ hüwwa ma ʔā-yiṫṫhəm-š hāḍik... ɖik əl-lāḥda ɖyāl ɖik əl-mṛa lli dāyra bhāl hākkāk. kə-yiṫṫhəbu wāš dāyra hākkāk b əl-ʔāni. yəqḍār yəlqa l-ʔāʔila ɖyālu məṫfəhma w: ʔāfāk ʔ-ygūl lih: “la, rāh əl-mṛa ɖyālək rāh hāmla, xāşşək təşbər liha. wāš hiyya kənt mṫāk hākkāk f əl-lūwwəl?” mātālān. ʔ-yḥāwlu bāš yṛəḍḍūh, bāš yṫāwd yəmsi mṫa l-mṛa ɖyālu hiṫ tā-tbṛa w yfūt hāḍik əl-wāqt ɖyāl təlt šhūr. müdda təlt šhūr. w kāyna, lḫāh yəstər, əlli tā-tšədd hādāk l-wḥəm həṫta ʔkəmməl tsāʔ šhūr. hādāk hüwwa lli şṫib mni tā-təbqa šādda təlt... tta ʔkəmməl tsāʔ šhūr. fhəmti? ümma ila kən hūr müdda tlāta t š-šhūr, māši müškil. tta t... mni tā-ṫwūlli l-hāla ɖyālha ʔ-tābṫiyya, tā-ṫwūlli tā-tākül, tā-ṫwūlli tā-tbān liha məzyān, ʔād tā-tbān liha... bhāli āna. āna ma kənt-š tā-nḥəmməl rāžli, w ʔā-ngūl lih: “ṫik riḫṫ əl-xmīra, fih riḫṫ əd-ɖgig w f... xānəz”. ʔ-ygūl liyya “wāxxa xānəz, ši bās ma kāyən, ma kāyən, əd-dənya hānya”. ʔ-y... ʔ-ygūl liyya: “şāfi, ma bgīti-š nnṫəs mṫāk...” ma ʔā-yiṫṫəs-š mṫāya, təlt šhūr ma ʔ-yiṫṫəs-š mṫāya. “ləḥmi, ləḥmi, ma kə-ṫhəmmulu-š”. məlli kə-yiṫṫni dāk əl-hāl, kə-nəbqa yḍāḥkni, ʔ-ygūl liyya: “ma bqiṫ-š xānəz? zwīn da... dāba”. kāyən əṛ-ṛāžəl lli kə-yiṫṫhəm əl-mṛa, w kāyən əṛ-ṛāžəl lli ma kə-yiṫṫhəm-š əl-mṛa, ma kə-yiṫṫhəmməl-š hüwwa hāḍik...*

[Everywhere.]

Ž.: *āh, f küll blāyəs. əṛ-ṫžāl w hūma ʔābāqāṫ.*

ʔĀ.: *w lə-mṛa f wqīyyət əl-ḥməl tta hiyya, ila kənt tā-tšha ši hāža w ma... ma lḡātha-š wəlla ma dārtha-š w hükkātha f ši qənt, tā-tşüwwār. tā-tşüwwār ət-tūḫima. f... f āsmītu, f žəldtha.*

[Like this one, I have one (showing a craving).]

ʔĀ.: *tūḫīma.*

Ž.: *tta rāšīd ʔāndu zīṫūna hna, kbīra.*

[An olive?]

²⁵ Loan from CIAr., although it is true that it is registered quite often.

Ž.: zīṭuna kbīra. āna mšīt fānd wāḥəd əž-žāra dyāli, w ḥəttāt līyya l-xūbz w z-zitūn w l-qāhwa. w āna tā-nākūl, bqāt līyya dəgma, dəgma f yiddīyya... dyāl l-xūbz əlli kā-nākūl w z-zitūn qādītu, fih dīk əl-məlḥa, dīk əl-məlḥa l-ḡliḡa. əz-zitūn əl-kḥəl fəžbni b dīk əl-məlḥa. w bqāt līyya dīk əd-dəgma w āna ngūl: “fāfāk llaḥ kūn ḥəzzātni hīr wūḥda, nkəmməl b ḥāḡīk əd-dəgma”. w mšāt līyya yiddīyya l hnāya, w ḥūkk^wī. šāfi. mni wlədt rāšīd, xəržāt lih zīṭuna hna.

Ḥ.: tta āna fīyya ši ḥāža hnāya.

Ž.: la ila zīṭuna! w ḡalṥa l dīk əl-mṛa Mm^wi xəddūš. ḡəlt līha: “a Mm^wi xəddūš, ḥa ṭra līyya, ḥa ṭra līyya”. mni ḥəzzāt rāšīd žāt ṭbārək līyya w dāk əš-ši, ḡəlt līha: “šūfi z-zitūna”. ḡəlt līyya: “w kifāš?” ḡəlt līha: “ḥa nhār fāš žīṭ fāndək w ḥəttāti līyya”. ḡəlt līyya: “xxxx flik? āna xti hrəbṭ līk l əllāḥ”. ḡəlt līyya: “fāzma, māši mūškil dyāli āna. dīk əs-sāfa ḡūli līyya bāqī bḡīt əz-zitūn, āna nəfīṭīk əz-zitūn”. ḥīṭ ḥūwwa šfīb bāš ḥāḡīk əl-ṛmsāna²⁶... bḥāl nta tā-tākūl əl-ḥəl... ši ḥəlwa, mātālān. w āna ḥāmla, w fəžbātni dīk əl-ḥəlwa lli fā-tākūlḥa, xāšš... w ḡəlt līk: “fīṭḥa līyya”. ma yəm... xāššək ma ṭḡūl-š līyya la. ila fṛəfīni tā-nūwləd. ḡa təsməḥ fīha ntāya w ḡa tāfīṭḥa līyya āna. lī?ānna, māši āna lli ḡəlt līk. bīdūn²⁷ xātṛ dyāli, ḡəlt bīt ḥāḡīk əl-ḥəlwa. fəžbātni ḥīt kā-ṭākūlḥa, fhəmṭi? ḥākkak ṭra l Sūfya wāḥəd ən-nhār. dəzna ḥda mūl l-līmūn. w tāḥət lih wāḥəd əl-līmūna. w ṭ-yḡūl nna: “āžīw tšəṛbu l-līmūn”. ḡəlt līh: “la, šūkṛān, āna ma kā-nšṛəb-š əl-līmūn”, ṭāḥət līmūna. w ḥūwwa... w ḥīyya thəzz dīk əl-līmūna, ḥūwwa yḡūl līha: “a la, ^wxti, lla yəṛḥəm līk əl-wālīḡīn”. ḥīyya šəddāṥa f yiddīḥa. w āna ngūl līh: “a xūya: kūn... kūn šəṭṭīḥ əš-šākəl bāš ḥəzzāṥa ḥīyya, ma ṭḡūl līha fīṭḥa līyya”. təḥdrāṭ b wāḥəd əs-šūfuba bāš... ḥi f ḥād mū?xārān. w yḡīr fīḥa ḥākkā w k-yfīyyəṭ f līḥa: “wa l-mṛa, a l-mṛa”. w fṛəfna fāndu. “nāri, nāri!²⁸ yāk a xūwya, la bās? fəddīna dīk əl-līmūna”. ḥūwwa yḥəzz mīka. fāmməṛ əl-mīka b əl-līmūn w yḡūl līha: “ḥāki. ma šəttək-š, šəmḥi līyya”. ḥūwwa ḥāda idən²⁹ tā-yfārf b ḥāḡḡ əl-mṛa l-ḥāmla. fhəmṭi dāba? fṭāḥa l-līmūna, ḡəlt līha: “šəmḥi līyya, rāḥ ma šəttək-š ānāya mni fṭīṭīni l-līmūna”. mni fṭāṭu ḥūwwa ḥāḡīk əl-līmūna w āna ngūl līh: “kūn.. kūn šəṭṭī nta dīk əṭ-ṭārīqa bāš ḥəzzāt ḥāḡīk əl-līmūna”, ḥīt bānt līha dīk əl-līmūna ḡāḡya, mšāt līha bīdūn³⁰ ma tšfāṛ, fhəmṭi? ḥəzzāṥa kbīra w zwīna. w ḥūwwa yḡūl līha...

Ḥ.: wāxxa ḡāf xxxx bḥāl ḥāḡīk əlli ḥəzzāt.

Ž.: əlli ḥəzzāt.

Ḥ.: xxxx bḥāl ḥāḡīk əlli ḥəzzāṭ ḥīyya.

Ž.: w fṭāṥa līh. “mni ḡəlt līk ḥād lā-ḥḡra māš... ” ḡāl līyya: “wa ḥāḡḡ llaḥ āna la, ma šəttḥa (šəttḥa)”. ḡəlt līh: “āna ma ḡəlt līk a xūwya wālu”. w fṭā-yfīyyəṭ. w fṭāḥa l-xānša dyāl l-līmūn. ḡəlt līh: “la, la, ma bḡīt-š, w llaḥ ma bīt-š”. ḡāl līha: “šūfi w llaḥ ḥād əl-mīka ma tdxūl f līyya ānāya”. ma bḡāḥa-š. ḡāl līha: “šəddīḥa nṭi”. šāfi, w fṭāḥa dīk əl-mīka w žābṥa l əḡ-ḡār. w ḡəlt līha: “kūli l-līmūn”. ḡəlt līk: “la”. ža

²⁶ Loan from ClAr.

²⁷ Loan from ClAr.

²⁸ A more abundant use of interjections has been noticed amongst women, in particular, *wīli wīli!*, used to express an exclamation of profound surprise and indignation (*wīl* “ill, misfortune”).

²⁹ ClAr.

³⁰ ClAr.

ražəlha, hüwwa lli ʕəşru w ʕtäha liha. ma... ma bqa-š liha dik əš-šhyya bāš... kifāš həzzāt dik əl-lim.. dik əl-limūna. wa sbħa llaħ, wāš šəfta w təħət liha dik əl-limūna wəlla ma ʕərt (ʕəft)... ma qəssu həd, bʕəd ʕliħ hna. w tdir dik əl-limūna (onomatopoeia of the rolling orange), təħət f Žämāʕ l-fna. w mšāt liha. w hüwwa ygül liha: “šükrān a “xti” ʕəzma, bhāl la (ila) dāba həzzāt dāba w ʕəʕtiha liħ. rāh həzzāta b wāhəd... āsmu... fhəmʕi dāba kifāš? bīdün³¹ ma tšʕə. həzzāt dik əl-limūna f l-ārđ. w āna ngül liħ... ʕəzma rāh hyya həzzātha... ʕəzma... kün šətti nta bāš həzzāt dik əl-limūna, ma gādi-š ngül liħ: “ʕtiha liyya”. mni bʕədna ʕliħ w bānt liħ əl-kərs, wulla ʕə-yʕyyəʕ ʕliħa. gāl liħa: “hāk a “xti l-limūn”. gält liħ: “la lla, ma bāqi bğitu, ma bğitu-š. ma bğit-š”, ʕəzma, gält liħ: “əd-dənya hāniyya”. gāl liħa: “wa llaħ... wa llaħ ma nbīʕu, wa la ma nšəddu”. gāl liħa: “xüdi l-limūn”. gält liħa: “šəddi!” w šəddātu. hād əš-ši lli kāyən³². iwa, wāš āxür? wāhəd əl-wəld xəzāt liħ dəllāha, hna. dəllāha hāmra.

[Why?]

Ž.: hiʕ hüwwa... dāba l-mra ɖyālu hāmra w hyya tgül l ražəlha: žib liyya d-dəllāh. mni ža f lə-ʕšyya, ma žābha-š liħa, w hūkk^w ātha f wüžha. hākkāk, əd-dəllāha, mən hna, ən-nəşş dyālu wüžhu küllu dəllāha. w l-gəd liħ, žāb liħa d-dəllāha, ma bāqi-š bğātha. gāl liħa: nsītha, w tā-yiħzrāha.

[It has to be at the right time.]

Ž.: āh! fātu l-ūqita. w hūkk^w ātha b āsmītu... āna, Şüfya ʕändha qimrūn hna. qimrūn, dāk əl-hüt əl-hmār. tā-nşri l-hüt w šəft əl-qimrūn w gəlt: llaħ kün hi ʕtāni wāhəd əl-qimrūna w nqāha liyya... tā-nāhdār hīr b wāhđi. w l-müşkil, mül l-hüt tā-nşərfu, ila gəltha liħ, gādi yiʕtiha liyya, fhəmʕi?

ʕĀ.: bənt xəlʕi fiha firiza f dhārha, tā-tüwşəl l-ūqāt t əl-firiz, tā-twülli hāmra w hādāk ntāʕha xđār, dāk ntāʕ... dīma, dīma mən şif l şif. tā-təlqa liħa đāhrha dīma hmār. w fiha t-tqibāt, wa hāqq llaħ tā-t... hākkāk, firiza.

Ž.: bhāl Şüfyya. hākkāk dük... dük əž-žniwħāt ntāwʕ əl-qimrūn w hāmra w dəyra bhāl hākkā. əs-sāg ɖyālha hāmra, gāʕ l-hüt fāš tā-ykūn, tā-tşüf fiha ʕālfa. hāđi qimrūna. nəşri hi l-hüt, nəşri hi s-sərdil, ʕla gədd žibi. w bān liyya dāk qimrūn hākkāk hmār w tā-ywəlwəl. bit āna hi nənqīha liyya w ʕtiha liyya hākkāk b dik əl-məlha ɖyāltu.

ʕĀ.: w tākülīha hākkā?

Ž.: nākülīha hi hākkā bītha. w ngül: llaħ, kün hi ʕtāni wāhəd əl-qimrūna w hīr klītha. hīr mʕa rāsi. kün gəltha liħ, hi Brāhīm, nīt. kənt āna sākna f Dərb əž-žāməʕ. w ma gəltha-š liħ bāš tşüfi š-şitān nʕālahu llaħ. māši hīr qimrūna lli ba yʕtīni hāda, ʕəzma... w ma... w ma gəltha-š liħ w hūkk^w iħa f rižliyya w žātha f ər-rəzəl mən hna. gält liyya: llaħ, llaħ ya māmā, kün hūkkitīha liyya f ši hənək, w xürzāt liyya qimrūna f hənki. žātha hi f rižliħa. rāşid, würrīna z-zitūna lli f yiddik, würrīha lihüm.

³¹ CIAr.

³² This is another formula to try to give credibility to the narration.

Translation

Žāmīla (Ž.): At first, when she is... is... is pregnant, the woman goes to the doctor. (*The doctor*) tells... (*her*) to have... this... tests. (*The doctor*) tells her: you are pregnant. She goes home happy.

[And the doctor knows just by...]

Ž.: With the medical tests, the tests... tell that she is pregnant. Then, when she goes back home she tells her husband. (*He*) is happy, they tell his family: “this is my wife, I’m going to give you some good news, you’ll be happy”. He tells them: “my wife is pregnant”. They are happy and wait for the newborn ... each month (*her*) belly grows, little by little, little by little. When her pregnancy is near nine months, people help that woman for her to go to the doctor, to give birth. When they take her to hospital, the hospital, he (*the husband*) is in charge to make sure that she can give birth. The baby is born, the cord³³ is cut, they remove (*her*) placenta. She may have a natural birth or may need some cut, she may give birth by caesarean. That depends on... how the woman has her³⁴, if it is narrow, normal. If the baby is fine, normal, it will be born fine. Some people are not normal, do you understand?

[Yes.]

Ž.: So, when the woman gives birth, the family is pleased, they go to hospital to see her, and so on, they bring her food, they get together in the hospital: congratulations! Congratulations! She may be there for three days, maybe four days, it depends on the delivery, if she had a difficult delivery...

[How long was Šūfyā?]

Ž.: About four days, wasn’t it?

Yes, four days.

[Four days, since Sunday?]

Ž.: Saturday evening.

[Ah, I thought it was since Sunday.]

ʔĀsma (ʔĀ.): She went in at eight, until the... what day did we leave?

On Tuesday.

ʔĀ.: On Tuesday at one, she left.

[The day before yesterday.]

Ž.: Four days.

[Four days.]

Ž.: Four days. Because she had a hard delivery, that is why she was there for four days... because...

[What happened to her?]

Ž.: Because... what happened was... the baby was not coming out, it was stuck. It ... no, it was not in a good position, (*the position*) was not normal.

³³ In the original text our source literally says *əl-būṭ* “the navel”.

³⁴ The source has opted, because she knows that she is being recorded, and, above all, because of the masculine presence, to omit the female sex which, given the context and the turn in the speech *kifāš dāyrīn dāk dyāwəlha* “how she has her” (including the mistake in the number). The use of this kind of euphemism (using indirect language) is more prevalent in the female sociolect (Mouhssine 1997: 28, Trabelsi 1991: 89-90, Sadiqi 1995: 72).

- ḤĀ.: And she had no contractions.
 [She had no contractions, nothing?]
 Ḥ.: No, she had no contractions.
 ḤĀ.: And at that point in the delivery...
 Ḥ.: And at that point in the delivery they helped her with that operation. She gave birth by caesarean. Thank God the little girl was born perfectly well. Thank God that went well. And we are happy for her, she already went back home. And on the third day...the *gmāṭa*³⁵ is made.
 [What does it consist of?]
 Ḥ.: The *gmāṭa* means that they take the baby, change its clothes, put new clothes on it. Everything new. And wrap it in a cloth³⁶. They wrap it like this, until it is well wrapped up.
 ḤĀ.: Like a loaf of bread.
 [I saw it.]
 Ḥ.: Like a loaf of bread. Like this, they wrap it, it is called the *gmāṭa*. *Trīd*³⁷ is cooked.
 [The *gmāṭa*.]
 Ḥ.: The *gmāṭa*, yes. *Trīd* is made with chicken, and the whole family gets together. A big dish with almonds, walnuts and dates is laid out and on the dish the carmine, the *kohol*, the *swāk*³⁸, they put the *kohol* on the baby, and they do this...the eyebrows. They mark on the baby the places where that will grow.
 [But if it is a boy, is it the same?]
 Ḥ.: The same, so that he is loved³⁹.

³⁵ Word which Légey (Légey 1926: 97) transcribes as *guemmata* (it must be taken into account that the noun is *gmāṭa*, since only the adjective and the verb have the duplicated phoneme /m/: *mgəmməṭ* and *gəmməṭ*, respectively). This technique where the baby is wrapped up is taken as the opportunity to stick little amulets to the body of the newborn intended to have a positive influence on its future life. In fact, Légey (Légey 1926: 97) describes how the midwife stuck to the area of the back of the baby, on the strip of cloth used to make the *gmāṭa* a plaster of yeast so that the baby lives on and grows (obvious parallel); part of that yeast was later taken to knead the bread and eat it. In the urban environment, with the loss of the role of the midwife (*qābla*) since most of the deliveries take place in the maternity units of hospitals, many of the rites linked to birth have been lost or are about to disappear. A proof of this is that in Légey (Légey 1926: 96 and ff.) all the ritual connected with the newborn is described, and the midwife plays a key role. It was actually she who made the *gmāṭa* for the baby for the first time.

³⁶ It was traditionally made of blades of wool taken from the skin of the fleece of the lamb, of the *l-ṣīd al-kbīr* (Légey 1926: 85). Due to the shape the newborn has when the *gmāṭa* is made, this technique is also called *sbūla* “sprig”.

³⁷ The dish our source refers to consists of a kind of *crêpes* (the pastry is the same as that used for the *rġifā*) which are crumbled and seasoned in different ways. We know the kind made with chicken, lentils and the sauce resulting from cooking the chicken and the lentils. There is also (Colin 1993: 2/42 and Abu-Shams 2002a: 74) a sweet variety (with or without meat), which can be accompanied with sugar, cinnamon, honey or nuts (almonds or walnuts).

³⁸ Bark of the root of the walnut tree, traditionally used for dental hygiene.

³⁹ The fact that the same ritual is made on the baby regardless of its sex indicates its belonging to a world where it is not culturally sexed yet, or it is not in terms of the later

ḤĀ.: They do not put carmine on the boy.

Ḥ.: It is done so everybody will love him⁴⁰. Because he... we didn't do the henna to our son, he doesn't like it...we didn't put carmine on him, he doesn't like it on his wife. We forgot, we didn't do it. For instance. You have to...if you do everything to the baby, it will be loved. If it is a boy he likes those things on his wife, if it is a girl, she likes them on herself, do you understand?

[Yes.]

Ḥ.: When everything is done to the child, everything that needs doing, then the dish is placed until the family comes. They put *kohol* on the eyes, they put carmine...

[What happened yesterday?]

Ḥ.: Yesterday we didn't, not all of us were there yet, the people. They just ate *trīd*. That has been left until the *sbūl*, it may be done (*then*).

ḤĀ.: When Ṣūfyā is better.

She's ill.

[So she can be well with us.]

Ḥ.: Yes, summing up, that is done, the family goes, everybody puts *kohol* on their eyes. Everybody puts on make-up like that baby. And the fruit is passed around and they have dinner. They do... they eat that *trīd* and they ululate. The day she's back after giving birth, people ululate three times⁴¹.

ḤĀ.: When the baby's born.

Ḥ.: When it's born, because it arrives home, people ululate three times.

ḤĀ.: And an elderly man whispers in the baby's ear the call to prayer⁴².

rites or vital events which shall surround that person as man or woman. Later on, the rite of circumcision (usually at the age of 3 or 4) and the gradual changes into the masculine world, shall determine the boy's masculinity. Likewise, the beginning of menstruation in the case of girls will be the most important indication of womanhood (although the circumcision is a reason for public celebration whereas in the case of menstruation, it is a cause of embarrassment and is kept private, *cfr.* Sadiqi 2003: 60). Due to this, in the first vital stages, the baby is practically a sexless being.

⁴⁰ We find exactly the same message compiled by doctor Légey. She describes the festival of name-giving to the newborn and the corresponding sacrifice of the lamb: "The meal following the sacrifice is intended for everybody taking part in it to be compelled to love the child" (our translation, Légey 1926: 95).

⁴¹ Nowadays the birth of a girl is celebrated, at least from what can be gathered from this text, ululating three times. But this has not always been the case. Doctor Légey claims that in the 1920's only on the occasion of the birth of a boy did people ululate (Légey 1926: 86). Fatima Sadiqi points out that in the case of the birth of a girl they only ululate once or not at all (Sadiqi 2003: 58-59). Amélie Marie Goichon, in her work regarding the life of women in the Mzāb (Algerian Sahara), points out that in the 1920s, in case of the birth of a girl the jubilation is significantly reduced (Goichon 1927: 143-144).

In any event, the signs indicating preference for a boy are currently clear, but they have a different shape. In the specific case of our source, she admitted that she was very glad to have a son after her first daughter, because he will always be part of the family (bearing in mind that girls leave the family home to move to their husband's).

⁴² Whispering the call to prayer and transmitting a message to the newborn to hear for the first time the true religion (from the Islamic point of view) and that the world is full of

Ž.: And he whispers the call to prayer ... in its ear.
 [Then, that's why you were asking whether the Faqih had said that to the baby.]
 ?Ā.: Yes.
 Ž.: The call to prayer is whispered, and the baby's told: "death exists..."
 [He didn't, he forgot.]
 Ž.: Because, I don't know what happened, but when she went back home, he did that. I, when he came to my home, because I don't have an elderly man, I whispered the call to prayer instead of an elderly man.
 [An elderly man, is it not a problem?]
 Ž.: No problem, it's normal. What's important is that the baby must know, because you whisper the prayer, because the little girl has just been born. You tell her: 'God is great, God is great, I vouch that there is no other deity but God ... Mohamed is God's envoy, go to prayer, go to salvation, the time for prayer has come...' in short, the call to prayer. When you finish, you tell her: "death exists, life and punishment exist, and..." all that's what exists in this world... you tell her in her ear.
 [The first time she hears it.]
 Ž.: Yes, she must hear that this is what's in life. There's a bit of everything. There are... problems, happiness, sorrow, there are... many things in life. Even though she's a little girl like this, little angel, the words you tell her...she knows what you've told her, even though she's like this. Because you whispered the words to her with the call to God. And God created her, do you understand?. He's everything. When the call is whispered...she's given her milk, or her mother feeds her, and she sleeps. Later, when the *sbūf* comes, seven days (*later*), people bring the lamb. If it is the first birth, the father of ... the father of the girl and the mother of the girl (*maternal grandparents of the newborn*) bring the lamb. They are in charge, they prepare the *slīlu* and the cakes, depending on their means, according to their means. If they have a lot of money, they may make all the *sbūf*.
 [It's like in any celebration, it depends on the means.]
 Ž.: Yes, the *sbūf*, the first *sbūf* of the girl...
 ?Ā.: ...is on the part of the mother of...
 Ž.: ...mother of... the mother of the girl, the mother of the bride.
 [If it is the first-born son.]
 Ž.: If it is the first-born son. Apart from the first-born son, (*the father*) manages by himself, he is the one who must make the *sbūf* it's up to him, no... why? Is it going to be you every time? She would always be giving birth and saying: "look, my mother-in-law is going to make me the *sbūf*". Very nice! Indeed! The first-born son, she takes him, buys clothes for him, the first-born. You buy him clothes and buy a pyjamas or a dressing gown for your daughter⁴³. And for the baby, you buy all the clothes and his little bag. You buy the lamb, make cakes. This, in case of people who are quite well-off. And you put the chicken with...everything, everything (*all related with*) the *sbūf*. You count how many people you have, like

sorrow and bliss, was traditionally done by the midwife (Légy 1926: 84). In the urban environment, if that baby was born in a hospital, it is generally an elderly man who does this. But as we will see later, it was the grandmother of the newborn who did it instead.

⁴³ She refers to the mother of the newborn.

in a wedding. You count the people and the expenses you have to pay. (*If*) you don't have enough, you go and tell the gentleman who married your daughter, you tell him: "I'm not going to pay for the sacrifice and the *slilu*". Like us, for instance. I prepared it yesterday; the sacrifice on my own, and the *slilu*. This thing about the *slilu* and the rest, which is what we can afford, I'm going to pay for. More than that, I don't have enough, you pay for it with your own money. Because, what's more important? It's the sacrifice, the name, the lamb. That's what's important. Another thing is not have... another thing, it's not compulsory to do it. If I had money, I would do it, it's my daughter. The birth, her first-born, without problems, but I don't have enough. The sacrifice I have to pay for is compulsory, I must see about doing it although... the person manages somehow, they know what to do, that sacrifice before the people, before the family and all that. That sacrifice is taken, all the family gets together when you are going to sacrifice that animal. They prepare these little bits of paper. They write names on them. You write down a name, Mārsya writes a name, this person writes a name. We have fun. We laugh. The names are written and they are placed like this, on a little tray and a little girl is brought in. She is told: "pick up a paper", do you understand? She picks up a paper, they open it and find Lina, for example, or Lāyla, or... they say: "this is the name which has been picked". Say: "yes, my name is the name which has been picked", do you understand?⁴⁴

[Yes.]

Ž.: This is done three times. The third time is the good one, do you understand? The third is the good one, the name. That's it. If they agree, that's it. If they don't, they don't agree, the father is in charge. What's important is that they've done that game which is done... with the family. They have fun and laugh, the people cook chicken and they bring dishes with sweets and cakes. They prepare that, the family comes, they get together, they eat and drink tea, they cheer up with those *slilāt*⁴⁵ of *slilu* which I bought for the family.

Ā.: And at the sacrifice, when the time of the sacrifice comes, (*the father*) says the name, the name of the girl. When he's going to... when he's going to do the sacrifice he says the name of the girl. That lamb already belongs to the girl, in honour to her name, do you understand?

"Lina, daughter of Rāšid"... like this... he pulls out the knife in the name of the girl and of her father. Then, he carries out the sacrifice, that... that girl's lamb. Because the lamb is mandatory, more so than that of the feast of the lamb. If you don't have lamb in that feast, God forgives you.

[Really? The most important.]

Ž.: And this newborn, God doesn't forgive you, you must buy it in honour of his name, your girl or your boy. In each birth, not only for the first-born.

⁴⁴ In Légey 1926: 94-95 it is pointed out that when there are problems in choosing the name, chance is used: with two possible names, which are written on two pieces of wood (one bigger than the other), a passer-by is asked to pick one. Another solution registered by the author consisted of choosing the first name the people involved would hear spoken in the street.

⁴⁵ They consist of small vessels (generally in the shape of a basket) where a small amount of *slilu* is placed and they are shared out during the celebration.

[For each birth.]

Yes, (*fōr*) each birth it must, it must be bought. More compulsory than that of the feast of the lamb, more than that of the feast of the lamb, the baby must be bought one so the name can be given to him through the sacrifice. Compulsory. Because the feast of the lamb is just *sunna*⁴⁶, not...

Hāyāt: exactly, the lamb.

Ž: Yes, with the lamb, there's no other one. The lamb. And if you don't do the sacrifice, you owe it.

xxxx (*several sources speak at the same time*).

Ḥ: And if you're grown up, if you're grown up and your parents couldn't afford it, you buy it yourself (*the lamb*) and you sacrifice it in your name, even if you are grown up, you sacrifice it in your name.

Ž: Your parents tell you: "we didn't celebrate the name giving, we didn't sacrifice in your honour. We couldn't afford to". They admit they didn't do the sacrifice.

Ḥ: They didn't do the sacrifice.

Ž: Like Sālma. We... we went through a crisis at that time and I gave birth. And then, God protect (*us*), Lord of peace⁴⁷, some thieves robbed us, do you understand?

[In the shop.]

Ž: In the shop, and we were in crisis, we didn't have anything. Asma was born (*mistake, she means her daughter Sālma*), we didn't do the sacrifice in her honour. And until now, she's still waiting for her lamb. The moment we told her: "we owe you the lamb of... when better times come, we'll buy and we'll do your name giving". Do you understand? It is owed to you. You see, she'll even grow up, get married, for instance, and her name giving will still be owed to her

[Compulsory.]

Ž: Yes, compulsory. Because you account to God for it. Do you understand?

[I have heard talking about something which may be only done in the north of Morocco, the *rāgəd*.]

Ž: The *rāgəd* is... tell him.

Ḥ: The *rāgəd* baby.

Ž: There is, there is...

[Does it exist also here, in Marrakesh or is it only in the north of Morocco?]

Ḥ: No, there is some, but , but, little.

[What is it?]

⁴⁶ Act or behaviour in agreement with the prophet's tradition.

⁴⁷ The frequent use of expressions denoting a call for protection in the religious sense or which reflect the union with God (*llāh yəstər* "may God protect (us)", *hād əš-ši lli šta llāh* lit. "this is what God gave us" (equivalent to *šāfi*), *əd-dāyəm llāh* "God shall remain, only God is eternal", *tkəl llāh* "trust God", *llāh yšāmmər had əd-dān llāh yšāmmərha dār*, "may God fill this house, fill her house" (in the sense of make it prosper), *llāh yəktər xīrək* "May God provide plentifully", *llāh yžīb ər-rzəq* "may God bring the worth") is typical not only in this source, but in most female sources under observation (from middle-aged generations and older). This does not mean that men do not use them, but it is true that less frequently than them, who tend to make a recurrent use of them in their speech.

?Ā.: You are, are pregnant, and the baby stays (*she means the foetus*) for one year. It may remain in your belly. For a year it may stay. You... you don't give birth at the right time. It stays, it stays, like that⁴⁸.

Ž.: Up to three years, up to three years.

?Ā.: Yes, it stays...

[Up to three years?]

Ž.: Yes, one says: "the *rāgəd* has woken up"

[Is that what you say?]

Ž.: Yes, the *rāgəd* has woken up. Why? These formulas of the Arabs are used⁴⁹, this hot stuff, and plants. And you use medicine... traditional medicine.

?Ā.: Natural remedies.

Ž.: That's it, and it's done. And with God's help it wakes up.

[Isn't that what sorcerers do?]

Ž.: No.

[Isn't it?]

?Ā.: No.

Ž.: No.

?Ā.: Natural remedies, do you understand?

Ž.: Like oregano.

?Ā.: It's like a pharmacy but only with herbs.

Ž.: Because the baby is *rāgəd*, asleep. It's alive, but with no energy⁵⁰. It doesn't grow, it has nothing. Like that, asleep, do you understand? It has a soul, but has no...asleep.

?Ā.: It doesn't grow.

Ž.: It doesn't grow.

[But, is there a body, even though it's a small one?]

Ž.: Yes.

[Or there's nothing, just the soul?]

⁴⁸ One of the forms of facing the woman's sterility (whether real or not) consists of believing that she has the *rāgəd* inside her and has not woken up at all. To this end the woman could claim that she had some irregularities in her menstruation for a period in her life (which is usually frequent). This aspect is not tackled in this corpus. See Légey 1926: 69, where several techniques to "wake up" the *rāgəd* child are described.

⁴⁹ Our source refers to passages in the Koran written by a man with some religious status (*tālāb* or *fqīh*). The religious element legitimizes these practices of pagan origin. Fatima Sadiqi (Sadiqi 2003: 68-73) aptly points out three forms of control on the side of the woman in the Moroccan social context: magic and remedies from the popular culture (an element very closely linked to the female world); gold (basically for economic control) and cunning (very prevalent in the collective imagery and deeply represented through numerous proverbs).

⁵⁰ The idea that the foetus is dormant, tired and must be woken up or given strength to continue growing involves some of the practices to solve this problem consisting of remedies against tiredness, such as applying compresses of cold water on the belly of the alleged mother, preparing a beverage with oil and hare's bile (from the idea of fast movements intended to incite), or in the case of Jewish women, sweet stewed wine with cinnamon and roast meat on the belly (the food given to persons who have fainted, see Légey 1926: 70). The practice our source describes next goes along the same line.

Ž.: Just the soul, it may be this size.
 ?Ā.: There's a little skin, it's like this, a little skin.
 [But it can't be seen.]
 Ž.: It can't be seen.
 ?Ā.: No, it can't be seen.
 Ž.: It can't be seen.
 ?Ā.: It doesn't grow. It stays like that in the belly, it doesn't grow.
 [Up to three years?]
 Ž.: It stays there for three years and wakes up, the *rāgød*.
 [Do you know anybody who had this happened to her?]
 Ž.: Yes, it has happened. It happened to a woman. She had the *rāgød* in her belly. For three years it was in her belly. She prepared cat thyme⁵¹, cat thyme is sold with mint. And she drank it. She made it in the teapot and drank it. For three days she drank it every morning before breakfast. And the foetus didn't stay that... three days, after three days, seven days later she started to feel... it moved. She was like that, little by little, little by little, until the baby woke up. It woke up and started kicking.
 ?Ā.: It started to grow.
 Ž.: It started to grow. She said... they told her that it had been a *rāgød* child. It was asleep for three years in his mother's belly. He's fine now. Very well. He's a man now and has had children.
 [With no problems?]
 Ž.: He has no problems.
 [Health problems...]
 Ž.: Everything fine. Fortunately, that woman used to say by then...
 [And when she has the *rāgød*, everything in her is normal?]
 Ž.: Normal, normal.
 ?Ā.: As if she wasn't pregnant.
 Ž.: As if she wasn't pregnant. She may have her period and be pregnant. She may not have it, for instance.
 [Can that be so?]
 Ž.: She may have it and have the *rāgød*.
 [Then, at that time, if she doesn't have her period, she may know that she has the *rāgød*]
 Ž.: And may not want to get rid of it. Because some women have an abortion.
 [How?]
 Ž.: The abortion, she goes to the doctor and they do a curettage.
 ?Ā.: He operates on you.
 [And it isn't legal.]
 Ž.: Yes, it's bad.
 ?Ā.: And it isn't legal.
 Ž.: It isn't legal.
 [Even in your village some people carry out abortions?]

⁵¹ Cat thyme (*teucrium marum*), used as medicinal plant usually to fight the effects of fainting due to low blood pressure.

Ž.: No, us in the village no, not in the village.

[There aren't any.]

Ž.: There aren't.

[Only in the city.]

Ž.: Only in the city. What else?⁵²

[Is there any disease typical of women?]

ǾĀ.: Disease? Anaemia, anaemia. The most important disease a pregnant woman may have is anaemia.

[What is it?]

ǾĀ.: Anaemia, what's it called...? I don't know.

Ž.: She doesn't have (*enough*) blood, she lacks blood.

Ḥāyāt: But anybody can suffer from that, not only women...

ǾĀ.: No, of pregnant women, most of them. Most pregnant women suffer from it. It is a condition that may be dangerous. It is the condition that may be dangerous. Its likely that she may suffer from it.

[What happens to her?]

Ž.: She needs calcium, she needs iron, she needs lots of things. When she goes to the doctor, he prescribes medicines against anaemia, lack of calcium, that, iron tablets. He tells her: "these tablets you must have until you give birth, so that the baby is not born with lack of, anaem... so that it doesn't have anaemia". And perhaps it doesn't, doesn't, doesn't come out fine, for instance. Because the blood that she needs and that the baby needs to grow in her belly doesn't have (*something's missing*). Perhaps she has dizzy spells. It may be that ... she's pregnant, she has anaemia and the doctor doesn't see that she needs ... she may fall, she may feel dizziness.

ǾĀ.: She turns white.

[Poor thing, she feels dizzy.]

Ž.: Yes, something like that. Some people cough. Some have that cough, cough (*in*) the chest. But some keep coughing and coughing until they give birth. Some have it all through the pregnancy. And the normal disease for pregnant women, to vomit. Some vomit a lot and have cravings. The food, they don't eat. Any food you give them, they don't want I, they want food from elsewhere, for instance. Or bring her something from the street...

[She has cravings.]

Ž.: Yes, she has cravings. As if... or she asks some of her neighbours to give her something to eat, she doesn't eat what she cooks. And some have a normal pregnancy. They eat anything, don't get sick, don't suffer from anything. And some women don't eat the food from their own home, the water, the water from their home they can't stand. Some can't stand their husband. There are problems between her and him. She says to him: "you stink, you are not good-looking". Seriously, it's true⁵³. She can't stand him. Some men understand this way of

⁵² This answer, accompanied by a facial gesture more stern than usual in our source, promptly indicated to us that it was not a suitable topic.

⁵³ We have noticed a greater tendency in women to reassert the credibility of their speech than in men through expressions such as *wa ḥāqq llāh lā-ṣḍim* "I swear to God the Sublime",

talking, they accept it. They know that that woman is not entirely in her right mind. He gives her... he respects her, respects... respects her decisions. Until that phase is over. And some men don't put up with that... that behaviour from the wife, he thinks she does it because she wants to. Problems come. They may even divorce. They even separate. Because he doesn't understand that... that phase that woman is going through that makes her behave like that. He believes she is like that deliberately. His family may act as conciliator and "please...", he is told: "no, look, your wife is pregnant, you must be patient with her. Was she like this with you at first?" For instance. They try to make them go back. To make him go back to his wife since (*what she suffers from*) is cured, and that three month period goes by. A three month period. And some, God protect us, have those cravings for nine months. That's what's difficult, when she is for three... until the nine months are over. Do you understand? When it's just three months, there's no problem. Until... when she goes back to normal, she eats again, she sees as usual, then she sees herself... like I. I couldn't bear my husband⁵⁴, I used to tell him: "you smell of yeast, you smell of flour... you stink". And he would tell me: "OK, I stink, it's OK, no...no problem at all". He would tell me: "OK, you don't want me to sleep with you..." he didn't sleep with me. For three months he didn't sleep with me. "My body, my body can't stand it". When that was over, he would laugh at me, he'd say: "I no longer stink? Fine, now". Some men understand women and those who don't, who don't put up with that...

[Everywhere.]

Ž.: Yes, everywhere. There are several types of men. And women, during the pregnancy, if they want something and they don't... don't find it or don't do it and they scratch somewhere, they pay for it. They pay for the craving on... on that... on their skin.

[Like this one, I have one (*showing a craving*).]

Ž.Ā.: Craving.

Ž.: Even Rāšīd, has an olive here, a big one.

[An olive?]

Ž.: A big olive. I went to a neighbour's house and she gave me bread, olives and coffee. I was eating, I was about to finish, I had the last bit in my hand...of the bread I was eating; I had eaten all the olives. They had this salt, coarse salt. I like

b aš-šāhh "really", *tā-nāhdār mšāk* "I'm talking to you (seriously)", *yāk/?yāk bōfda?* "isn't it?", *tā-nāhdār b əl-māšqūl* "I'm serious", at times agglutinating several of these expressions: *wa ḥāqq llāh lā-šdīm, tā-nāhdār mšāk b əl-māšqūl*. It is hardly surprising that when they talk about *əl-kəlma ntāšt l-šyālāt* it is opposed to *əl-kəlma ntāšt ər-ržāl*, as, respectively, the speech you should not trust, said without premeditation *versus* what one can trust (Sadiqi 1995: 73-74 explain how some of these Moroccan sayings are but the reflection of the collective imagery regarding men and women).

While in other uses a difference in generations can be noted, the lack of credibility of the female speech is practically the same regardless of the age of the girl or woman (it must be remembered that from a religious point of view the testimony of a woman is worth half the man's, *cf.* Trabelsi 1991: 95, and that public recognition is given to men, not to women).

⁵⁴ The husband of our source works as a *mūl l-ḥānūt*, the owner and sole attendant of a small grocery shop in the quarter.

black olives with that kind of salt. I had this bit left and I said: “I wish she’d bring me just one (*J*) would finish it with this bit”. And my hand went here, I scratched. That’s it. When I gave birth to Rāšid, he had an olive here⁵⁵.

ḤĀ: I have something here too.

Ḥ: An olive it is indeed! And I told that woman, Mm^wi Xəddūš. I told her: “Mm^wi Xəddūš, this happened to me, this happened to me”. When she held Rāšid, because she came to congratulate me and all that, I told her: “look at the olive”. She told me: “what...?”. I told her: “that day I came to your house and you gave me...” She said: “Am I to blame? As God is my witness”. She said: “I mean, I have no problem at all. At that time, tell me: “I want more olives”, I give you olives”. Because it’s hard on that woman... like when you are eating ca... cakes, for instance. And I am pregnant. And I like those cakes you are having, you have... and I tell you: “give them to me”. You can’t... you can’t refuse. If you know I’m pregnant, you’ll give up and give them to me. Because it’s not me who told you. I’m not in my right mind, I’ve told you: “I want those cakes”. I fancy them because you were eating them, do you understand? That’s what happened to Šūfyā once. We were passing by the oranges stall. And one fell down. He said to us: “come and drink some orange (*juice*)”. I said: “no, thanks, I don’t drink orange (*juice*)”. He had dropped one orange. And he...she picked that orange. He said to her: “no, madam, please”. She had it in her hands. I said to him: “if ...if... you’d seen how she’d picked it, you wouldn’t say give it to me”. She had bent with great effort to...at the end. He did like this (*beckoning from the distance*) and called her: madam! madam! And we returned where he was. What’s the matter? Is anything the matter? We gave you the orange back”. He picked a bag. He filled the bag with oranges and said to her: “here. I hadn’t seen you, forgive me”. So, he knows what a pregnant woman is like, do you understand? He gave her the oranges, he told her: “forgive me, I didn’t see you when you gave me the orange”. When she gave him the orange I told him: “if, if you’d seen how she picked that orange”, because she saw the orange rolling and went straight for it, without thinking, do you understand? She picked it up, it was big and beautiful. And he told her...

ḤĀ: Even though every xxxx like the one she picked up.

Ḥ: The one she picked up.

ḤĀ: xxxx like the one she picked up.

Ḥ: And he gave it to her. “When I told you that this form of speaking I didn’t ...” he told me. “I swear I didn’t, I didn’t see her”⁵⁶. I said to him: “I didn’t

⁵⁵Légey 1926: 7 reports one form of deleting a craving which consists of taking a ritual purifying bath with water from the well of a sanctuary. Jewish women performed a similar rite with the ritual bath of *mikveh*, like at the end of each menstruation.

⁵⁶ During the fragments of conversation reproduced by our main source, the dramatization is quite remarkable. The staging is very stressed, with changes in the voice, intonation, gestures. These features are more frequent and common in women than in men as we have noticed (see in this respect Mouhssine 1997: 28). In fact, it is claimed that women generally have a spectrum of different tones which is much wider than in men. When a woman wants to make her story more credible in non-familiar contexts, she uses a lower tone (similar to men’s in this sense), whereas men would never resemble a woman in this sense (Sadiqi 2003: 97-100).

tell you anything”. He called (*her*). And he gave her the bag of oranges. She said to him: “no, no, I don’t want, really I don’t want”. He said: “look, by God that this bag does not come back to me”. She didn’t want it. He said: “take it”. And that’s it. He gave her that bag and she brought it home. I told her: “eat the oranges”. She said: “no”. Her husband came, it was he who squeezed them. No... she no longer had that craving for... Since she had picked up that or... orange. Who knows, if it is because she saw it and that orange fell or I don’t know... nobody touched it, we were far from him. And that orange went (*onomatopoeia of the rolling orange*), it had fallen in *Žāmāŕ lfnā*. And she went for it. He said: “thanks”. I mean, as if picking it and giving it back. She picked it as if... well... do you understand? Without thinking. She picked up that orange that was on the floor. And I said to him... Well..., she picked it up...well.. if you had seen how she picked up that orange you wouldn’t say to her: “give it to me”. When we moved away and he saw her belly he started calling us. He said to her: “take the oranges”. She said to him: “no, no, I don’t want them any more, I don’t want them, I don’t, I don’t want”, well, he said: “it’s OK”. He said: “by God, by God, I will neither sell them nor pick them up”: He said: “take the oranges”. I told her: “take them!” And she did. That’s the story. What else? A boy had a watermelon here, a red watermelon.

[Why?]

Ž.: Because he... his wife was pregnant and she told her husband: “go and get a watermelon”. When later that evening he came back home he didn’t bring it and she scratched her face. Like this, a watermelon, here, in the middle of his face, an entire watermelon. The next day he brought her the watermelon but she no longer wanted it. He said to her: “I forgot”, and consoled her.

[It has to be at the right time.]

Ž.: Yes, he forgot. And she scratched... I... *Šūfyā* has a prawn here. A prawn, the red fish. I was buying fish, I saw the prawns and said: “if only he gave me, even just one prawn, and peeled it for me...” I was talking to myself. The problem is I knew the fishmonger, because if I had told him he would have given it to me, do you understand?

ʔĀ.: My cousin has a strawberry on her back, the strawberry season comes and it turns red and that part that’s green, that...always, always, from summer to summer. Her back is always red. And it has little holes, I swear to God, like this, a strawberry.

Ž.: Like *Šūfyā*, those... little fins on the prawn, red, like this. Her calf goes red, where she has the fish, the full thing, that goes up. It is a prawn. I only buy sardines, what I can afford. And I saw those prawns, red, shiny. I just wanted him to peel one for me and give it to me, with the salt they have.

ʔĀ.: And eat it like that?

Ž.: Eat it like that, I just wanted it like that. And I said: “I wish he’d give me just one prawn, I’d eat it”. I was talking to myself. If I had told him... actually, he is *Brāhīm*. I was living in *Dərb əž-žāməŕ*. And I didn’t tell him. He wasn’t going to give me just one prawn, well... and I didn’t, I didn’t tell him, I scratched my leg and she got it on her leg, around here. She told me: “mum, if you had scratched your cheek I would have had a prawn on my cheek”. She just got it on her leg. *Rāšid*, show us the olive you have on your arm. Show them.

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