



Title: **An Unruly Classic: Kalīla and Dimna and Its Syriac, Arabic, and Early Persian Versions**

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Title

An Unruly Classic: *Kalīla and Dimna* and Its Syriac, Arabic, and Early Persian Versions

Authors

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List of KD Chapters

Chapter abbreviations¹:

- (As) Preface by 'Ali b. ash-Shah
- (Lv) BurzOy's voyage (long version)
- (Im) Arabic introduction
- (Sv) BurzOy's voyage (short version)
- (Bu) Life of BurzOy
- (Lo) Lion and Ox
- (Di) Investigation of Dimnah
- (Rd) Ring-dove
- (Oc) Owls and crows
- (At) Ape and tortoise
- (Aw) Ascetic and weasal (Me) Mouse and cat
- (Kb) King and bird
- (Lj) Lion and jackal
- (Kd) The king and 8 dreams (Km) King of the mice
- (fg) Traveller and goldsmith
- (Ks) King's son and his companions
- (Lh) Lioness and horseman
- (Ag) Ascetic and his guest
- (Kw) Two kingfishers and whimbrel
- (Df) Dove, fox, and heron

¹ Based on De Blois 1990, *Burzoy's voyage*.. p.62.

1. Introduction (Beatrice Gruendler and Isabel Toral)

Mouvance and variation

In this collective volume, members of the AnonymClassic project will discuss, from different perspectives, a core aspect of their work with *Kalīla and Dimna*: the study of variation and mutability. The aim is to shed light on *Kalīla and Dimna*'s mouvance and establish typologies of textual mobility and instability across linguistic traditions and historical periods, as well as to develop analytical tools to describe, classify, represent and interpret these dynamics. Other equally important aspects of the *Kalīla and Dimna* tradition, so as the character as frame narrative and fictional text and the translations it inspired, will be discussed in future volumes of this series.

Ever since Paul Zumthor launched in his *Essai de poétique médiévale*² the term “mouvance” to refer to the textual mutability in works surviving in more than one manuscript, as well as the “ceaseless vibration and fundamental instability” as a particularly characteristic of Medieval texts (particularly the vernacular and anonymous), these have been discussed widely in Medieval philology and connected to anonymity and orality, but also to scribal agency (cf. the thought-provoking Bernardo Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante*, who prefers to use the term “variance” to highlight the importance of written intervention)³. The rejection of the classicists' positivism and of the chimeric quest for the recovery of a supposed *Ur-text*, as well as the focus on textual fluidity, have turned into a topos in Medieval philology.

In Arabic philology, however, this discussion has almost not taken place, and editions of pre-Modern texts usually still follow the textual critical method, i.e. the stemmatic editing on the basis of a selection of old manuscripts, and with a normalized orthography⁴. For the many

² Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, 1972.

³ Bernardo Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante*, 1989.

⁴ It is to be said that there have been recent efforts to overcome this quest for the *Urtext*, cf. the ongoing edition of the Epistles of the Ikhwan al-Safa', another “texte mouvante”. However, the editorial project lacks a systematic and consistent method. Cf. the highly critical review by Guillaume De Vaulx d'Arcy, « The *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* Edited by the Institute of Ismaili Studies », *MIDÉO*, 34 | 2019, 253-330. It is to be said that the reviewer complains in an old-school manner that “The consequence is their [the editors']

texts transmitted via the controlled scholarly methods practiced in traditional Arabic philology (dictation, audition, collation etc.), this approach is well applicable, since texts, though preserved in numerous manuscripts, are remarkably stable⁵. However, for *Kalila wa-Dimna* (and probably other texts that “fell apart” from scholarly control)⁶, characterized by a enormous variation, such a critical edition has been deemed unfeasible. The existing editions by Cheikho and Azzam are single-manuscript editions that only provide snapshots of its actual variance⁷. This is prone to provide a wrong impression, since the Arabic versions form the basis of all later versions, so that an assessment of the whole corpus is an urgent desideratum. The project AnonymClassic now aims for the first time at capturing and documenting a more complete picture of *Kalila wa-Dimna*’s motions, approaching it as “texte mouvant,” without privileging certain versions, and making use of sophisticated digital infrastructure.

The progressive digitalization of philology in the last decades offers now the unique opportunity of putting the concept of mouvance into praxis. In fact, though widely accepted as a valid interpretative framework, the concept of mouvance has been criticized for its impracticability in text-editing, particularly when the preserved manuscripts exceed a certain number, and the perspective is widened to all possible and even impossible readings⁸. In the case of Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna*, where the number of (often very diverging) manuscripts known surpasses 140, a reproduction of all variants in a printed edition is not feasible, and

incapacity to determine the genealogy of the manuscripts, to have an idea of the possible *Urtext*, or to agree on a version.”

5 Stability of classical texts

6 Gruendler, Beatrice. *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 2020, pp. XX. For research on the vast corpus of popular literature, among which prominently *the Thousand and One Nights*, see the numerous studies by Ulrich Marzolph, Aboubakr Chraïbi, Bruce Fudge, Muhsin Mahdi and others.

7 See Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *La version arabe de Kalīla et Dimnah ou Les fables de Bidpai*, ed. Louis Cheikho, Beirut 1905, rpt. Amsterdam: Academic Publishers Associated - Philo Press, 1981, based upon MS Dayr al-Shīr, dated XXX/1339?; *Kalila wa-Dimna*, ed. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām, C.: Dar al-Ma’ārif, 1941, based upon Istanbul, Ayasofya, 4095 (dated 618/1221); and *Kalilah and Dimnah: Fables of Virtue and Vice*, Library of Arabic Literature, 76, ed. and trans. Michael Fishbein, et al., New York: New York University Press, 2021, based upon London, British Library, Or. 4044 (dated to ninth/fifteenth century).

8 Rupert T. Pickens, “Jaufre Rudel et la poetique de la mouvance,” *CCM* 20

(1977): 323–37; *The Songs of Jaufre Rudel*, ed. id. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1978) is regarded as the only edition that tries to reproduce completely all variants and puts the concept of mouvance into practice.

the exploration and evaluation of them is impossible by conventional means. But, as already proposed by Cerquiligni, the solution lies in the application of new technologies: “L’écrit électronique, par sa mobilité, reproduit l’oeuvre médiévale dans sa variance même.”⁹ Digital tools are the best option to express and access the multidimensionality of the text as well as to mirror the conditions of text production, since they can offer both more textual information than the printed edition and easier comparison, and are ideally structured for non-linear reading and synoptic editions. In the project of AnonymClassic, the development of a tailored software to analyse, compare and edit the various versions provides the researchers of the team a sophisticated and customized digital tool to tackle in new ways the challenges posed by the large number of manuscripts, variations and the peculiarities of Arabic script (see chap. 10 by Mahmoud Kozae). The final aim is to publish a comparative digital edition of selected manuscripts that best chart the motion of the text, to be accompanied by studies on various aspects of its history and reception.

Terminology

To approach the difficult task of capturing this picture in motion, the team of AnonymClassic has developed a consistently used **terminological toolset** to categorize clusters, patterns, practices, agents and relations that will be introduced here.

Kalila wa-Dimna is called a **textual tradition**, since the ongoing process of transmission suggests a constant written remaking of the text, and the term highlights that it is rather a group of texts with multiple representatives, held together by a reception that considers it an identifiable entity. The reception history and the readers’ response to the versions of this tradition are important aspects to be explored in this regard and show the varying perceptions and reinterpretations over time (see chapt. X by Isabel Toral).

Within the corpus of the Arabic versions, it is possible to identify clusters of manuscripts, and a central analytical tool has been the segmentation into **narrative units** (roughly representing syntactically and semantically coherent sections) to allow a sensible comparison between the manuscripts. The resulting clusters that are ordered according to diverse descriptive group categories. First, there is the newly coined term of **continuum**/pl. **continua**, to address groups

⁹ Essai, P. 116

of manuscripts that share much formulation but differ in certain scribal, targeted and conscious additions and cuts, incremental over time and with a thematic focus. Within the continua, there are further subgroups (see chapt. X by Beatrice Gruendler). Second, there is the **sequence** of the **chapters 10**, that varies among manuscripts, and that has been already used by Sprengling in 1924 to group the manuscripts and associate to the non-Arabic versions (see chapt. X by Khoulood Khalfallah). Within the chapter sequence, certain **chapter blocks** are relatively stable and reflect the different layers in the history of the text (Sanskrit blocks, Arabic block etc.). Third, there are the **image cycles**, i.e. series of recurring illustration motives and legends, a further category to classify groups of Arabic manuscripts (see chapt. X by Rima Redwan).

In terms of relational categories, there is within the Arabic corpus a broad spectrum that stretches from **near verbatim copies** to more or less **closely related copies** and finally distinct **versions**. The philological practices of rewriting that can be identified are variegated and can be classified into the following categories: **copying** (literal reproduction), **cross-copying** (producing hybrid versions on the basis of various copies), creative **rewriting** within a continuum, **rasm reinterpretation** (reinterperation of the consonantal skeleton of words), **linguistic adaptation and actualization** (for instance, the integration of colloquial elements for aesthetic purposes and the replacement of unusual words) (see chapt. X by Johannes Stephan), and, outside Arabic, more or less **literal translation**, and various degrees of **adaptation** and **cultural translation** (see chapt. X by Jan van Ginkel and Theodore Beers).

Finally, there is the important category of **copyist-redactors** to denominate the many copyists, either anonymous or only known by name, who intervened actively in the text applying the practices sketched above. The term highlights their agency and relativizes the scribal-authorial dichotomy.

It is to be emphasized that this terminology is a work in progress and might be adapted, tuned and nuanced as the project progresses.

History of the text

10 An overview of the chapters and the abbreviations used to refer to them is added at the end of

Kalila and Dimna is a work of wisdom and advice literature, thereby meaning a variegated group of texts that deal with ethical and political content, and that go back to Sasanian traditions¹¹. More precisely, it is a mirror of princes in the form of animal fables that was avidly read, copied, translated and rewritten in an area stretching from Spain to Malaysia in more than forty languages until the nineteenth century. The journey of *Kalila and Dimna* began in India, then entered Iran, where it was composed and compiled in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) and then turned into Syriac, and thereafter Iraq, where the Arabic version came into being. The older Syriac version received no further translations, whereas the Arabic version was disseminated through Europe and Asia, again translated to Syriac, and to the Persian and the Turkic-speaking worlds, back to South Asia, and onward to Southeast Asia.

Retracing the chronology of *Kalila and Dimna* requires delving into deep time: its earliest Sanskrit sources, the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata*, took their final shape approximately in the third and fourth century respectively. A selection from these (including some Buddhist material (see chapt. X by Khoulood Khalfallah)) was translated and redacted in Middle Persian in the late sixth century, and the translator also added some introductory chapters explaining the origin of the book, as well as other supplementary material. The book now appears for the first time under its title *Kalilag we Dimnag*. This Pahlavi version is unfortunately lost, but can be reconstructed based on the older Syriac version, translated soon after (see chapt. X by Jan van Ginkel). In the eighth century, the Middle Persian version was then translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. c. 139/757), and expanded. The Arabic versions proliferated, they were quoted, commented, reused and versified, and became particularly popular in the Middle Islamic Period¹² and Early Modernity (see chapt. X by Johannes Stephan and Isabel Toral). From the Arabic textual tradition, it branched out in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries into multiple European and Near Eastern translations, (i.a. the Greek, Old Castilian, Persian, Hebrew, and Younger Syriac versions¹³). The West European "bridge" version was the Latin translation (via Hebrew), which generated all modern European translations, including outliers such as Icelandic, Hungarian, and Czech. The first Persian version by Naṣr Allāh al-Munshi (sixth/twelfth century) via Arabic became a foundational work for Persian artistic

11 Dimitri Gutas, Louise Marlow EI3

12 This term, coined by Stephan Conerman or Konrad Hirschler?, designates the sixth/twelfth to tenth/sixteenth centuries.

13 JvG

prose (see chapt. X by Theodore Beers) and received a retro-translation into Arabic, the later one, the *Anvar-i Sohaili* ninth/fifteenth century) as well as the Ottoman Humayun Nameh (tenth/sixteenth century) became classics in their own right. The work then received a renewed reception in the nineteenth century in South and Southeast Asia, where it resurfaced in eight languages, from Hindi and Bengali to Madurese to Malay. It moreover gave rise to versifications and emulations in many of these languages.¹⁴

Summary of the contributions

The volume starts with a section on *Mouvance*. It describes and analyzes the diverse types of textual variation that we find within the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition—rewriting, replacement, rearrangement, *etc.*—and evaluates what this evidence reveals about philological practices, textual mobility, and the understanding of authorship. Beatrice Gruendler explains the methodology pursued in the project, which approaches the manuscripts from two angles: their relation to each other, and the redaction of each individual version. She also introduces and explains the key terminological terms already mentioned. Based on close analysis of several manuscripts, Gruendler also discusses potential reasons for these types of variation, likely connected to a non-scholarly mode of transmission (chapter 2). Khoulood Khalfallah illustrates this methodology and its concepts by focusing on one chapter of the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that serves as exemplifying case study. She shows how, and according to which criteria, manuscripts are classified in our project: first, by concentrating on selected chapters, which represent the historical layers of *Kalīla and Dimna* (the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* and *Mahābhārata*, Middle Persian, Arabic); and second, by analyzing and comparing the work's macro- and microstructure (chapter 3).¹⁵ Illustrations are also central to the process of establishing relationships among codices, as Rima Redwan shows in chapter 4, in which she explains how “image cycles” can be used to connect and date manuscripts.

The second section of the volume, *Traveling Tales*, turns to non-Arabic versions of *Kalīla and Dimna* and explores the ways in which they provide information, not only about linguistic translation techniques, but also about cultural processes of translation, hybridization, and the

¹⁴ Schema at the end

¹⁵ Macrostructure refers to the level of chapters, and microstructure to the segments within chapters. [SYNC BG w/ this].

adaptation of form and content. The multiplicity of versions across languages further demonstrates the adaptability of *Kalīla and Dimna*, a book that inspired a striking number of translations and functioned as a seminal work in various literary cultures (Arabic, Persian, Old Castilian, and beyond). Jan J. van Ginkel opens this section with a comparative analysis of a single chapter as it occurs in the two extant Syriac translations—one derived from Middle Persian, the other from Arabic—and highlights the diverse translation techniques, as well as the different degree of adaptation to the cultural environment. (The second version is heavily christianized; chapter 5). Theodore S. Beers provides a translation, with notes and commentary, of the preface to the Persian *Kalīla wa Dimna* of Naṣr Allāh Munshī (c. 540/1146). This version proved highly influential in the development of artistic prose in Persian literature, but it is also a fascinating case of a multilingual text, with Naṣr Allāh interweaving a huge number of Arabic quotations from classical poetry, the Qur’an, Ḥadīth, *etc.* Thus the text evidences a thorough adaptation to an Islamic framework (chapter 6).

The third section, *Responsive Readers*, addresses the question of reception history within the Arabic tradition, and how *Kalīla wa-Dimna* inspired remarkably diverse literary responses across genres—animal fables, mirrors for princes, popular tales, zoology, *etc.*—and incorporated a range of styles and linguistic registers. Isabel Toral discusses the case of an early animal fable that was intended and read as a culturally arabized adaptation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, more tailored to the Arabic concept of *adab*, and which could be interpreted as a metatext or commentary on the early versions attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (chapter 7). Johannes Stephan then studies the book’s variation from a linguistic and stylistic perspective, focusing on three manuscripts from a later period (eleventh/seventeenth to thirteenth/nineteenth centuries). He proposes an interpretation of the frequent use of Middle Arabic—a semi-standardized register between Classical Arabic and Arabic dialects—as a deliberate literary strategy to convey proximity to oral storytelling (chapter 8).

The final section of the volume, *Wisdom Encoded*, consists of a chapter by Mahmoud Kozae, in which he discusses the software solutions that have been developed within AnonymClassic, to support and facilitate the investigation of a multitude of variants of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. He also introduces the project’s newly created web-based platform, which, among other things, allows for the construction of customized synoptic editions (chapter 9).

Part I. Mouvance

2. The Interrelation of some Arabic Versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (Beatrice Gruendler)

1. Editing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Since *Kalīla wa-Dimna* attracted scholarly notice at the dawn of Arabic studies in Europe with Sylvestre de Sacy (d. 1838), the great variety among its Arabic manuscripts extant from the seventh/thirteenth to century onwards, after a lack of complete witnesses over a period of half a millennium, has presented the challenge of how to edit such a text. Certainly the indirect transmission since the third/ninth century and the early translations since the fifth/eleventh century give important clues to the work's textual history. But the phase from which the entire Arabic text is available (seventh/thirteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century) poses its own problems and needs to be addressed with attention to the specifics of their production and circulation.¹⁶

At the time of de Sacy's first edition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in 1816, this precondition of knowing how the manuscripts relate to each other was not met, resulting in the lack of any basis for devising an editorial procedure fit to embrace the puzzling divergence, let alone showing the nature of the text's changes over time across the manuscripts.¹⁷ Meanwhile, a sophisticated method of editing, adopted from Classical Studies and further developed by Karl Lachmann (d. 1851), became the standard in the field. This procedure posited a single original which could be reconstructed, or approximated, by organizing its deriving descendants into a stemma and worked well for scholarly and classical literary texts, which were more or less

16. A further source are several text fragments (in single leaves or bifolia, the longest passage counting three bifolia) from the Cairo Geniza, datable to circa 950-1250.

17. Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Calila et Dimna ou Fables de Bidpai*, ed. Sylvestre de Sacy, Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1816.

stable in transmission, but it did not fit the fluid textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, whose strongly diverging witnesses cannot be reduced to a single text.

Editions there were, but these tended to select one manuscript, usually an early one, in the manner of a “best text.”¹⁸ The chosen single witness was edited either diplomatically, as by Luis Cheikho (1905), or filled in with portions from other unidentified manuscripts, as done by Sylvestre de Sacy or, to a lesser degree, by Muḥammad ‘Abduh ‘Azzām (1941) and more recently by Michael Fishbein (2021).¹⁹ Further modern editions in turn combined existing printed editions (de Sacy or the Būlāq editions (1249/1817 and 1297/1835) that reuse was text) with further unidentified manuscripts, and the result is often recopied in manuscript form.²⁰ There clearly was an awareness that more than one manuscript was necessary to adequately present the work; the modern editors intuitively reacted to the textual variety, even though not in a systematic way. They were not the first to do so; some copyist-redactors had done so as early as the eighth/fourteenth century, at times skillfully combining a number of *Vorlagen*.

The puzzle with *Kalīla wa-Dimna* has been to ascertain how its drastically differing manuscripts distributed over seven centuries hang together, and what can be found out about the processes, factors, and agents of their textual change. Advances in editorial theory, especially in research on medieval European literature, and the recent potential of critical digital editions have altered the situation and opened new avenues of approach. Today a number of manuscripts can be placed side by side, respecting each as its own instance, while looking at them together as a spectrum, making traceable the differences from the one to the next. This has replaced modern editors’ misleading conglomerates or the preference of one manuscript over others solely based on its date.

18. The concept has been defined by Joseph Bédier, d. 1938.

19. MS Dayr al-Shīr, dated 739/1339 was edited by Louis Cheikho; P3465, dated to circa 1220, by Sylvestre de Sacy; A4095, dated 618/1221, by ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Abduh ‘Azzām; L4044, dated to the ninth/fifteenth century, by Michael Fishbein. For full references, see the volume’s bibliography.

20. For the modern editions see C. Brockelmann, EI², s.v.; MSS Rabat BNRM 879 and Yale 270 reproduce de Sacy (including the *Mu‘allaqa* of Labīd) with acknowledgment of the source; Tehran Majlis 16288 and Mosul DFM 283 reproduce one the Būlāq editions, which are based on de Sacy, without acknowledging the source and add the rare Df chapter. I owe this information to Khoulood Khalfallah.

The *mouvance* of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is the most prominent such case in Arabic literature and the first to be observed close up.²¹ What caused such textual fluidity remains to be ascertained; among the factors might be its many-faceted nature, the lack of adherence to any firmly established genre and its ambivalent status sharing traits with both classical and popular Arabic literature.²² Nonetheless, its case should not be regarded as unique, and textual traditions of other works may well reveal comparable developments upon inspection. Fluid text groups include early Christian Arabic texts, Arabic popular literature, and Arabic popular science, such as magic and astrology.²³

2. The concept of continuum

The following will sketch out one way in which a large share of Arabic manuscript versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are related to each other, and why it is more accurate to speak of a textual tradition, not a single work. The immediate impression gained when looking at juxtaposed digitized versions, is that much text is shared across many manuscripts in the form of recognizable phrases, but with incremental changes from one specimen to the next. In order to trace the rewriting, to distinguish what is shared and what differs, one needs to arrange side by side those witnesses most similar to each other in wording, then proceed with the next

21. On *mouvance*, see the introduction and note 12 below.

22. On the generic multifacetedness of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see Matthew L. Keegan, "Its Meaning Lies Elsewhere: The Vagaries of *Kalīla and Dimna*," *Poetica* (forthcoming) and idem in *Medieval Worlds*, 269-70.

23. See recent studies on textual fluidity in early Christian Arabic texts by Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and Their Families*, *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung* 42, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012 and Aaron Butts, "Diversity in the Christian Arabic Reception of Jacob of Serugh (d. 521)," in Barbara Roggema and Alexander Treiger, eds, *Patristic Literature in Arabic Translations*, Leiden: Brill, 2020, 89-128; in Arabic popular literature by Aboubakr Chraïbi, "Al-Bunduqānīcalife, voleur et justicier: étude et projet d'édition d'un conte des *Mille et une nuits* à partir de manuscrits arabes et européens des XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles," *Arabica* 86 (2021): 171-215 and Ulrich Marzolph, "Fluid fables: An Experimental Synopsis of Uncritically Transmitted text" (forthcoming); and in Arabic popular science by Lucia Raggetti, *ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī's Book on the Useful Properties of Animal Parts: Edition, translation and study of a fluid tradition*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018. For an edition project that does not take systematic account of textual fluidity, see the review article by Guillaume De Vaulx D'Arcy, "The *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* Edited by the Institute of Ismaili Studies: When the Re-edition of a Text Can Be Its Destruction," *MIDEO* 34 (2019), 253-330.

in similarity, and so forth with manuscripts decreasing in similarity being placed at increasing distance. This needs to be done without prioritizing a manuscript's date, since some later manuscripts contain versions that are several centuries older than the material support they are written upon,²⁴ and the version not the material witness is at issue here. Indeed an undated textual version can be placed along the trajectory of witnesses between its closest matches and thereby its text (not the physical manuscript) dated approximately to the timespan in between.

In our digital edition it is possible to view up to eighteen versions simultaneously, reorder them, and recombine digitized passages in as many editions as desired.²⁵ In the present article, the maximum is fifteen versions, to keep the text at a readable size on the printed page (see screenshots in the Appendix). At first glance, the recurrence of similar phrases across many versions is patent, with further recurrences of phrases in a subsection of the same group, which can lead to defining subgroups. "Shared text" means here not long continuous passages but rather short phrases and parts of sentences, that agree across several manuscripts. Which phrases exactly are shared, and among which witnesses of a group, fluctuates from one passage to the next. Even within recurring phrases, words can be replaced, cut, or added in each witness. Intercalated with the shared phrases are others (from one word to a passage) only found within one individual witness.

This relation between the manuscripts in which a relatively high percentage of textual variance is shared between a number of witnesses can be best characterized as a *continuum*. Reading across a number of witnesses, one segment of a sub-story for instance is gradually replaced in parts. When considering several versions jointly and taking the dates into account (while making allowance for the above-mentioned exceptions), small additions of words or phrases generally accumulate chronologically, so that one may speak of an accretion over time in the majority of the versions. The opposite trend of shortening occurs too, though less often, such

24. For instance, P3475, dated 1175/1761 is a near-verbatim copy of BRR 3655 dated to 1265-1280. P3478, dated to the twelfth/eighteenth century, is a near-verbatim copy of I344 dated to the eleventh/seventeenth century and both are very close to L3900, dated 1166/1752-53 and itself a near-verbatim copy of Riyādh 2536, dated 747/1346. This principle is also known in the Lachmanian tradition. Obviously a manuscript's date is essential to contextualize a copyist, trace the reception of his version, and establish the trajectory of a particular continuum.

25. On the LERA-tool, see chapter 9 by Mahmoud Kozae.

by targeted cuts of sayings, analogies, or sub-stories, or via a streamlining of the narrative as a whole.²⁶ Nonetheless, the accretion, change, or abridgment that define a continuum are incremental, so that the elements of shared text remain recognizable across related versions. Among the modalities [/triggers/factors] of change, a phenomenon particular to Arabic codicology is the copyist-redactor's reinterpretation of the consonantal skeleton (*rasm*) of words. The *abjad*-alphabet gives writing a certain indeterminacy, since short vowels are not written, and in manuscripts the diacritical dots marking the different functions of homographs are often missing, so that a given word can be read in a number of ways. In *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, this phenomenon is further complicated by the fact that (re)interpretations by the copyist-redactors seem not to have been bound by the rules of classical Arabic, and their (often unvocalized) *Vorlagen* gave rise to recontextualize a changed word meaning, when it diverged substantially from the earlier one. The (re)interpretation of the *rasm* shows (among others) that such intervention took place in the process of written transmission and not through oral recomposing, as is the case in the *mouvance* of medieval European texts.²⁷ While the comparison between the two cultural traditions is illuminating, the rewriting of the Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* needs to be considered on its own terms. To wit, much Arabic scholarly literature is indeed transmitted within the context of hearing a written text read out to a teacher (*samā'*) with continuous correction and subsequent collation of the transcripts (so-called aural transmission),²⁸ guaranteeing the stability of a given text, for which reason stemmatic reconstruction often works. But *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, during the late period from

26. Examples of targeted cuts are Poc. 400 and P3466, streamlining occurs in BRR 3655 and P3465. A drastic abridgement is Vat. 213, dated to the eleventh/seventeenth century, which reproduces its longer *Vorlage* in the same manuscript; see Beatrice Gruendler and Dima Mustafa Sakran, "A Redactor at Work: Discoveries in MS Vat. Borg. ar. 213 of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*," *Geschichte der Germanistik. Historische Zeitschrift der Philologien* (forthcoming).

27. On the concept of *mouvance* in European literature, see Paul Zumthor, and for an overview, "What is *mouvance*?" *Wessex Parallel Web Texts (WPWT)* <http://wpwt.soton.ac.uk/mouvance/mouvance.htm>.

28. On aural transmission and notebooks for personal use as an interim format, see Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, revised and enlarged ed. of *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'islam*, in collaboration with and translated by Shawkat M. Toorawa, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009 and idem, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, trans. by Uwe Vagelpohl, with a preface by James E. Montgomery, New York: Routledge, 2006.

which its manuscripts survive, was copied outside such scholarly purview: moderate Middle Arabic features abound, a free treatment of the text is the rule, and collation notes are rare.²⁹

3. Continuum as a basis for analysis and classification

The following exemplary analysis is based on selective editions of six passages deriving from different historical layers of the book, with special focus on two of these, the preface added by Arabic translator-adaptor Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 157/757) and the chapter of "The Cat and the Rat," originating from *Śāntiparvan* section of the *Mahābhārata*. The results, however, can be considered representative of all six edited passages.³⁰

Beyond defining a type of manuscript interrelation, the concept of the continuum serves to group together those manuscripts that share more passages among themselves and separate them from others that fall outside. In our case, two continua appear after analysis (referred to after the libraries in which salient specimen are held) as the Paris continuum and the London continuum (hereafter P-c and L-c). To complicate matters, a number of manuscripts starts out as part of P-c until the end of the Chapter of "The Ringdove" (Rd) and then switches to L-c with the beginning of the Chapter of "The Owls and Crows" (Oc).³¹ This group will be referred to as the Queen-continuum (hereafter Q-c), named after a salient passage in the Chapter of "The King and his Dreams" (Kd) detailing the merits of the queen.³² Furthermore, within P-c two subgroups belong more closely together, as visible by increased shared text among them, namely one including P3465, P2789, dated 1008/1599-1600, and H170 datable

29. Collation notes are only found in P3466. On Middle Arabic including its literary dimensions, see chapter 8 by Johannes Stephan.

30. The continua can be confirmed in Lv, Im, Oc (parts), Kd (parts), Mc, and Ag (the chapter abbreviations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are those of de Blois). On "The Cat and the Mouse" (Mc), see also chapter 5 by Jan van Ginkel for an analysis of the two Syriac versions. A word of caution is in order: many manuscripts retain indeed the same interrelation with others throughout the text, but some switch or rebalance their focus among several *Vorlagen* along the line. An inverse phenomenon is a version's alternating in proximity among different *Vorlagen* at the beginning of a chapter before honing in and continuing with one *Vorlage* till the end. As long as not all manuscripts have been thoroughly studied, experience teaches the researcher of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* to expect the unexpected.

31. P3466, dated 845/1450, is the oldest manuscript of Q-c; others are USJ 00022(2), dated 1263/1847 and BnT 16029, undated, each representing a subgroup.

32. For further features of Q-c, see chapter 3 by Khoulood Khalfallah.

before 1830, and L23466 and another reuniting manuscripts the latest of which is We II 672, dated 1246/1830 (referred to as the Wetzstein subgroup, hereafter We).³³

As to the relative age of the two continua, both are attested since the seventh/thirteenth century (the date of the earliest manuscripts of either, P3465 and A4095). P-c unfolds in a broader spectrum and has more subgroups, which might imply a longer period of development. But when comparing both to the earliest manuscripts, these agree more often with L-c, as does an even earlier copious source of the indirect transmission, the *Muḍāhāt* of al-Yamanī (alive end of fourth/tenth century), whereas substantial additions of P-c, for instance in the Arabic preface, occur without parallel in the early manuscripts. This supports a higher age of L-c.

4. The limitations of continuum

Before demonstrating in detail how a continuum looks, the limitations of the concept need to be clarified: first, the term does not apply to *all* extant manuscripts, and second, it is only one of several parameters by which manuscripts can be described.

Applicability

To the first point, not all manuscripts can be placed along any continuum. A number of early manuscripts from the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth century (provisionally designated as “early group” (hereafter E) fall outside).³⁴ The amount of additional material shared with other manuscripts is too small to consider them part of any continuum. They lack many units shared by P-c or L-c, and they only share few units between them, while some display strong idiosyncratic features. In some places, these early versions differ drastically from each other and from the identified continua, while in others, phrases are shared between them. Some manuscripts of E contain an early version of Burzoy’s voyage (Sv), likewise

33. Others are Riyadh 2407, dated 1103/1692 and P3473 dated 1110/1699.

34. This includes I344 and Riyadh 2536 (with their respective later copies L3900 and P3478), as well as Poc. 400, dated 755/1354 (its parallels P3467, dated to ca. 1350 and M486, dated 1040/1631 and its copy BL Add 24350, undated), CCCP 578, dated to the eighth/fourteenth century, and BRR 3655 and its copy P3475 (on which see also note 9).

preserved in the Pahlavi original of that chapter,³⁵ the Old Castilian translation of 1251 and the Older Hebrew and Latin translations of the same century.³⁶ These MSS deserve further study.

Another type of manuscripts falling outside the continua are demonstrable combinations of *Vorlagen*. This is realized variously as an assemblage of large blocks from other known manuscripts or as small-scale intercalations, and these cross-copied versions too deserve further investigation.³⁷ In this sense, Q-c is also a cross-copy between P-c and L-c at the macroscale of entire chapters, yet each individual chapter can be matched with either P-c or L-c.

Nonetheless, in the below diagnostic editions, both early and cross-copied witnesses are included, to be able to define the borders of a given continuum. The cross-copied versions also aid to restore any wording lost through lacunae, with passages from a continuum that have been reused for instance in a cross-copied version, for many elements of these collages can indeed be identified by comparison and traced to earlier models. Unidentifiable other text pieces of the mixed versions might either derive from models that do not survive or be additions of these copyist-redactors themselves.³⁸

Disregarded also are near verbatim copies (in which the copyist did not act as a co-author), as they do not contribute to understanding the dynamic of the continua, but they are retained for solving puzzles in their *Vorlagen* or for tracing the dissemination of a particular version. Their number is low within the entire textual tradition, and so far it appears that the cross-

35. Daniel Sheffield identified the Pahlavi model of Sv in the *Wizirkerd ī Dēnīg*, chapt. 105. There the live-giving herbs grow in Iran, and they are explained as wise words. The figures of Anūshirwān and Burzoy and the fact that such wisdom is contained in books appear only in the Arabic versions; see idem of “New Evidence for the Middle Persian Prototype of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*,” unpublished paper, 227th Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Los Angeles, 2017. Sv is contained in Riyadh 2536, I344 (and its copy L3900; P3478 has a lacuna at Sv), Poc. 400 (and its parallels and copy), and MMA 1981.373.

36. These are I344 and Riyadh 2536 and their copies (see previous note), referred to as the dream-group, based on a characteristic passage in the Kd chapter. On this group, which served as the model for the *recensio iberica*, see chapter 3 by Khoulood Khalfallah.

37. Obvious cases are CCCP 578, Poc. 400, P3471 dated 1053/1643, P5881 dated 1092/1681, and Bodleian 253, dated 1227/1812. Versions with a minor extent of cross-copying are more difficult to ascertain. The cross-copying on P3471 is not equally evident in all chapters.

38. One of the sources of P3471 is the dream group (see note 21). P5881 takes over combined passages from CCCP 578, and Bodleian 253 likewise relies on earlier collages.

copied versions received a disproportionately high share of near verbatim copies, as if those collages were particularly esteemed.

Parameter

Being part of a continuum is only one dimension of a witness and the manuscript containing it, namely the way in which its main text is related to others. Relation is intended here as concerning the microlevel, that is the formulation in the body of the text, extending to the mesostructure of intercalated sub-stories to the degree that this structure changes between continua and helps distinguishing one from another. Not regarded here are larger parts that are added, such as the rare chapters (Km, Df, Kw), the paratexts added by each the copyist-redactor (incipit, explicit, table of contents) or manuscripts notes by subsequent owners and readers. Rather, affiliation to a continuum informs about the version of the main text contained, while other elements need to be regarded separately and the findings compiled in a second step, which may well yield contradictory results.³⁹

Furthermore, the incremental text change across a continuum is distinct from redactional interference within an individual witness. Each witness, besides moving slowly with a continuum, shows more or less individual rewriting. Such interference, however, can only be identified as a result of comparison of all witnesses of a continuum, when the smaller changes in passages that were added, rewritten, or cut across a number of witnesses, i.e., those elements which “continue,” have been accounted for, so that passages found in one manuscript only stand out from the flow. The “unique” passages that then remain may derive from the pen of the latest redactor, but their identification will always remain a function of all other surviving and discovered manuscripts. Individual redaction in one witness can only be identified provisionally, as parallels might be found at any moment in another hitherto unknown manuscript. In such cases where a version close in time and formulation exists, it might be used as the closest comparative specimen. Thus, an otherwise very close version

39. Paratexts may be taken from other versions; some incipits even derive from a version different than the one used as a *Vorlage* for the main text. In other cases a table of contents differs from a manuscript’s actual sequence of chapters for being taken from a different version, e.g. in Ayasofya 4213, dated 880/1476 or Chicago A 11991, dated to the eleventh/seventeenth century.

shows additions in a few places which can then be dated to the time period in between them — if not to the redactor of the later witness.⁴⁰

These unique portions are not therefore the present focus, since individual rewriting can only be identified by eliminating any extant models, and thereafter the unique instances must be studied and viewed together across an entire chapter (at least) to detect potential trends and consistencies.

5. Two Continua in the Arabic Preface

Turning to the first example, the preface added by Ibn al-Muqaffa', often titled "The Purpose of the Book" (*gharaḥ al-kitāb*), and at times ascribed to Buzurgmihr, two continua are easily recognizable at a bird's eye view. To explain the analytical procedure, the wide divergence of the Arabic versions has made it necessary to subdivide the text into units of sense in order to chart their presence or absence in a given witness before looking close at the formulation within the units in each case (in the digital edition, identical segments are aligned for comparison). The units' subdivision respects the narrative, as well as taking account of the chapters' structure into a frame dialogue (beginning after the prefatory chapters), changes of speaker, inserted wisdom sayings (*ḥikam*, s. *ḥikma*), short analogical images (usually one-sentence-long), and longer sub-stories, which require further subdivision. The segmentation is necessary for the analysis, but it is not alien to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, since its modular nature prompted already copyists to segment units of sense with paragraph symbols and mark their beginnings with rubricated or overlined words. Sub-stories often receive titles in the margin or in the running text.⁴¹ The marked words are usually *inquires* (*qāla*, *qālat*), sentence-initial particles, such as *lammā*, or numbers of items or persons in a list.⁴² While text subdivision and

40. For example, Mc of München 618 resembles L4004 closely except for a few added passages; in other chapters, however, München 618 departs from L4044. Likewise earlier witnesses of the We subgroup show the long additions of We II 672, and P3466 serves as a backdrop to gauge the rewriting in BnT 2281.

41. For titles in the margins, see P3466, We II 672, and in the running text, see L4044. For the relation between subtitles and legends of images, see the chapter 4 by Rima Redwan.

42. The wisdom sayings in numbered series in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* go back to its Indian sources; they take up for instance the final section of the Kd chapter; see Gruendler "Les versions arabes de *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: une transmission et une circulation mouvantes." In *Énoncés sapientiels et littérature exemplaire: une intertextualité complexe*, edited by Marie-Sol

highlighting are not uncommon in Arabic manuscripts, they are particularly present and fine-grained in manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Abstracts too were added with time at the beginnings of chapters, commentaries at the ends, and short or long tables of contents, the latter type containing synopses of each chapter.⁴³ All this indicates that easy navigation in the text was of concern to its users. The purpose may have been to extract pithy quotes, as it had been done since the book's translation into Arabic,⁴⁴ yielding a copious indirect transmission of detached sayings, or to flag entertaining sub-stories for oral retelling, as has been documented recently for the last three generations in Israel/Palestine.⁴⁵

In the Arabic preface, the presence or absence of numerous segments clearly distinguishes two continua. A key factor is the position of the sub-story of "The Merchant and His Partner" (90-100).⁴⁶ It tells of a fraudulent grain merchant's attempt to steal from his partner, which fails as he mistakenly picks his own bale at night and shares the supposed booty with his hired helper before discovering his error.

In L-c, the story appears towards the end of the preface.⁴⁷ The unlucky thief remains quiet about the failed theft and keeps his loss and his shame to himself not to lose face. In this continuum, Ibn al-Muqaffā' concludes with exhorting the reader in the first person to begin reading the book with the preface and to heed its precepts (86). He states, "I hope it will increase his insight and knowledge," save him reading anything else, and "without such knowledge he will benefit nothing" (87). Shifting to the first person plural, Ibn al-Muqaffā' then explains that he added the preface to impart essential information so that the matter of the book "be clear to him who wants to read, (understand,) and gain knowledge from it"

Ortola, 387–418. Nancy: Pun, 2013, esp. 403-404.

43. The earliest table, formatted as a separate page, appears in P3465, and the earliest table with synopsis P3466; in Poc. 400 and. Some manuscripts combine short and long tables with an intervening description of the book, such as M486; its acephalous model Poc. 400 and a similar version in acephalous München 616, probably once contained both tables too.

44. See Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020, 157-58 and Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009, pt. 2, 326.

45. For the discovery of recent oral tellings, I am indebted to Heba Tebakhī; oral telling may well be older, for P3593, dated to extracting only the sub-stories, may have served such a purpose.

46. Each number refers to a segment; those specific to one continuum are tabulated in the Appendix, fig. 3.

47. In the master list of all segments, Appendix, fig. 2, each receives (besides a stable number particular to it) a serial number indicating its place within each witness.

(89).⁴⁸ While the three segments are shared with the early group, the quoted passages within them occur solely in L-c.

Indeed, the witnesses belonging to L-c are characterized by a number of units that discuss the reading process, emphasizing the importance of reading slowly and carefully (*bi-jawdati l-qirā'ati wa-l-tathabbuti fīhi*; 10)⁴⁹ and to understand the text bit by bit, following the proper order (12.2). “[The reader] must not move from one thing to the next before having carefully considered it and verified his reading. He must understand and know what he is reading in order to get everything right and connect it to its meaning” (16.1). This concerns particularly the book’s secret meanings (*khafīyyāt, khabīy*), which the reader is to extract (18). Man in general is liable to seek knowledge (*ilm*, 20.1). Culture (*adab*) is what everyone needs most in life besides money (22), and it must be respected as much as death (23). The fact that education bolsters social standing is mentioned in all witnesses, but in two witnesses of L-c, it receives the illustrating analogy of a thrown ball soaring in the air (26). A further epistemic aspect emphasized in L-c is the checking of received information. A person failing to do so accepts questionable information, and this error is further elaborated in three subtypes in L-c (79).⁵⁰ It is true, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* preceded the massive rise of Arabic books in the third/ninth century, but the second/eight century already saw a few Arabic books, some written on commission, others translated, and moreover the codex was familiar from Christian books in Greek, Coptic, and Syriac, to which Arabic translations were soon added.⁵¹ Therefore, the instructions given in Ibn al-Muqaffa’s preface on how to use the emerging book medium in general and the present book in particular make historical sense. While the original version of the preface is irretrievable, the topics that are shared by *all* manuscripts can be assumed to have been part in some form of the lost Arabic original, among them the sub-story of a man who wishes to learn classical Arabic (*al-'arabiyya*) and does so by procuring a folio of rules and memorizing it. But he then commits a linguistic error in public (*lahn, khaṭa'*), because he has

48. Parentheses in the translation of a shared passage in a continuum mark those words not present in all witnesses.

49. A passage in this unit on following the wisdom of the forebears, present in E, which shares the unit, is cut in L-c.

50. Lacunae in some manuscripts of L-c can be supplied from P5881, which takes over the passage.

51. On Arabic books of the second/eight century, see Schoeler, *Genesis*, 54-67 and *The Oral and the Written*, 34 and 71-73; on early Christian books, see Gruender, *Rise of the Arabic Book*, 3 and 14 and references given there.

confused knowing something by heart with understanding and applying it (19.1-4). Elsewhere (mere) memorization is juxtaposed with lack of action and condemned (46).⁵² A further focus of L-c is ethics, namely that actions must be beneficial and not harm others (45, 49), and that one should be steadfast in life, neither despairing (56, 65) nor relying on fortune (68).

Conversely, in P-c the sub-story of “The Merchant and His Partner” is moved to the middle of the preface and continued with the fraudulent partner admitting his treachery. The narrative diverges between the continua at many places of the tale. In L-c the thief’s hiring of a helper to transport the stolen goods is related before the burglary, a segment earlier, and the helper makes the following demand:⁵³

حتّى / يجعل أو / يجعل أن إلّا . . ذلك صديقه فأبى عليه يعينه أن وسأله . . به همّ . . بالذي فأخبره له صديقٍ إلى انطلق
(92) (ففعل) منه يأخذ ما نصف له جعل

In P-c, the hiring of the helper is mentioned later as an aside at moment of the burglary (94). The surrounding text is close within this continuum, yet the terms for the agreement vary between the versions:

على أوصاه / معهُ اتَّفَق / استأجره / (P3473, H170, P3465) / على واطأه قد رجل ومعه
جعلاً له وضمن عليه عزم ما (We II 672)

Another example for lexical variety from this preface is the designation of a thief’s garb which he takes off to carry the grain he wants to steal in another sub-story, “The Pauper and the Thief” (62.1-64.2). This varies in P-c in a sentence that changes little otherwise between “shirt,” “coat,” and “garb” (*qamīṣ* P3465; *izār* P2789, Riyadh 2407, P3473, We II 672; *kisā* P3473; *ridā*’ H170; 63 and 64.2), whereas L-c (and the early group E) has the stable term

52. For an analysis of this sub-story, see Beatrice Gruendler, “Media in Flux: The Tale of the Yellow Folio from *Kal_īla and Dimna*,” in *FS NN*, ed. Hakan Özkan and Nefeli Papoutsakis, Leiden: Brill (forthcoming).

53. Words not present in all versions of a continuum are replaced by points of suspension or marked with parentheses, and words that diverge between them are given after forward slash.

milḥafa “wrap, shawl.” This actualizing of narrative detail related to material life and social habits is a frequent type of intervention by copyist-redactors.

To return to the sub-story of “The Merchant and His Partner” in P-c, the focus of the above-mentioned segment of the burglary (94) lies rather on the effort of carrying the heavy take to the thief’s home, where he collapses exhausted. The account varies too much to present it as one quote. The following are two longer versions:

التعب شدة من بنفسه فرمى منزله إلى صار حتى حمله على يتعاونان والرجل هو وجعل أخرجاه حتى بجهدٍ عدلاً فاحتملاً والجهد (P3473)

الحمال ظهر عن وألقاه منزله إلى وصل فلما منزله به يريد وذهب الحانوت داخل من واقتلعه والحمال هو فاحتمله وهو الحمل وثقل الحركة وقوة المعالجة شدة من ناله مما لنفسه ليسترح قفاه على واستلقى المنزل داخل إلى به وانحدر (BnT 2281)⁵⁴ أصاب بما ظافراً أنه يظن

The confession of the fraudulent partner specific to P-c prompts the honest merchant to hold up a mirror to him with another sub-story, “The Thief and the Two Jars.” This thief confuses the jars and carries off the one containing grain, while he had intended to steel the other filled with coins. Two further sub-stories follow. In “The Three Brothers,” the youngest one saves his older wasteful siblings by sharing his preserved inheritance with them and guiding them to better their ways.

The last sub-story in P-c, “The Fisher and the Pearl,” exemplifies a fisher’s lack of perseverance; he gives up after a shell he brings up from a laguna turns out empty, while a fellow fisher finds a pearl in a second shell, which the first disappointed fisher had passed by and ignored. The preface in P-c concludes with an explanation of the book’s four goals: bringing delight to children, being treasured by kings, earning profit for craftsmen, and finally serving philosophers (124.1-124.5). Again, the crafts specified in the third goal vary in the manuscripts among transmitter (*nāqil*), copyist (*nāsikh*), illustrator (*muṣawwir*), dyer (*ṣabbāgh*), and stationer (*warrāq*). The sophisticated division of labour among craftsmen involved in book

54. The pleonastic conjunction introducing the apodosis *wa-stalqā* is a feature of Middle Arabic.

production derives from a later period and represents another instance of copyist-redactors' actualizing the text. A reinterpretation of the phrase *uns al-mulūk* in the second goal to *nisā' al-mulūk* in one continuum (Q-c, here aligning with P-c) leads in the We subgroup of P-c to a relocation of this part among the first goal, combining royal women with children as those entertained by animal stories. This segment is of interest as it defines *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as an illustrated book. The earliest illustrated complete witnesses date to the seventh/thirteenth century (P3465, BRR 3655), fragments with colored illustrations from the Geniza (T-S Ar. 40.9, T-S Ar. 51.60) are datable to circa 950-1250, but the indirect transmission mentions illustrated or illuminated copies as early as the third/ninth century.⁵⁵

In keeping with the increase of sub-stories, the versions of P-c emphasize the two layers meaning of the parables and the need to analogically decode them, using the logical terms of “premises” (*muqaddimāt*) and “conclusions” (*natā'ij*), as well as frequently recalling throughout the preface the genre of parables (*amthāl*), their meaning, and their secret content (*asrār*).⁵⁶ The reader must unlock these secrets (114.1) and not be mistaken to think that the books is *about* animals, lest he miss the point (114.2). Superficial readers who *only* seek pleasure (118; not in Q-c) are blamed for missing the book's deeper meaning (117, all of P-c) The proper reader needs stamina (120; not in the P3465 subgroup) and must be aware that the book has both an outer and an inner meaning. This concept of *zāhir* and *bāṭin*, though mentioned once in L-c (16.2) is here used repeatedly and made the basis for decoding the parables (9.1, 16.2, 117-118, 123), and this task is addressed at a mature audience of adults, the intelligent, philosophers, and kings (123, 124.5).

The added sub-stories of the P-c continuum are balanced by increased instructions for their interpretation. While becoming more entertaining on the surface, P-c insists simultaneously on the book's deeper intellectual purport and condemns the mere use of it for pleasure. An erudite elite audience is the book's true aim, though children (and royal women) are also allowed for as lesser readers. P-c combines its better story-telling with the rhetoric to justify it, claiming the status of high literature. The Middle Arabic features of many witnesses might have entered later, and they indeed culminate in some witnesses of the twelfth/eighteenth

55. See Gruendler, *Rise of the Arabic Book*, 152-53. On illustrated manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see chapter 4 by Rima Redwan.

56. See Appendix, figs. 4-5, for analysis of selected units 9.1, and 16.1 [#ADD 107.1, 107.2?]

and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, it appears that this explanation was more successful than L-c's dry instructions on how to read a book properly, and the polyphonic preface probably contributed to making P-c the more widespread of the two continua.

Summarizing the findings on the Arabic preface, one may attempt a hypothesis on how the move of the sub-story of "The Merchant and His Partner" occurred. In both continua it follows and illustrates a saying: in L-c that one should not seek benefit by harming others (49), and in P-c that one should treat others as one would like to be treated oneself and not seek gain by harming others (85). Both introductory sayings contain a similar sentence:

(49) نفسه صلاح بذلك يطلب لصاحبه مضرة فيه أمرًا يطلب لا أن عقل لمن وينبغي

بفساد نفسه صلاح يلتمس ولا (لنفسه يكرهه ما للناس ويكره) لنفسه يحبّه ما للناس ويحبّ | . . أن العاقل على ويجب
غيره (85-84)

which was probably moved together with the following tale that illustrates it. Further sayings at different places in the Arabic preface are near synonymous, as if they grew out of a duplication after reordering the chapter (51-53 with 72 on guarding God's limits; 43 and 76 on things necessary in life; and 33-34 and 82 on following a wrong path without reconsidering; and that proper reading takes time, 107, 114.1, 123). Comparable duplications happen in one of the early manuscripts, Riyadh 2536, in which one page of the Arabic preface was restored using a version from a different continuum. The relocation of the sub-story in P-c (and Q-c) to the middle of the preface was easily possible, since the preface has no narrative sequence like the other chapters, and rather consists of thematic blocks on how to read, acquire knowledge, apply it in life, and conduct oneself exemplarily.

The more likely scenario is that the order of L-c preceded, which contains all these blocks once, whereas the final thematic block in P-c is a duplication the first one how to read properly. This

57. See also chapter 5 by Johannes Stephan. The passage's claim may denote a certain anxiety that the status the text would slip, or was already slipping, towards popular entertainment literature. Guillaume De Vaulx D'Arcy observes a similar shift in popular philosophy, calling "The Case of Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn" (Epistle 21 of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*) "a turning point in the development of Arabic mirrors of princes," namely from Indian and Persian princes' mirrors to "the people's mirror" of *One Thousand and One Nights*; idem, "Epistles," 23.

might have been added to resume and conclude the preface after the cluster of tales added after “The Merchant and His Partner.” Among those, “The Thief and the Two Jars” simply repeats a plot element of the former tale, while “The Three Brothers,” about the proper management of wealth (though discussed elsewhere in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*) has no connection to the preface’s themes.

In the Arabic preface, the bird’s eye view has sufficed to distinguish the continua, and though their different formulation within the units corroborate these findings, it would take unnecessary space to go into further detail here. In other passages digitally edited for analysis, the continua bifurcate less through the presence or absence of entire segments, than by the formulation within these, as the following example of the chapter of “The Cat and the Rat” will show.

6. Two Continua in “The Cat and the Rat”

In the chapter about a cat and a rat who put their enmity temporarily aside to save each other from further foes, only few segments are specific to either continuum, while most are shared by both.⁵⁸ A short summary is in order: A cat and a rat live near a tree. One day, the rat discovers the cat caught in a snare, only to notice that he himself is cornered by an owl and a weasel. The rat then concludes a truce with the cat, promising to free him in return for which the cat shall protect him from the other foes. So it goes, except for a night’s delay, since the cautious rat cuts the last cord only at the hunter’s arrival the following morning. Both escape. Thereafter, the cat wants to continue the newfound friendship, but the rat explains to him that it was a temporary friendship which has served its purpose and therewith ended.

The rat’s approach to cut the cat’s cords appears alone in the Wetzstein subgroup of P-c (hereafter We, 34), whereas the cat’s acceptance of the truce “I will do this gladly” (*af’alu dhālika wa-ni’ma*; L4044, 31)⁵⁹ and his fear of death at the hunter’s approach (53) are proper

58. This chapter is analysed elsewhere for the trends of rewriting in three manuscripts; see Beatrice Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors: Silent Co-Authorship in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*,” in *The Journeys of Kalīla and Dimna: Itineraries of Fables in the Arts and Literatures of the Islamic World*, edited by A. Vernay-Nouri and E. Brac de la Perrière, Leiden (forthcoming). The present discussion studies the interrelations of a wider sample of manuscripts.

59. The segment also appears in USJ 0022(2), dated 1263/1847, and München 618, dated 1046/1636, both of L-c, which are not included in this edition.

to L-c, as well as a saying that friendship serves only for profit (45).⁶⁰ This last segment derives from the fourth and final dialogue between the now rescued cat and rat, on types of friendship and shows the largest divergence between the continua. All other units are shared as whole entities, yet their internal formulation differs.

To proceed in the order of the narrative, a segment toward the beginning, telling of the rat's reflection (cornered by owl and weasel) that to save himself an arrangement with the cat is the only option, shows differences. Only in L-c (and E) appears the sentence "I see no better ploy than to seek [a truce with the cat]" and "perhaps I can save him." Conversely P-c adds a phrase to clarify the animals' similar position, "The same disaster [happened to him] as to me."⁶¹ More phrases are shared within the We subgroup of P-c, namely the rat's anticipation of the cat's acceptance and a reminder that both are in this together "He will rejoice at my truce [and perhaps there will be deliverance for him and me] from what we are in" (*yastabshiru bi-ṣulḥī . . . mimmā naḥnu fīhi*;16).⁶²

In a segment in which the rat proposes the solution to the cat, L-c emphasizes the prior situation of the rat's *schadenfreude* at any harm suffered by the cat "I used to be pleased by what harmed you" (*kuntu . . . yasurrunīmā sā'aka/yasū'uka*; 20.1). In the following segment in L-c (and E), the rat draws out the situation by recalling that the two foes cornering the rat fear the cat and immediately asks for a guarantee of safety from the cat (*wa-hum yakhāfānika wa-yattaqiyānika/yahābānika . . . wa-in ammantanī*; 20.2), whereas in P-c the rat first describes only the threat to himself and then carefully asks the cat's opinion about a truce that would contain such a guarantee, should he come near the cat to free him from the hunter's net (*fa-in jalalta/ra'ayta an taj'ala lī l-amāna/dhimāman/'ahdan wa-mīthāqan . . .*).

In the second dialogue, the rat explains to the cat that there are two different kinds of friendship to motivate his delaying of the cat's release to protect himself. In L-c the true friend (as opposed to the friend for convenience) is given an added descriptive phrase that one always obliges or trusts him (*wa-yu'malu/yūthaqu bihī/yu'manu lahū ['alā kullī ḥālin]*; 43).

60. Segment 45 also appears in We II 672.

61. Parentheses mark words not present in all versions of one continuum; square brackets indicate words that appear beyond one continuum and are needed for the context. For a list of Mc segments with major differences, see Appendix, [fig. 6](#).

62. See also the analytic charts for this and the following segments discussed in the Appendix, [figs. 7-10](#).

In the long fourth and final dialogue, the rat explains the nature of a temporary friendship. To navigate such an unstable relationship, a person must be astute and adaptive, and the way to navigate it, while present in both continua, receives two further paraphrases in L-c (and CCCP 578) “[The intelligent] is trusting at times and wary at others and pleased at times and angry at others” (*[al-‘āqilu] yastarsilu marratan/sā‘atan wa-yaḥtarisu ukhrā wa-yarḍā marratan/tāratan wa-yaskhuṭu ukhrā*, 69.1).

In the following segment (69.2), the rat defines the friendship with the cat precisely as one born out of need and therefore limited in time, and in L-c contrasts this with the occasional ending of a true friendship “[whose root] was not enmity.” The Wetzstein subgroup (hereafter We) of P-c describes this in opposite terms as “[whose root] was friendship.” There, the other kind of friendship, namely the useful one between the protagonists, simply “ends” (*inqaḍā*), whereas L-c (and CCCP 578) draws out that a friendship born of enmity naturally returns to its original state after a temporary truce to (*fa-ammā mā kāna aṣluḥū ‘adāwatan . . . fa-taḥawwalat/wa-yataḥawwalu (adāwadata)*).

Only L-c states the fact that the cat is actually the rat’s worst enemy, “No foe is more harmful to me than you” (*lā aduwwa aḍarra lī minka*, 71.1) and adds in the following segment about the end of the truce that it was created merely out of mutual need (*fa-aḥadtha . . . al-muṣālaḥata . . . [wa-wad dhahaba l-amru] alladhī ḥtajta (fīhi) ilayya wa-ḥtajtu ilayka fīhi/iḥtāja kullu wāḥidin minnā ilā ṣāḥibihī*; 71.2; also in P3475, CCCP 578, P3473). Later in L-c, the rat draws the necessary conclusion and emphasizes about the urgency of ending a friendship grown out of need (*[al-‘āqilu] yu‘ajjilu l-inṣirāfa ‘anhu*, 75).

L-c also draws out an illustrative analogy that illustrates the point. The changeability of friendship by analogy with clouds receives further paraphrastic additions, “They pour at times and withhold [rain] at others (*wa-yahmī/yaqṭuru/yumṭiru sā‘atan/marratan wa-yumsīku (marratan) ukhrā*, 68) and, in a saying, states the fact that any asymmetric relationship between a weak and a strong partner must be avoided (*[fa-lā khayra . . .] wa-lā li-l-dhalīli/li-l-ḍa‘īfi qurba/fīqurbi/fī dunuwwin min al-‘aduwwi al-‘azīzi*; 72).

Taken together, Mc shows a bifurcation between the continua with L-c adding slightly more segments and phrases, some of which are shared with the early group E, and others developed within the continuum itself. In proportion to the entire chapter, the additions are subtle and scattered, but they increase in frequency in the concluding discussion of the core theme, types

of friendship. They occur predominantly within the dialogue of the characters, mostly the rat's speech and the sayings and analogies he adduces, but the cat also receives a more active role with two added segments of his speech and emotions. In their summation, these small edits within L-c constitute a perceptible trend: they refine and sharpen the strategic calculations in a onetime useful — but now fatal — friendship.

To summarize, the segments in Mc are mostly shared between the two continua, which distinguish themselves from the early group E. Those E segments missing in the continua are often taken over in the later cross-copied versions that combine these with segments from the continua.⁶³ To discover the difference between the two continua in this chapter, one needs to look into the formulation of the shared segments. Elaborations particularly in L-c concern the focus of the chapter, the nature of a limited partnership, a truce between enemies for the duration of a crisis after which it dissolves. This part of the chapter has grown considerably in the Arabic versions when compared with the Older Syriac one.⁶⁴ The concept clearly aroused controversy and provoked lengthy explanation in the fourth dialogue. Particular insistence is placed on the necessity of caution while it lasts, the limitations in time by the purpose to be achieved, and the need to end it immediately thereafter. Further additions concern the mercurial relations of humans in general and the importance of adjusting to changing situations.

7. Conclusion

Regarding the types of changes within continua, two general observations can be made. First, segments tend to start out with more stable formulations and diversify towards the end. In those that diverge more, this is visible in the synoptic edition by a different length of the text, not unlike a row of organ pipes. Sayings and analogies as well as formulaic segments introducing and concluding parables or sub-stories tend to be more stable, though there are exceptions to this too.

63. See P3471 and P5881 in the Appendix, figs 7-10.

64. For the more substantial rewriting and Christianization of the Younger Syriac version, see chapter 5 by Jan van Ginkel.

Second, the kinds of additions cover a range. Many are synonymous reformulations (potentially in style more familiar to the copyist-redactor, including select dialectal expressions), others add narrative detail and round off the plot, or contribute psychological motivations of the characters. Sub-stories receive final commentaries, linking them explicitly to the argument they serve, and sayings and images are drawn out with added paraphrases.⁶⁵ Occasionally final reflections about the gist of the chapter are placed into the mouth of the philosopher in a return to the frame dialogue.⁶⁶

The continuum has been shown to provide a valid model for analyzing the mobile Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Using it relies on a critical digital edition that makes it possible to align and compare versions. Even here it is not possible (neither for the screen nor the eye) to view the full spectrum at the same time, but closely related versions can be compared in one diagnostic digital edition, whereas selected witnesses for each of P-c, Q-c, L-c, E and cross-copied versions combined in another digital edition can give an overview of the full spectrum. The latter option has been chosen for the present representative study. However, each selection of versions is a reduction of the entire gamut and involves interpretation. The question of which number of manuscripts is necessary for a representative edition is equally difficult to answer. Finally, one must acknowledge the effect of the present kind of analysis on the researcher's reading process. Viewing several versions side by side leads to a paradigmatic way of reading and creates an awareness that for every rendition there are alternatives in other manuscripts. At each step that the same thing is said differently elsewhere, and one acquires a habit of horizontal perusal. Even this is not entirely new, as the anonymous compilations of different versions, such as P5881 and P3471, are the outcome of some procedure of parallel reading, the exact technique of which still remains a puzzle.

By establishing the relationship between manuscripts as a continuum, it becomes possible to trace the flow of the text between them and detect shared changes in content and focus. Shared adherence to a continuum further permits to establish a relative chronology between the witnesses, helping to date undated ones by close matches that are dated. The shared text of a continuum finally allows to isolate those passages in individual versions that depart from it and can be attributed to the last copyist-redactor (or any lost *Vorlage*).

65. See for e.g., the commentary to the sub-story of "The Yellow Folio."

66. See for e.g., the philosopher's commentary ending the chapters of "The Cat and the Rat."

Still unknown is how copyist-redactors went about creating their versions, particularly those that combine a number of *Vorlagen* with visible skill and dramatic effect. At least one witness, München 616, shows marginalia from another manuscript that expand the narrative,⁶⁷ and this might be an interim phase before a further copyist-redactor would integrate this into the main text. In another case, Vat. 213, a manuscript preserves three stages of work: note-taking, the resulting abridgments of a number of chapters, and the chapters in original length, revealing a targeted approach of preserving the chapters' core messages and the sub-stories' narrative climax.⁶⁸ Further discoveries may reveal more about such techniques and increase our knowledge of para-scholarly transmission practices which kept *Kalīla wa-Dimna* mobile and alive over centuries.

67. This occurs notably in the sub-story of "The Carpenter and His Wife" in the Oc chapter (fol. 94r), as well as other places of Oc and Rd chapters (between fols. 80r and 96r).

68. See Gruendler and Sakran, "A Redactor at Work."

3. What the Chapter of “The King and His Dreams” reveals about the Variety of Versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (Khoulood Khalfallah)

Abstract:

For a better understanding of the textual evolution of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, based on the roughly 95 manuscripts that we have collected so far, the classification of witnesses becomes essential to trace the process of development of different versions. In my contribution, I plan to focus on “The King and His Dreams” tale.

The chapter of “The King and His Dreams” has an old Sanskrit origin and has been found so far in all Arabic versions. With regard to its position in the book, however, it is quite variable. Therefore, I have chosen to analyze the extent to which this order, as well as certain peculiar narrative elements, could help to classify the Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

Based on our analysis of this chapter, several groups of manuscripts have been recognized, which have helped to identify characteristic narrative and structural elements that are proving useful in our classification work. The comparison of different groups leads us to another important result, which is the uncovering of higher-level connections among them. Throughout this process, we have been able to describe the evolution of some versions of the text, see which have been reproduced more than others, identify how copyists experimented with the combination of different *Vorlagen*, and uncover how certain *Kalīla wa-Dimna* versions changed over time. It remains to be seen, however, to what extent these findings are applicable for the remainder of the book.⁶⁹

Introduction

Kalīla wa-Dimna is one of the most important marks of Arab and Eastern literature. Being rich in literary, cultural, and ethnic diversity, it is proof of the coexistence of the different cultures and religions of the Far East and Middle East. The plurality of its fables has,

⁶⁹ For further features of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* continua, see article by BG in this volume.

therefore, given rise to many discussions concerning its origins. The large number of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, their distribution in time and space, as well as the identity of their copyists/ co-authors, are all determining factors in the evolution of the book and its composition.

In the Arabic versions, this work consists mostly of fourteen stable chapters (i.e., they appear in almost all manuscripts), which can be divided into several categories depending on their probable origins, as well as of four rare chapters, which recur only in a small minority of manuscripts. In this contribution, I will focus on “The King and His Dreams” chapter, exploring how it might help trace the development of different versions. This chapter has an old Sanskrit origin and has been found so far in all complete Arabic versions, but its position in the book is quite variable. I have chosen, therefore, to analyze the extent to which its position in the chapter sequence could help classify the versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. I will combine this analysis with that of certain recurrent narrative elements in the chapter to examine if the results correlate.

The King and His Dreams Chapter

Whereas the majority of the tales in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* have their origins in the Sanskrit (Vedic-Hinduist) *Pañcatantra* or the *Mahābhārata*, the “The King and His Dreams” chapter (hereafter Kd) is an exception, since it has a Buddhist origin. The Arabic Kd chapter originates from the Buddhist legend of the Canda king Pradyōta,⁷⁰ and it is especially close to that found in the Tibetan version.⁷¹

This chapter is as stable as the two Indian blocks, the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata*.⁷² It is present in all Arabic versions and all their medieval translations. Kd also appears in the Old Syriac version which has been translated directly from the Pehlevi.⁷³ This chapter is clearly the only one in the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* which highlights indirectly the

⁷⁰ Schiefner, *Mahākātjājana und König Tshanda-Pradjota. Ein Cyclus buddhistischer Erzählungen.* (1875), pp. 47-66.

⁷¹ De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 13.

⁷² For a discussion of these blocks in the chapter sequence, cf. below.

⁷³ The Old Syriac version, translated directly from the Pehlevi by the end of the 6th century CE and which was translated by a Persian Christian named Būd and preserved in a single manuscript copied by Pardeacon Hormizd in Iraq in the 16th century. For further features of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Old Syriac version, see article by JvG in this volume.

Buddhist confession tradition and presents the Brahmins as spiteful, untruthful, and enemies of the king:

أشكَّ أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَنْصَحُوهُ لَمَّا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مِنَ الْحَقْدِ عَلَيْهِ وَالْبَغْضِ لَهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ إِنْ قَدَرُوا عَلَى هَلَكْتِهِ التَّمَسُّوا لَهُ الْحِيلَةَ فِي ذَلِكَ

I doubt that they [the Brahmins] will advise him, for their hearts hold malice and antagonism against him [the King]; rather, if they could destroy him, they will seek a trick for that.

(Ayasofya 4095, dated 618/1221, fol. 73v)

وقال عند ذلك لم أوفق حين قصصت منامي على البراهمة الأعداء السود الأكباد

And then he [the King] said: „I was wrong to tell the belligerent, black-livered Brahmins about my dream.” **(Tunis BnT 16029, Pdf 112)**

Because of this anti-Brahminic bias, Kd was excluded from the traditional Indian sources but remained in the versions of neighboring areas that had a Buddhist majority. It is found, for example, in the Tibetan, the Pali, and some Chinese versions.⁷⁴ De Blois also supposes that Burzōy used an old Indian copy in Sanskrit for his translation, which still contained the Kd fable and has unfortunately been lost or destroyed.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 13.

⁷⁵ De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 13.

In the Arabic versions, however, we have a revision not completely in line with this anti-Brahminic idea. One positive figure, the sage Kabābīrūn,⁷⁶ who helps save the king from his gruesome fate, is qualified in one specific passage—when the queen advises her sad husband to seek Kabābīrūn’s advice on and interpretation of the dream—as “originally a brahmin.” This specification is included in all the early Arabic copies, except in MS Paris 3465, where this part of the text is illegible, and MS Rabat 3655, where this sage is only mentioned by name, but with a small correction above it in a different hand that translates into “and he is a monk.” This passage is presented in various *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts from the 13th and 14th centuries as following:

ولكن انطلق إلى كئابابرون فاذا ذكر له ذلك وسله عما أحببت فإنه لبيب أمين وليس عند هؤلاء شيء إلا وعنده أفضل منه وإن كان أصله من البرهمنين فإنه ناسك مجتهد فقيه

But go to Kanābābirūn, tell him that, and ask him whatever you want; for he is intelligent and honest. And if they [the Brahmins] lay claim to some [knowledge], he rather has the better kind. Though he is **originally a Brahmin**, he is an assiduous ascetic and a man of judgment. (Ayasofya 4095, dated 618/1221, fol.74v)

ولكن انطلق إلى كبابرون العابد فاذا ذكر له أمرك واسأله عما بدى لك فإنه لبيب أمين وليس عند أحد منهم شيئاً إلا وجد أفضل منه وإن كان أصله من البرهمنين⁷⁷ فإنه ناسك فقيه

But go to Kabābirūn, the devout, tell him your story and ask him for [the interpretation] of what you have seen; for he is intelligent and honest. And if they [the Brahmins] lay claim to some [knowledge], he has rather found the better kind. Though he is **originally a Brahmin**, he

⁷⁶ His name varies slightly from one manuscript to another. He’s called Kint’run in the Old Syriac and Kar-Idun in Persian. Cf. the various versions below.

⁷⁷ Grammatical mistake by the scribe of MS Cambridge, Parker Library 578.

is an ascetic and a man of judgment. (Cambridge, Parker Library 578, dated 7?1/1389,⁷⁸ fol. 104v)

ولكن كنايرون العالم فقيهٌ خَيْرٌ فأطلعته على أمرك وما هو يأمرك به فإنه عالمٌ عنده الأمور وهو أيضاً منهم غير أنه أفضلهم
ولسنا نتهمه في نصيحة الملك

But Kanāirūn the wise is a good religious man. Inform him of your issue and [do] what he will command you to do, for he is a wise man, and he knows everything. **He is also one of them,** yet he is the best of them, and we do not doubt the sincerity of his advice to the King. (Riyadh, King Faisal Center 2536, dated 747/1346, fol. 116v)

The specification about the sage being originally a Brahmin is also included in the versification of Ibn al-Habbāriyya (12th century CE),⁷⁹ in Naṣr Allāh Munshī's version (ca. 540/1146),⁸⁰ in the Old Hebrew (13th century CE),⁸¹ and in the Old Castilian (1251 CE)⁸² translations. Interestingly, in the Old Syriac (ca. 6th century CE), the sage is described as “a prophet of God and as wiser than all brahmins.”⁸³ I suppose that this formulation could not be translated literally into Arabic, for fear that the Muslim reader will reject it, and had been therefore adjusted. When it comes to the Tibetan version, which is probably the closest version to the

⁷⁸ The date noted in the colophon is partly illegible, the Parker Library has dated the manuscript to [ca. 1300 - 1399].

⁷⁹ Edition by al-Khūrī Ni‘mat Allāh al-Asmar (1900) p.199 “وإن يكن من جملة البراهمة فنفسه ليست لهم ملائمة”.

⁸⁰ English translation by Thackston (2019) p. 157 “Although his origin is near that of the Brahmans, he is more honest and truthful than they are and is more worldly-wise.”

⁸¹ Edition and a French translation of the Hebrew translation (late thirteenth century CE) by Joseph Derenbourg (1881) p.198. “Il sait tout, le passé et l’avenir, il est bien de leur secte, mais il est plus sage d’eux tous”.

⁸² Edition of the Old Castilian translation (1251 CE) by Hans-Jörg Döhla (2007) p.396. “que es Sabio destas cosas, e es otrosy dellos, e nos non le sospechamos que te de leal consejo”.

⁸³ Edition by Friedrich Schulthess (1911) p.139 He is described as “er weiß um die Welt Bescheid und was bei ihrem Anbeginn gewesen und was bei ihrem Ende sein wird, und er ist ein Prophet Gottes and gerechter und weiser als alle Brahmanen.”

Arabic,⁸⁴ the sage is obviously a Buddhist,⁸⁵ which confirms de Blois' analysis of the absence of this fable in the extant Indian sources: that it is included in the versions which are intended for cultures with a Buddhist majority.

Illustration of the wise Kabābīrūn interpreting the king's vision, (Riyadh 2536, fol. 117v).

⁸⁴ De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 13.

⁸⁵ Friedrich Schultness (1911) p.49.

كانت بن لياير الملوك وليس يعرف قيمتها واما قيتامك على جبل ابيض فانه
صورة الملك يزيد بن معاوية بن يزيد



يايتك من جبل كندور فيل ابيض مع تلحقة الخيل واما ما كان علي
 راسك من سنبيه النار فانه يايتك من بعض الملوك اكليل ذهب واما
 الطائر الذي تقدر راسك فلست مفتر لك ذلك فلا توحل منه
 فليس عليك منه مارهه واما هو ان نخطه علي بعض احبابك فتصير الي

الصلح

When it comes to the fable itself, Kd has the exact same narrative frame as the other fables in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely the dialogue between the philosopher Baydabā' and the King Dabshalīm. The story of the King and his dreams comes then to illustrate the importance of clemency for rulers and its essential role in the protection and the management of their kingdoms. In addition to the story of the Indian king, his wife, and his vizier, which barely includes any animals, this fable incorporates two third-level sub-stories. Both of them contain animals. These two sub-stories are told by the sage vizier who tries to convince his King of the danger of mistrust and irrationality. The first sub-story is about a couple of doves that agree to fill their nest with grains and to save them for winter. Then the male goes away for some time and when he comes back after summer, he finds that the dried grains have diminished in volume and then accuses his female partner of having eaten from the nest in his absence. The female tries to defend herself but the male refuses to listen to her and beats her to death. After some time, the rain falls on the nest and the grains become moist and increase again in volume. The male, therefore, finally understands his mistake and regrets his deed. The second story is about a monkey who steals some lentils from a man in the woods. But while the monkey is climbing up into a tree, one lentil falls, so he follows it and tries hard to find it. The irrational monkey is depicted as being so obsessed with the lost lentil that he ends up losing all the lentils he has found.

The Kd story, as previously mentioned, particularly highlights the quality of “*ḥilm*” (clemency) and the importance of being patient and able to forgive so as to protect goods and loved ones. The chapter is about an Indian King (Bilād), his vizier (Iblād), and his wife (Ibraḥt)—the names of the characters vary from one manuscript to another. One day, the Indian King sees, while sleeping, some terrifying dreams and upon waking up asks the Brahmins to interpret them. The resentful Brahmins, looking for revenge—because the King has killed twelve thousand of them—inform him that something bad will happen to him and advise him to execute his loved ones in order to save himself and his kingdom from the implications of his misfortunate dream. The sad King becomes confused, does not know what to do and, following instructions from the Brahmins, conceals the matter from his vizier and wife. Fortunately, the queen, encouraged by the vizier to enquire about the King's odd behavior, manages to get him to speak and encourages him to seek advice from a wise, pious ascetic named Kabābīrūn. The King, who trusts his wife, does so, and the sage interprets all of the King's dreams differently from what the other Brahmins have done. He first assures the King that no one has to be

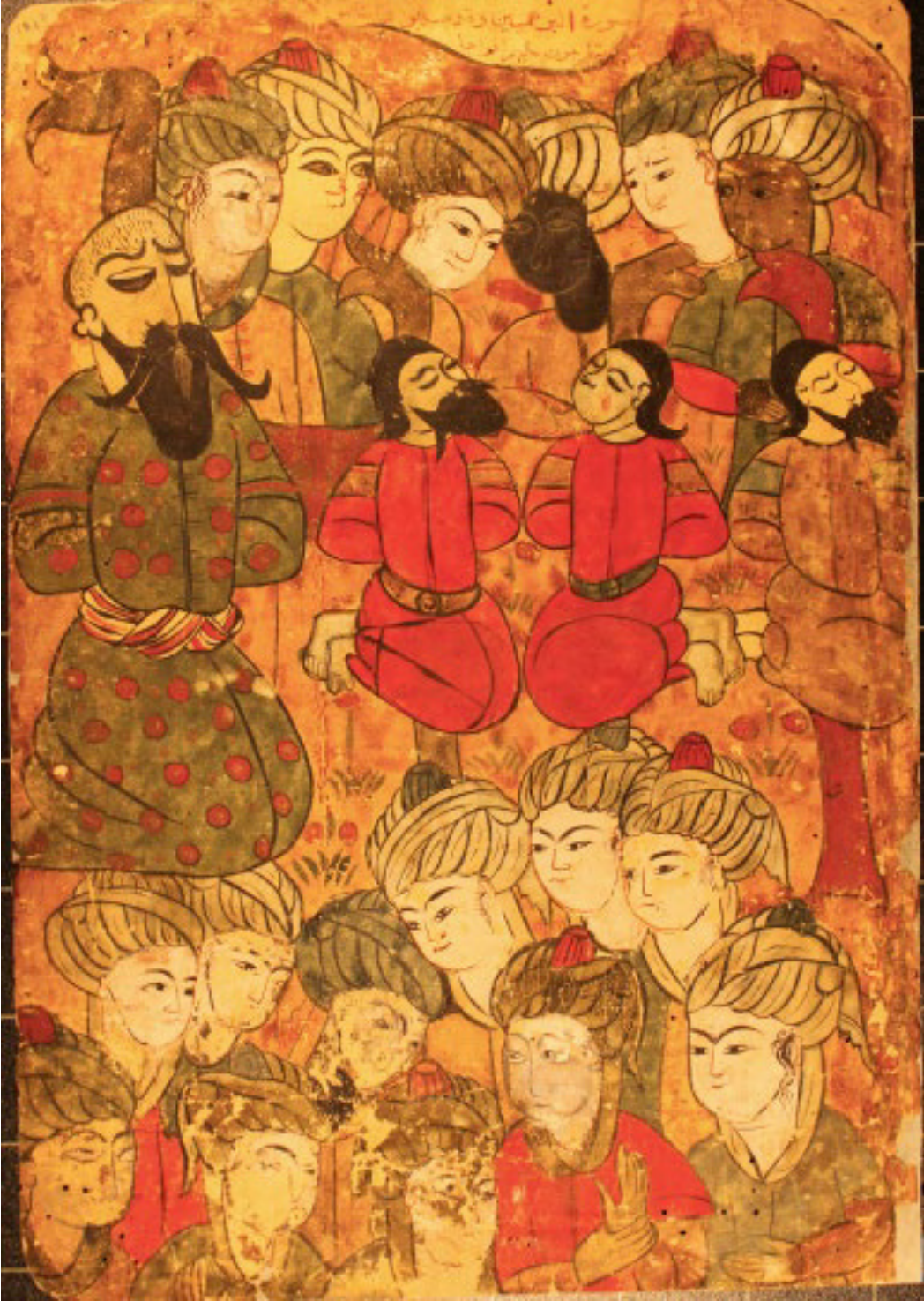
executed and then tells him that he will receive some precious gifts within a week. He, nevertheless, refuses to interpret the King's last dream, assuring him that no harm will come from it, either to him or his loved ones.

After seven days, as Kabābīrūn has said, the King receives many gifts and decides to distribute them among the people in his entourage as a gesture of gratitude for their loyalty. In the end, he takes two of the remaining gifts, a garb, and a crown, and asks the queen to choose between them. The queen hesitates and looks toward the vizier for a suggestion. The vizier gestures with his eye toward the garb, as it is decorated with gold and precious stones and shines in the dark. But before she follows his suggestion, she notices the King staring at her and suspects that he has seen what just happened between her and the vizier. Therefore, she fears that he might have misunderstood the situation and chooses to take the crown and the King's second wife receives the garb.

After some time and while the King is sitting with the queen, his second wife passes by, wearing the gorgeous garb, which the queen did not choose: she looks charming, which makes the King desire her. Subsequently, the King gets angry with the queen and tells her that she was foolish for not choosing the garb and that his second wife is a much better wife for him than her. The angry queen, overreacting, pours a bowl of rice she has in her hand over the King's head. The King becomes angry and frustrated at this disrespectful act and orders his vizier to execute her. The wise vizier, aware of the affection and love the Indian King bears for his first wife, the mother of his child, decides to spare her and to put her in a safe place. He returns then to the King and tells him that he has executed his order. The King, who has become sad by now, blames him for rushing and regrets his order. The vizier, however, wanting to teach his King a lesson about exercising patience and clemency, starts a long discussion filled with "*amthila*" (proverbs) and anecdotes to convince the King that major decisions should not be taken without thinking properly. He tells him, moreover, the story of the hasty pigeon who mistrusts his female and kills her, as well as the story of the impulsive monkey who loses all the lentils he has found because of his irrationally. After some time, the King starts feeling guilty about his hastiness and starts contemplating the implications of his irreversible decision. The vizier then realizes that his King has understood the lesson he has been taught and decides to bring the Queen back, revealing the truth. The happy King then shows great gratitude toward his vizier, who saved the queen, and decides to employ good

judgment before taking any important decisions in the future. Finally, he orders the untruthful Brahmins to be executed.

Illustration of the execution of the Brahmins, (MS MET1981.373, fol. 100r).



Sprengling's classification of the manuscripts based on the chapter sequence 86

It is important to clarify that the chapters in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* can be subdivided into several blocks of chapters, that correlate with their origin. The Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are usually composed of four stable blocks.

The first block consists of the four introductory chapters which are presented successively as follows: "The Preface of 'Alī b. al-Šāh" (*muqaddimat 'Alī b. al-Šāh* or *muqaddima al-kitāb*), "The (Long) Version of Burzōy's Journey" (*ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*), "The Preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa" (*muqaddimat Ibn al-Muqaffa' or gharaḍ al-kitāb*), "The (Short) Version of Burzōy's Journey" (*ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*) and finally "The Life of Burzōy" (*Burzūya aṭ-ṭabīb li-Buzurhmihr b. al-Bakhtikān*).⁸⁷

These chapters are highly important since they present the historical frame of the book. The first chapter "The Preface of 'Alī b. al-Šāh" (also called Bahnūd b. Šahwān) serves to explain why the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was elaborated. It contains an introduction of the two main characters in the frame story of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely the philosopher Baydabā and the Indian King Dabšālīm. This preface is unstable, and its origins can not be clarified with certainty.⁸⁸

The second chapter is "The (Long) 89 Version of Burzōy's Journey" (hereafter Lv). This chapter describes how the Persian King Kīsrā Anūšaruwān sends Burzōy to India to look for the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the challenges he encounters there until he returns to Persia with the book translated from Sanskrit into Pehlevi. This preface tells us, among other things, how Burzōy himself asks the king to dedicate a chapter to his biography, which was elaborated, according to this chapter, by the secretary of the King, Barzağamhar.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Sprengling, 1924, *Kalīla Studies I*, American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures Vol 40, University of Chicago press, p. 81-97.

⁸⁷ I am using the English translation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* chapter titles used by de Blois.

⁸⁸ De Sacy and De Blois think that the preface is not as old as the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* since it is missing in the Persian version and in all medieval translations. De Blois qualifies this chapter as "spurious". See De Blois 1990, *Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book* p. 62.

⁸⁹ The chapter of Burzoy's voyage is the only one in the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that has two different versions: one quite elaborated and another more demonstrative and rather short. Those two versions are mostly mutually exclusive in the Arabic versions, except for some exceptions where the two versions are similarly present (MS Bodleian Pococke 400, MS New York Met 1981-373, MS München Cod.arab. 616 et MS Paris arabe 3467).

⁹⁰ The chapter supposed to be elaborated by the secretary of King Barzağamhar is the last introductory chapter "The Life of Burzōy" (*Burzūya aṭ-ṭabīb li-Buzurhmihr b. al-Bakhtikān*).

The third chapter, “The Preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (hereafter Im), represents, as its title indicates, an introduction elaborated by Ibn al-Muqaffa’,⁹¹ who translated the book from Pehlevi into Arabic. This chapter acts as an instruction manual for the book and initiates the reader to look for the real wisdom implied in its stories.

The fourth introductory chapter, “The (Short) Version of Burzōy’s Journey,” is rarely found in Arabic manuscripts. It exists, however, in the majority of the old medieval translations.⁹² It tells the story of the physicist Burzōy who hears about some plants in the Indian mountains that are capable of resurrecting the dead. The physician travels, with his king’s approval, to India and begins searching and mixing plants without success. Eventually, he understands that the magical plants he heard about are just an allegory for books, that the mountains represent the wise men, and the dead symbolize ignorant people. Burzōy, therefore, sets out in search of Indian books of wisdom and chooses the best among them in order to translate them and bring them back to his king and his people. He chooses, among others, the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

The last chapter in this block is the “The Life of Burzōy” (*Burzūya aṭ-ṭabīb li-Buzurhmīhr b. al-Bakhtikān*). This is the only one, among the four introductory chapters, that exists in the second Syriac version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, translated directly from Arabic. This chapter includes the biography of the physicist Burzōy and his thoughts. There has been a lot of speculation regarding the origin of this chapter and its writer. De Blois and Nöldeke suggest that this chapter existed in the lost Pehlevi version.

The introductory block is followed by the two Indians blocks, namely the *Pañcatantra* and *Mahābhārata* blocks

The *Pañcatantra* block starts with the fable of “The Lion and The Ox” (*al-asad wa-l-thawr*), which is the backbone of the book and the source of its title. This fable is the largest and the most complex one in the book. It contains multiple layers of embedded sub-stories that go up to the fifth degree. Originally, this fable formed the first book of the *Pañcatantra*

91 Most of the scholars agree that this preface was written by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ himself, given the resemblance seen between the content of this chapter and other introductions developed by Ibn al-Muqaffa’, especially that of *Kitāb al-adab al-kabīr*. See Kristó-Nagy 2013, *La pensée d’Ibn al-Muqaffa’* pp. 132-133.

92 De Blois 1990, *Burzōy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book* p. 40.

which is “*Mitrabhedha*” (The Loss of Friends). The “Trial of Dimna” chapter (*al-faḥṣ ‘an amr Dimna*), represents a continuation of the fable of “The Lion and The Ox” and it is always located between the two first fables from the *Pañcatantra*.

The “Ring-Dove” chapter (*al-ḥamāma l-muṭawwaqa*) is the second fable of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* which belongs to the second book of the *Pañcatantra*, the “Mitralāpti” (The Acquisition of Friends). This fable highlights the mutual trust between the members of a group, and the importance of selflessness. It was reinterpreted, moreover, in the 10th century in “*Rasā’il iḥwān as-safā*”.

The third fable originating from the *Pañcatantra* is “The Owls and the Crows” (*al-būm wa-l-ghirbān*). This fable belongs more precisely to the third book of the *Pañcatantra* the “*Kākolūkīya*” (The War of Crows and Owls). It narrates a war between the kingdom of owls and the kingdom of crows. This fable is quite complex and contains an abundance of incorporated stories. The final two fables that originated from the *Pañcatantra* are “The Ape and Tortoise” (*al-qird wa-l-ghaylam*) and “The Ascetic and Weasel” (*al-nāsik wa-ibn ‘irs*). These two fables are relatively short and belong respectively to the fourth and the fifth book of the *Pañcatantra* which are the “*Labdhapranāśana*,” translated from Sanskrit as “The Loss of The Acquired Good,” and the “*Aparīkṣitakāritva*,” translated as “Reckless Behavior.”

When it comes to the *Mahābhārata* block, the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* retains three chapters. The first is “The Mouse and Cat” (*al-juradh wa-l-sinnawr*). It narrates how a mouse and a cat reconcile their differences—despite their natural enmity—and save one another from a deadly, dangerous experience. The second chapter is “The King and Bird” (*al-malik wa-l-ṭā’ir Fanza*), and it tells us the story of a king and a bird who lose their friendship upon mutual distrust and suspicion, moving from affection into hatred following a dramatic incident. The third and last chapter from the *Mahābhārata* block is that of “The Lion and Jackal” (*al-asad wa-ibn āwā wa-l-nāsik*). This is a chapter about a king and his entourage and how a ruler can regain the loyalty and friendship of those whom he severely and unjustly punished in the past.

In addition to these three blocks, one also finds in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* the so-called “Arabic” fables, i.e., those which one finds only in the Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ and which do not appear in the first Syriac version, translated directly from the Pehlevi. These fables include the “The Trial of Dimna” (*al-faḥṣ ‘an amr Dimna*), which is a continuation of the

fable of “The Lion and Ox” and was probably an addition by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, and five other fables that appear most often at the end of the book: “The Traveler and the Goldsmith,” “The Lion and Jackal,” “The Ascetic and His Guest” (*al-nāsik wa-l-ḡayf*), “The Lioness and horseman (*al-labwa wa-l-aswār wa-l-sha‘har*) and finally “The Son of The King and His Companions” (*Ibn al-malik wa-aṣḡābuhū*).

The Kd chapter, the only Buddhist one, is often inserted between the Indian blocks (*Pañcatantra* and *Mahābhārata*), but sometimes changes its position within the book.

This variety of positions inspired Sprengling (1924) to build a classification system for all *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts based on the presence and order of the different chapters in the diverse manuscripts. He chose the Kd chapter as an indicator of the structure of those different versions, developed a method of classification based on the position of this chapter, and defined six groups labeled (A) to (F). Subsequently, a new group (G) has been identified by Gruendler.

In group (A), the first group, Kd chapter appears between the Indian blocks and the added tales. Many early copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* belong to this group sequence, namely MS Paris 3465, (attributed to the 13th century, hereafter P3465)⁹³ as well as its three copies: MS München. Cod.arab. 615 (attributed to the 16-17th century), MS Oxford. E. D. Clarkii Or. 9 (attributed to the 14th Century)⁹⁴ and MS Paris 3470 (attributed to the 16th Century).⁹⁵ This sequence has been enriched through verbatim copies of Silvester de Sacy’s edition (dated 1816), based on MS P3465,⁹⁶ which has been copied very intensively in the 19th century with at least 8 copies that have been discovered so far: namely, two manuscripts attributed to the 19th century, MS Yale A 270 and MS Aleppo Salem Ar 143; four other undated copies from the Royal Library of Rabat, MS Rabat 4418, MS Rabat 879, MS Rabat 4837, MS Rabat 5437; and two other copies from the Library of the Mosque of Wazzān, MS Wazzān MAS 442 and MS Wazzān MAS 444. In addition to that, at least three copies of the Egyptian Bulaq editions (1249 H. and 1251 H.), namely MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā 16288 (dated in its colophon to 601/1205 which is probably not the actual dating), MS Mosul, DFM 00283 (attributed to the 19th century) and MS Wazzān MAS 463 belong to the sequence group

⁹³ See P13, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 70.

⁹⁴ See O3, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 72.

⁹⁵ See P16, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 71.

⁹⁶ De Blois suggests that Silvestre de Sacy’s edition is mainly based on P3465 but he also includes readings from other manuscripts. See De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 3.

(A), since the Bulaq Edition is based on Silvester de Sacy's edition, with the addition of the rare chapter of "The Dove, the Fox and the Heron" at the end.⁹⁷ Thus, a large number of copies belonging to the group sequence (A) are related to the MS P3465 copy but there is another variant of the same group sequence in which Kd does not change its position but the four added tales switch pairwise their positions. One example of this variant is the MS London Or. 4044 (attributed to the fifteenth century).⁹⁸

In the (B) group, Kd chapter appears between the four Arabic added tales. This group has the same chapter sequence as the new Persian version. This sequence is quite rare within the Arabic manuscripts but some copies include a variant of this sequence where two of the Arabic added tales are reversed, namely, MS Toronto 117953 (dated 1055/1645), MS Riyadh 2407 (dated 1103/1691), MS Paris 3473 (dated 1110/1699)⁹⁹ and MS Berlin We 672 (dated 1246/1830) belong to this group. MS Met 1981.373 (dated before 1026/1617) has another variant of the (B) sequence, including a different order of the added tales. A unique Arabic version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Sultan Ahmed III 3015, which is a free retroversion of Naṣr Allāh Munshī's version into Arabic and was translated by a certain 'Umar b. Dāwūd b. al-Shaykh al-Sulaymān al-Fārisī and entitled *Siyar al-mulūk*, belongs also to the (B) sequence group but omits the introductory chapter of Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

In group (C), Kd chapter appears between the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* blocks. The majority of the Arabic manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* belong to this group, among them MS Bodleian Oxford Pococke 400 (attributed to the 14th century CE) as well as its copies, namely, MS Manchester 486 (dated 1040/1631), MS London BL Ad. 24350 (attributed to the 14th CE) and MS Paris 3467 (dated to the 14th/15th century CE). The cross-copied manuscript MS Paris 5881 (dated 1092/1681) belongs also to this group. In addition to that, there is another variant of this sequence group in which the rare chapter of "The King of the Mice" (hereafter Km) is included after Kd and the added tales change order, among them the earliest dated manuscript MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221), MS London BL 8751 (dated 799/1396) and MS Vatican Ar 367 (dated 1026/1617). In a third variant of the sequence group (C), the rare chapter "Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel" comes at the end of the book right after the

⁹⁷ Ibn al Muqadda' 1941: *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. éd : 'Azzam et Taha Husayn p. 14.

⁹⁸ See L5, De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 69.

⁹⁹ See P7, De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 68.

chapter of “The Ascetic and His Guest.” MS Paris 3471 (dated 1053/1643, hereafter P3471), as well as its near-verbatim copies, belong to this variant.

The fourth group is the group sequence (D). Here, Kd chapter and the *Mahābhārata* block are inserted into the *Pañcatantra* block between the third and fourth tales. This group sequence usually includes the rare chapter Km. Many Paris manuscripts belong to this group, namely, MS Paris 3466 (dated 854/1450),¹⁰⁰ MS Paris 3468 (dated 1005/1597),¹⁰¹ MS Paris 3476 (dated 1169/1755),¹⁰² MS Paris 3479 (dated 1184/1770),¹⁰³ MS Paris 3480 (dated 1200/1786)¹⁰⁴ and MS Paris 3477 (attributed to the 18th century).¹⁰⁵

In group (E), the fifth group, Kd chapter is inserted into the *Mahābhārata* block between the second and third tales. This chapter sequence is the same as the Old Castilian and the Hebrew translations. The manuscripts of this sequence group usually include one or two rare chapters at the end, namely, “The Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel” (hereafter Kw) and “The Dove, Fox and Heron” (hereafter Df). In addition to that, it includes mostly “The (Short) Version of Burzōy’s Journey” chapter (hereafter Sv). Among the manuscripts belonging to this group, we find MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346), its copy MS London BL 3900 (dated 1166/1753),¹⁰⁶ MS Istanbul EY 344, dated in its colophon to the 11th century CE—which is probably not the actual dating—and its copy MS Paris 3478 (attributed to the 18th century).¹⁰⁷

The last group sequence identified by Sprengling is (F). In it, Kd chapter appears at the end. This chapter sequence is the same as the later Syriac version. Only a limited number of manuscripts in Arabic with this chapter sequence have been discovered so far, for instance, MS London Add. 23466 (attributed to the 18th century)¹⁰⁸ and MS Hamburg Or.17, an undated copy and which includes a reader note dated to 1904, and MS Beirut BO USJ (2) 00360 (attributed to the 20th century).

¹⁰⁰ See P1, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 67.

¹⁰¹ See P2, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 70.

¹⁰² See P9, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 68.

¹⁰³ See P11, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 69.

¹⁰⁴ See P12, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 69.

¹⁰⁵ See P17, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 71.

¹⁰⁶ See L3, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 68.

¹⁰⁷ See P18, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 72.

¹⁰⁸ See L8, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 70.

In addition to that, Gruendler added a new group (G) in which the fables that originated from the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* are intercalated between each other in a dovetail fashion.¹⁰⁹ This chapter sequence appears in one of the earliest manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Arabic collection, which is the Rabat 3655 copy, dated based on its illustrations to the second half of the thirteen century (1265-1280 CE)¹¹⁰ and its verbatim copy Paris 3475 (dated 1175/1761).¹¹¹ Another variant of this sequence has been discovered in MS Ayasofya 4213 and MS Riyadh 5786.

In addition to the position of Kd in the book, I will introduce new criteria for the classification, based on some specific narrative elements in Kd chapter that have been emphasized very selectively in some manuscript copies. These narrative elements have proved to be of great use for the identification of different versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and have helped us to distinguish two major groups: The Queen continuum and the “dreams group.” Those narrative elements found in Kd chapter were also accompanied by the presence of some rare chapters at the end of the book. The correlation of those two criteria will be further discussed in the next part of this paper.

The Queen Continuum

When it comes to the narrative content of Kd, it offers an excellent opportunity for the classification of our manuscript copies. In fact, some narrative elements appear only in a limited number of manuscripts with the same consistency and in the same position in the text. This group of manuscripts, which I call “Queen continuum” (hereafter Q-c), represents a group of manuscript versions whose additions and modifications make them aesthetically distinctive, though the main storyline of the chapter remains unaltered.

An example, among many, is the Indian king prostrating before the wise Brahmin when he goes to visit him, seeking an interpretation of his dreams. In the Q-c there is a specification of this act: “*sağada li-ḥakīm suğūda taḥiya lā suğūda `ubūdiyya*” ([...and the king] prostrated before the sage, as a greeting sign, not as a sign of worship). This specification has been

¹⁰⁹ Gruendler 2013, Les versions arabes de *Kalīla wa-Dimna* p. 397.

¹¹⁰ Bernard O’Kane, Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century, B.B. Tauris & Co 2003 p.218.

¹¹¹ See P10, De Blois 1990, Burzoy’s voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 69.

probably added to eliminate any possible misinterpretation of this act and to be more acceptable by a Muslim reader.

Another example is when the queen serves her husband rice. The bowl she holds in her hand is always described as made of sapphire: “*wa-fī yadīhā ṣaḥfatun min yāqūt*” ([...] in her hand a bowl made of sapphire). This is different from all other manuscripts where the bowl is made of gold.

A further distinctive feature of this group in Kd chapter is the expansion of the qualities of the queen and the amplification of her contributory role in saving the kingdom. The queen is presented as a very wise woman and her husband, the King of India, and his vizier compliment her several times in this version, as shown in the next examples. For this reason, I call this group “Queen continuum”:

وقال لهم إنّه لا ينبغي أن تدخل هذه الهدايا خزائنا ولكي أقسمها بينكم > لأنكم < أنتم الذين وظنتم أنفسكم على الموت بسببي ولا سيّما ابرخة التي جادت بنفسها وبذلت نصحتها وهي التي أشارت عليّ بالرأي الذي وجدت فيه بقاء ملكي وما صرت إليه ممّا ترون من الفرح والسرور

He told them, “These gifts should not enter our coffers. I am going to divide them between you, because you are the ones who have resigned yourselves to die for my sake, **especially Ibraḥat, who devoted herself and imparted her advice. She was the one to give me the advice that saved my kingdom and offered me joy and pleasure as you see.**” (Q-c: Tunis BnT 4459, fol. 96r)

وليس هو [الملك] بصابرٍ عنها وإن كان أصابه منها بعض خرقٍ فليس ينسى فضل عقلها وحلاوة دلالتهـا له على العمل والحلم والتأني وتعريفها إيّاه وهو في أشدّ ما ممّا أصابه من البراهمة بالصبر

“And he [the King] will miss her, though he has suffered at some of her disobedience, **for he cannot forget the favors of her intellect and the sweetness of her advice to him when she**

signaled to him to be patient, wise, and tolerant and revealed to him, when he was in a very dire predicament, what the Brahmins had caused him.” (Q-c: Tunis BnT 4459, fol. 97r)

In fact, the qualities of the queen are also extended in some of the manuscripts, which Gruendler has labeled the “London continuum” (hereafter L-c)¹¹² but those qualities are not as much enlarged as they are in the version of the Q-c. In the L-c as well as in the Q-c, the Indian King states that his wife, the queen, is the one who has saved him and his kingdom, unlike the rest of the manuscripts of the “Paris Continuum” (hereafter P-c)¹¹³ where the role played by the queen was appreciated but rather underestimated. This is evident in the following examples:

لولا أنّ الله تبارك وتعالى تداركني ومنّ عليّ برحمته وبزوجتي ابرخة السيّدة السعيدة حتّى شرحت صدري ووجهتني إلى الحكيم الفاضل وبشّرتني بهذه الهدايا <لمتّ>حزنًا وكمدًا

“If God, blessed and exalted be He, had not rescued me and offered His mercy *and* [the advice] of my wife Ibraḥt, the happy woman, who opened my eyes, directed me to the virtuous sage, and foretold of these gifts, <I would have died>of grief and agony.” (Q-c: Tunis BnT 4459, fol. 95v)

لولا أنّ الله عزّ وجلّ تداركني ورحمني برأي ابراخت كنت قد هلكت وزالت دنياي

¹¹² The L-c includes some of the earliest copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely, MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221) and MS London Or. 4044 (attributed to the fifteenth century). See Gruendler 2020, An interim report on the editorial and analytical work of the AnonymClassic project p. 259.

¹¹³For further features of P-c, see article by BG in this volume.

“If God, the Great and Almighty, had not rescued me **and offered me mercy through Ibraḥt’s advice**, I would have died and my claim to life would have vanished.” (L-c: *Ayasofya* 4095, fol. 75v)

ولا أنّ الله تعالى تداركني برحمته لكنك قد هلكت وأهلك

“If God, glory be to Him, had not rescued **and offered me His mercy**, I would have died and [caused others to] perish.” (P-c: *Paris* 3465, fol. 133v)

The Q-c is based on the MS P3466 version, a manuscript that jumps from one continuum to another in the middle of the book and builds its own model.¹¹⁴ In Kd chapter, however, the Q-c lines up with the L-c and highlights further the qualities of the queen by displaying her character and her merits.

Another distinctive passage of the Q-c is the portrayal of the reaction of the king after he meets with the Brahmins by highlighting his confusion and his fear. This passage is almost identical to those in the early manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Here follows an example:

قام ودخل منزله ووقع لوجهه وجعل يتقلّب يميناً وشمالاً محزوناً مهموماً ويفكر في رأيه أيّ الأمرين يركب الموت عياناً وهو ينظر إليه إذا أعطاهم ما سألوه فمكث لذلك أياماً وفشى الحديث في أرضه.

He got up and entered his house. He fell on his face and began turning right and left, grieving and worried, thinking about his decision regarding which of the two choices he should take: Should he embrace apparent death, which was looking him in the eye if he gives them what

¹¹⁴For further features of Q-c, see article by BG in this volume.

they asked for. So he stayed like that for days and rumors spread in his land. (L-c: Ayasofya 4095, fol. 73r/v)

In the Q-c some new elements have been added to this passage. For instance, the description of the place where the King withdraws, as well as his crying, amplify and demonstrate his deep sadness. A summary of the situation has also been added to clarify the problem and to explain the king's confusion:

وثار قائمًا من بين أيديهم ودخل إلى خلوة له كان يغمّ فيها فوق على وجهه وجعل يبكي ويتقلب ويفكر فيما أصابه من كلام البراهمة وما طلبوه منه وما عنده من خوف رؤياه وأحلامه وكان لا يطمئن إلى جهة تارة يهون الموت على نفسه ولا ينقاد إلى سؤال البراهمة وتارة يذهب إلى الانقياد إلى كلامهم وتحير أي الأمرين يركب فمكث على ذلك أيامًا وفشى الحديث في أرضه ونواحي مملكته.

He rose in anger and left them. **He entered an isolated room where he usually grieved and fell on his face and started crying and rolling, thinking about what had stirred inside him because of the Brahmin's talk and what they had asked him to do as well as his fear of his vision and dreams. He did not feel comfortable in any way. Sometimes he made the thought of death easy on himself and did not fall for the Brahmin's request and sometimes he submitted to their suggestion.** He was confused about which of the two decisions he should take. So, he stayed like that for days, and rumors spread in his land and the other parts of his kingdom. (Q-c: Tunis BnT 16029, PDF 108)

The uniqueness of this group is not limited to Kd chapter, but it is spread throughout the rest of the book. Many additions and modifications were found in many other chapters. Their length can vary from small additions or cuts to some extensions of many sentences. For

instance, in the chapter of “Owls and Crows,” particularly in the story of the deceived carpenter, the carpenter’s reaction to his wife’s deception is rather unusual. Instead of being angry or sad, he is portrayed as being very excited by what has happened in the night between his wife and her lover and decides to make love with her. A description of this intimate intercourse was added to this passage. In “The Mouse and the Cat” chapter, there are no big changes but rather small additions. For example, when the mouse goes to meet the trapped cat, he gives him a nickname and calls him “*abā Sinān*,” and he asks him: “How are you *abā Sinān*?” This addition does not change the conversation between the two animals, but gives charm to this version and makes it more distinctive.

As mentioned earlier, the Q-c is based on a unique manuscript from the fifteenth century, MS Paris 3466 (dated 854/1450, hereafter P3466). P3466 is the earliest manuscript of this continuum that has been discovered so far, but it is probably a verbatim copy of an earlier specimen, since the copy includes a large number of collations and corrections on the margins, probably with an earlier copy. MS Paris 3466 also includes a large number of blanks, left out for illustrations along with precise legends (what indicates that the “Vorlage” was illustrated), but neither MS P3466, nor any member of the Q-c includes illustrations.

The Q-c includes eleven manuscripts, some of them are copies of each other, namely, two undated manuscripts, MS Tunis BnT 4459 and MS Tunis BnT 16029 from the National Library of Tunis. In addition to that, this group includes three manuscripts from The National Library in Paris, namely, MS Paris 3468 (dated 1005/1597), MS Paris 3480 (dated 1200/1786), and MS Paris 3476 (dated 1169/1755); three other manuscripts from the National Library of Tunis, MS Tunis BnT 2281 (dated 1076/1666), MS Tunis BnT 9760 (dated before 1320/1902) and MS Tunis BnT 8623 (dated before 1229/1814); two manuscripts from Lebanon, MS Sarba OBA 989 (dated 1127/1715) and MS Beirut USJ 0022 (2) (dated 1263/1847); and, finally, one manuscript from Iraq, MS Baghdad 350 (dated 1114/1704).

Nine of these mentioned manuscripts include the rare chapter Km, discovered so far only in sixteen Arabic manuscripts. This chapter, despite its rareness in the Arabic versions, is quite old, since it was included in the Older Syriac version, dated to the 6th century.

Q-c Manuscripts			
Manuscript	Date	Rare Chapters	Sprengling Sequence
Paris arabe 3466	(854/1450)	King of The Mice	D
Paris arabe 3468	(1005/1597)	King of The Mice	D
Tunis BnT 2281	(1076/1666)	King of The Mice	D
Baghdad 350	(1114/1704)	King of The Mice	D
Sarba OBA 989	(1127/1715)	King of The Mice	D
Paris arabe 3476	(1169/1755)	King of The Mice	D
Paris arabe 3480	(1200/1786)	King of The Mice	D
Beirut USJ 0022 (2)	(1263/1847)	King of The Mice	D
Tunis BnT 9760	Before (1302/1884)	Manuscript incomplete	D
Tunis BnT 8623	Before (1229/1814)	King of The Mice	D
Tunis BnT 4459	n.a.	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
Tunis BnT 16029	n.a.	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E

It should also be mentioned that the majority of the witnesses in this group share the chapter sequence of the (D) group, which is the same sequence that includes P3466. All those copies also include Km chapter. The two undated manuscripts belonging to the chapter sequence (E) (MS Tunis Bnt 4459 and MS Tunis BnT 16029) are the only exceptions in the Q-c, since they include the rare chapter Kw at the end.

The differences between these two sub-groups can also be highlighted through numerous dissimilarities in the vocabulary used in the two versions. For example, when the King decides to offer the crown and the garb to his two wives, he asks his vizier to bring the gifts to where the women are gathered and asks the queen to choose one of them. This passage varies within the Q-c as follows:

ويقال إنه أخذ الإكليل ودفعه إلى بلاذ وقال احمل هذا بين يديك إلى مجلس الحرير فلما رفعه بلاذ دخل الملك
<و>أحضر النساء وقدم <ل>ابزاخت وحورفتاه وخيرهن وقال لبلاذ ضع التاج واللباس وأمر ابزاخت أن تأخذ منهما ما
شاءت

It is said that he [the King] took the **wreath** and gave it to Bilād, saying: “Carry this in your hands **to the wives’ sitting room.**” When Bilād took it, the King came in. He summoned the women and presented [the gifts] to Ibraḥt and Ḥurfatāh, asking them to choose. He said to

Bilād: “Put the **crown and the garb down**,” and he asked Ibraḥt to take of the two the one she desired. (Tunis BnT 8623, fol. 77r/v)

وقال أما الإكليل وسائر الثياب احملها واتبعني بها ففعل وتبعه بالذي تبقي من الهدية إلى مجلس النساء حيث أمره فجلس ودعا الملك ابرخة وجوبر فجلستا بين يديه فقال الملك ضع الإكليل والكسوة بين يدي ابرخة تأخذ أيهما شاءت

He [the king] said, “Concerning the **wreath** and the **remaining garments**: take them and follow me.” He [Bilād] did so, following him with what was left of the gifts to the **women’s sitting room**, where he had ordered him to go. The King sat down and called Ibraḥt and Ğober, who sat in front of him. The King then said, “Put the **wreath and the robe** in front of Ibraḥt so that she can take what she wants.” (Tunis BnT 16029, PDF 113)

وقال أما الإكليل وسائر اللباس فإنه يصلح للنساء فقال لبلاذ خذ الإكليل والثياب فاحملها واتبعني بها إلى مجلس النساء ودعا الملك ابراخت وحورفتاه فجلستا بين يديه فقال لبلاذ دع الكسوة والإكليل بين يدي ابراخت لتأخذ أيهما شاءت

[The king] said: “As for the **wreath** and the **remaining clothes**, **they befit women more**: take the wreath and the garments,” he said to Bilād, “and follow me with it to **women’s sitting room**.” The King called Ibraḥt and Ḥurfatāh, and they sat in front of him. So, he said to Bilād: “Put the **wreath and the garb down** in front of Ibraḥt so that she can take from them the one she desires.” (Paris 3466, fol. 235v/236r)

The terms used to distinguish the two gifts (*al-kiswa wal-iklil* in Tunis 16029 and P3466; *at-tāğ wal-libās* in Tunis 8623) and the term used to identify the space reserved for women in the palace (*mağlis n-nisā'* in Tunis 16029 and P3466; *mağlis l-ḥarīm* in Tunis 8623) show the diversity within this continuum and a certain resemblance between Tunis 16029 and P3466. It seems that the manuscripts of the second subgroup (Tunis BnT 16029 and Tunis BnT 4459) use a similar lexicon to the original *Vorlage* of the entire continuum P3466, even though these two manuscripts reveal a big structural dissimilarity when it comes to their sequence group and the rare chapter added at the end of the two copies.

To conclude, the analysis of Kd chapter has made it possible to identify the Q-c, which is a group of twelve manuscripts distinguished by unique descriptive and narrative elements and modifications. Those distinctive elements are spread throughout the text without changing the main storyline and they vary, from one word to many sentences. The link between those manuscripts is confirmed by two important elements: first, the model used in those copies, P3466 or a similar copy, which has rather an uncommon composition within the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and can easily be distinguished, since it jumps from one model to a different one in the middle of the book without any indication; and second, a big majority of the manuscripts belonging to this continuum belong to the sequence group (D) and place Km chapter following Kd. An exception to the above-mentioned majority is the last two Tunisian manuscripts, Tunis BnT 4459 and Tunis BnT 16029. Although these two manuscripts share almost all the unique narrative distinctive elements of the Q-c, they are in some cases closer than the others to the original model represented by P3466 and they differ from the other members of this continuum since they have a different sequence group (E) and include Kw chapter at the end. In this sense, the manuscripts of the Q-c can be divided into two subgroups: the first subgroup includes Q-c members with the sequence group (D), and the rare chapter, Km, and the second subgroup includes Q-c members with the sequence group (E) and the rare chapter, Kw. This second subgroup seems to be influenced by a second *Vorlage* from sequence group (E), the one that I am going to introduce in the next section.

The Dreams Group

In Kd chapter, one can directly spot, from the beginning of the story, a key narrative unit that demonstrates the diversity of the Arabic manuscripts. It is about the Indian King and

the visions he has one night while sleeping. In the remaining part of this chapter, I plan to focus on this narrative unit to demonstrate the huge diversity within the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In order to do that, I have first to distinguish between two large groups.

In the first group, the Indian King sees eight visions, and without any mention of their content, he asks to see the Brahmins. The content of those dreams comes in a late passage, namely when the King discusses his visions with the wise sage Kabābīrūn. This first group includes a majority of early manuscripts from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. In addition to that, the three editions by Silvestre de Sacy (1816), Louis Cheikho (1905), and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām (1941) adapted this version of the story. Here are some examples of the passage in the early manuscripts, namely, Ayasofya 4095 MS (dated 618/1221), MS Parker Corpus Christi College 578 (dated to the 14th century CE), MS Oxford Bodleian Pococke 400 (dated to the 14th century CE), and MS P3465 (dated to the 13th century CE):

في بعض الليالي إذ رأى ثمانية أحلامٍ يستيقظ عند كلِّ منها¹¹⁵ فبينما سادوم الملك نائمًا

While King Sādūm was sleeping one night, he saw **eight dreams**, waking up at each of them. **(Ayasofya 4095, fol. 71v)**

فبينما الملك نائمٌ إذ رأى ثمانية أحلامٍ يستيقظ عند كلِّ حلمٍ

While the King was sleeping, he saw **eight dreams** and was woken up at each dream. **(Parker 578, fol. 102r)**

¹¹⁵ Grammatical mistake by the scribe of MS Ayasofya 4095, shared with MS Oxford Bodleian Pococke 400.

فبينما الملك نائمًا 116 على السرير يعني سرير ملكه إذ رأى في منامه ثمانية أحلامٍ فاستيقظ عند كلِّ واحدٍ منها

While the King was sleeping on the bed, meaning his throne, he saw in his sleep **eight dreams**, and he woke up at each one of them. (**Oxford Bodleian Pococke 400, 118r**)

فنام الملك ذات ليلةٍ فرأى في منامه ثمانية أحلامٍ أفزعته فاستيقظ مرعوبًا

The King slept one night and saw in his sleep **eight dreams**, which terrified him, and he woke up petrified. (**Paris 3465, fol.128v**)

To this first group, belongs also the Old Syriac version translated directly from the Pehlevi¹¹⁷ and the versification of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* by Ibn al-Habbāriyya (12th century CE)¹¹⁸ and al-Ṣaghānī (13th century CE).¹¹⁹

In the second group, the king's vision includes eight dreams, the same ones as in the previous group. However, they are introduced in the text as being seven in number or more precisely as being one vision seen seven times.¹²⁰ This error in the enumeration of the king's dreams is not limited to some Arabic manuscripts but it appears also in Naṣr Allāh Munshī version dated to the 12th century CE (*ca.* 540/1146)¹²¹ and in a free retroversion of it, namely MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015 (dated 727/1327). Contrary to all the other versions counting the visions as seven, those two versions do not include any description of those visions:

116 Grammatical mistake by the scribe of MS Oxford Bodleian Pococke 400, shared with MS Ayasofya 4095.

¹¹⁷ Eines Tages schlief der König in einem seiner Gemächer auf dem Ruhebett, und er wachte achtmal auf und schlief wieder ein, und er träumte acht Träume (German translation by Friedrich Schulthess (1911) p.135).

¹¹⁸ Edition by al-Khūrī Ni‘mat Allāh al-Asmar (1900) p.192: فناما ذات ليلةٍ وقاما مبلبلًا إذ رأى أحلامًا أبصرها وعدّها ثمانية لم تر مثلها العيون

الرائية
¹¹⁹ Edition by Fawzia El-Rabī‘ī (1994) p.209: رأى ثمانية من الأحلام مؤذن باليقظة في المنام

¹²⁰ Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346) fol. 113r: فرأى في المنام رؤيا سبع مرّات ثم انتبه وعادت إليه

¹²¹ English translation by Thackston (2019) p. 157 He had the same terrifying dream seven times and woke up at the end of each.

وَاتَّفَقَ أَنَّ الْمَلِكَ رَأَى فِي لَيْلَةٍ سَبْعَ مَنَامَاتٍ هَائِلَةً أَفْشَعَرَ مِنْ هَوْلِهَا

And it happened that the King saw, one night, **seven horrifying dreams**, and he was shocked by their horror. (Sultan Ahmed III 3015, page 203)

For all the other versions belonging to this second group, a long passage that includes a description of each one of the dreams appears in the text just after the Indian King wakes up. This passage is usually introduced by “*wa kāna ra’ā*” followed by an enumeration of the king’s visions. Here are two examples of the enumeration from MS Riyadh 2536 (dated to 747/1346) and MS Paris 3471 (dated to 1053/1643):

وَكَانَ الْمَلِكُ نَائِمًا عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَرَأَى فِي الْمَنَامِ رُؤْيَا سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ ثُمَّ انْتَبَهَ وَعَادَتْ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ الَّذِي رَأَى فِي مَنَامِهِ سَمَكَتَيْنِ قَامَتَا عَلَى أذْنَابِهِمَا وَبَطْنَتَيْنِ قَامَتَا عَلَى رَأْسِهِ وَحَيَّةٌ وَثَبَتْ عَلَى رِجْلَيْهِ وَرَأَى أَنَّ جَسَدَهُ قَدْ خُضِبَ بِالدَّمِ وَأَنَّ غَسَلَ جَمِيعَ بَدَنِهِ بِالمَاءِ وَرَأَى أَنَّهُ قَائِمٌ عَلَى جَبَلٍ أَبْيَضٍ وَرَأَى أَنَّ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ شَيْبَةً بِالنَّارِ وَرَأَى طَائِرًا أَبْيَضَ يَنْقُرُ رَأْسَهُ

The King was sleeping on his bed when **he saw in his sleep a vision seven times**. When he woke up, he remembered the dream: in his sleep, he saw two redfish standing on their tails, two geese standing on his head, and a snake had jumped on his feet; he saw that his body was covered in blood and that he washed his entire body with water; he saw that he was atop of a white mountain, that something like fire was on his head and that a white bird was poking his head. (Riyadh 2536, fol.113r/v)

فبينما الملك ذات ليلة نائمًا¹²² على فراشٍ له في غرفةٍ فرأى في المنام رؤيا سيع مرّات يستيقظ عند كلّ مرّةٍ منها ثمّ يفيق فتعاوده في الثانية وكان الذي رأى في منامه سمكتين حمراوتين قائمتين يستقبلانه على أذناهما وبطنين طارتا من خلفه فصارتا بين يديه وحيّة دبت على رجليه ورأى جسمه خُصّب بالدم وأنه غسل جميع جسمه بالماء ورأى أنّ قائمًا على جبلٍ أبيض ورأى أنّ على رأسه شيئًا شبيهاً بالنار ورأى طيرًا أبيض نقر رأسه بمنقاره

One night, as the King was sleeping on a bed he had in one of the rooms, **he saw in his sleep a vision seven times over**, waking up at each time; whenever he woke up [and went back to sleep], the vision came to him again. In the dream, he saw two redfish welcoming him while standing on their tails, two geese flying over from behind him and coming right in front of him, and a snake that had crept onto his legs; he saw his body covered in blood and that he was washing his entire body with water; he saw that he was atop a white mountain, that something like fire was on his head and that a white bird had poked his head with its beak. **(Paris 3471, fol. 121r)**

This key narrative passage is also included in the Old Castilian¹²³ translation, as well as in Kāshifī's Persian version¹²⁴ where the mentioned number of the visions is also seven. Remarkably, this passage is also included in the two Buddhist sources, namely, the Chinese text translated directly from the Sanskrit and the Tibetan version,¹²⁵ where the mentioned number of dreams is eight, exactly like in the Hebrew¹²⁶ and the Latin¹²⁷ translations and which likewise include this passage.

When it comes to the Arabic manuscripts which include the description of the dreams passage, we find MS Istanbul EY 344 and MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346), which belong to what Gruendler calls the "early group,"¹²⁸ as well as their two copies from the 18th century, namely, MS Paris 3478 and MS London BL 3900 (1166/1753). These manuscripts are, for the most part,

Grammatical mistake by the scribe of MS Paris 3471, shared with MS Oxford Bodleian Pococke 400 and MS Ayasofya 4095.

¹²³ Edition of the Old Castilian translation. (1251 CE) by Hans-Jörg Döhla (2007) p.388.

¹²⁴ The Persian adaptation of Husayn Vā'iz Kāshifī (d. 910/1504–5) published in Cawnpore in 1880 P. 423.

¹²⁵ The old German translation of the Tibetan version by Friedrich Schulthess (1911) p. 48.

¹²⁶ Edition and a French translation of the Hebrew translation (late thirteenth century CE) by Joseph Derenbourg (1881) p.185.

¹²⁷ Edition of John of Capua's Latin translation p.243 by Joseph Derenbourg (1889).

¹²⁸ For further features of the "early group", see article by BG in this volume.

very close to the Old Castilian translation (dated 1251). Furthermore, this group which I call the “dreams group” (hereafter D-group) also includes MS ÖNB AF 298 (dated 1000/1592) and it is a copy of MS Vatican Ar 367 (dated (1026/1617)). As well as another copy, namely, MS Manchester 487 537 (dated 1083/1672).



صورت الملك وبيشم وبيير نا الفيلسوف يحدنه

صورت الملك والفيلسوف

قال الفيلسوف كان رجل من الملوك بالهند عظيم المترلة مظفر حسن
 للتعبير قائم بسلطان وكان له وزير يدعى بلار وان الملك كان بما ذات
 لبلدة فرأى في المنام رؤيا سبع مرات ثم انتبه فعاد عليه ثم انتبه فعاد
 عليه ثم انتبه فعاد عليه وكان رأي في منامه سمكتين حمراوتين
 يستقبلانه علي اذناهما وتطبتين طارتا من خلفه فصارتا بين يديه وحيته
 وثبتت علي رجليه ورأى جسمه مخضيا بالدم وانه غسل جميع جسده بالما
 ورأى انه قائم علي جبل ابيض ورأى علي راسه شيئا شبيها بالذار ورأى طير
 ابيض ينقده راسه بمنقار فلما انتبه الملك دعا قوما من اهل ملته

ع
 ذلكا

In addition to that, we have a subgroup of the D-group, which I call the P3471-group. It is a group of verbatim copies and includes a description of the king's dreams. The earliest witness of this group is MS Chester Beatty 4201, an illustrated fragment held in Dublin and dated to the 16th century, but since it is not a complete copy, some parts are missing, among them the first part of Kd chapter. Our second earliest witness in this group is the P3471 (dated 1053/1643) held today in the National Library in Paris. P3471 as well as 6 other near-verbatim copies,¹²⁹ which are MS Paris 3472 (dated 1080/1669), MS München 617 (dated 1070/1659), MS London BL Add 7414 (dated 1173/1760), MS London BL 7413 (dated to the 18th c.), MS Baghdad 6949 and MS Tübingen Ma VI 35 (dated 1243/1828) include the king's visions passage as well. Furthermore, the P3471-group includes two other fragments, MS Riyadh 6146 (dated between the 17th and the 19th centuries) and MS Chicago A12101, an illustrated copy under restoration, of which we only have access to few folios.

Eleven out of eighteen manuscripts belonging to the D-group also share Kw chapter, which is a very large number if we take into consideration that this chapter has been discovered so far only in fourteen Arabic manuscripts (See table). Indeed, the Kw chapter is a rare spurious fable and has been found only in Hebrew, Latin, and Old Castilian translations.¹³⁰ The rare Km chapter is also present in two of the Dream group manuscripts, namely ÖNB AF 298 (dated 1000/1592) and Vatican. Ar.367 (dated 1026/1617).

Dreams Group Manuscripts			
Manuscript	Date	Rare Chapters	Chapter Sequence
Riyadh 2536	(747/1346)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
ÖNB AF 298	(1000/1592)	King of The Mice	C
Vatican. Ar.367	(1026/1617)	King of The Mice	C
Chester Beatty 4201	n.a.	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	Manuscript in disorder
Paris arabe 3471	(1053/1643)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
München 617	(1070/1659)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
Manchester 487 537	(1083/1672)	None	A
Paris arabe 3472	(1080/1669)	None	C
Riyadh 6146	17th- 18th century	Manuscript incomplete	C

¹²⁹ All copies are almost identical but some of them are illustrated and some not. Moreover, some do not include the “Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel chapter”.

¹³⁰ De Blois 1990, Burzoy's voyage to India and the origin of the book p. 62.

Dreams Group Manuscripts			
Manuscript	Date	Rare Chapters	Chapter Sequence
Istanbul AM EY 344	18th century	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel Dove, Fox and Heron	E variant*
London BL 3900	(1166/1753)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
London LB Add 7414	(1173/1760)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
Paris arabe 3478	18th century	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel Dove, Fox and Heron	E variant*
London BL 7413	18th century	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
Riyadh 7053	18th - 19th	None	C
Tübingen Ma VI 35	(1243/1828)	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
Baghdad 6949	n.a.	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
Chicago A12101	n.a.	Manuscript incomplete	Manuscript in disorder

To conclude the discussion about the D-group, I can say that it can be divided into three sub-groups. The first subgroup includes the four manuscripts mentioned above with the sequence (E), which is a quite rare sequence within the Arabic copies. Three out of those four manuscripts also include Kw and Df chapters. The oldest copy of this group Riyadh 2536 includes only Kw. The sequence group (E) and the existence of the rare chapters Kw and Df within this group, as well as the rare introductory chapter Sv, make this group quite close to the Old Castilian and the Old Hebrew versions. As mentioned before, those two versions also include a full description of the king's dreams, which are seven in the Old Castilian and eight in the Old Hebrew.

The second subgroup is P3471-group. This group includes six manuscripts with the sequence group (C) and the rare chapter Kw at the end of each copy. Three other copies share the same sequence but omit Kw chapter. This group also includes two fragments in disorder, one of them MS Chester Beatty 4201, probably the oldest copy of this version found as far, includes two folios from Kw. The version of the P3471-group is unique because it is the result of a cross-copying process based on many *Vorlagen*; among them probably the MS Riyadh 2536, MS Parker Corpus Christi College 578, and MS P3466 or similar copies to those. The uniqueness of this version is also confirmed through some distinctive elements for instance some poetry verses and some sub-stories found so far only in this group of manuscripts. In general, this

group includes probably the largest number of substories in comparison to all other Arabic copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

The third and last subgroup includes MS ÖNB AF 298 and its copy MS Vatican. Ar.367. This group belongs to a variant of sequence (C) and adds Km chapter after Kd chapter. In this variant, Im and Lv chapters usually switch places like in MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221) and MS British Library, London Or. 8571 (dated 799/1396). But in this sub-group, the beginning of the book, including the incipit, the long table of content, and the introductory chapters are quite similar to Ayasofya 4214 (dated before 761/1360), which belongs to a different group and includes neither Km nor the key passage from Kd chapter. All those elements make me think that those two manuscripts likely include a cross-copied version since only a mixture of the mentioned versions can explain the existence of those elements in one version.

When it comes to the last manuscript in the list above Manchester 487 537, things become less clear. The copy belongs to the sequence group (A) but adds Sv to the introductory chapters, which is usually found in the (E) sequence, and it does not include any other rare chapter. The inclusion of the key passage in Kd and Sv chapter makes this copy similar to the first group, despite its chapter sequence.

In addition to the mentioned groups, this key passage brings to light two smaller groups, in which the passage including the description of the vision of the king is absent but the number of dreams is different. The first group includes the MS Rabat 3655 copy (dated ca.1265-1280 CE)¹³¹ and its verbatim copy MS Paris 3475 (dated 1175/1761).¹³² In these two manuscripts, the king sees nine dreams, but in his discussion with the wise sage, only eight dreams are mentioned.

فبينما الملك نائمًا ذات ليلةٍ في غرفةٍ له إذ رأى تسعة أحلامٍ ينتبه عند آخر كلِّ حلمٍ منها

¹³¹ Bernard O’Kane, *Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century*, B.B. Tauris & Co 2003 p.218.

¹³² Marianne Barrucand, “Le Kalila wa Dimna de la bibliothèque royale de Rabat: un manuscrit illustré il-khanide,” *Revue des Études Islamiques* 54 (1986): 17–51.

As the King was sleeping one night in his room, he saw nine dreams, waking up at the end of each one of them. (Paris 3475, fol.161v)

The fourth and the last group consists of three copies, in which the king sees three visions. These manuscripts are MS Toronto 117953 (dated 1055/1645) MS Paris 3473 (dated 1110/1699) MS Berlin WII 672 (dated 1246/1830) and MS Malik 1669 (dated 1121/1709), which is a cross-copied version. A fifth manuscript belongs to this group as well, the MS Riyadh 2407 (dated 1103/1691) but it does not include the first folio of Kd chapter.

فبينما الملك نائمٌ في غرفةٍ له كانت وفي ذات يومٍ إذ قام الملك من منامه مرعوبًا مذعورًا فزعًا ثم عاد نومه ثم قام كذلك مرارًا وهو أنه رأى في منامه ثلاثة أحلامٍ

As the King was sleeping in his room one day, he woke up terrifyingly scared, frightened. He then went back to sleep and woke up again many times; it was [because] he saw in his dreams **three visions.** (Paris 3473, fol. 88r)

From the examples mentioned above, it becomes clear that the Key passage of the king and his dreams in Kd chapter is quite volatile and represents an ideal opportunity to distinguish between several different groups of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts. This passage is not meant to be the only criterion of classification on which our D-group is based but it is an indication that gives us hints and allows us to collate small groups of manuscripts and look further into other parts of the book.

In general, the D-group and the Q-group can both be divided into small subgroups, based on further criteria. As much as this result shows us that the majority of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* copies are in a way or another related, it makes us realize that they all represent individual and unique works that should be considered as a version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, except for the verbatim or near-verbatim copies.

4. Illustrations in Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts: What Is Their Story? (Rima Redwan)

Abstract

In the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, illustrations are an important aspect of manuscripts. Not only are the images that accompany the text pleasing to look at, while adding great value and prestige to a manuscript, but they also provide the entire book with a peculiar structure and highlight specific scenes. It can fairly be said that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts are—along with those of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī—among the few illustrated Arabic manuscripts that gained glory.

The AnonymClassic project uses the analysis of illustrations, legends, and even empty gaps left for images to group, date, and connect different copies. Here the legends retained without illustration (or even the spaces) acquire a new function as side titles and navigation tools, especially for finding subtales, which are the most frequent subjects of illustrations. Of the nearly one hundred manuscripts already in our records, about one-third contain either illustrations, gaps, or legends, so that they form a comparatively large corpus for study, with a large number of details that may be put to useful scrutiny. These features are also important in determining the readership and the interrelations among manuscripts.

1. Introduction

Whoever studies the matter of this book must know . . . that its second [goal] is to show images (khayālāt) of animals in varieties of paints and colors (aṣbāgh, alwān) to delight the hearts of princes and increase their pleasure and also the degree of care that they would bestow upon the work, and that its third [goal] is that by this quality kings and common people use it, it shall be copied often and not fall into disuse and become obsolete with the passing of the days, so that illustrator, painter, and copyist may benefit from it forever (Paris Arabe 3465, fol. 33v).²⁸

Kalīla wa-Dimna is work that due to its multifaceted content has often been copied. Together with *al Harīrī's* (d. 516/1122) *Maqāmat* it is also one of the most famous literary works containing illustrations—besides non-literary works that are often illustrated, of medical, veterinary, botanical, astronomic, or other scientific content. *Kalīla wa-Dimna* has been copied multiple times—at least 140 copies survive—and its images played a crucial part in the book's popularity, and as its text diversified in multiple yet related versions, so too its images evolved along their own trajectory, which to elucidate is the purpose of the present chapter.

The above-cited quotation from Ibn Muqaffa's (d. 139/756) preface, which elaborates on the role of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a book, mentions illustrations and details their functions of entertaining princes and enhancing the attraction, value, and currency of the book as a whole. The fact that the illustrations and their components are addressed in the book by its Arabic translator-redactor— or at least in a number of later versions, among them one of the oldest extant Arabic manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*— emphasizes the significance of images as a major element of the book and their relevance for various audiences.

There is much more to an illustration than the pleasure of the reader or observer. Taking into consideration that such an illustration usually involves the work and effort of different kinds of professions e.g., the scribe who wrote the captions/legends and left a space to be filled by (usually) another person, often a professional illustrator. Even though the handwriting of the captions is often identical to the one in the main text, it can also be in a different hand. However, since the motives that occur in Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts seem to be recurring, one may argue that a kind of *Vorlage*-catalogue with illustrations depicted time and again, were used. This implies that such a catalogue either existed as a physical reference to select the motives for a particular manuscript, or that experienced painters retained the repertoire of images in their memory. The fact is that a number of motifs recur time and again. Considering that we do not have any kind of guidelines or handbooks of the artistic practices, methods and workflow, there is no other way then to search for clues in the illustrations and their elements themselves.

Kalīla wa-Dimna is a text with many different facets regarding the content of each chapter and its sub-stories. It has always been a serious and moralizing text, but the images of the depicted plots often have a comedian and entertaining flavor. Similarly, the enframed tales entertaining in addition to conveying a moralizing message. This may be linked to the high

frequency with which images depict sub-stories as opposed to other scenes of the book. This leaves no doubt that illustrations and sub-stories are intimately connected. Regardless of the seriousness of the book's content, it has come to serve a broad audience and enjoy worldwide popularity. Even today, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is part of the curriculum in schools, in simplified redactions, depending on the age of the student and leaving out contents and images deemed unfit for this audience. It is a teaching book that can be adapted to almost any kind of situation, any language and in every corner of the world. Meanwhile, the illustrations wander, often retaining identical motifs in many of the existing versions. The illustrated Arabic versions of this lively book, even though the execution of images might not be realistic, unveil fascinating facts.

The workflow of the production is often uncertain. Was it the writer of the legends within the main text who chose them, or did this person merely copy from another *Vorlage* including any legends? Furthermore, one can detect that in some manuscripts, the legends were added later, which means that the illustrations were already in place. In this case, the function of a legend is a complete different, namely that of an explanatory note. Legends were usually placed on the edges of the illustrations "to familiarize the reader with the subject matter." We cannot be certain how the copying process affected the illustration cycles. In some cases, two manuscripts share almost every detail, whereas in others, their text is very similar while the illustrations or legends, differ.

One needs to bear in mind that many manuscripts are undated. Most of them mention neither the place of production nor the patron or artist involved. An analysis of the style and execution of a manuscripts illustrations can allow to date it and identify its place of production. Images further help in connecting manuscripts to each other and are therefore provide crucial information of a manuscripts history. One dimension of this history is the particular series, or cycle, of illustrations contained in each witness.

2. The Relation between Text and Image

Several important studies about the illustrations in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts exist. But these were often mainly focused on the illustrations proper, not incorporating the

version of the text in which they appear into the analysis. Hence, the focus of this chapter will be the connection between both dimensions of images and text.

The illustrated motifs of each manuscript vary. However, by assembling a repertoire of the motifs, focusing on those that appear frequently. As mentioned, sub-stories figure prominently. At the same time, the illustrations of the sub-stories function as a markers of those sections in the text. In some manuscripts, illustrations of personages are more frequent whereas the animals are not often illustrated (e.g., Oxford, Bodleian 253, dated 1227/1812). The execution of the illustrations has been carried out in each manuscript in a unique way, especially when it comes to the later witnesses of the tenth/sixteenth to twelfth/eighteenth century. In some manuscripts, for instance manuscript Chester Beatty Lib. Ar. 4201 dated to the tenth/sixteenth century or MET 1981.373, datable before 1026/1617, one encounters a variety of artistic executions and styles, which means that several artists could be involved in one particular manuscript, and this might be done at different workshops.

One can observe that in older manuscripts (seventh/thirteenth to ninth/fifteenth century) greater effort was put into the since copy. Likewise, the text was often written in a polished, proficient handwriting. The *mise-en-page* was carefully designed, including the insertion of the illuminations, the marking of chapter titles (and occasionally of sub-stories) and subdivision of the narrative with paragraph signs or highlighted words. Lastly, the illustrations were carried out with great sophistication. The reader of such a work immediately notices the artistic effort and material investment placed in such a copy, giving the manuscript a higher value. Later copies (tenth/sixteenth to thirteenth/nineteenth century) are done with less effort. Presumably, they were copied more often over time, and a broadening readership was willing, and able to own a copy of the famous *Kalīla wa-Dimna* but at lower price. Thus the visual depiction of stories in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, once were a major ingredient, became more seldom. Still, even if the illustrations were left out, the legends were often retained, even without any visible intention to add them later (such as spaces left empty), either in the running text separated by frame (P3473) or on the margin (We II672; on legends, see section 4).

Hereafter in sections 6-7, the chapter “The King and His Eight Dreams,” also titled “*Ilād wa-Bilādh*” (in various spellings of the names) will be used to demonstrate how the relation between the manuscripts can be linked through the illustrations and legends. The question

pursued here is to what extent illustration cycles can be defined and individual witnesses classified within them? Is there a logic to the recurrence of motifs? As will be shown, the entire repertoire of images used falls into a limited number of series, or cycles, whose motifs vary slightly in number and styles but overlap to a large extent.

3. The Manuscripts

Viewing the collection of Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts assembled and surveyed so far, illustrations add indeed an important parameter to arranging and organising it. They further indicate relations among the manuscripts. The depicted motifs (disregarding at the moment their respective styles) intervene in the narrative at certain places and thus deserve examination of the way in which they structure the plot and highlight specific scenes of frame tale and sub-stories.

In the Arabic manuscript tradition, illustrations are rare in general, but *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts constitutes one of the notable exceptions. Over the last three years of the AnonymClassic project, 140 *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts have been identified about and circa 95 acquired in digitized form and inspected. A third of these are illustrated, a further group has empty spaces for illustrations, often with legends that give a short description of the missing motif, and which appear unfinished. This significant number empirically confirms the importance of illustrations Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, stated in the above-cited quote. Still, there is no manuscript evidence between Ibn al-Muqaffa's version produced in the second/eighth century and the earliest witnesses of the book, the Geniza fragments datable to circa 950-1250 CE, of which two in Arabic script (T-S Ar. 40.9 and T-S 51.60) contain each a colored illustration and two further ones, in Hebrew script (T-S Ar. 6.32 and T-S NS 97.16) do not. It is impossible to make assumptions about the lost manuscripts of the intervening period.

However, the frequency of illustrations in a given manuscript is not constant. Table 1, shows the gradually decreasing proportion over time. The manuscripts are arranged in chronological rows, beginning with the seventh/thirteenth century (orange, 4 specimen), followed by the eighth/fourteenth to ninth/fifteenth century (yellow, 10 specimen), and then the tenth/sixteenth to eleventh/seventeenth century (green), with 17 specimen the most

numerous in the table, and lastly the twelfth/eighteenth to thirteenth/nineteenth century (blue). The last group is richest in total manuscripts, though a lower proportion of them (7 specimen) is illustrated.

After the eleventh/seventeenth century, gaps appear more and more in place of illustrations. The overall impression of that period is that copyists put less much effort in each single copy, with a few exceptions. This might be due to the fact that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was copied more often and not produced for private libraries of the elite but belonged to regular people who were interested in the book. For example, manuscript Wetzstein II 672, held in Berlin, was copied and owned by Ahmad al-Rabbāṭ, a famous Damascene librarian who lived in the late twelfth/eighteenth and early thirteenth/nineteenth century. If illustration are included at that period, they are less professionally executed, compared to older witnesses. Often they are replaced entirely by captions describing the motif that should have been drawn, and which then occasionally serve as marginal titles.

Beyond certain group characteristics to be discussed below, the chronological table of the illustrated manuscripts gives evidence that each witness was unique in several ways. No two manuscripts share the same amount of illustration, rather, their number of illustrations per manuscript varies significantly, ranging between 50 and 190. The exact original amount is at time impossible to determine, because many older manuscripts, such as Paris Arabe 3465 dated to the seventh/thirteenth century, were often restored. In these, often at the beginning, illustrations were added by other artists or illustrators. The younger a manuscript, are the more it is to have legends, independently of the fact whether illustrations are present, unfilled, or completely omitted.

In the following, we will also consider such legends. Both legends or images are seen as markers highlighting certain passages in the text, and both types of elements endow the text with a specific structure. Undoubtedly the combination of the text and the illustrations (or legends) is a key factor, even if analyzing the images of a group of given witness must be done separately at first and then the result compared with the analysis and comparison of their text versions. This allows to include even such cases as manuscript Riyadh 7053, dated to the twelfth/eighteenth century, which displays mere blank spaces without any indication of what should have been illustrated. Documenting the locations of these spaces and comparing these to other manuscripts can still provide important clues.

Manuscripts	Date	Number of folios / illustrations and/or gaps	Illustrated/blanks/with or without legends
Paris 3465	ca. 1200-50 CE	146 fols. (22 later replacement) / 98 ills. (8 are re	illustrated / legends present
Rabat 3655	ca. 1265-80 CE	113 fols. (incomplete)/ 122 ills.	illustrated / no legends
Cambridge, Geniza T-S40.9	ca. 950-1250 CE	1 folio (fragment)/ 1 ills.	illustrated / legend present
Cambridge, Geniza T-S51.60	ca. 950-1250 CE	1 folio (fragment)/ 1 ills.	illustrated / legend present
Oxford, Pococke 400	1354 CE	155 fols. / 78 ills.	illustrated / legends present
München 616	ca. 1340-50 CE	129 fols. (22 not original) / 73 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Paris 3467	ca. 1350-60 CE	119 fols. (incomplete) / 50 ills. (47 original)	illustrated / legends present but not consistently
Riyadh 2536	1392 CE	156 fols. / 65 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Cambridge Corpus Christi MS Ar. 578	ca. 1389 CE	136 fols. / 120 ills.	illustrated / no legends
Istanbul, Sultan Ahmad 3105	727 AH.	xxx folios	partly illustrated / legends present
London Add 24350	mid-fourteenth century	162 fols. (first 16 are later) / 90 ills.	blanks / legends present
MS Schiller [75] (vers.)	1439 CE	63 fols.	illustrated / no legends
Paris 3466	1450 CE	xxx	blanks / legends present
London BL 4044	15th century/17th century	Xxx / 76 ills.	illustrated / no legends
Istanbul AM EY 344	dated 11th century, probably 17-18th century	ca. 104 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Paris 3470	17th	122 fols. / 79 ills.	illustrated / labelled
Paris 3472	1669 CE	165 fols. / 33 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Paris 5881	1092/1681	91 fols. / 98 ills.	illustrated / legends present
München 618	1044/1684	124 blanks	small blanks / legends present
Riyadh 2407	1690-91 CE	100 blanks	blanks / legends present
Montreal, McGill University 117953	1055/1645	95 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Cairo 66947	1638 CE	130 fols.	blanks / no legends
Manchester 487	1672 CE	113 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Manchester 486	1631 CE	75 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Berlin, Sprenger 1234	1688 CE	MTM, fol. 99v-110v (beginning to Lo)	blanks / legends present
Oxford, Clarkii Or. 9	17th century?		illustrated / labelled
Chicago A12101	17th century	140 fols. (only 8 available) /102 ills.	illustrated / legends present
München 615	16-17th century	102 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Oxford, Bodleian Marsh 673	1653 CE	145 fols. / ca. 102 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Chester Beatty Lib. Ar. 4201 (incomplete)	16th century	27 ills.	illustrated / legends present
MET 1981.373.1-102	1617 CE (reader note)	75 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Paris 3475	1761 CE	199 fols. / 180 ills. and 95 gaps	illustrated but unfinished / no legends
Paris 3478	18th century		small blanks / legends present
Aleppo Ar. 406	18th century		blanks / legends present
Oxford, Bodleian, x 253	1812 CE	16 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Berlin, Wetzstein II 672	1830 CE	80 ills.	no blanks / legends present on margins
Cairo 1169	1873 CE	121 fols. / 96 ills.	illustrated / legends present
Riyadh 7053	19th century	146 fols. / ca. 34 gaps	blanks / no legends
Riyadh 12965	fragment undated	16 fols. / 3 ills.	illustrated / no legends
	12th-13th century		
	14.-15 century		
	16.-17. century		
	18.-19. century		
	Undated		

4. Legends

With “legend” I refer to any kind of description or summary of what a particular image is supposed to show. It occurs mostly together with an image or an empty space or varying size, but in some cases without any space left at all, as if it was copied from an illustrated *Vorlage*, or that *Vorlage* already lacked the illustrations. The length and the phrasing of legend each can vary from manuscript to manuscript or even from image to image, depending on the complexity of the illustrated motif.

The illustration of the ‘The Man in the Well’ allegory in manuscript Manchester 486, dated 1631 CE is an example of a long and detailed legend (fig. 1; on this motif see also section 8). Marginal legends, were occasionally written in the margin, were probably written by a different hand than the main text. Furthermore, the language level may contrast the one in the main text, containing for example more Middle Arabic features. This particular manuscript displays mostly long legends, describing not only what is represented therein but also including parts of the plot, such as the emotions of the depicted figures. The example in fig 6 also shows that legends may contain information that diverges from the text—a phenomenon known from European manuscripts. The beginning of the legend in a different hand from the main text mentions that the man headed to the well because he was feeling thirsty; whereas in the main story he is fleeing from an enraged camel.



Fig. 1. Manchester 486 dated 1631 CE, fol. 32v

وهذه صورة رجل أدركه العطش فجاء إلى بئر ونظر فيه فإذا تحت رجليه
أربع ثعابين قد أخرجوا رؤوسهم إليه فتعلّق بغصنين ثابتين على
شفير البئر فإذا بجرذين أتيا يقرضان الشجرتين ليقع في البئر ونظر
في قعر البئر فإذا به تنّين عظيم فاتّما فاه له ليلدغه فبينما
الرجل كذلك إذ نظر إلى كوة نحلٍ فيها عسل فاشتغل بالعسل الذي
في الكوة عن ما هو فيه من الخطر والهلاك الذي نازل به

This is the image (*ṣūra*) of a man who felt thirst. He came to a well and looked inside it. And there, beneath his two feet were four vipers stretching their heads at him, and he grasped two firm branches on the edge of the well. Suddenly two rats came to gnaw at the two bushes, so that he would fall into the well. Then he looked at the bottom of the well, and there was a big dragon opening his mouth to bite him. While the man was in this situation, he happened to look at a honeycomb containing honey and distracted himself with it from the danger he was in and the perdition coming upon him.

Despite all its detail, the legends fails to tell that the man actually fell into the well, letting the reader gathers this from the depiction. In another instance, a legend in the main text and of the same hand limits itself to a brief mention of the figures to be depicted (fig. 2). It is stretched to the full width of the text block and separated from the previous by two space fillers, creating a new line. The blank has been shrunk to a mere space holder of two lines' height, too small to fit an actual illustration.

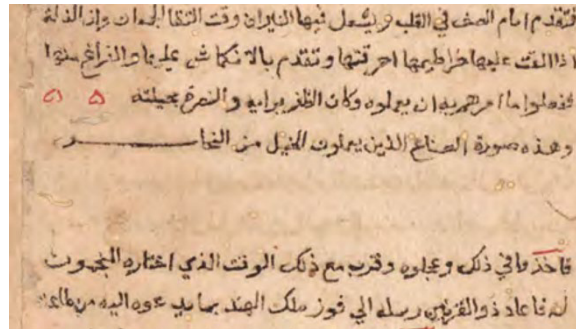


Fig. 2. München 618, dated 1044/1634, fol. 2v. The legend reads:

“This is an image (*ṣūra*) of the craftsmen who made the copper horses.”

In the next example, Wetzstein II 672, dated 1246/1830, the legend (in the same hand as the main text) is written on the margin without any space left for an image (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Berlin Wetzstein II 672, dated 1246/1830CE, fol. 20v

Descriptions (*ṣifāt*) of Burzoy with the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in this hand and descriptions (*ṣifāt*) of Kisrā and the dignitaries of his kingdom.

When and by whom legends were written contributes important information, as it may give hints on how a manuscript was produced. The form and appearance of legends differs from manuscript to manuscript. Often it is written by the same copyist as the main text, even

though a different ink colour or *qalam* size may be used to highlight the legend to serve as an immediately visible indicator of the illustration.

Gaps of various sizes, whether large enough for an image or not, serve the same highlighting function, as for instance the two-line gaps in München 618 (see fig. 2). Naturally, illustrations are the quickest way for readers familiar with *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, to find a particular passage or sub-story. But both gaps and legends are similarly indicative, while the latter's content and phrasing, specifying the motifs (if not the styles) are closer to standing in for an actual image. More exposed legends, written on the margin, not unlike the *ajzā'* and *aḥzāb* indications in Quran codices, can be quickly consulted by readers leafing through a codex. In their quality of important placeholders for illustrations they might be described as "invisible images." However, not all legends are clearly set off; some continue the text block, not followed by any gap.

The positioning of a legend in relation to its illustration also varies per manuscript. Most often the legends appears above the images. In other examples, they are placed vertically in the margin next to it. In rare cases the legends are written inside the image. For example names or short designations are inscribed above each figure of an image in manuscript Paris arabe 3465, better termed "labels." This labelling is of later date.

In sum, a legend serves several functions. In some cases, the legend simply describes the depicted scene, in others it comments and contextualizes a scene, as in Manchester 486 (fig. 1) throughout the whole manuscript. Throughout this manuscript the scribe often summarizes the action, or he anticipates its outcome with a brief trailer, placed next to the image, that informs the reader of part of the plot that lies still in the future (see fig. 5 below). The legends and illustrations or gaps therefore tell a parallel story next to the main text. Even though the main text provides the narrative content for an image, the phrasing of the legend may depart from it.

5. Image Cycle

Regarding relations among illustrated manuscripts, similarity of the text versions they contain does not imply similarity of their images, and conversely, similar motifs may appear in different versions of the book. Indeed, illustrations can be added at different moments in a

manuscript's history. Here the sequence of images contained in a particular codex is treated as a cycle, with the goal to identify resemblances between individual cycles that may allow to place them into groups.

For gain a first impression of these cycles, the chapter "The King and His Eight Dreams," is chosen for inspection of its depicted motifs and their recurrence. This parable is of unknown Indian origin, and its message is to teach rulers to use prudence (*ḥilm*) and select wise counsellors. It is the book's third longest chapter, after "The Lion and the Ox" and "The Owls and the Crows," but compared to either, which are rich in sub-stories, it contains only two, told by the vizier to the king. In the following comparison, each scene, or motif, is labelled; which motif I designate an image's elements, figures and objects and their composition as distinct from the particular style in which I is rendered, since both dimensions align differently.

This study is based on both illustrations and legends, for reasons described above. The chapter's illustrations are charted in all illustrated witnesses for comparison with each other. Likewise, each legend is transcribed for comparison with its cognates. On this basis, certain manuscripts can be linked. In a second step, several noteworthy motives of *Kalīla wa-Dimna's* 'motif-catalogue' will be compared and discussed, for example *The Men in the Well*. This second analysis, I argue, support the results of the comparison of the sample chapter, namely of numerous similarities among the motifs of the paintings, but also differences in their stylistic execution.

Such an approach has both advantages and limitations: choosing a chapter from the middle of the book minimizes uncertainties resulting from lacunae or restored parts frequent at beginnings and ends of a manuscripts and gives a more accurate impression of each manuscript's original state. However any results based on only a chapter are preliminary and will have to await confirmation by a similar analysis of the entire manuscripts.

6. The Sample Chapter: The King and His Eight Dreams (Kd)

To briefly summarize the chapter's plot: an Indian king has disturbing dreams and asks Brahmins to interpret them. They use the occasion however to obtain revenge for the recent execution of twelve thousand of them by the king's order, and press him, allegedly to avert the dreams' inauspicious message, to kill all those beloved to him, including his wife, his son,

his vizier Bilād, and his secretary. The king retires in sorrow and indecision. His grief is evident to his vizier Bilād, who in turn draws the queen Irakht into his confidence. She advises the king to consult the sage Kābāriyūn (in various spellings), who interprets the dreams quite to the opposite as auspicious foretellings of the imminent arrival messengers with gifts, which prediction is shortly borne out. The grateful king decides to give Irakht the first choice between of two of these gifts, a crown and a garment. Uncertain which to take, she glances at the vizier, who indicates the garment as the better choice, but the king intercepts the gesture. Concerned that the king may infer their understanding (which had actually led to his rescue) and pretending ignorance of the wink, Irakht quickly chooses the crown instead in order not to compromise Bilād and herself. The story continues with the king’s visiting of the queen and a favorite on alternate nights. One night when he visits Irakht, who wears the crown, the jealous favorite passes by wearing the garment. The king, fascinated by her beauty, calls Irakht foolish for not having selected the garment, which is one of a kind. Enraged at the unjustified insult (her wisdom having saved the king’s life), she empties a bowl of rice in her hand over the king’s head. In equal haste and fury, the king orders Bilād to execute her on the spot. The vizier, knowing the king’s impulsiveness, pretends to do so while waiting for the king to regret his order. So it happens, and he returns her safely to the king—after having made him listen to a long list of maxims. The king recognizes his error and orders the Brahmins’ execution.

7.1. Grouping by Position

One way to compare illustrations of this chapter is according to their positions in the plot, i.e., the narrative moments selected for depiction, as done in the following table 2. Each of the green boxes represents an image and/or legend. Based on the shared occurrence of illustrations at identical positions in the plot, ergo the coinciding of motifs (this might be one or several motifs per narrative moment, such as the king’s meeting with the wise man has him stand and talk, with or without horse, or kneel before him), manuscripts can be clustered together. They are arranged in the table (and serially numbered for convenience) only by the way images “punctuate” the narrative, irrespective of date. The illustrated scenes following the sequence of the narrative are labelled in alphabetical order (starting over after z with double letters, aa, bb).

The mere charting of the illustrations' positions allows to see correspondences (interpreted here as adherence to a group). The use of the term "group" warrants elaboration. The present grouping is based only on one chapter, "The King and His Eight Dreams," whose motives are plotted across all manuscripts. Only the relationship between these, their elements and configurations, is targeted here. This allows to identify overlaps but also differences (even within the manuscripts assigned to one group). Some manuscripts lack illustrations but provide some information by labelling the blanks. Other manuscripts cannot be assigned to any group at all, either because their selection of motifs (besides other aspects) is unique, or because they lack sufficient evidence to be assigned to any group, such as those with blank spaces for illustrations which lack legends (e.g. manuscripts Cairo 66947, dated 1048/1636 and Riyadh 7053, dated to the thirteenth/nineteenth century). The last two categories have therefore not been included in the following tables 2 and 3.

Group A

Focusing on those manuscripts, two groups can be identified. Manuscripts nos. 1-6, share (in different subsets) the scene of the dreaming king (tab. 2, col. c), the king and queen in conversation (cols. g/h), and of the arrival of the gifts (col. n). Most conspicuous is a cluster of images/legends at the end of the chapter (cols. t, u, v, w) covering the four scenes of the vizier and king conversing, two sub-stories the vizier tells the king, and the king's feeling regret as a result; these manuscripts constitute group A. Further moments of illustration are shared among subsets of the group (r, s, t, z, aa). The legends, confirm this: manuscripts Istanbul AM EY 344 (datable to the eleventh/seventeenth century but containing a text very similar to eighth/fourteenth-century Riyadh 2536) and Paris Arabe 3478 (dated to the twelfth/eighteenth century but a near verbatim copy of Riyadh 2536) have the exact same legends and are related more closely. Potentially, Paris Arabe 3478 was copied, including the legends, from the Istanbul manuscript or a similar *Vorlage*. Regarding this group, taking the main text into account, all of these manuscripts are either very early (from seventh/thirteenth to eight/fourteenth centuries or near verbatim copies of these), and the subset of the Riyadh and Istanbul manuscripts and their later copies, are very close to the Castilian translation of 1251, constituting together the *recensio iberica*. Rabat 3655 and its copy Paris 3475, and CCC Parker 578 however, constitute a different, idiosyncratic version.

Group C

Another identifiable group comprises nos. 13-21 (labelled C). The beginning of the chapter in this group is less illustrated, or has fewer legends, compared to the other manuscript groups, and they increase only towards the end. There as two blocks of images/legends appear, separated by one image that appears in only one instance (the kneeling queen, tab. 2, col. x). The first block illustrates the sub-story of “The Two Doves” told by the vizier and the king regretting his order to execute the queen (cols. v, w); The second block shows the salvation of the queen and the execution of the Brahmins (cols. y, z).

Both groups show that sub-stories figure prominently among the illustrated scenes in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: of the two sub-stories, “The Two Doves” is depicted in two thirds of the manuscripts, and “The Ape and the Lentil Dish” in one third. Though either group shares a number of images, others fluctuate, so that almost each manuscript exhibits a unique selection (FN only Istanbul EYAM 344 and P3478 completely overlap in this chapter). The table thus exhibits both overlaps and variations in the book art of the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* – a visual intertextuality.

The following table 3 lists manuscripts and motifs (represented again by illustration, legend, or both) in the same order but adds the serial numbers for those present in each witness in vertical columns and shows the total number of instances of each motif across all manuscripts. The number of manuscripts is reduced to 24. The figures show even more clearly that (beyond resemblances in overlapping motifs, yielding groups A and C), each manuscript is unique in the precise selection of its images (with one exception mentioned above). In terms of the amount of images per manuscript, CCCP 578 and Rabat 3655 contain the most, 12 and 10 respectively, and *mutatis mutandis*, Bodleian March 673 and Paris 3466, contain the highest number of blanks with legends, 12 and 10 respectively). The single most frequent illustration, included in 18 of the 24 manuscripts, is unsurprisingly the sub-story of the two doves (col. W). Next frequent (14 times) is the dramatic final moment in which the vizier brings the supposedly executed queen back alive to the king; the prominence of this illustration elicits an awareness for the narrative climax of the parable.

Groups	MSS/Units	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
		[KdTitle illustration]	[KdDahsholim biography]	[KdKingDreemina]	[KdArahmanatAlin afkretOklilBeloved Oseil]	[KdKing concernedStinal]	[KdVizierTalkingTo QueenaboutKinasC]	[KdQueenTalking Takinahin]	[KdQueenTalking Takinahet]	[KdQueenTalking To Queen]	[KdKingLestWestro Queen]	[KdKingTalkingTo WiseHorse]	[KdKingpreparingto frontVise]	[KdKingTalking ToVise]	[KdKingTalking to gifs]	[KdKingTalkingTo Hiproonleabout gifs]	[KdGiftsComing]	[KdWhite Elephant]	[KdChoosinGifs]	[KdQueenAnd Condemn]	[KdQueenPours RiceOverKing]	[KdQueenHides QueeninHisPalace]	[KdQueenHides Vizier]	[KdKingTalkingTo Vizier]	[KdKapeOnTree ManSleeping]	[KdTwoDoves Flying]	[KdKingRepeteC ommandAfterTalk Over]	[KdQueenAliveKone elinfantentOking]	[KdVizierBrings QueenAliveToKing]	[KdExecutionOf Bahmans]
A	Riyadh 2536/ 14th century			1									2										3					4		
	P3475/ 1761 CE				1								2		3		4		5				6	7	8	9/7		10		
	Rabat 3655/ ca. 1265-85 CE							1				2	3		4				5				6	7	8	9/3		10		
	CCC Parker 578/ 1389 CE				1		2			3			4	5	6	7			8	9	10	11					12			
	Istanbul AM EY 344/ ca. 17th century		1	2					3						4					5			6	7	8	9				
P3478/ 18th century			1	2					3						4					5			6	7	8	9				
B	Schiller/ 1439 CE			1						2					3		4								5		6			
	Clarkii Or. 9/ 17th centurx				1				2				3									4	5				6			
	P3465/ 13th century							1	2				3		4								5	6			7			
	München 615/ 17-18th century							1					2		3				4				5	6	7			8		
	P3470/ 16th century	1							2			3			4												6			
Mc Gill 117953/ 1055 AH.				1/2				2					3																	
Riyadh 2407/ 1691 CE				1									2											3						

Groups	MSS/Units	[kExecutionOf Brahmaj]	[kVizierRings QueenAndKing]	[kQueenSalweene elInfrOntKing]	[kKinReregrisc ommanderTalk OVer]	[kTwoDoves Pheon]	[kApeOnTree Mansleeping]	[kKingTalkingTo Vier]	[kVizierIdess QueenHisPalas]	[kQueenPours RiceOverKing]	[kQueenand conubine]	[kChosingEris]	[kWhite Elephant]	[kErisComing]	[kKingTalkingTo HisPeopleAbout eris]	[kKingTalking ToWise]	[kKinKneelinIn frontVise]	[kKingTalkingTo Wisehorse]	[kKingNextTo Queen]	[kQueenTalking ToKing]	[kQueenTalking ToKing]	[kQueenTalking ToKing]	[kVizierTalkingTo QueenAboutKingSc Concersting]	[kdermanstelin afingokBeloved One]	[kkinDreaming]	[kDabshalm Biday]	[kKrite Illustration]
	London Add 24350/ 14th century	7	6			4			3	2						1											
	Pococke 400/ 1354 CE	6	5			3				2						1											
	München 616/ 1340-50 CE	4				3				2													1				
	Manchester 486/ 1631 CE		3			2			1																		
	Manchester 487/ 1672 CE		6		7	4				3										2					1		
	MET 1981.373.1-102/ 1617 CE					4				3						2				1							
	P3467/ 14th century		4			2				1																	
	P5881/ 1681 CE							3									2										
	Cairo 1196/ 1873 CE		6			4		3												2		1					
	Paris 3466/ 1450 CE					9	8	7		6								5	4			3	2	1			
	Bodleian Marsh/ 1653 CE		12			10		9		7						5			4			3	2	1			
	P3472/ 1669 CE					2		1																			
	Aleppo Ar 406/ 18th century												1														

Groups	MSS/Units	[kExecutionOf Brahmaj]	[kVizierRings QueenAndKing]	[kQueenSalweene elInfrOntKing]	[kKinReregrisc ommanderTalk OVer]	[kTwoDoves Pheon]	[kApeOnTree Mansleeping]	[kKingTalkingTo Vier]	[kVizierIdess QueenHisPalas]	[kQueenPours RiceOverKing]	[kQueenand conubine]	[kChosingEris]	[kWhite Elephant]	[kErisComing]	[kKingTalkingTo HisPeopleAbout eris]	[kKingTalking ToWise]	[kKinKneelinIn frontVise]	[kKingTalkingTo Wisehorse]	[kKingNextTo Queen]	[kQueenTalking ToKing]	[kQueenTalking ToKing]	[kVizierTalkingTo QueenAboutKingSc Concersting]	[kdermanstelin afingokBeloved One]	[kkinDreaming]	[kDabshalm Biday]	[kKrite Illustration]
	Wetzstein II 672/ 1830 CE														1											
	London 4044/ 15th/17th century																							1		
	Number of images in all manuscripts	4	14	6	11	19	11	13	3	11	4	3	1	11	2	9	6	2	2	2	10	2	9	2	2	

Group A
Group B
Group C
Other

Table 3.

7.2. Grouping by Motif

The positional table has permitted an initial grouping of certain manuscripts by virtue of narrative structure. This need to be further defined and complemented with a study of the motifs. Each group has one or two core motifs, shared by most of its manuscripts, and further ones shared by fewer of them in various constellations. Motifs are also not limited to the group they are taken to characterize, some occur in several groups, it is rather the *combination* of certain motifs and their various renditions that characterize a group.

Group A

The above defined group A, comprising of five manuscripts (Riyadh 2536, Paris Arabe 3475, Rabat 3655, CCC Parker 578, and Istanbul AM EY 344) has as a core motif the king meeting the wise man (tab. 2, cols. j, k, l), but in only some his horse is standing next to him (col. l). This motif is found in two manuscripts, CCC Parker 578 and Rabat 3655, the two oldest in this group. Another core motif is the vizier holding a bloody sword, pretending he executed the queen, as the king commanded (tab. 2, col. t). This is detailed in the legend of Istanbul AM EY 344 reading as follows, “The image of Bilād as he entered to the king with a blood-smeared sword.” The legend, in this case, what the vizier really did. One needs to read the text to know the vizier’s scheme to make the king regret his command before then revealing to him that the queen is still alive.

Another motif is queen talking to the king at the very beginning of the chapter (tab. 2, col. g/h). She advises him not to trust the Brahmins. This image speaks for itself: the queen stands before the king, animatedly gesticulating with her hands, while background is empty, so that the two figures appear to be floating in space. This rendition is consistent throughout the group, see table 4 for a comparative arrangement of the group’s core motifs.

















	MSS	Date	[KdQueenTalkingToKingRight] [KdQueenTalkingToKingLeft]	[KdKingTalkingToWiseLeft] [KdKingKneedingInfrontWise] [KdKingTalkingToWise]	[KdQueenPoursRiceOverKing]	[KdVizierSword]	[KdTwoDovesFighting]
Group A	Riyadh 2536	1392 CE	missing	 fol. 117v	missing	We	missing
	P3475	1761 CE	 fol. 164v	missing	missing	 fol. 169v	 fol. 170r
	Rabat 3655	ca. 1265-85 CE	 fol. 97r	 fol. 97v	missing	 fol. 100v	 fol. 101r
	CCC Parker 578	ca. 1389. CE	 fol. 103v	 fol. 104v	 fol. 107r	 fol. 108r	missing
	Istanbul AM EY 344	ca. 17th century	 fol. 128v	missing	 fol. 132r	 fol. 132v	 fol. 133v

Table 4. Core motifs of Group A in chapter Kd.

Group B

There is one group of manuscripts whose cohesion does not appear clearly in tab. 1, and requires comparing the illustrations. Their similarity justifies defining it as a group. It is constituted by one of the oldest manuscripts (including those with or without illustrations), Paris arabe 3465, which has been copied almost word by word, and motif for motif, several times. Its oldest portion is dated to the early seventh/thirteenth century is based on the style of illustrations, but the beginning and end have been lost and restored at later date.

This can be best shown by an example: manuscript Oxford Clarkii Or. 9 is dated to the eleventh/seventeenth century, based on the style of its illustrations. But it is its motifs that interest here. These, not their execution, show an obvious connection with Paris arabe 3465 despite the latter having been produced four centuries years earlier. The scene of the Indian king prostrating himself before the sage, whom he asks about those ominous dreams, may serve as an example. In fig. 4, the younger manuscript is on the left side, and in Paris arabe 3465 on the right. Several aspects of the motif visibly overlap: first, the posture of the figures, the king's prostration and the wise man being seated and gesturing with his hand; and second, the floral elements on both sides, giving the image cohesion.; third, smaller details, such as the contours of the figures' attire and headpieces (turban and crown). Beyond that, the two renditions of the motif differ in style and colors. In this case the connection between the images is paralleled by witnesses' text versions, which are near verbatim similar.



Fig. 4. Oxford Clarkii Or. 9 (eleventh/seventeenth century), fol. X, and Paris arabe 3465

Group B consists of five manuscripts, Paris Arabe 3465, Paris Arabe 3470, Bodleian Clarkii Or. 9, München 615, and Montreal 117953, all following the same model, Paris arabe 3465. This codex is noteworthy, because its figures are partly Hellenistic and partly eastern in style, and the architectural elements can be traced to Byzantine models. Hugo Buchthal established its similarity to Paris Arabe 6049, Harīrī's *Maqāmāt*. In both manuscripts, the illustrations are framed by arches. This architectural element is present in all five manuscripts of group B, even though rendered differently. Another common feature occurs in the motif of the queen talking to the king (tab. 2, col. g): the queen stands always on the right side and raises her hands in a particular fashion, the right above the left, while the king sits cross-legged on his throne in all manuscripts, and gestures with his hands. This motif also belongs to group A, but there the figures float and the illustration has no structure or boundaries. In group B, the royal couple is placed within or next to arches, which serve as a frame. A further motif dominant in this group is the king kneeling in front of the wise man (only once he is depicted standing; cols. k, l). This illustration is also framed, this time by floral elements which provide it with a structure. (Further motifs occurring in this group are the arrival of the gifts, col. n, and the ape on the tree, col. u).

Regarding the text and images, the manuscripts also belong together, since Clarkii Or. 9, München 615 and Paris Arabe 3470 are near verbatim copies of the version of Paris Arabe 3465. This confirms their belonging to one group. The illustrations provide additional evidence of the manuscripts' connection. In one manuscript, however, they show a certain distance: the illustrator of München 615, seems to have had inspiration from elsewhere. The scene of the queen pouring rice over the king's head after he has called her choice of the crown over the garment foolish (col. r), is illustrated, whereas the other manuscripts of group B lack the motif.










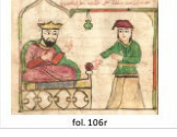
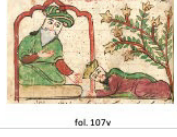


	MSS	Date	[KdQueenTalkingToKingRight]	[KdKingKneelingFromWise] [KdKingTalkingToWise]	[KdQueenPoursRiceOverKing]	[KdVizierSword]	[KdTwoDovesFighting]
Group B	Mc Gill 117953	1055 AH.	 fol. 117v	 fol. 119r	missing	missing	 fol. 122v
	P3465	ca. 1200-50 CE	 fol. 130v	 fol. 132v	missing	missing	missing
	P3470	16th century	 fol. 108v	 fol. 110r	missing	missing	missing
	Bodleian Clarkii Or. 9	17th century	 fol. 112r	 fol. 113r	missing	missing	missing
	München 615	17-18. century	 fol. 106r	 fol. 107v	 fol. 108v	missing	 fol. 110r

Table 5. Core motifs of Group B in chapter Kd.

Group C

The above defined group C, consisting of six manuscripts (MET 1981.373.1-102, Pococke 400, Manchester 487, Paris 3467, München 616, and Manchester 486) has a core motif the queen pouring rice over the king (col. r; except in Manchester 486). Its manuscripts Pococke 400, München 616, and Paris Arabe 3467, all dated to the eighth/fourteenth century, are also similar in style. The artist of Paris Arabe 3467 shares the arch of Pococke 400 but in different colours. A closer look at the figures in München 616 shows that the illustrated figure next the queen is a woman, wearing a headscarf. Except in Pococke 400 and Paris Arabe 3467, where the vizier is depicted, the figure standing next to the queen in group C is a woman, which is also the case in München 615 (group B).

The motif in Manchester 486 is peculiar; it is placed wrongly at the beginning of the story and lacks any vessel in the queen's hand. Nonetheless it has the composition of the rice-pouring motif in the earlier München 616, freely redrawn. The contour of crown on the queen's head is emphasized, and so is the headscarf of the favorite standing next to the queen; some of the colors (the king's and the queens garment's and the favorite's headscarf) are likewise adopted.

The legend (in a different hand than the main text) confirms this to be a motif of a later event in the story., but instead of describing the image, it narrates the consequences of the queen’s offense not visible there, “This is the image of the king who called his vizier and commanded him to kill his wife Ilādh. The vizier took her to him until the rage of the king had subsided. The king then repented his command, and the vizier told the king that she was hidden at his place, and the king rejoiced.”



Fig. 5. Manchester 486, 1631CE fol. 93r

This legend foretells the happy end on the story, which in the narrative follows only after a long series of maxims, which the king (and the reader) has to endure.

A further core motif is the two doves (tab. 2, col. v), created from a similar template in MET 1981.373, Pococke 400, and München 616, while Manchester 486 freely redraws the composition and adopts the colors of München 616. This motif is present in many manuscripts (including group A), but this group depicts the scene of the male’s killing of the female. Manchester 487 evinces a completely different style. The ornamented background in solid colors reminds of Persian miniatures, whereas the figures follow a Christian iconography. In another motif of this manuscript, the famous “Man in the Well,” the artist of this manuscript reveals his *Vorlage* to be Persian. To wit, Arabic versions do not show the cause for the man’s falling into a well, but Manchester 487 includes the enraged camel he is running away from.

A look at this motif in Persian versions shows the connection (see figs. 11 and 12 below). The third core motif of group C shows the executed Brahmans (col. z). It is found in three of the manuscripts: Pococke 400, Paris Arabe 3467, and Manchester 487 with the last one varying in the style of rendition.

The present preliminary grouping of manuscripts, based on one chapter, permits two general observations. First, it demonstrates the relations of manuscript groups through image cycles. But within these each manuscripts evinces individual choices of adding or omitting select motifs. Furthermore, some manuscripts cannot be assigned to any group, since they combine elements from different cycles. This is not unlike the cross-copying of text versions, but whether these two trends are in any way related remains to be investigated. A second observation is that in one group (B), the relation of the images parallels a relation of the text version. In the other groups, this is not the case, which means that images were transmitted between manuscripts along different trajectories than their text versions.


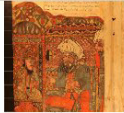



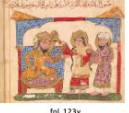












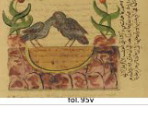
MSS	Date	[KdQueenTalkingToKingright] [KdQueenTalkingToKingleft]	[KdKingTalkingToWise]	[KdQueenPoursRiceOverKing]	[KdVisorSword]	[KdTwoDovesFighting]	[KdExecutionOfBrahmans]
MET 1981.373.1-192	1617 CE	 fol. 94r	 fol. 97r	 IMG_7953	missing	 IMG_7963	missing
Pococke 400	1354 CE	 fol. 121	missing	 fol. 123v	missing	 fol. 125r	 fol. 130r
Manchester 487	1672 CE	 fol. 142v	missing	 fol. 145r	missing	 fol. 346v	 fol. 150r
P3467	14th century	missing	missing	 fol. 93r	missing	 fol. 94r	 fol. 99v
München 616	ca.1340-50 CE	missing	missing	 fol. 107v	missing	 fol. 308v	missing
Manchester 486	1631 CE	 fol. 93r	missing	missing	missing	 fol. 95v	missing

Table 6. Core motifs of Group C in chapter Kd.

8. Select Motifs

Among the many dimensions of images in the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna* manuscripts (as in other illustrated works), is their function to lead the reader throughout the text and to support the narrative by visualising it. But there are many further roles of illustrations play, such as to entertain the reader while he or she draws ethical lessons from the text, in the same ways the sub-story achieve in a narrative way. Logically, these often emotionally charged sub-stories are frequently illustrated. They also offered the artist a greater palette of motives than, for instance, the rather static scenes of dialogue of the frame story between the Indian king and philosopher and the equally frequent dialogues of characters within the chapters. As to be expected in Kd, the sub-story of the male dove killing the female rashly and wrongly (as the king errs in ordering the queen to be executed) appears in nearly every illustrated manuscript (or legend next to a blank).

The Two Doves

To briefly summarize the story of the two pigeons: They have an agreement to store their grain for the winter. But when summer comes the grain has dried and lost in volume. The male pigeon blames his mate of having eaten some of the grain and in his anger picked her to death. When winter returns and the rains start, the corn swells again to its original volume. The male pigeon recognizes his injustice and dies or regret and grief over her.

This sub-story is told by the vizier to the king to persuade him not to kill his wife. As other wandering sub-stories, it further figures in *The Thousand and One Nights* and the *Seven Sages*, in manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Glaser 166. The tale's popularity may have contributed to the frequency of its depiction. The particular scene of the tale that is depicted varies. In many cases, it is the dramatic scene of the male pecking his mate to death, in a further one, in others, more rarely, the two dead doves. In Manchester 487 (fig. 7), the perspective is from above, showing the full of corn at the center and the doves lying at its side (as the marginal legend correctly describes). Manuscript Istanbul AM EY 344 shows the dead doves lying on their back on a slope. The artist may have been creative or followed an unusual *Vorlage*. He did not head the legend above to the image which specifies the same as the previous motif, "The image of the two dead doves and the image of the nest with the wheat and barley, as

you see.” That nest is missing in the image; the illustrator created instead his own visualisation of the scene (fig. 6).

The two motifs select different moments in the sub-story: the fighting scene, with both doves still alive, matches the moment of the main story in which the queen shows her fury to the king, and in this sense emphasizes the analogy of both. The dead doves next to the nest full of grain shows the tragic error of the killing and seems to forewarn of a similar outcome in the main story — which is indeed averted by the character of the vizier. In this sense, the images act variously as parallelism or counterpoint between enframed and framing tale.



Fig. 6. Istanbul AM EY 344, ca. XXXX/17th-18th century



Fig. 7. Manchester 487, dated [XXXX](#)/1672 CE

The Man in the Well

The widespread parable of *The Man in the Well*, or *The Perils of Life*, and its equally frequent illustration are placed Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts at end of the preface containing Burzoy's biography. The parable compares worldly existence to a well full of dangers, and each of the image's elements represents a temptation or a danger in the world. It is found already in the earliest manuscripts, Paris Arabe 3465, Pococke 400, and CCC Parker. The visual challenge is how to show everything narrated about this situation in the well, and is resolved by the motif of a diametrically cut through the well, visualizing what a realistic depiction from the outside could not show, yet what features the parable (see figs. 8-10).

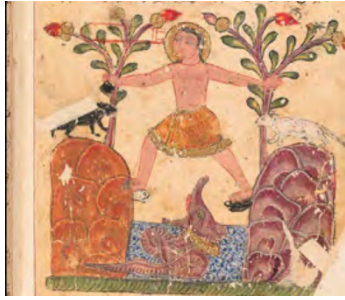


Fig. 8. Paris Arabe 3465, fol. 43v Fig. 9. Pococke 400, fol. 36v Fig. 10. CCC Parker 578, fol. 26v

The Arabic versions of this depiction, in contrast to Persian ones, do not depict the enraged camel leading to the man's fall, but only the resulting scene of him holding onto branches, while a dragon is waiting for him at the bottom of the well. The latter rendition of the motif is found for instance, in manuscript Manchester 487, fol. 20v, which resembles the Persian manuscript Cairo Dar al-Kutub, Adab Farisi 61, dated 1385-95 CE down to the smallest detail, as mentioned above, notwithstanding a gap of about 300 years and the difference of language versions.



Fig. 11. Cairo Dar al-Kutub, Adab Farisi 61, fol. 20v



Fig. 12. Manchester 487, 1672 CE, fol. 48v

It is noteworthy that Manchester 487 is full of marginal notes quoting Persian poetry. On the second fly-leaf at the beginning of the manuscript, appears an ode by Hafez (d. XXXX/1390),

the first *ghazal* in his *divan*. Throughout the manuscript further Persian verses are inscribed on the margins, from poet as late as Shokat Bokharī, contemporary with the manuscripts date. Manchester 487 contains 113 illustrations, and in the first half of the manuscript, a seal inscribed with the name *مورینی ابن سهل* and the date of 1162/1748 is found next to most illustrations. Furthermore, each illustration is explained in a very small hand in the margins. There are others legend written in a different hand fly leaves perhaps for further planned illustrations. The colophon on fol. 160r, contains the copyist's and the patron's names (see fig. 13).

Though the main text of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in Manchester 487 is in Arabic and Cairo Dar al-Kutub manuscript is Persian the connection between both is evident. The Persian reader's notes and poetic quotes suggest that it was produced or used in the same region the Persian Cairo Dar al-Kutub manuscript. The images likewise show a close dependence on that manuscript or an intervening *Vorlage*. This example of two manuscripts produced at times and in different languages and sharing a similar image not only documents the mobility of a motif but also a history of use by a bilingual Persian-Arabic audience.



Fig. 13. Manchester 487, dated 1083/1672 CE, colophon

The Queen Pouring Rice over the King's Head

One case of a repeatedly illustrated scene in the main story in Kd, is the scene in which the queen pours rice over the king's head. Here again, the depictions differ: the queen is either still holding the rice bowl in her hand (München 615, fig. 14), and or she is pouring the rice over the king's head (Pococke 400, fig. 15), the second being the more dramatic scene, a moment of high tension and immediate consequence.

صوَرَه الْمَلِكِ وَأِيْرَامَخْت لَأَيْتَه الْاَكْطِيْل وَخَوْرَقْنَاه لَأَيْتَه الْبَدَلِ الْاَكْطِيْل





Fig. 14 (above). München 615, 17th-18th century, fol. 108v

Fig. 15 (below) Pococke 400 dated 1354 CE, fol. 123v

The legend of the former reads “The image of the king and of Īrakht wearing the crown and Hūraftāh wearing the beautiful dress (*badla*),” the legend of the latter, “The Image of Īlādih after she has thrown the rice on the king’s head and the image of Bilādih, the king’s vizier.” In P3466, only the legend appears next to a blank

9. Conclusion

The above study has shown some of the multiple interrelations between Illustrations and text in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition and made the case that legends standing in for unfilled illustrations can be adduced to enlarge the corpus. On a basic level, illustrations help date manuscripts, notably the oldest ones, which have lost those parts of the book, incipit and colophon, crucial to dating (Rabat 3655, Paris Arabe 3465, and Pococke 400). Image-based

dating applies however primarily to the physical codex, and not necessarily its text version, which is in some cases considerably earlier (Met 1981.373 and Istanbul AM EY 344).

Returning to the initial questions, it could be shown that manuscripts hang together by the selection and placement of the motifs illustrated. Such motifs, and in some cases their exact rendition, might be copied from another manuscript including its text or not. A majority of the images belong to recurring motifs regarding their figures and objects and their constellation and further structural elements, at times reproduced from an identifiable *Vorlage*, be that through techniques of copying or free hand redrawing. Some manuscripts, however, give evidence of unique renderings of motives, changing their *Vorlage* (such as in P3475 departing from BRR 3655 in a few cases not only in style but in motif) or leaving out elements (Istanbul AM EY 344, see fig. 6). Conversely depicted figures with no counterpart in the narrative occur. Some illustrators must have had a number of different *Vorlagen* at their disposal to choose from, as visible in motifs that reunite elements from different renditions. This parallels the cross-copying of the text from different *Vorlagen* in various ways, a phenomenon that can be documented since the eighth/fourteenth century, and notably in CCCP 578 (and Pococke 400). The later Manchester 487, whose images were copied from an eighth/fourteenth century Persian manuscript, also contains an Arabic text that is a collage of several different versions. The simultaneity of these processes of recombination, which added to the artistic and literary value of a codex, needs further investigation as to whether copyist-redactor and illustrator took inspiration from each other (if they were not the same person).

Despite the existence of a distinct motif-repertoire, focusing on identical scenes across the manuscripts, the renditions differ in style and iconography. In a few cases, the coherence of pictorial repertoire and stylistic character in a group of manuscripts points to a school of painters, notably in group B. Even without exact knowledge about the workings of such schools, on which sources are sparse, three groups of manuscripts clearly show close interrelations. But this is only part of the findings; not a few manuscripts with unique motives or unusual combinations of them cannot be assigned to any group. Beyond that, even those manuscripts that fall within a group, especially those pairs identified as *Vorlage* and copy in the same style (e.g., P3465 and Clarkii Or. 9) are not completely identical in their execution.

Taking one chapter (Kd) as basis has permitted to identify which points of the narrative were selected for depiction. With *Kalīla wa-Dimna* being a frame narrative with further enframed

narratives, conversing figures, especially in the prefaces of the book, are frequent. In Kd, this leads to many depiction of king, queen, and vizier in varying combinations in dialogue. This is complemented by selections of moment of dramatic tension in the main story, also frequently depicted. The sub-stories (in addition to their overtly argumentative function within the plot) entertain both as narratives and through their visual depictions, and Kd, even though poor in sub-stories, confirms this. Again the prominent roles of sub-stories, challenging artists with the diverse animal motifs parallels to a certain extent the role of sub-stories that were extracted for independent story-telling (P3593 as a separate collection, P3612 within *The Thousand and one Nights*). Depictions are moreover the quickest way to locate a story in the book, serving as a sort of visual bookmark, which is probably the reason that are retained in codices that no longer make space for images (We II 672, P3473).

If this brief study cannot accomplish more than propose avenues of investigation based on a portion of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, it exemplifies the benefit one draws from placing text and image of this mercurial work in a comprehensive view.

Part II. Traveling Tales

5. What Makes a Good Friend? Analysis of the Two Syriac Translations of “The Cat and the Mouse” (Jan J. van Ginkel)

Introduction

In the following article I will discuss how both the Syriac versions of Kalila and Dimna versions treat one specific fable and highlight the particular characteristics of each version. The Story about the Cat and the Mouse was originally part of the Mahābhārata, a famous Sanskrit epic, consisting of 18 Parvas or Books¹³³. In the Twelfth Book, the Shanti Parva or Book of Peace, there is a collection of stories illustrating the duties of a good ruler and good governance. It resembles the Panchatantra in goal and set up. A ruler asks a wise man a question regarding good governance and the wise man answers by telling an (animal) fable. As a result, it made perfect sense to the composer of the original Middle Persian Kalilag and Dimnag collection to add some of the material from the Shanti Parva to the Panchatantra to create a more elaborate Mirror of Princes.¹³⁴

Cultural setting of the two Syriac versions

The old Syriac version was created in the Sasanian empire of the Sixth century. Although the Middle Persian collection is linked to Khosrow I (531-579), our translation most likely took place at the end of his reign or under Hormizd IV (579-590), his successor. Christian communities, most notably the Church of the East (often referred to as “Nestorians”),¹³⁵ were a sizeable minority in their empire, especially in the Mesopotamian region of Modern-day Iraq. Their (religious) leaders and educated elite were well integrated in society, up to highest levels.

¹³³ See introduction pp

¹³⁴ See Introduction pp

¹³⁵ Chr. Baum, D. Winkler, *The Church of the East A Concise History*, London 2003

At that time, Persian literature blossomed and there was an active interest in both Roman and Indian culture, which was translated and integrated in Middle Persian literature. Most Sasanian Christians used an Aramaic dialect for their literature, usually referred to as Syriac. Although most of the Syriac texts from this region are either new creations or translations and adaptations of Greek works, there are one or two glimpses of translations from Middle Persian into Syriac. The two most famous works are the Alexander Romance¹³⁶ and Kalila and Dimna. In addition, there was a circle of scholars working on Aristotelian philosophy, that also integrated Middle Persian material in their work.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, even though the Christians had access to the Middle Persian literature, not much of it has been preserved in the Syriac tradition.

The Younger Syriac Version was created in Church of the East circles in the Late Abbasid period of the tenth or eleventh century, when the role of the Syriac Christians in the development of the Arabic culture and literature began to wane. In the Early Abbasid period Christians had been heavily involved in the translation and adaptation of Greek literature into Arabic. But by the tenth century, they seem to have lost some of their position, both culturally and socially, and most of their literary production was focussed on an internal audience only. Rather than being a bridge between Greek and Arabic culture, there is a slow increase in translating and integrating Arabic literature into the Syriac tradition, which would become a significant feature of Syriac culture in the 12th and 13th century.

Syriac Versions¹³⁸

After the various Sanskrit texts had been combined into the Middle Persian fable collection known as Kalilag and Dimnag¹³⁹, it was almost immediately - around CE 570 - translated into Syriac-Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Christian communities in the Near East and Persia [the "Old version"]. This translation has left very few traces in the later Syriac literary tradition, but

¹³⁶ The Syriac Alexander Romance may, however, may not have a Middle Persian Vorlage, but may have only been translated in a Persian environment, van Ginkel, Doufikaer Aerts (2021?)

¹³⁷ A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur. Mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*. Bonn 1922, p 123

¹³⁸ For text and (German) translation of the Old Version see Schulthess (1911), txt 86-91, tr. 85-88; for text and translation of the Young version, see Wright (1884) 262-272, Keith Falconer (1885) 172-177. Quotations from the Old version by the author, from the Young version by Keith Falconer.

¹³⁹ Although the combination of these texts could have happened in India, it is more likely to have happened when the Middle Persian Version was created. Some arguments for this will be discussed in this article.

some short quotations can be found in the dictionary of Bar Bahlul.¹⁴⁰ In addition, Abdisho' bar Brīkā, of Nisibis¹⁴¹ (d. 1318) in his Catalogue of Syriac Books mentions a certain Bud, the Periodeutes, as the translator of Kalilag and Dimnag.¹⁴² The fact that Abdisho' has retained the guttural sounds of the Middle Persian at the end of the names, which we also find in the manuscript of this old version, is clear proof he was aware of this version, and not the younger version. The text of the former, in general, seems to stay close to the Middle Persian text although the manuscript text seems somewhat abbreviated and possibly may have lost some parts in transmission.

The reason for the lack of a detectable impact of this translation within the Syriac tradition is not entirely clear. As stated, in reference works like Syriac-Arabic dictionaries and Abdisho's Catalogue, the compilers were aware of its existence. However, that was only from previous reference works, or from manuscripts with the full text can not be established. Larger fragments, or even references, have not come down to us in other Syriac works. Intriguingly the Fables of Aesop in their Syriac form seem to have fared slightly better.¹⁴³

In the Syriac tradition, there is also a second translation [the "Younger version"], which is based on an early Arabic version.¹⁴⁴ As yet, no Arabic manuscript has been found with a text form that could qualify as the Vorlage for this translation. An unknown translator, most likely a cleric, produced this version in the tenth or eleventh century, most likely in (Northern?) Iraq. Although it has some unique features, it also preserves many elements from the early Arabic tradition, like the particular sequence of the stories,¹⁴⁵ although it is unique in putting the Kd and then Bu last. This Syriac translation shows some elements that seem to have been lost or heavily redacted in the later Arabic versions of Kalila and Dimna.¹⁴⁶ As such it – and other translations of Kalila and Dimna in Hebrew and other languages – provides a glimpse of this earlier phase in the evolution of the Kalila text in the Arabic tradition. In addition, the text is

140 Duval, Rubens, ed. *Lexicon syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule: voces syriacas graecasque cum glossis syriacis et arabicis complectens*. (Collection orientale 15-17) Paris, 1888-1901.

141 J.W. Childers, "'Abdisho' bar Brikha Ebedjesus (d. 1318)", S.P. Brock, e.a., *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011, 3-4; Abdisho' was an East Syriac scholar and ecclesiastical leader, who, among other works, also composed a metrical "Catalogue of Books", providing us with a first attempt for a Literary History of Syriac Culture.

142 G.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, III,1 ((Rome, 1725), 219-220. Assemani argues that Bud was active around 570 (see n 2 p 219). For a discussion on the date see Keith Falconer xliii-xlv.

143 (Sœur) B. Lefèvre, *Une version syriaque des fables d'Esop: conservées dans huit manuscrits. Texte syriaque édité et traduit en français*, Paris 1941

144 William Wright, *The Book of Kalilah and Dimnah or: The Fables of Bidpai*, (Oxford, 1884)

145 De Blois, 62

146 The Arabic manuscripts, and the versions they contain, all seem to date from some centuries after the translation into Syriac.

also heavily redacted and adapted to a Christian audience. As will be shown in the following, the creator of the younger Syriac version saw it as a book of moral instruction for his community, which had given in to all kinds of immorality. Although this claim of immorality is rather universal in works of moral instruction, it could, in addition, also be reflecting a period of socio-political pressure on the community in Late Abbasid times and a subsequent loss of membership.¹⁴⁷

Although the added layer of Christian adaptation and interpretation of the fables might have made this text more attractive to monastic and other religious copyists, it, too, does not have a detectable *Nachleben* in the Syriac tradition nor in a translated form in other traditions.

The survival of both Syriac versions of Kalila and Dimna was almost accidental and their manuscript transmission was problematic.¹⁴⁸ The older version survived in only one manuscript copied by a certain deacon Hormizd near ʿAmadiya in Northern Iraq in 1524 and was rediscovered in the library of the Chaldean Patriarchate in Mardin in 1870. After being copied four times for Western scholars, G. Bickell and E. Sachau, the manuscript was brought to Paris, where it was photographed by the Société asiatique and later described by Francois Nau.¹⁴⁹ Sadly, since then it has not been possible to locate both manuscript and photographs anywhere. However, the four “German” copies – even though each of them has its problems – provided a good enough basis for the edition (and translation into German) by F. Schulthess.

W. Wright published an edition of the younger version on the basis of the unique manuscript, now in Trinity College, Dublin. Again, this is a unique manuscript and it also has a checkered past. Although it originally was copied in the late 13th century, large parts had to be restored and rewritten in the 14/15th century. In 1613 several passages needed additional restoration. These rewrites may, in part, be an explanation of the many textual problems and scribal errors.

Content of the Sanskrit Fable

147 For a similar situation amongst the West Syrian community a few centuries later see D. Weltecke, „Überlegungen zu den Krisen der syrisch-orthodoxen Kirchen im 12. Jahrhundert“, In: M Tamcke, ed. *Syriaca : zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen* ; 2. Deutsches Syrologen-Symposium (Juli 2000, Wittenberg). Münster 2002, 125-145

148 Van Ginkel, “The Syriac Manuscript Situation” In: Gründer e.a., *An Interim Report on the Editorial and Analytical Work of the AnonymClassic Project*, *Medieval Worlds* 11 (2020) *Ideologies of Translation*, I, 241-279 (here 247-249).

149 F. Nau, , “Un manuscrit de Mgr Graffin: l’ancien manuscrit du Kalila et Dimna syriaque“, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien*, 16, 1911, p. 200-204.

Within the Sanskrit tradition, the Mahābhārata itself, also, went through various evolutions and has many regional variations. Although the stories in Kalila and Dimna are clearly closely related to those in the Mahābhārata, the differences may – at least in part – be not only be caused by the translator and editors in the Middle Persian, Syriac and Arabic tradition, but may reflect Sanskrit variation that has not been preserved in the manuscripts we have today.¹⁵⁰ In Book XII, following a similar set up of the Panchatantra, there is a conversation taking place between a king, Yudhishtira, and a wise man, Bhishma, on matters of governance.

In this particular fable¹⁵¹ the question is raised of what a weak ruler must do, when he is surrounded by enemies. The wise man, Bhishma, answers Yudhishtira, the king, that enemies can become friends and friends can become enemies, depending on the necessities of time and place. Sometimes one even has to make peace with long-time enemies. The story about the unexpected cooperation between a (wild) cat (Lomaśa) and a mouse (Palita) illustrates the point.

They both lived under a Banian tree, where the mouse was definitely on the cat's menu. At the same time, a hunter came to that region and set up traps at dusk. The cat, accidentally, got herself caught in one of these traps. When the mouse came out to forage, he saw the cat trapped and felt some joy about that. Being a little bit careless, he all of a sudden was surprised to find a mongoose behind itself on the forest floor and an owl above in the tree. Surrounded by three enemies, it had to rely on its intelligence to get out of trouble. Because the cat was in trouble herself, she might be willing to help against the others in return for being freed. He appealed to the cat to trust one another and help one another. The cat agreed to a pact and they greeted each other as friends and embraced. The owl and mongoose left disappointed, because they did not dare challenge the cat. After they have left, the mouse very slowly gnawed through the ropes of the trap, making the cat nervous, because she feared the mouse might not fulfil her part of the pact. The mouse then told her that she will only gnaw through the last rope when the hunter would arrive to make certain the cat would flee and not think of eating the mouse after all. Even though the cat protested, the mouse stuck to its plan. When

¹⁵⁰ For a very first survey see the Prolegomena in V.S. Sukthankar, The Mahābhārata. Vol. 1, The Ādiparvan : being the first book of the Mahābhārata, the great epic of India / for the first time critically edited, Poona 1933, pp I-CX
¹⁵¹ Mahabharata, Book XII, ch. 138

at dawn the hunter returned to check on his traps, the mouse finally freed the cat and both scurried away and ran for safety.

After the hunter has left, disappointed, the cat returned to the mouse's hole and proclaimed her eternal gratitude. She would be a friend to the mouse, forever! The mouse, however, declined the friendship by referring to the general rule that friends can become enemies easily, depending on the necessities of the time and the place. Blind faith and trust in friends and eternal fear of enemies can be fatal. So always look out for your own interests. But if you, cat, are willing to not chase me anymore, I would be more than happy. But I will always fear you as the weak must always fear the strong. When the cat promises and swears that she will always honour their friendship, the mouse is impressed, but still reiterated that the weak must be careful around the strong. A lack of trust tends to be of more use than naivety. The story ends with Bhishma applying these general rules to governance.

It's noteworthy that in the Mahābhārata the discussion between the cat and the mouse after the event, i.e. after the cat has been freed from the trap and the hunter has left, is as long as the story itself. In addition, there are several references in the story to Bhishma telling the story and highlighting "truths" in the story. Both actors, cat and mouse, use wisdom sayings to make their points – and several of the ones used by mouse are also used by Bhishma in the introduction and in the application phase of the story.

Syriac Versions of Cat and Mouse: Structure

As stated above, this story became part of the Middle Persian work, known as Kalilag and Dimnag and reappears in both Syriac-Aramaic versions of this collection, as well as in all related versions in other languages. Compared to other chapters in Kalila and Dimna the structure of the Story of the cat and the mouse is relatively simple. Although the animal story is embedded in the frame story of the discussion of the king and his advisor on good governance, there are no additional layers of stories embedded into the animal fable, where most other chapters have multi-layered structure of stories within stories. As stated before, in the Sanskrit version the frame story, at times, reappears in the account and the story also ends with a long epilogue by the advisor explaining the finer points of the fable. In the (Old?) Syriac – and related -versions, the frame story only appears as the introduction to the fable,

but there is no further reference to the king and his advisor, nor a more general explanation of the fable in relation to the question raised in the introduction.¹⁵²

The chapter is also one of the shortest in the collection. Intriguingly, the long discussion between the protagonists at the end of the story in the Mahābhārata, is seriously abbreviated in both Syriac and other related versions. This abbreviation does not explain the lack of a return to the frame story, as the other fables also end without returning to the frame story in the Syriac versions. Most likely, when the story was added to the Kalila collection, the composer of the collection was more interested in the fable and reduced the frame story elements from the Mahābhārata. One reason could be that the compiler wanted to bring these Mahābhārata-stories more in line with the Panchatantra structure, where the princely frame is also very limited in scope and thus not reappear at the end of a story.

In addition, the Younger version has reduced the introductory part of the frame story as well, compared to the preserved versions of the Arabic tradition. For example, in the question of the king the Arabic versions tend to refer to a man surrounded by his enemies and how he will use alliances and peace to survive. The younger Syriac version only states: “his enemies are many and approach him from all sides, yet [he] manages to escape”. In the answer of the advisor only discusses the changes between love and hate that may occur, where the Arabic explicitly refers to escaping from peril and using reasonable judging abilities of a person to come to a decision and sticking to it.¹⁵³ In reducing the frame elements, its composer seems to have put even more focus on the fable in comparison to the framework.

It is noteworthy, that the Old Syriac version, unlike the Younger version, lacks the normal reference to the issue of the previous chapter, which characterizes the Panchatantra chapters and the Kalila and Dimna tradition after ibn al-Muqaffa.¹⁵⁴ As this internal linkage does not occur in the Mahābhārata and was introduced by the (Sasanian) compiler, when he added these stories to the Panchatantra stories, the omission thereof and the fact that in this account the old names of the king in his advisor from the Mahābhārata are still present, seem to be an

¹⁵² The younger version ends with a general statement: “This is a parable of enemies who become friendly and familiar with one another, and afterwards part

¹⁵³ Miquel p. 229 (Azzam p xx)

¹⁵⁴ Most chapters in the various Kalila and Dimna versions start with something like “I have heard this story ..., but ..” linking the frame story into one account.

indication that the integration was not yet complete, when the translation into Syriac took place.

The older version also has a unique sequence of chapters, in that the fable of the cat and mouse appears as the fifth chapter of the collection, while the third chapter of the Panchatantra on the Owls and Crows was moved to the sixth position.¹⁵⁵ This, however, was not a characteristic of the Middle Persian Vorlage of al-Muqaffa, where the sequence of the Panchatantra has been retained. This, therefore, is an error by the translator, or, more likely, by a later copyist.

Observations on style

In general, the old Syriac version stays closer to the Sanskrit text, but it is not a straight forward translation of the Sanskrit versions we know, as some of it seems abbreviated and, at times, more a retelling of the text. The Sanskrit sayings and metaphors are mostly retained, but in a modified form. Although the Syriac story follows the same plot lines and arguments, the Syriac – or rather Middle Persian – composer of the text, also, felt the freedom to adapt the material to the world of his audience. (cultural translation and/or “domestication” is the term...). An example of this cultural translation technique is the adaptation of a metaphor, where in the Sanskrit text the cooperation between Cat and Mouse is equated with a man, locating a piece of wood in order to cross a river by using it as a floating device, the old Syriac version is the first in the tradition to preserve an “adaptation” on the imagery by relating that the safety of a human depends on a ship and that of a ship on humans [i.e. by the crew of the ship] in order for both of them to cross the sea.¹⁵⁶

The younger version has far more metaphors and sayings¹⁵⁷ – most of which have been added to the fable in the evolving Arabic tradition, although some seem, for the time being, unique for this version of Kalila and Dimna. As a result, the chapter in the young version is nearly twice as long as that in the old version.

¹⁵⁵ Introduction; Sprenglin p 97.

¹⁵⁶ Schulthess 89 (txt), 87 (tr).

¹⁵⁷ E.g. “through idleness destruction befalls a man” (Wright 264; Keith Falconer 173); “heal the ulcer of enmity by the soothing medicine of love remote from deceit” (Wright 265; Keith Falconer 173); “knocking on death’s door” (Wright 265; Keith Falconer 173). Some are also part of the “Christianisation” of the text and message.

However, although most of the adaptation seems to be aimed at making the story more accessible to a non-Indian audience, some parts still reflect an Indian background, which is not present in the Mahābhārata, as we have it today. In the final monologue of the mouse about the dangers of being dependent on enemies (of old), he uses the metaphor of being like a man sitting on the tusk of an elephant. In the Arabic tradition – and the Younger Syriac version -, this image tends to be turned into riding an elephant as such – although the tusk is sometimes referred to. In the Sanskrit, however, this element seems to be missing. The mouse in the Mahābhārata, in a different part of the narration, does refer to elephants, but only on how tame elephants are being used to catch wild elephants. He uses this image to illustrate how people can change from being enemies to being friends, or vice versa. This metaphor may have been part of the particular – now lost - Sanskrit version of this fable, that was used for the Middle Persian translation. If it was not part of the Vorlage, it may have been inserted to give the story an exotic feel – although there are very few clear examples of that in the whole work.

A clear example of a novelty, i.e. lacking in the Sanskrit, in the imagery in the old version is the use of the metaphor of the suckling animal, that follows his mother around for as long as it can get milk. When the production of milk ends, the young loses interest in its mother and they go their separate ways. Similarly, friendship only lasts as long as there is a profit in it for the participants.¹⁵⁸ Intriguingly, this metaphor is preserved the Arabic tradition, but not in the young Syriac version.

General argument of protagonists for helping each other

Regarding the content of the fable, the Old Syriac retains, in its introduction, the reference to the weakness of the king, who is being surrounded by enemies. In the later stages of the account, however, the element is only implicitly present. In the later Arabic tradition, and its offspring, the younger Syriac version, this element has disappeared altogether and the king only asks about a ruler surrounded by enemies, irrespective of their strength. The old Syriac is a first stage of this development of losing the weakness element.

¹⁵⁸ Schulthess 90 (txt), 88 (tr)

In the Old Syriac version, the argument for befriending a (previous) enemy stays close to the Sanskrit logic that one should befriend an enemy, when he could be useful, and when a friend is harmful, you might become his enemy. Hate and friendship are determined by harm and profit. The mouse asserts that the cat will understand their mutual needs and will come to the right conclusion and will help him against the other enemies.

In the younger version, it is necessity that drives the switch between friendship and enmity. Although this comes close to the utilitarian argument, it is less Machiavellian in its presentation. In addition, in the younger version there is a discussion on two types of enmity and love/friendship, of which there are traces in the Arabic tradition as well.¹⁵⁹ The first is dependent on circumstances (necessity), the second is “implanted by nature” and can never be completely changed into its opposite.¹⁶⁰ Although the question of the fable focusses on the first type, it is the second type that is also used to explain the wariness of the mouse towards the cat. Their innate enmity can, in his opinion, never entirely disappear. In the old version, it is the usefulness of the friendship and self-interest that explains his lack of trust after the events and is an important argument for not extending the friendship.

Another innovation, that can be found in the younger version, is the fact that emotions are highlighted.¹⁶¹ For example, the despair of the protagonists, especially the cat, and being without a helper, is expressed much stronger than in the Sanskrit or in the old version. Even the mouse, on realizing that he was facing a three-way threat of Mongoose, Owl and Cat, first despairs, before rebuking himself and then focussing on the problem and reasoning his way out of the dilemma. By highlighting some of the emotions, it seems the text might be more relatable for a larger audience, becoming more entertaining and draws in the reader into the account.

The link between the more emotional language and a religious, more specifically Christian,¹⁶² language can be seen throughout the chapter. When the cat despairs, he expresses it as follows: “I [...] am knocking at death's door¹⁶³ and am far from temporal life and pleasures,

¹⁵⁹ Miquel 234; Might there be an Arabic Aristotelian theory of innate opposition behind this?

¹⁶⁰ Wright 271; Keith Falconer 177

¹⁶¹ Many of the emotional aspects are also missing in (most of) the Arabic versions.

¹⁶² Although many phrases might also work in an Islamic context, the translator of the younger version explicitly discusses the Christian message in his work in the Chapter on Burzoy's Life (Wright 402; Keith Falconer 264). A comparison with Arabic versions has – as yet -found no equivalents of most of the phrases.

¹⁶³ Compare Ps 107:18.

because I have no helper¹⁶⁴ except God”.¹⁶⁵ When using a metaphor about a ship in a storm, he uniquely elaborates and gives a vivid description of the sailors’ fears, unknown from any other version. “[they] all, with one voice and with one cry, cry out to God, and out of one troubled and miserable heart call to Him. For the Adorable One (الله العزيب), because He knows the purity of their conscience, does not despise their petition, but immediately allays the angry sea, His command restrains its waves ...”.¹⁶⁶

But the divine also is used to express solemnity, when the pact between the two is witnessed by God¹⁶⁷ and deceit is described as a form of not fearing God,¹⁶⁸ a sin” (كفر بالله).¹⁶⁹ In general, it is God, who will ultimately provide a way out of their predicament,¹⁷⁰ provided both of them act in a God-fearing way. The religious language ultimately even seems to have led to a quotation from the Bible, “according to the word of the chief of the wise, who says”, but the quotation itself is missing.¹⁷¹

Both the emotions and the religious language work to enliven the story, while at the same time the message of a switch between friendship and enmity being caused by necessity is slightly adjusted by an additional thought that God is always an active participant in life as well. Most of the Christian phraseology is cultural translation, without losing the core of the original tradition, which makes the story more relatable.

The composer, elsewhere, explicitly states his work was intended for a Christian audience. . Although the goal of instructing “princes” of God’s will is mentioned¹⁷² – preserving the mirror of princes- theme – the composer goes on, in his adapted version of the Life of Burzoy, to address a slightly different audience than secular princes. “We find, o my honoured brethren and distinguished teachers, that the world is going backwards in this-hard time of ours, and in this our evil and vexatious generation, especially in the days in which it has seemed good to your Excellency¹⁷³ that this book should be brought to light and translated

164 Compare Ps 74: 12 or 22:11.

165 Wright 265; Keith Falconer 173

166 Wright 267, Keith Falconer 174. The translator may have been inspired by Mark 4:35-39, since the second part about allaying the wind is irrelevant for the argument.

167 Wright 266, Keith Falconer 174; Wright 267, Keith Falconer 174

168 Wright 268, Keith Falconer 175; Wright 269, Keith Falconer 176

169 Wright 272, Keith Falconer 177

170 Wright 267, Keith Falconer 174; Wright 272, Keith Falconer 177

171 Wright 269, Keith Falconer 176. The preceding sentence about laying down one’s life for one’s brother seems a paraphrase of John XV:13.

172 Wright 401; Keith Falconer 264

173 Who the composer refers to is unknown. A high ranking church member seems likely, but, due to a lack of context, it is impossible to say more.

from Arabic into Syriac”.¹⁷⁴ The reference to “honoured brethren and distinguished teachers” is not very specific, but refers to the broader cultural leadership of the Christian community. Although this might include high ranking professionals like physicians and translators, the majority would be – high ranking - members of the clergy. ¹⁷⁵

However, given that he continues with the following statement: “.. the truth on which the world is founded, and on which [as] on solid adamant the Church of Christ is built, has been specially hidden by the teachers of the Church and the pastors of God. Yea, they have hidden in the heart of the earth that love which is the perfecter of all virtues, according to the testimony of the wise architect and zealous treasurer and heavenly apostle. It is utterly taken from the world, especially from the priests and from those who seek the priestly office, and is laid in the dust of the earth.”¹⁷⁶ This is obviously a challenge to these teachers and religious leaders. This does not mean that they are not the intended audience, but it does also open the possibility that it was to be read by members of the community, who shared a certain disdain for or anger against the ecclesiastical leadership of the day.¹⁷⁷

In the chapter of the Cat and the Mouse this message is mainly implicit. Although it may be read as an instruction for a Church leader on how to deal with – and trust - other non-Christian leaders, this would not be obvious unless the text was read in combination with the preceding fragments from the Life of Burzoy. The main explicit adaptation of the message of the fable is that God has given both Cat and Mouse deliverance.

Syriac Versions of Cat and Mouse: intriguing details

The first striking element of the older version are the names of the protagonists. The king is called ܙܕܫܬܪܐ, (Zd’shtr)¹⁷⁸ which reflects the name Yudhishtira from the original story. ¹⁷⁹ The adviser is also still called Bhishma. In all the other chapters of Kalila and Dimna, even those taken from the Mahābhārata, the king is either anonymous or called (transcribe) ܕܡܝܬܐ,

¹⁷⁴ Wright 402; Keith Falconer 264

¹⁷⁵ Also see the use of terminology like ܐܘܪܫܐܝܢܐ (nobility) for protagonists in the fables, suggest an elitist setting.

¹⁷⁶ Wright 402; Keith Falconer 264. The text continues with a long expose over all kinds of evils in the world, seemingly committed by these teachers and pastors.

¹⁷⁷ The implications of this passage for the entire work will be discussed in another article.

¹⁷⁸ Vocalisation is dubious as it was added later in the manuscripts – see van Ginkel 2020.

¹⁷⁹ The z instead of y is not an unexpected copyist’s mistake. The name of the adviser is also still Bhishma.

(Dbshrm) reflecting the kings name of the Panchatantra. 180 The fact that the Middle Persian Vorlage, in this case, still, erroneously, retained the old names of the Mahābhārata would suggest that the process of the incorporation of the Mahābhārata stories into Kalila and Dimna had not been completed by the time the Middle Persian Vorlage came into existence. The most likely explanation would be that the merger of the stories was part of the creation of the Middle Persian collection, and had not taken place in an earlier Sanskrit phase. 181

By the time the Younger version was created, the frame story had been harmonized – king and adviser have been anonymized. In fact, this had already occurred in the Arabic tradition, where this inconsistency is not present in any manuscript. It is, therefore, not an innovation by the Syriac translator and composer.

In the old version, the Sanskrit, also, is reflected in the names of the cat and the mouse, पृथु (Parit) from the Sanskrit Palita (i.e. grey), and र्होमि (Rhoma) from the Sanskrit Lomasa (i.e. hairy).

In the later Arabic tradition these names have evolved further away from the Sanskrit Vorlage and, as a result, the younger version refers to فریدون (mouse) and رومی (cat), reflecting the Arabic names of Feridun and Rumi.

In the younger version, the protagonists are also explicitly referred to as nobility (نبل and رهبان), a term used for the imperial elite since Roman times, and wise, possibly connecting them to their potential audience, whereas in the Old version the animals are not socially “qualified”.

As to be expected, both translations are influenced by the language of their respective Vorlages. The old version retains some of the Persian grammar and may have influenced some particular translation choices. For example, Syriac retains the names of the titular protagonists, Kalilag and Dimnag, where the g-sound reflects the Middle Persian ending, which in time would soften and is not established in the Arabic tradition. The younger version refers Kalilah and Dimnah, based on the Arabic names. Also, the use of راسغ (rasug) for Mongoose and رهبان (parrhesia) for an oath, a word of honour, seem to have a Persian background. 182

180 The adviser is called بیدون (Bydwg) from the Sanskrit Vishnu Sharma.

181 Even though there was more than one version of these fables in the Sanskrit tradition, there is no proof that there already a version where Panchatantra and some of the Mahābhārata fables were merged into one work.

182 E.g. Schulthess 87 (txt); 86 (tr); Schulthess 89 (txt); 87 (tr)

The influence of the Arabic text on the young version can be illustrated by the use of **ܡܬܠܐ** (**Matla**) for fable.

Syriac Versions: general conclusions

In comparing the two Syriac versions with each other, and also in the context of the Sanskrit Vorlage and some of the Arabic versions, it becomes clear that the focus of the composer of the Middle Persian collection in the Sixth century was more on the fables and less on the frame story. As a result, in both Syriac versions, the more elaborate frame story of the segments from the Mahābhārata has been reduced to be similar to the Panchatantra. Noteworthy is that the younger version also reduces the question of the king and the answer of the advisor to its more general core. In addition, the explanatory dialogue of the mouse and the cat at the end of the story has been reduced. The adaptation, most likely, took place in Persia, because the old version still retains elements of an incomplete transformation. Whether or not the Middle Persian version had ironed out the inconsistency of retaining the name of the king from the Mahābhārata by the time it was translated by Ibn al Muqaffa is unknown, but it seems likely.

The old version, even though it gives us an abbreviated version of the Sanskrit story, still retains most of its tone and tenure. The attitude and morality expressed in the fable remain true to the Sanskrit story. The younger version provides us with a slightly different attitude towards the dilemma of changing friendships and enmity. Although this shift can already be detected in the Arabic versions, the younger version still holds a rather unique position in the Kalila and Dimna tradition by the addition of the Christian element to the story. Although, some of the references to God could have already been created in an Islamic context, there is no trace of it in the Arabic tradition of these specific references, that has come down to us.¹⁸³ In addition, some of the language show a clear link to Biblical texts, including a potential quotation. This version of the Cat and Mouse story is an example of how the young Syriac editor adjusted Kalila and Dimna to his new aim to use this work to educate his audience in Christian morality.

¹⁸³ In some Arabic versions the religious – Islamic? - component in Kalila and Dimna is also more prominent than in the early Syriac version.

This highlights a difference between the old and the young version. The old version, by and large, seems to have stayed true to the Middle Persian Vorlage and has only slight adaptations. The young version is in essence a new creation by retelling the stories with a new purpose. In the transmission of the Kalila and Dimna collection both versions are examples of the gradual evolution of the narrative, not necessarily in straight line, but more like water seeking its way in various directions. The old version reflects the oldest phase, just after the collection had come into being in Middle Persian. Even though the translator tried to be close to its Vorlage, he, at times, seems to have allowed himself some freedom with the text.

However, after the text had entered the Arabic tradition, the freedom to adjust and adapt the text according to the ideas of its transmitters and, potentially, the appreciations of the intended audience, allowed for far more elaborate diversification – *mouvance*. The second, younger version, is a case in point. It is not a new version of the old version – it seems not to be aware of its existence – as it is a clear and conscious adaptation of an Arabic Vorlage in order to present an adapted message to a specific, i.e. Christian, audience.

This raises the issue of the intended audience in general. The composer of the younger version clearly intends his work as part of a battle against “immorality”, in part specifically of the religious leaders. While the Sanskrit mirror of princes was aimed at the leading elite and was intended to instruct them to fulfil their leading role in society for the good of their kingdom, almost at all costs, the composer of the younger version wants elite and other members of his community to learn about good behaviour, and that God rewards good behaviour and keeps an eye on those who do not live according to His instructions. This may also be appreciated by those who felt the impact of the priests' immorality.

The old version is more complicated in this respect. The Middle Persian version was created and aimed at the Sasanian court, an elitist audience. Whether it was meant for the princes, or more for high ranking courtiers can be debated. But, in both cases, why bother with a Syriac version? No clear answer can be given. However, in the higher court circles there was a substantial Syriac speaking community, which was in part specifically representing the needs of the Christians, but some were also involved in scholarly activities and more practical affairs, like court physicians. Although this Christian and Aramaic elite would be a potential audience, it is noteworthy that they were all bilingual and would have been able to appreciate the work in Middle Persian as well. To what extent non-Christians were able to read Aramaic at the

Sasanian court is unclear. The fact that the impact and reception of this text in the later Syriac tradition is also very limited, again highlights the uniqueness of this translation.

As to putting the Cat and the Mouse fable from both Syriac accounts next to each other illustrates on the one hand how Syriac was able in different circumstances to present it self as part of a multilingual and multicultural community. Both texts have within the Syriac tradition no real connection, but when seen in this kaleidoscope of languages, which together make up the “Arabic World” of the first millennium, they become branches of an enormous tree, that is still growing. The old one is a tiny branch, almost from the roots. The younger one is – much higher up -a very distinct side twig– with Christian mistletoe woven into it - of an obscure and vaguely visible branch. They are well connected to each other and many other branches, but each also has its own form and lives its own life. And we, the scholars, can play in that tree like Palit and Roma.

1/0 Chapter¹⁸⁴ of Cat and Mouse

[Abstract missing]

3/2 And Zđštr said to Bšm:

If a weaker person happens to be amongst enemies, and they strive against him, show me how he through his knowledge can plan and turn one from the multitude of the haters to friendship and agreement, and so that the rest of his enemies would turn away from him, and also that he, who had turned to friendship, would not with deceit destroy him, and how he would achieve that agreement with that one, who was suited for it.

4/3 Bšm said:

One should not always think of a friend as a friend, nor an enemy as an enemy, because when an enemy finds a benefit in his enemy, he will turn to friendship, and if [a friend] perceives damage from a friend, he turns to enmity. Hatred and friendship correspond to damage and benefit.

5/4 A wise person sometimes gives his pledge (prhsy') to his enemy, and sometimes receives¹⁸⁵ trust (prhsy') from him. Whosoever understands his benefit and is able to show with his enemy and with his friend sometimes agreement and sometimes disagreement, will achieve [87] his goal.

10/7 An example for this is the story that happened to the mouse with the cat.

11/8 Zđštr said: How goes this story?

[Title¹⁸⁶ is lacking]

[Abstract missing]

3/2 The King said: "I have heard your parable¹⁸⁷. You have composed it very well. Now tell me the parable of the man, whose enemies surround him and approach him from all sides (263) and he plans his deliverance from them."

4/3 The teacher said: "Not every reign and not every enmity will last. Sometimes love turns and becomes enmity instead; sometimes enmity comes to an end and love reigns in its place. When change comes upon things and matters alter and the mind is troubled, by all means hatred, which is hiding inside the heart, reveals itself. 7/5.1 Sometimes, also, necessities/ty invites towards love and (banishes) fear and makes, those that are far apart, familiar so that they approach each other,

10/7 as happened to the mouse with the cat. When they, both, agreed on one goal and the made a plan and delivered themselves from the hand of their enemies."

11/8 The king said: "How was their message/story?"

¹⁸⁴ Also "door"

¹⁸⁵ Lit. "perceives"

¹⁸⁶ Possibly related to the Riyadh ms.

¹⁸⁷ Matlā

Bīšm said:

12/9 There was tree, called Nyrut. It was big and had many branches. In its shade lived all kinds of animals, and birds were nesting in its smaller branches. At the foot of the tree lived a mouse, whose name was Prt, and certain cat, whose name was Rhwmy, had its hole there. 13/10 And trappers used to come there and hide snares and spread out nets for the animals and the birds.

One night, that cat, named Rhwmy, got herself caught in the nooses. 14/11 And the mouse at feeding time came out of her small hole and wandered discreetly around in that place. He saw the cat, caught in the nooses, and was glad. 15/11.1 But when he looked behind him, behold, he saw a weasel, wanting to eat him. He lifted his gaze to the tree and saw an owl, observing in order to devour him.

16/12 While he had happened to get amongst his enemies, he considered: If I turn around, I will fall in the hands of the weasel. And if I go forward, the cat will kill me. And if I rush to either side, the owl will snatch me. From all sides there is danger.

The teacher said: 12/9 "They say that in one of the provinces¹⁸⁸ there was a tree, that was called Bayruz¹⁸⁹. And underneath it was a (certain) hole of a mouse, named Aphrywdyun¹⁹⁰, and in the neighbourhood of that place was a (certain) burrow of a cat, called Rummy. 13/10 And there was a custom that trappers came to that tree and (tried to) trap of every kind (of animal), that they could find there. And when one of the trappers had set up his snare/trap and had hidden it in the ground, that cat came out of his hollow to look for something he needed. And hunger covered/blinded his eyes and he came and fell in that snare/trap, that was hidden. (264) And he lost hope for his life because there was for him no helper, towards whom he could lift up his gaze.¹⁹¹ 14/11 The mouse left on some business (??)¹⁹² and saw the cat, lying in the trap. 15/11.1 And he turned away his gaze and, behold, a weasel¹⁹³ from his right, lying in wait to destroy him. And he raised his eyes up towards that tree, and behold, a certain owl in the tree that wanted to snatch (him). Then the mouse was afraid that, if he turned back, the weasel would kill him, and if he went up the tree, the owl would snatch him, and if he remained on his spot, that the cat would see some way to free itself from that snare, in which he lay and kill him. And he was in a state of having lost hope. 16/12 Next, the mouse began to think by himself, while saying: "Because of what am I fallen in uncertainty? But let me consider a plan and deliver my life before a fatal punishment might come upon me. And there is no assistant nor guide nor advisor for me, except my strength. And it is necessary for me that I do not remain in negligence, because through negligence ruin will come upon (a man).

¹⁸⁸ Lit.: "cities"

¹⁸⁹ Probably: *bayrud* (c.f. Spanish *vairod*, cf. Arabic P3466 البيروط ; L4044 الهيرود ; and P3471 النيرود).

for)

¹⁹⁰ Faridun

¹⁹¹ On "lifting the gaze," cf. Psalm 121:1-2

¹⁹² Text is corrupt, corr. KF 296 (supported by Wright LXXII); other option *المحلل* - for eating

¹⁹³ (Bar) auruzd

But I will keep my composure and think hard and make a plan, 18/14 because the intellect of the wise is a deep source, and in good and in bad firmly established. 19/15 And in good they are not intoxicated and in bad not [88] depressed, but they plan, full of self-control and with comprehension.

20/16 I have examined it and in this distress, I do not know (another) solution, but an agreement with the cat. Because of what has happened to her and because there is nobody able to help her except me, she, perhaps, may, when she hears my straightforward argument, understand her benefit and makes with me an agreement. And in that way I am saved.”

21/17 Then he spoke with her and said to her:

How is your life, cat?

22/18 She replied:

Thus, I live in distress, as you would want.

But now I will examine the matters and investigate them. 18/14 Because he, who investigates the great sea of every kind, sometimes someone obtains its depths by way of a polished mind.¹⁹⁴ And it is not possible that a mind, when sound, would not come upon the secrets of matters, even if they are very profound and difficult/complex. Like the understanding of the great sea is not difficult for divers (265), who descend and search pearls in it, likewise it is not difficult for the sound mind to bring up good ideas as good pearls. 20/16 And I, now there is nothing for me in this trial as to get close to this cat, who has fallen in a difficult pitfall and is very shaken himself and longing to get up out of it. And is not possible that he be delivered from this trap, except by me. Now I will approach towards him and appease the fury of his heart with gentle words, and foster his heart with a delicate mind and heal the ulcer of enmity by the soothing medicine of love, far from deceit; like oil and wax¹⁹⁵, while mixed, calm swollen and hard ulcers.”

21/17 And the mouse approached towards the cat and said to him: “how are you, little brother?”

22/18 The cat said: “As you see me. Behold, I am lying in a snare and I am knocking on the door of death and I am far from life time and pleasures because there is no helper for me except God.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Text seems corrupt

¹⁹⁵ Read *rebase*

¹⁹⁶ C.f. Ps. 107 ??

23/20 He said to her:

{There was a time,} when I wanted your death and your misfortune, but now I have come to a point where my hope rests with you and do not want your death. Also, nobody is able to save you from your ropes, but I. Listen to what I say to you and be aware that I do not speak with falsehood, 24/20 because the weasel and the owl are my enemies and I am weak and despised compared to them. The weasel from behind me and the owl from above me are looking for me. Of you and of them I am afraid, and they are afraid of you.

If I come to you and you help me and deliver me¹⁹⁷ and save me from their hands, and I will also cut your snares and let you leave them. 25/21 Because whoever does not trust anybody, [89] nobody also will trust him., and they are considered deceitful and unwise, and their life is full of fear.

26/22 But you, make an agreement with me and have trust without delay. When you have made your promises, I will be diligent. 28/24 And as your life is wanted by me, thus also my life is to be seen by me by way of your life.

¹⁹⁷ Mss “help you and deliver you”

23/20 The mouse said: “The matter is as you have said. And even if, before today, I was desiring your destruction and would be glad about your ruin because of the enmities, that are fixed between our nature and yours, but I, also, am knocking of the door of death and I am in the middle of waves of distress. When I had looked at it, I saw that there was for me no escape and freedom from these miseries, that surround me, except through you, nor that there is for you, also, a release from this prison (house of bounds), in which you are caught except (266) through me. When you search this matter in your mind, which I a telling you, you will know that it is true and far removed from any deceit, free from any form of cunning and separated from any form of falsehood. 24/20 Because you see my enemies, that surround me, the weasel on my right and the owl above my head. Even If I have named them my enemies, they are yours as well in a way. I have directed my thoughts (gaze) towards deliverance, mine and yours. I have found the only one way that must be done/performed by me and you.”

The cat said: “ What is it?”

The mouse said: “you have to agree a genuine pact with me and give me the (right) hand of righteousness/ a legal pledge¹⁹⁸ and make witness between me and you that Witness that searches the secrets/hidden places of the heart,¹⁹⁹ that you will not hurt me, when I approach towards you and cut the strings of this trap, in which you lie, and free you from this prison, in which you are caught. And for my soul / me, myself, there will be deliverance and freedom from these enemies, that surround me.

¹⁹⁸ Phrase can also indicate “ordination to the priesthood”

¹⁹⁹ C.f. Ps. 44:21

29/25 You know that the safety [of men] is by way of the ship and that of the ship by way of the men, and that both of them gain from the sea. And also, we, we save ourselves, one (saving) the other.

31/28 When the cat had heard these kinds of words from the mouse, she believed and trusted him and said to him:

True and fittingly is your word.

32/29 The mouse said to her:

Then I will come near to you in loving friendship and when the weasel and the owl have seen me with you in loving friendship, they will go in despair. And I will be without fear and then I will cut your ropes.

25/21 And know, O my beloved, that there is no blinder mind and more misfortunate than two persons, who are in one prison and know that, when they agree with each other, they will achieve freedom for themselves, and they neglect it and don't do it. 26/22 Now, little brother, consider that what I have said to you, and weigh the words on the balance of the mind, and examine them with love, far remote from deceit, and their rightfulness will outweigh everything, that was done straight. 29/25 [...] Let us imitate those that sit on the sea (267) in a ship. And when the sea rises up against them and the surging waves throw the whole ship around, and the miseries and distress surround them from all sides, they all call out to God with one voice and one outcry, and from one anxious and flattened heart they scream to Him. Because His venerated glory, who knows the purity of their conscience(s), does not reject their supplication and at that very moment made the wrath of the sea peaceful. His command restrains its surging waves and there is a great calm. 30/26 In the same way, let us do also to each other."

31/28 When the cat had heard these (words), he believed them and knew that they had been spoken in truth/truthfully by the mouse.

The cat said to the mouse: "I see what you have said, to be sincere and far removed from deceit, and I believe all your sayings, and I think that God has made for me and you a salvation from these surging waves, that surround us."

Then the cat agreed a pact with the mouse and he made God a witness over himself, that he would not act fraudulent with his promises.

32/29 The mouse said to the cat: "First I will approach you to salute each other in order that the weasel and the owl lose hope regarding us and turn away ashamed/frustrated, and in order that on us our strength, which by way of our fear of them had perished, will return, so that we be able to cut the snares of the trap."

33/32 Then the cat gave him her pledge (prhsy') and she pressed him to her breast. 36/33 When the weasel and the owl saw them with each other in loving friendship, they despaired and departed. 37/35 And when the mouse started to cut the snares, he gnawed slowly. 39/36 And when the cat saw it, she said to him as follows:

My dear, what is it that you were so diligent in your affair, and in my affair you are cold and yours has reached the top / its culmination. 40/37 But this action is not of honest (people), that they disregard the affairs of their loved ones. 41/38 But as you have taken care of your own (affair), you should also take care of mine, that I also be saved. And if my end arrives, let it not be from your lack of faithfulness.

33/32 The cat said: "Little brother, let your wish be / let it be as you wish."

Then, the mouse approached towards the cat and they embraced each other and saluted one another and enjoyed each other company. 36/33 When the owl and the weasel saw (it), they wondered (268) about them and were amazed and left and turned away from towards them stupefied. And the mouse began to cut the strings of the trap sluggishly and not diligently

[lacuna]

39/36 In the²⁰⁰ matter perhaps, when you are aware/perceive your freedom from the evil of those enemies, that surrounded you, you are inclined to falsehood and are about to enter the door of deceit. 40/37 This is not inherent to wise men and to those who fear God and to noble (people). 41/38 Because you have gathered many benefits for yourself from approach towards me and deliverance from the enemies, and in return for these it would be right for you to offer a thanks-giving to him, who sowed/planted from/some of the fruits of peace in your reasoning. 45/41 Now vigour is required from you and it is a duty, which is being owed on the grounds of your nobility, that you strive to my deliverance from this snare, in which I lie. 46/38.1 Let not come up in your heart (some of) the earlier things, 47/39 because He who has brought us to brotherhood with each other, behold, has revealed the completeness of my thinking/ my full commitment towards you. You know very well what utter joy the fulfilment of a promise procures, even more when the beginning of the matter is peaceful and the living king testifies on his inner heart.²⁰¹ You, o beloved, know (have been convinced) what a bad ending and (269) a deep pit deceit digs for whoever uses it. 48/40 Because all wise men affirm and say that there is no blow which is harder than the blow of deceit, and there is no cure and there is no healing for the fracture, he received.

²⁰⁰ Perhaps ὅτι . missing (in lacuna): "in that matter"

²⁰¹ Error??

56/46.1 The mouse told her:

Faithfulness is not the issue, but I am fearful for myself, namely that you, when you have escaped, you might pounce²⁰² upon me.

Then with oaths [90] she (i.e., the cat) asserted the agreement in order that he would be trustful (in trust).

61/47 And he began fearfully to cut. 62/52 And while they were in this disputation with each other, dawn broke and the trappers appeared. 64/53 When the cat saw (that), she became upset. 65/55 Then it seemed good to the mouse that that moment was the (right) time to cut the ropes. 66/57 He cut them hastily 68/58 and the cat fled to the tree and the mouse entered her small hole. And in this way they both equally with each other were delivered.

69/59 And after the trappers were gone,

Have you not heard, little brother, that him, whose brother slips in one of his causes or there was from him a certain error in one of his affairs, and he asked forgiveness from his brother, while confessing his sin and affirming his transgression, and his brother does not accept his repentance and does not proclaim forgiveness out of a perfect heart, cleared of all evil, God does also not forgive any transgression?"

56/46.1 The mouse said: "He, who works hard toward a completion, is him, who makes plans for the rest/satisfaction of two sides and is careful, that not one of them falls in the snares of evil. 49/43 He, whose obedience is steadfast, will put himself on the line for his brother, like the word of the leader of the wise men/ the wisest man, who says: "..."²⁰³, he, to whom it happened that he does this, and not from the necessity, that was upon him, but from the steadfastness of love, in perpetuity he will remain by his friend. 50/44.1 But he, who, is near to him because of necessity, that was upon him, will, when they quarrel, through the reproaches depart from him. And it is found that he is not perfect in the fear of God²⁰⁴ (270) and he imitates the love of the worldly people, i.e., one does not approach towards a fellow, except to plunder his possessions and then leave him behind. 59/50 Behold, I come near and I cut the strings of the trap. But I will leave one string, that will be/remain to the moment of distress."

60/51 The mouse approached and cut the strings of the trap, but he left only one string. 62/52 When he saw the trapper, who had crept near, little by little, and was coming near to them, when he was about three paces away from them, 66/57 he (i.e., the mouse) approached and cut that string 68/58 and hastily entered a fissure before him, which he had prepared before he severed the last string. The cat sprang up and went up that tree. The trapper came and approached them and saw that the strings of the trap were cut, and turned back in shame/frustrated.

²⁰² Lit. "pour"

²⁰³ The saying/quotation seems to be missing. C.f. John X:18

²⁰⁴ Text: Wright p. lxxiii additions and corrections 269: 16-19

the cat descended and called out to the mouse., but he did not come to her.

She said to him:

Friend, who has fulfilled for me this kindness / good deed, you, come to me, 70/61 in order that now it is right that you will eat the fruits because of your loving friendship. Behold, you have laboured on my behalf. Come! 71/62 Because, whosoever has gained a friend and does not take care of him, will also not find fruits from his friends. 72/63 And I have found my life by you and therefore from me and from my friends and family it is right that you receive the fruits of your kindness/good deed. /but, come hence, and whatever is mine, consider it as yours. 73/63.1 And fear not!

And she swore an oath to him. 74/64 And he replied to her:

Whosoever wants friendship from an enemy and does not distinguish between enemy and friend, makes his own persona into an enemy. 76/65 And when he falls into his hands, he sees himself like him who is sitting on the tusk of an elephant. . He, who perceives a benefit in an enemy, will trust him and will leave his friend behind because of the benefit.

69/59 After a short while, the mouse came out to see what the news was of the trapper. The cat saw him from the tree and said to him: “little brother, you are worthy of great thanksgiving. 70/61 For what reason are you anxious regarding us and agitated. Let your heart not be troubled and your mind be divided, because our love for each other a sword cannot cut, nor fire can burn it up, nor anything else from earthly gold and pearls can introduce a change in it. Therefore, believe my words and come out towards me in order that we may enjoy each other’s company, 72/63 because the good deed/kindness that you have done me, cannot be expressed²⁰⁵ and the debt, which rests on me, cannot be repaid. As long as I am in this life, everything I amass (271) from riches, I will put before you. 73/63.1 Do not shrink away, nor doubt the sincerity of my words.”

75/64.1 Then replied him the mouse, saying: “There is an enmity, which is hidden inside the heart, which from the outside appears that his mind, which owns it, is carrying love, but its blow/wound is more bitter than blow/wound of enmity, that is manifest. 76/65 And to him, who is not on guard against it, happens like what happened to him, who rode on the back of an elephant, who, overcome by sleep, fell before the feet of the elephant, and he trampled him and killed him.

77/66 The case/matter, that is called brotherhood between brothers and closeness between the distant²⁰⁶, or familiarity towards strangers²⁰⁷, makes up the quantity of help, which one gets from one’s companion. 80/68 And in the same manner that a cloud, when it rains from it, makes it gloomy, and sometimes the rain falls/pours down, and then is spent/disperses and there is a clear sky and the sun shines, 81/69 in that manner love sometimes exists between many, and sometimes it removes itself from them, and a change comes upon them.

²⁰⁵ Text: Wright p. lxxiii additions and corrections 270: 24 (حلاله)

²⁰⁶ Not members of one family

²⁰⁷ No relationship at all

79/67 And the instruction of the four legged (animals) teaches (us) that because of the milk the offspring walks after its mother, and whenever the milk is cut off, it turns away and leaves her. 81/69 A wise man is he, who knows his benefit and his detriment.

95/80 I [91] was helped thus. And when I, in the future, cherish you and, from now on, want your best, which I did not use to want, for you can harm me, 96/81 you also, if it pleases you, do not reward the good deed with falsehood and remember your friendship from afar.

101/84 And in this manner the mouse and the cat were saved.

82/69.1 Everything, also, has a limit and also a cause. There is love, which is fixed in/by nature, like a father towards his children. In that manner there is (also) enmity, which is come into existence by the cause of a change in giving and taking. This is a lot more simple/plain than the one fixed in/by nature. Our enmity toward each other is fixed in nature, and there is no cause to it from a perishable/transient²⁰⁸ deed.

Our love, between us, is introduced by a chance occurrence. 83/70 You know that water is an enemy to the nature of fire, and when they are mixed with each other and by the fire (272) it (i.e., water) is heated²⁰⁹, it is not restrained from extinguishing the fire, when it is put/poured upon it. 86/72 (also 89/74) Thus, it is right for an enemy, who understands that his enemy is stronger than him and mightier, that he should not go near him. 85/71.1 Because we have approached each other by an accidental necessity. And now the merciful God has given a release/liberation²¹⁰ to us all and deliverance to both sides, let each of us remain in his burrow. 95/80 Behold, I will give you peace/ I salute you and I will depart from with you. Stay healthy and safe all the days of your life, while staying away from sins and separate from all deceit and evil. And do not be afraid, little brother, of this peace from a distance, because I, like you, receive it from you.

101/84 This [is] the parable of enemies, that came close and familiar with each other, and then separated.

²⁰⁸ i.e. not eternal, but limited in time and circumstances

²⁰⁹ Text: Wright p. lxxiii additions and corrections 272: 1 (حعلسلل)

²¹⁰ Text: Wright p. lxxiii additions and corrections 272: 6 (ععل)

6. Naṣr Allāh Munshī's Preface to *Kalīla va Dimna*: Translation and Commentary
(Theodore S. Beers)

Introductory notes

What follows is an unabridged, fairly literal English translation of the preface that Abū al-Ma'ālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī added to his adaptation of *Kalīla and Dimna*, written *ca.* 540/1146. Naṣr Allāh was a secretary (*munshī*) at the Ghaznavid court, serving the sultan Bahrāmshāh (r. 511–52/1117–57), and he made the fateful decision to write a Persian translation²¹¹ of *Kalīla and Dimna* from a copy of the Arabic version attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. *ca.* 139/757), which a friend had given to him. The result is a text nearly as idiosyncratic as it is historically significant.

Naṣr Allāh's *Kalīla and Dimna* is without a doubt one of the few most important works of Persian belletristic prose from the pre-Timurid period. The author accomplished several feats at once. **First**, he produced a complete Persian translation of the content of the Arabic *Kalīla and Dimna*. **Second**, he forged a new prose style, during what was still a relatively early period in the development of New Persian literature (though the poetic tradition was well underway). Naṣr Allāh is credited with inaugurating a style that has variously been called "artistic prose" (*naṣr-i fannī*) and "ornamented prose" (*naṣr-i maṣnū*). This can be understood in part as a persianization of Arabic *adab* literature, in which prose is peppered with poetry; references to scripture and other texts are incorporated for æsthetic effect or to strengthen the author's argument; and the reader is enchanted by a mixture of seriousness and jest (*al-jidd wa-al-hazl*), edification and entertainment. It is noteworthy that Naṣr Allāh's "persianized," *adab*-inflected version of *Kalīla and Dimna* is still almost a bilingual text: the amount of Arabic included is substantial. These introductory remarks are not the place for a detailed analysis of Naṣr Allāh's style, which would need also to address his use of Persian syntax patterns,

²¹¹ I use the term "translation" broadly, rather than refusing to apply it where it seems—as in this case—not to fit perfectly. Translation can involve a range of approaches. For Naṣr Allāh, it meant rendering his Arabic source material into Persian, while adding a new preface and weaving into the text copious quotations of qur'anic verses and *aḥādīth*, snippets of poetry in both languages, and more.

rhetorical devices, etc. Suffice it to say that his bold, original approach to writing Persian prose has been recognized as a key influence in the literary tradition.²¹² There are only a few other medieval Persian books—for instance, the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī* (470/1077)—that hold a comparable status.

Third, Naṣr Allāh added a great deal of material to *Kalīla and Dimna* in crafting his translation. The text is replete with quotations from the Qur’an and *aḥādīth*, lines of poetry in both Persian and Arabic—some of it original, some taken from famous poets such as al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965)—and beyond. Apart from these insertions, the largest change that Naṣr Allāh made to *Kalīla and Dimna* was by adding an original prefatory chapter, *i.e.*, the section whose full translation is presented below. There was precedent for attaching new sections to the beginning of this book. Anyone who has studied *Kalīla and Dimna* will have noticed that, while the “real” first chapter is the one that tells the story of the Lion and the Ox, it comes after a series of prefatory passages, including (depending on the version or manuscript) some or all of the following: an introduction attributed to one ‘Alī ibn al-Shāh al-Fārisī; an introduction attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa’; the story of the voyage of the physician Burzūya to India, to retrieve this book of wisdom; and the autobiography of Burzūya. Naṣr Allāh Munshī was thus far from the first individual to leave his mark on *Kalīla and Dimna* through translation, adaptation, and the insertion of a new preface. And he would not be the last. (The subsequent Persian adaptation by Ḥusayn Vā’iẓ Kāshifī, d. 910/1504–5, for example, comes with a large original introductory chapter.) What makes Naṣr Allāh’s preface remarkable is that it was the first, in any language or translation context, to argue explicitly and systematically for a certain interpretation of the book’s value.

In short, Naṣr Allāh advances the idea that kingship is necessary for the flourishing of the Islamic religion; that justice is necessary in kingship; and that *Kalīla and Dimna* as a book of wisdom is uniquely well suited to the task of instructing readers—including, but not limited to, rulers—in justice and the sound management of their affairs. As we will see, substantial parts of the preface are also given over to praise of the Ghaznavid dynasty (and of Bahrāmshāh in particular), and to anecdotes from the history of the caliph al-Manṣūr, effective founder of the Abbasid caliphate and patron (for a time) of Ibn al-Muqaffa’. But the main argument, to

²¹² See, for example, Mahmoud Omidsalar, “*Kalīla wa Demna* ii. The translation by Abu’l-Ma‘ālī Naṣr-Allāh Monšī,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

which Naṣr Allāh returns continually, is in linking *Kalīla and Dimna* to moral and political instruction, to worldly rulers, to the fortunes of Islam as a religion and a community. It should be understood that the preface of this version is what provides the rationale for the interweaving of quotes from the Qur’an and *aḥādīth* that we find throughout all of the chapters. Naṣr Allāh is not merely showcasing his erudition and skill as an *adab* composer; he is applying an interpretive framework. Thus it will be useful for us to have an unabridged English translation of the preface to accompany any translation of the main narrative content of this book—which we now also have, thanks to Wheeler M. Thackston.²¹³ And any study of Naṣr Allāh’s *Kalīla and Dimna* must reckon with the preface as an integral part of the text.

An overview of the preface

Naṣr Allāh’s preface can be divided into nine sections. This division is not entirely arbitrary—it follows the author’s transitions from one topic to the next, and (as can be seen) he gives clear indications. But the subsections are set apart with headings in the translation, which is obviously not true of the original Persian. The overall length of the preface is comparable to that of some of the substantial body chapters in the book. In the edition of Muḥtabā Mīnuvī—the standard critical edition that was the basis for this translation, and whose pagination is referred to throughout—the preface takes up twenty-six pages. This is longer than the preface attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (six pages), Burzūya’s voyage (eleven pages), or the life of Burzūya (fifteen pages). That is to say, what Naṣr Allāh has added becomes the single largest prefatory chapter. Of similar length are the body chapters of “The Trial of Dimna” and “The Lion and the Jackal”—not of the magnitude of “The Lion and the Ox,” but not short by any means.

The opening passage of the preface (pp. 2–3) is given to praise of God and the Prophet Muḥammad. Much of this is conventional, but Naṣr Allāh turns eventually to the issue of people who rejected the message of Islam, and the need for them to be subdued in order that

²¹³ See Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Kalīla and Dimna*, tr. Wheeler M. Thackston (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2019). Thackston has endeavored to make his translation accessible to a general readership. He therefore omits the many lines of poetry quoted by Naṣr Allāh, and he has greatly abridged the preface, which he deems “excessively long-winded.”

the true religion could be brought to the corners of the world. This allows for a neat transition into the first argumentative section (pp. 4–6), in which the author explains that worldly rule is necessary for the flourishing of Islam. The most pithy expression of this claim comes in the form of an Arabic saying, which Naṣr Allāh falsely introduces as a *ḥadīth*: “kingship and religion are twins” (*al-mulk wa-al-dīn taw’amān*). This passage also contains an interpretation of the eponymous verse (*i.e.*, verse 25) of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd. The idea is that God sent down scripture (*al-kitāb*), the balance (*al-mīzān*, which Naṣr Allāh takes as a reference to judgment day), and iron (*al-ḥadīd*, representing the sword). Worldly rule without religion would lack a legitimate basis, but, at the same time, it would not be feasible to build a global religious community without joining it to political power.

From this point, Naṣr Allāh transitions into a discussion of the importance of justice in kingship (pp. 6–8). He continues to cite a variety of references, including the story of the Prophet David; an anecdote involving an unbeliever at the dawn of Islam, who converted after hearing a particular qur’anic verse; and a wise saying by Ardashīr-i Bābakān. The quote from Ardashīr is perhaps the clearest distillation of Naṣr Allāh’s argument in this section: “There is no kingship except through men, and there are no men except through money, and there is no money except through building, and there is no building except through justice and governance.” From the practice of justice flows everything else that a ruler might need.

The question that would naturally follow this tying of Islam to kingship, and of kingship to justice, is how a ruler is supposed to be instructed to follow the correct path. Naṣr Allāh will address this in due course—the answer, unsurprisingly, is to study books like *Kalīla and Dimna*—but first he takes a long detour. The next two sections contain praise of the Ghaznavid dynasty (pp. 8–14), and a bit of autobiographical discussion (pp. 15–18) in which the author explains, among other things, how he decided to take on this translation project. The pro-Ghaznavid material is of less general relevance than the rest of the preface. Naṣr Allāh goes on at great length extolling the virtues of the ruling family that he serves, which cannot come as a surprise: he knows on which side his bread is buttered. As for the autobiographical notes, one of the most interesting points that Naṣr Allāh mentions (p. 18) is that he had access to multiple copies of *Kalīla and Dimna*, but it was when he received a certain manuscript as a gift that he took a liking to the book and decided to make a translation. This opens the possibility—though it is difficult to be certain—that there were textual variations among the copies that Naṣr Allāh saw, such that one of them presented a version that he found particularly

appealing. In any case, although the flow of the argument in the preface is, to an extent, interrupted by these passages, there is a logic to their inclusion.

After Naṣr Allāh explains the circumstances in which he became interested in translating *Kalīla and Dimna*, he turns to praise the qualities of the book (pp. 18–20). He begins by focusing on two of its virtues. First, the ethical and practical messages of these fables are applicable, in different ways, to all segments of society. Whether one is a ruler or, say, managing a business, s/he will benefit from reading. Naṣr Allāh also mentions the significance of the entertaining quality of *Kalīla and Dimna*: “Just as the élites of the people will incline toward that [book] for the discernment of experiences, common folk will also read because of its playfulness, and gradually those points of wisdom will become fixed in their disposition.” The second key point in this passage is that *Kalīla and Dimna* has been carried from one religious community to another, and from nation to nation, without ever being rejected. Naṣr Allāh places particular emphasis on the role of Kisrā Nūshirvān in bringing the book from India to Iran and having it translated into Middle Persian; and even more so on the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75), under whose auspices Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ produced an Arabic translation.

From this point, Naṣr Allāh digresses to mention the blessed status of Baghdād, the capital founded by al-Manṣūr, and then there is a whole section (pp. 20–23) devoted to anecdotes about the wisdom and sound rule of that caliph. As with the earlier passages focusing on the Ghaznavids and on the author’s life story, the discussion of al-Manṣūr has less relevance to the central arguments of the preface. (In fact, this distinction is reflected in the *Siyar al-mulūk*, an Arabic readaptation of Naṣr Allāh’s version of *Kalīla and Dimna* from the late seventh/thirteenth century. The author of that adaptation has translated much of Naṣr Allāh’s preface, but only the sections that deal with Islam, kingship, justice, and *Kalīla and Dimna* in universal terms.)

Naṣr Allāh freely admits that he has strayed far from his main topic, and he returns (pp. 23–5) to the question of the transmission of *Kalīla and Dimna*. After the retrieval of the book from India, and its translation into Arabic in the age of Islam, the next important stage occurs in the Samanid period. The ruler Naṣr II ibn Aḥmad (r. 301–31/914–43) asked the poet Rūdakī (d. ca. 329/940–41) to compose a versification of *Kalīla and Dimna*. This would become the first well-known rendering of the fables in New Persian. One of the points to which Naṣr Allāh returns on multiple occasions is that, throughout history, the strongest rulers have tended to be those

who recognized the value of this book: Kistrā Nūshirvān, al-Manṣūr, Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, and now (supposedly) the Ghaznavid Bahrāmshāh.

The penultimate section (pp. 25–7) describes a bit of Naṣr Allāh’s approach to translating *Kalīla and Dimna*. He notes that people in the Persianate sphere have become less interested in reading Arabic books. This provides a motivation for a new version in Persian prose. Of course, as anyone who looks at Naṣr Allāh’s text will notice, there is still a great deal of Arabic, and the reader should be functionally bilingual. This is due to the frequent quoting of qur’anic verses, *aḥādīth*, lines of poetry, and proverbs. Naṣr Allāh defends the addition of these references to other sources by arguing that they will help people to recognize the extensive benefits of *Kalīla and Dimna*. He then describes how he completed a portion of his translation and shared it with Bahrāmshāh, who approved of the work and encouraged its completion. This leads us into the final passage of the preface (pp. 27–8), which consists of a few paragraphs of effusive praise for Bahrāmshāh. Again, the Ghaznavid sultan is being linked to a series of great rulers who have invested in the transmission of *Kalīla and Dimna*.

Technical notes on this translation

As has been noted above, the standard critical edition of Naṣr Allāh Munshī’s *Kalīla and Dimna* is that of Mujtabā Mīnuvī, published in Tehran in 1964. This edition serves as both the reference point for most research on the text, and the basis of the recent English translation by Thackston—in which the preface has been heavily abridged. In the full translation of the preface that follows, the corresponding page numbers in Mīnuvī’s edition are indicated in brackets. It should be easy for a reader who is interested in following both the original Persian text and the translation to do so.²¹⁴

Another aspect of this translation that will facilitate its use in conjunction with the Persian is that it has been carried out in a fairly literal, sentence-by-sentence manner. I have not been

²¹⁴ While the Mīnuvī edition provides a good reference text, I have occasionally wanted to check a manuscript for the reading of a troublesome passage. For this purpose I have consulted Persian MS 68 at the University of Manchester. It is one of the earliest extant copies of Naṣr Allāh’s work, with a colophon date of 616/1219, and it was not among the manuscripts used by Mīnuvī.

wholly dogmatic in this: there are compromises to be made between precision and readability. And of course, the division of a medieval Persian text into paragraphs and sentences involves some arbitrariness in the first place. The limited punctuation found in the edition of *Mīnuvī* is not present in the original manuscripts. Likewise, the sentence division that I have applied in translation goes well beyond what is found in *Mīnuvī*. The English needs to be readable, and the benchmark of technical quality for this translation is that it should strive to render the meaning of the text accurately and to maintain a clear correspondence with the Persian, down to the level of a clause.

On occasion, a word or short phrase that is absent in the original text is added in translation to promote clarity. One common example is the need to restate the subject of a sentence after it has been interrupted by one of Naṣr Allāh's characteristic long parenthetical statements. Such insertions are indicated with square brackets. At points where it seemed relevant to highlight the Persian word(s) that gave rise to certain translations, I have used parentheses. Finally, there is a modest number of footnotes, which offer comments, questions, and extra details. The goal is *not* for this translation to be accompanied by a proper commentary. Rather, I have sought to produce a full, accurate rendering of Naṣr Allāh's preface to *Kalīla and Dimna*, so that it might serve as a basis for future analytical work.

Translation

Introductory praise of God and the Prophet²¹⁵

*In the name of God, the most merciful and compassionate;
and in God I trust*

Thanks and praise be unto God—may He be exalted—the signs of whose power shine upon the face of the bright day; the lights of whose wisdom glow in the heart of the dark night; the

²¹⁵ Again, section headings have been added in translation. They are not present in the original Persian and serve here only to make the text more easily navigable.

bestower of mercy who made a spider-thread a barrier to protect friends; the almighty one who made a mosquito-bite a sword to subdue enemies. 216

In bringing entities into being, He did not need a minister or adviser, nor assistance or support; and He made the marvels of creation manifest in the realm of generation and decay; and He distinguished mankind over other living things with excellence of speech and superiority of intellect.

And for guidance and direction He sent apostles, that they might rescue people from the darkness of ignorance and waywardness through divine proof, and adorn the surface of the earth with the light of learning and knowledge.

And He selected the last of them by turn and first by rank, the sky of rightness and sun of truth, lord of the apostles and seal of the prophets, leader of the exceptional, Abū al-Qāsim **Muḥammad** ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf al-‘Arabī—may God bless him and his pure family—for the strengthening of prophethood and the completion of bearing the divine message. And He singled him out with manifest miracles [→ 3] and clear proofs.

In order to compel proof [on mankind], and to furnish indisputable evidence, He called [people to the faith] with kindness and courtesy, and commanded that signs (*āyāt*) be revealed—until the obstinacy and recalcitrance of the deniers (*kuffār*) was obvious, and it became clear to the wise people of the world that [the deniers] would not pay heed to logical proofs or perceptible miracles.

216 As Mīnuvī has noted in the Persian, the spider-thread here refers to a story in which the Prophet Muḥammad and his companion Abū Bakr spent a night in a cave, hiding from Quraysh who were pursuing them. By the time that the Quraysh reached the cave, a spider had woven a web across the entrance, which gave the impression that it had not been disturbed recently. So the pursuers passed by the cave, with Muḥammad and Abū Bakr safe inside. As for the mosquito-bite, Mīnuvī suggests that it refers to a version of the story of Nimrod, in which the evil king and his army are defeated by a swarm of mosquitoes (or gnats) summoned by Abraham. I do not know whether it was common to combine the two images, as Naṣr Allāh has done, to demonstrate God’s working great miracles through humble vessels.

At that time, the verses (*āyāt*) relating to *jihād* came down, and the obligation of holy struggle—in accordance with both religious law (*sharʿ*) and intellect—was established. And heavenly support and the firm resolve of the master of the *sharīʿat* were joined to that [effort], and the good fortune of divine guidance showed the right path to the helpers of truth (*anṣār-i ḥaqq*). The reinforcement of success adorned the beauty of their condition, until they turned toward the subdual of the deniers, and purified the face of the earth from the wickedness of their idolatry (*shirk*), and carried the true religion (*millat-i ḥanīfī*) to the corners and horizons of the world, and situated the truth (*ḥaqq*) in the center of their selves.

*Let there be praise, praise, praise
for the one who grants virtues if He is thanked;
And may my salutations be conveyed to the one
who is at Yathrib day and night—
The greeting of one who longs to be guided,
through praise, to precious rewards*²¹⁷

May salutations and greetings and benedictions and divine prayers (*ṣalavāt-i īzādī*) be upon the sublime essence and holy spirit of the chosen one (*muṣṭafā*),²¹⁸ and upon his companions (*aṣḥāb*) and followers (*atbāʿ*) and friends and partisans (*ashyāʿ*)—a salutation that should be reinforced until the end of time—and may the breeze lift that dust from the perfume-shop:²¹⁹ *Indeed God and His angels pray for the Prophet; O you who believe, pray for him and give him blessings. [→ 4]*

On the need for rulers in upholding Islam

Since it was necessary that this nation (*millat*) last eternally, and that the kingdom of this religious community (*ummat*) reach the horizons and corners of the earth, and that the truth of this prophetic saying, which is among the living miracles, become clear to the people of the world—*The earth was shown to me, and I saw its east and its west, and the kingdom of my*

²¹⁷ Arabic poetry, three lines, *hazaj* meter; unclear attribution (possibly original?).

²¹⁸ Naṣr Allāh often refers to the Prophet by this epithet.

²¹⁹ What does this mean?

community will reach what was shown to me—God empowered the vicegerents of the Prophet (khulafā'-i muṣṭafā)—may God bless him, and may He be happy with them—in commanding and forbidding and binding and unbinding.

And He bestowed [upon them] absolute authority, and connected obedience to *them* to obedience to Himself and the Prophet, insofar as He, the mighty and exalted, said: *O you who believe, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those among you who hold authority.* That is, the effectuation of the prescriptions of religious law and the performance of the rites of truth will not stay everlasting in the pages of history without the governance of pious kings; nor will the duration of that [flourishing of religion] be joined to the end of the life of this world.

The indication of this [fact] by the master of prophethood is as follows: *Kingship and religion are twins.* 220 And in truth, it must be recognized that the kings of Islam are the shadow of the Creator—may His name be glorified—in that the face of the earth gains beauty by the light of their justice, and the civilization of the world and the taming of passions are linked to their fearsomeness and grandeur—since the sweetness of worship cannot in any sense have the same effect as fear of the sword.

Were it not for this expediency in compelling the masses, the order of things would have been broken, and difference of creed would have appeared in the religious community; and, given that there is variation in temperament, each person would have intervened in the affairs of Islam with his own opinion, and the legitimate principles and religious laws would have become disordered and neglected. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb says: *The sultān restrains more than the Qur'an.* 221

And the source of this meaning [→ 5] is from the sublime Qur'an: *Indeed you are a stronger fear in their hearts than God, for they are a people who do not understand.* 222

220 This is presented as a *ḥadīth*. Mīnuvī notes that it should be attributed to Ardashīr-i Bābakān. I would like to find something to cite.

221 I see this more often attributed to 'Uthmān, but again, I would like to find something reliable to cite.

222 Sūrat al-Ḥashr (no. 59), verse 13.

This is because the ignorant one is not held back from sins except through the immediacy of punishment, and he will not understand the totality of the greatness and majesty of the Creator—may His splendor be exalted.

*For the one who has not intellect as a bedfellow,
the lion (shēr) of the forest is like the faucet (shīr) of the bath* 223

As for the person who seeks repose in the shadow of the banner of the scholars (*‘ulamā’*) until he falls close to the sun of revelation (*kashf*): with knowledge alone, that grandeur and awe will appear in his mind, whose extent cannot be grasped through fancies, whose core cannot be reached through idle thoughts. His word, may He be exalted: *Verily, among the servants of God, it is the scholars who fear Him.* 224

By virtue of these introductory remarks, it becomes clear that religion without rule will go to waste, and rule without religion is baseless. And the Lord (*khudāy*) says—may His names be hallowed, may His favor be all-encompassing: *Indeed We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the scripture and the balance, that people might observe right measure; and We revealed iron, in which there are great power and benefits for mankind.* 225

The composition of this verse, before deduction and careful consideration, gives the appearance of disconnect—since scripture and the balance and iron do not have a great relation to one another. But, after contemplation, the dust-cloud of obscurity and the veil of doubt lift away, and it becomes clear that these terms could not be *more* related to one another, and that each word has quite a distinct wondrousness—in that the explanation of religious laws can [only] be through scripture; the presentation of the gates of justice and equity through the balance and the reckoning; and the effectuation of these concepts through the sword.

And because it was determined that the interests of the religion would not be observed without the greatness of the kings of Islam, and the quenching of the fire of discord (*fitna*)

223 Persian poetry, one line, *khafif* meter; unclear attribution.

224 Sūrat Fāṭir (no. 35), verse 28.

225 Sūrat al-Ḥadīd (no. 57), verse 25. The chapter is named for this verse.

would be infeasible without the fear of the gleaming sword, [→ 6] the obligation of obeying rulers, to which are bound the advantages of the religion and the world, is also recognized.

It becomes clear that whoever has purer faith and more unadulterated belief will express more emphatically the imperative of glorifying the side of rulers and extolling the commands of kings, and will count loyalty and obedience and devotion and sincerity of intentions toward them among the pillars of the faith, and, in serving them, will consider the external (*zāhir*) and internal (*bāṭin*) to be of equal importance.

And it must be acknowledged without hesitation that, if a person thinks about opposing the great leader (*imām-i a'zam*) or permits the damage of treason, small or large, to spread to the borders of his realm and the edges of his kingdom, he will be blameworthy in this world and punished in the next. For the harm of that [treason] is tied also to the judgments of religious law, and both the élites and the commoners of the community will fall into pain and hardship.

On the need for justice in kingship

This part of the virtues of rulership—that it is consequent to religion—has been established. Now let a few of the merits of justice—which is a highly valuable adornment and a priceless gift for kings—be mentioned. On that [topic] as well, the side of conciseness and epitomization will be observed, with the assistance and facilitation of God. 226

He said, may He be exalted: *O David, indeed we made you a vicegerent on earth, so render judgment among the people in truth.* 227 God selected David—may God's blessings be upon him—who had the distinction of prophethood, for this direction and guidance—not because the way of prophets is to do only good deeds, but rather [because] mildness in governance (*khilāfat*) is connected to the beauty of equity and justice.

And in the recited stories (*qiṣaṣ-i khwānda*) it has come down that one of the deniers (*munkirān*) of the prophethood of the master of religious law (*ṣāhib-i sharī'at*) heard the following verse: *Indeed God commands justice and beneficence and giving to kinfolk, and He*

226 I had difficulty parsing this sentence, but the point becomes clear a bit later that Naṣr Allāh considers the Qur'an's explanation of just rule to be miraculous in its economy.

227 Sūrat Ṣād (no. 38), verse 26.

forbids immorality and reprehensible conduct and transgression; He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. 228

[The denier] was stunned, and he said, “Everything on earth that would be of use for the civilization of the world, and [everything that] ordinary people would need in order to govern their selves and their households and their subordinates—[→ 7] for example, the work of a landholder (*dihqān*) will not be possible without it—has come down in this verse.”

What inimitability could be greater than this, that, if a mortal wished to express these ideas, many pages would be filled, and the truth of the message would not be achieved in all of that [space]? [The denier] believed at once, and he attained a position of eminence in the religion.

A clear command that is limited to adherence to three praiseworthy qualities, and a negation that encompasses avoidance of three blameworthy actions—let it not be hidden. And there is no need for explanation or clarification of that.

In the account (*tarjuma*; translation?) of the words of **Ardashīr-i Bābak**—may God comfort him—they have brought down that, *There is no kingship except through men, and there are no men except through money, and there is no money except through building, and there is no building except through justice and governance.* 229 The meaning is as follows: kingship will not remain under control without men, and men will not serve steadfastly without money, and money will not be obtained without building, and building will not be possible without justice and governance.

Based on this saying, one can recognize that the instrument of world-seizing is money, and that the alchemy of money is justice and governance.

The benefit in singling out justice and governance, and recommending those above other virtues of kings, is that the expenses (*abvāb*) of generous acts and various kinds of favors definitely have a limit, and the arrival (*rasīdan*) of that [munificence] to élite (*khāṣṣ*) and commoner (*‘āmm*) has a clear infeasibility. But the profits of these two qualities [*i.e.*, justice and sound governance] apply to all people.

228 Sūrat al-Naḥl (no. 16), verse 90.

229 For this saying, as well, it would be helpful to find a reliable source to cite.

And there will be a share of those [profits] for the far and near of the world, since building in the environs [of the kingdom], and the increase in prosperity, and the succession of revenues, and the reviving of wastelands, and the comforting of dervishes, and the provision of the necessities of life and acquisition of the masters of professions, and the likes and kin (*akhavāt*; lit. “sisters”) of those [things], are connected to *justice*. And the security of roads, and the subduing of corrupt ones, and the control of routes, and the protection of lands, and the driving-off of transgressors, are dependent on *governance*.

Nothing is more powerful than these two matters for the preservation of the world. Also, unto which good deed could there be this distinction, that reformers are soothed [by it], and corrupt ones are ground down?

Any time that these two aspects come to be observed as obligatory, complete power will follow. And the hearts of élite and commoner and soldier [→ 8] and peasant will become settled on the basis of affection (*havā*) and friendship (*valā*). Friend and enemy will come together under the yoke of obedience and service, and vexation will not take shape in the minds of the weak. For the disobedient, there will not remain the capacity for recalcitrance. And the mention of [all of this] will spread to the horizons; and the robe of kingship will be ornamented; and the pledge of permanence in this matter will be obtained.

These few words have been related as a summary of the properties of kingship and royal fortune, and of the virtues of justice and [sound] governance. Now we will turn to other purposes. God is the one who will grant success in completing [this work], with His grace and the vastness of His generosity.

Praise of the Ghaznavid dynasty

Let thanks and praise be unto God—may His name be glorified—who has adorned the abode of Islam and the pearl of the world with the beauty of the justice and mercy and total majesty and governance of the lord of the world, the great ruler, possessor of the necks of the nations,

king of Islam, supporter of the Imam,²³⁰ protector of mankind, right hand of the state²³¹ and guardian of the religious community, eminence of the Islamic nation (*umma*), king of the lands of God, ruler of the servants of God, helper of the friends of God (*awliyā'*), subjugator²³² of the enemies of God, master of the kings of the Arabs and Persians (*'Arab va 'Ajam*), pride of the sultans in the world, exalted of the mortal realm and the religion, vanquisher of kings and sultans, conqueror by the order of God, upholder of the proof of God, strengthener of Islam and Muslims, subduer of deniers and unbelievers, refuge of human and *jinn*, shadow of God on the two horizons, supported [by God to triumph] over enemies, helped [to victory] by the heavens, shooting star of the heavens of vicegerency, origin-point of justice and mercy, dispenser of security in the two lands, spreader of beneficence in the two worlds, ruler of the people (*khalq*) and proof of the truth (*ḥaqq; i.e., God*), winner of the lands of the mortal realm and manifester of the sublime word of God, patron of favors (*waliyy al-ni'am*), **Abū al-Muẓaffar Bahrāmshāh**, son of the noble ruler, exalted of the state and brilliance of the religious community (*milla*) and light of the nation (*umma*), **Abī Sa'd Mas'ūd**, son of the contented ruler, supporter of the state and helper of the religious community and protector of the nation, **Abī al-Muẓaffar Ibrāhīm**, son of the martyred ruler, helper of the religion of God and supporter of the vicegerent of God, [→ 9] **Abī Sa'īd Mas'ūd**, son of the former ruler, right hand of the state and guardian of the religious community, order of the religion, refuge of the Muslims, **Abī al-Qāsim Maḥmūd**, son of the just commander, supporter of the religion and imperial fortune, **Abī Manṣūr Sabuktagīn**, pillar of the vicegerent of God, commander of the faithful—may God strengthen his supporters and double his power.²³³

230 To what does this refer?

231 With apologies to my mentors in Chicago, who insisted on the avoidance of anachronistic translation, I do occasionally render *dawlat* as “state.” I think this is acceptable, as long as one does not read too much into the term.

232 *i.e., muzīl*. Mīnuvī gives *muzīl* here, to rhyme with *mudīl* (“helper”) a few words earlier. Either reading would have a similar meaning, with *muzīl* as the active participle of the verb *azalla*, and *muzīl* that of *azāla*. But I have not been able to find an attestation for *muzīl*. I checked the Manchester MS, and the *rasm* of this word is not entirely clear. It looks as though the copyist may also have been unsure.

233 Here Naṣr Allāh has traced the whole Ghaznavid line from Bahrāmshāh, his patron, back to Sabuktagīn, founder of the dynasty.

[God] has spread the wing of [Bahrāmshāh’s] benevolence and favor over the world and the mortals. And He has given the turn of world-rule to him on the basis of merit, both in terms of inheritance and by way of attainment.

And He has brought the peoples of the climes into the fold of his protection and stewardship; and He has given rest to the weak ones of the *ummat* and the *millat* in the shadow of his justice and the refuge of his mercy.

And He has consigned the reins of power and the halter of empire to his governance and management; and He has fortified his kingly resolutions with the support of manifest victory and persistence of the help of the Almighty—so that on every side that he commands a movement [of his army], triumph and victory will consider the welcoming and acceptance of his banner and his standard to be obligatory.

The kingly glories that [Bahrāmshāh] has accomplished in the spring of youth and the dawn of his lifetime, in terms of the acquisition of territories, have now become the model of the kings of the world. 234

*He led the cavalry on fifteen pilgrimages
while his contemporaries were too preoccupied for that;
Their caprices held them back, and for him towered
the ambitions of kings and the vehemence of heroes* 235

*O you who have grasped the rule of the world in one strike,
sun of kingship, shadow of the Sustainer* 236

234 This last phrase is repeated in equivalent form using Arabic, then Persian words: *qudva-yi mulūk-idunyā* and *dastūr-i pādshāhān-igītī*. I have often tried to keep Naṣr Allāh’s pleonastic phrases in translation, since they represent an important component of his style, and of classical Persian prose style in general. But sometimes the only sensible approach is to translate as though the pleonasm were not present.

235 Arabic poetry, two lines, *kāmīl* meter; attributed to an Umayyad-era poet of Persian origin, Ziyād al-Aḥjam.

236 Persian poetry, one line, *ramāl* meter; probably original.

Based on that, if the demon of discord settled in the heads of the Bū Ḥalīm until they placed their feet outside of the bounds of servitude,²³⁷ [→ 10] in the handling of their affair, [Bahrāmshāh] carried out the customs of mobilizing and outfitting the army²³⁸ in such a way that the gazette of felicity was marked with the name and fame of that [episode], and the register of imperial fortune gained beauty by the mention of its virtues.

*His sword did not [just] erase the signs of the rebellion;
indeed it scrubbed the dishonor from the face of time*²³⁹

With these two renowned victories, which were made possible by the grace of God and the aura of triumphant imperial fortune—may it remain firmly rooted, immovably anchored—the order of affairs of the center and periphery²⁴⁰ returned to its established stability and familiar custom. And based on a solid foundation and correct traditions, [the kingdom] achieved good progress and continuation.

All of the corrupters of the borderlands²⁴¹ drew in their breath and bowed their heads,²⁴² and the hearts of élites and commoners and soldier and peasant were at peace in obedience and servitude. The following of royal commands in all respects was attained, and the majesty of kingship and the awesomeness of empire were fixed in the minds of friends and enemies. And mention of that [success] became generally known and widespread in the horizons and quarters of the world.

And *if*, in the relation of the merits of the reign of this pious king and absolute monarch—may he be in power durably, and triumphant over enemies—a thorough and rightful discussion

²³⁷ The Bū Ḥalīm were a family of military commanders who served the later Ghaznavid sultans. They rebelled against Bahrāmshāh and needed to be put down. See Clifford Edmund Bosworth, “Bu Ḥalim Šaybāni Family,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

²³⁸ Here I have reduced a bit of the wordiness of the Persian: *rusūm-i lashkar-kashīva ādāb-i sipāh-ārāʾi*.

²³⁹ Arabic poetry, one line, *basīṭ* meter; unclear attribution.

²⁴⁰ *ḥaẓrat va nāḥiyat*; is this a correct translation?

²⁴¹ *aṭrāf*; is this a correct translation?

²⁴² This verb, *sar bi-khaṭṭ āvardan*, is listed in Dehkhoda, with another example from the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*.

were pursued, and [if] the excellent qualities of his great self and the virtues of the blessed royal family were given a detailed and broad explanation, *then* the goal of translating this book [*i.e.*, *Kalīla and Dimna*] would slip away. And how could it be the place of this servant²⁴³ to speak [worthy] praise of the victorious state? Since... [→ 11]

*If the kingdom had a tongue,
it would be speaking praise of the king of the world:
Abū al-Muẓaffar, about whom the heavens wish
that they could be so prosperous.
If your servant had a hundred mouths,
and there were a hundred tongues in each mouth;
And if he spoke a hundred times with each of those tongues,
and there were a hundred declarations in each speech-act;
And if all the hairs on his body became fingers,
and there were a pen at each fingertip;
Then, if all of those pens and tongues
were running and flowing in praise;
When [all] that was written and said was brought together—
although it would be a limitless amount—
Next to the hundred tales [required for] praise of you,
it would be like one [paltry] story²⁴⁴*

And this servant-nurturing emperor—may he always be emperor, and always servant-nurturing—has, in world-rulership, accepted and followed the example of the virtues of his blessed family. And he has recognized the grandeur of the qualities of the ancestor kings—may God illuminate their proofs—as the *qibla* of auspicious undertakings.

He found his father with that great attainment²⁴⁵

²⁴³ *man banda*; lit. “I, the servant.”

²⁴⁴ Persian poetry, eight lines, *mutaqārib* (the meter of the *Shāhnāma*); probably original.

²⁴⁵ Arabic poetry, one hemistich, *basīṭ* meter; attributed to Dhū al-Rumma (fl. ca. early eighth century CE).

i.e., the numerous praiseworthy and agreeable signs which, in the presentation of the principles of justice and governance, belong to the former ruler, ²⁴⁶right hand of the state ²⁴⁷and guardian of the Islamic nation, order of the religion, refuge of the Muslims, **Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd**—may God illuminate his proof and weigh his balance with good deeds—and furthermore that, in reviving the precedents of the just commander, helper of the religion²⁴⁸ and the state [*i.e.*, Sabuktagīn]—may God illuminate his grave and whiten his forehead—[Maḥmūd] endeavored to adorn those [prior accomplishments] with his own additions.

And [Maḥmūd] rendered praiseworthy customs fresh and alive, and he at once erased the blameworthy habits that oppressors and irresponsible people had put in place, [→ 12] until [all of] the creatures on the face of the earth, at peace and contented, set their backs against the wall of security and leisure.

Friend and enemy [alike] acknowledged the exaltation of the ambition and the perfection of the governance of that pious ruler—may God envelop him in the cloak of His forgiveness. And his orders were absolutely obeyed throughout the kingdoms. And the proud ones of the age sought refuge in the safety of his sanctuary, and recognized their nobility and prosperity in obedience and submission to him.

All of the kingdoms of Ghaznīn and Zābulistān and Nīmrūz and Khurāsān and Khwārazm and Chaghāniyān and Gurgān and Ṭabaristān and Qūmis and Dāmghān and Ray and Iṣfahān and the lands of Hindūstān and Mūltān came under the control of the command of that great ²⁴⁹emperor—may God shelter him with His grace—such that, occasionally, he would state in a blessed voice, “One edge of my kingdom is Iṣfahān, and another is Tirmīz, and a third is Khwārazm, and the fourth is the course of the Ganges River.” And anyone who has read the

²⁴⁶ In Mīnuvī’s edition, the word *khudāvand* occurs here in a way that I was unable to parse. I checked the early Manchester MS, to which Mīnuvī did not have access, and the word is missing there. I have chosen to omit it for purposes of translation.

²⁴⁷ This title, Yamīn al-Dawla, was the standard honorific, or *laqab*, of Sultan Maḥmūd.

²⁴⁸ This title, Nāṣir al-Dīn, was the standard *laqab* of Sabuktagīn, founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty.

²⁴⁹ I have read this as *muḥtasham*, though Mīnuvī for some reason has it voweled *muḥtashim*—which would mean “modest” or “bashful.”

*Book of Routes and Realms*²⁵⁰ and has learned the length and breadth of these [aforementioned] countries—it will not be concealed for him to what extent [Maḥmūd’s] kingdom reached.

At that point, he restricted his ambition to the glorification of the word of truth (*kalima-yi ḥaqq*),²⁵¹ and he focused his peerless self on assisting the religion of Islam and attending to the interests of the people.

From the gate of Kābul to the bank of the river of Qannawj and the borders of Kālinjar and Bānūsī; and from the side of Mūltān to Nahrwāla and Maṣūra and Sūmnāt [*i.e.*, Somnath] and Sarandīb and the shores of the ocean and the environs of Egypt; and from the side of Quṣḍār, all of the surroundings of Yemen and Sibapūra and Sind and Sīvastān [*i.e.*, Sīstān] and Sila-yi ‘Umar²⁵² and Yawziya and the environs of Kirmān and the coasts of Tīz and Mukrān—he added on the order of two thousand *farsangs* [→ 13] to the territory of Islam.

And the sun of the Aḥmadī [*i.e.*, Muslim] religious community shone on those countries from the reflection of the moon of the Maḥmūdī banner.²⁵³ And the rays of the heavens of Islam, in the shade of the parasol of the line of **Nāṣir al-Dīn** [Sabuktagīn], were spread over those regions. And mosques were built in place of idol-temples.

In those places where, in the age of the emperors of the past, they were saying inappropriately of the king of kings, “May his names be exalted, and may his favor be all-encompassing,” today they are continuously engaging in worship and reading the glorious Qur’an. More than a thousand pulpits have been installed, at which, on Fridays and holidays, they speak praise of the Creator—may His name be respected. And they carry out the divine obligations.

²⁵⁰ *i.e.*, the *Kitāb al-masālik wa-al-mamālik* of Iṣṭakhrī (d. after 340/951–2). The order of words in the title is inverted in Mīnuvī’s edition, but the Manchester MS has it correct.

²⁵¹ *ḥaqq* can be read here as an epithet for God.

²⁵² This is not clear to me at all. Some of the place names in this list have come out differently in the Manchester MS, but not in ways that are easier to interpret. There are points at which the copyist seems to have been doubtful.

²⁵³ As difficult as it is to parse the preceding few paragraphs, this at least confirms that the discussion has remained centered on Sultan Maḥmūd.

And in the period of one hundred and seventy years, which represents the days of the imperial fortune of this blessed family—may God the Exalted extend that to one thousand and seven hundred—in [each] year, they have brought approximately fifty thousand [wearers of] the mantle of the infidel from the abode of war to the abode of Islam. They accept the faith, and until the time of resurrection, 254 male and female believers will be born from their begetting and generation. And all of them acknowledge the unity of their Creator and Sustainer.

Blessings and rewards and benefices are being amassed for that king of kings, conqueror [in the name of the religion], **Maḥmūd**, and [for] all of the kings of this family.

And unto the other rulers of the august polity—may the [current] lord of the mortal realm, king of the age, *khusraw* of the world, the conquering emperor **Bahrāmshāh**, be the inheritor of their kingship and longevity—there are many virtues and good qualities, since each one of them has been, in governance and administration and justice and mercy, a religious community unto himself.

*Indeed the élite of the tribe is one person;
as for the Banū Ḥanīfa, all of them are élites*²⁵⁵

But the explanation and analysis of that [greatness] is not possible, since speaking about it insufficiently would be blameworthy;²⁵⁶ and if a broad treatment [of the subject] were given, the goal of translating this book [*i.e.*, *Kalīla and Dimna*] would be eclipsed.

Necessarily, by the benedictions of those good intentions and pure convictions, the emblem of kingship and the qualities of world-rulership [→ 14] have become eternal and permanent and lasting and perpetual in this great family. And the conduct of the emperors of this polity—may God strengthen it—has become the model of the virtues of the world and the beauty of the glories of the Children of Adam. And the age has been guided by might and nobility; and mention of that has been written with the pen of Mercury on the body of the sun.

254 *dāman-i qiyāmat*; lit. “skirt of resurrection.”

255 Arabic poetry, one line, *kāmil* meter; unclear attribution.

256 At a few points in this preface, Naṣr Allāh uses the term *ishbāʿ* (or a derivative thereof), whose literal meaning is “satiating,” in the sense of treating a topic in the manner that it deserves.

Let there be praise unto God the Sublime, that the signs of this superabundance of power and the indications of this excess of capability are as clear as possible.

The hopes of the loyal servants—that the other climes of the world will be added to the territory of the fortunate kingdom, and [that] the hereditary possessions and [newly] acquired [lands] will be joined together therein—are as firm as possible. And this servant and son of a servant has an ode (*qaṣīda*) in praise of the exalted, conquering assembly—may God double its radiance—which has been set in the blessed voice of the king of kings. Two lines from that [ode], which are appropriate to this topic, are recorded [here]:

*With swords unsheathed, we will win
the kingdom of Rūm and that of the Turks beside it;
So that the world in its entirety will belong to us,
protected among the inherited and acquired lands*²⁵⁷

May God the Sublime and Sacred always adorn the face of the earth with the beauty of the justice and mercy of the lord of the world, the just and supreme king of kings, the patron of favors. And may He convey [the king] to the limit of his ambition and the extremity of his desire in religious and worldly [pursuits].

And may He ornament the pulpits of Islam, in the east and in the west, with the aura and precious value of the august epithets, and [with] the beauty of the blessed name of the king of kings. And may He render the ground of the royal court the prostration-place of the kings of the world.

And may God have mercy on a servant who said Amen. [→ 15]

Autobiographical notes

So says the servant and son of a servant, **Naṣr Allāh [ibn] Muḥammad [ibn] ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, Abū al-Ma‘ālī**—may God the Generous take care of him with His grace: ²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Arabic poetry, two lines, *basīṭ* meter; unclear attribution.

²⁵⁸ In the Persian, the patronymics here are done by way of *izāfa*.

Since, by the aura of favor and the felicity of the good fortune of the conquering assembly of the king of kings—may God perpetuate its splendor—the house of this servant’s master—may God prolong his life and make permanent his days and his benefaction, and may God bless him with happiness in the two realms—became the *qibla* of noble and learned people, and the *ka’ba* of scholars and of the peers of this great man—may the surroundings of [the house] remain guarded, and its inner walls and enclosures protected;

And [since] everyone knew refuge and asylum at his side, and in the matters of their supervision and care, he took it as an obligation [to engage in] various kinds of exertion and fastidiousness;

And [since] he would accept the petitions of each one in that assembly²⁵⁹ with excitement and rejoicing—[conduct] the like of which cannot cross the minds of the people of the age—and the mention of this fact is too widespread for an excess of verbosity [in describing it] to be needed—

*In Ghazna he set down his staff, and his good repute
perfumes what is between Iraq and Egypt*²⁶⁰

Consequently, everyone had attained tranquility and contentment at his side.²⁶¹ And they were placing footsteps of sincerity in the arena of friendship and affection. [→ 16]

*People are too smart to praise a man,
until they see by him the signs of beneficence*²⁶²

And a group of the famous among them, of whom each one had abundant excellence and wide renown, were in the position of residents of the house and [members of] the inner circle of the assembly (*majlis*).

²⁵⁹ How to read *bar ān jumla*?

²⁶⁰ Arabic poetry, one line, *ṭawīl* meter. This seems specific to the context and may well be original.

²⁶¹ Despite this effusive praise, Naṣr Allāh never names his master (*khwāja*).

²⁶² Arabic poetry, one line, *basīṭ* meter; attributed to an Abbasid-era poet named Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī.

[They included] Qāzī Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Ishāq, and Burhān al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rashīd ibn Naṣr, and the *imāms*: ‘Alī Khayyāṭ (“the Tailor”), Ṣā’id Mayhanī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bustī, Muḥammad Sayfī, Muḥammad Nisābūrī [*i.e.*, Nīshāpūrī], Muḥammad ibn ‘Uṣmān Bustī, Mubashshir Raḥavī Adīb (“the Littérateur”), ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Iskāfī, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Zāhidī (“the Ascetic”), Maḥmūd Sagzī, Fākhir ibn Nāṣir, and Sa’īd Bākharzī; and at times the *imāms*: Muḥammad Khabbāzī (“the Baker”) and Maḥmūd Nīshābūrī [*i.e.*, Nīshāpūrī]—may God have mercy on those of them who have passed away, and may He prolong the lives of those who remain.

And for me the servant, in their assembly and meeting and conferring and conversation, there had become such a fresh familiarity, and there had occurred [such] an inclination toward seeking and persevering in the acquisition of knowledge, that I had a total determination to commence activities and to participate in works.

I was restricting the limit of my keen desire to [the goal] [→ 17] that I could get to know one of them, and [that] I could seek fellowship by an hour in conversation with him. And I would recognize that as the capital of felicity and prosperity and good fortune.

It is possible that this speech may pass upon the minds [of readers] in the garb of boasting, and it may come before their intellects in the context of self-promotion.

But because the necessity of impartiality would lift the veil of the evil eye from the beauty of oneself, and [because], on the signs (*āyāt*) of proficiency and the miracles (*mu’jizāt*) of craft—of several of which this book contains mention and manifestation—a deserved consideration will proceed; it will be recognized that, so long as [one’s] determination in educational attainment is not high, and the burden of learning is not borne as completely as possible, [then] in speech—in which lies the nobility of a human over other living things—[one] cannot achieve this status. 263

Noble qualities are allocated in proportion to hard work 264

263 Which status? That of a scholar?

264 Arabic poetry, one hemistich, *wāfir* meter; attributed to Imam al-Shāfi‘ī?

And since the world, by the decree of its own custom in the requisitioning of talents, scattered that assembly, and the order of this situation became broken, I did not know myself [to be] guided except by studying books.

*The best table-companion of the age is a book*²⁶⁵

And in the parables it is [told], “What an excellent conversation partner is the notebook.” And by the precept of that which they have said:

*Seriousness every year eats away the life of people*²⁶⁶

From time to time, jocularly would occur, and there would be an inclination toward histories and evening conversation.

And during this period, a learned jurist, [→ 18] **‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā‘īl**—may God perpetuate his success—who, among the young religious scholars²⁶⁷ of His Illustrious Majesty, is exceptional in the superiority of his skill and intellect—and at this time he attained the prosperity of good faith,²⁶⁸ and his temperament admitted little discrepancy in the turning of circumstances—brought as a gift a copy of *Kalīla and Dimna*.

Although several other copies of it were among the books, this was taken as a good omen, and [‘Alī’s] rights were brought to observance in sincere friendship. The mention of his discharging an obligation and of his liberality in that was made permanent—may God reward him with the best recompense and grant him his wishes in his first [life] and his other.

In short, an attachment to that copy occurred, and, with consideration and contemplation, the merits of this book better showed their beauty.

Praise of *Kalīla and Dimna* (and of Baghdād)

²⁶⁵ Arabic poetry, one hemistich, *ṭawīl* meter; from al-Mutanabbī.

²⁶⁶ This may be a hemistich of Persian poetry, though the meter is unclear. It could also be a saying.

²⁶⁷ *az aḥdās-ifuqahā*?; is this reading correct?

²⁶⁸ What does this mean? I cannot make heads or tails of it.

[My] desire in perusing it increased, since, after the books of religious law, in the span of the life of the world, they have not made a book more beneficial than [*Kalīla and Dimna*].

The foundation of its subject matter is upon wisdom and admonition, and at the same time, it has exhibited that [material] in the outward form of jest—so that, just as the élites of the people will incline toward that [book] for the discernment of experiences, common folk will also read because of its playfulness, and gradually those points of wisdom will become fixed in their disposition.

In truth, it is a mine of understanding and sound judgment and a treasury of experiential wisdom and practice. Both for the governance of kings, in controlling the kingdom, there could be assistance in hearing that [material]; and for the middling ones of the people, in taking care of their property, profit could be attained by reading it.

And they asked one of the Brahmins of India, “They say that toward India there are mountains, and in those grow medicinal [plants], by which a dead person becomes alive. What would be the way of obtaining those [medicines]?”

[The Brahmin] answered: “‘You have preserved one thing, and [other] things have slipped away from you.’ This saying belongs to the allusion and hinting of the ancients, and by ‘mountains’ they intended ‘scholars’; and by ‘medicinal plants,’ ‘the speech of [the scholars]’; and by ‘dead people,’ ‘ignorant people,’ [→ 19] who, by hearing that [speech], are revived and achieve eternal life on the path of knowledge. And there is a collection of these words [of wisdom] that they call *Kalīla and Dimna*, and it is in the treasuries of the kings of India. If you can obtain it, this desire will be achieved.” 269

The benefits of this book are endless. What excellence could be higher than this, that [the book] passed from religious community to religious community, and from nation to nation, and was not rejected?

When emperorship reached **Kisrā Nūshirvān**—may God grant him comfort—the renown of whose justice and mercy remains on the face (*vajh*) of the world, and the mention of whose strength and [sound] governance is established in the hearts (*ṣudūr*) of the histories, to such

269 It is interesting that Naṣr Allāh has a Brahmin quoting an Arabic saying and then explaining its meaning.

an extent that they liken the rulers of Islam to him in benevolent conduct—and what felicity [could be] greater than this, that the Prophet has bestowed upon him this honor [in saying], “I was born in the time of the just king”—**Anūshirvān** ordered that [his servants] bring that [book] from the lands of India to the kingdom of Persia by stratagems,²⁷⁰ and he [had it] translated into the Pahlavī language.

And he laid the foundation of the affairs of his kingdom in accordance with that [book]; and he recognized its suggestions and exhortations as the register of the interests of the religion and the world, and as the model of governance for élites and commoners. He counted it a valuable gift and a precious treasure in his vaults; and it remained on this basis until the end of the days of **Yazdijird-i Shahriyār**, who was the last of the kings of ‘Ajam.

When the countries of ‘Irāq and Persia were conquered at the hands of the armies of Islam, and the dawn of the religion of truth broke over that region, mention of this book reached the ears of the caliphs. And they had an inclination and a desperate desire for it, until, during the reign of Commander of the Faithful Abū Ja‘far **Manṣūr** ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-‘Abbās—may God be pleased with them—who was the second caliph from the family of the uncle of the Prophet (*muṣṭafā*)—may God’s prayers be upon him, and may He be pleased with his uncle—**Ibn al-Muqaffa** translated that [book] from the Pahlavī language into the Arabic (*tāzī*) language.

And that ruler [*i.e.*, Manṣūr] accepted [the book] completely, and the other great ones of the religious community followed that example.

The condition of [Manṣūr’s] exaltation of ambition and capability of kingship is too widely known for there to be a need to go into detail in explaining it. One of the remaining signs of that great emperor is the majestic abode of Baghdād, which, today, is absolutely the center of the caliphate [→ 20] and the dwelling-place of the imamate and the source of kingship and the City of Peace. Not [elsewhere] in the lands of Islam do they display such a city, nor in the lands of unbelief.

And one the special traits of that abode—may God lengthen its shade—is that the death of caliphs does not occur there. Commander of the Faithful Abū Ja‘far **Manṣūr**—may God be

²⁷⁰ *i.e.*, by any means necessary.

pleased with him—went from the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of the hereafter at Bi'r Maymūn, one caravan-stop from Mecca—may God protect it. And Commander of the Faithful Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Maṣṣūr, whose epithet was **al-Mahdī** (“the Rightly Guided”)—may God be pleased with him—[died] at the stopping-place of Māsabazān, on the road to Gurgān. And Commander of the Faithful Abū Muḥammad Mūsā ibn al-Mahdī, whose epithet was **al-Hādī** (“the Guide”), [died] at 'Īsā-ābād. And Commander of the Faithful Abū Ja'far **Hārūn** ibn al-Mahdī, whose epithet was **al-Rashīd** (“the Rightly Guided”), [died] at Ṭūs.²⁷¹

Muḥammad **al-Amīn** (“the Upright”) was killed at Baghdād, but in that situation he was not caliph, and a majority of the religious community had agreed upon his deposition. And in this recent age, Commander of the Faithful Abū Maṣṣūr al-Faḥl, whose epithet was **al-Mustarshid bi-Allāh** (“the Seeker of Guidance from God”), was martyred within the borders of 'Irāq. And they [*i.e.*, maps?] show a full day's journey between that site and the majestic abode of Baghdād.

The merits of this city are many, and every person among the historians²⁷² has entered it, and they have brought to completion its explanation and description.²⁷³

Anecdotes about the caliph al-Manṣūr

Now a few points from the words of Commander of the Faithful **Maṣṣūr** will be cited,²⁷⁴ although this is not the place for it—but it is possible that, for the readers, there may be a benefit from it.

²⁷¹ Here I have translated *mahdī* and *rashīd* identically. There are differences between these words—in particular when *mahdī* is used in an eschatological context—but as caliphal epithets they are roughly equivalent.

²⁷² *aṣḥāb-i tavārīkh*; lit. “possessors of histories.”

²⁷³ *i.e.*, they have given thorough accounts.

²⁷⁴ I am unsure how to give a direct and sensible translation of the verb form used in Persian, *irād karda āmad*.

One day, [Maṣṣūr] was saying to his companions, “How badly I need for there to be at my door four [people] as I desire!” [The companions] said, “And who are they?” [Maṣṣūr] said, “Those without whom my kingdom will not remain standing, just as a throne will not remain standing without its four legs. As for the first of them, it is a judge whom the censure of a critic does not take [from the path of] God.²⁷⁵ As for the second, it is a chief of police who sees that justice is done for the weak in the face of the powerful. As for the third, it is a master of taxation who investigates and does not oppress the subjects—for I can do without oppressing them.”²⁷⁶ Then he bit his index finger and said, [→ 21] “Ah, ah!” And they said to him, “Who is the fourth, O commander of the faithful?” He said, “A postmaster who transmits the news with authenticity and does not overstep the bounds of truth.”

The meaning [*i.e.*, translation!] is thus: “How I need four men who would stand at the door of my court!” The attendants said, “What is the classification of their names?” He said, “The people without whom the affairs of kingship cannot be right, just as the throne does not stand upright without its four legs. One of them is a judge (*ḥākim*) who does not stray from the path of piety and the matter of faithfulness in issuing rulings of religious law (*sharʿ*), and whom the reproach of the people does not hinder from the way of truth. Second is a lieutenant (*khalīfat*) who claims justice for the weak oppressed ones from the powerful oppressors. Third is a competent, sincere [individual] who demands taxes and the rights of the treasury in a thorough manner, and [who] does not allow a burden upon the subjects, since I am averse to his being oppressive.” Then he bit his finger and said, “Ah, ah!” They said, “Who is the fourth, O commander of the faithful?” He said, “A postmaster who transmits the news correctly and rightly and does not cross the boundary of truth.”

And among [Maṣṣūr’s] commands, he decreed, “Entice your enemy to flee by abandoning eagerness in pursuing him if he is routed, and know that every man in your army [represents] an eye on you.”

²⁷⁵ *lā yaʾkhudhuh fī Allāh*; this is less than clear to me, and my translation is based in part on the way that Naṣr Allāh rendered it into Persian.

²⁷⁶ I prefer this reading of *fa-innī ghanīʿan ḡulmihā*, but note that it differs slightly from Naṣr Allāh’s Persian translation.

The meaning is as follows: “Make flight appealing in the heart of your enemy by not going in pursuit of him when he flees, and know that every man who is in your army [→ 22] is spying on you.”

And he summoned an official to the court, [and that official] made an excuse and stood back and desisted.²⁷⁷ [Manṣūr] signed the order of [the official] with the following statement (*jumla*): “If it is burdensome for him to come before us in his entirety, then we will be content with part of him and lessen his trouble; so let his head be carried to the court (*al-bāb*) without his body.”

The meaning is as follows: “If it is burdensome for him to come toward our court (*ḥaẓrat*) with all of his body, we will satisfy ourselves with part of him to lighten his load. Let them bring his head to the court (*dargāh*) without the body.”

And during tutelage, [Manṣūr] said to his son, Commander of the Faithful **Mahdī**—may God be pleased with both of them—“O my son, do not be open-handed with your army, for they will no longer need you; and do not be restrictive with them, for they will run away from you. Give them a gift economically, and restrain them graciously, and enrich them with hope, and do not be [overly] generous with them in gifts.”

The meaning is as follows: “O son, do not make your giving to the army plentiful, for they will no longer need you; and do not handle affairs too tightly, for they will scatter in fear. Give gifts to the extent of economy, and order restrictions kindly, without ill temper. Make the field of hope open for them, and hold tightly the reins of giving.”

And he was always saying, “Fear is something without which no one can have integrity. [One can] either [be] pious, and fear [divine] punishment; or noble, and fear dishonor; or intelligent, and fear consequences.”

The meaning is as follows: “Fear and fright is a matter without which no person can have integrity. [One can] either [be] pious, and fear [divine] punishment; or noble, and have fear of dishonor; or intelligent, and be cautious about the consequences of negligence.”

²⁷⁷ This is a bit difficult to parse, though the general meaning is clear.

One day he said to Rabī, 278 “I see people accusing me of avarice. By God, I am no miser, but I saw that they are slaves to the *dirham* and the *dīnār*, so I deprived them of those things so that they would serve me because of them. Indeed he was honest who said, ‘Make your dog hungry and it will follow you.’”

The meaning is as follows: “I see people who label me avaricious. I am not a miser, but I see that everyone is a slave to the *dirham* and the *dīnār*, [so] I withhold those things from them so that they will serve me for them. And that wise man has spoken truly, ‘Keep the dog hungry so that it will run after you.’” [→ 23]

One day they said to [Manṣūr], “Such-and-such prominent individual²⁷⁹ was called to his maker, and from him many estates are left behind, and his children have not reached the point of independence. If there were an order for the tax agents to take some [of those estates] under control and bring them into possession, there would be a windfall for the treasury.” He replied, “Whoever is not satisfied with the vicegerency of God on His earth, will not be satisfied by the estates of orphans and poor people.”

The meaning is as follows: “Whomever the vicegerency of God on the face of the earth does not satiate, will not be satiated by the estates of orphans, either.”

The virtues of this emperor [*i.e.*, Manṣūr] are without end, and the histories of the ancients speak to that. In particular, the *Ghurar al-siyar* of **Tha‘ālibī**—may God have mercy on him—contains discussion of it.

And that which was put forward from his side in the establishment of the caliphate and the strengthening of the kingdom and imperial fortune, rendered the pillars and borders [*i.e.*, nobles?] solid and fortified with firmness of resolve and realization of will, in such a way that four hundred years passed, and the turning of the heavenly sphere and the vicissitudes of time could not weaken the foundations of that [kingdom], and could not give way to any harm to its mid- and lower-ranking people.

278 This presumably refers to al-Rabī‘ ibn Yūnus (d. ca. 168/785), a freedman who became a senior official at the Abbasid court during al-Manṣūr’s reign.

279 *fulān muqaddam*; how to translate this?

Any edifice that gains stability on the foundation of justice and benevolence, and whose sides and margins are reinforced by the help of the religion of truth and the observance of the orders of mankind—if the turning of conditions has no clear effect on it, and the hand of time is impotent in the arena of its felicity, it should not appear as a marvel.²⁸⁰

This amount of the excellent qualities of this emperor—may God be pleased with him—has been recorded, and now we will turn toward our purpose.

Further praise of *Kalīla and Dimna*

In sum, the intention of the progression of this discussion was [to show] that this kind of emperor took an interest in this book. When the rule of Khurāsān passed to Commander Sadīd Abū al-Ḥasan **Naṣr ibn Aḥmad**²⁸¹ the Samanid—may God envelop him in His mercy—he ordered the poet **Rūdakī** to bring that [book] into verse, since the inclination of [human] natures toward versified speech is greater. [→ 24]

That ruler—may God’s favor be upon him—was distinguished among the kings of the line of Sāmān by an abundance of capability. During his reign, Kirmān and Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, up to the borders of Ray and Sipāhān [*i.e.*, Iṣfahān], were added to the territory of the Samanid kingdom. [His reign] lasted thirty years, and various kinds of pleasure and enjoyment were associated with it. If a small selection of his affairs were recorded, it would become long. And he rightly considered this book precious and took pains in studying it.

And **Dābshalīm**, the raja of India, at whose command they made this collection [of stories]—**Bīdpāy** the Brahmin, the original author, was among his circle—held the status (*simat*) of emperorship, and in this book the perfection of his wisdom and judgment can be recognized.

The sorceries that **Bīdpāy** the Brahmin has performed in bringing together this collection, and the strange, beautiful fabrications and odd, rare compositions that have occurred to him, are too evident for any [normal] effort to have the ability to construct [such things].²⁸²

²⁸⁰ *i.e.*, it should come as no surprise.

²⁸¹ *i.e.*, Naṣr II, r. 301–31/914–43.

²⁸² These sentences are rather difficult to parse.

For anyone who has a share of wisdom, the excellence of that [book] will not be concealed; and he who is obstructed from the beauty of intellect may be excused next to the people of understanding.

How could a blind person see the light of Moses?

*How could a deaf person know the speech of Jesus?*²⁸³

And if, in recording the virtues of this book, [many] volumes were completed, still its right would not be discharged according to the obligation. But confirmation [of this idea] has crossed all boundaries, and from the point at which we reached the mention of **Nūshirvān** up to here, it is all stuffing; and of course it has no relation to the topic of the book.

The intention was [→ 25] for it to be recognized that wisdom has always been precious, especially on the side of kings and nobles. And in truth, if effort is made in that [cause], and if trouble is borne, it will not have been wasted or fruitless, since knowledge of the laws of governance is fundamentally valued in world-rule, and the survival of the mention [of one's name] to the limit of time is a precious treasure. Whatever the price at which it is bought, it is [as if it were] free.

On translating Kalīla and Dimna

After the translation of **Ibn al-Muqaffa'** and the versification of **Rūdakī**, they have made [other] translations of this book, and each person has left a footprint in the field of discourse according to the measure of his ability. But it seems that their goal has been the recording of evening chat and the writing of tales, not the instruction of wisdom and admonition, since they have cut short good speech and limited [themselves] to presenting the stories.²⁸⁴

And in sum, since the desire of the people in studying Arabic books has become limited, and those bits of wisdom and admonition have been abandoned—if not obliterated—it crossed my mind that it should be translated, and that, in the explanation of its speech and the

²⁸³ Persian poetry, one line, *khafif* meter. I have seen this attributed to Nāṣir Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) in the Dehkhoda dictionary, but I am still looking for a secure source.

²⁸⁴ This is another sentence that is somewhat difficult to parse.

unveiling of its allusions, a sufficient measure²⁸⁵ should be reached. And it should be reinforced with scriptural verses (*āyāt*) and reports (*akhbār; i.e., aḥādīth?*) and verses of poetry and proverbs, so that this book, which is the choice extract of a few thousand years, might be revived, and people will not be held back from its uses and benefits.

In this way, [the book] was opened, and the conditions of speech-adornment were carried out in the insertion of proverbs and the interweaving of verses of poetry and the explanation of symbols and allusions. And the translation and praise of [the book] was done.

One chapter, which is restricted to the discussion of the doctor **Burzūya** and attributed to **Buzurjmīhr**, has been rendered as concise as possible, since its foundation is on [mere] storytelling. Any expression (*ma'nā*) which is devoid of the ornament of universal governance and the jewel of fundamental wisdom—if a person tries to adorn that with a borrowed garment, it will not attain beauty by any means. And whenever it passes before the wise appraisers and superior masters, they will not incline toward its ornamentation, and it will undoubtedly fall into a position of disgrace.

The [aforementioned] verbosity and exaggeration tied to the gracefulness of shared purpose²⁸⁶ has its beginning with the story of “The Lion and the Ox,” [→ 26] which is the original [start of *Kalīla and Dimna*]; and the gate of the garden of knowledge and wisdom will be opened for the readers of this book from that point.

When part of this [translation] was completed, mention of it reached the blessed, exalted, victorious ears of the king of kings—may God let him hear secrets and words of affection—and a few sections were granted the honor of his sublime attention.

[With his] perfect knowledge of speech and kingly discernment,²⁸⁷ he was pleased by that [writing], and he granted the honor of praise and approval. And he issued a command, based on the principles of beneficence and cultivating hope, and limited to various kinds of servant-

²⁸⁵ *ishbā'*; lit. “satiating.” See the earlier note regarding this term.

²⁸⁶ *laṭāfat-imuvāradat*; this is a puzzling term.

²⁸⁷ *az ānjā kih kamāl-isukhan-shināsī... ast*; lit. “from that place which is the perfection of speech-knowledge...” A certain degree of streamlining was necessary in translation.

nurturing and benevolence, that: “Let [the translation] be completed in this same way, and let the preface be embroidered with the epithets of my court.”

And this servant attained through that [command] strength of heart and support and eminence and pride, and he [*i.e.*, I] dove into this act of service with an anxiety all the more complete—since for servants there is no escape from carrying out an order.

In any case (*va illā*), unto the people of the world it is fixed that the extemporization of the mind and the first thought of the king of kings of the world—may God exalt his affair and perpetuate his kingship and rule—is the model of the total intellect and the path to the side of the sacred spirit. Neither from contemplation of the allusions and experiential wisdom (*tajārib*) of this book could a sharpening of his illuminated, victorious mind take shape; nor from studying these expressions could his shining kingly enunciations be reinforced.

How could I bring speech as a gift for you?

What could the water of life give to life [itself]?

What could a rose gain from ten women’s rosewaters?

*What glow could the moon gain from a hundred lanterns?*²⁸⁸

[→ 27] But with this order [to finish translating *Kalīla and Dimna*], this servant and servant’s son was honored as greatly as possible and nurtured as completely as possible; and my glories and pride increased as abundantly as possible. And the reward for that was saved for the age of the exalted emperor.

Concluding praise of Bahrāmshāh

Likewise, if the kings of the past, whose names have been brought forth in the introduction of this chapter, achieved this kind of success; and if they held dearly the words of the wise men, so that mention of them in that connection would remain on the face of the earth—[then] today, when the age has come into obedience to, and the heavens into the following of, the mind and banner of the lord of the world, the just and great ruler, king of kings of the children of Adam, patron of favors, possessor of the necks of the nations—may God exalt his

²⁸⁸ Persian poetry, two lines. The meter is rather difficult to determine—especially in the second hemistich—but it seems likely to be a variant of *munsariḥ* or *muẓārīʿ*. This poetry may be original to Naṣr Allāh.

intelligence and his banner and grant help to his army and his standards—and the reins of power and the halter of world-rule have been deposited to his kingly justice and mercy and strength and governance—and the excellence and superiority of this pious emperor over the rulers of the [current] age and the kings of times past and present, in the noble qualities of his blessed family and the virtues of his peerless essence, is too obvious for there to be a need for servants to engage in verbosity and long-windedness about it—

*In a hundred thousand centuries, the promenading heavens
would not bring [another] knight like him to the field of time*²⁸⁹

[Bahrāmshāh] gave this same order [to have *Kalīla and Dimna* translated],²⁹⁰ and he rendered permanent and eternal the name and reputation of his fortunate reign, which is the golden age²⁹¹ of virtue and excellence.

May God the blessed and exalted make the utmost determination of the kings of the world into the dawn of the imperial fortune and praise of the prosperity and felicity of this servant-nurturing emperor. And may He grant him all manner of enjoyment and happiness from the season of youth and the fruits of kingship, in His grace and His mercy and His power and His strength.

Part III. Responsive Readers

²⁸⁹ Persian poetry, one line, *muḏārīʿ* meter; unclear attribution (perhaps original).

²⁹⁰ The preceding paragraph is a comparison between the care that earlier kings have shown for *Kalīla and Dimna*, and Bahrāmshāh’s continuation of that legacy in sponsoring Naṣr Allāh’s translation.

²⁹¹ *rūz-i bāzār*; lit. “market day.”

7. „The Book of the Panther and the Fox” and other siblings of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
(Isabel Toral)

As explained in the introduction, one important aim of the present volume on “mouvance” is to reconstruct the extraordinary rich reception history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* [KD] and investigate how the textual tradition was read, valued, commented and understood in different times, as well as how it was accommodated to varying reader’s expectations and cultural context. By studying adaptations, commentaries, and other transformations as well as the indirect transmission it is assumed that these texts may help to reconstruct the “productive reception history” of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* since they reflect the varying responses of the readers.

This chapter will approach *Kalīla and Dimna*’s reception history by focussing one of the earliest responses preserved, namely the “Book of the Fox and the Panther” (*Kitāb al-Namir wa-l-Tha’lab*) [NTh] attributed to Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/830). From its beginnings, the booklet was perceived as intricately connected to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* by Arabic readers. As will be shown in the following, Sahl b. Hārūn’s text does not only emulate and respond to many aspects of Ibn al-Muqaffa’s text, but also reuses much of its material, albeit without noting it. Two central issues will be addressed: What can be said more specifically about the connection between both texts? In how far does this contribute to understand the readers’ reception of KD soon after Ibn al-Muqaffa’s version?

The author and his oeuvre

Sahl b. Hārūn b. Rāhawayh²⁹² al-Baṣrī al-Dastmaysānī (d. 251/830) was a well-known personality of early Abbasid times, an author of Persian background and eminent member of the bureaucratic class in Baghdad, the *kuttāb*. His *laqab* was, very significantly so, “*Buzurgmihr*

²⁹² There are many variants of his grandfather’s Iranian name, like *Rāhibūn*, *Rāmnūy* and others, cf. the list in Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 49–50, with further references. Sahl’s full name indicates that he was a convert of second generation.

al-Islām" 293, because, like the famous minister of Khosraw Anūshirwān, Sahl was credited as being a wise man, a *ḥakīm*, and a political advisor.

Sahl's family, originally from Nīshāpūr, had moved to Dastmaysān and then to Baṣra, hence his second nisba al-Baṣrī²⁹⁴. His early education in Baṣra, which was then a thriving hub of Arabic culture, remains in obscurity. He became first known as secretary of Hārūn al-Rashīd's vizier Yaḥyā b. al-Khālīd b. Barmak (d. 158/808)²⁹⁵, under whom he oversaw certain public payments as *ṣāḥib al-dawāwīn* (head of the chancelleries). He then managed to survive the shocking fall of the Barāmika/ Barmakids in 187/803.²⁹⁶ He was secretary for several viziers until he embarked on a career as literatus under al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-833). The caliph is said to have found pleasure in Sahl b. Hārūn's literary knowledge and erudition, and therefore put him in custody (as *ṣāḥib*) of the *Khizānat* or *Bayt al-Ḥikma* in 203/819, the caliphal palace library, famous for its rich collection of Persian and Early Arabic lore, a sort of treasure-house where books were preserved, copied, bound and sometimes translated from Persian into

293 Karp, 51 and note 154 for references. For the semi-legendary figure of Buzurgmihr cf. Massé, 'Buzurgmihr'. Buzurgmihr became a hero in various literary anecdotes that derive from popular tradition. It is interesting to note that Buzurgmihr plays a certain role in the reception history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, since the name of Burzōe, the supposed author of the Pahlawī version and contemporary of Anūshirwān, is not only related to Buzurgmihr (Borzūya could be a shortened form of Borzmehr) but can easily be confused. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 305 refers to this attribution. Cf. Khaleghi-Motlagh, 'Borzūya'.**XXX Theo Johannes**

294 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 120; trans. Dodge, *The Fihrist of Al-Nadim. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, vol. I, 262. For his time in Basra, cf. Karp, 'Sahl b. Hārūn', 62–63.

295 Yaḥyā b. Khālīd was Hārūn al-Rashīd's vizier between 170/786 and 187/803 and the most important member of the family of the Barāmika (Barmekids). The beginnings of the Barāmika in Balkh are difficult to ascertain. They appear first with some reliability in the historical records towards the end of the Umayyad period among the followers of the Hāshimite da'wa. Khālīd b. Barmak, Yāhyā's father, played an important role in the taxation administration under al-Manṣūr's, and later became vizier and governor of several provinces. It was Yāhyā who became the most influential member of the family. His son Ja'far b. Yaḥya b. Barmak became boon companion of Hārūn and tutor of his son 'Abdallāh (the future al-Ma'mūn); he was executed in 808/158 by Hārūn al-Rashīd in a famous and brutal episode that resonated widely in Arabic tradition. Cf. also infra, "Autobiographical Aspects".

296 For Sahl's involvement in the downfall of the Barmakids cf. infra, "Autobiographical Aspects".

Arabic. 297 Ibn al-Nadīm not only tells that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was part of this library, but that Sahl was one of the men in charge of preparing summaries and extracts 298.

Sahl was credited as being a partisan *shu'ūbī* and a Shī'ī, and it seems that he was influenced by Mu'tazilī thinking, as many people of Baṣran background. 299 He regularly appears associated with intellectual personalities and poets of similar ethnic and social background, like Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200/815-6) 300 and 'Alī b. 'Ubayda al-Rayhānī (d. 219/834) 301. All these men were also famous translators from Pahlawī into Arabic and functioned as Iranian-Arabian “double agents”, like Ibn al-Muqaffa' had done in the previous generation 302.

Sahl is said of having translated at least one work from the Pahlawī, the *Kitāb al-Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'*, “The Lover and the Virgin”, an epic allegedly collected in time of Anūshirwān, not preserved. 303 Together with Ibn al-Muqaffa' and others, he was so skilled as translator that Jāḥiẓ says that they:

“...يستطيعون أن يولدوا مثل تلك الرسائل ويصنعوا مثل ذلك السیر”

...were capable of producing the likes of those treatises [i.e. Persian books], and fashioning the likes of those histories 304

297 For a critical assessment of the Bayt al-Hikma, cf. Gutas, ‘Bayt Al-Hikma’.

298 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 305. لهذا لكتاب جوامع والانتزعات عملها جماعة منهم ابن المقفع وسهل بن هارون. Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 68.

299 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 120. For an extended discussion of his intellectual background, cf. Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 1–96 (chapter 1 on the cultural-ideological context of Sahl). For Baṣra as intellectual environment and particularly of early Mu'tazila, cf. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*. 2, 1–426.

300 Abān b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī (d. c.200/815). His ancestors are said to have Jews from Fars. Like Sahl, he came from Baṣra and then emigrated to Baghdad and then managed to attach himself to the Barmakids. He is famous for having versified various works, particularly *Kalila wa Dimna*. Seidensticker, ‘Abān Al-Lāḥiqī’.

301 D. 219/834. For him, cf. Zakeri, ‘Alī Ibn 'Ubaida Ar-Raiḥānī: A Forgotten Belletrist (Adīb) and Pahlavi Translator’. He was a secretary of al-Ma'mūn, from Khurasanian family that had settled in Basra and then moved to Baghdad.

302 I am borrowing this term from István Kristó-Nagy, *La Pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Un 'Agent Double' Dans Le Monde Persan et Arabe*.

303 Cf. references Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 82, note 299.

304 Ḡāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān Wa l-Tabayīn*, III, 29. The sentence is part of a larger polemic passage where Jāḥiẓ questions the authenticity (*ṣaḥḥ*) of the literature translated from Persian and against the *Shu'ūbiyya* in general.

Sahl's eminent role in the development of early Arabic prose and *adab* has been already studied and evaluated in detail by Lisa Karp in her PhD thesis and cannot be elaborated here. It is just to be remarked that his younger contemporary al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868) praised him as superior orator and master of style, and it is through him that we know much about his activities. Among his original books, most titles indicate a strong interest in political and mirrors-of-princes related subjects, featuring titles like *Kitāb Tadbīr al-mulūk wa-l-siyāsa*, thus a genre that broadly builds on the Iranian tradition of *andarz-name*³⁰⁵.

Besides the book discussed in this chapter, there are two titles that seem to have been animal fables.

First, according to al-Mas'ūdī³⁰⁶, it is said that he composed the *Kitāb Tha'ala wa-'Afra*:

وقد صنف سهل بن هارون الكتاب لأمير المؤمنين المأمون ترجمه ثعلة وعفرة يعارض فيه كتاب كليلة ودمنة في ابوابه
وامثاله

Sahl b. Hārūn composed a book for al-Ma'mūn, whose title translated reads Tha'ala wa-'Afra,³⁰⁷ in which he imitated/ emulated *Kalīla wa Dimna* in its chapters and proverbs.

Unfortunately, the book is only preserved in few excerpts³⁰⁸. According to the Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, (d. 415/1025), quoted by István Kristó-Nagy, the book included talking animals:

وقد وضع سهل بن هارون بن رهبويه الكاتب الفارسي، صاحب المأمون، كتاب ثعلة وعفرة

305 For a survey of the genre, cf. Marlow, 'Advice and Advice Literature'. Cf. the List in Karp, 'Sahl b. Hārūn', 80–85.

306 al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, 1, 96; Karp, 'Sahl b. Hārūn', 81 and note 295.

307 There is a certain confusion with the names of this title, since al-Mas'ūdī certainly has clearly *ثعلة وعفرة*, but we also find *ثغرة وثعلة*. Cf. the discussion in Kristó-Nagy, *La Pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Un 'Agent Double' Dans Le Monde Persan et Arabe*, 122, n.319. Others, p.e. Karp, 'Sahl b. Hārūn', 81, n.82 read otherwise: *Kitāb al-Tha'ala wa-'Afrā*, as also found in Zakeri, 'Sahl b. Hārūn b. Rāhawayh'.

308 Unfortunately, I did not have access to A. Muhamed Yāgī, *Sahl ibn Hārūn. Edition des fragments avec traduction précédée d'une introduction sur cet auteur et ses oeuvres*, diss. Paris, Sorbonne 1956, unpubl.

يعارض به كتاب كليلة ودمنة جعله على السن الطير والبهائم وذكر فيه حكم العرب كما صنع ابن المقفع في

كليلة ودمنة

Sahl b. Hārūn b. Rahbūyeh, the Persian secretary of Ibn Ma'mūn and his friend, wrote a book called Tha'ala wa-'Afra, he made in it birds and animals talk and mentioned Arabic proverbs, imitating thereby Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Kalīla wa Dimna. 309

The second book that probably also contained some sort of animal fable was the *Kitāb al-Ghazālayn*, “The Book of the two Gazelles”, but there is no information preserved about the content³¹⁰.

Plot and protagonists

The animal fable the Panther and the Fox (*al-Namir wa-l-Tha'lab*, [NTh]), is one of Sahl's few original works that have survived.³¹¹ It is preserved, probably as an abridgement, in an undated single manuscript, and was edited twice: first in 1973, accompanied by a translation into French, and second, in a revised version¹⁹⁸⁰. The manuscript (in Maghribi script) was discovered in 1964 by A.Q Mehīrī in the Bibliothèque 'Ibdiliyya in Tunis (R 288) and consists of 21 folia; he edited and translated the text 1973. It is undated and does not provide the name of the copyist. As it seems, it is lazily copied, contains lacunae, ambiguities and orthographical mistakes or idiosyncrasies. Since it is a unique manuscript and there are no known quotations of the book in later works, the text was not easy to establish³¹². Therefore, it is important to compare the edition by A.Q Mehīrī with the one by al-Ka'bī from 1980, which also contains

309 Kristó-Nagy, *La Pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Un 'Agent Double' Dans Le Monde Persan et Arabe*, 122 with references, cf. also n. 319.

310 Karp, 'Sahl b. Hārūn', 84 and note 303.

311 Sahl's letter (*Risāla fī-l-bukhl*) is quoted in the *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'* by **Jāhiz** is of contested authenticity. Cf. the discussion in Karp, 85–93.

312 Introduction in Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha'lab = (La Panthère et Le Renard)*, 31–33, with a facsimile copy of the first page.

earlier corrections by Shawqī Ḍayf and ‘Uthman Būghānimī³¹³. Al-Ka‘bī also adds a list of twenty-one quotations from Kalīla wa-Dimna and other parallels³¹⁴.

The booklet (72 pages in both editions) tells the story of the fox Marzūq, the wolf Mukābir and the panther al-Muẓaffar b. Manṣūr.

It begins with a formal *ḥamdala* and a short exposition of the goals of the book (= *kitāb*), introduced by the usual formula *amma ba‘d*, what means that it follows broadly the literary conventions of the time³¹⁵.

316 أما بعد أيديك الله بتوفيقه وعصمك بتسويده في رأيي رأيت أن أصنع لك كتاباً في الادب والبلاغة والترسيل والحروب والحيل والأمثال والعالم والجاهل وأن أشرب ذلك بشيء من المواعظ وضروب من الحكم وقد وضعت من ذلك كتاباً مختصراً موعباً شوفياً وجعلته أصلاً للعالم والاديب والعاقل والاريب مما امكنتني حفظه وإطرد لي تأليفه والله نسأله العون والتأييد والتوفيق والتسديد ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

I have considered it useful, (may God give you his assistance and protect you through his help), to compose for you a book on belles-lettres and eloquence and the art of letter-writing, and on warcraft, stratagems, proverbs, and on the wise man and the ignorant, and I peppered it with some exhortations and diverse sorts of wise sayings. Thus, I have composed this as a brief, comprehensive and satisfying book, and I made it as manual for the wise, the cultivated, the intelligent and the clever, by collecting of what I was able to, and what I could compose. We ask God for help, support and assistance, and there is no might or power except with God the Almighty.

After this *muqaddima*, the main text starts with a plain “*dhukira*” (it is told), without any reference either to the textual origins, nor isnad or similar reference to an author or authority.

It tells how the fox Marzūq (Abū l-Ṣabāḥ) is recommended by a friend called Ṭāriq (Abū l-Mughallas, probably also a fox) to leave his home in a valley, because he alerts about the

313 Cf. introduction to Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha‘lab*, 3–5.

314 Sahl b. Hārūn, 87–100.

315 Freimark, ‘Das Vorwort als literarische Form in der arabischen Literatur’, 22–28, die Form des Vorworts.

316 ترسل

danger of a potential flood. Marzūq does not follow this advice, but rather decides to stay, after having listened to his wife. The flood comes and drives them from their homeland. Marzūq strands on an island, where he meets an unhappy, depressive wolf. Asked for the reasons of his bad mood, the wolf Mukābir (Abū l-Firā'/Abū al-'Idā')³¹⁷ tells him about the king of this island, who is an oppressive, tyrannical, and avaricious ruler, namely the panther al-Muẓaffar b. al-Mansūr. Marzūq recommends the wolf to ask the king to appoint him as governor of a rich province, and so to gain wealth and honor. After some reluctance – and a long dialogue in which the fox argues in favor of the benefits of being close to political powerholders, and the necessity of diplomacy, deceit and cunning to succeed in life³¹⁸ – the wolf Mukābir follows this plan. He is given by the king the post of *walī* (governor) of a distant province; and on his side, he appoints the fox Marzūq as his vizier-secretary (*al-wazīr al-kātib*). The wolf gets rich and prestigious as governor, but soon the relationship to the sovereign gets tense, since Mukābir does not correspond the panther-king al-Muẓaffar with gifts and revenues as is expected from him. There follows an exchange of eight highly rhetorical epistles between the king and the fox, who, as his secretary, writes the letters in the name of the wolf. Despite the foxes' brilliant letters to the king and his endeavors to give moderating advice to the wolf (who never follows this advice), the tension escalates and ends in an open rebellion by the wolf. The king-panther sends his troops, they defeat the wolf and execute him and his entourage. The fox is also in danger to be killed but can convince the king in the last minute to pardon him, by pointing at his talent as advisor. The king then commands his ministers to test the capacity of the fox as advisor by posing a long series of questions about the human nature, ethics, religion, importance of rhetoric and fine speech, knowledge, virtues etc. What follows on ca. 40 pages (more than the half of the whole book) is a long Q&A list that functions as a didactic exposition of the basics of moralizing "*adab*" (topics are the nature of knowledge, of reason, of virtue... etc.). As is to be expected, the fox passes the exam, the king is impressed by the beauty of the foxes' mind (he is *ḥasan al-'aql*) and the excellency of his speech and nominates him as his advisor until his death.

317 Meḥīrī reads Abū l-Firā'; Ka'bī reads Abū al-'Idā.

318 See below for a detailed discussion of this passage.

Style and structure

The storyline can be subdivided into four key sections that correspond to different scenes.

- a) *FoxIntro* the paratextual introduction (2 pages)
- b) *FoxFlood* the story about the flood and how the fox arrives on the island (3 pages),
- c) *FoxEpistles* the time of the fox as advisor of the wolf, particularly the epistles (29 pages)
- d) *FoxExam* the exam by the ministers (40 pages).

In terms of style, the book encompasses a broad spectrum. It varies between

- plain prose in the short narrative passages.
- then moderate rhetorical dialogical passages interwoven by proverbs, poetry, Qur'ān and *ḥikam*³¹⁹ in b) and the beginning of c).
- finally, highly rhetorical and parallelistic passages, often in *saj'*, in the epistles in c) and in the explanatory sermons of d).

As concerns the narrative structure, NTh is kept quite simple. It is a heterodiegetic, straight linear narrative on one level, attributed to an anonymous “they say”, and most passages consist of quoted dialogues, epistles, and speeches. It is remarkable that those few passages that narrate the turning dramatic events (the flood, the fights, and the war) are very brief and summarized³²⁰ and seem only to serve as connectors to explain the change of scenery. As said, the focus is rather put on the dialogues, sermons, and epistles, what gives Sahl occasion to display his mastery as stylist and show off as an *adīb* knowledgeable of the ethics, philosophy, and morals necessary for a political advisor. There are no embedded narratives at all, also no prolepses or analepses, the plot is simple and almost dispensable in some parts. For instance, the initial flood episode (b *FoxFlood*) seems not to be functional for the rest of the book, except that one could say that it gives Sahl the opportunity to insert a very misogynous section when Marzūq speaks with his “stupid and short-sighted” wife.

³¹⁹ Many of these quotations seem to have been taken from *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see below the discussion the KD parallels in NTh.

³²⁰ For critical evaluation of this khabar-style as found in Arabic historical prose in early centuries, s. Beaumont, ‘Hard-Boiled’.

Comparison and connections between *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and *Namir wa-l-Tha'lab*

In comparing NTh and KD, the most important similarity is to be found in the shared use of the trope of “talking animals” to discuss political and ethical issues, to wit, the idea of connecting the textual genres of animal fables and mirror-of-princes. This is a hybrid initiated in Arabic literature with *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, and to be found in other emulations of it as, p.e. in *al-Asad wa l-Ghawwāṣ* (the Lion and the Pearl-Diver) an anonymous work from 5./ 11./12 century with a complicated connection to KD already studied by E. Wagner.³²¹ Probably KD became a model in this regard and served to show that “talking animals” could be used in political literature as an effective literary strategy to derive responsibility and avoid censorship, what it did by putting sensitive political situations and statements in an overtly fictional, timeless setting. Giving advice was important for good government,³²² and offered great career opportunities for ambitious, talented people, also from lower social background. However, the life in higher political spheres was risky and precarious for these social climbers, and caution, indirect communication skills, cunning, vigilance, and smartness were crucial, literally to survive. This aspect will be discussed below in more detail.

There are also striking similarities in the sceneries of KD and NTh. Section d) *FoxExam* contains the advice situation frequently found in KD (p.e. in chapters Di and Oc): the king/ruler poses questions to his advisors/ministers, either to his favorite one, who then gives didactic speeches, or to several of them, whose opposing answers represent the different options the ruler has when taking a decision. We also find the dramatical trial situation (a person is in danger to be executed, and several ministers give contradictory advice)³²³, as well as the trope of the accused advisor who saves his life because of his intelligence, rhetorical skills, and knowledge.

There are further parallels that still need to be investigated in depth. For instance, the triad panther-king, wolf-governor, and fox-secretary in NTh seems to echo the constellation in the

³²¹al-Sayyid, *Al-Asad Wa-l-Ghawwāṣṣ. Hikāya Ramziyya 'arabiyya Min al-Qarn al-Khāmis al-Hijrī* first edition 1977; Wagner, ‘Die Quellen des anonymen arabischen Fürstenspiegels “Löwe und Schakal”’. As Wagner argued, this work is based on a reworking of the chapter Lion and jackal, but with protagonists of Lion and Ox.

³²²Toral-Niehoff, ‘Justice and Good Administration in Medieval Islam: The Book of the Pearl of the Ruler by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (860-940)’.

³²³ For instance in chapters Di and Oc of KD.

Lion and Ox chapter of KD: In KD, the lion king is introduced as being surrounded in his court by “wolves, jackals and foxes”³²⁴. Then KD continues telling the story about the two jackals Kalīla and Dimna, and not about the wolves and foxes. One could say that NTh tells the story about these other animals at the court, as a kind of “spin-off” or “sequel” to the Lo chapter in KD. The trial of the fox in NTh in d) *FoxExam* also parallels the one on Dimna, since, like him, Marzūq advocates himself his interests. However, Marzūq is never portrayed as cunning and deceitful as Dimna, and in contrast to him, he is absolved and spends his further life as favorite adviser of the king³²⁵.

The differences between NTh and KD are also significant and deserve a deeper investigation. First, in contrast to the sophisticated system of framing stories characteristic of KD, NTh features a simple, and even dull narrative structure and lacks entertaining embedded stories that illustrate the moral advice. Second, NTh does not have any twisted plots with exciting intrigues and ruses as partly to be found in KD: the problems between the king and the governor in NTh result simply from the non-payment of an expected tribute and the governor’s refusal to follow the advice of his smart counsellor. Third, NTh has a clear Islamic flavor (eulogies, Arabic names and kunyas of the animals, Qur’ānic quotations, and formal elements as the *hamdala*, etc.), whereas KD has only rarely Islamic reminiscences. Fourth, the general focus in NTh is on ethics and (Muslim) morality; KD, in contrast, is a collection of fables on practical, even utilitarian and Machiavellian political and everyday ethics. Fifth, whereas KD is kept in plain prose, NTh has many passages written in a sophisticated, rhymed artistic prose style (*saj’*), particularly in c) *FoxEpistles* and d) *FoxExam*. Sixth, the trope of translation is pervasive and central to KD, whereas NTh does not present itself as a translation of foreign origin. All these points require a deeper analysis that cannot be undertaken here.

Quotation practices

There is a remarkable feature that will be studied in more detail: the high degree of intertextuality in NTh. As will be shown in the following it has implicit and explicit reuse of previous texts, particularly in b) *FoxFlood*, and to a lesser degree in c) *FoxEpistles*. One could say

³²⁴‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., *Kalila Wa-Dimna*, 75.

³²⁵ See below the discussion in “autobiographical aspects”.

that NTh already functions like classical *adab* compilations and anthologies, well-known for their pervasive intertextuality³²⁶. In contrast, though KD insists on its status as translated text, and thus inserts itself into a chain of previous versions, the earliest Arabic versions of KD seem neither to quote or allude to other pre-existing intertexts. It is interesting that Ibn al-Muqaffa' even presents the book of KD as a book that makes other books dispensable³²⁷.

In the following, I will show the quotation and text reuse strategies to be found in NTh based on selected passages.

First, I quote here some passages found in the second part, namely in *b) Fox Flood*³²⁸. When Ṭāriq comes to the valley and announces Marzūq that he lives in a dangerous place, Marzūq responds in the following way:

يا ابو المغلس و ما الذي أنكرت علي منه وغمصت علي فيه؟ فأنت من لا أتهم من عقله و نصيحتته لأهل
مودته و ما عقلك لهم بأشوطة و إني لعلى حبل ذراعك و المؤمن مرآة اخيه؟ وقد كان عمر بن عبد العزيز رحمه
الله قال رحم الله من أهدى إلينا عيوبنا

“O Abū l-Mughallaṣ, what do you reproach me and blame me for? I do not doubt your intelligence nor your good advice for your friends, and your friendship (to them) is not a “knot easy to untie”³²⁹. “I am a cord that you tighten in your hand”³³⁰: “isn’t a believer a mirror for his brother”³³¹, and did not the deceased, may God have mercy on him, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, say: “May God have mercy on any man that points out our faults to us?”³³²

326 For a recent evaluation of the state of research, cf. the collected volume Orfali, *Approaches to the Study of Pre-Modern Arabic Anthologies*.

327 ‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., *Kalīla Wa-Dimna*, 50.

فمن قرأ هذا الكتاب فليقتد بما في هذا الباب؛ فإنني أرجو أن يزيد بصراً ومعرفة
فإذا عرفه اكتفى واستغنى عن غيره

328 Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha‘lab = (La Panthère et Le Renard)*, 172 (9).

329 Maydānī, *Majma‘ al-amthāl*, II, 278.

330 Maydānī, II, 388. “I am a good friend of you.”

331 Hadith, quoted in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, *Kitāb Al-‘Iqd al-Farīd*, III, 77.

332 The saying is frequently put in the mouth of his previous namesake, namely ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. For instance, Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī et al., *The Epistle of Forgiveness Or*, 62.

The texts quoted are proverbs, a hadith and a saying ascribed to a frequently cited authority, the pious Umayyad caliph, 'Umar b. 'Abd Al-'Azīz (r. 99-101/ 717-720). The frequent quoting is particularly impressive (and even unintentionally hilarious) in the scene when the flood menaces to kill the fox Marzūq and his wife, since it seems highly unfunctional. In this dire situation, he tries to convince her to leave the place by quoting poetry and proverbs, and the vixen responds similarly³³³.

They were in this situation until the flood came, and Marzūq saw this and said to his wife: "You have to pay attention to precursory signs,"³³⁴ and you know quite well the verses by al-Qutāmī³³⁵

"The best thing is to anticipate events and not to be pushed by them"

The wise men have said: "The worst opinion is the belated one". And he also quoted the proverb: "Before you throw the lance, you should feather it". Let us save ourselves, "before it is too late"³³⁶.

The vixen responded: "Not every [hairy] camel is a coward³³⁷".

فبينما هو على تلك من حاله حتى جاء السيل فنظر إليه مرزوق فقال لزوجته خذي الأمر بقوابله وقد علمت ما قال
القطامي في شعره

وخَيْرُ الأَمْرِ مَا اسْتَقْبَلَتْ مِنْهُ * وَلَيْسَ بِأَنْ تَتَّبِعُ أَتْبَاعَا

وقال الحكماء : شرُّ الرأْيِ الدَّبْرِيُّ وقال مثلاً: قبل الرِّيحِ يُرَاشُ السَهْمُ فالنَّجاةُ الآنَ ولات حينَ مَنَاصٍ
قالت له زوجته ما كلُّ أَرْبٍ نَفور

333 Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha'lab* = (*La Panthère et Le Renard*), 170 (11).

334 Maydānī, *Majma' al-amthāl*, I, 231.

335 "The falcon", name of several early poets, the most famous being 'Umayr b. Shuyaym b. 'Amr, probably died in 101/720. Bräu and Pellat, 'Al-Ḳuṭāmī'.

336 Q 38:3.

337 Anonymous proverb in the sense of "a camel with hairy eyebrows (*nafūr*) turns away when the wind blows [because the wind is bothering], but that does not mean it is a coward" Zubayrī, *Kitāb Nasab Quraysh*, 238.

If we then look at the selection of references in NTh, we will find the “usual suspects” of *adab*: Pre-Islamic and Umayyad poetry; Qur’ān, hadith and proverbs,³³⁸ one saying attributed to ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The chronological range supports the authenticity of this early text, since all datable quotations relate to texts and authors that preceded Sahl’ s life-time. Particularly intriguing is the frequent and non-acknowledged reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This means, in fact, that KD-quotations are treated like Qur’ān, hadith and proverbs, and that they are incorporated in the speeches in a sort of *iqtibās*.³³⁹ It is also to be said that the material reused of KD proceeds almost exclusively from the many *ḥikam* (wise sayings and proverbs). They thus belong to the relatively stable, formulaic, and crystalline elements of KD that would less be subject to “mouvance” than the narrative passages. A preliminary comparison of the quotations in NTh with textual parallels in the manuscript corpus of KD has shown that the amount of variation is relatively small, what also means that they belong to the early layer of KD.

The quotations of KD attested by now seem to be almost exclusively found in the early part of the NTh (i.e. in *b)Foxflood* and in the beginning of *c)FoxEpistles*. However, it is important to highlight that an exhaustive quantitative and qualitative critical evaluation of the reuse of KD and other non-acknowledged intertexts in NTh has not been undertaken by now³⁴⁰. Furthermore, there are parallels with other texts belonging to the corpus attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffā’, like the *al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr*, which is merely a collection of wise sayings, and probably there will be more yet to be identified.³⁴¹

The main concentration is to be found in the conversation between the wolf and the fox where they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of engaging in politics and approaching the inner circle of the ruler³⁴². This is not a coincidence, since the scene in NTh echoes in many aspects the conversation between the jackals Kalīla and Dimna found at the beginning of the

³³⁸ It seems hadith had not yet achieved the status of “quotable saying” in *adab*?

³³⁹ Orfali, ‘*Iqtibās*’.

³⁴⁰ Al-Ka’bī already has identified more quotations of KD than Mehīrī (cf. Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha’lab*, 87–100.), and there are more parallels to be expected if compared with the whole manuscript corpus and the other KD versions.

³⁴¹ For the corpus of texts attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffā’ cf. Kristó-Nagy, *La Pensée d’Ibn al-Muqaffā’. Un ‘Agent Double’ Dans Le Monde Persan et Arabe*; Kristó-Nagy, ‘On the Authenticity of *Al-Adab Al-Ṣaghīr* Attributed to Ibn Al-Muqaffā’ and Problems Concerning Some of His Titles’, with further references.

³⁴² Sahl b. Hārūn, *Kitāb Al-Namir Wa-l-Tha’lab*, 166, 165 (15-16).

Lo chapter, when they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a career in higher politics.³⁴³ The reticent wolf Mukābir stands for the cautious Kalīla, the ambitious Marzūq for the trickster Dimna. It is also from this dialogue in KD where most borrowings in NTh come from; only one is from a different chapter (from Rd).

I quote here the whole passage to appreciate the reuse of KD in this dialogue. The quotations of KD are underlined:

The wolf said: Beware of binding yourself to a greedy and false man, since, if he considers you powerful, he will see your position as particularly odious, and if he considers you as insignificant, he will not let you in peace in this situation.

The Fox said: “You do not need to empty the cup completely to quench your thirst”. The man who does not live on a humble position of low esteem, but who lives in generosity towards himself and his friends, his life will be, though short in years, in fact long, because the one who lives in poverty and deprives himself of all good things, will have a long existence, even if short in years³⁴⁴.”

The wolf said: They say there are three things that only the fools dare to undertake and from which few people survive unscathed: the company of rulers, to trust a woman with a secret, and to drink a poison for a test³⁴⁵.

The fox said: One can swallow the core part in little bits and ride on difficult paths without a good camel³⁴⁶. And everyone who frequently visits the antechamber of the ruler and meets arrogance, suffers vexations, restrains anger, and shows friendliness to all, will end up realizing his goal with the ruler³⁴⁷.

The wolf said: Do not find joy in rulership without justice, and do not pursue illegal wealth; and do not delight in insincere eloquence, do not be generous without purpose, and a good deed without piety is worthless.

343 ‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., *Kalila Wa-Dimna*, 75–78.

344 ‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., 76.

345 ‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., 78.

346 Maydānī, *Majma‘ al-amthāl*, II, 63 and II, 93.

347 ‘Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and ‘Abdalwahhāb ‘Azzām C., *Kalila Wa-Dimna*, 77.

*The fox said: The intelligent man should trick like a swimmer who swims in running water, and quoting a proverb, he said: "Content yourself with mounting a boat"*³⁴⁸.

The wolf said: The means used by the weak to reach his goal is the same means that impedes the resolute to attain his one.

The fox said: "Money guarantees your living and good judgment. Without money, there are no brethren, nor associates, nor supporters". Only money puts virtue in evidence; since, whoever does not have it, if he undertakes an action, will be hindered by his indigence, and will not achieve his aim³⁴⁹.

*The wolf said: Power has the whimsiness of drunkenness: it favors those who deserve anger, and its anger turns towards those who merit favors. That is why people say: Great is the risk for those who travel on the ocean, but even greater is the danger for those who approach power*³⁵⁰.

*The wolf said: Who does not confront dangers, even if they are challenging, cannot achieve his goals. And the one that renounces the plan that might have helped him to achieve his objective, out of fear for his safety, will not achieve anything. They say, there are three activities that can only be undertaken by people with high ambition and great courage: the association with rulers, the maritime commerce, and the fight against the enemy*³⁵¹.

As shown, the text reuse of KD here is so pervasive in this passage that one could even speak of plagiarism, else if it were not that KD was a famous text whose close connection to NTh was well known. There are various possible explanations.

First, it is possible that both Sahl and Ibn al-Muqaffā' drew from a common anonymous source, used by both since the theme was the same and triggered the same associations. Since Arabic prose literature was still in *statu nascendi* in the time of Ibn al-Muqaffā', and written collections of were rare at this stage, this would rather be an oral corpus of Arabic sayings, or

348 Not identified.

349 'Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and 'Abdalwahhāb 'Azzām C., *Kalila Wa-Dimna*, 129. Also in al-Adab al-Saghīr (check)

350 'Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and 'Abdalwahhāb 'Azzām C., 92.

351 'Azzām, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, and 'Abdalwahhāb 'Azzām C., 78.

some informal, private notebook. This would suppose that Ibn al-Muqaffa' peppered his translation from Pahlawī with Arabic *ḥikam* material from the same collection used later by Sahl.

Second, it cannot be excluded that NTh, an *adab* text scarcely known and not quoted elsewhere, is a later falsification plagiarized from KD, and inspired by the notice found elsewhere that the famous Sahl had composed an "imitation of KD". This hypothesis would require a meticulous study of possible anachronisms and other incongruities in NTh.

Third, it could be that Sahl reused KD directly, or via a summary / selection arranged by himself – as said, he was in charge of producing summaries of KD -352, but without acknowledging it, since he did not deem it necessary. This assumption, which seems the most plausible, would open a set of further options. To begin with, it could either mean that KD had acquired in the time of Sahl already a prestige status comparable to the Qur'ān or hadith. Alternatively, it could also mean that KD had already descended in status, and now belonged to the popular genre of entertaining fiction and was not authoritative anymore – and its maxims had become "popular wisdom". Finally, it could mean that quotation practices and notions of authority were still not standardized and established, so that it was perfectly possible not to refer to a source-text that was otherwise well known.

Autobiographical aspects

The storyline in NTh is centered on the theme of the rebellious minister/governor who is punished and executed by the king/ruler; but also, on the smart and astute secretary who survives thanks to his talent. Both elements do not only resonate with Sahl's life experience, but with the sociopolitical context in the eighth and early ninth century, a moment when *mawālī* of Iranian background climbed up the social ladder in the state administration³⁵³.

Sahl b. Hārūn was a typical representative of the class of Iranian *kuttāb*. Having grown up in Baṣra amongst Iranians, in a vibrant city that had become a multicultural melting-pot³⁵⁴, he

352 Cf. above n. 298

353 My thanks to the feedback by Lara Harp, who pointed to the autobiographical dimension.

354 After its demilitarization around by al-Ḥajjāj, Baṣra had become a melting-pot populated Arabs, Persians, and Indians; the province was also closely connected to Khurasān, which

moved to Baghdad soon after its foundation in 762, to the city that had become the new “place to go”. Like many ambitious young talents of his generation, he did this by searching the patronage of the Barāmika, who enjoyed excellent connections to the caliphal court since the rise of the Abbasids, but particularly since 786/355, when Hārūn had come to power. Like him, they were originally from Khurāsān and had then settled in Baṣra. According to Jāḥiẓ, Sahl had written poems in praise of Yaḥyā b. Khālīd b. Barmak, Hārūn al-Rashīd’s powerful vizier, and sent them to him to attract his attention.³⁵⁶ This move proved successful and would form the starting point of Sahl’s brilliant career in Baghdad. But from then onwards, Sahl’s life was also marked by the dangerous up-and-downs of political life at the caliphal court.

First, he became Yaḥyā’s secretary when the Barāmika were at the height of their power. Soon after, he experienced the viziers’ loss of the caliphs’ favor. He became witness of the assassination of Yaḥyā’s son Ja’far and his patron’s imprisonment in 187/803, a dramatic turn of events – the fall of the Barmakids - that resonated widely in Arabic sources³⁵⁷. However, Sahl managed somehow to survive this life-threatening crisis.

Sahl then appears in the environment of a person who could be seen as his second patron, the vizier al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī, (d. 207/208 – 822-24) Yaḥyā’s successor as vizier since 187/ 803 under the late Hārūn al-Rashīd and then al-Amīn (r. 809-813). He was the son of al-Rabī b. Yūnus, courtier and prominent enemy of the Barāmika.³⁵⁸ Often portrayed as a cunning intrigant in favor of al-Amīn, al-Faḍl fell in disgrace under al-Ma’mūn in 198/814, who accused

had been province conquered by troops from Baṣra. Cf. . Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ḡāḥiẓ*, XXX., Pellat, 34 ff. For Sahl’s time in Basra, cf. Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 62–63)

355. Cf. Barthold and Sourdel, ‘Al-Barāmika’ and note 295.

356 Cf. Karp, ‘Sahl b. Hārūn’, 63 and n. 209 with references. Yaḥyā was empowered to choose his own secretaries, so we must assume that he appointed Sahl personally. After 187/803, when his son Ja’far was executed (cf. infra), he was put into prison and died 193/808.

357 Maybe he even became eyewitness of the events. We preserve a report in which Sahl tells his personal experience as first-person narrator of the dramatic downfall of the Barāmika (to be found in Ibn’Abd Rabbihī, *Kitāb Al-’Iqd al-Farīd*, V, 58–64., probably deriving from Pseudo-Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Imāma wa-Siyāsa*, a spurious work of Egyptian background), and transmitted by al-Jāḥiẓ. The attribution of this report to Sahl via Jāḥiẓ is however controversial, cf. Hamori, ‘Going down in Style: The Pseudo-Ibn Qutayba’s Story of the Fall of the Barmakis’. Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen Zum Kitāb Al-’Iqd al-Farīd Des Andalusiers Ibn ‘Abdrabbih*, Bd. 70:344–47 and 383–85 considers it authentic.

358 Sourdel, *Le vizirat ‘abbāsīde de 749 a 936*, 118–21; Atiya, ‘Al-Rabī b. Yūnus’. He was of humble origin, born as slave in Medina around 112/730. In the sources, he is protagonist of various intrigues against the Barāmika.

him of having encouraged his brother to deprive him of his hereditary rights.³⁵⁹ Sahl again managed to overcome the downfall of his patron.

Under al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-33) Sahl won the sympathies of the latter's vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl b. Zahdhānfarūkh, another Iranian who had ascended in his career thanks to the Barāmika³⁶⁰. His father, converted to Islam, had put his two sons under their protection, and al-Faḍl was taken into the service of Ja'far b. Yaḥyā. He became a very powerful minister, but his open partisanship for the Iranian cause won him the accusation of having planned to restore Iranian rule by having had 'Alī Riḍā nominated as heir. He was assassinated under mysterious circumstances in 202/817/18. Rumors persisted that al-Ma'mūn had been the instigator of this death, who feared his power and had changed his Shī'a policy. Again, Sahl survived his patron's disgrace and rallied with al-Faḍl's brother Sahl, who had learned the lesson and had retired from political life. Soon after, the caliph put Sahl b. Hārūn in custody of the *Bayt al-Ḥikma* in 203/819, a position he seems to have held until his death in 830.

Two important points must be highlighted. First, Sahl's trajectory shows how much his social class – the *kuttāb* – maintained a well-functioning network in the first decades of Abbasid rule. One can easily perceive a certain pattern – all of them were first or second-generation converts of Iranian background, were bilingual and bicultural, had grown up in thriving Baṣra, the first Arabian metropole, and then moved to Baghdad; all of them soon climbed up the social ladder into the highest ranks of society. The Barāmika were the first who raised to power in the early decades of Abbasid rule, and under their protection many others of similar bicultural background gained positions, like the descents of Zahdhānfarūkh, and Sahl b. Hārūn himself. There are many others that belonged to this milieu, several of them men of letters. For instance, the poet Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200/815-6), of Baṣran, Persian-Jewish background, composed panegyrics dedicated to the Barāmika and produced a versification of KD. 361. There is 'Alī b. 'Ubayda al-Rayhānī (d. 219/834), Iranian from Khurasān, grown up in Baṣra,

359 Cf. Sourdél, 'Al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī'; Sourdél, *Le vizirat 'abbāside de 749 a 936*, 183–94.

360 'Al-Faḍl b. Sahl b. Zahdhānfarūkh'; Sourdél, *Le vizirat 'abbāside de 749 a 936*, 195–217.

361 Abān b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī (d. c.200/815). His ancestors are said to have been Jews from Fars. Like Sahl, he came from Baṣra and then emigrated to Baghdad and then managed to attach himself to the Barmakids. He is famous for having versified various works, particularly *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Seidensticker, 'Abān Al-Lāḥiqī'.

then secretary to the caliph al-Ma'mūn, and prolific translator from Pahlavī.³⁶² There are also famous poets like Abū Nuwās (d. 198/813) and Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/783), both of Persian background and rooted in Baṣra. Most of them are credited as sympathizers of the Shu'ūbiyya and of a cultural and political pro-Iranian attitude, often associated with *zandaqa*. This was the social class that promoted the Iranization of early Arabic culture through translations and adaptations and functioned as vectors of cultural hybridization. Ibn al-Muqaffa', the Baṣran Iranian-Arabian "double agent" of an earlier generation, son of a Basran tax-collector under the Umayyads and secretary to Abbasid officers, was their senior forerunner.³⁶³

Second, Sahl's biography also shows that he was a smart survivor in the "shark pool" of political life, and capable of overcoming the death/downfall of at least three patrons/viziers. The rapid success of this new administrative elite demonstrates at the same time the opportunities and the high risks of the extraordinary social mobility of early Baghdad.

Against this background it is inevitable to think of the figure of Marzūq in NTh, who is another ambitious social climber and smart politician. The fox-secretary, loyal counselor of the wolf-vizier Mukābir, only manages to save his life after the downfall of his patron thanks to his talent and high education, and ends happily as the favorite adviser of the ruler at court. His figure seems to be a benevolent and self-indulging alter-ego of Sahl, since we do not know in how far Sahl owed his survival only to his splendid literary talent and his *adab*. Furthermore, the fox Marzūq and his happy end work clearly as the positive counterpart and response to the cunning jackal Dimna in KD, who is also an ambitious underdog of high intelligence, albeit of questionable morals, and who ends as fatal victim of political ruses³⁶⁴. One could even speculate if Sahl saw himself as the fortunate follower of Ibn al-Muqaffa', who tragically fell victim of political intrigues in young age.

The story-line of both texts thus resonates with the life experience of the many *mawālī* of Persian/Basran background in the higher ranks of society between 750 and the early decades

³⁶² D. 219/834. For him, cf. Zakeri, 'Alī Ibn 'Ubaida Ar-Raiḥānī: A Forgotten Belletrist (Adīb) and Pahlavi Translator'; Zakeri, *Persian wisdom in Arabic garb*. He was a secretary of al-Ma'mūn, from Khurasanian family that had settled in Basra and then moved to Baghdad.

³⁶³ Cf. Kristó-Nagy, *La Pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Un 'Agent Double' Dans Le Monde Persan et Arabe*; Gabrieli, 'Ibn Al-Muqaffa'.

³⁶⁴ On a side note, 'Abdallāh b. al-Muqaffa' himself was executed in a political intrigue in early age. There is a fascinating figure in Lo, the friend Ruzbeh, who seems to be an alter-ego to Ibn al-Muqaffa', whose Iranian name was also Rozbeh.

of the ninth century. The existence of a “spin-off” to KD several decades later, roughly developing the same theme found in the chapter Lo of KD – the ambitious and smart underdog at court who experiences a precarious time of glory near to the ruler – suggests that the social milieu that had produced KD in the first place not only continued to exist and felt comparable anxieties, but that they expressed it in a similar way.

Preliminary Conclusions and further perspectives

What can be said more specifically about the connection between both texts, and how does this contribute to understand the readers’ reception of KD? I think it can be safely said that NTh is a “hypertext” to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, since it evokes *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as “hypotext” without mentioning it, and worked better if the reader already knew *Kalīla wa-Dimna*³⁶⁵. The exact nature of this relationship however needs further investigation, since many quotations and parallels are still to be discovered, particularly if NTh is compared to the rich KD manuscript corpus, and also with other collections of Arabic sayings and proverbs. What can be said by now is that Sahl does not only silently reuse many passages from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (and, to a lesser degree, of other texts of Ibn al-Muqaffa’s corpus like *al-Adab al-Saghir*), but also partly adopts story-lines, sceneries and characters of KD, as well as develops further the idea of combining an animal fable with political advice and *adab*. This might be related to the fact that Nth and KD were produced by authors of a similar milieu - the up climbing Iranian *mawali-kuttāb*- and who were of comparable bicultural mindset and shared similar anxieties. Moreover, the fact that Sahl b. Harun decided to compose a spin-off to KD without acknowledging, but expecting his readers to capture the reference, indicates that KD circulated widely in this milieu and had already become a common known reference text, either directly, or via abridgements or anthologies. The deeper analysis of quotation techniques and intertexts in NTh will help to clarify further this aspect.

Sahls adaptation, however, also involved significant differences in form and content, and the result is in many ways less entertaining, more erudite and more didactic than *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

365 I am using here the terminology by Genette “Hypertextuality refers to any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary”. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5.

This might indicate a slight change in literary taste among the courtly elites. ThN appears to be a more “adabized” and islamized version of Kalīla wa-Dimna, rather oriented to a restricted elite readership of cultivated *udabā’* and *kuttāb*, as Sahl already states in its own introduction.³⁶⁶ ThN expects a cultivated reader familiar with many intertexts (Qur’ān, early Arabic poetry, sayings, proverbs, and, of course, KD) who finds pleasure in reading fine Arabic artistic prose and poetry, closer to the ideal *adīb* of the time of Ibn Qutayba. This might reflect the gradual evolution of the *kuttāb* class since Ibn al-Muqaffa’s time, that had become more institutionalized, Islamized and Arabized by the beginning of the ninth century. The reasons why Sahl did not take over the framing narrative structure featured by KD need to be investigated further, but are probably connected to the same tendency – the predominance in Nth of the didactic and aesthetic over the entertainment purpose.

In terms of textual mouvance, a very preliminary comparison (that requires urgently to be deepened) between NTh’s quotations of KD and the KD manuscript corpus has shown meagre and rich results at the same time. On the one hand, the variation is comparatively small, so that they do not contribute much to reconstruct the early layers of the text. On the other, they confirm that the *hikam* passages are the most stable and crystalline elements in the stream of KD’s textual mouvance since its early beginnings. Mouvance, in sum, seems to affect much more narrative passages, that are less fixed in form and content, so that they invite engaged readers and copyist-redactors to intervene actively.

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³⁶⁶ [*ja’altuhu aṣlan li-l-‘ālim al-adīb wa al-‘āqil al-arīb* = for the knowledgeable cultivated and the intelligent and clever].

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Appendix:

قال الذئب: يا ابا الصَّبَّاح انه كان يقال اتَّق مقارنة الحريص الغادر فَإِنَّه ان رَأَكَ في القوة رأَى منك أخبث حالاتك وان رَأَكَ في الفضول لم يدعك وفضولك

قال الثعلب: يا ابا العداء أَنَّهُ ليس الرِّيِّ عن التشافِّ. **من عاش غير خامل الذكر والمنزلة إذا أفضل على نفسه وأصحابه فهو وإن قلَّ عمره طويل العمرومن كان عيشه في ضيق وقلَّ خيره وعلى نفسه فهو وإن طال عمره**
367 **قصيرالعمر**

قال الذئب: إِنَّه كان يقال: **في أمور ثلاثة لا يجترئ عليها إلا أهوج. ولا يسلم منها إلا قليل: صحبة سلطان و**
368 **ائتمان النساء على اسرار و شرب السم على تجربة**

قال الثعلب : **قد يُبلغ الخَضُم بالقُضْم. ويُركب الصعب من لا ذلول له. وليس يواظب على باب السلطان أحد**
369 **فيلقى عن نفسه الأنفة ويتحمل الأذى ويكظم الغيظ ويرفق بالناس الا خلص إلى حاجته من السلطان**
قال الذئب: إِنَّه كان يقا لا تغتبط بالسلطان مع غير عدل ولا بغنى من غير فضل. ولا بالبلاغة من غير صدق. ولا

بجود بغير إصابة ولا بحسن من غير خشية
قال الثعلب : إِنَّه ينبغي للعاقل أن يداري الزمان مدارة الرجل السابح في الماء الجارء. وقال المتمثل : **ارض من**
المركب بالتعليق

قال الذئب: لسبب الذي يدرك به العاجز حاجته هو السبب الذي يحول بين الحازن وطلبته
قال الذئب: **المال زيادة في القوت والرأي و ليس الاخوانوالاهل و الاعوان إلا مع المال ولا يظهر المرؤة إلا المال**
370 **لإنَّ من لا مال له إذا أراد أو يتناول أمراً قعد به العدم فقصر عنه**

قال الذئب :إنَّ للسلطان سكرات فمنها الرضي عن بعض من يستوجب السخط والسخط عن من يستوجب الرضي و
371 **لذلك قيل: قد خاطر من لجج في البحر وأشدَّ منه مخاطرة من صحب السلطان**

قال الثعلب : من لم يركب الهوال على صعوبتها لم ينل الرغائب ومن ترك الامر الذي لعلَّه أن يبلغ فيه حاجته
مخافةً ما لعلَّه يوقاه فليس ينال جسيما وقد كان **يقال أعمال ثلاثة لأحد يستطيعها إلا بمعونة ارتفاع همّة وعظم**
372 **خطر: صحبة الملوك تجارة البحر ومناجزة العدو**

367 Azzam 76

368 Azzam 78

369 Azzam 77

370 Azzam 129

371 Azzam 92

372 Azzam 78

8. Poetic Moments: The Literary Significance of Middle Arabic in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts from the Early Modern Period (Johannes Stephan)

1. Introduction

Mouvance in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* has many facets. Besides variation concerning the chapter order,³⁷³ the inclusion of certain substories and narrative segments, this textual tradition also displays remarkable linguistic differences from one copy to another. How to make sense of linguistic variation within this rich textual corpus is the topic of this article. Before presenting my outline, I shall like to stress three aspects as to the nature of the material. First, I call *Kalīla wa-Dimna* a textual tradition, because the ongoing practice of copying, rewriting and making use of its story material suggests an ongoing process of transmission a constant remaking of what Ibn al-Muqaffa' in the 8th century or possibly someone before him, had produced. Calling it a tradition with multiple representatives, I shall leave aside the focus on the question of textual origins and rather shed light on *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from a viewpoint of textual practice and address the following question: What has been constructed, written, and performed as *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and what are this tradition's aesthetic implications? Second, I should note that, although often considered a milestone within classical Arabic literature, the textus receptus is very much a post-classical and early modern, phenomenon, that is between the 13th and 19th century. The earliest dated manuscript copy from the "Indian book" (as it is often called in the Arabic tradition) is from the 1220s. The whole Arabic textual tradition, however, contains more than 80 manuscripts that stem from the 16th to early 19th centuries, a circumstance that provides ample ground to equally call it an early modern textual tradition. It is specifically within this later corpus from the early and mid-Ottoman period that creative rewritings occur and that variation from one recension to another is remarkable. Third, especially during this later period, the tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* contains a high number of texts written in an Arabic register that differs from the classical standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*), namely the so-called "Middle Arabic," which includes shifts in orthography, morphology, syntax and lexicon. The latter linguistic dimension further deepens the range of *mouvance* in this tradition.

³⁷³ see xxx's contribution to this volume.

Thus, the high degree of variation within the whole *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, particularly in Ottoman times, urges us to draw attention to the textual practices from that period. In the following, I try to pave ground for this by approaching the question of linguistic and stylistic variation. Here I shall note that I understand the term “Middle Arabic” as an idiom which combines features from the classical standard *fuṣḥā* with colloquialisms, and follows specific writing conventions.

Focusing on these variations, my paper showcases how Middle Arabic is not, simply, the outcome of linguistic deficiency nor a mere appropriation of colloquial registers:³⁷⁴ Middle Arabic is itself a flexible register in which writers develop their own linguistic style. On this account, I shall further formulate the hypothesis that the use of Middle Arabic is often a deliberate practice with literary implications, which oftentimes leads to what I term “poetic moments.” These moments, I argue, occur when on whatever minor scale a copyist chooses to notably deviate from a given transmitted version.

In the following, I will, first, briefly introduce my understanding of the term Middle Arabic; in a second step, I will offer insights into the linguistic variety of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as found in the manuscript corpus by drawing from several case studies how Middle Arabic was used and how writers reworked their texts from a rather minimalistic to a remarkably elaborate fashion. I will begin with a group of manuscripts, collected in Paris in the late 17th century in which texts deviate from each other in mostly orthographic terms, then move to an example from the 18th century (Sbath 267), which is certainly the outcome of a cross-copying process³⁷⁵ and that contains a higher degree of linguistic variation. Finally, I will present the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* version by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī, a writer of Middle Arabic prose during the turn to the 19th century who produced a rewriting in which Middle Arabic syntax and lexicon are paired with a diverging style of narration. In the concluding section, I shall elaborate on the literary implications of Middle Arabic.

³⁷⁴ See Lentin, Jérôme. "Comparing the Language of Manuscript Versions of Two Tales. Promise and Limitations." *Arabic Manuscripts of the Thousand and one Nights. Presentation and Critical Editions of Four Noteworthy Texts, Observations on Some Osmanli Traditions*. Ed. Aboubakr Chraïbi, Paris: Espaces et signes, 2016. 353-366, 354; also Davies, Humphrey T. "Dialect Literature." *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong. Consulted online on April 30, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_0086>.

³⁷⁵ see xxx (in this volume).

2. Middle Arabic – a Broad Linguistic Spectrum

The academic concept of Middle Arabic first emerged during the 1950s and 1960s³⁷⁶ and gained some prominence in the seminal studies of Joshua Blau. Jérôme Lentin, who further nuanced Blau's notions, articulated a consensus that Middle Arabic is "the language of numerous Arabic texts distinguished by its linguistically (and therefore stylistically) mixed nature."³⁷⁷ More specifically, Middle Arabic is a written register which rests between what is known as *fuṣḥā*, "the pure language", being the classical standard, and the Arabic dialects.³⁷⁸ Within linguistics scholarship, different focuses had led to different concepts of Middle Arabic, either as a language variant pertaining to a particular historical period³⁷⁹ or as being used mostly among certain religious communities, such as Jews or Christian denominations.³⁸⁰ Besides, the emphasis on the epithet "middle" entails the possibility of a sociolinguistic interpretation, i.e. as a sociolect that stands for the language of the semi-literate (supposedly "middle") classes. It would then be the idiom of the people that are between the class of the learned and the lower, illiterate groups of society, and be characteristic for their respective literatures. The latter understanding would suit what Aboubakr Chraïbi, among others, calls "Middle Literature,"³⁸¹ which is a textual archive to which the versions of the *Arabian Nights* belong: a sphere between the elitist realm of classical literature and the literature of the common people with little to no access to written sources.

The fashion, in which I will use the term, however, will consider Middle Arabic, first and foremost, as a hybrid written register moving between two poles: the colloquial language and

³⁷⁶ Mejdell, Gunvor. "Luġa wuṣṭā." *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong. Consulted online on April 30 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_SIM_000004>.

³⁷⁷ Lentin, Jérôme. "Middle Arabic." 2011. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rolf de Jong. Accessed March 7, 2019 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_vol3_0213.

³⁷⁸ Ibid and Khan, Geoffrey. "Middle Arabic." *The Semitic Languages*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012. 817-35, 817. By "dialect" I mean the colloquial variants which are of oral use, cf. Abboud-Haggar, Soha. "Colloquial."

Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong. Consulted online on April 30, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_SIM_0020>.

³⁷⁹ see Blau, Joshua. *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic*. Jerusalem: The Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation, 2002, 14.

³⁸⁰ see Grand'Henry, Jacques. "Christian Middle Arabic." *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Ed. Kees Versteegh. Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 2006, 383-87; and Khan, Geoffrey. "Middle Arabic." *The Semitic Languages*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012. 817-35.

³⁸¹ Chraïbi, Aboubakr. *Les mille et une nuits. Histoire du texte et classification des contes*. Critiques littéraires, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008; and Chraïbi, Aboubakr. "Introduction." *Arabic Manuscripts of the Thousand and one Nights: Presentation and Critical Editions of Four Noteworthy Texts Observations on Some Osmanli Translations*. Ed. Aboubakr Chraïbi. Paris: Espaces et signes, 2016. 15-64.

the classical *fuṣḥā* standard.³⁸² This hybridity applies to orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. The concept is, therefore, foremost of a descriptive, analytical nature, in the first place, and not a sociolinguistic one, although it can be of some utility for the historical contextualization of premodern and early modern prose. Although this chapter studies manuscripts of a particular period, Middle Arabic can be encountered in almost all periods of Arabic history.³⁸³ As a linguistic form reflected in written texts, the register existed since the classical period, only beginning to disappear as some sort of written standard with the advancement of print culture during the 19th century. With the emerging national standardization and the implementation of centralized state education in this period, Middle Arabic became increasingly marginalized as a written idiom, though it had been previously a widely used register.³⁸⁴ Although features known from Middle Arabic texts still occur in modern standard Arabic in different forms of written and oral communication until today, the context of its use is fundamentally different to that in pre-20th-century written culture, due to the standardized language system. And although stretching over several periods of premodern history, it is particularly the early modern period in which variants of Middle Arabic flourished.

Although Blau has pointed to the use of the term for particular historical linguistic forms – which we usually know as pseudo-corrections (also known as hypo- and hypercorrections) – I understand the term as rather designating whole texts, or at least larger textual units.³⁸⁵ This is to say, that the single occurrence of words, expressions or certain grammatical features itself does not qualify the text as Middle Arabic but that the text must contain some consistency in its deviance from what we know as the *fuṣḥā* standard. Hence, following Jérôme Lentin's suggestion to read Middle Arabic as a continuum between *fuṣḥā* standard and colloquial language, Middle Arabic texts form a broad spectrum that ranges from texts with a few orthographic and lexicographic peculiarities to an almost distinct vernacular register.³⁸⁶

³⁸² Lentin, "Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l'époque Moderne." Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III, 1997, 25.

³⁸³ Lentin, Jérôme. "Middle Arabic." *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rolf de Jong. Accessed March 7, 2019 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_vol3_0213.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*

³⁸⁵ Blau, Joshua. *On Pseudo-Corrections in Some Semitic Languages*. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970.

³⁸⁶ Lentin, "Recherches," 12.

Kalīla wa-Dimna, as this contribution will show, is a text in which Middle Arabic was used to some extent in a systematic fashion and for some cases might have been a deliberate choice of a particular practice that falls under the large theme of *mouvance* within this textual tradition. Although the degree to which most copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* deviate from the classical standard is rather low, the focalization of linguistic nuances within texts and, particularly, the differences between copies, help shed light on both the literary aesthetic and the practical dimension of *mouvance*. Since both the use of Middle Arabic was widespread during the early modern period and most of the manuscript copies in our corpus are from the 17th to the early 19th centuries, I shall focus on this period. Shedding light on linguistic variation and literary production in the context of an Arabic, although *unruly classic*³⁸⁷ during this time, I believe, is also important, as this may impact our view of (Arabic) literary history.

3. Copying and Rewriting *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the 17th to 19th centuries

Kalīla wa-Dimna was translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' into Arabic in the 8th (2nd A.H.) century, but was also a frequent theme for textual scholars and interested audiences in the early modern period. Many of the manuscript copies, if not all, reflect a continuous interest in a clear, yet simple prose language for purposes of teaching and moral instruction. Looking specifically at the time of Ottoman rule in the Arab lands, one has to take into account the transregional character of the tradition. By that time, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* circulated in different prose and versified forms through different languages. The Ottoman scholar Katib Çelebi in his *kasf al-ẓunūn* from the early 17th century notes ten different versions of the originally "Indian book."³⁸⁸ With the Persian Kāshefī's *Anvar-e Sohayli* and the Ottoman *Humayun-Nameh*, which Çelebi both mentions among the ten versions, the book had gained a transregional popularity, leaving a heavy impact, also, on European literary culture already before the 18th century. It was no less a person than Antoine Galland, the famous translator of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1646-1715) who began to translate the above-mentioned Turkish translation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* the *Humayun-Nameh* into French.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ see xxx (in this volume).

³⁸⁸ Çelebi, Kātib. *Kashf al-ẓunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. Muḥammad Sharaf al-Dīn Yāltaqāyā and Rif'at Bīlgah al-Kilīsī, vol. 2, Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, 1941-1943, 1507-1509.

³⁸⁹ Riedel, Dagmar. "Kalīla wa Demna." *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, New York, 2012, accessed January 24, iranicaonline.org/articles/kalila-demna-i. Galland contributed to the first "Encyclopedia of Islam,"

Although Galland's knowledge of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* did not play a role in his translation of the *Arabian Nights* during the turn to the 18th century, the mention of both traditions, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the *Nights*, imposes itself. Both were based on the frame tale form, they were transmitted as anonymous works of Indo-Persian predecessors with some degree of Middle Arabic features, and are, both in their own ways, of an outstanding importance during the early modern period. In what follows, I shall note briefly some of the main differences between the two famous traditions.

The story telling language (*lughat al-ḥikāya*) of the *Thousand and One Nights*, as described by Muhsin Mahdi,³⁹⁰ while being overall consistent, conveys an air of orality, alluding to features of oral transmission. Moreover, David Pinault, emphasizing the variation between different versions of the *Arabian Nights*, hints at features of a mixed transmission history between the written and the spoken word.³⁹¹ The conjecture of orality parallels the diverging Middle Arabic character of both textual traditions. The *Thousand and One Nights* are also crucially impacted by the morphology and syntax of Arabic dialects which counts equally for the sister book *The Hundred and One Nights*.³⁹² Looking at various manuscripts of the *Arabian Nights* between the 15th and 18th centuries, Lentin comes to the conclusion that the linguistic register of the *Arabian Nights* in general is Middle Arabic.³⁹³

This statement cannot be equally made for *Kalīla and Dimna*. First of all, the linguistic style of the oldest known witness, being the Aya Sofia manuscript (edited by 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām) does not necessarily differ fundamentally from those more recent ones – with few exceptions – of the 17th to 19th centuries. Also, the text being repeatedly presented as a "book" (*kitāb*),

d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*, which was mainly based on Çelebi's *kashf*. Galland, however, did not incorporate the extensive *Kalīla wa-Dimna* entry from the *kashf*, while solely leaving a few lines to its Turkish and Persian early modern versions in separate entries. D'Herbelot, Barthélémy. *Bibliothèque Orientale ou Dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui fait connoître les peuples de l'Orient*. Vol. 1 La Haye: J. Neaulme & N. van Daalen, Libraires, 1777.

³⁹⁰ Mahdi, Muhsin. *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla). From the Earliest Known Sources. Arabic Text Edited with Introduction and Notes by Muhsin Mahdi*. Vol. 1 Leiden: Brill, 1984, 37-51.

³⁹¹ Pinault, David. *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*. Leiden etc.: Brill, 1992, 15.

³⁹² see Bruce Fudge, "Note on the Text." *A Hundred and One Nights*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.

³⁹³ Lentin, Jérôme. "La langue des manuscrits de Galland et la typologie du Moyen Arabe." *Les mille et une nuits en partage*. Ed. Aboubakr Chraïbi. Arles: Actes Sud, 2004. 434-55; Lentin, Jérôme. "La langue des Mille et une nuits." *Les mille et une nuits. Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe*. Eds. Élodie Bouffard, and Anne-Alexandra Joyard. Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2012. 55-59.

already in the preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa' and further by its earliest recipients, does not contain much of a clue for a mostly oral tradition. An interference of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with orality cannot be excluded but shall be the subject of a later section in this contribution. Be it as it may, in contrast to the *Thousand and One Nights*, it is only a smaller part of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition that displays an elaborate Middle Arabic character.

One has to note that the examples which this study is based on are all different in nature and style, pertaining to different continua of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, but showing close relationships to other manuscript copies, as will be shown later in more detail. For those texts that contain a considerable amount of Middle Arabic features, it has to be assumed that they are not based on one *Vorlage* and are rather an outcome of what Beatrice Gruendler has termed as cross-copying, i.e. mixing textual snippets from diverse versions and continua.³⁹⁴

Let me now turn to presenting the three different texts in which a variegating degree of Middle Arabic can be identified. All of them deviate to some extent from actual or possible preceding versions. The first of the three cases stands out because of peculiar orthographical aspects, the second features besides orthographic divergence a change in the morphology, and the third entails Middle Arabic features in all areas: orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexical specificities. In order to compare different versions, I have chosen four extracts from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that appear in all manuscript versions and which are of a different narrative nature, and of a different length: (1) the introductory passages of Ibn al-Muqaffa's famous preface, (2) the short embedded story: "The Hare and the Lion" from the lengthy first chapter "The Lion and the Bull," (3) the complete chapter of "The Ascetic and the Weasel", and (4) a lengthy scene containing mostly direct speech: the dialogue from the chapter "The King and his Eight Dreams" between the vizier and the king's wife.

3.1. Manuscript München 617

The famous Orientalist Silvestre De Sacy having prepared the first complete critical edition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in 1816, deems the Munich 617 manuscript of poor quality.³⁹⁵ The codex's colophon contains a peculiar copyist's note referring to someone named Luṭfallāh al-Ṭabīb

³⁹⁴ see xxx.

³⁹⁵ Sacy, Silvestre de. *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*. Paris: l'Imprimerie Royale, 1842, ms 180.

(the physician), belonging to the Christian community (*madhhab*) and descending from a family in Kairouan (present-day Tunisia).³⁹⁶ This manuscript, produced in 1659, which was first part of de Sacy's library and later moved to Munich,³⁹⁷ bears strong resemblance with an allegedly slightly older one. De Sacy, for the purpose of preparing his edition used among several manuscript copies of a variant that must have been produced only a few years earlier (Paris 3471). At de Sacy's time, it was owned by the Bibliothèque du Roi (in the collection Colbert). In his note on the manuscripts, which he used for his edition, he refers to it, while mentioning, yet, a third one, that was bought in Aleppo in 1673 and produced only 26 years later (numbered Paris 3472 today).³⁹⁸ Thus, it seems that the latter as well as Munich 617 are based on the older Paris 3471. All of these together form part of a larger group of manuscripts that contain more substories and episodes than most other versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.³⁹⁹

A much older, namely the 14th century manuscript, that de Sacy mainly based his editing work on, was sent to Paris through the manuscript hunter and priest Johann Michael Wansleben (Vansleb).⁴⁰⁰ It is likely that such collecting activities provoked the sending of even more manuscript copies to Paris through intermediaries from centers of trade activities such as Aleppo or Istanbul. Regardless whether Wansleben was responsible for sending also some of the *Kalīla-wa-Dimna* manuscripts mentioned above, it is likely that they originate from the Levante, and probably all from Aleppo.

The two Parisian manuscripts contain a reader's note by Wansleben's friend, Buṭrus Diyāb, called Pierre Dipy at the time in Paris, a Melkite Catholic from Aleppo who served both as royal interpreter and antiquarian. Also, Dipy produced the first French catalogue of Arabic books in

³⁹⁶ Both the reference to *al-madhhab al-masīhī* and the use of the *hijrī* dating is rather unusual for a Christian scribe.

³⁹⁷ Aumer, Joseph. *Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*. München: Palm 1866, 269.

³⁹⁸ De Sacy, Silvestre. *Calila et Dimna ou Fables de Bidpai en arabe*. Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1816, 59.

³⁹⁹ Thanks to Khoulood Khalfallah who studied this group of copies.

⁴⁰⁰ Wansleben travelled through the Levante, Egypt, the Syrian Lands, Anatolia and Istanbul between 1671 and 1676. He was entrusted to send manuscripts and antiquities to the French capital which he did in several extensive batches from different cities during his trips. See "Johann Michael Vansleb." *Manuscript Hunters*, LMU München. Accessed February 2, 2021. <https://www.manuscripthunters.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php/vansleb/>; and Alastair Hamilton's introduction to *Johann Michael Wansleben's Travels in the Levant, 1671-1674*. Ed. A. Hamilton. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

1677 in which he mentions *Kalīla and Dimna*, by referring to two manuscripts residing in Paris until the present day.⁴⁰¹

The interest noted with Wansleben, Dipy, and others at the time shows that there was a network backed by the French Sovereign for the acquisition of antiquities which itself may have triggered the proliferation of manuscripts. It is possible that manuscripts were reproduced in the Levante in order to sell them to travelers in the service of early Orientalism. And it is noteworthy that it is the late 17th-century context of exchanging manuscripts through travels and transregional trade which made the transmission of the so far oldest copy of the *Arabian Nights* into Galland's hands possible.⁴⁰² Likewise, the Western archive of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is informed by such pre-colonial activity of manuscript trade, which is an aspect that has not been duly highlighted.

As far as the shape and style of the München 617 manuscript and its Parisian predecessor 3471 are concerned, one can note that they are both to some degree Middle Arabic texts. The copyist of the younger text, however, seems to have enhanced the Middle Arabic character. It is well recognizable that he changed the orthography and, in a few instances, also intervened on the morphological and syntactic level.

Let me focus on two sections from the very beginning of Ibn al-Muqaffa's preface (*muqaddimat* Ibn al-Muqaffa'). Ibn al-Muqaffa's opening is a shared section to be found in all Arabic manuscripts, although not always at the same place in the sequence of chapters. Copyists often place it between (or after) the historical reports by 'Alī Shāh and Buzurgmihr and before the autobiographic frame narrative to the book by Burzawayh, another Persian wise man.⁴⁰³ Looking at the first couple of lines from Ibn al-Muqaffa's preface in the various manuscripts from the 17th to 19th centuries, the chapter remains relatively stable in terms of word choice. Therefore, nuances in terms of linguistic shifts can be easily delineated. As is discernible in the following, the differences between the two manuscript copies rest almost exclusively on the different choice of letters and vocalization.

⁴⁰¹ Dipy, Pierre. ms. Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque du Roi, rédigé en 1677, par P. Dipy (Diyâb) d'Alep. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, ms Arabe 4484, 298.

⁴⁰² Akel, Ibrahim. "Quelques remarques sur la bibliothèque d'Antoine Galland et l'arrivée des Mille et une Nuits en Occident." *Antoine Galland et l'Orient des Savants*. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Académie, la Société asiatique et l'INALCO, les 3 et 4 décembre 2015 Ed. P.-S. Filliozat and M. Zink., Louvain: Peeters, 2017, 201-218.

⁴⁰³ See introduction to his volume.

Paris 3471, 23r	München 617, 21v
<p>هذا كتاب كليله ودمنه وهو ما وضعه علماء الهند من الامثال والاحاديث وَالتمسوا ان يدخلوا فيها ابلغ ما يجدون من القول في النحو الذي ارادوا ولم تزل العقلا من كل امة واهل كل لسان يلتمسون ان يعقل عنهم ويلزمون انفسهم العناية بذلك ويناقض بعضهم البعض ويحتالون في ذلك بصنوف الحيل وبيتغون في اخراج ما عندهم من العلل حتي كان من ذلك وضع هذا الكتاب علي افواه البهايم والطير</p>	<p>هذه كتاب كليله ودمنه وهو ما وضعته علماء الهند من الامثال والاحاديث وَالتمسوا ان يدخلوا فيها ابلغ ما يجدون من القول في النحو الذي ارادوا ولم تزل العقلا من كل امة واهل كل لسان يلتمسون ان يعقل عنهم ويلزمون انفسهم العناية بذلك ويناقض بعضهم بعضًا ويحتالون في ذلك بصنوف الحيل وبيتغون في اخراج ما عندهم من اللعل حتي كان من ذلك وضع هذا الكتاب علي افواه البهايم والطير</p>

What the scribe of München 617 did when presumably copying from Paris 3471, is that he omitted some of the diacritics, more specifically, *dhāl* (ذ) by *dāl* (د) and *thā'* (ث) by *tā'* (ت), something he does iteratively throughout the manuscript. This has therefore become a stable feature of his recension and not a scribal error and may simply be due to some influence of Levantine (or other Arabic) colloquialisms.⁴⁰⁴ These slight changes of consonants through the use of diacritics, especially with regard to *dāl*, is a very common feature of early modern texts, it appears frequently in the famous Galland manuscript of the *Arabian Nights* which stems from the 15th century. A peculiarity in the case of Munich 617 of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is that the copyist had turned the initial demonstrative "this" (*hādhā*) in front of "book" (*kitāb*) into a female form. Changing the initial demonstrative pronoun of this section of the preface is something that appears in some other manuscript copies as well. Besides, whereas the consonant shift, showcased above is a rather moderate feature, other changes concerning the change of letters are more striking. So, it happens, that the copyist of Munich 617 takes the *fushā* standard *ta marbūṭā* instead of a simple *tā' maftūḥa*, as he sometimes does the reverse.⁴⁰⁵

Additionally, in few instances, the writer of München 617 and to a smaller degree the writer of Paris 3471, use syntactic oddities. It is a typical feature of Middle Arabic to make use of the

⁴⁰⁴ see Jérôme Lentin, "Damascus Arabic." *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Eds. Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong. Consulted online on April 30, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_0077>

⁴⁰⁵ add examples.

accusative form *manṣūb* when the classical syntax would call for the nominative form *marfū'* (and sometimes genitive, *majrūr*), and sometimes also the other way around.⁴⁰⁶

Both manuscripts, München 617 a bit more than Paris 3471, contain linguistic deviations, which are, however, for the most cases of an orthographic nature.

We can conclude from this that the use of a different register is at least to some extent deliberate. More specifically, I notice a certain consistency with variability in the Munich 617 manuscript, such as the hypercorrective *tā' marbūṭa*. A similar consistency in altering the written form of certain words can be observed in the Sbath manuscript to which I shall turn below.

3.2. Manuscript Sbath 267

This manuscript belongs to a collection in the Vatican, which according to Paul Sbath (d. 1945), as he states in the preface to his catalogue in 1928, is based on his book collection from private households in Aleppo.⁴⁰⁷ After his death his family gave large parts from his collection to the Vatican Apostolic Library. This manuscript's last folios are likely to be missing which, however, does not seem to affect the main text in the codex. The manuscript is the work of a Christian copyist, as the *basmala* variant (*bismi llāh al-ḥayy al-azalī*) alludes to. The overall outlook in which the manuscript is presented and the colored writing as well as the, albeit peculiar, vocalization features, present this book as more than just a private copy, but one that was meant to be used as a precious book. Arabic speaking Christians produced copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, notably during the 17th and 18th centuries in connection with their link to the West, as the experience of Athanasius Safar, traveler and bishop who left two Arabic manuscripts in Karshūnī script in Rome showcases.⁴⁰⁸ Given, that the manuscript Sbath 267 seems to lack the typical colophon, most likely a few additional pages, and therefore does not contain any more readers' or ownership notes, we cannot identify any details on its belonging, such as for those that Sacy provided for the group of manuscripts mentioned above.

⁴⁰⁶ Lentin. "Recherches," 691-695.

⁴⁰⁷ Sbath, Paul. *Bibliothèque de manuscrits : Catalogue. Tome I*. Le Caire: H. Friedrich et Co., 1928, 1.

⁴⁰⁸ Ghobrial, John-Paul A. "Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (2017): 153-73, 154.

Although generally fitting within one type of chapter sequence according to the list of manuscript "families" made by Sprengling, Sbath 267 is still specific, if not to say unique in terms of its chapter arrangement.⁴⁰⁹ The book differs in many respects from the group that emerged around the Paris 3471 ms mentioned before. As to the Sbath Vatican manuscript the chapter on Dimna's trial, for instance, is included in the long chapter of the "Lion and the Ox." Also, some of the prefatory chapters do not bear an independent title, for example the "Ascetic and the Guest" chapter comes as usual at the end but is referred to as "some story," just to note a few peculiarities. Evidently, this manuscript, like so many others, seems to be the outcome of a copying activity that considered different source texts or it is based on such cross-copying *Vorlage* which did not come down to us. Probably, as will be later adduced in this chapter, it might contain features of an oral transmission practice. While this manuscript does not contain many colloquial expressions, it is replete with orthographic and grammatical deviations from the *fuṣḥā* standard.

Apart from the use of consonants in the fashion mentioned above, a very particular feature of this manuscript is the way in which words are vocalized, something one does not encounter in any other manuscript from the tradition. Remarkably it occurs in a long passage of direct speech, in the chapter on the "King and his Eight Dreams," which I deem representative for what occurs in many instances in this manuscript – when the first minister, the central character of this narrative, is worried about the sovereign, he approaches the king's wife:

فأثي الي امرأة الملك وقال لها لا اعلم ان الملك ركب امرٌ صغيراً ولا كبيراً منذ كنتُ معه إلا بمشورتي اذ كنتُ صاحب سرُّه ولا يكتُمني شيءٌ طري عليه وكان اذا احزنه امرٌ اعزى نفسه واصبره علي ما نزل به واذا ذكر لي ذلك ازيله عنه بارفق ما يكون والان اراه مستخْلِياً بجماعة البراهمين منذ سبعة ايام احتجب بها عن الناس وانا خائف ان يكون قد اطلعهم علي سرُّه ولستُ امنهم فادهبي اليه واساليه عن امره وحاله وما بلغه وما الذي ذكره له واعلميني فاني لا استطيع ان ادخل عليه

He went to the king's wife telling her: I wouldn't know that from the day I am with him he considers any affaire, be it a small or a big one, without taking my advice. For I am the guardian of his secret. He doesn't hide anything that occurs to him and when something depresses him, I comfort his soul and comfort him about what happened. When he mentions something to me, I take it away from him in the friendliest fashion. Now seeing him left alone by the Brahmans for seven days, staying away from everybody else, I am afraid that he shared his secret with them,

⁴⁰⁹ Sprengling, Martin. "Kalīla Studies. I" *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 40, no. 2 (1924): 81-97, 92-97.

as I do not trust them. So, go then, look after him and ask him about his matter and his condition, about what he had received and what they told him and then inform me, because I cannot go see him myself.

In addition to the aforementioned features, this section has a couple of peculiarities pertaining to the idiom of this manuscript. Let us lend a closer look at those few aspects that go beyond a mere orthographic deviation and which may have to do with the oral use of such material:

First of all, the dealing with the *nāṣb* form (morphological accusative), as I mentioned above: The *nāṣb* seems to be in some cases a feature of stressing particular words. This may be used in a language of public performance to keep a certain tonality. In spoken Arabic as well as in the performance of popular tales, the so-called epics and books like *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, one would traditionally not fully vocalize endings – in contrast to poetic texts or *maqāmāt* which are written in rhymed prose. The manuscripts of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition rather rarely contains full vocalization. However, in the case of accusative forms, the scribes sometimes stress the word ending and thus add to the literate tone – albeit pseudo-corrected – or the overall melody of the performance.

(2) In addition to a certain overuse of morphological accusatives, in such places in which a *naṣb* is usually expected, the author indicates the use of *naṣb* while omitting the supporting alif. This appears so often that one wonders whether this is not meant for a reading performance. In this case, the scribe shows his ability to make use of the appropriate form, yet, not needing to use it in its full shape, as it ought not to be read. In any case, this is not a dialect feature, but a writing convention.

(3) Another peculiar feature of this text is, also, the use of vowel signs which may be due again to a performative consideration. Vocalization seems oftentimes arbitrary in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, besides some of the few classical texts from the tradition that are fully vocalized. In this respect, Sbath 267 is considerably different. In a few instances the vocalization with *ḍamma* is indicated. Although judging this feature from a *fuṣḥā* standard perspective, it would be incorrect, especially when nouns follow a preposition. This is the case in the quotation above: the case for the pairs *‘alā ‘amruḥ* and *‘alā sirruḥ*. The vowel use may indicate an emulation of a dialect tone, in which the case of the noun does not need to be signaled and the pronoun can be simply referred to by a mere, often stretched *ū* (or dialectal *ō*). The scribe,

thus, may have chosen this because his knowledge of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is informed by oral performances, or as a way to address the register of everyday language and provide ground for an oral performance.

The use of accusative in places where they ought not be used is a case of pseudo-correction. Kees Versteegh understands such forms as "breaking the rules without wanting to."⁴¹⁰ I deem it questionable whether intentionality is something that can be correctly assumed here. It seems more important to consider that writers attempted to fit within in a certain register. Evidently, the writer here using both vocalization features and other deviations from *fuṣṣḥa* standard, deploys a systematic fashion of writing, which may not be unintended. However, keeping in mind the many classical *Vorlagen* of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* at least, it is possible that this scribe did not mean to use fully-fledged *fuṣṣḥā* standard here, but conventions of a context of writing, which is still largely unknown to us. In doing so, he possibly tried to ease the text for the reader or thought of performative purposes. Suggesting the aim of following the rule can hardly be upheld. The feature of hypercorrection appears too regular to be an intended, but flawed standard form. It rather represents a particular writing style.

Two more aspects, the first one again concerning vocalization and the second one grammar, are to be indicated below. Within the first dialogue of the chapter "The Ascetic and the Weasel," we find a short sentence in which two cases of typical hypercorrection appear. This is a short chapter which contains only one embedded narrative. A pious man (*nāsik*) living in the land of Jurjān is excited when his wife after a long time of trying tells him that she finally turns out to be pregnant. The man then expresses his strong hope that she will give birth to a boy, saying (99r):

فاني ارجوا ان تلدين غلاما

"I wish you will give birth to a boy."

In this passage two features appear.

⁴¹⁰ Versteegh, Kees, "Breaking the Rules without Wanting to: Hypercorrection in Middle Arabic Texts." *Investigating Arabic. Current Parameters in Analysis and Learning*. Ed. Alaa Elgibali. Leiden: Brill, 2004, 1-18.

Firstly, the so-called, *alif wiqāya* following the *ū* in the verb *arjū* (to wish), which is a Middle Arabic scribal convention and has, normally, nothing to do with pronunciation. It may stem from the ordinary use of such additional letter in third person plural perfect forms or used as an orthographic intervention to emphasize the length of the *ū* or to.⁴¹¹

Secondly, the case of the verbal mode, in which a conjunctive verb, which would be correct from the perspective of the classical standard form, is replaced by a verb in the indicative mood, *talidīn(a)* instead of *talidī* (to give birth).

In the case for the aforementioned group from Paris which de Sacy commented on, this sentence is kept in its *fuṣḥā* standard shape. However, a manuscript from a letter stage, the Wetzstein manuscript, from Berlin, as I shall call it, contains the sentence in the exact same syntactic hyper-corrected fashion. This last manuscript, to be discussed below is, however, in many regards yet a different case of fashioning *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the Middle Arabic register.

3.3. Manuscript Wetzstein (BW II 672)

The Wetzstein II 672 manuscript has been written by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī in 1830 as a "copy for himself"(131r). Al-Rabbāṭ was a poet and owner of a large library in Damascus at the time. This man's library had for some time at least 100 codices, dating from the 14th to early 19th century of which a considerable part pertains to the field of *belles lettres*, among these books like (different versions of) *The Thousand and one Nights*, *al-Ṣādigh wa-l-bāghim* by Ibn al-Habbariyya, and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.⁴¹² Another version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that al-Rabbāṭ had not copied himself is from the 18th century (which belongs to the British Library, shelfmarked London 7414) but must have been in his possession, probably as a loan for some while, as Ibrahim Akel has adduced.⁴¹³ When al-Rabbāṭ produced his own recension of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* he did not seem to copy from the other manuscript (the mentioned London BL 7414) he once had in his hands. Rather, the writer and poet decided for his own refashioning of the "Indian book." His text is remarkable as one of the last creative rewritings of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from the period right before textual modernity.

⁴¹¹ See Lentin, "Recherches," 70.

⁴¹² Akel, Ibrahim. "Ahmad al-Rabbāt al-Halabī : sa bibliothèque et son rôle dans la réception, diffusion et enrichissement des Mille et une nuits." Université Sorbonne, Paris, 2017, 114.

⁴¹³ *ibid.*, 269 f.

When composing his recension, De Sacy's first critical edition was in the making. The latter also affected the copying practice, as several scribes in present day Syria/Lebanon took de Sacy's printed volume and turned it into manuscript texts. Especially in Christians milieus, de Sacy's edition was first verbatim reproduced in manuscripts and later used for Arabic print editions.⁴¹⁴ This beginning practice of standardizing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, however, did not yet affect al-Rabbāṭ who did not seem to be at all interested in a standardized, accurate, unified version of the ancient narrative, but obviously rather invested himself in another literary rewriting, reminiscent of local performative purposes. Although owning literary works of a classical nature, for his own writings, including those he copied, but also his own *dīwān* as well as other poetic compositions, al-Rabbāṭ used a pronounced Middle Arabic register.⁴¹⁵ It is due to the collecting activities of Johann G. Wetzstein (1815-1905) who brought big parts of al-Rabbāṭ's library to Germany that this copy ended up in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin where it remains until today.

Looking at the linguistic oddities, I shall emphasize here, that the Wetzstein manuscript does in many cases deviate from previously discussed forms of Middle Arabic. A decisive difference of this manuscript, when contrasted with S bath 267, is its almost standard *fuṣḥā* orthography and hardly any use of vocalization or endings. The text shifts from section to section in its use of either standard Arabic syntax or a rather a colloquial one, containing, however, several words from a (Levantine) dialect lexicon and a good amount of hypercorrective forms. To name only a few examples: In the realm of syntax, he uses the nominal sentence in a typical fashion for Middle Arabic texts which turns the singular form into a plural one, such as in ما فقال البراهمة (110r, instead of فقالوا البراهمه) or (ما صنع علماء الهند (23r, instead of صنعوا علما الهند); he, further, sometimes replaces the affirmative plural verb form by the colloquial form that writes without the letter *nūn*: (فيتغلبون برائهم (112v, instead of فيتغلبوا برايهم). Also, he changes the case, replacing acc./gen. forms for nominative and the reverse, and does not always conform to agreement rules in terms of number and gender: ونريد الفيلتان السود (109v, instead of ونريد الفيلتين (السوداوين). Furthermore, as to verb forms, he occasionally deviates from the *fuṣḥā* standard rule of using jussive (*majzūm*) after affirmative sentences which necessitates a shortening of long vowels: e.g. لم تزل (23r, instead of لم تزل). Moreover, he uses particular words from the lexicon of colloquial Arabic, such wide spread verbs as جاب (23v, he brought) and شاف (28v, he saw).

⁴¹⁴ 'Azzām, 'Abd al-Wahhāb. "Muqaddima." *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Beirut: Dar al-Shurūq, 11 f.

⁴¹⁵ Akel, Ibrahim. "Ahmad al-Rabbāt al-Halabī," 60-68; 115-121.

As it already happened in Sbath 267 occasionally, he sometimes uses اش (what, instead of ماذا), but makes also use of منشان (109r, because; in this case: about/concerning).

This said, this manuscript contains both a considerable number of colloquial features and those only known from Middle Arabic texts as writing conventions. Al-Rabbāt's practice of adding features pertaining to the colloquial or hypocorrective dimensions of the Middle Arabic register sometimes accompanies a use of dramatic intensifications, which is especially the case in dialogues of some of the stories. Let me shed light on the above quoted section again and choose another popular manuscript, Paris 3473 from the 17th century, which for some sections may have been one of the branches of the tradition al-Rabbāt was familiar with.

Paris 3473, 89v	Wetzstein II 672, 110v-111r
<p>إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ لِلْمَلِكِ أَمْرًا وَلَا عَمَلًا مِنْذِ صَحْبَتِهِ إِلَّا صَدَرَ مِنْهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي وَمَشَاوَرَتِي وَلَمْ أَزَلْ فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ صَاحِبٌ مَشُورَةٌ وَرَأْيٌ وَارَى الْمَلِكَ قَدْ سَرَّ مَنِّي أَمْرًا لَا أُنْرِي مَا هُوَ غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ اسْتَخْلَى بِالْبِرَاهِمِينَ مِنْذِ تِسْعِ لَيَالٍ وَهُوَ مُحَجَّبٌ فِيهَا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَإِنَّا خَافِي مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ أَطْلَعَهُمْ عَلَيَّ سِرَّهُ وَإِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَشِيرُونَ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ الْمَلِكُ مِنْ سُوءٍ فَقَدْ دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ فُقُومِي وَأَدْخَلِي عَلَيْهِ وَأَسْأَلِيهِ عَنْ شَأْنِهِ وَأَمْرِهِ فَلَسْتُ أَقْدِرُ عَلَيَّ الدُّخُولِ ..</p>	<p>وانى قد سمعت ان الملك مهموما مغموما وما اطلعنى على سره من بعد خلوه بالبراهمه واننى متيقن انهم اعداه ومد خرجوا من عنده فهو متجنب الخلق وانا خايف عليه وعلى ملكه من اعداه البراهمه واخاف لا يكونوا شارون عليه بما يضره وانتى تعلمي ان كل سوء يدخل على الملك يصيبني فامضى وادخلى عليه واساليه عن شأنه لانه يقر لكي لكونكى عنده عزيزه مجله فلا الى عاده ادخل عليه من غير طلب ..</p>

Al-Rabbāt, also in contrast to Sbath 267, adds an emotional tone to the dialogue and portrays, yet, other features pertaining to the realm of Middle Arabic. Still, whereas the use of non-classical orthography is rather moderate in the Wetzstein manuscript, its writer adds words and phrases to the direct speech of the vizier which contain several morphological and syntactic peculiarities. Among other things, he changes the suffix for the second person singular feminine from a vocalized *kāf* (ك) to a *kāf* followed by a *yā*' (ي). Albeit irritating to the modern reader's sensibility, for the one listening to the text this does not make a big difference, simply recalling the colloquial tone. The same applies to the use of second person singular as *intī* (or *antī* instead of *inti*). Since al-Rabbāt, as I mentioned before, avoids vocalization, this additional *yā*' may emphasize the dialogue with a female addressed. A reader of this texts, especially if wanting to perform the text in front of an audience, would, thus, use undoubtedly the correct gender, even when reading the text without any *fuṣḥā* standard vocalization.

Other features on the morphological level do reflect in the reading out loud of this manuscript copy and stem from a colloquial fashioning. The copyist writes the second person feminine of "to know" without a final *n* (*ta'lamī*, instead of *ta'lamīna*), typical for colloquial pronunciation. Furthermore, on the syntactic level, the writer makes use of an accusative form in *mahmūman maghmūman*, indicated by the final *alif*, instead of the nominative, expected in a nominal sentence introduced by *'anna*. This use of an *alif* with *tanwīn* is the only visible case to highlight the specific status of a predicate and to, again, accentuate its role.

Also, in this passage, al-Rabbāṭ dramatizes the narrative's emotional dimension by explicitly referring to different terms for emotions and the strong bond that exist between the king and the vizier on the one hand and the king and his wife on the other. It is in these lines, that he makes more frequent use of Middle Arabic syntax. In contrast to other manuscript copies, al-Rabbāṭ emphasizes the vizier's fear and worries by using twice the word *khawf* (deviations from it), while also stressing that the king must have deep concerns and that all matters affecting the king also have an effect on the vizier. He further in the section emphasizes the merit for the whole kingdom if Ibrakht, the king's wife, has a word with the king.

What is remarkable here is the fact that these Arabic forms appear in a dialogue section, although they of course also occur in other passages of this manuscript. Overall Rabbāṭ's text carries an individual, lively character, when compared to other versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. To finally summarize the main observations in this section from the manuscripts that I have discussed here I shall, before coming to my conclusion, present a table of a famous tale: *the hare and the lion* (*al-asad wa-l-arnab*) from the famous first chapter of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

4. Orality and Deviations from the *fuṣṣḥā* Standard

[TABLE *al-asad wa-l-arnab* – see on next page]

	München 617	Ayasofia 4095	Paris 2789	Sbath 267	Paris 3465	Riyadh 2407	Paris 3473	Wetzstein II 672	Paris 3471
4	فاطلع الاسد في البيير فراي ظل نفسه في المآي فضله	فاطلع الاسد في البيير فراي ظل نفسه في الما فضله	ونظر في الحب فاذا هو بظلمها وظلمه	فاطلع فيه الأسد فراي ظلمه في الماء وظل الارنب فلم يشك في قولها	فطلع الاسد في الجُب فراي ظلمه وظل الارنب في الماء	فَاطَّلَعَ الْأَسَدُ فَرَايَ ظِلْمَهُ وَظِلَّ الْأَرْنَبِ فِي الْمَاءِ فَلَمْ يَشْكُ فِي قَوْلِهَا	الاسد فطلع راي ظلمه في الماء وراي ظل الارنب ايضا عنده فلم يشك في ذلك	ثم اطَّلَعَ الْأَسَدُ فَرَايَ ظِلْمَهُ فِي الْمَاءِ وَالْأَرْنَبُ وَظَلَّهَا إِلَى جَانِبِهِ فَلَمْ يَشْكُ فِي ذَلِكَ	فطل الاسد راي خياله وخيال الارنبه فلم يشك بقولها
5	فاقتحم في البيير وهو لا يشك ان ذلك حق تهور في البيئر وهلك	فاقتحم في البيير وهو لا يشك ان ذلك حق فتهور في البيير وهلك	فوضع الارنب من صدره ووثب لقتال الاسد في الجب وظلمه فغرق	ووثب عليه ليقاتله فغرق في الجب	ووثب الي الجُب ليقاثل ظلمه وهو ظنه اسد اخر فغرق في الما	وَوَثَبَ إِلَيْهِ لِيُقَاتِلَهُ فَغَرِقَ فِي الْجَبِّ	ووثب اليه ليقاتله فغرق في الجب	وَوَثَبَ إِلَيْهِ لِيُقَاتِلَهُ فَتَهَوَّى فِي الْجَبِّ فَغَرِقَ	ووثب للبيير ليقاتله فراح خنيق الماء وغرق
6			وانقلبت منه ورجعت الي ساير الوحوش فاعلمتتهن بخبره	فانقلبت الارنبه الي جماعة الوحوش واخبرتتهن بصنيعهما بالاسد	فرجعت الارنبه الي الوحوش واخبرتتهن بما صنعت بالاسد	وَانْقَلَبَتْ الْأَرْنَبُ إِلَى الْوُحُوشِ فَاعْلَمْتَهُمْ صَنِيْعَهَا بِالْأَسَدِ	وانقلب الارنب للوحوش اخبرهم بما صار	وانقلبت الارنب الي الوحوش فاخبرتتهن	ومضت الارنبه للوحوش واخبرتتهم بذلك فشكروها على فعلها

The above table contains those nine ms copies that seem either exemplary for the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition or in close relation to the variants I have dealt with above. Looking at the manuscripts of Munich 617 and Sbath 267 we can discern mostly orthographic features that are typical for these texts. Besides, Munich 617 clearly deviates from its *Vorlage*, adding orthographic replacements and a hypercorrected accusative form. Sbath 267 exchanges *tā'* and *thā'* and adds a syntactic oddity to the material: *wa-huwa ḡannahū asadun*, which, being a *ḡāl*, which is a phrase of and adverbial character, from a fuṣḡā standard perspective would call for an imperfect (*muḡāri'*). Besides, the required accusative is turned into a nominative. Furthermore, the Sbath 267 manuscript entails some particular aspects in this story that once more showcase the mixed influence on such manuscript stemming from different branches of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition; although in another chapters deviating strongly from the Paris 2789 manuscript (listed above), here it contains some proximity in terms of content, as both recensions emphasize the condition of the well, being full (*'āmir*).⁴¹⁶ Be it as it may, the Sbath manuscript adds a unique twist to one of the following sentences. The lion, that deems himself being the king, jumps into the well willing to, as it says with some irony, "fight his own shadow".

In different, rather linguistic terms, specific is the rendering of the passage in the Wetzstein manuscript which contains dialect words such as قدامه (*quddāmuh* = before him), ملئان (*mal'ān* = full), ليكه (*laykuh* = over there), فراح (*fa-rāḡ* = so he went), للوحوش (*lil-l-wuḡūsh*, instead of إلى الوحوش).

Hence, both manuscripts Sbath 267 and Wetzstein II 672, being of a highly elaborate Middle Arabic character, albeit the Wetzstein ms being closer to colloquial language, as we know it today, also seem to be texts that contain passages of creative rewriting. What becomes evident in this table, is that in several cases the rewriting of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is accompanied by an intensification of Middle Arabic features.

5. Conclusion

This taken together, the Middle Arabic features are the outcome of a more or less deliberate reworking of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* material. What I attempted to show with my contribution

⁴¹⁶ This is something they share with an older manuscript: Paris 3465.

on details in the orthographic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical variation both within a single manuscript and between different manuscripts, is an aspect of premodern and early modern literary culture. Textual *mouvance* does not only hold for narrative re-composition, but seems to be a main characteristic of an open text tradition such as *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The change of words, letters, vowels and syntactic structures etc. is not an exception. It is the rule. How can we make further sense of the varieties of Middle Arabic in different manuscript copies?

Emphasizing the literary character of the manuscripts in their linguistic fashioning reverberates what the Scottish physician and resident of Aleppo Patrick Russel (1726-1805) had described in his *Natural History of Aleppo*. Russel speaks about the "recitation of Eastern fables" as a practice in which the speaker grants the stories "an air of novelty even to persons who at first imagine they are listening to tales with which they are acquainted."⁴¹⁷ Although in this case addressing narrative re-composition, it is likely that linguistic refashioning, both in performative settings and in written texts, was part of a storyteller's (or copyist's) activity.

This perspective helps us reformulate the significance of Middle Arabic which cannot be described as a deficient idiom or an assemblage of odd conventions. For the logic of the Middle Arabic idiom, is, that it reminds the reader of the artistry of Arabic, by bringing together the language of everyday life with the *fuṣḥā* standard. Middle Arabic then is "middle" because it mediates the poetic or artistic language to the spoken word, the oral narrative. In this regard, neither one of the two written registers but their entanglement is the artful experience when one is confronted with the *mouvance* of these early modern texts.

A deeper study of Middle Arabic features in the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* may figure out how orality has its share in the production of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts and the significance of the tradition's *mouvance*. There are several options how the Middle Arabic character of the discussed texts maybe impacted by orality: First, the models or *Vorlagen* for rewriting were both oral and written. Copyists, while producing a new manuscript may have both an older codex in front of them and at the same time remember the story material from other occasions. Or second, some texts may have been written for oral performance. Or third,

⁴¹⁷ Russell, Alexander. *The Natural History of Aleppo*. Vol 1. Revised by Patrick Russell. London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1794, 149.

the versions were dictated to a scribe who automatically adapted the material to his own orthography, hence produced a new variant.

Be it as it may, the creative rewriting of a text or the replacement of a word from one register with a word from another register helps foster the reader's or listener's focus on certain moments of the narrative or the making of the narrative altogether. According to Victor Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*), artful language breaks the conventions of everyday prose and, hence, prolongs the reader's experience.⁴¹⁸ Being a genuine register of Arabic writing and literary performance within the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, the use of Middle Arabic may imply that the friction does not occur between a literary textual language and the everyday language, rather it exists between the actual performance, being the rewriting of a text and its classical predecessor. To paraphrase Shklovsky: At some point in time, the overuse of a literary language necessitates a linguistic change, to, yet again, prolong the perception, which often results in a commitment for a (more) vernacular register.⁴¹⁹ Hence, instead of categorizing Middle Arabic as a less literary language, such reading would focus on the register's specific literariness. I suggest to call this aspect of constant defamiliarization, being the linguistic and stylistic difference from one manuscript copy to the next, the poetic moment. And it is these poetic moments that seem to occur again and again until in the 19th century, beginning with Silvestre De Sacy's edition the standardization of this *unruly classic* becomes the rule and the notion of both literariness and textual rewriting turn out to be comprehensively redefined.

⁴¹⁸ Shklovsky, Viktor: *A Reader*. Ed. and transl. Alexandra Berlina, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, 80.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Part IV. Wisdom Encoded

9. New Approaches to Tackle Textual Variation (Mahmoud Kozae)

Introduction

Decisions around software are central in edition projects. The choices are not only driven by research goals; the goals themselves evolve and get adjusted based on the abilities and availabilities of software. In the Anonymclassic project, the final goal is to produce a synoptic critical edition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Scholars who attempted this task before the age of computers deemed it infeasible⁴²⁰. The large number of manuscripts and the variations among them are the biggest challenges. Even with modern software and powerful computers, the task is far from simple. The project follows a long tradition of scholarly editing of Arabic manuscripts and borrows many practices by scholars of other languages. Digital techniques have been more widely adopted in Latin-script languages than in any other language, thus adapting them for Arabic has constituted an extra challenge. Relying on publications of concluded and ongoing edition projects has not been sufficient for deciding on all the aspects of the computer-assisted workflow in Anonymclassic, as most of the surveyed projects⁴²¹ has not thoroughly documented their software usage during the process of creating their digital editions; they often instead provide the digital edition website, sometimes with the raw data and briefly hint to the used technologies. Hence communicating directly with the scholars, encountering them in conferences, or holding workshops have been necessary to resolve intricate and nuanced matters around digital editing. Another approach was to take a step away from the set of practices usually labelled as DH and seek solutions in Computer Science; precisely from the subfields Software Engineering and HCI “Human-Computer Interaction,” both of which investigate the best ways to optimize human activities by software usage.

⁴²⁰ REF
⁴²¹ REF

Edition Activities and Workflows

Activities in the project can be classified into five types:

- a) Collection of descriptive data of manuscripts.
- b) Transcription of manuscripts' content.
- c) Literary analysis of the transcribed texts.
- d) Image cycle analysis.
- e) Intertextuality analysis and detecting relations to other sources.

Task set (a) can take place independently from the others as it involves a general examination of a manuscript and recording assertions regarding its features. Task sets (b), (c), (d), and (e) must take place in a sequence. The text must be fully transcribed and revised before performing a literary analysis on it. Transcription involves locating and labelling the images. The literary analysis involves mainly identifying narrative units within the text, segmenting it based on these units, then collating segmented texts from multiple manuscripts. It is then more practicable to find analogous passages and quotations from other sources once the text is broken down into smaller pieces.

Collection of Descriptive Data and Intertextuality Analysis

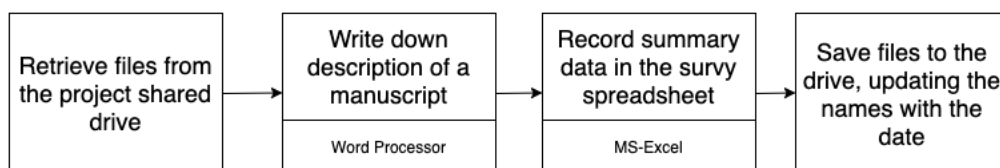


Figure 1 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using general purpose software.

Manuscripts' descriptive data⁴²² are gathered according to four classes: codicology, version, redaction, and relation; more specific details on the data schema are in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. Before developing dedicated software, general-purpose software like MS Excel, and various word processors were used for the collection and storage of these data. Usage of such software presented some challenges. The first challenge is keeping the data uniform. Various editors would record the data in different structures according to their experience,

⁴²² Sometimes referred to as "meta-data." This term however fell out of usage in the project as it is less indicative of the nature of the data.

knowledge, and writing styles. The second challenge is the time expense, especially when extensive schooling is needed to train new editors on what data to collect and the appropriate way to record observations. Furthermore, certain steps are duplicated, as an editor would have to record data on a manuscript in an individual file then input the same data again in another spreadsheet. The third challenge is regarding versioning and keeping track of the evolution and changes to the data. Manual versioning resulted in conflicts when different people edited the same file on the same day; it also caused duplication when different members would follow deviated naming conventions for the versioning. Intertextuality analysis is technically similar to manuscripts description, in the sense that it involves tabulating data; it just takes place after the text is transcribed.

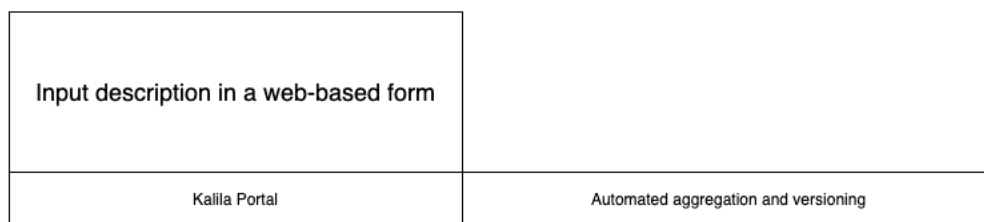


Figure 2 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using specialized software.

Providing a web-based solution was then needed to overcome these challenges. The Kalila Platform, on which a detailed discussion is in section 3, has an interface dedicated to the collection of descriptive data. This interface includes a form that has separate fields for each of the features to be collected about each manuscript with hints to the appropriate way to input information on each feature. Furthermore, the data is automatically aggregated and can be later viewed in a separate table. Saving of data with versioning to a central database happens automatically upon inputting it.

Transcription and literary analysis

The most work-intensive task within the project is transcription. It is also the activity that produces the data to be presented in the final digital edition. Almost every other research activity in the project depends on the transcriptions. Naturally, transcriptions are not created once, instead, they keep getting revised, edited, and improved. Transcription workflow has

been oriented towards producing texts that can be viewed using LERA⁴²³, a web-based software that gives the possibility to view multiple texts side by side, provided that these texts are segmented. Working with the LERA team, they provided dedicated instances of the software for AnonymClassic⁴²⁴. Data can be imported in multiple formats into LERA. The XML format was chosen as it gives the possibility to segment the text and give unique names for each segment.

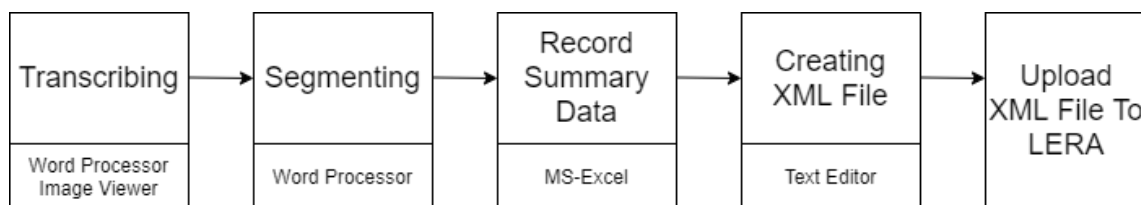


Figure 3 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using general-purpose software.

A transcriber would start by having two windows open side by side, one for a word processor and the other for an image or PDF viewer, in which the page to be transcribed is displayed. The text of the page, and subsequent pages, is then typed into the word processor. Specific chapters were transcribed fully or partially from a group of manuscripts. Upon completion, the transcription file would be then saved to the project's drive with the abbreviated name of the chapter, the siglum of the manuscript, the name of the editor, and the date. Each transcribed file would then undergo revision by the principal investigator. Afterward, literary analysis is performed on the text to determine a plan for segmenting the text of a chapter into narrative units and reuse these units across multiple manuscripts. The beginnings and ends of these narrative units are then manually marked up in the running text of each file. A separate spreadsheet is then compiled to keep track of the units, their orders, and their occurrences across the manuscripts. This spreadsheet is internally called a "master-list" and there is one per chapter. The data needs then to be prepared for LERA; a file is prepared per chapter instance from a manuscript. Separate XML elements are made for each narrative unit, with the element content being the text of the unit and an element *xml:id* attribute indicating the title of the unit. LERA uses these *xml:ids* to align corresponding segments.

⁴²³ Bremer et. al (2015)

⁴²⁴ Gründler and Pöckelmann (2018).

The workflow dependent on general-purpose software has posed many challenges. Revisions have been especially hard, as the files of the transcribed texts and the original facsimiles are saved separately, and a reviewer would have to manually determine which transcribed page and line are representative of which places in the facsimile. There has been also a problem of duplication; as there are per transcribed chapter two files: a word file for the raw transcription and an XML file for the segmentation. Thus, when correcting or changing the transcription, the same correction had to be done in two places. Maintaining master-lists has been as well time-consuming and highly mistake-prone.

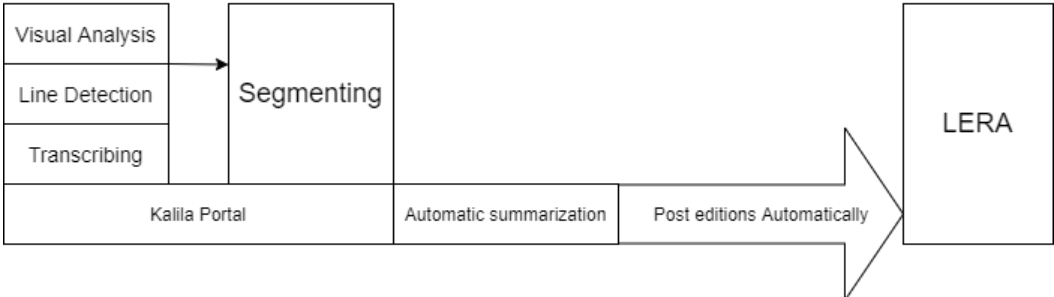


Figure 4 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using specialized software.

In the specially developed Kalila Platform, the transcription process has been reimagined into a three-step process. Firstly, in the visual analysis step, parts of the layout of each page are extracted and distinctly saved. The distinction is between text and image elements. Text elements are further subdivided into main body elements, legends, side-titles, and glosses. Secondly, in the line detection step, the software automatically retrieves the text elements from the database and performs an automated process to dissect each text element into lines. The automated detection is not always precise; an editor can manually correct mistakes using an interactive interface. Finally, in the transcription step, text can be inputted line per line and the final transcription is saved this way in the database: the transcribed text is directly tied to the corresponding line facsimile and when retrieving a transcribed part the corresponding facsimile is automatically retrieved as well. There is then a dedicated interface for segmenting a chapter's text into narrative units. This interface has two columns side-by-side: one has the transcribed text and the other shows a list of pre-defined unit titles. A user marks the beginning of narrative units by dragging and dropping the titles into the running text. Information on the units is saved in the database as pointers to the page, line, and word where

a unit starts and ends. Upon segmenting a chapter, it is automatically posted to a LERA instance and can then be viewed on it and collated with corresponding chapter editions. This automatic posting feature was implemented in coordination with the LERA team. The workflow in the Kalila portal saves the time spent manually managing and versioning the data. The portal also spares team members the need for learning XML, as the interface is easy to use and designed from the beginning to require minimal training.

Image Cycle Analysis

This task set is still only dependent on general-purpose software and the specialized software is still in the early design phase. The workflow involves locating and labelling similar images across the manuscripts, collating, and comparing them. The comparison involves style elements and execution. Such comparison helps identify which manuscripts have a closer relation to one another.

The Kalila Platform

The set of tools developed for the projects are put together in a web application: “The Kalila Platform,” named after one of the book’s protagonists. The idea for the tools started with examining the edition workflow and activities in the project, then contemplating the extent to which each activity can be automated and optimized by an intelligent interactive user interface. Work on this platform has started in January 2018. It is tailor-made for the needs of the AnonymClassic project and as of August 2021 is only available within the intranet of the Freie Universität Berlin. Nonetheless, the platform has been designed from the beginning with reusability in mind and it can be customized to serve other projects as well. In section 2, the uses and the practical aspects of the platform are discussed, this section is dedicated to the technical aspects.

Platform Architecture

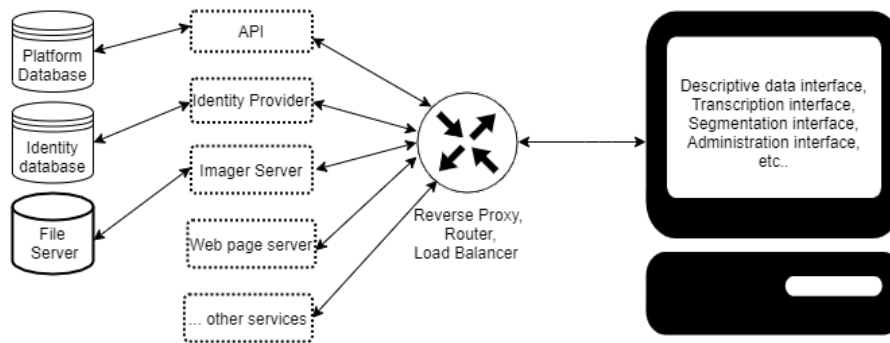


Figure 5 Structure of the Kalila Platform

The platform is designed according to the MVVM “Model-view-view-model” architectural pattern. The main feature of this pattern is that the data processing logic on the server and the user interface are developed independently from one another⁴²⁵. This design choice was necessary as the same data must be processed in different ways by the user i.e., via different interfaces; as in the text data: it must be transcribed via an interface and segmented via another interface.

The Data Schema

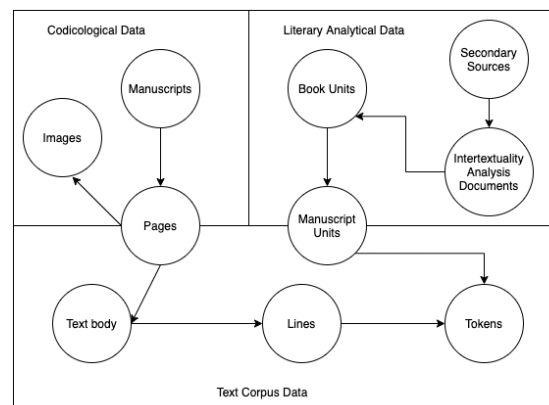


Figure 6 Visualization of the data schema

⁴²⁵ Siddiqi and Vice (2012) pp.77-81.

Data must be saved in a way that makes both writing and reading operations as simple as possible. The circles in figure six represent the main entities i.e., tables of the data schema, with the arrows representing relations among them. These entities are the ones that are often queried or posted independently. For example, tokens could have been entries in the pages table, however, when querying the body of a manuscript unit a list of tokens is retrieved. Separating tokens in a separate entity allows their querying without the need for going through the pages table. There is a difference between how the data are entered by the user and how they are saved in the database. Data entry schema abstracts many technical details of the infrastructure and facilitates the user’s interaction with the data.

The Infrastructural Data Schema

The data schema is written in SQL, specifically in the open-source implementation PostgreSQL⁴²⁶. This technology gives the ability to define tables, give their columns specific names and data types, and add constraints on the data e.g., make sure that a manuscript siglum is unique or a narrative unit title is not used more than once. SQL can also ensure that no entry can be added in e.g., the pages table without association to a specific manuscript in the manuscripts table. More sophisticated validation can be implemented e.g., making sure that a value in a specific column belongs to a predefined list. Many of the constraining and validating features are used extensively to ensure the validity and uniformity of the data.

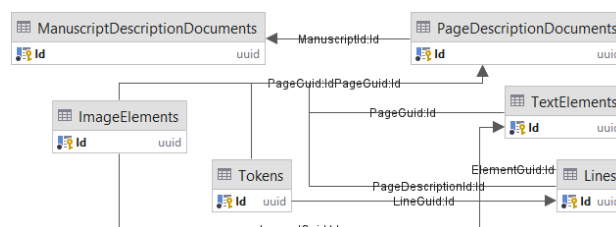


Figure 7 an UML diagram showing the entities of the text corpus data and the relations among them.

⁴²⁶ Official website: postgresql.org

PageDescriptionDocuments	ManuscriptDescriptionDocuments	ManuscriptUnits	ImageElements
Id uuid	Id uuid	Id uuid	Id uuid
Editor text	Editor text	Editor text	Editor text
EditionProgress text	EditionProgress text	EditionProgress text	EditionProgress text
CreatedAt timestamp	CreatedAt timestamp	CreatedAt timestamp	CreatedAt timestamp
Version timestamp	Version timestamp	Version timestamp	Version timestamp
ManuscriptId uuid	Siglum text	BookUnitGuid uuid	PageGuid uuid
Body text	CatalogueTitle text	ManuscriptGuid uuid	Position text
TranscriptionFinalized boolean	CatalogueCommentary text	Chapter text	Label text
Number integer	LocationCity text	Order integer	Motifs text[]
PresentPageNumbering text[]	LocationLibrary text	Type text	StyleElements text[]
Pagination integer	LocationManuscriptId text	Tags text[]	LocatedInGuid uuid
Foliation text	LocationCommentary text	Body text	DepictsGuid uuid
Tags text[]	DatingAccuracy text	AdditionalCommentary text	FacsimileImageUrl text
FacsimileImageUrl text	DatingGregorianCentury integer	StartsInPageGuid uuid	LegendText text
AdditionalCommentary text	DatingHijriCentury integer	EndsInPageGuid uuid	LegendGuid uuid
	DatingGregorianYear integer	StartsInLineNumber integer	AdditionalCommentary text
	DatingHijriYear integer	EndsInLineNumber integer	
	DatingGregorianDate text	FirstTokenOrderInLine integer	
	DatingHijriDate text	LastTokenOrderInLine integer	

Figure 8 an UML diagram showing some of the columns defined for the manuscript description table⁴²⁷ and all columns for three other tables.

The Data Entry Schema

Input	One	Text
	Many	Text
Rich text		
Select	One	Text
	Many	Text
Boolean		
Image upload		
File upload		
Date		
Indirect input		

Figure 9 Input modes in the Kalila platform.

From the user's perspective, data can be manipulated in 11 different ways:

- Input one textual value e.g., the catalogue title of a manuscript.
- Rich text i.e. text with formatting. This is used for commentary fields.
- Input one numerical value e.g., the year of manuscripts creation.
- Input many textual values e.g., the names of readers in the reader notes of a manuscript.
- Select one textual value e.g., the dating accuracy of a manuscript must be one of three predefined values: exact, estimated, or unknown.

⁴²⁷ The manuscript description table has 144 columns.

- Select many textual values e.g., the tags for a page; as a page can have multiple tags but each one has to be from a predefined set.
- Boolean value i.e., yes or no answers to questions like whether pages of a specific manuscript have frames.
- Images, which are necessary to attach facsimile to pages, text elements, illustrations, and lines.
- Files, which can be used to attach PDFs to manuscript descriptions or secondary sources.
- Date, which is exclusively used for versioning purposes.
- Indirect inputs. This involves all the values generated not by direct input or selection; like when a user marks the beginning of a narrative unit, one relational value is generated which is the id of the page and two numerical values, "unit starts in line number" and "first token order in line."

The API

The Application Programming Interface⁴²⁸ "API" is the software responsible for handling the HTTP requests and interacting with the database. It performs authentication and validation on requests before processing them and converting them to database queries or commands. The Kalila API has been written in the beginning in Python and later migrated to C#, as the second programming language has faster performance and is better suited to larger projects⁴²⁹.

The User Interfaces

Each of the user interfaces is dedicated to one edition activity. All the interfaces are Single Page Applications "SPAs"; developed using Angular, an open-source framework developed by Google⁴³⁰. Descriptions on the usage of the interfaces are in section 2. The interfaces are

⁴²⁸ No universal definition nor strict specifications exist for APIs. Generally, APIs provides ways for programmatic interaction with a software, either by another software or by a human user.

⁴²⁹ TechEmpower ([techempower.com/about.html](https://www.techempower.com/about.html), retrieved July 2021) holds yearly benchmarks for software. As of 2021 C# provides the 8th fastest web framework (Asp.net Core) overall, while the fastest Python framework (Django) is ranked 118th. ([techempower.com/benchmarks](https://www.techempower.com/benchmarks), retrieved July 2021).

⁴³⁰ Official website: angular.io (last retrieved July 2021)

assembled into a single website using the so-called micro-frontends architecture. All of them follow the same visual design and color theme which gives an impression of a single website.

The Supporting Services

The platform includes various other services:

- The identity provider, which handles the authentication and authorization.
- A IIIF image server⁴³¹, which facilitates fetching images or specific parts of an image.
- An image processing service, which does the automatic line detection.
- A LERA service, which overtakes the communication between the Kalila Platform and LERA.

Future Milestones

One missing piece from the portal is the tool for performing image cycle analysis, which is currently still in design. Almost all the platform functionality is focused on the creation of data with limited analysis and visualization features. Ideas for such functions are currently being examined. A short-term goal is producing extensive technical documentation for the source code of the project to make it better reusable by the technical teams of other edition projects. A long-term goal is to produce zero-configuration plug-and-play versions of different interfaces that can be used by projects or scholars without advanced technical expertise.

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Gründler, Beatrice and Pöckelmann, Marcus: *Adjusting LERA For The Comparison Of Arabic Manuscripts Of Kalila wa-Dimna* In: Digital Humanities, DH2018, Mexico City, 2018.

⁴³¹ Pronounced *tripe-eye-eff*. Detailed information is on the website: iiif.io/about (last retrieved July 2021).

Vice, Ryan and Siddiqi, Muhammad Shujaat: "MVVM survival guide for enterprise architectures in Silverlight and WPF," Packt Publishing, Birmingham, 2012.

Illustration and graphs

Graph/map of KD dissemination

“Stemma” of versions in diverse languages/and/or map

Manuscripts (to be compiled from all chapters)

Fragments

Geniza T-S Ar. 40.9 (Arabic script, illustrated)

Geniza T-S Ar. 51.60 (Arabic script, illustrated)

Geniza T-S Ar. 6.32 (Hebrew script)

Geniza T-S NS 97.16 (Hebrew script)

Ch. introduction

Dayr al-Shīr, dated 1339?

Ch. Continua BG

Early Group

I344 = Istanbul, Archæological Museum, EY 344 (dated to eleventh/seventeenth century), very similar to Riyadh, King Faisal Center, MS 2536 (dated 747/1346)

Poc. 400 = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 400 (755/1354)

P3475 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3467 (near verbatim copy of

BRR 3566 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, 3655 (dated to c. 1265–80 CE)

Paris continuum

P3465 subgroup

P3465 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3465 (dated to circa 1220)

P2789 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 278 (MTM, first part dated 1008/1599-1600)

H170 = Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, cod. orient. 170 (undated)

Wetzstein subgroup

Riyadh 2407 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center, 2407 (dated 1103/1692)

P3473 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3473 (dated 1110/1699)

We II 672 - Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830)

Queen-continuum (from beginning to Rd, incl. Im)

P3466 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3466 (before 854/1450)

BnT 2281 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, 2281 (dated 1070/1660)

USJ 0022(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, 0022(2) (dated 1263/1847)

London continuum

A4095 = Istanbul, Ayasofya, 4095 (dated 618/1221)

L8751 = London, British Library, Or. 8751 (dated 799/1369)

L4044 = London, British Library, Or. 4044 (dated to ninth/fifteenth century)

München 618 (in Mc) = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 618 (dated 1046/1636)

Queen continuum (from Oc to the end, incl. Mc)

P3466 see above

BnT 2281 see above

USJ 0022(2) see above

Cross-copied versions

P3471 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3471 (dated 1053/1643)

P5881 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5881 (dated 1092/1681)

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