

Edited by
Beatrice Gruendler
and Isabel Toral

AN UNRULY CLASSIC

*Kalīla and Dimna
and Its Syriac,
Arabic, and Early
Persian Versions*

BRILL



An Unruly Classic

Global Arabic Literary Cultures

Edited by

Beatrice Gruendler (*Freie Universität, Berlin*)

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Contents

Acknowledgments	VII
List of Figures and Tables	XII

1 Introduction	1
<i>Beatrice Gruendler and Isabel Toral</i>	

PART 1

Mouvance

2 The Interrelation of Some Arabic Versions of <i>Kalīla wa-Dimna</i> as Continua	19
<i>Beatrice Gruendler</i>	
3 The Chapter of the King and His Dreams as an Indicator for Classifying the Variety of Versions of <i>Kalīla wa-Dimna</i>	69
<i>Khouloud Khalfallah</i>	
4 Illustrations in Arabic <i>Kalīla wa-Dimna</i> Manuscripts	
<i>What Is Their Story?</i>	103
<i>Rima Redwan</i>	

PART 2

Traveling Tales

5 What Makes a Good Friend?	
<i>Analysis of the Two Syriac Translations of the Mouse and the Cat</i>	151
<i>Jan J. van Ginkel</i>	
6 Naṣr Allāh Munshī's Preface to <i>Kalīla and Dimna</i>	181
<i>Theodore S. Beers</i>	

PART 3***Responsive Readers***

- 7 The Book of *The Panther and the Fox*
A Sibling of Kalila wa-Dimna? 215
Isabel Toral
- 8 Poetic Moments
The Literary Significance of Middle Arabic in Kalila wa-Dimna
Manuscripts from the Early Modern Period 237
Johannes Stephan

PART 4***Wisdom Encoded***

- 9 Software Use in the Kalila and Dimna Project 265
Mahmoud Kozae
- Alphabetical List of Manuscripts 291
 Chronological List of Manuscripts 297
 List of Manuscripts Online 303
 Bibliography 306
 Index of Names and Works 319
 Index of Subjects and Terms 324
 Index of Manuscripts 329

Acknowledgments

Despite the popularity of *Kalila and Dimna* in Europe, North Africa and Asia up the 1800s, this collection of animal fables had become for nearly a century a “black box.” The shifts and turns of its tangled trajectories over one and a half-millennia, transmitted in numerous diverging manuscripts and versions could be grasped neither theoretically nor practically with the givens of conventional critical editing. Studying it is an exercise in infinity. The textual tradition itself is borderless, and the attempt to catch its movements resembles trying to photograph a waterfall. Its ceaseless remediations between prose and verse and its intra-lingual and cross-lingual translations and adaptations showcase the porousness of Arabic literature, which, in this case, transcends boundaries.

Our past six years of engaging with *Kalila and Dimna* has coincided with a media shift, the use of computer science in the humanities, which has now come to be called Digital Humanities. It reminds of earlier media shifts propelling the history of Arabic studies, such as when the pioneer of Arabic studies in Europe, Thomas Erpenius at Leiden University created his own font to print his editions of Arabic sources (to be acquired and reused after Erpenius’ untimely death in 1613 by Jakob Elsevier, printer of Leiden University). To turn manuscripts into numerical bits and bytes and to “calculate” textual interrelations is yet another instance of reinventing Arabic studies. After all, we had to grapple with centuries of complex and massive changes in what can no longer be called a “text.” This necessitates the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach, now increasingly practiced across the *Kulturwissenschaften*, since there is much to learn, contrast and compare across textual traditions of great longevity, be it Sanskrit or Chinese.

In this, we owe a great debt to past scholars on whose work we still rely: Antoine Silvestre de Sacy, who made the first modern edition of the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna*, Carl Brockelmann, Theodore Nöldeke, Johannes Hertel, Franklin Edgerton, Ignazio Guidi, Friedrich Schulthess, and Martin Sprengling, who dealt with sources and versions, many of them experts in multiple languages from Sanskrit via Pahlavi and Syriac to Arabic, in a manner we can no longer aspire to today.

Turning to the present endeavor in the first decades of the 21st century, we now tackle the spectrum of languages needed with collaborative research, as it uniquely characterizes the landscape of German public universities. This book represents the culmination of a transdisciplinary team work, with contributions from junior and senior researchers from various fields and subfields. It would have not have been possible otherwise, and although

each chapter is credited to one or two individuals, many team members have contributed long-term to each other's research through constant interaction, shared reading sessions, and other ways of cooperation too many to account for. A special thanks goes here to Jan van Ginkel for his multilingual expertise and generosity in discussing in-depth the work of younger members of the team.

The individuals involved in the present volume are more than those contributing the chapters, since the basic research, such as transcriptions, editing, indexing, and commenting on manuscripts, programming the online edition platform, and providing redactional support to the present volume was provided by present and former team members Marwa Ahmed, Dima Mustafa Sakran, Doga Akpınar, Hala Abdalhadi, and Alice Woolston, Ruslan Pavlyshyn, Heba Tebakhi, Albert Schlosser, and Jens Inden. Ingrid Evans gave the volume a first read and ensured its consistency. Agnes Kloocke, the project's experienced financial coordinator and logistical soul, kept the tabs on all things, from immediate to long-term planning, and from the big picture to the smallest logistical detail with untiring effort.

As a project team, we have also undergone a period of collective growth and achievement, with numerous shared experiences from previous years playing a pivotal role in the creation of this volume. The collaborative process developed synergies in ways that no one could have anticipated. Many team members brought along unexpected second interests and competencies: Theo Beers programmed the "Kalila Reader," a digital tool that placed at our disposal all extant published editions in original and translation at a click. Matthew Keegan (a member of the team 2018-2019, now New York) inaugurated a reading session on fiction, and Johannes Stephan on framing narratives, which propelled the theoretical dimension of the project and led to conferences, an article in *Poetica* 52 (2021), and themed issues in the *Journal of Abbasid Studies* (vol. 8, 2021 and vol. 9, 2022) and the *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* (vol. 24/1, 2024) as well as an entry on the keyword "Framing Narratives" in *Articulations*, together with Simon Godart.

Rima Redwan latched onto the importance of images for the rhythm of the narrative, viewing text and image of *Kalila wa-Dimna* jointly for the first time. The discoveries of Dima Sakran of an idiosyncratic version led to an article in the *Geschichte der Philologien*. Khoulood Khalfallah became an expert on all aspects of the Arabic manuscripts and contributed the volume's manuscript lists with the assistance of Doga Akpınar and Oualid al-Khattabi. Doga Akpınar also prepared all the volume's indices with unfailing precision. Oualid al-Khattabi managed the feat of replicating in English the textual variety of a synoptic edition and also systematized the overview of the transcription workflow. Ruslan Pavlyshyn provided the first comparison Arabic and Persian

versifications of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the twelfth and thirteenth century CE. Marwa Ahmed created the project's first preview edition, which went online in 2020. Mahmoud Kozae, who designed the digital architecture of the project, taught himself in lightning speed any new programming language or feature he deemed useful, and created at every step of the way larger and smaller tools to observe and analyze aspects of the textual tradition. This led to an essay on the interactive process of eye and algorithm in this interdisciplinary research process between Arabic studies and computer science to appear in *Interface Critique* 5 (2024). And more. The years jointly spent on *Kalīla and Dimna* have been a living proof that teamwork in the humanities harbors an enormous potential, which we are just beginning to tap.

Since we did not cover all the needed manifold linguistic expertise, we were grateful for being able to rely on collaboration with Florinda Di Simini, Naples, for Sanskrit, especially for the *Mahābhārata*, François de Blois, London, on the early New Persian indirect tradition, Florencia Miranda, Buenos Aires, for the Old Castilian, Rachel Peled Cuartas, Madrid/Alcalá de Henares, and Maysoon Shibi, Berlin, for the Hebrew, Lilli Hölzhammer, Uppsala, for the Greek, Christine van Ruymbeke, Cambridge UK, for the later New Persian, and Yoones Farsani-Dehghani and Friederike D'Assandri, both Berlin, for the Chinese versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

Some colleagues helped with encouragement and advice at the project's outset, such as Aboubakr Chraïbi, Paris and Maxim Romanov, Hamburg. Others visited our weekly colloquium and our conferences, enriching our work and contributing to special aspects, such as István Kristó-Nagy, Exeter, on the Arabic translator-adaptor. Ignacio Sanchez, Toledo, contributed on sundry matters, among them the Indian sources of one of the prefaces, and Chia-Wei Lin shared her research on Chinese Buddhism in later Arabic sources. Boris Liebrecht, Leipzig, Said Aljoumani, Berlin, and Yousry Elseadawy, Cairo helped us decipher manuscript notes. Ulrike Becker, Bonn, gave us the context of the early Castilian reception of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and Helène Condylis, Athens, shared her insights on the terminology of Greek translations. Ulrich Marzolph, Würzburg, in two intensive workshops, helped us understand the role of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* within the corpus of Arabic fables, and Heba Tebakhi, Berlin, discovered and documented oral telling of sub-stories from *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Our exchanges and conferences with the Paris team, Annie Vernay-Nouri, Aïda El Khiari, Éloïse Brac de la Perrière, and Sipana Tchakerian, gave us insights on the art historical dimensions of *Kalīla and Dimna*.

The Präsidium of Freie Universität Berlin has supported the project from its inception, including the expert assistance of the colleagues from the grant-writing and grant administration section. The uniquely rich array of fields of the Faculty of Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften gave us a broader context

and the ability to consult colleagues of adjacent disciplines on numerous issues. The Faculty's chief administrative officer Michael Vallo gave our project a home in the "Neubau for Kleine Fächer," or lovingly called "Holzlaube" ("wooden bower") in Berlin parlance, and the Faculty's IT-Support provided continuous care.

Aware of the integral part Digital Humanities played in our research and the core piece of the digital edition, we thank Brigitte Grote, FUB-IT for her conceptual advice, Johannes Posel, for helping to deploy our edition in the university's website, and the University Library for support with book acquisition and research data management. In our initial phases we were fortunate to be able use the LERA-tool, developed at Universität Halle-Wittenberg for our first online editions, curated by Marcus Pöckelmann. We also thank other large projects in Arabic Digital Humanities for sharing with us their experiences, such as the KITAB project, led by Sarah Savant, Aga Khan University, London, and the *Bibliotheca Arabica*, led by Verena Klemm, Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

We thank the manuscripts libraries that have supplied the sources for our research and permitted us to include images of the work: the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, the John Rylands Library, Manchester, the King Faisal Center Library, Riyadh, and the Archaeology Museum (Arkeoloji Müzesi), Istanbul. A special thanks goes to those libraries that made their holdings available online and give general permission to use their images for scholarly research, such Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Parker Library of Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge.

The generous grants of the European Research Council (ERC, Advanced Grant 742635) and the Gottfried-Wilhelm-Leibniz-Prize of the German Research Foundation (DFG) awarded in 2017, for both of which we are immensely grateful, gave our project an unusually long time span — without these the investigation of such a complex textual tradition could not have been dared. Last but not least the cosmopolitan city of Berlin, made it easy to find or attract talent, notably the still rare combination of Arabic and computer science, and which honored the field of Arabic Studies with the award of the Wissenschaftspreis to one of the present authors in 2019. We thank Teddi Dols and Pieter te Velde at Brill De Gruyter for the pleasant cooperation, and the anonymous peer reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

Our shared work since 2018 has allowed us to bring some light into the *Kalila and Dimna* "black box," and indeed grasp the movements of this textual tradition in its first five centuries. However much remains to be done. A full

online edition of the identified representative MSS (we now know which they are), a companion volume presenting this variety in readable form, a study of the numerous emulations of KD in Arabic and translations made from Arabic (directly and indirectly) after the thirteenth century into the languages of the globe (which have yet to be counted) remain desiderata. To encourage such future endeavors, we hope to lay the groundwork and ease the path with the present volume.

Figures and Tables

Figures

- 2.1 Cross analysis of P-c Unit Im 15: Reader Must Decode Parables 59
- 2.2 Cross analysis of L-c Unit Im 28: Readers Should Read Carefully and Reflect 59
- 2.3 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 21: The Rat Decides on a Pact with the Cat 67
- 2.4 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 85: Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need 68
- 2.5 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 88: The Rat's Need for Friendship Has Gone 68
- 2.6 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 93: The Intelligent Escapes Forced Friendship 68
- 3.1 The wise Kabābīrūn interpreting the king's vision (MS Riyadh 2536, fol. 117v) 74
- 3.2 The execution of the Brahmins (MS New York 1981.373, fol. 100r) 76
- 3.3 Enumeration of the king's visions (MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], fol. 142v) 95
- 3.4 Overview of salient Arabic versions of KD in the chapter of the King and His Dreams (based on number of dreams and presence of dream description passage) including both continua and cross-copies and considering chapter sequence and rare chapters 101
- 4.1 MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, p. 32 113
- 4.2 MS München 618, dated 1046/1636, fol. 2v. The caption reads: "This is an image (*ṣūra*) of the craftsmen who made the copper horses" 115
- 4.3 MS Wetzstein II 672, dated 1246/1830, fol. 20v 115
- 4.4 MS Clarke Or. 9, attributed to the fourteenth century CE, fol. 113r; MS Paris 3465, dated ca. 1220 CE, fol. 132v 138
- 4.5 MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, p. 93 140
- 4.6 MS Arch. Museum BY 344, dated 410/1019, but actually later, fol. 133v 143
- 4.7 MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], dated 1083/1672, fol. 146v 143
- 4.8 MS Paris 3465, dated to ca. 1220 CE, fol. 43v 144
- 4.9 MS Pococke 400, dated 755/1354, fol. 36v 144
- 4.10 MS Parker 578, dated to the fourteenth century CE, fol. 27v 145
- 4.11 MS München 615, attributed to the seventeenth/eighteenth century CE, fol. 108v 145
- 4.12 MS Pococke 400, dated 755/1354, fol. 123v 145
- 9.1 An example of an SQL schema 268
- 9.2 An example of a C# class definition 268
- 9.3 An example of a JSON schema 269
- 9.4 An example of an XML schema 269
- 9.5 An example of an XML data representation according to the schema in figure 9.4 270

- 9.6 An example of a JSON data representation according to the schema in figure 9.3 270
- 9.7 Example of using the “lb” element to highlight line breaks
Note: The example is retrieved from the TEI Guidelines: *tei-c.org/Vault/P5/2.2.0/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/examples-lb.html* (accessed July 12, 2023). Note that the text is formatted for human readability: An XML parser software cannot ascertain the existence of line breaks without the presence of the “lb” elements. However, an extra text-parsing step can be integrated to locate such line breaks 273
- 9.8 Structure of the Kalila Platform 283
- 9.9 Visualization of the data schema 284
- 9.10 A screenshot of the layout analysis tool 288
- 9.11 A screenshot of the line detection tool 288
- 9.12 A screenshot of the transcription tools 289
- 9.13 A screenshot of the narrative segmentation tools 289
- 9.14 A screenshot of a part of the manuscript description summary table 290
- 9.15 A screenshot of a part of the manuscript description input form 290

Tables

- 2.1 Unit Table of the Preface of Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ 45–54
- 2.2 Units Diverging between Paris continuum and London continuum 55–58
- 2.3 Unit Table of the Chapter of the Rat and the Cat 60–66
- 3.1 Queen continuum manuscripts 88
- 3.2 Dreams group manuscripts 97
- 4.1 Chronological list of illustrated manuscripts of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, including those with gaps and captions 110–11
- 4.2 Distribution of illustrations in the chapter of the King and His Dreams 120–23
- 4.3 Numbers and congruence of illustrated scenes of manuscripts in image groups 126–29
- 4.4 Core motifs of image group A in the chapter Kd 132–33
- 4.5 Core motifs of image group B in chapter Kd 134–35
- 4.6 Core motifs of image group C in chapter Kd 136–37
- 8.1 *al-Asad wa-l-arnaba* 258–59
- 9.1 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using general purpose software 279
- 9.2 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using specialized software 279
- 9.3 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using general-purpose software 280
- 9.4 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using specialized software 281

Introduction

Beatrice Gruendler and Isabel Toral

1 *Mouvance* and Variation

In this collected volume, members of the *Kalīla and Dimna* project¹ discuss, from different perspectives, a core aspect of their work with this textual tradition: the study of variation and mutability. The aim is to shed light on *Kalīla and Dimna*'s so-called *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, such as its indirect tradition, copyists as redactors, and the earlier Persian adaptation it inspired, will be discussed in a future volume in this series.²

It was Paul Zumthor who first launched the term *mouvance* to refer to the textual mutability in works surviving in more than one manuscript and who pointed to “ceaseless vibration and fundamental instability” as idiosyncratic features of medieval texts (particularly vernacular and anonymous ones) in his

1 This publication has been made possible by the *Kalīla and Dimna*-AnonymClassic research project and the Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan research project at Freie Universität Berlin. The AnonymClassic project has received funding from the *European Research Council (ERC)* under the *European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme* under grant agreement no. 742635, and the Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan research project is funded by the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz-Prize 2017 of the German Research Foundation (DFG). See the link to the project's website: <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/kalila-wa-dimna/index.html>.

2 On the aspect of *Kalīla and Dimna* as a fictional text, its Chinese versions, an Arabic retroversion of the early Persian version, and an incipit added by copyists, see Matthew L. Keegan and Beatrice Gruendler, eds., *Special Issue on (Un)declared Co-Authorship in the Kalīla wa-Dimna Textual Tradition*, *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022), <https://brill.com/view/journals/jas/9/1-2/jas.g.issue-1-2.xml>; On the aspect of *Kalīla and Dimna* as a frame narrative, see Johannes Stephan, Simon Godart, and Beatrice Gruendler, “Framing Narratives: Toward a Reconceptualisation of Textual Framing beyond Literary Modernity,” In “Framing Narratives,” ed. Simon Godart, Johannes Stephan, and Beatrice Gruendler, *Articulations* (2024), [articulations.temporal-communities.de/curated-collections/frames-narratives/](https://www.articulations.temporal-communities.de/curated-collections/frames-narratives/), and Johannes Stephan and Beatrice Gruendler, eds., *Framing Narratives in Premodern Literature: Arabic, Persian, Hebrew. Themed Issue, Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 24/1 (2024).

Essai de poétique médiévale.³ Ever since, these ideas have been discussed widely in European medieval philology. The term *mouvance* has been connected to anonymity and orality, but also to scribal agency (cf. the thought-provoking essay *Éloge de la variante* by Bernard Cerquiglini, who prefers to use the term *variance* to highlight the importance of written intervention).⁴ The rejection of the positivism widespread among classicists and of the chimeric quest for the recovery of a supposed *urtext*, as well as the acceptance of textual fluidity, have become established topoi in European medieval philology.

In Arabic philology, however, this discussion has almost not taken place. Editions of premodern texts usually still follow the textual critical method, consisting of a stemmatic editing on the basis of a selection of old manuscripts that applies a normalized orthography.⁵ There has, however, recently been an increase in studies of fluid texts in Arabic popular literature and science.⁶ For the many texts transmitted via the controlled scholarly methods practiced in traditional Arabic philology (audition, dictation, collation, etc.), this approach is indeed suitable, since the texts, though preserved in numerous

3 Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972.

4 Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: histoire critique de la philologie*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989. For a comprehensive view of both editorial traditions, see Anna Kathrin Bleuler and Oliver Primavesi, *Lachmanns Erbe: Editionsmethoden in klassischer Philologie und germanistischer Mediävistik*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 19, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2022.

5 For a critique where such an approach is misapplied, see 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): 253–320.

6 For popular literature, see Aboubakr Chraïbi, "Al-Bunduqānī calife, 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; Ulrich Marzolph, "Fluid Fables: An Experimental Synopsis of Uncritically Transmitted Texts" in *Teachers and Students. Reflections on Learning in Near and Middle Eastern Cultures, Collected Studies in Honour of Sebastian Günther*, eds. Dorothee A.M. Pielow, Jana Newinger and Yassir El Jamouhi, Leiden and Boston, 2024, 679–704. For Christian Arabic texts, see Hikmat Kashouh, "The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and Their Families," in *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung* 42, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012; Aaron Butts, "Diversity in the Christian Arabic Reception of Jacob of Serugh (d. 521)," in *Patristic Literature in Arabic Translations*, eds. Barbara Roggema and Alexander Treiger, Leiden: Brill, 2020, 89–128. In recent editions, such as Muhsin Mahdi's edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1984, and Bruce Fudge's edition of *A Hundred and One Nights*, New York: New York University Press, 2016, Middle Arabic is retained and no longer normalized. For popular science, see 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, 2019, and Petra Sijpesteijn, "Arabic Medical-Magical Manuscripts: A Living Tradition," in *Amulets and Talismans of the Middle East and North Africa in Context*, eds. Marcela A. Garcia Probert and Petra M. Sijpesteijn, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022, 78–104.

manuscripts, are remarkably stable.⁷ However, for *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (and probably other Arabic texts that have traditionally not been subject to scholarly control),⁸ characterized by an enormous variation, such critical editions have been deemed infeasible. The existing editions by Louis Cheikho, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, and Michael Fishbein are single-manuscript editions that only provide snapshots of the text’s actual variance,⁹ meaning that they provide an incomplete impression of the textual tradition as a whole. Moreover, since the Arabic versions form the basis of all later versions, an assessment of the whole corpus is an urgent desideratum. Our project now aims for the first time to capture and document a more complete picture of the motions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, approaching it as a *texte mouvant* without privileging certain versions and making use of a sophisticated and tailored digital infrastructure.

The progressive digitalization of philology in the last decades has offered the unique opportunity of putting the concept of *mouvance* into practice. In fact, though widely accepted as a valid interpretative framework, the concept of *mouvance* has been criticized for its impracticability in text-editing.¹⁰ This is considered to be the case particularly when the preserved manuscripts exceed a certain number, potentially widening the perspective to all possible and even impossible readings.¹¹ In the case of the Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, where the number of (often very diverging) manuscripts known surpasses 160 (of which 119 have been acquired and studied mostly in digital form in the

7 For an example based on a massive manuscript tradition, see Amos Bertolacci, “Philosophy on the Border of Civilizations and Intellectual Endeavours: Towards a Critical Edition of the Metaphysics (*Ilāhiyyāt of Kitāb al-Šifāʾ*) of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā),” ERC Advanced Grant 339621, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa and IMT School for Advanced Studies, Lucca.

8 Beatrice Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020, 155–63. For research on the vast corpus of popular literature, among which figures prominently *The Thousand and One Nights*, see the numerous studies by Ulrich Marzolph, Aboubakr Chraïbi, Bruce Fudge, Muhsin Mahdi, and others.

9 See Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ, *La version arabe de Kalīla et Dimnah ou Les fables de Bidpai*, ed. Louis Cheikho, Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1905, reprint Amsterdam: Academic Publishers Associated—Philo Press, 1981, based on MS Dayr al-Shīr, dated 749/1348; idem, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, eds. Tāhā Ḥusayn and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, Cairo: Dar al-Maʿārif, 1941, based on MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221); and idem, *Kalīlah 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 on MS London 4044 (attributed to the fifteenth century CE).

10 Florian Kragl argues inversely that this enables new ways of reading; see idem, “Jenseits der Textkritik: Überlegungen zu einer Theorie der digitalen Edition,” in Bleuler and Primavesi, *Lachmanns Erbe*, 575–84.

11 Rubert T. Pickens, “Jaufré Rudel et la poétique de la mouvance,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 20 (n°80) (1977): 323–37; idem, *The Songs of Jaufré Rudel*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1978 is regarded as the only edition that tries to reproduce completely all variants and that puts the concept of *mouvance* into practice.

course of the project), a reproduction of all variants in a printed edition is not feasible. Moreover, the exploration and evaluation of the variants is impossible by conventional means. As already proposed by Cerquiglini, however, the solution lies in the application of new technologies: “L’écrit électronique, par sa mobilité, reproduit l’œuvre médiévale dans sa variance même.”¹² Digital tools offer the best means to expressing and accessing the multidimensionality of the text, as well as to mirroring the conditions of text production, since they can offer both more textual information than printed editions and easier comparison between versions. In addition, they are ideally suited to non-linear reading and synoptic editions. In the project, the development of a tailored software to analyze, compare, and edit the various versions and display the underlying manuscripts has provided the team researchers with a sophisticated and customized digital tool to tackle the challenges posed by the large number of manuscripts, variations, and the peculiarities of Arabic script in novel ways (see Chapter 9 by Mahmoud Kozae).¹³ 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.

2 Terminology

To approach the difficult task of capturing this text in motion, the team of AnonymClassic has developed a consistently used **terminological toolset** to categorize clusters, patterns, practices, agents, and relations that is best introduced at the outset.

Kalīla wa-Dimna is referred to as a **textual tradition**, since the ongoing process of transmission suggests a constant written remaking of the text. The term highlights the nature of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a group of texts with multiple representatives, held together by a reception that considers it an identifiable entity. The reception history and readers’ responses to the versions of this tradition are important aspects to be explored in this regard, as they showcase the varying perceptions and reinterpretations of the tradition over time (see Chapter 7 by Isabel Toral).¹⁴

¹² Zumthor, *Essai*, 116.

¹³ For a first selection of prefaces and full and partial chapters, see the online edition by Mahmoud Kozae and Marwa Ahmed with English translations by Oualid El Khattabi, <https://kd-preview-edition.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/>.

¹⁴ See further Johannes Stephan, “Modalities of Fictionality in the Arabic Tradition: *Kalīla wa-Dimna*’s readers from the third/ninth to the sixth/twelfth century,” *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 8–39.

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 are ordered according to various descriptive group parameters. First, there is the newly coined term of **continuum/pl. continua**, referring to groups of manuscripts that overlap significantly in their formulations but that differ in copyists' targeted and conscious additions, excisions, and rephrasings that are incremental over time and that demonstrate a thematic focus. Within the continua, there are further subgroups (see Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler). Second, there is the **sequence of the chapters**,¹⁵ which varies among manuscripts. This parameter has already been used by Martin Sprengling in 1924 to group the manuscripts and associate them with the non-Arabic versions (see Chapter 3 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 blocks etc.). Third, there are the **image cycles**, i.e., series of recurring illustration motifs and captions, a further parameter used to classify groups of Arabic manuscripts (see Chapter 4 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** (near-literal reproduction), **cross-copying** (producing hybrid versions on the basis of various copies), creative **rewriting** within a continuum, **rasm reinterpretation** (differing readings 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 Chapter 8 by Johannes Stephan), and, beyond Arabic, more or less **literal translation**, as well as various degrees of **adaptation** and **cultural translation** (see Chapters 5 and 6 by Jan J. van Ginkel and Theodore S. Beers).¹⁶

15 An overview of the chapters and the abbreviations used to refer to them is added at the end of this introduction.

16 On the earlier Greek version, see the article by project partner Lilli Hölzhammer, "Altindische Weisheit in Byzanz: Zu den didaktischen Erzählstrategien in Symeon Seths *Stephanites und Ichnelates* und seinen arabischen Vorgängern," *Fabula* 63/1 (2022): 96–118, available under: <https://doi.org/10.1515/fabula-2022-0004>. For Chinese versions, see Yoones Dehghani Farsani, "The Chinese Textual Tradition of the Story of The King and His Dreams: An Analytical Investigation of Two Unstudied Recensions of the Story," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 40–71.

Finally, there is the important category of **copyist-redactors**, denominating the many individuals, either anonymous or only known by name, who intervened actively in the text by applying the practices sketched above. The term highlights their agency and relativizes the scribal-authorial dichotomy. In other words, Ibn al-Muqaffa' has little to do with what goes on in the manuscripts between the seventh/thirteenth and the thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.¹⁷

It is important to emphasize here that this terminology is a work in progress that will be adapted, tuned, and nuanced as the project develops.

3 History of the Text

Kalīla wa-Dimna is a work of wisdom and advice literature, denoting a variegated group of texts with ethical and political content, dating back to Sasanian and Indian traditions.¹⁸ More precisely, it is a mirror for princes in the form of animal fables that were avidly read, copied, translated, and rewritten in an area stretching from Spain to Malaysia in more than forty languages up until the nineteenth century CE. The journey of *Kalīla and Dimna* began in India, then continued to Iran, where the textual tradition was compiled and recomposed in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) and then translated into Syriac. It then traveled to Iraq, where the Arabic version came into being. The older Syriac version generated no further translations, but the Arabic version was disseminated throughout Europe, North Africa, and Asia, re-translated into Syriac. It then circulated back to the Persian and the Turkic-speaking regions, and traveled back to South Asia, and onward to Southeast Asia.

Retracing the chronology of *Kalīla and Dimna* requires delving deep into the past. Its earliest Sanskrit sources, the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata*, assumed their final shapes approximately in the third and fourth centuries CE, respectively. A selection from these (including some Buddhist material, see Chapter 3 by Khoulood Khalfallah) was translated and redacted in Middle Persian in the late sixth century CE, and the translator also added some

17 See also Matthew L. Keegan and Beatrice Gruendler, "Before and after Ibn al-Muqaffa': Introduction to the Special Issue on (Un)declared Co-Authorship in the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Textual Tradition," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 1–7, available under: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142371-00802010>.

18 Louise Marlow, "Advice and Advice Literature," in *E13*, online version. On *Kalīla and Dimna* specifically, see François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1990 and István T. Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa': Un "agent double" dans le monde persan et arabe*, Paris: Éditions de Paris, 2013.

introductory chapters explaining the origin of the book, as well as other supplementary material. The book now appears for the first time under the title *Karīrak ud Damanak*. This Pahlavi version is unfortunately lost, but it can be reconstructed based on the older Syriac version, translated soon after (see Chapter 5 by Jan J. van Ginkel). In the second/eighth century, the Middle Persian version was then extended and translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. ca. 139/757). The Arabic versions proliferated. They were quoted, commented on, reused, and versified, and they became particularly popular in the Middle Period¹⁹ and Early Modernity (see Chapters 7 and 8 by Isabel Toral and Johannes Stephan). From the Arabic textual tradition, *Kalīla and Dimna* branched out in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries CE into multiple European and Near Eastern translations (i.e., the Greek, Old Castilian, Persian, Hebrew, and Younger Syriac versions).²⁰ The translations are crucial for the textual history, since no complete Arabic manuscripts antedate the seventh/thirteenth century. The West European "bridge" version was the Latin translation (via Hebrew), which served as a basis for all modern European translations, including outliers such as the Icelandic, Hungarian, and Czech versions. The first Persian version by Naṣr Allāh (ca. 540/1146) via Arabic became a foundational work of Persian artistic prose (see Chapter 6 by Theodore S. Beers) and engendered a retroversion into Arabic.²¹ A later Persian translation, the *Anvār-i Suhaylī* (ninth/fifteenth century),²² as well as the Ottoman *Humāyūn-nāmeḥ* (tenth/sixteenth century) became classics in their own right. The work then experienced a renewed reception in the nineteenth century CE in South and Southeast Asia, where it resurfaced in eight languages, from Hindi and Bengali to Madurese and Malay. It also gave rise to versifications and emulations in many of these languages.²³

19 This term, used by Stephan Conermann and Konrad Hirschler, designates the sixth/twelfth to the tenth/sixteenth centuries. For further references, see chapters 7 and 8.

20 See Chapter 5.

21 See Theodore S. Beers and Khoulood Khalfallah, "The *Siyar al-mulūk* of 'Umar b. Dāwūd al-Fārisī: A Quasi-Plagiaristic Translation of *Kalīla and Dimna*," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022):72–104.

22 See Christine van Ruymbeke, *Kāshefi's Anvār-e Sohayli: Rewriting Kalīla and Dimna in Timurid Herat*, Studies in Persian Cultural History, volume 11, Leiden and New York: Brill, 2016.

23 Known versifications are by Abān al-Lāḥiqī (partially preserved), Ibn al-Habbāriyya, al-Ṣāghānī and al-Naqqāsh. On an emulation, see Francesca Bellino, "Animal Fables in the *Sulwān al-muṭā'* by Ibn Ṣafar al-Ṣiqillī," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 10 (2015): 23. The most exhaustive list of translations and emulations is still Carl Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa-Dimna," in *ET*², online version, and the graph in the inner binding of Ernst Grube, *A Mirror for Princes from India: Illustrated Versions of the Kalīlah wa Dimna, Anvar-i Suhayli*,

4 Summary of the Contributions

Following this introduction, the volume starts with a chapter by Beatrice Gruendler on the concept of *mouvance*. This chapter 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. The chapter 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. Gruendler also elaborates further on the key terminological terms introduced above. Based on the close analysis of several manuscripts, she discusses potential reasons for these types of variation, likely connected to a non-scholarly mode of transmission (Chapter 2).

Next, Khoulood Khalfallah illustrates this methodology and its concepts by focusing on one chapter of the Arabic textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that serves as an 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*, the Middle Persian and Arabic versions); and second, by analyzing and comparing the work's macro- and microstructure (Chapter 3).²⁴ Illustrations are also central to the process of establishing relationships among codices. This is demonstrated by Rima Redwan in Chapter 4, in which she explains how image cycles can be used to connect 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 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, Latin, and beyond). Jan J. van Ginkel

Jyār-i Dānīsh, and Humānyūn Nameh, Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991. See also the graph at the end of the preface in de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 11. Both earlier sources are in need of updating.

24 "Macrostructure" refers to the level of incipits, prefaces, and chapters, and "microstructure" to the main texts of the chapters, segmented for analysis.

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 degrees of adaptation to their respective cultural environments. (For example, the second version is heavily Christianized; see Chapter 5). Theodore S. Beers provides a translation, with notes and commentary, of the preface to the Persian *Kalīla va Dimna* of Naṣr Allāh. 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 an enormous number of Arabic quotations from classical poetry, the Qurʾān, hadith, and Persian poetry in his translation. 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-Muqaffaʿ (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 the thirteenth/nineteenth centuries). He proposes an interpretation of the frequent use of Middle Arabic—a hybrid and semi-standardized register falling 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, entitled *Wisdom Encoded*, consists of a chapter by Mahmoud Kozae, in which he discusses the software solutions that have been developed within the AnonymClassic project to enable and propel 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 features, contains multitext editions of selected chapters (Chapter 9).

5 *Mouvance: A Sketch*

Based on the project work of the past six years, we can tentatively draw a larger picture of the Arabic textual history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Over the trajectory of

this fluid and long-lasting textual tradition—articulated in writing, not evolved through oral transmission²⁵—we can detect several *impulses*, and we see the popularity, i.e., the positive reception of some of them, by a wider dissemination (especially of versions resulting from impulses III and IV below). For example, MS Ayasofya 4214 and MS Paris 3471 receive multiple near-verbatim copies, as does the edition by Antoine Silvestre de Sacy and its Bulaq reprints. Other manuscripts also receive near-verbatim copies (MS Princeton 169H with MS Paris 3473, MS Paris 2789 with MS Aleppo 406, etc.), but usually only one each.²⁶ In other words, certain versions were more appreciated than others.

The first impulse is *quotation*. Government scribes (*kuttāb*) of the second/eighth to the fourth/tenth centuries detached quotable pithy sayings, analogies, or maxims from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* to reuse these in their own collections or compilations. These text snippets survive as indirect tradition. Here too belongs the copious reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* quotations by Sahl b. Hārūn in his book of *The Panther and the Fox* (*al-Namir wa-l-thaʿlab*). Sahl did more than just reuse text snippets, however, as he shaped them into a new cohesive narrative. It can be argued that the larger form of this resulting narrative is itself a metatext or commentary to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.²⁷

The activity of quoting from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* continues after the fourth/tenth century in the works of very different authors, for example by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, al-Ṭurṭūshī, and Ibn Ḥamdūn. But the turn of the fourth/tenth to the fifth/eleventh centuries brought about changes. At this time, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* must have been widespread in various forms everywhere, while new political constellations were forming. During this period, Ibn al-Nadīm mentions the book, al-Yamanī and somewhat later al-Bīrūnī adopt critical stances toward it, and Ibn Sīnā refers to it in his commentaries on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. This was a period when *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, as we gather from Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Yamanī, became a widely read book, available in different forms, and established as an important source for all kinds of anthological works.²⁸

In the seventh/thirteenth century (when full Arabic manuscripts appear), we see the rise of the second impulse, namely *gradual redaction*. This takes shape in continua,²⁹ or sequences of versions, where the main text is

25 However, for a mention of oral retelling over the last three generations, see Chapter 2, note 41.

26 An exception is the illustrated MS Paris 3465 with four near-verbatim illustrated copies, see Chapters 2 and 4.

27 See Chapter 7.

28 For further details, see Chapter 8.

29 For a definition of this concept, see Chapter 2.

incrementally reformulated here and there (in changes extending from single words to phrases and sentences). This practice continues up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century. We must assume that it began before the seventh/thirteenth century, as documented by the Iberian continuum (I-c), which first appears in the Old Castilian version of 1251, but which depends on a (lost) earlier Arabic model. The most copious source of indirect tradition, al-Yamanī's *Muḍāhāt* from the late fourth/tenth century (see first impulse), contains quotations from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that most often resemble the London continuum (L-c), pointing to a beginning of that continuum as early as the fourth/tenth century.³⁰ Two of the four fragments of the Geniza, datable to ca. 950–1250 CE, are likewise close to this continuum.³¹ What we can see in the seventh/thirteenth century is thus most likely the outcome of developments that date back several centuries.

A still unknown factor is the *regionality*, i.e., the fact that some (groups of) versions were more popular than others in certain places. This may well explain the emergence in the Islamic west of the Iberian continuum, which includes the Old Castilian, Hebrew, and Latin translations. Apart from that, the development of three major continua (the Iberian, London, and Paris continua) evinces quite distinctive structures, as seen in the respective sequence of their chapters. The London continuum is related to Sequence Group C (characterized by the Kd³² chapter being placed between the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* blocks), whereas the Paris continuum (P-c) is related to the Sequence Group A (with the Kd chapter following the two Indian blocks of chapters), and the Iberian continuum is related to the Sequence Group E (with the Kd chapter inserted into the *Mahābhārata* block between the second and third tales). From the eastern end of Europe, the Greek versions composed in

30 For further discussion of the continua's beginnings, see Chapter 2, notes 25 and 26.

31 Geniza fragment T-S 40.9 (Rd chapter, in Arabic script with illustration) is close to MS Ayasofya 4095, and Geniza fragment T-S 51.60 (Di chapter, in Arabic script with illustration) is close to the edition by Cheikho, based on MS Dayr al-Shir, dated 749/1348. Both manuscripts belong to the London continuum. The Geniza fragment T-S NS 97.16, a bifolio in Hebrew script attributed by Rachel Hasson-Kent to the eleventh or twelfth century CE (Lo chapter) shares one phrase with MS Ayasofya 4095 but another with MS Parker 578 and MS Paris 3475, both early manuscripts from the eighth/fourteenth century that fall outside the continua. We thank Dr. Hasson-Kent for sharing her analysis of this fragment. The longest Geniza fragment, T-S Ar. 6.32 (3 bifolios, Kd chapter in Hebrew script), is still awaiting full analysis by Mohamed Ahmed. See the preliminary survey at this link: <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2021/fragment-0>.

32 For the chapter abbreviations (adopted from de Blois), see the list at the end of this introduction.

Byzantium and Palermo are structurally close to the London continuum, while Naṣr Allāh's Persian version belongs to the rare Sequence Group B, which is structurally close to the Paris continuum.³³ All these aspects require further study, which may make it possible to motivate their structural diversification by geographical movements.

The case of the various rare prefaces (As, Sv) and chapters (Km, Kw, and Df) found in the earliest versions confirms the hypothesis of a regional diversification. As first appears in Paris 3465 and the appendices of a seventh/thirteenth-century manuscript of Naṣr Allāh's version; Km appears in MS Ayasofya 4095, the Older Syriac, and the Greek versions; whereas all of Sv, Kw, and Df occur in the Iberian continuum (including the Old Castilian, Hebrew, and Latin translations). These rare prefaces and chapters had different trajectories and were mutually exclusive in a given version, which means that they initially belonged to disconnected but stable environments.³⁴

The diversification between the continua, which by the seventh/thirteenth century was in full bloom, has left its traces in the structure of the book (both in the chapter sequence and in the presence of rare prefaces and chapters), and the formation of the continua probably occurred in unrelated milieus. These larger structural changes were probably accompanied by gradual micro-changes, such as the addition of embedded stories in the Im preface of the Paris continuum and other variations that distinguish it from the London continuum.

The third impulse is *enrichment*, via the practice of cross-copying. This is documented in the main text as early as in MS Parker 578 and MS Ayasofya 4214 (both eighth/fourteenth century) and Naṣr Allāh's Persian version (he declares his possession of various versions and combines in one chapter (Lj) two long and plot-changing passages that only appear in MS Ayasofya 4095 and MS Paris 3466 respectively).³⁵ In the eleventh/seventeenth century, cross-copying becomes more widespread (most patently in MS Paris 3471). This is probably due to copyist-redactors noticing more and more the diversification of *Kalila wa-Dimna* and reacting to it, in creative ways, by picking from various versions at their disposal and combining selected elements into collages that contain

33 He used several *Vorlagen*, however (see third impulse), and his sources still require further analysis.

34 The aspect of regionality has been contributed by Khoulood Khalfallah.

35 The intervention of Naṣr Allāh obviously goes far beyond the act of combining versions, the aspect relevant here; see Chapter 6. The copious bilingual additions by Naṣr Allāh also cover up substantial excisions, such as in the Lj chapter of those passages concerning the king's error, guilt, and self-correction, shifting the emphasis instead to the topic of royal mercy.

more than any single specimen of the various versions. The realization of the extant variety also spurred redactors on to make their own new additions, as is most visible in Naṣr Allāh's Persian version. This tendency is evident also in Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ's personal copy of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, MS Wetzstein II 672. This manuscript is based on a version close to MS Princeton 169H and MS Paris 3473, but it has been significantly enriched, and it differs from another version he held in his library (MS Dar al-Kutub 967).³⁶

This type of folding many versions into one new main text produces a mosaic of short intercalated phrases of diverse provenance, and even though we do not know how it was carried out in practice, it must have been a laborious process. Another method of cross-copying occurred at a structural level, where the scribe would add rare chapters or an incipit from another version in a less complicated intervention. Traces of this practice are for instance tables of contents in a version's incipit that disagree with the actual order of the chapters in the manuscript.³⁷ At this scale, a whole new continuum emerges: the Queen continuum, which follows first the Paris continuum, but then switches to align with the London continuum between chapters Rd and Oc.

A fourth impulse, *stabilization*, co-occurs with the rise of the first European “scholarly” edition by Silvestre de Sacy in 1816 and the availability of printing technology. Silvestre de Sacy openly declares that he enriched his basic manuscript, the early but abridged MS Paris 3465, with other versions. As such, his edition is not entirely different from those composed by many of the earlier copyist-redactors, but because it was a printed edition by a European Orientalist that appeared at a propitious moment, it became a kind of standard. It was reproduced among others by the Bulaq Press (1249/1817)³⁸ and recopied multiple times in manuscripts.³⁹ Further early modern printings of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* followed, and they deserve investigation as “printer's versions” for their combination of different sources—not to mention for their efforts to correct the grammar, polish the style, or cut passages deemed unfit for young readers. The success of the first printed edition might betray a new trend to seek clarity and stability in a textual tradition that had proliferated to such an extent that the uninitiated copyist or reader lost track of the whole.

Another factor to be considered is the growth of *readership* since the Middle period, supported by increasing private book ownership and the rise of lending

36 On Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ's personal copy, see Chapter 8.

37 See also Chapter 2, note 35.

38 On the Bulaq Press, see Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020, 66–67.

39 On these manuscripts, see Chapter 2, note 9, Chapter 3, 80–81, and Chapter 8, note 57.

libraries. For example, MS London Add. 7413, datable before 1036/1626 and containing copious readers' notes, must have been a library copy.⁴⁰

If we compare the result of the analysis of the written *Kalila wa-Dimna* tradition with the interrelations documented by its illustrations in their various image cycles, or groups, we notice a partial overlap. The illustrations align with the second and third impulse. Regarding the second, one image group (B) fits neatly inside the Paris continuum.⁴¹ Another image group (A) partly overlaps with the Iberian continuum but also includes other early heterogeneous manuscripts. Image group (C) is less conclusive. Regarding the third impulse, a few "unclassified" manuscripts combine items from all three image groups and thus constitute cross-copies at the level of the image.

These four impulses are not meant to be understood as a chronological sequence. While their beginnings are successive, several of them coexist alongside each other, such as gradual redaction and enrichment, which overlap in time. While the impulses help us to explain the larger trends of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* tradition, they do not cover all aspects of it. Notably, in each period, idiosyncratic versions were produced: among these is MS Rabat 3655 from the early seventh/thirteenth century and MS New York 1981.373 (datable before 1026/1617, but its text version resembles eighth/fourteenth-century versions). The pair of MS München 618 and MS Bodleian 253 evinces stronger rewriting than in any other copy. In yet other versions, a palpable stylistic reworking takes place, for example in the form of more elegant rephrasing in MS Tunis 2281 and MS Tunis 16029 or the addition of ornate prose (*saj'*) in MS Paris 3468.⁴² Elsewhere, a redactor drastically abridges a version but recopies his model within the same manuscript (MS Vatican Borg. 213),⁴³ or another simply extracts the sub-stories and connects them with retained phrases from the otherwise excised main text (MS Paris 3593). Both of these redactors are anonymous.

This rough sketch is meant to provide some orientation to the reader before delving into the following chapters, in which the underlying research is presented in depth. It is preliminary and liable to be refined and adjusted in the course of our ongoing research.

40 We thank Boris Liebrecht for sharing his analysis of this manuscript.

41 Here belong MS Paris 3465 and four near-verbatim copies, see note 26 above and Chapter 4, table 4.5.

42 This discovery in MS Paris 3468 was made by Dima Mustafa Sakran.

43 See Beatrice Gruendler and Dima Mustafa Sakran, "A Redactor at Work: Discoveries in MS Vat. Borg. ar. 213 of *Kalila wa-Dimna*," *Geschichte der Philologien* 59/60 (2021): 37–52.

6 List of Chapters and Abbreviations

(Based on de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 62; the order chosen here is sequence group A. The orthography of non-Arabic names and terms and the precise wording of the titles vary among the manuscripts. The mouse becomes a rat in the Arabic versions.)

As	Preface by 'Alī b. al-Shāh (<i>muqaddimat al-kitāb</i>)
Lv	Burzūya's Voyage (long version) (<i>ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind</i>)
Im	Arabic Preface (<i>gharaḍ al-kitāb</i>)
Sv	Burzūya's Voyage (short version) (<i>ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind</i>)
Bu	Life of Burzūya (<i>Burzūya/Barzawayh li-Buzurgmihr b. al-Bakhtikān</i>)
Lo	Lion and Ox (<i>al-asad wa-l-thawr</i>)
Di	Trial of Dimna (<i>al-faḥṣ 'an amr Dimna</i>)
Rd	Ring-Dove (<i>al-ḥamāma l-muṭawwaqa</i>)
Oc	Owls and Crows (<i>al-būm wa-l-ghirbān</i>)
At	Ape and Tortoise (<i>al-qird wa-l-ghaylam</i>)
Aw	Ascetic and Weasel (<i>al-nāsik wa-bn 'irs</i>)
Mc	Mouse and Cat (<i>al-juradh wa-l-sinnawr</i>)
Kb	King and Bird (<i>al-malik wa-l-ṭā'ir Fanza</i>)
Lj	Lion and Jackal (<i>al-asad wa-bn āwā al-nāsik</i>)
Kd	King and His Dreams (Bilād) (<i>Īlād wa-Bilād wa-Īrakht</i>)
Km	King of the Mice (<i>Mihrāyz/Mihrār malik al-jurdhān</i>)
Tg	Traveller and Goldsmith (<i>al-sā'iḥ wa-l-ṣā'igh</i>)
Ks	King's Son and His Companions (<i>Ibn al-malik wa-aṣḥābuhū</i>)
Lh	Lioness and Horseman (<i>al-labwa wa-l-aswār wa-l-sha'har</i>)
Ag	Ascetic and His Guest (<i>al-nāsik wa-l-dayf</i>)
Kw	Two Kingfishers and Whimbrel (<i>al-'uljūm wa-l-mīrzam</i>)
Df	Dove, Fox, and Heron (<i>al-ḥamāma wa-l-tha'lab wa-malik al-ḥazīn</i>)

PART 1

Mouvance



The Interrelation of Some Arabic Versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as Continua

Beatrice Gruendler

1 Editing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Kalīla wa-Dimna first began to attract scholarly notice at the dawn of Arabic studies in Europe with the edition by Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (d. 1838) in 1816. The first Arabic manuscripts of the work surfaced after a lack of complete witnesses over a period of half a millennium. Ever since, the great variety among these manuscripts, which date from the seventh/thirteenth century onwards, has presented the challenge of how to edit such a text.¹ Certainly, the indirect tradition beginning in the third/ninth century and the early translations beginning in the fifth/eleventh century contribute important pieces to the work's textual history. However, the phase from which the entire Arabic text appears in manifold versions (from the seventh/thirteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century) is the richest in material.² At the same time, this period poses its own problems and needs to be approached with attention to the specifics of the production, interrelation, and circulation of the work.³

When Silvestre de Sacy published the first edition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, he did not concern himself with the precondition of investigating how the diverging manuscripts related to each other. Moreover, there was no basis for devising an editorial procedure fit to embrace this puzzling divergence, let alone for tracking the nature of the text's changes over time across the manuscripts.⁴ Meanwhile, a sophisticated method of editing, first demanded

1 The *Kalīla and Dimna*—*AnonymClassic* project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635. The *Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan* project has been funded by the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize awarded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) in 2017. See the joint projects' website: <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/kalila-wa-dimna/>.

2 See the alphabetical and chronological lists of manuscripts in the book's Appendix.

3 A further source is that of several text fragments (in single leaves or bifolia, the longest passage counting three bifolia) from the Cairo Geniza, datable to ca. 950–1250 CE.

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

by Karl Lachmann (d. 1851) and developed further by others, became the standard in the field.⁵ This procedure posited a single archetype which could be reconstructed, or approximated, by organizing its deriving descendants into a stemma.⁶ This worked well for classical Arabic scholarly and literary texts, which remained more or less stable in transmission, but did not fit the fluid textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, whose strongly diverging witnesses cannot be reduced to a single text.

Following Silvestre de Sacy's efforts, other scholars published further editions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, but these tended to select one manuscript, usually an early one, according to the principle of the "best text."⁷ The chosen single witness was edited either diplomatically, as by Louis Cheikho (1905), or filled in with portions from other manuscripts, as had been done by Silvestre de Sacy or, to a lesser degree, by 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (1941), and most recently by Michael Fishbein (2021).⁸ Other modern editions combined existing printed editions (Silvestre de Sacy or the Bulaq editions of 1249/1817 and 1297/1835, which reused his text) with further unidentified manuscripts, and the result was often recopied in manuscript form.⁹ There was clearly an awareness that more than one manuscript was necessary to adequately present the work; the first modern editors intuitively reacted to the textual variety, though not in a systematic way. Furthermore, they were not the first to do so; some copyist-redactors had done this as early as the eighth/fourteenth century, at times skillfully combining a number of *Vorlagen*.

5 See Anna Kathrin Bleuler and Oliver Primavesi, eds., *Lachmanns Erbe: Editionsmethoden in klassischer Philologie und germanistischer Mediävistik*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2022, 11–108. The editors show that many editorial principles commonly attributed to Lachmann were in fact developed later by his successors.

6 See *ibid.*, 35–58.

7 The concept was first defined by Joseph Bédier (d. 1938). See also Bleuler and Primavesi, *Lachmanns Erbe*, 63–74.

8 MS Dayr al-Shīr, dated 749/1348, was edited by Louis Cheikho; MS Paris 3465, dated to ca. 1220 CE by Antoine Silvestre de Sacy; MS Ayasofya 4095, dated 618/1221, by 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām; MS London 4044, attributed to the fifteenth century CE, by Michael Fishbein. For full references, see the volume's bibliography.

9 For the first modern editions, see Carl Brockelmann, "Kalīla wa-Dimna," in *ET*², online version; for instance, MS Rabat 879 and MS Yale A 270 reproduce Silvestre de Sacy's edition (including the *Mu'allāqa* of Labīd) with acknowledgment of the source; MS Majlis-i Shūrā 16288 and MS Mosul 283 reproduce the Bulaq editions, based on Silvestre de Sacy's edition, without acknowledging the source, and add the rare Df chapter. For further manuscripts, see Chapter 3 by Khouloud Khalfallah, 80–81.

The challenge posed by *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was to determine how its drastically differing manuscripts distributed over seven centuries related to each other and to investigate what could be found out about the processes, factors, and agents of their textual change. Advances in editorial theory, especially within research on medieval European literature, and the recent potential of critical digital editions have altered the situation and opened new avenues of approach.¹⁰ Today, a number of manuscripts can be placed side by side, respecting each as its own instance, while reading them synoptically and considering them as a spectrum permitting us to trace the differences step by step from one manuscript to the next. This viewing of versions side by side has replaced the ahistorical composite editions or the prioritizing of one version over others based solely on the date of the manuscript containing it, which were the practices of earlier editors.

The *mouvance* observable in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is the most prominent instance of this phenomenon in Arabic literature and the first to be investigated as such.¹¹ The causes of this textual fluidity remain to be determined. Among the factors might be its many-faceted nature, the lack of adherence to any firmly established genre, and its ambivalent status of sharing traits with both classical and popular Arabic literature.¹² Nonetheless, the case of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* should not be considered 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.¹³

10 See also Bleuler and Primavesi, *Lachmanns Erbe*, editors' introduction on editing medieval texts (58–92) and the chapters by Florian Kragl (575–84) and Michael Stolz (585–614) on digital editing.

11 On *mouvance*, see the introduction and note 18 below.

12 On the generic multifacetedness of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see Matthew L. Keegan, "Elsewhere Lies Its Meaning: The Vagaries of *Kalīla and Dimna's* Reception," *Poetica* 52 (2021), 13–40 and idem in Beatrice Gruendler et al., "An Interim Report on the Editorial and Analytical Work of the AnonymClassic Project," in *Medieval Worlds*, 269–270.

13 For Christian Arabic texts and Arabic popular literature and popular science, see Introduction, n. 6. 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.

2 The Concept of Continua

In the following, I will sketch out one way in which a large portion 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, as opposed to a single work. The immediate impression given by 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 retrace the rewriting process and distinguish similarities and disparities, the best method is to arrange side by side those witnesses most similar to each other in wording, then proceed with the next in similarity, and so forth, with manuscripts decreasing in similarity being placed at increasing distance.¹⁴ This needs to be done without prioritizing any manuscript's date, since some later manuscripts contain versions that are several centuries older than the material support they are written upon,¹⁵ and it is each textual version, not the material witness containing it, that is at stake here. Indeed, an undated textual version can be placed along the trajectory of witnesses between its closest matches, allowing its text (not the physical manuscript) to be dated approximately to the timespan in between those matches.

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.¹⁶ In the present chapter, the maximum has been set to sixteen versions to keep the text's segments at a readable size on the printed page (see tables 2.1 and 2.2 in the Appendix). At first glance, the recurrence of similar phrases across many versions is patent, with further recurrences of phrases within a subsection of the same group, which can enable us to define subgroups. "Shared text" refers not to long continuous passages but rather to short

14 This can be aided by a clustering algorithm, as shown in Beatrice Gruendler and Mahmoud Kozae, "Human Intuition and Computational Clustering: Tackling a Fluid Textual Tradition," in *What Is the Digital Doing? Interface Critique* 5 (2024) (forthcoming).

15 For instance, MS Paris 3475, dated 1175/1761, is a near-verbatim copy of MS Rabat 3655, dated to ca. 1265–1280 CE. MS Paris 3478, attributed to the eighteenth century CE, is a near-verbatim copy of MS Arch. Museum EY 344, dated 410/1019, though it is actually younger than that, and both are very close to MS London 3900, dated 1166/1753, itself a near-verbatim copy of MS Riyadh 2536, dated 747/1346. This distinction between text carrier and text version is also known in the Lachmannian tradition. Obviously, a manuscript's date is essential to contextualizing its copyist, tracing the reception of his version, and establishing the historical trajectory of a particular continuum.

16 On the LERA-tool, see chapter 9 in this volume by Mahmoud Kozae. In the digital edition, near-verbatim copies are disregarded and only consulted for textual problems in their *Vorlagen*.

phrases and parts of sentences that agree across several manuscripts. Exactly which phrases are shared, and among which witnesses of a group, fluctuates from one passage to the next. Even within recurring phrases, words can be replaced, excised, 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 manuscripts in which a relatively high percentage of textual variance is shared between a number of witnesses can best be characterized as a that of 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, either by targeted excisions of sayings, analogies, or sub-stories, or by streamlining the narrative as a whole.¹⁷ 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 factors causing change, a phenomenon particular to Arabic codicology is the copyist-redactor's reinterpretation of the consonantal skeleton (*rasm*) of words. The *abjad* lends a certain indeterminacy to writing, 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 *Kalila wa-Dimna*, this phenomenon is reinforced by the fact that (re)interpretations by the copyist-redactors seem not to have been bound by the rules of classical Arabic. Their (often unvocalized) *Vorlagen* thus gave them room to reread words and recontextualize changed word meanings that diverged substantially from their previous meanings. The (re)interpretation of the *rasm* shows (among other things) that such intervention took place in the process of written transmission and not through oral recomposition, as is the case in the *mouvance* of medieval

17 Examples of targeted excisions are MS Pococke 400, MS Paris 3473, and MS Paris 3466. Streamlining occurs in MS Rabat 3655 and MS Paris 3465. A drastic abridgement is MS Vatican Borg. 213, dated to the seventeenth century CE, 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 *Kalila wa-Dimna*," in *Geschichte der Philologien* 59/60 (2021): 37–52.

European texts.¹⁸ 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. It is important to note that much of Arabic scholarly literature has indeed been transmitted within the context of students reading written texts aloud to their teachers (*samāʿ*) with continuous correction and subsequent collation of the resulting transcripts (so-called aural transmission).¹⁹ This guaranteed the stability of texts, which means that stemmatic reconstruction often constitutes a good approach to editing them. *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, however, is an entirely different beast. During the late period from which its manuscripts survive, this textual tradition was copied outside such scholarly purview. Specifically, moderate Middle Arabic features abound, a free treatment of the text is the rule, and collation notes are uncommon.²⁰

3 The Continuum as a Basis for Analysis and Classification

The following exemplary analysis is based on selective editions of nine passages deriving from different historical layers of the book with a special focus on two of these, namely the preface added by the Arabic translator-adaptor Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 157/757) and the chapter of the Rat and the Cat, originating from the *Śāntiparvan* section of the *Mahābhārata*. The results, however, can be considered representative of all nine edited passages.²¹

18 On the concept of *mouvance* in European literature, see Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972, and for an overview, “What is *mouvance*?” *Wessex Parallel Web Texts* (WPWT), <http://wpwt.soton.ac.uk/mouvance/mouvance.htm>, accessed August 8, 2023.

19 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. Uwe Vagelpohl, with a preface by James E. Montgomery, New York: Routledge, 2006.

20 Collation notes do, however, appear in some versions, e.g., MS Paris 3466, MS Paris 3468, MS Ayasofya 4214, and MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015. On Middle Arabic, including its literary dimensions, see Chapter 8 by Johannes Stephan.

21 The continua can be confirmed in Im, Lv, Bu (parts), Oc (parts), Kd (parts), Mc, Lj, Ag, and Km (the chapter abbreviations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are those of François de Blois, see the introduction to this volume). On the Mouse and the Cat (Mc), see also Chapter 5 by Jan J. van Ginkel, which provides 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

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 either did not take part in the formation of the continua or cut across them. In our case, following initial analysis in the project, we first established two continua that we refer to as the Paris continuum and the London continuum (after the libraries in which salient specimens are held; hereafter abbreviated as P-c and L-c). To complicate matters, a number of manuscripts start out as part of P-c until the end of the chapter of the Ring-Dove (Rd) and then switch to L-c with the beginning of the chapter of the Owls and Crows (Oc).²² 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.²³ Furthermore, within P-c two subgroups belong more closely together, made visible by increased shared text or shared excisions among them. These comprise a subgroup including MS Paris 3465 (and its near-verbatim copies MS Clarke Or. 9, MS Paris 3470, and MS München 615), MS Paris 2789, dated 1041/1631–1632, MS Hamburg 170, dated before 1321/1904, and MS London Add. 23466, and another subgroup reuniting various manuscripts, the latest of which is MS Wetzstein II 672, dated 1246/1830 (referred to as the Wetzstein subgroup).²⁴

As for the relative age of the Paris and London continua, both are attested since the seventh/thirteenth century (the date of the earliest manuscripts of the two respective groups, MS Paris 3465 and MS Ayasofya 4095).²⁵ P-c unfolds in a broader spectrum and has more subgroups, which might imply a longer

line. An inverse phenomenon can be seen where versions alternate in proximity among different *Vorlagen* at the beginning of a chapter and then hone in on and continue with one *Vorlage* until the end. As long as not all manuscripts have been thoroughly studied, experience teaches the researcher of *Kalila wa-Dimna* to expect the unexpected.

- 22 MS Paris 3466, datable before 854/1450, is the oldest manuscript of Q-c; others are MS Beirut 0022(2), dated 1263/1847, and MS Tunis 16029, dated 1290/1873, each representing a subgroup.
- 23 For a discussion of this passage and further features of Q-c (e.g., the intersection of the continuum affiliation with other types of groupings), see Chapter 3, 83–91 with table 3.1.
- 24 Others are MS Princeton 169H, dated 997/1588, its near-verbatim copy MS Paris 3473, dated 1110/1699, and MS Riyadh 2407, dated 1103/1691. For a list of manuscripts either assigned to continua or falling outside of them, see Appendix, subsection 1.
- 25 However, unique passages from the chapter of the Lion and the Jackal (Lj) in both Ayasofya 4095 (L-c) and Paris 3466 (Q-c) appear already in the Persian adaptation by Naṣr Allāh from ca. 540/1146.

period of development. If we compare both to early manuscripts that fall outside the continua, we see that these older manuscripts more often agree with L-c, as does an even earlier copious source of the indirect transmission of the work, the *Muḍāḥāt amthāl Kitāb Kalīla wa-Dimna bimā ashbahahā min ash'ār al-'arab* by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Yamanī (alive end of fourth/tenth century).²⁶ Conversely, substantial additions of P-c, for instance in the Arabic preface, have no parallel in the early manuscripts. This supports the hypothesis that L-c is older.

Finally a fourth continuum, the cross-lingual Iberian continuum (hereafter abbreviated as I-c) has been detected, which includes the Old Castilian translation from 1251 CE and the Older Hebrew and Latin²⁷ translations from the same century, as well as the Arabic versions of MS Riyadh 2536 and MS Arch. Museum EY 344 (and their respective near-verbatim copies of MS London 3900 and MS Paris 3478).²⁸ It is characterized by the earlier and shorter version of Burzūya's Voyage (Sv), likewise preserved in the Pahlavi original of that chapter,²⁹ as opposed to the long version of the Voyage of Burzūya (Lv) present elsewhere.³⁰ I-c is thus documented as early as since the thirteenth century, while the

26 Furthermore, Fragment T-S 51.60 of the Cairo Geniza (datable ca. 950–1250 CE) containing part of the Trial of Dimna (Di) coincides near-verbatim with MS Dayr al-Shīr (edited by Cheikho 1905), which belongs to the London continuum.

27 The Latin version and the German version of 1482 based upon it then give rise to further translations into modern European languages which are beyond the scope of our project.

28 Besides being part of the Iberian continuum, these Arabic versions also belong to the Dreams group, based on a characteristic passage in the Kd chapter; see Chapter 3, 91–99 with table 3.2 and 101, figure 3.4.

29 Daniel Sheffield identified the Pahlavi model of Sv in the *Wizirkerd ī Dēnīg*, chapter 105. There the life-giving herbs are described as growing in Iran, and they are explained as wise words. The figures of Anūshirwān and Burzoy, along with the fact that such wisdom is contained in books, appear only in the Arabic versions; see idem, “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 MS Riyadh 2536, MS Arch. Museum EY 344 (and its near-verbatim copy MS London 3900; MS Paris 3478, a near-verbatim copy of Riyadh 2536, has a lacuna at Sv), all belonging to I-c, and further in MS Pococke 400 (and its close parallel MS London Add 24350 and near-verbatim copy MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486]), MS Munich 616, MS Paris 3467, and MS New York 1981.373. The last four manuscripts contain Lv as well.

30 For further traits of this continuum, also called the *recensio iberica*, see Chapter 3, 82 (on group E) and 96–97. On the presence and sequence of the various prefaces in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see Johannes Stephan, “A Sense of No Ending: *Kalīla and Dimna* between Fluidity and Completeness,” in the special issue on “How to End Things in Arabic Literature,” ed. Lale Behzadi and Bilal Orfali, *Al-Abhath* 71 (2023), 53–81, <https://doi.org/10.1163/2589997X-00710101>.

earliest extant Arabic manuscript of this continuum is a century younger and must derive from an earlier *Vorlage*.

4 The Limitations of the Continuum

Before showing in detail the elements that make up a continuum, the limitations of the concept need to be clarified: first, it does not apply to *all* extant manuscripts, and second, it is only one of several ways in which manuscripts may relate to each other.

4.1 *Applicability*

To begin with the first point, not all manuscripts can be placed along a continuum. A number of early manuscripts from the seventh/thirteenth and the eighth/fourteenth century fall outside the established continua.³¹ The amount of text they share with other manuscripts is too limited to classify them in this way; they simply lack too many narrative units present in P-c or L-c. Conversely, they share units between them. In some places they differ drastically both from each other and from the identified continua, while in others, phrases between them overlap. Some of these diverse early manuscripts show evidence of cross-copying (on which see below), but the exact sources cannot be traced besides in snippets of the indirect tradition for lack of earlier complete *Vorlagen*. Each of the early manuscripts furthermore exhibits idiosyncratic traits, all of which require further study.

Another type of manuscripts falling outside the continua are demonstrable combinations of *Vorlagen*, whose sources can be determined, as far as they are extant in the corpus. This practice, designated as cross-copying, takes the form either of small-scale intercalations of phrases from several known versions or of an assemblage of large blocks, even entire chapters, from different versions,

31 Here belong the idiosyncratic MS Rabat 3655 and its near-verbatim copy MS Paris 3475 (on which see also note 15) and MS New York 1981.373, datable before 1026/1617, containing a much earlier text version. Furthermore, MS Pococke 400, dated 755/1354, along with its parallel MS Paris 3467, datable before 856/1452, and its near-verbatim copies MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, and MS London Add. 24350, dated to the fourteenth century CE, all have an early main text but share a structural innovation with further manuscripts which have been subsumed under the First *Risāla* group; see Beatrice Gruendler and Khoulood Khalfallah, "Anthologizing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: The Incipit of the First *Risāla*," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 105–160. MS Parker 578 is an early manuscript, dated to the fourteenth century CE, but it represents a collage; see note 32.

and these cross-copied versions also deserve further investigation.³² 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 diagnostic editions below, both early and cross-copied witnesses are included to be able to define the borders of a given continuum. The cross-copied versions can also help us to restore any wording lost through lacunae in those cases where passages from a continuum have been reused in cross-copied versions. 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 have not survived or be additions of these copyist-redactors themselves.³³

We have also disregarded near-verbatim copies (in which the copyist did not act as a co-author), as they do not contribute to an understanding of the dynamic of the continua, but they are retained for the purpose of 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-copied versions received a disproportionately high share of near-verbatim copies, making it seem as if those collages were held in particularly high esteem.

4.2 *Parameters*

Being part of a continuum is only one dimension of a version and the manuscript containing it, clarifying the way in which its main text is related to others. The relation intended here concerns the microlevel, that is the formulation in the body of the text, and it extends to the mesostructure of intercalated sub-stories to the degree that this structure changes between continua and helps us to distinguish one from another. Not considered here are the additions of larger parts, for example of entire prefaces or chapters, which occur in only some of the manuscripts (As, Sv, Km, Df, Kw),³⁴ the paratexts added by

32 Obvious cases of fine-grained cross-copying are MS Parker 578, MS Pococke 400, MS Paris 3471, dated 1053/1643, MS Ayasofya 4214, datable before 761/1360 (with near-verbatim copies MS Paris 5881, dated 1092/1681, and MS Dar al-Kutub 1169, datable before 1290/1874), and MS Bodleian 253, dated 1227/1812. MS Paris 3477 evinces cross-copying of large blocks (see Gruendler and Khalfallah, "Anthologizing *Kalila wa-Dimna*," 134–35). Versions with a minor extent of cross-copying are more difficult to detect. The cross-copying in MS Paris 3471 is not equally evident in all chapters.

33 One of the sources of MS Paris 3471 is the Dreams group (see note 28). MS Ayasofya 4214 (and MS Paris 5881 and MS Dar al-Kutub 1169) include combined passages taken from MS Parker 578, which is itself a collage, and MS Bodleian 253 likewise relies on earlier collages.

34 The presence (or absence) of the unstable chapters belongs to the macrostructure and is left aside here in discussing the interrelations of the main text within the stable chapters.

the copyist-redactors (incipit, explicit, table of contents), or manuscript notes made by subsequent owners and readers. The affiliation with a continuum thus informs us about the version of the main text contained by the material witness, while other elements need to be regarded separately and the findings compiled in a second step, which may yield contradictory results.³⁵

Furthermore, the incremental text change across a continuum is distinct from redactional interference within an individual witness. Each witness, besides changing gradually with a continuum, carries evidence of more or less individual rewriting. Such interference, however, can only be identified as a result of comparing all witnesses of a continuum, when the smaller changes in passages that were added, rewritten, or excised 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 crowd. 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. Regarding those manuscripts for which another version close in time and formulation exists, this second manuscript can be used as the closest comparative specimen. Thus, if an otherwise very close version shows additions in few places, those can then be dated to the time period in between the two versions—if not to the redactor of the later witness.³⁶

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 (at least) an entire chapter to detect potential trends and consistencies.

Indeed, the occurrence of the unstable chapters confirms the division into continua and contributes to the versions' classification; see Chapter 3, 81-82 with table 3.1 and 96-98 with table 3.2.

35 Paratexts may be taken from other versions; some manuscripts' incipits, for instance, derive from a version different than the one used as a *Vorlage* for the main text; see Gruendler and Khalfallah, “Anthologizing *Kalila wa-Dimna*,” 134-35. In other cases, the table of contents differs from a manuscript's actual sequence of chapters, making it clear that it has been taken from a different version, e.g., in MS Ayasofya 4213, dated 880/1476, MS New York 1981.373 datable before 1026/1617, and MS Chicago A 11991, attributed to the seventeenth century CE.

36 For example, Mc of MS München 618 resembles MS London 4044 closely except for a few added passages; in other chapters, however, MS München 618 departs from MS London 4044. Likewise, earlier witnesses of the Wetzstein subgroup make it possible to isolate the long additions of MS Wetzstein II 672, and MS Paris 3466 serves as a backdrop to gauge the rewriting in MS Tunis 2281.

5 Two Continua in the Arabic Preface

Turning to the first example, the preface added by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, often titled “The Purpose of the Book” (*gharaḍ al-kitāb*) and at times ascribed to Buzurgmihr, here two continua are easily recognizable from 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 closely at the formulation within the units in each case (in the digital edition, identical segments are aligned for comparison). The units’ subdivisions respect the narrative while also taking account of the chapters’ structure as a frame dialogue and a main parable (unlike the prefatory chapters). The main parable is further subdivided into changes of the speaker, inserted wisdom sayings (*ḥikam*, sing. *ḥikma*), short analogical images (usually one sentence long), and sub-stories, which require further internal division. The segmentation is necessary for the analysis, but it is not alien to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* itself, since the work’s modular nature already prompted copyists to segment units of sense with paragraph symbols or mark their beginnings with rubricated or overlined words. Sub-stories often receive titles in the margin or in the running text.³⁷ The marked words are usually *inquits* (*qāla*, *qālat*), sentence-initial particles (such as *lammā*, *innamā*), or numbered items or persons in a list.³⁸ While text subdivision and highlighting are not uncommon in Arabic manuscripts, they are particularly present and fine-grained in manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. With time, abstracts were also added at the beginnings of chapters, commentaries at the ends of them, and short or long tables of contents placed variously in the As and Bu prefaces, at the end of the text, or within the copyist’s incipit, the latter type containing synopses of each chapter.³⁹ All this indicates that

37 For titles in the margins, see MS Paris 3471 and MS Wetzstein 11 672. For titles in the running text, see MS London 4044, MS Paris 2789, MS Leiden Or. 1590, and MS Paris 3593. For the relation between such titles and captions of images, see Chapter 4 by Rima Redwan.

38 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 Beatrice Gruendler, “Les versions arabes de *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: une transmission et une circulation mouvantes,” in *Énoncés sapientiels et littérature exemplaire: une intertextualité complexe*, ed. Marie-Sol Ortola, Nancy: Éditions Universitaires de Lorraine, 2013, 387–418, esp. 403–04.

39 The earliest table, formatted as a separate page, appears in MS Paris 3465, and the earliest table with synopses in MS Pockocke 400. Some manuscripts combine short and long tables with an intervening description of the book, such as MS Ayasofya 4214 and MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486]; the acephalous model of the latter, MS Pococke 400, and a similar version in the acephalous MS München 616 probably also contained both tables at some point. For further detail on the placement of tables of contents, see Gruendler and

easy navigation in the text was important to its users. The purpose may have been to extract pithy quotes, which had been done since the book's translation into Arabic,⁴⁰ yielding a copious indirect tradition of detached sayings, or to flag entertaining sub-stories for oral retelling, as has been documented recently for the last century in Israel/Palestine.⁴¹

In the Arabic preface, the presence or absence of numerous segments clearly distinguishes two continua (see table 2.1 in this chapter's Appendix). A key factor is the position of the sub-story of the Merchant and His Partner (115–126).⁴² 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.⁴³ The unlucky thief remains quiet about the failed theft and keeps his loss and his shame to himself in order not to lose face (123). In this continuum, Ibn al-Muqaffā' concludes by exhorting the reader in the first person to begin reading the book with the preface and to heed its precepts (111). He states, "I hope it will increase his insight and knowledge" and save him from having to read anything else, because "without such knowledge he will not benefit from it" (112). Shifting to the first-person plural, Ibn al-Muqaffā' then explains that he added the preface to impart essential information to the reader so that the matter of the book "be clear to him who wants to read, (understand,) and gain knowledge from it" (114).⁴⁴ While the three segments are shared with the early manuscripts, the quoted phrases 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

Khalfallah, "Anthologizing *Kalila wa-Dimna*," 123–28. A further navigation tool is images; see Chapter 4, 106, 116, 118, and 148.

40 See Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, 157–58 and Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009, 2:326.

41 For the discovery of recent oral tellings, I am indebted to Heba Tebakhi, see <https://blogs.fu-berlin.de/kalila-wa-dimna/2022/09/13/oral-storytelling-and-kalila-wa-dimna-hamza-al-aqrabawi/>, accessed August 8, 2023. Oral storytelling may well be older, as the undated MS Paris 3593 extracts only the sub-stories and may have served such a purpose. In the many illustrated manuscripts, sub-stories figure prominently and supply a further aid for navigation; see note 39 and Chapter 4.

42 Each number refers to a segment; those specific to one continuum are tabulated in the chapter's Appendix, subsection 3, table 2.2.

43 In the table of units, Appendix, subsection 2, table 2.1, each receives (besides a stable number particular to it) a serial number indicating its place within each witness.

44 Parentheses in the translation of a shared passage in a continuum mark the words that are not present in all witnesses; square brackets indicate words that appear beyond one continuum and are needed for the context.

slowly and carefully (*bi-jawdati l-qirā'ati wa-l-tathabbuti fihi*; 17)⁴⁵ and of understanding the text bit by bit, following the proper order (21) and the instructions of the present preface (111). “[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” (28, see table 2.2). This concerns particularly the book’s secret meanings (*khafīyyāt*, *khābīy*), which the reader is to extract (31). Man in general should seek knowledge (*‘ilm*, 36). Culture (*adab*) is what everyone needs most in life besides money (39), and it must be respected as much as death (40). 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 kicked ball soaring in the air (43). A further epistemic aspect emphasized in L-c is the checking of received information. A person who fails to do this accepts questionable information, and this error is further subdivided into three ways of erring in L-c (104).⁴⁶ While the Arabic adaptation of *Kalila wa-Dimna* preceded the massive rise of Arabic books in the third/ninth century, the second/eighth century also witnessed the appearance of a few Arabic books. Some of these were written on commission and others were translated from Greek or Middle Persian. Moreover, the codex was familiar from Christian books in Greek, Coptic, and Syriac, to which Arabic translations of Christian texts were soon added.⁴⁷ 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. However, he soon commits a linguistic error in public (*laḥn*, *khaṭa’*), because he has confused knowing something by heart with understanding and applying it (32–35).⁴⁸ Elsewhere, (mere) memorization is juxtaposed with a lack of action and

45 A passage in this unit on following the wisdom of the forebears, present in early manuscripts that share the unit, has been excised in L-c.

46 Lacunae in some manuscripts of L-c can be supplied from MS Paris 5881, which contains the passage.

47 On Arabic books of the second/eighth century, see Schoeler, *Genesis*, 54–67 and idem, *The Oral and the Written*, 34 and 71–73; on early Christian books, see Gruendler, *Rise of the Arabic Book*, 3 and 14 and references given there.

48 For an analysis of this sub-story, see Beatrice Gruendler, “Media in Flux: The Tale of the Yellow Folio from *Kalila wa-Dimna*,” in *Doing Justice to a Wronged Literature: Essays on Arabic Literature and Rhetoric of the 12th–18th Centuries in Honour of Thomas Bauer*, eds. Hakan Özkan and Nefeli Papoutsakis, Leiden: Brill, 2022, 147–72.

condemned (68). A further focus of L-c is ethics, namely that actions must be beneficial and not harm others (67, 71), and that one should be steadfast in life, neither despairing (78, 89) nor relying on fortune (92).

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 in 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 (117):⁴⁹

انطلق إلى صديق له فأخبره بالذي ... همّ به ... وسأله أن يعينه عليه فأبى صديقه ذلك ... إلا أن يجعل / أو يجعل / حتى جعل له نصف ما يأخذ منه (ففعّل)

In P-c, the hiring of the helper is mentioned later as an aside during the burglary. The surrounding text demonstrates little variation within this continuum, yet the term for the agreement varies between the versions (120):

ومعه رجل قد واطأه على (MS Paris 3473, MS Hamburg 170, MS Paris 3465) / استأجره (MS Paris 2789) / اتفق معه (MS Riyadh 2407) / أوصاه على (MS Wetzstein II 672) ما عزم عليه وضمن له جعلاً

Another example of lexical variety from the preface is the designation of a thief's garb, which he takes off to carry in his clothes the grain he wants to steal in another sub-story, that of the Pauper and the Thief (84–88). In a sentence that otherwise changes little, this varies in P-c between “shirt,” “coat,” and “garb” (*qamīṣ* MS Paris 3465; *izār* MS Paris 2789, MS Riyadh 2407, MS Paris 3473, MS Wetzstein II 672; *kisāʾ* MS Paris 3473; *ridāʾ* MS Hamburg 170; 86 and 88), whereas L-c (and early manuscripts) use the stable term *milḥafa* “wrap, shawl.” This actualizing of narrative details 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 (120) lies rather on the effort of carrying the heavy stolen goods 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:

49 Words absent from some versions of a continuum are replaced by points of suspension or marked with parentheses, and words that diverge between them are given after a forward slash.

فاحتلماً عدلاً بجهدٍ حتى أخرجاه وجعل هو والرجل يتعاونان على حمله حتى صار إلى
منزله فرمى بنفسه من شدة التعب والجهد

MS Paris 3473

فاحتله هو والحمال واقتلعه من داخل الحانوت وذهب يريد به منزله فلما وصل
إلى منزله وألقاه عن ظهر الحمال وانحدر به إلى داخل المنزل واستلقى على قفاه
ليستريح لنفسه مما ناله من شدة المعالجة وقوة الحركة وثقل الحمل وهو يظن أنه ظافراً
بما أصاب⁵⁰

MS Tunis 2281

The confession of the fraudulent partner specific to P-c prompts the honest partner to hold up a mirror to him with another sub-story, the Thief and the Two Jars (128–131). This thief confuses the jars and carries off the one containing grain, having intended to steal the other one, filled with coins. Two further sub-stories follow. In the Three Brothers (135–143), the youngest brother saves his older wasteful siblings by sharing his preserved inheritance with them and helping them to better their ways.

The last sub-story in P-c, the Fisher and the Pearl (146–149), exemplifies a fisher's lack of perseverance; he gives up after a shell he brings up from a lagoon turns out to be empty. Subsequently, 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 (157–161). Again, the vocation specified in the third goal varies in the manuscripts between that of the transmitter (*nāqil*), the copyist (*nāsikh*), the illustrator (*muṣawwir*), the colourer of images (*ṣabbāgh min qibali l-ṣuwar*), and the stationer (*warrāq*). The sophisticated division of labor among craftsmen involved in book production derives from a later period and represents another instance of the actualization of the text by copyist-redactors. A reinterpretation of the phrase *uns al-mulūk* in the second goal as *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 to the second goal, combining royal women with children as those entertained by animal stories. This segment (159) is of particular interest, as it defines *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as

50 The preposition *li-naḥsihī* and the conjunction introducing the apodosis *wa-stalqā* are pleonastic features of Middle Arabic, retained in the edition.

an illustrated book. The earliest complete illustrated witnesses date to the seventh/thirteenth century (MS Paris 3465, MS Rabat 3655). Fragments with colored illustrations from the Geniza (T-S Ar. 40.9, T-S Ar. 51.60) are datable to ca. 950–1250 CE, but the indirect tradition from the third/ninth century already mentions illustrated or illuminated copies.⁵¹

In keeping with the increase of sub-stories, the versions of P-c emphasize the two layers of meaning of the parables (133–134) and the need to analogically decode them, using the logical terms of “premises” (*muqaddimāt*, 15) and “conclusion” (*natīja*, 15, 18, 145), as well as frequently recalling throughout the preface the genre of parables (*amthāl*), their meaning, and their secret content (*asrār*; 15, 134, 150; see also table 2.1).⁵² The reader must unlock this secret meaning (134, 145, 150) and not be led to think that the book is *about* animals, lest he miss the point (145). Superficial readers who *only* seek pleasure are blamed for missing the book’s deeper meaning (151, all of P-c; not in Q-c). The proper reader needs stamina (153; not in the MS Paris 3465 subgroup) and must be aware that the book has both an outer and an inner meaning. This concept of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, though mentioned once each in the early manuscripts and L-c (28, 29), is here used repeatedly and established as the basis for decoding the parables (9, 11 (only Q-c), 29, 150, 151, 156).⁵³ Moreover, this task is addressed to a mature audience of adults, constituted by intelligent people, philosophers, and kings (157, 161).

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 purpose and condemns the use of it for mere pleasure. An erudite elite audience is the book’s true aim, though it also caters to children (and royal women) as lesser readers. P-c combines its superior storytelling techniques with the rhetoric to justify it, claiming the status of high literature. The Middle Arabic features of many witnesses might have entered later, and these features indeed reach a zenith in some witnesses of the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, it appears that this approach was more successful

51 See Gruendler, *Rise of the Arabic Book*, 152–153. On illustrated manuscripts of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, see Chapter 4.

52 See the chapter’s Appendix, subsections 4–5, for analysis of units 15 (P-c) vs. 28 (L-c).

53 Further instances appear in only one version per unit, namely in 11 (MS Tunis 2281), 28 (MSS Paris 5881 and Pococke 400), and 151 (MS Wetzstein II 672).

54 See also Chapter 8. The passage’s claim may indicate a certain anxiety that the status of the text would slip, or was already slipping, towards popular entertainment literature. 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

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, we can attempt to form a hypothesis as to 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 (71 followed by 115–120, 122–123), and in P-c that one should treat others as one would like to be treated oneself and not seek gain by harming others (110 followed by 115–121, 124–132). Both introductory sayings contain a similar sentence:

وينبغي لمن عقل أن لا يطلب أمراً فيه مضرة لصاحبه يطلب بذلك صلاح نفسه
71, L-c⁵⁵

ويجب على العاقل أن... ويجب للناس ما يحبّه لنفسه (ويكره للناس ما يكرهه لنفسه)
ولا يلتبس صلاح نفسه بفساد غيره

110 P-c

This segment was probably moved towards the end of P-c together with the tale that follows and illustrates it. Further sayings at different places in the Arabic preface are almost synonymous, as if they grew out of a duplication after the chapter was reordered (53–54 with 107 on following a wrong path without reconsidering; 65 with 101 on things necessary in life; 72 and 74–75 with 97 on guarding God's limits; and 133–134 with 153 on how proper reading takes time). Comparable duplications occur in one of the early manuscripts, MS Riyadh 2536, in which one page of the Arabic preface was restored using a version from a different continuum. Relocating the sub-story in P-c (and Q-c) to the middle of the preface was an uncomplicated affair, since the preface has no narrative sequence like the other chapters, consisting rather of thematic blocks on how to read, acquire knowledge and apply it in life, and conduct oneself exemplarily.

The more likely scenario is that the order of L-c is older, as it contains all these blocks once, whereas the final thematic block in P-c is a duplication of

turning point in the development of Arabic mirrors of princes," namely from Indian and Persian princes' mirrors to the "people's mirror" of *The Thousand and One Nights*; idem, "Epistles," 23.

55 The unit in L-c is formulated in the negative, whereas in P-c, it is formulated in the positive.

the first one, detailing how to read properly. This might have been added to summarize and conclude the preface following the cluster of tales added after the Merchant and His Partner (115–126). Among those, the Thief and the Two Jars (128–131) simply repeats a plot element of the former tale, while the Three Brothers (135–143), is about the proper management of wealth. Though this has no connection to the preface's main themes, the topic is discussed elsewhere in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

In the Arabic preface, a bird's-eye view is sufficient to distinguish the continua, and though their different formulation within the units corroborates these findings, it would take unnecessary space to go into further detail here.⁵⁶ In other passages digitally edited for analysis, the continua bifurcate less through the presence or absence of entire segments than by the formulation within them, as the following example of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat will show.

6 Two Continua in the Rat and the Cat (Mc)

In the chapter about the Rat⁵⁷ and the Cat 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 (see table 2.3).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 the cat's protection against the other foes. They then proceed as agreed, 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 therefore come to an end.

56 For a comparative close reading of one sub-story, the Yellow Folio, see Gruendler, "Media in Flux."

57 The animal is a mouse in Sanskrit and in translations from the Arabic, but since it is a rat in the Arabic versions, I refer to it as such. The cultural translation of animals is common in *Kalīla and Dimna*, such as jackals turning into foxes etc. Likewise the animals' grammatical gender varies between languages.

58 This chapter has been analyzed elsewhere with a focus on the trends of rewriting in three manuscripts. See Beatrice Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors: Silent Co-Authorship in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*," in *Les périples de Kalīla et Dimna: quand les fables voyagent dans la littérature et les arts du monde islamique*, eds. Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden: Brill, 2022, 3–42. The present discussion studies the interrelations of a wider sample of manuscripts.

The rat's approach to cut the cat's cords (40) appears earlier (before segments 38–39) and with a distinct formulation (*aqbala l-juradh 'alā/ilā taqrīd al-ḥibāl*) only in the Wetzstein subgroup of P-c, whereas the cat's acceptance of the truce with the words "I will do this gladly" (*af'alu dhālika wa-ni'ma*; MS London 4044, 37)⁵⁹ and his fear of death at the hunter's approach (64) are proper to L-c, as well as a saying that friendship serves only for profit (54).⁶⁰ This last segment derives from the fourth and final dialogue between the now rescued cat and rat. The conversation deals with types of friendship and shows the largest divergence between the continua. One unit only present in the Wetzstein subgroup (58) is a saying about harvesting at the wrong time, which recontextualizes a rereading of the *rasm* in the previous segment.⁶¹ All other units are shared as whole entities, yet their internal formulation differs.

In the segments shared by both continua, the formulation differs between them. To proceed in the order of the narrative, a segment toward the beginning, telling of the rat's reflection (cornered by the owl and the weasel) that to save himself by an arrangement with the cat is the only option, demonstrates certain differences. Only in L-c (and early manuscripts) do we find the sentence "I see no better ploy than to seek [a truce with the cat]" and "(perhaps) I can save him (beginning of 21, see table 2.3)."⁶² Conversely, P-c adds a phrase to clarify the animals' similar position, "The same disaster [happened to him] as to me (beginning of 21)." More phrases are shared within the We subgroup of P-c specifically concerning 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 the situation we are in" (*yastabshiru bi-ṣulḥī ... mim mā naḥnu bihī*; end of 21).

In a segment in which the rat proposes the solution to the cat, L-c emphasizes how the rat had earlier experienced *schadenfreude* at any harm suffered by the cat: "I used to be pleased by what harmed you" (*kuntu ... yasurrunī mā*

59 The segment also appears in the idiosyncratic MS München 618, dated 1046/1636, and MS Beirut 0022(2), dated 1263/1847 (Q-c), which are not included in this edition.

60 Segments 55 and 65 also appear in early manuscripts. Segment 55 further appears in MS Wetzstein 11 672 through cross-copying. MS Wetzstein 11 672 shows occasional reliance on a version belonging to L-c. The copyist, who was a poet, composer, and owner of a library, had several manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* at his disposal, one of them being MS Dar al-Kutub 967, which bears his ownership note and another is MS London 7414 (see chapter 8, n. 56).

61 *Alja'anī* (الجانّي) "made me seek recourse" is reread as *al-jānī* (الجانّي) "the harvester" and completed with *li-l-thamr/al-thamr* "of fruit" to make sense.

62 On the use of parentheses, see note 44. For a list of Mc segments with major differences, see the chapter's Appendix, subsection 7. See also the analytic charts for the following segments, subsections 8–11.

sā'aka/yasū'uka; 25). In the following segment in L-c (and early manuscripts), the rat draws out the situation by recalling that the two foes who have cornered him fear the cat, and immediately asks for a guarantee of safety from him (*wa-hum yakhāfānika wa-yattaqiyānika/yahābānika ... wa-in ammantanī*; 26). In P-c, however, 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 ja'alta/ra'ayta an taj'ala lī l-amāna/dhimāman/'ahdan wa-mīthāqan ...*; 26).

In the second dialogue, the rat explains to the cat that there are two different kinds of friendship in order to justify his delay 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 to the effect that one always obliges or trusts him (*wa-yu'malu/yūthaqu bihī/yu'manu lahū [ʿalā kulli ḥālīn]*; 49).

In the long fourth and final dialogue, the rat explains the nature of a temporary friendship. To navigate such a risky 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: "[The intelligent person] is trusting at times and wary at others, and pleased at times and angry at others" ([*al-ʿāqilu*] *yastarsilu marratan/sā'atan wa-yaḥtarisu ukhrā wa-yardā marratan/tāratan wa-yaskhuṭu ukhrā*, 84).

In the following segment (85), the rat defines the friendship with the cat precisely as one born out of need and therefore limited in time, and in L-c he contrasts this with the occasional ending of a true friendship "[whose root] was not enmity." The Wetzstein subgroup of P-c describes this in opposite terms as an enmity "[whose root] was friendship." There, the other kind of friendship, namely the useful one between the protagonists, simply "ends" (*inqaḍā*, 88), whereas L-c (and MS Parker 578) emphasize that a friendship born of enmity naturally returns to its original state after a temporary truce (*fa-ammā mā kāna aṣluhū 'adāwatan ... fa-taḥawwalat/wa-yataḥawwalu adāwadatan*, 85).

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*, 87) and adds in the following segment about the end of the truce that it was created merely out of mutual need (*fa-aḥdatha ... al-muṣālaḥata ... [wa-qad dhahaba l-amru] alladhī ḥtajta (fihī) ilayya wa-ḥtajtu ilayka fihī/iḥtāja kullu wāḥidin minnā ilā ṣāḥibihī*, 88; also in MS Paris 3475, MS Paris 3473). Later in L-c, the rat draws the necessary conclusion and emphasizes the urgency of ending a friendship grown out of need ([*al-ʿāqilu*] *yu'ajjilu l-inṣirāfa 'anhu*, 93).

L-c also draws out an 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/*

yatahayya'u/yanshaqqu sā'atan/marratan wa-yumsiku/yanqaṭi'u/yaqla'u (marratan) ukhrā, 84) 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/al-dhalīli/li-l-ḍa'ifi qurba/fi qurbi/fi dunuwwin min al-'aduwwi (l-qawīyyi) l-'azīzi*, 89).

These variations demonstrate that Mc is subject to a bifurcation between the continua, with L-c containing slightly more segments and phrases, some of which are shared with the early manuscripts, and others which have been 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, namely types of friendship. They occur predominantly within the speech of the characters, mostly in the rat's monologues 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 conjunction, these small edits within L-c constitute a perceptible trend: They refine and sharpen the strategic calculations in a formerly useful—but now fatal—friendship.

To summarize, the segments in Mc are mostly shared between the two continua, which distinguish themselves from the early manuscripts.⁶³ Those early segments missing in the continua are often taken over in the later cross-copied versions that combine these with segments from the continua.⁶⁴ To discover the difference between the two continua in this chapter, we need to consider the formulation of the shared segments. Particularly in L-c, the elaborations center on the focus of the chapter, namely the nature of a limited partnership, and specifically 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 in comparison with the Older Syriac version.⁶⁵ The concept clearly aroused controversy, provoking lengthy explanation in the fourth dialogue. Particular insistence is placed on the necessity of caution for the duration of the friendship, 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 human beings in general and the importance of adjusting to changing situations.

63 For a visualization, see the dendrogram of Mc in Gruendler and Kozae, "Human Intuition and Computational Clustering."

64 See MS Paris 3471 and MS Ayasofya 4214 (represented by its near-verbatim copy MS Paris 5881) in the Appendix, subsections 8–11.

65 For the more substantial rewriting and Christianization of the Younger Syriac version, see Chapter 5.

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 as well.

Second, the kinds of additions cover a range. Many are synonymous reformulations (potentially in a style more familiar to the copyist-redactor, including select dialectal expressions), others add narrative detail and round off the plot or attribute psychological motivations to the characters. Sub-stories receive final commentaries, linking them explicitly to the argument they serve, and sayings and images are expanded with added paraphrases.⁶⁶ Occasionally, final reflections about the gist of the chapter are placed in the mouth of the philosopher in a return to the frame dialogue.⁶⁷

The continuum has been shown to provide a valid model for analyzing the mobile Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The use of the model relies on a critical digital edition that makes it possible to align and compare versions, although it is not possible (neither for the screen nor for the eye) to view the full spectrum at the same time. However, closely related versions can be compared in one diagnostic digital edition, while selected witnesses for each of P-c, Q-c, L-c, I-c, early manuscripts, 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, we 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 the same thing is said differently elsewhere, encouraging the reader to acquire a habit of horizontal perusal. Even this is not entirely new, as the anonymous compilations of different versions, such as MS Ayasofya 4214 (along with its near-verbatim copies MS Paris 5881 and Dar

66 See for example the commentary to the sub-story of the Yellow Folio (Im 35).

67 See for example the philosopher's commentary at the end of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (Mc 107–108).

al-Kutub 1169) and MS Paris 3471 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 us 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 us to isolate those passages in individual versions that depart from it and that can be attributed to the last copyist-redactor (or to any lost *Vorlage*).

It is still unclear how copyist-redactors went about creating their versions, particularly those that combine a number of *Vorlagen* with visible skill and dramatic effect. In at least one witness, MS München 616, marginalia copied from another manuscript expand the narrative,⁶⁸ and this might reflect an interim phase occurring before a further copyist-redactor would integrate this into the main text. In another case, MS Vatican Borg. 213, a manuscript preserves three stages of work: note-taking, the resulting abridgments of a number of chapters, and the chapters in their original length, revealing a targeted approach of preserving the chapters' core messages and the sub-stories' narrative climax.⁶⁹ Further discoveries may reveal more about such techniques and increase our knowledge of creative premodern Arabic-Islamic transmission practices—different from the better known scholarly conventions—which for centuries kept *Kalīla wa-Dimna* mobile and alive.

Appendix

1 *The Continua and Their Manuscripts*⁷⁰

Early Manuscripts

MS Pococke 400 = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 400 (755/1354) with near-verbatim copies MS Manchester 2 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms. 2 [formerly 486] (dated 1040/1631) and MS London Add. 24350 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 24350 (attributed to the 14th century CE).

68 This occurs notably in the sub-story of the Carpenter and His Wife in the Oc chapter (fol. 94r), as well as in other places of the Oc and Rd chapters (between fols. 80r and 96r); the model was most likely MS München 618.

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

70 For full alphabetical and chronological lists of the manuscripts and their online links, see the Lists of Manuscripts, 291–305.

MS Paris 3467 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3467 (datable before 856/1452)

MS New York 1981.373 = New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ms. 1981.373 (datable before 1026/1617)

MS Rabat 3566 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, 3655 (fragment, dated to c.1265–80 CE) with near verbatim copy MS Paris 3475 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

Paris continuum

Paris 3465 subgroup

MS Paris 3465 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3465 (dated to circa 1220) with near-verbatim copies MS Clarke Or. 9 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, E.D. Clarke Or. 9 (attributed to the 14th century CE), MS Paris 3470 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3470 (attributed to the 16th century CE), and MS München 615 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 615 (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE)

MS Paris 2789 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 278 (MTM, first part dated 1008/1599–1600)

MS Hamburg 170 = Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, cod. orient. 170 (undated)

MS London Add. 23466 = British Library, London. Or. Add. 23466 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

Wetzstein subgroup

MS Princeton 169H = Princeton University Garrett Library 169H (dated 997/1588) [Hitti no. 176] near-verbatim copies MS Paris 3473 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3473 (dated 1110/1699) and MS Riyadh 2407 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, 2407 (dated 1103/1692)

MS Wetzstein II 672 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830)

London continuum

MS Ayasofya 4095 = Istanbul, Ayasofya, 4095 (dated 618/1221)

MS Dayr al-Shīr = Dayr al-Shīr, Lebanon (749/1348)

MS London 8751 = London, British Library, Or. 8751 (dated 799/1369)

MS London 4044 = London, British Library, Or. 4044 (dated to ninth/fifteenth century)

Queen continuum (aligns with Paris continuum from the beginning to Rd, then switches to London continuum from Oc to the end, this includes Mc)

MS Paris 3466 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3466 (datable before 854/1450)

MS Tunis 2281 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, 2281 (dated 1070/1660)

Ms Beirut 0022(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, 0022(2) (dated 1263/1847)

Iberian continuum

MS Arch. Museum EY 344 = Istanbul, Archæological Museum, EY 344 (attributed to the 17th century) with near-verbatim copy Paris 3478 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3478 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

MS Riyadh 2536 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, MS 2536 (dated 747/1346) with near-verbatim copy MS London 3900 = London, British Library, Or. 3900 (dated 1166/1753)

Old Castilian version

Hebrew version

Latin version

Cross-copied versions

MS Parker 578 = Parker Library, Cambridge Corpus, 578 (dated to the 14th century CE)

MS Paris 3471 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3471 (dated 1053/1643)

MS Paris 3477 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3477 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

MS Ayasofya 4214 = Istanbul, Süleymanîye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 4214 (datable before 761/1360) with near-verbatim copies MS Paris 5881 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5881 (dated 1092/1681) and MS Dar al-Kutub 1169 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 1169 (datable before 1290/1874)

MS Dar al-Kutub 967 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 967 (dated 1030/1621)

Idiosyncratic versions

MS München 618 (in Mc) = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 618 (dated 1046/1636)

MS Bodleian 253 (in Mc) = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arab. Ms. 253 (dated 1227/1812)

Unit Table of the Preface of Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffa'

Unit number and label	
0	Arabic Introduction
1	Chapter Title
2	Baydaba's Composition
3	Ibn al-Muqaffa' Describes the Book
4	Parables Originated with Scholars of India
5	Scholars Desire to Be Understood
6	Scholars Commit to Debate and Prefer It
7	Scholars Record Knowledge
8	Scholars Put Knowledge in Book of Fables
9	Fables Facilitate Many Types of Discourse
10	Farmer Works Land for Yield Not Weed
11	"Book Is Used for Wisdom, Pleasure, and Knowledge"
12	Acquired Knowledge Manifests in Adulthood
13	Bequeathed Treasure Suffices
14	Knowledge Has Many Branches
5	Reader Must Decode Parables

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (cont.)

Unit number and label		L4044	L8751	A4095	P3475	P400	I344	P5881	P3471	T2281	P3466	BWII672	P3473	R2407	H170	P2789	P3465
16	Displaced Chapter Title		16														
17	Reader Must Read Well and Reflect		17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17		17					
18	Careful Reader Reaps the Most		18														
19	Hasty Reader Benefits Nothing																
20	Indiscriminate Reader Benefits Nothing																
21	"Voracious, Disoriented Reader"							21	21	21							
22	Reading Without Implementation Is Labour Lost							22	22	22							
23	Treasure Discovered							23	23	23							
24	Discoverer Hires Help							24	24	24							
25	Discoverer Expects Success							25	25	25							
26	Helpers Take Treasure							26	26	26							
27	Discoverer Loses Treasure							27	27	27							
28	Readers Should Read Carefully and Reflect							28	28	28							
29	Readers Should Look for Hidden Meaning							29	29	29							
30	A Nut Has to Be Cracked							30	30	30							
31	Readers Should Extract Hidden Meaning							31	31	31							

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		L4044	L8751	A4095	P3475	P400	I344	P5881	P3471	T2281	P3466	BWII672	P3473	R2407	H170	P2789	P3465
66	One Should Not Condemn Faults in Others One Has				66	66											
67	Things Should not Be Pursued without Premeditation		67	67	67			67									
68	Some Readers Err in This			68	68												
69	The Passive Reader Is Like a Blind			69													
70	Reader Is Like a Blind Blaming another Blind					70	70		70								
71	No Benefit Should Be Obtained by Harming Others					71	71	71	71								
72	One Must Know When to Halt Pursuit					80	80	80	80								
73	He Who Strives Aimlessly Fails					81											
74	A Pursuit without a Clear Goal Is Treacherous					82	82	82	82								
75	One Should Not Seek the Unattainable					83	83	83	83								
76	The Here Is Not to Be Preferred Over the Hereafter					84	84	84	84								
77	Detachment Eases Death					85	85	85	85								
78	One Should Not Despair from Attaining Goals							86	86								
79	Two Things Suit Everyone					87	87	87	87								
80	Two Things Do Not Suit Anyone					80	80	80	80								
81	Fire Consumes Every Log					81	81	81	81								
82	Fire and Water Do Not Mix					82	82	82	82								
83	God's Blessings Arrive When Least Expected					83	83	83	83								

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (*cont.*)

[illegible]

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (cont.)

Unit number and label		P3465	P2789	H170	R2407	P3473	BWII672	P3466	T2281	P3471	P5881	I344	P400	P3475	A4095	L8751	L4044
116	The Merchant Devises a Plot	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	79	95	87	92	80	80	79
117	The Merchant Executes the Plot	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	80	96	88	93	81	81	80
118	The Partner Finds the Garb	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	81	97	89	94	82	82	81
119	The Partner Moves the Garb	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	82	98	90	95	83	83	82
120	The Merchant Steals His Own Bale	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	83	99	91	96	84	84	83
121	The Merchant Discovers the Error at Home	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121							
122	The Merchant Notices the Error in the Shop										85	101	93	98	86	86	85
123	The Merchant Keeps Silent about His Betrayal										86		94	99	87	87	86
124	The Partner Fears Accusation (Monologue)	124	124	124	124		124	124	124	124							
125	The Partner Fears Accusation (Dialogue)	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125							
126	The Merchant Admits Treachery	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126							
127	The Merchant Explains Events upon Request	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127							
128	The Partner's Parable about the Thief	128	128	128	128	128	128	128	128	128							
129	The Thief Who Mistakes Grain for Gold	129	129	129	129	129	129	129	129	129							
130	The Thief Eyes Jar	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130							
131	The Thief Takes the Grain	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131							
132	The Merchant Forfeits Trust	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132							
133	The Reader Should Examine the Parables Carefully	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133							

TABLE 2.1 Unit table of the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (cont.)

Unit number and label	
L4044	
L8751	
A4095	
P3475	
P400	
I344	
P5881	
P3471	
T2281	
P3466	
BWII672	
P3473	
R2407	
H170	
P2789	
P3465	
134 The Reader Should Discern the Aim	134 134 134 134 134 134
135 Two Brothers Waste Bequeathed Wealth	135 135 135 135 135 135
136 The Youngest Brother Weighs the Situation	136 136 136 136 136 136
137 The Youngest Reflects on Wealth	137 137 137 137 137 137
138 Allocating Wealth Poorly is Poverty	138 138 138 138 138 138
139 A Wealth Well Spent Brings Praise	139 139 139 139 139 139
140 False Spending Brings Regret	140 140 140 140 140 140
141 The Youngest Brother Decides To Help	141 141 141 141 141 141
142 The Youngest Brother Scolds His Siblings	142
143 The Youngest Brother Shares His Wealth	143 143 143 143 143 143
144 The Reader Must Always Come Back to the Book	144 144 144 144 144 144
145 The Book Is Not about Animals	145 145 145 145 145 145
146 A Fisher Finds an Empty Shell	146 146 146 146 146 146
147 The Fisher Abandons His Catch for the Shell	147 147 147 147 147 147
148 The Fisher Misses the Pearl	148 148 148 148 148 148
149 Another Fisher Wins the Pearl	149 149 149 149 149 149
150 The Superficial Readers Miss the Meaning	150 150 150 150 150 150
151 Humor Seeking Readers	151 151 151 151 151 151

3 Units Diverging between Paris Continuum and London Continuum

The chart juxtaposes the Paris continuum (incl. Paris 3465 subgroup group and Wetzstein subgroup; aligning in this preface with the Queen continuum) with the London continuum. The Iberian continuum, early manuscripts of the seventh/thirteenth to eighth/fourteenth centuries (Pococke 400, Paris 3475 a near verbatim copy of Rabat 3655), and cross-copied manuscripts up to the eleventh/seventeenth century (Paris 5881, Paris 3471) are added for context. The units' types are labeled as follows: d = dialogue, n = narrative, g = gist, h = *ḥikma*, m = short *mathal*, analogy); “x” marks units present in all manuscripts of a column, otherwise the present manuscripts are specified or missing ones excluded.

TABLE 2.2 Units diverging between Paris continuum and London continuum

Unit number and label	Type	Paris continuum (aligning with Queen continuum)	London continuum	Iberian continuum	Early mss	Cross-copied mss
10 Farmer Works Land for Yield Not Weed	m	We subgroup				
14 Knowledge Has Many Branches	n		x		Poc. 400	P5881
17 Reader Must Read Well and Reflect	n	We II 672	x	x	x	P5881
21 Voracious, Disoriented Reader	n		x			P5881
25 Discoverer Expects Success	n	P3465 subgroup				
28 Readers Should Read Carefully and Reflect	n		x	x	P3475	P5881
31 Readers Should Extract Hidden Meaning	n		x		P3475	P5881
35 Using the Yellow Folio Proved His Ignorance	n	x		x	Poc. 400	P5881, P3471
36 One Should Seek Knowledge	h		A4095, L4044		P3475	

TABLE 2.2 Units diverging between Paris continuum and London continuum (*cont.*)

Unit number and label	Type	Paris continuum (aligning with Queen continuum)	London continuum	Iberian continuum	Early MSS	Cross-copied MSS
39 Culture and Knowledge Are a Necessity	h		A4095, L4044		P3475	P5881
40 Culture and Death Are Not to Be Disregarded	h		A4095, L8751		P3475	
43 A Ball Well Kicked Travels High	m		A4095, L4044			
53 Man Hears about Traveller	m		x	x	x	P5881
62 Silk Worm Benefits Only Others	h	x				P3471
66 One Should Not Condemn Faults in Others One Has	h	x		x	Poc. 400	P3471
67 Things Should Not Be Pursued without Premeditation	h		x		P3475	P5881
68 Some Readers Err in This	h		x		P3475	
71 No Benefit Should Be Obtained by Harming Others	h		x	x	Poc. 400	P5881
78 One Should Not Despair from Attaining Goals	h		x			
80 Two Things Do Not Suit Anyone	h	x				P3471
82 Fire and Water Do Not Mix	m	x				P3471
89 The Intelligent Man Must Not Despair	h		x			P5881
92 The Striving Masses Are the Model	h		x			P5881
94 One Should Benefit from Experience	h		x			P5881
104 The Types of Credulous Men	h		x			P5881

TABLE 2.2 Units diverging between Paris continuum and London continuum (*cont.*)

Unit number and label	Type	Paris continuum (aligning with Queen continuum)	London continuum	Iberian continuum	Early MSS	Cross-copied MSS
111 Reader Must Head the Instructions of the Preface	n		x	x	x	P5881
112 The Author Hopes That the Reader Would Benefit	n		x			P5881
114 The Translator Added the Preface	n		x	x	x	P5881
121 The Merchant Discovers the Error at Home	n	x				P3471
122 The Merchant Notices the Error in the Shop	n		x	x	x	P5881
123 The Merchant Keeps Silent about His Betrayal	n		x		x	P5881
124–133 end of The Merchant and His Partner, The Thief and the Jars (sub-stories)	n	x				P3471
133 The Reader Should Examine the Parables Carefully	n	x				P3471
134 The Reader Should Discern the Aim	n	x				P3471
135–143 The Three Brothers (sub-story)	n	except Q-c				P3471
144 The Reader Must Always Come Back to the Book	n	x				P3471
145 The Book Is Not about Animals	n	except P3465 group				P3471
146–149 The Fisher and the Pearl (sub-story)	n	x				P3471

TABLE 2.2 Units diverging between Paris continuum and London continuum (*cont.*)

Unit number and label	Type	Paris continuum (aligning with Queen continuum)	London continuum	Iberian continuum	Early MSS	Cross-copied MSS
150 The Superficial Readers Miss the Meaning	n	x				P3471
151 Humor Seeking Readers	n	except Q-c				
152 A Gardner Neglects His Harvest	m	except Q-c				
153 The Reader Needs Stamina and Focus	n	except P3465 group				P3471
154 The Teacher and the Student are Partners	h	We subgroup				
155 Friends Reach Agreement by Counseling	h	We subgroup (except We II 672)				
157 The Preface Is for Explaining the Target Audience		except P3465 subgroup				P3471
157–161 The Book’s Four Aims	n	x				P3471
Sum of units per column		47	23	9	17	35

4 *Cross Analysis of P-c Unit Im 15: Reader Must Decode Parables*

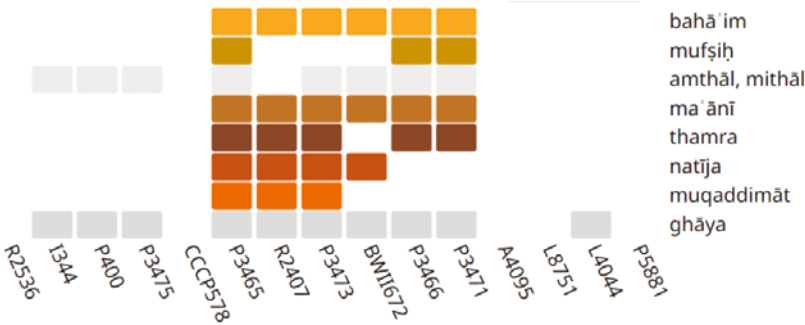


FIGURE 2.1 Cross analysis of P-c Unit Im 15: Reader Must Decode Parables

5 *Cross Analysis of L-c Unit Im 28: Readers Should Read Carefully and Reflect*

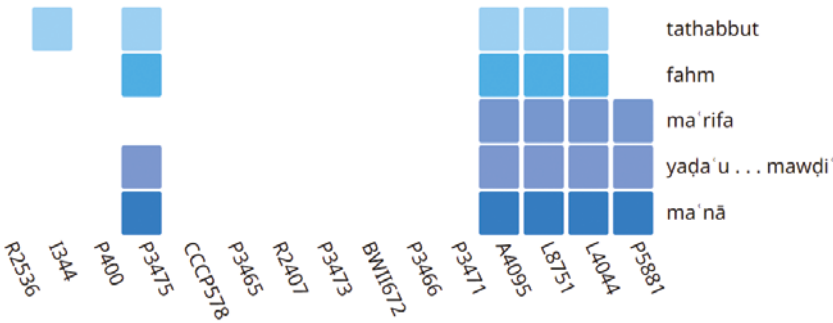


FIGURE 2.2 Cross analysis of L-c Unit Im 28: Readers Should Read Carefully and Reflect

6 Unit Table of the Chapter of the Rat and the Cat

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat

Unit number and label		P3471	L4044	L8751	CCCP578	P3466	A4095	BWII672	R2407	P3473	P3475	P5881	P3465	P400	R2536	I344
0	Mouse and Cat															
1	Chapter Title	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Abstract	2						2	2							
3	The King Asks about Escaping Enemies	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
4	The Philosopher Responds that Emotions Change	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	The Intelligent Adapts to Situations	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4				4	5
6	Enmity Must Not Stop One from Requesting Help					5	4	5	4	6	6	5	5	4	5	6
7	One's Disposition toward Friends and Foes Changes															7
8	The Intelligent Man Could Make Friends or Foes															8
9	The Resolute Attains His Need					6	5		5	7	6	6	5	6	7	9
10	The Parable of the Cat and Rat Is Invoked	6	5	5	7	6	6	8	8	6	6	8	7	7	6	10
11	The King Requests the Full Parable	7	6	6	8	7	7	9	9	7	7	9	8	8	7	11
12	The Rat and the Cat Live Next to a Tree	8	7	7	9	8	8	10	10	8	8	10	9	9	8	12
13	The Cat Is Caught	9	8	8	10	9	9	11	11	9	9	11	10	10	9	13

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		I344	R2536	P400	P3465	P5881	P3475	P3473	R2407	BWII672	A4095	P3466	CCCP578	L8751	L4044	P3471
14	The Rat Seeks Food	10	9	9	11	10	10	10	12	12	11	11	10	11	12	14
15	Foes Surround the Rat	11	10	10	12	11	11	11	13	13	12	12	11	12	13	15
16	The Rat Weighs His Predicament	12	11	11	13	12	12	12	14	14	13	13	12	13	14	16
17	Intelligence Is Revealed in Crises									15						
18	The Intelligent Always Keeps Alert			12	14	13	13	13	15		14	14	13	14	15	17
19	Intelligence Is Like the Sea	13	12	13	15	14	14	14	16	16	15	15	14	15		18
20	Situations Do Not Blind the Intelligent	14	13	14	16		15		17	17	16	16	15	16	16	19
21	The Rat Decides on a Pact with the Cat	15	14	15	17	15	16	15	18	18	17	17	16	17	17	20
22	The Rat Comes Up to the Cat	16	15	16	18	16	17	16	19	19	18		17	18	18	21
23	The Cat Acknowledges Being Trapped	17	16	17	19	17	18	17	20	20	19	18	18	19	19	22
24	The Rat Resolves to Be Sincere					18										
25	The Rat Points Out Their Common Problem	18	17	18	20	19	19	18	21	21	20	19	19	20	20	23
26	The Rat Proves His Sincerity	19	18	19	21	20	20	19	22	22	21	20	20	21	21	24
27	People Fail without Mutual Trust					21	21		23	23	22	21	21	22	22	25
28	The Rat Promises Faithfulness					22	22	20	24	24	23	22	22	23	23	26
29	The Intelligent Does Not Postpone Action					23	23	21	25	25	24	23	23	24	24	27

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		I344	R2536	P400	P3465	P5881	P3475	P3473	R2407	BWII672	A4095	P3466	CCCP578	L8751	L4044	P3471
30	The Cat Should Desire Common Rescue	19	20		24	24	24	22	26	26	25	24	24	25	25	28
31	Sailors Depend on Ships and Vice Versa	20	20	21	22	25	25	23	27	27	26	25	25	26	26	29
32	Cooperation Ensures Delivery for Both	21	21	22								26				30
33	Everything Happens According to Fate														27	
34	The Cat Puts His Trust in the Rat	22	22	23	23	26	26	24	28	28	27	27	26	27	28	31
35	The Rat Explains the Strategy	23	23	24		27	27	25	29	29	28	28	27	28	29	32
36	The Rat Explains the Detail of the Last Rope				24											
37	The Cat Accepts the Pact														30	
38	The Cat Fulfills His Part	24	24	25		28	28		30	30	29	29	28	29	31	33
39	The Foes Leave Frustrated	25	25	26	25		29	26	31	31	30	30	29	30	32	34
40	The Rat Approaches to Cut the Rope	26	26			29	30	27	32	32	31		30			
41	The Rat Begins to Cut the Rope			27	26			28	33	33		31		31	33	35
42	The Cat Deems the Rat's Efforts Slow	27	27	28	27	30	31	29	34	34	32	32	31	32	34	36
43	The Noble Must Help	28	28	29	28	31	32	30	35	35	33	33	32	33	35	37
44	The Cat States the Rat's Duty of Reciprocation				29	32	33	31	36	36	34	34	33	34	36	38
45	The Rat Should Forget Enmity	29	29	30	30	33	34	32	37	37	35	35	34	35	37	39

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		I344	R2536	P400	P3465	P5881	P3475	P3473	R2407	BWII672	A4095	P3466	CCCP578	L8751	L4044	P3471
46	Good Deeds Erase Bad Deeds	30	30	31		34		33	38	38	36	36	35	36	38	40
47	The Punishment of Betrayal Comes Swiftly				31	35	35	34	39	39	37	37	36	37	39	41
48	The Rat Must Fulfill the Pact	31	31	32								38				42
49	The Two Kinds of Friends	32	32	33	32	36	36	35	40	40	38	39	37	38	40	43
50	Trusting a Foe Is Like Eating Bad Food	33	33	34												44
51	The Intelligent Trades Favors				33	37	37	36		41	39	40	38	39	41	45
52	The Intelligent Protects Himself	34	34	35												46
53	Forced Friendship Does Not Last	35	35	36	34	38	38	37	41	42	40	41	39	40	42	47
54	Friendship Is Pursued For a Need					39	39			43	41	42	40	41	43	48
55	The Rat Acknowledges His Remaining Obligation	36	36													49
56	The Rat Explains the Reasons for Self-Protection					40	40	38	42	44	42	43	41	42	44	50
57	The Rat Resumes Cutting the Rope				35											
58	Ill-Timed Harvest							39	43	45						
59	Everything Has Its Time	37	37				41	40	44	46	43	44	42	43	45	51
60	Bad Timing Brings Failure	38	38					41	45	47	44	45		44		52
61	The Rat Explains Not Cutting the Last Rope	39	39	37		41	42	42	46	48	45	46	43	45	46	53

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		I344	R2536	P400	P3465	P5881	P3475	P3473	R2407	BWII672	A4095	P3466	CCCP578	L8751	L4044	P3471
62	The Rat Cuts All but One Rope						43	43	47	49	46	47		46	47	54
63	The Huntsman Approaches	40	40	38	36	42	44	44	48	50	47	48	44	47	48	55
64	The Cat Expects to Die	41	41	39								49			49	56
65	The Cat Requests Fulfillment				37										50	
66	The Rat Resolves to Cut the Last Rope					43	45	45	49	51	48	50	45	48		57
67	The Rat Fulfills the Pact				38	44	46	46	50	52	49	51	46	49	51	58
68	The Cat Breaks from the Last Rope	42	42	40												
69	The Cat and the Rat Escape	43	43	41	39	45	47	47	51	53	50	52	47	50	52	59
70	The Cat Calls Back the Rat	44	44	42	40	46	48	48	52	54	51	53	48	51	53	60
71	The Rat Refuses the Call					47										
72	The Cat Reminds the Rat of their Friendship	45	45	43	41	48	49	49	53	55	52	54	49	52	54	61
73	If One Gives Up a Friend One Loses Out				42	49	50	50	54	56	53	55	50	53	55	62
74	The Cat Suggests a Reward	46	46	44	43	50	51	51	55	57	54	56	51	54	56	63
75	The Cat Reassures the Rat	47	47	45		51	52	52	56	58	55	57	52	55	57	64
76	The Treatment of Friends or Foes	48	48	46			53								58	65
77	The Rat Distinguishes Hidden from Overt Enmity				44	52	54	53	57	59	56	58	53	56	59	66

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		The Great War															
P3471 L4044 L8751 CCCP578 P3466 A4095 BWII672 R2407 P3473 P3475 P5881 P3465 P400 R2536 I344	78	Hypocrisy Is the Worst Danger															
	79	Riding an Elephant's Tusk															
	80	An Enemy Is Befriended in Times of Need															
	81	One Should Not Befriend an Enemy Indefinitely															
	82	Young Cattle Only Nurse for a While															
	83	Clouds and Rain Come and Go															
	84	The Intelligent Adapts															
	85	Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need															
	86	Heated Water Cools Down															
	87	The Cat Is the Rat's Worst Enemy															
	88	The Rat's Need for Friendship Has Gone															
	89	The Weak Must Avoid the Strong															
	90	The Cat Desires the Rat for Food															
	91	The Prudent Rat															
	92	The Cautious Weak Is Better Than Deluded Strong															
	93	The Intelligent Escapes Forced Friendship															

TABLE 2.3 Unit table of the chapter of the Rat and the Cat (*cont.*)

Unit number and label		I344	R2536	P400	P3465	P5881	P3475	P3473	R2407	BWII672	A4095	P3466	CCCP578	L8751	L4044	P3471
94	Trusting Quickly Is Risky		49				69	66		74	71	73	68		74	82
95	The Intelligent Distrusts Forced Friendship		50				70	67	72	75	72	74	69	71	75	83
96	The Intelligent Must Leave Forced Friendship														76	
97	The Best Thing Is Distance From the Enemy		51				71	68	73	76	73	75	70	72	77	84
98	Staying Away from the Enemy is the Best Judgment						72	69	74	77	74	76	71	73	78	85
99	The Rat Will Love the Cat from Afar		52			66	73	70	75	78	75	77	72	74		86
100	The Rat Does Not Need a Reward		53				74	71	76	79	76	78	73	75	79	87
101	The Last Verdict Is No Reunion			55		67	75	72		80	77	79	74	76	80	88
102	The Rat Departs to Safety	55	56	55												89
103	The Philosopher Comments on the Rat's Foresight				68											90
104	The Philosopher Comments on Human Foresight				69											91
105	The Gist of the Chapter		56											77		
106	The Ending of the Chapter	56		55	70	76	73	77	81							92

7 *Mc Units Discussed in the Chapter*

Units diverging strongly between Paris continuum and London continuum are marked **bold**

- 21 **The Rat Decides on a Pact with the Cat** (ml), see fig. 2.3
- 25 **The Rat Points out Their Common Problem** (d)
- 26 **The Rat Proves His Sincerity** (d)
- 37 The Cat Accepts the Pact (n)
- 40 The Rat Approaches to Cut the Rope (n)
- 49 **The Two Kinds of Friends** (d)
- 54 Friendship is Pursued for a Need (ḥ)
- 64 The Cat Expects to Die (n)
- 73 **If One Gives up a Friend One Loses Out** (d)
- 83 **Clouds and Rain Come and Go** (m)
- 84 **The Intelligent Adapts** (ḥ)
- 85 **Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need** (ḥ), see fig. 2.4
- 87 **The Cat Is the Rat's Worst Enemy** (d)
- 88 **The Rat's Need for Friendship Has Gone** (d), see fig. 2.5
- 89 **The Weak Must Avoid the Strong** (ḥ)
- 93 **The Intelligent Escapes Forced Friendship** (ḥ), see fig. 2.6

8 *Cross Analysis of Unit Mc 21: The Rat Decides on a Pact with the Cat*



FIGURE 2.3 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 21: The Rat Decides on a Pact with the Cat

9 *Cross Analysis of Unit Mc 85: Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need*

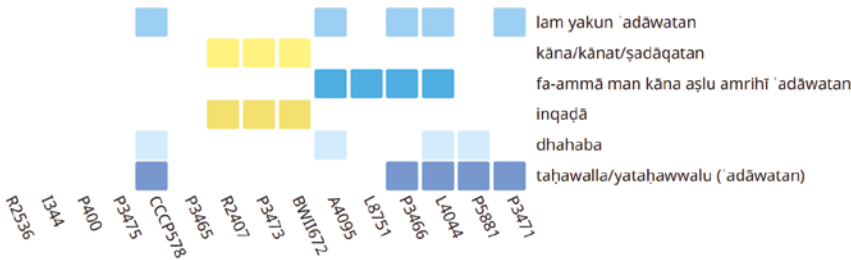


FIGURE 2.4 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 85: Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need

10 *Cross Analysis of Unit Mc 88: The Rat's Need for Friendship Has Gone*

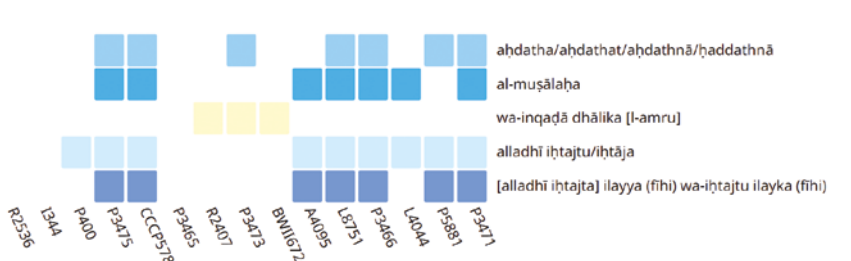


FIGURE 2.5 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 88: The Rat's Need for Friendship Has Gone

11 *Cross Analysis of Unit Mc 93: The Intelligent Escapes Forced Friendship*



FIGURE 2.6 Cross analysis of Unit Mc 93: The Intelligent Escapes Forced Friendship

The Chapter of the King and His Dreams as an Indicator for Classifying the Variety of Versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Khouloud Khalfallah

1 Introduction

Kalīla and Dimna is one of the most important works of Arab and Eastern literature.¹ Rich in literary, cultural, and ethnic diversity, it bears witness to the coexistence of the different cultures and religions of South Asia and the Middle East. The plurality of its fables has given rise to long debates concerning its origins. The large number of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, their wide distribution in time and space, and the identity of their copyists/co-authors have all contributed to the development of the book.

In its Arabic versions, the work consists mainly of fourteen stable chapters that appear in almost all manuscripts and that can be divided into several categories depending on their probable origins. To this we can add five unstable chapters which recur only in a subgroup of manuscripts.² In this contribution, I will focus on the chapter of the King and His Dreams, exploring how it may be instrumental in tracing the development of different versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This chapter has a Sanskrit origin and has so far been found in all complete Arabic versions of the work, though its position in the overall sequence of the chapters varies considerably. I have chosen to analyze the extent to which its position in the chapter sequence can contribute to the classification of the versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. I will combine this analysis with that of certain recurrent narrative elements within the chapter to examine whether the findings correlate with each other.

¹ The *Kalīla and Dimna*—*AnonymClassic* project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635.

² These unstable chapters include the preface by 'Alī b. al-Shāh, the short version of Burzūya's Voyage, the King of the Mice chapter, the Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel chapter, and the Dove, Fox, and Heron chapter.

2 The Chapter of the King and His Dreams

Whereas most of the tales in *Kalīla and Dimna* have their origins in the Sanskrit (Vedic-Hindu) *Pañcatantra* or the *Mahābhārata*, the King and His Dreams chapter (hereafter Kd) forms an exception to the rule. The fable's origins lie in the Buddhist legend of the Canda king Pradyōta,³ and it is especially close to the Tibetan version of the legend.⁴

This chapter is as stable as the two main Indian blocks, which derive from the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata*, respectively.⁵ It is present in all Arabic versions and their medieval translations. Kd also appears in the Older Syriac version, which was translated directly from the Pahlavi.⁶ This chapter is the only one in the textual tradition of *Kalīla and Dimna* which highlights the Buddhist tradition. It presents the Brahmins as spiteful and untruthful enemies of the king, with the narrator stating:

أشكّ أنهم لا ينصحوه⁷ لما في قلوبهم من الحقد عليه والبغض له وإنهم إن قدروا على
هلكته التمسوا له الحيلة في ذلك

I suspect that they [the Brahmins] may not advise [the king], for their hearts hold malice and antagonism against him. Rather, if they could destroy him, they would seek out a ruse to accomplish that. (MS Ayasofya 4095, dated 618/1221, fol. 73v)

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

Then he [the king] said: "I was wrong to tell the vengeful, black-hearted⁸ Brahmins about my dream." (MS Tunis 16029, PDF 112)

3 Anton Schiefner, *Mahākātjājana und König Tshanda-Pradjota: ein Cyclus buddhistischer Erzählungen*, Saint Petersburg: l'Académie impériale des sciences de St. Pétersbourg, 1875, 47–66.

4 François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 13.

5 For a discussion of these blocks in the chapter sequence, see below.

6 The Older Syriac version is based directly on the Pahlavi, dating from the end of the sixth century CE and translated by a Persian Christian named Būd. It is preserved in a single manuscript that was copied by Pardeacon Hormizd in Iraq in the sixteenth century CE. For further details on the Older Syriac version, see Chapter 5 by Jan J. van Ginkel.

7 The Middle Arabic register has been retained.

8 Literally: "with black livers." MS Tunis 16029 is not foliated or paginated.

Kd was most likely excluded from the traditional Indian sources because of this anti-Brahmin bias, though it was preserved in the versions circulating in the neighboring geographical areas inhabited by a Buddhist-majority population. It is found, for example, in the Tibetan, Pali, and some Chinese versions of *Kalīla and Dimna*.⁹ François de Blois also surmises that in writing his translation, Burzoy used an old Indian copy in Sanskrit containing the Kd fable that has since been lost or destroyed.¹⁰

The Arabic versions, however, contain elements not completely in line with this anti-Brahmin idea. An example in point is the sage Kabābīrūn.¹¹ He helps to save the king from a gruesome fate, and in one specific passage—when the queen advises her sad husband to seek Kabābīrūn’s opinion on the interpretation of his dreams—he is qualified as having been “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 the sage is only mentioned by name. Here, however, we find a small correction above it in a different hand that may be translated as “and he is a monk.” This passage appears in various *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts from the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries in the following phrasing:

ولكن انطلق إلى كبابرون فاذكر له ذلك وسله عما أحيت فإنه لبيبٌ أمينٌ وليس عند
هؤلاء شيءٌ إلا وعنده أفضل منه وإن كان أصله من البرهمنين فإنه ناسكٌ مجتهدٌ فقيهٌ

But go to Kanābābirūn, tell him that, and ask him about whatever you like; for he is intelligent and trustworthy. If [the Brahmins] lay claim to any [knowledge], he knows it better. Though he is **originally a Brahmin**, he is an assiduous ascetic and a religious scholar. (MS Ayasofya 4095, fol. 74v)

ولكن انطلق إلى كبارون العابد فاذكر له أمرك واسأله عما بدا لك فإنه لبيبٌ أمينٌ وليس
عند أحدٍ منهم شيئاً إلا وجد أفضل منه وإن كان أصله من البرهمنين¹² فإنه ناسكٌ فقيهٌ

9 Yoones Dehghani Farsani, “The Chinese Textual Tradition of the Story of the King and His Dreams: An Analytical Investigation of Two Unstudied Recensions of the Story,” *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 40–71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142371-00802008>.

10 See de Blois, *Burzōy’s Voyage*, 13.

11 His name varies from one manuscript to another. He is known as Kint’run in the Older Syriac and as Kar-Idun in Persian. Cf. the various versions below.

12 Middle Arabic feature by the scribe of MS Parker 578 as also *shay’an* in the same line.

But go to the devout Kabābirūn, tell him your affair, and ask him about [the interpretation] of whatever you saw; for he is intelligent and trustworthy. None of the Brahmins knows anything that he doesn't know better. Even though he was **originally a Brahmin**, he is an ascetic and a religious scholar. (MS Parker 578, dated to the fourteenth century CE,¹³ fol. 104v)

ولكن كايرون العالم فقيهٌ خيرٌ فأطلعه على أمرك وما هو يأمرُك به فإنه عالمٌ عنده الأمور
وهو أيضاً منهم غير أنه أفضلهم ولنا تنهيه في نصيحة الملك

But the wise Kanāyirūn is a generous religious scholar. Inform him of your affair and [do] what he will command you, for he is a wise man, and he knows everything. **He is also one of them**, but he is the best of them, and we do not impugn [the sincerity of] his advice to the King. (MS Riyadh 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 (sixth/twelfth century),¹⁴ in Naṣr Allāh Munshī's version (ca. 540/1146),¹⁵ in the Older Hebrew (thirteenth century CE),¹⁶ and in the Old Castilian (1251 CE)¹⁷ translations. Interestingly, in the Older Syriac (ca. 590 CE), the sage is described as "a prophet of God and as wiser than all Brahmins."¹⁸ I assume that the copyist decided that this formulation could not be translated literally into Arabic out of fear that the Muslim

13 The date noted in the colophon is partly illegible. The Parker Library catalogue has dated the manuscript to ca. 1300–1399 CE.

14 Niẓām al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Habbāriyya, *Natā'ij al-fiṭna fī naẓm Kalīla wa-Dimna*, ed. Ba'abda al-Khūrī Ni'mat Allāh al-Asmar: *al-Maṭba'a al-Lubnāniyya*, 1900, 199.

15 English translation by Wheeler Thackston. See Naṣr Allāh Munshī, "The King and the Brahmins," in *Kalila and Dimna*, trans. Wheeler Thackston, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2019, 157: "Although his origin is near that of the Brahmins, he is more honest and truthful than they are and is more worldly-wise."

16 See the edition and French translation of the Hebrew translation (late thirteenth century CE) by Joseph Derenbourg, *Deux versions hébraïques du livre de Kalīlāh et Dimnāh*, Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881, 198. "Il sait tout, le passé et l'avenir, il est bien de leur secte, mais il est plus sage qu'eux tous."

17 Edition of the Old Castilian translation. See Hans-Jörg Döhla, *El libro de Calila e Dimna: 1251 nueva edición y estudio de los dos manuscritos castellanos*, Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Próximo Oriente, 2007, 396a (i), "que es sabio destas cosas, e es otrosy dellos, e nos non le sospechamos que te de leal consejo."

18 Edition by Friedrich Schulthess. See Friedrich Schulthess, *Kalila und Dimna: Syrisch und Deutsch*, 2 vols., Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911, 139. He is described as "er weiß um die Welt

reader would reject it, and that it was therefore adjusted. In the Tibetan version, which is probably closest to the Arabic,¹⁹ the sage is obviously a Buddhist.²⁰ This confirms de Blois's argument explaining why the fable is absent from the extant Indian sources, but included in the versions intended for cultures with Buddhist-majority populations.

As for the content, Kd features the exact same narrative frame as the other chapters in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely a frame dialogue between the philosopher Baydabā' and the king Dabshalīm. The story of the King and His Dreams then proceeds to illustrate the importance of clemency for rulers and its essential role in the protection and management of their kingdoms. Unlike most of the other chapters, this chapter does not include any speaking animals in its main plot. In addition to the story of the Indian king, his wife, and his vizier, the fable incorporates two third-level sub-stories involving animals. These two sub-stories are told by the vizier to convince his king of the dangers of mistrust and irrationality. The first sub-story centers on a couple of doves who agree to fill their nest with grain and save it for winter. Then the male departs for some time, and when he returns after summer, he finds that the (dried) grain has diminished in volume and 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 and beats her to death. After some time, rain falls on the nest and the grain becomes moist, again increasing in volume. The male realizes his error and regrets his deed. The second story tells of a monkey who steals some lentils from a man in the woods. While the monkey is climbing up into a tree, one lentil falls, so he turns back and tries to find it. The foolish monkey is depicted as being so obsessed with one lost lentil that he ends up losing all the lentils he has found.

The Kd story highlights the quality of *ḥilm* (clemency²¹) and the importance of being patient and forgiving so as to protect goods and loved ones. The protagonists of the main/framing story of the chapter are an Indian king (Bilād), his vizier (Iblād), and the king's wife (Ibrākht/Halbat/Halīth). As seen above with Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the names of the characters vary from one manuscript to another. One day, the sleeping Indian king has some terrifying dreams and upon waking asks the Brahmins to interpret them. The resentful Brahmins, looking for revenge—because the king has executed

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."

19 De Blois, *Burzoy's Voyage*, 13.

20 Schulthess, *Kalīla und Dimna*, 49.

21 Several English terms are necessary to convey the full spectrum of this crucial concept for *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: forbearance, patience, and clemency.



FIGURE 3.1 The wise Kabābirūn interpreting the king's vision (MS Riyadh 2536, fol. 117v)

twelve thousand of them—inform him that something bad will happen to him and advise him to kill his loved ones in order to save himself and his kingdom from the consequences of his terrifying dreams. The sad king becomes confused and uncertain what to do and, following the instructions of the Brahmins, conceals the matter from his vizier and his wife. Fortunately, the queen, encouraged by the vizier to enquire about the king's odd behavior, succeeds in getting 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 the king's dreams differently from the way the other Brahmins have done. He first assures the king that no one need be killed, and then he tells him that he will receive 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 to his loved ones.

After seven days, the king receives many gifts, as Kabābīrūn has foretold, and decides to distribute them among the people in his entourage as a gesture of gratitude for their loyalty. He himself takes two of the remaining gifts, a robe and a crown, and asks the queen to choose between them. The queen hesitates and looks to the vizier for a suggestion. The vizier winks towards the robe, since it is decorated with gold and precious stones and shines in the dark. But before she can follow his suggestion, she notices the king looking at her. Fearing that the king may have misunderstood the situation, she decides to take the crown, while the king's second wife receives the robe.

After a while, the king's second wife passes by wearing the gorgeous robe while he is sitting with the queen. She looks bewitching, which makes the king desire her. Angry with the queen, the king tells her that she was foolish for not choosing the robe and that his second wife is a much better wife to him than she is. The angry queen, overreacting, pours a bowl of rice over the king's head. The king becomes furious and frustrated at this disrespectful act and orders his vizier to execute her. The wise vizier, aware of the affection and love the king bears for his first wife, the mother of his child, decides to spare her and hides her in a safe place. He returns to the king and pretends to have dutifully carried out the order. The king, who feels regret by now, blames himself for his hastiness. The vizier, however, wanting to teach the king a lesson about exercising patience and clemency, starts a long dialogue filled with *hikam* (wise sayings) and *amthāl* (analogies) and anecdotes to convince the king that major decisions should not be made without proper deliberation. He tells him, moreover, the story of the hasty dove who mistrusted his female partner and killed her, as well as the story of the impulsive monkey who lost all the lentils he had found because of his foolishness. After some time, the king starts to feel guilty about his hastiness and contemplates the implications of his irreversible decision.



FIGURE 3.2 The execution of the Brahmins (MS New York 1981.373, fol. 100r)

The vizier then realizes that the king has understood the lesson and decides to bring the queen back and reveal the truth. The king, overjoyed, shows gratitude toward his vizier, who has saved the queen, and decides to employ good judgment before making any important decisions in the future. Finally, he orders the untruthful Brahmins to be executed.

3 Sprengling's Classification of the Manuscripts Based on the Chapter Sequence²²

The chapters in *Kalīla and Dimna* can be grouped into several blocks that correlate with their origins. The Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* usually comprise four stable blocks. The first block consists of the five prefatory chapters, which are presented successively as follows, but which do not each appear in all manuscripts: the Preface of 'Alī b. al-Shāh (*muqaddimat* 'Alī b. al-Shāh or *muqaddimat al-kitāb*), the long version of Burzoy's Journey (*ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*), the Preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (*muqaddimat* Ibn al-Muqaffa' or *arḍ al-kitāb*), the short version of Burzūya's Voyage (*ba'that Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*), and finally the Life of Burzūya (*Burzūya al-ṭabīb li-Buzurgmihr b. al-Bakhtikān*).²³

These prefaces are highly significant, since they present the historical frame of the book. The first chapter, the Preface of 'Alī b. al-Shāh (also called Bahnūd b. Ṣahwān), serves to explain why *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was composed. 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 Dabshalīm. This preface is unstable, and its origins cannot be identified with certainty.²⁴

The second preface is the long²⁵ version of Burzūya's Voyage (hereafter Lv). This chapter describes how the Persian king Khusraw (Arabic: Kisrā)

22 Martin Sprengling, "Kalīla Studies," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 40 (1924): 81–97.

23 I am using the English translation of the *Kalīla and Dimna* chapter titles used by de Blois. On the presence and sequence of these prefaces, see Johannes Stephan, "A Sense of No Ending."

24 Antoine Silvestre de Sacy and François 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, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 62.

25 The chapter of Burzūya's Voyage is the only one in the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that has two different versions: one quite elaborate version and another that is rather short. Those two versions are mostly mutually exclusive in the Arabic versions, except for some where the two versions are both present (MS Pococke 400, MS New York 1981.373, MS München 616, and MS Paris 3467).

Anūshirwān sends Burzoy to India to look for the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and narrates the challenges he encounters there until he returns to Persia with the book translated from Sanskrit into Pahlavi. This preface tells us, among other things, how Burzoy himself asks the king to dedicate a chapter to his own biography, which was created, according to this chapter, by the king's vizier, Buzurgmihr.²⁶

The third prefatory chapter, the Preface by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (hereafter Im), represents, as indicated by the title, an introduction written by Ibn al-Muqaffa',²⁷ who translated the book from Pahlavi into Arabic. This chapter acts as an instruction manual for the use of the book and urges the reader to search for the real wisdom implied in its stories.

The fourth preface, the short version of Burzūya's Voyage, is rarely found in Arabic manuscripts. However, it is included in the Old Castilian translation and in a Pahlavi source.²⁸ It tells the story of the physician Burzoy who hears about some plants in the Indian mountains that are supposedly capable of bringing the dead back to life. With the king's approval, Burzoy travels to India and begins to search for these plants. He then proceeds to mix some of them without success. Eventually, he understands that the magical plants he has heard of are instead an allegory for books, that the mountains represent wise men, and that the dead represent ignorant people. Burzoy therefore sets out in search of Indian books of wisdom and chooses the best among them, intending 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 preface in this block is the Life of Burzūya (*Burzūya al-ṭabīb li-Buzurgmihr b. al-Bakhtikān*). This is the only one of the five prefaces to figure in the second, or Younger, Syriac version of *Kalīla and Dimna*, which was translated directly from the Arabic. This chapter includes the biography of Burzoy and his reflections on life and afterlife. There has been much speculation regarding the origin of this chapter and its writer. De Blois and Nöldeke both suggested that it was originally present in the lost Pahlavi version.

26 The chapter described as being written by the secretary of Burzugmihr is the last introductory chapter, the Life of Burzūya (*Burzūya al-ṭabīb li-Buzurgmihr b. al-Bakhtikān*).

27 Most scholars agree that this preface was written by Ibn al-Muqaffa' himself, given the resemblance between the content of this chapter and other introductions developed by Ibn al-Muqaffa', especially that of *al-Adab al-kabīr*. See István T. Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée d'Ibn al-Muqaffa': Un "agent double" dans le monde persan et arabe*, Paris: Éditions de Paris, 2013, 132–33.

28 De Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 40. On the Pahlavi source, see Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler.

The introductory block is followed by the two Indian blocks, deriving from the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* respectively. The *Pañcatantra* block begins 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 in the book. It contains multiple layers of embedded sub-stories, extending to the fifth degree. Originally, this fable formed the first book of the *Pañcatantra*, entitled *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*, and it represents the second book of the *Pañcatantra*, entitled “*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 tenth-century Arabic work *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (the Treatises of the Brethren of Purity).

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

Kalīla wa-Dimna retains three chapters of the *Mahābhārata* forming the second Indian block. The first is the Mouse and the Cat (*al-juradh wa-l-sinnawr*). This chapter narrates how a mouse and a cat reconcile their differences—despite their natural enmity—and save one another from a situation of mortal danger. The second of these chapters is the King and the Bird Fanza (*al-malik wa-l-ṭā’ir Fanza*), and it tells the story of a king and a bird whose friendship morphs into mutual distrust and suspicion, as the two move from affection to hatred in the wake of a dramatic incident. The third and last chapter from the *Mahābhārata* block is that of the Lion and the Jackal (*al-asad wa-bn āwā al-nāsik*). This is a chapter about a king and his entourage that demonstrates how a ruler can regain the loyalty and friendship of those whom he has severely and unjustly punished in the past.

In addition to these three blocks, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* also contains the so-called “Arabic” fables, i.e., those extant only in the Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ and absent in the Older Syriac version that was translated directly from the Pahlavi. These fables include the Trial of Dimna (*al-faḥṣ ‘an amr Dimna*), which is a continuation of the fable of the Lion and the Ox and probably an addition by Ibn al-Muqaffa’, and four fables that appear most often at the end of the book: the Traveller and the Goldsmith (*al-sā’ih wa-l-ṣā’igh*), the Ascetic and His Guest (*al-nāsik wa-l-ḡayf*), the Lioness and the Horseman (*al-labwa wa-l-aswār*) and finally, the Son of the King and His Companions (*ibn al-malik wa-aṣḥābuhu*).

The Kd chapter, unique for its Buddhist content, is often inserted between the Hindu Indian blocks (the tales that derive from the *Pañcatantra* and *Mahābhārata*), but in other versions, it also appears in other positions within the book. This variety of positions inspired Martin Sprengling (1924) to devise a classification system for all *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts based on the presence and order of the different chapters in the various manuscripts. He chose the Kd chapter as an indicator of the structure of the different versions and came up with a classification system based on the position of this chapter, defining six groups, labeled A to F. Subsequently, a new group (G) was identified by Beatrice Gruendler.

In group A, the Kd chapter appears after the Indian blocks and before the added tales. Many early copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* belong to this group sequence, namely MS Paris 3465, (dated to ca. 1220 CE)²⁹ and its three near verbatim copies: MS München 615 (attributed to the eighteenth century CE), MS Clarke Or. 9 (attributed to the fourteenth century CE)³⁰ and MS Paris 3470 (attributed to the sixteenth century CE).³¹ This sequence is expanded through verbatim copies of Antoine Silvestre de Sacy’s edition (dated 1816), based on MS Paris 3465,³² which was frequently copied in the nineteenth century, with at least eight copies discovered so far. These include two manuscripts attributed to the nineteenth century CE, MS Yale A 270 and MS Aleppo 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 further copies from the Library of the Mosque of Ouazzane: MS Ouazzane 442 and MS Ouazzane 444. In addition, at least three manuscripts reproduce the Egyptian Bulaq editions (dated

29 See P13, de Blois, *Burzōy’s Voyage*, 70.

30 See O3, *ibid.*, 72.

31 See P16, *ibid.*, 71.

32 De Blois suggests that Silvestre de Sacy’s edition is mainly based on MS Paris 3465, but he also includes readings from other manuscripts. See de Blois, *Burzōy’s Voyage*, 3.

1249 AH and 1251 AH), namely MS Majlis-i Shūrā 16288 (dated in its colophon to 601/1205, which is probably not the actual dating), MS Mosul 283 (attributed to the nineteenth century CE), and MS Ouazzane 463. All of these belong to the sequence group A, since the Bulaq editions are based on Silvestre de Sacy's edition, with the addition of the rare chapter of the Dove, the Fox, and the Heron at the end.³³ Thus, a large number of copies belonging to the group sequence A are related to MS Paris 3465, but there is a variant of the sequence in which Kd remains in its position while the four added tales switch their positions, pairwise. One example of this variant of A is MS London 4044 (attributed to the fifteenth century CE).³⁴

In the B group, the Kd chapter appears between the four added Arabic tales. This group has the same chapter sequence as the new Persian version of Naṣr Allāh.³⁵ This sequence is rare among the Arabic manuscripts, but some copies include a variant of this sequence in which two of the Arabic added tales are reversed. MS Montreal 117953 (dated 1055/1645), MS Riyadh 2407 (dated 1103/1691), MS Paris 3473 (dated 1110/1699),³⁶ MS Princeton 169H (dated 997/1588), and MS Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830) belong to this group. MS New York 1981.373 (dated before 1026/1617) shows another variant of the B sequence, including a different order of the added tales. The B sequence also appears in a unique Arabic version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015, which is a free retroversion of Naṣr Allāh's version into Arabic. It was translated by a certain 'Umar b. Dāwūd b. al-Shaykh al-Sulaymān al-Fārisī and is entitled *Sīyar al-mulūk*. This manuscript omits the introductory chapter by Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

In group C, the Kd chapter appears between the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* blocks. Most of the Arabic manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* belong to this group, including MS Pococke 400 (dated 755/1354) as well as its close parallels, namely, MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486] (dated 1040/1631), MS London Add. 24350 (attributed to the fourteenth century CE), and MS Paris 3467 (datable before 856/1452). The cross-copied manuscripts MS Ayasofya 4214 and its near-verbatim copies MS Paris 5881 (dated 1092/1681) and MS Dār al-Kutub 1169 (datable before 1290/1874) also belong to this group. In addition, there is a variant of this sequence in which the unstable chapter of the King of the Mice (hereafter Km) is included after Kd and the added

33 Ibn al Muqaffa', *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, eds. 'Taha Ḥusayn and 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1941, 14.

34 See L5, de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 69.

35 For further details on the Persian version, see Chapter 6 by Theodore S. Beers.

36 See P7, de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 68.

tales change order, namely in the earliest dated manuscript MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221), MS London 8751 (dated 799/1396), and MS Vatican Borg. 367 (dated 1026/1617). In a second variant of sequence C, the unstable chapter of the Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel is added at the end of the book, right after the chapter of the Ascetic and His Guest. MS Paris 3471 (dated 1053/1643), as well as its near-verbatim copies, belong to this variant.

The fourth group is sequence D. Here, the Kd chapter and the *Mahābhārata* block are inserted into the *Pañcatantra* block between the third and fourth tales. This sequence usually includes the unstable chapter Km (as a variant of sequence C does). Many Paris manuscripts belong to this group, namely, MS Paris 3466 (datable before 854/1450),³⁷ MS Paris 3468 (dated 1005/1597),³⁸ MS Paris 3476 (dated 1169/1755),³⁹ MS Paris 3479 (dated 1184/1770),⁴⁰ MS Paris 3480 (dated 1200/1786),⁴¹ and MS Paris 3477 (attributed to the eighteenth century CE).⁴² Al-Yaʿqūbī's chapter sequence also belongs to the D sequence, although some of the usual chapters are missing.⁴³

In group E, the Kd chapter is inserted into the *Mahābhārata* block between the second and the third tales. This chapter sequence recurs in the Old Castilian and the Hebrew translations. The manuscripts of this sequence group usually include one or two unstable chapters at the end, namely, the Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel (hereafter Kw) and the Dove, the Fox, and the Heron (hereafter Df). Additionally, the E sequence often includes the short version of Burzūya's Voyage. Among the manuscripts belonging to this group, we find MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346), its copy MS London 3900 (dated 1166/1753),⁴⁴ MS Arch. Museum EY 344, dated in its colophon to 410/1019—which is probably not the actual dating—and its copy MS Paris 3478 (attributed to the eighteenth century CE).⁴⁵

The last group sequence identified by Sprengling is F. Here, the Kd chapter appears at the end. This chapter sequence is the same as in the Younger Syriac version. Only a limited number of manuscripts in Arabic containing this

37 See P1, *ibid.*, 67.

38 See P2, *ibid.*, 70.

39 See P9, *ibid.*, 68.

40 See P11, *ibid.*, 69.

41 See P12, *ibid.*, 69.

42 See P17, *ibid.*, 71.

43 Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1995, 88–89 and Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, 157–59 and 211, note 38.

44 See L3, de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 68.

45 See P18, *ibid.*, 72. For the Iberian continuum formed by this group, see Chapter 2, 26–27, 44, and 55–58.

chapter sequence have been discovered so far, such as MS London Add. 23466 (attributed to the eighteenth century CE),⁴⁶ MS Hamburg 170, an undated copy which includes a reader's note dated to 1321/1904, and MS Beirut 00360(2) (attributed to the twentieth century CE).

In addition to that, Gruendler added a new group (G), in which the fables originating from the *Pañcatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* are intercalated in dovetail fashion.⁴⁷ This chapter sequence appears in one of the earliest Arabic manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely MS Rabat 3655, dated based on its illustrations to the second half of the thirteenth century (ca. 1265–1280 CE)⁴⁸ and its near-verbatim copy MS Paris 3475 (dated 1175/1761).⁴⁹ A variant of this sequence has been discovered in MS Ayasofya 4213, MS Chicago A11991, and MS Riyadh 5786.

In addition to using the chapter sequence as a classificatory parameter, I will introduce further criteria based on specific narrative elements in the Kd chapter that have been selectively emphasized in some manuscripts. These narrative elements have proved to be of great use for the identification of different versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and have contributed to the distinction of two major groups: The “Queen continuum”⁵⁰ and the “Dreams group.” These narrative elements found in the Kd chapter co-occur with certain unstable chapters, mostly at the end of the book. The correlation of both criteria will be discussed in the next part of this study.

4 The Queen Continuum

The narrative content of Kd represents an obvious way to classify most of the manuscripts that have been examined. In fact, some narrative elements consistently appear in a limited number of manuscripts in the same position in the text. The “Queen continuum” (hereafter Q-c) represents a group of manuscripts whose numerous additions and modifications make it aesthetically distinctive, though the main storyline of the chapter remains unaltered.

46 See L8, de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 70.

47 Beatrice Gruendler, “Les versions arabes de *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: une transmission et une circulation mouvantes,” in *Éconcés sapientels et littérature exemplaire: une intertextualité complexe*, ed. Marie-Sol Ortola, Nancy: Éditions Universitaires de Lorraine, 2013, 397.

48 Bernard O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003, 218.

49 See P10, de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 69.

50 For the topic of continua, see also Chapter 2, and for the Queen continuum in specific, *ibid.*, 25, 43–44, and 55–58.

One example among many is the Indian king's prostration before the wise Brahmin when he goes to visit him, seeking the interpretation of his dreams. In Q-c there is a specification of this act: *sajada li-l-ḥakīmi sujūda taḥiyyatin lā sujūda 'ubūdiyyatin* ("[and the king] prostrated himself before the sage, as a greeting, not as a sign of worship"). This distinction probably helped to eliminate any possible misinterpretation of this act and to make it acceptable to a Muslim reader.

Another example occurs when the queen serves her husband rice. The bowl she holds in her hand is always described as being made of sapphire: *wa-fī yadihā ṣaḥfatun min yāqūt* ("in her hand was a bowl made of sapphire"⁵¹). This marks a departure from all other manuscripts, in which the bowl is made of gold.

A further distinctive feature of this group in the Kd chapter is the expansion of the qualities of the queen and the amplification of her efforts to save the kingdom. The queen is presented as a wise woman. Both the king of India (her husband) and his vizier compliment her several times in this version, as shown in the following examples. For this reason, I chose the "Queen continuum" to serve as a label for the group as a whole.

وقال لهم إته لا ينبغي أن تدخل هذه الهدايا خزاننا ولكي أقمها بينكم «لأنكم» أنتم
الذين وظنتم أنفسكم على الموت بسبي ولا سيما ابرخة التي جادت بنفسها وبذلت
نصحها وهي التي أشارت عليّ بالرأي الذي وجدت فيه بقاء ملكي وما صرت إليه
مما ترون من الفرح والسرور.

He told them, "These gifts should not enter our treasuries. I will divide them among you, because you are the ones who have resigned yourselves to die for my sake, especially Ibrakht, who sacrificed herself and imparted her advice. She was the one who gave me the advice that saved my kingdom and gave me the joy and pleasure you see." (Q-c: MS Tunis 4459, fol. 96r, corresponding to online edition, units Kd 47 Gifts To Be Distributed To All Victims and Kd 48 Queen Is Especially Deserving)

وليس هو [الملك] بصابرٍ عنها وإن كان أصابه منها بعض خرقٍ فليس ينسب فضل عقلها
وحلاوة دلائها له على العمل بالصبر والحلم والتأني وتعريفها إياه وهو في أشد ما يكون
مما أصابه من البراهمة.

⁵¹ *Yāqūt* can also refer to other precious stones.

And [the King] will miss her, though he has suffered from some of her impetuosity, for he cannot forget her excellent intellect and sweet guidance toward action, clemency, and deliberation, or how she signaled [the solution] to him when he was in a very dire predicament on account of the Brahmins. (Q-c: MS Tunis 4459, fol. 97r, online edition, unit Kd 75 King Will Miss Queen)

In fact, the qualities of the queen are also emphasized to some degree in the manuscripts that Gruendler has subsumed under the “London continuum” (hereafter L-c),⁵² but those qualities are not as heavily emphasized as they are in the version of Q-c. In L-c as well as in Q-c, the Indian king states that his wife, the queen, is the one who has saved him and his kingdom, while the rest of the manuscripts of the “Paris continuum” (hereafter P-c)⁵³ note the role played by the queen in passing and rather minimize her influence. This is evident in the following examples:

لولا أن الله تبارك وتعالى تداركني ومنّ عليّ برحمته وبزوجتي ابرخة السيّدة السعيدة حتّى
شرحت صدري ووجهتي إلى الحكيم الفاضل وبشّرنى بهذه الهدايا «لمت» حزنًا وكمدًا.

If [it had not been for] God, blessed and exalted be He, who caught me in time and offered me His mercy, *and* [the advice] of my wife Ibrakht, the fortunate woman, who gladdened me, directed me to the virtuous sage, and he foretold me these gifts, <I would have died> of grief and agony. (Q-c: MS Tunis 4459, fol. 95v, online edition, unit Kd 41 King Thankful For Queens Advice)

لولا أن الله عزّ وجلّ تداركني ورحمني **برأي ابراخت** كنت قد هلكت وزالت دنيائي

If God, the Great and Almighty, had not caught me in time **and offered me mercy through Ibrākht's advice**, I would have died, and my claim to life would have vanished. (L-c: MS Ayasofya 4095, fol. 75v)

52 L-c includes some of the earliest copies of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, namely, MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221) and MS London 4044 (attributed to the fifteenth century CE). See Beatrice Gruendler et al., “An Interim Report on the Editorial and Analytical Work of the AnonymClassic Project,” *Medieval Worlds* 11 (2020): 259.

53 For further features of P-c, see Chapter 2, 25 and 31–40.

ولا أن الله تعالى تداركني برحمته لكنت قد هلكت وأهلك

If God, glory be to Him, had not caught me in time **and offered me His mercy**, I would have died and caused [others'] deaths. (P-c: MS Paris 3465, fol. 133v)

Q-c can be traced back to the fifteenth century CE, the date of its first known specimen so far that includes this version. This is MS Paris 3466 (datable before 854/1450), which shifts from one continuum to another in the middle of the book, thereby building its own model. Indeed, this version appears to be the result of a cross-copying experiment that involved two or more manuscripts from two different continua, the London continuum and the Paris continuum.⁵⁴ These two continua were combined in a single copy that announced the emergence of a new continuum, the Queen continuum. This cross-copied continuum can easily be traced because the process was carried out in a straightforward way. For some reason, the copyist/editor changed from one model to another in the middle of the book at the end of the Rd chapter, while faithfully following the original traits of the two models in their respective sections. One may hypothesize that the copyist did not have access to both models at the same time, since there is no trace of simultaneous use of the two models in any part of the book. In the Kd chapter, Q-c lines up with L-c and further highlights the qualities of the queen by displaying her character traits and her merits.

Another distinctive passage of Q-c is the portrayal of the reaction of the king after he meets with the Brahmins, highlighting his confusion and fear. Here is an example:

قام ودخل منزله ووقع لوجهه وجعل يتقلب يمينا وشمالا محزونًا مهمومًا ويفكر في رأيه
أيّ الأمرين يركب الموت عيانًا وهو ينظر إليه إذا أعطاهم ما سألوه فكث لذلك أيامًا
وفشى الحديث في أرضه.

He rose and entered his house. He fell on his face and began turning right and left, grieving and worried, thinking about the decision he would have to make between the two alternatives: Should he embrace apparent death, which was looking him in the eye if he gave them what they asked for? So, on account of this he remained undecided for days, and rumors spread in his land. (L-c: MS Ayasofya 4095, fol. 73r/v)

54 For further features of these continua, see Chapter 2, 24–40.

In Q-c, some new elements have been added to this passage. For instance, the descriptions of the place the king withdraws to and his weeping are amplified to convey his deep sadness. A summary of the situation is added to clarify the problem and to explain the king's confusion:

وثار قائماً من بين أيديهم ودخل إلى خلوة له كان يغتم فيها فوقع 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 فكث على ذلك أياماً 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 weeping, tossing and turning. He thought about what he had suffered from what the Brahmins had said, what they had asked him to do, and his fear of his vision and his dreams. He could not assuredly decide which alternative to choose. Sometimes he considered it easy to submit to death and not to yield to the Brahmins' request, and at other times he tended toward submitting to what they had pronounced. He was confused about which of the two decisions he should make. So he stayed like that for days, and rumors spread in his land and the regions of his kingdom. (Q-c: MS Tunis 16029, PDF 108)

The characteristics of this group are not limited to the Kd chapter but are rather found throughout the book. Additions and modifications abound in the other chapters. Their length can vary from small additions or cuts to the addition of several sentences. One example can be found in the chapter of the Owls and the Crows. In the sub-story of the deceived carpenter, the carpenter's reaction to his wife's infidelity is rather unusual. Instead of being angry or sad, he is portrayed as being excited by what has happened in the night between his wife and her lover and decides to make love to her. A description of this sexual intercourse is added to the passage. In the chapter of the Mouse and the Cat, the changes are only small additions. For example, when the mouse goes to meet the trapped cat, he gives him the nickname "Abū Sinān," and he asks him: "How are you, O Abū Sinān?" This addition does not change the conversation between the two animals, but it adds charm to the version and makes it distinctive.

As mentioned earlier, Q-c is based on a manuscript from the fifteenth century CE, MS Paris 3466 (datable before 854/1450). MS Paris 3466 is the earliest

manuscript of this continuum that has been discovered so far, but it is probably a near-verbatim copy of an earlier specimen, since the copy includes a large number of collations and corrections in the margins that probably derive from its model. MS Paris 3466 also includes many gaps left for illustrations, along with precise captions, indicating that the *Vorlage* was illustrated. However, neither MS Paris 3466 nor any member of Q-c includes illustrations.

Besides MS Paris 3466, Q-c comprises fifteen other manuscripts, some of which are copies of each other. These include (in a larger subgroup) three manuscripts from Tunisia, MS Tunis 16030 (dated 1173/1760), MS Tunis 4459 (dated 1277/1861), and MS Tunis 16029 (dated 1290/1873), all from the National Library of Tunis. In addition, this subgroup includes four manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, namely, MS Paris 3468 (dated 1005/1597), MS Paris 3480 (dated 1200/1786), MS Paris 3477 (attributed to the eighteenth century CE), and MS Paris 3476 (dated 1169/1755). Q-c also includes (as a smaller subgroup on which see below) three further manuscripts from the National Library of Tunis, MS Tunis 2281 (dated 1076/1666), MS Tunis 9760

TABLE 3.1 Queen continuum manuscripts

Manuscript	Date	Rare chapters	Sprenghing sequence
MS Paris 3466	Before 854/1450	King of the Mice	D
MS Paris 3468	1005/1597	King of the Mice	D
MS Tunis 2281	1076/1666	King of the Mice	D
MS Baghdad 6949	1114/1704	King of the Mice	D
MS Sarba 989	1127/1715	King of the Mice	D
MS London 2715	1143/1731	King of the Mice	D
MS Paris 3476	1169/1755	King of the Mice	D
MS Tunis 16030	1173/1760	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel & Dove, Fox, and Heron	E
MS Paris 3480	1200/1786	King of the Mice	D
MS Paris 3477	18th century CE	King of the Mice	D variant
MS Tunis 8623	Before 1229/1814	King of the Mice	D
MS Beirut 0022(2)	1263/1847	King of the Mice	D
MS Tunis 4459	1277/1861	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
MS Tunis 9760	Before 1320/1902	Manuscript incomplete	D
MS Dar al-Kutub 968	Undated	King of the Mice	D
MS Tunis 16029	1290/1873	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E

(dated before 1320/1902), and MS Tunis 8623 (dated before 1229/1814). There are also two manuscripts from Lebanon, MS Sarba 989 (dated 1127/1715) and MS Beirut 0022(2) (dated 1263/1847); one manuscript from the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, MS Dar al-Kutub 968 (undated); one manuscript from the British Library, MS London 2715 (dated 1143/1731); and, finally, one manuscript from Iraq, MS Baghdad 6949 (dated 1114/1704).

At this point, a further macro-structural parameter comes into play. Eleven of these fifteen manuscripts include the unstable chapter of the King of the Mice (Km), discovered so far only in eighteen Arabic manuscripts. Despite this chapter occurring only rarely in the Arabic versions, it is demonstrably old, since it is included in the Older Syriac version, dated to the sixth century CE.

The presence of Km is thus a distinctive feature of Q-c. It should also be mentioned that most of the witnesses in this group share the chapter sequence of the D group. The three manuscripts belonging to the chapter sequence E (MS Tunis 16030, MS Tunis 4459, and MS Tunis 16029) are the only exceptions in Q-c, since they include instead the rare chapter Kw at the end and thus constitute a small subgroup.

The differences between these two subgroups extend to numerous dissimilarities in vocabulary. For example, when the king decides to offer the crown and the robe 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 Q-c as follows:

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

It is said that [the King] took the **diadem** and gave it to Bilād, saying: “Carry this in your hands **to the wives’ sitting room**.” When Bilād took it, the King entered [the sitting room]. He summoned the women and presented [the gifts] <to> Ibzākht and Hūrfatāh, asking them to choose. He said to Bilād: “Put the **crown and the garb down**,” and he ordered Ibzākht to take of the two the one she desired. (MS Tunis 8623, fol. 77r/v online edition, unit Kd 56 Queen Shall Choose Gift)

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

[The king] said, “Concerning the **diadem** and the **remaining garments**, take them and follow me.” [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 Ibrakht and Jūbar, who both sat down in front of him. The king then said, “Put the **wreath and the robe** in front of Ibrakht so that she may take what she wants.” (MS Tunis 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 **diadem** and the **remaining clothing**, they **befit women more**: take the wreath and the garments,” he said to Bilād, “and follow me with them to the **women’s sitting room**.” The king called Ibrākht and Ḥūrfatāh, and they both sat down in front of him. He then said to Bilād: “Put the **diadem and the robe down** in front of Ibrākht so that she can take from them the one she desires.” (MS Paris 3466, fol. 235v/236r)

The terms used to distinguish the two gifts (*al-kiswa wa-l-iklīl* in MS Tunis 16029 and MS Paris 3466; *al-tāj wa-l-libās* in MS Tunis 8623) and the term used to identify the space reserved for women in the palace (*majlis al-nisāʾ* in MS Tunis 16029 and MS Paris 3466; *majlis al-ḥarīm* in MS Tunis 8623) show the diversity within this continuum and evince a certain resemblance between MS Tunis 16029 and MS Paris 3466. It seems that the manuscripts of the smaller subgroup (MS Tunis 16029 and MS Tunis 4459) use a lexicon similar to that of the original *Vorlage* of the entire continuum, namely MS Paris 3466, even though these two manuscripts reveal a major structural dissimilarity when it comes to their sequence group and the unstable chapter added to the two copies.

To conclude, the analysis of the Kd chapter has made it possible to identify Q-c, a group of fifteen manuscripts distinguished by idiosyncratic descriptive and narrative elements and modifications. These distinctive elements are spread throughout the text without, however, changing the main storyline, and the lengths of these elements vary from one word to many sentences. The link between these manuscripts is confirmed by two important elements: first, the model used, MS Paris 3466 or a similar copy, which evinces an uncommon composition within the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This composition

scheme can easily be distinguished due to the shift from one continuum to another in the middle of the book⁵⁵ without any explicit reference to this in the manuscript. Secondly, almost all the manuscripts in this continuum belong to the sequence group D, placing the unstable Km chapter after Kd. An exception to the above-mentioned majority is constituted by the last three Tunisian manuscripts, MS Tunis 4459, MS Tunis 16029, and MS Tunis 16030. Although these two manuscripts share almost all the distinctive narrative elements of Q-c, they are in some cases closer than the others to the earliest model represented by MS Paris 3466. However, they differ from most members of this continuum in that they follow a different chapter sequence, sequence E, and include the Kw chapter at the end. Therefore, the manuscripts of Q-c can be divided into two subgroups. The larger subgroup includes Q-c members with the sequence D and the rare chapter Km, and the smaller subgroup includes Q-c members with the sequence E and the rare chapter Kw. This second subgroup seems to be influenced by a further *Volage* from the sequence E, which I will interpret as leading to an intersection of Q-c with a further group through particular narrative and structural features.

5 The Dreams Group

At the beginning of the main story in the Kd chapter, we can spot a key narrative unit that documents the diversity of the Arabic manuscripts. This concerns the Indian king and the dreams he has one night in his sleep. In the remaining part of this chapter, I use this narrative unit to demonstrate the tremendous variety within the textual tradition of *Kalila wa-Dimna*. To do so, I first need to distinguish between two large groups.

In the first group, the Indian king has eight dreams and, without any mention of their content, asks to see the Brahmins. The content of those dreams follows in a later passage, namely when the king discusses his dreams with the wise sage Kabābīrūn. This first group includes most of the early manuscripts from the seventh/thirteenth to the ninth/fifteenth centuries. In addition, the three editions by Silvestre de Sacy (1816), Louis Cheikho (1905), and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām (1941) adopt this version of the story. Here are some examples of the passage from early manuscripts, namely MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221), MS Parker 578 (dated to the fourteenth century CE), MS Pococke 400 (dated 755/1354), and MS Paris 3465 (dated to ca. 1220):

55 The place of the shift is mentioned p. 86.

فبينما سادوم الملك نائماً⁵⁶ في بعض الليالي إذ رأى **ثمانية أحلام** يستيقظ عند كل منها

While King Sādūm was sleeping one night, he had **eight dreams**, waking up after each of them. (MS Ayasofya 4095, fol. 71v, online edition, unit Kd 17 King Dreams)

فبينما الملك نائمٌ إذ رأى **ثمانية أحلام** يستيقظ عند كل حلم

While the king was sleeping, he had **eight dreams** and woke up after each dream. (MS Parker 578, fol. 102r)

فبينما الملك نائماً⁵⁷ على السرير يعني سرير ملكه إذ رأى في منامه **ثمانية أحلام** فاستيقظ عند كل واحدٍ منها

While the king was sleeping on the elevated seat, meaning his throne, he had in his sleep **eight dreams** and woke up after each one of them. (MS Pococke 400, 118r)

فنام الملك ذات ليلةٍ فرأى في منامه **ثمانية أحلام** أفرغته فاستيقظ مرعوباً

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

The Older Syriac version, translated directly from the Pahlavi, also belongs to this first group, like the Persian translation by Muḥammad al-Bukhārī *made* in the late 1140s, the versifications of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* by Ibn al-Habbāriyya (sixth/twelfth century)⁵⁸ and al-Ṣāghānī (seventh/thirteenth century).

In the second group, the king's vision also 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 that the king has seven times.⁵⁹ This error in the enumeration of the king's dreams is not limited to the

56 Middle Arabic feature by the scribe of MS Ayasofya 4095, shared with MS Pococke 400.

57 Middle Arabic feature by the scribe of MS Pococke 400, shared with MS Ayasofya 4095.

58 Edition by al-Khūrī Ni'mat Allāh al-Asmar, *Natā'ij al-fiṭna*, 192.

فناما ذات ليلةٍ وقاما مببللاً إذ رأى أحلاماً أبصرها وعدّها ثمانية لم تر مثلها العيون الرائية.

59 See MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346) fol. 113r. انتبه ثم مراتٍ سبع رؤيا في المنام فرأى في المنام رؤيا سبع مراتٍ ثم انتبه وعادت إليه.

Arabic manuscripts, but also appears in Naṣr Allāh's version, which dates to the sixth/twelfth century (ca. 540/1146) and in a free retroversion of it, namely MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015 (dated 727/1327).⁶⁰ Contrary to all the other versions that count the visions as seven, these two versions do not include any description of them:

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

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

In all the other versions belonging to this second group, a long passage including a description of each dream appears in the text just after the Indian king wakes up. This passage is usually introduced by *wa-kāna ra'ā* "and he had seen" followed by an enumeration of the king's visions. Here are two examples of the enumeration from MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346) and MS Paris 3471 (dated 1053/1643):

وَكَانَ الْمَلِكُ نَائِمًا عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَرَأَى فِي الْمَنَامِ رُؤْيَا سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ ثُمَّ انْتَبَهَ وَعَادَتْ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ الَّذِي رَأَى فِي مَنَامِهِ سَمَكَيْنِ حُمْرَاوَيْنِ قَامَتَا عَلَى أُذُنَيْهِمَا وَبَطْنَتَيْنِ قَامَتَا عَلَى رَأْسِهِ وَحَيَّةٌ وَثَبَتْ عَلَى رِجْلَيْهِ وَرَأَى أَنَّ جَسَدَهُ قَدْ خَضِبَ بِالدَّمِ «وَعُغْسِلَ جَمِيعُ بَدَنِهِ بِالْمَاءِ وَرَأَى أَنَّهُ قَائِمٌ عَلَى جَبَلٍ أَيْضٌ وَرَأَى أَنَّ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ شَيْهًا بِالنَّارِ وَرَأَى طَائِرًا أَيْضٌ يَنْقَرُ رَأْسَهُ.

The king was sleeping in his bed when **he had in his sleep a vision seven times**. When he woke up, he remembered the dream. In his sleep, he saw two red fish standing on their tails and two ducks standing on his head. A snake had jumped on his legs. He saw that his body was covered in blood and that his entire body was washed with water. He saw that he was atop a white mountain, that something like fire was on his head, and that a white bird was pecking at his head. (MS Riyadh 2536, fol. 113r/v, online edition, units Kd 17 King Dreams and Kd 18 Dreams)

60 English translation of Naṣr Allāh by Thackston, "King and the Brahmins," 157. He had the same terrifying dream seven times and woke up at the end of each one. On the retroversion, see Theodore S. Beers and Khoulood Khalfallah, "The *Sīyar al-mulūk* of 'Umar b. Dāwūd al-Fārisī: A Quasi-Plagiaristic Translation of *Kalīla and Dimna*," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 72–104.

فبينما الملك ذات ليلة نائماً⁶¹ على فراش له في غرفة فرأى في المنام رؤيا سبع مرّات يستيقظ عند كلّ مرّة منها ثم يفيق فتعاوده في الثانية وكان الذي رأى في منامه سمكتين حمراوتين قائمتين يستقبلانه على أذناهما وبطنين طارتا من خلفه فصارتا بين يديه وحيّة دبّت على رجليه ورأى جسمه خُصّب بالدم وأنه غُسل جميع جسمه بالماء ورأى أنه قائم على جبل أبيض ورأى أن على رأسه شيئاً شبيهاً بالنار ورأى طيراً أبيض نقر رأسه بمنقاره

One night, while the king was sleeping on a bed he had in one of the rooms, **he had in his sleep a vision seven times over**, waking up each time. Whenever he woke up [and went back to sleep], the vision would come to him again. In the dream, he saw two red fish approaching him while standing on their tails, two ducks flying over from behind and up to him, and a snake that crept onto his legs. He saw his body covered in blood and that his entire body was washed with water. He saw that he was atop a white mountain, that something like fire was on his head, and that a white bird was pecking at his head with its beak. (MS Paris 3471, fol. 121r)

This key narrative passage is also included in the Old Castilian⁶² translation, as well as in Kāshifī's Persian version,⁶³ in which the number of the visions is also given as seven. Remarkably, this passage is also included in the two Buddhist sources, both in the Chinese text which had been translated directly from the Sanskrit and in the Tibetan version,⁶⁴ in which the number of dreams is given as eight. This matches with the numbers in the Hebrew⁶⁵ and the Latin⁶⁶ translations, which also include this passage.

61 Middle Arabic feature by the scribe of MS Paris 3471, shared with MS Pococke 400 and MS Ayasofya 4095 as also *shay'an shabihan* and *ṭayr* denoting the singular in the fifth line.

62 Edition of the Old Castilian translation. See Döhla, *El libro de Calila e Dimna*, 388.

63 The Persian adaptation of Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kāshifī (d. 910/1504–1505). See Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kāshifī, *Anvār-i Suhaylī*, Cawnpore: Naval Kishore Press, 1880, 423.

64 The old German translation of the Tibetan version by Schulthess, *Kalila und Dimna*, 48. For a tabulation of the dreams in the Tibetan and Chinese versions, see Dehghani Farsani, "The Chinese Textual Tradition," 46, 57–59, and table 1.

65 Edition and a French translation of the Hebrew translation (late thirteenth century CE) by Joseph Derenbourg. See Derenbourg, *Deux versions hébraïques*, 185.

66 See Johannis de Capua, *Directorium vitae humanae alias parabola antiquorum sapientum*, ed. Joseph Derenbourg, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des hautes études, 1889, 243.



FIGURE 3.3 Enumeration of the king's visions (MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], fol. 142v)

When it comes to the Arabic manuscripts that include the description of the dreams passage, we find MS Arch. Museum EY 344 (dated 410/1019, but actually later) and MS Riyadh 2536 (dated 747/1346), both of which belong to the Iberian continuum, as well as their two copies from the eighteenth century, namely MS Paris 3478 and MS London 3900 (dated 1166/1753). These manuscripts are, for the most part, very close to the Old Castilian translation (dated 1251 CE). Furthermore, this group, which I call the “Dreams group” also includes MS Vienna AF 298 (dated 1000/1592), and its copy MS Vatican Borg. 367 (dated 1026/1617), as well as another copy, MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487] (dated 1083/1672).

Additionally, the Dreams group contains a subgroup that I call the P3471-group. This is a group of almost verbatim copies of each other, and it includes a description of the king’s dreams. The earliest witness of this group is MS Dublin 4201, an illustrated incomplete manuscript dated to the tenth/sixteenth century. Since some parts are missing, and among them the first part of the Kd chapter, it cannot serve as the model for the group as a whole. MS London Add. 7413 is another early copy of this group datable to before 1036/1626 on the basis of manuscript notes. Our oldest complete and securely dated witness for this group is MS Paris 3471 (1053/1643). MS Paris 3471 and MS London Add. 7413, along with nearly verbatim later copies,⁶⁷ which are MS Paris 3472 (dated 1080/1669), MS München 617 (dated 1070/1659), MS London Add. 7414 (dated 1173/1760), MS Baghdad 350 (attributed to the nineteenth century CE), and MS Tübingen Ma VI 35 (dated 1243/1827) all include the passage on the king’s visions. Moreover, the P3471-group includes two later incomplete witnesses, MS Riyadh 6146 (dated 1118/1706) and MS Chicago A 12101, an illustrated copy under restoration of which only a few folios are accessible.

Eleven out of the eighteen manuscripts that constitute the Dreams group also share the unstable Kw chapter. This is a significant number, considering that this chapter has been discovered so far in only fourteen Arabic manuscripts (see table). Indeed, the Kw chapter is a rare fable and is only found in the Hebrew, Latin, and Old Castilian translations.⁶⁸ Conversely, the Km chapter is present in two of the Dreams group manuscripts, namely MS Vienna AF 298 (dated 1000/1592) and MS Vatican Borg. 367 (dated 1026/1617).

To conclude the discussion about the Dreams group, we can observe that it can be divided into three subgroups. The first subgroup includes the four manuscripts mentioned above in the sequence E, a rare sequence within the Arabic copies. The text of this subgroup is very close to those of the Old Castilian

67 All copies are almost identical, but some of them are illustrated, whereas others are not; only some include the Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel chapter.

68 See de Blois, *Burzōy’s Voyage*, 62.

TABLE 3.2 Dreams group manuscripts

Manuscript	Date	Unstable chapters	Chapter sequence
MS Riyadh 2536	747/1346	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
MS Vienna AF 298	1000/1592	King of the Mice	C
MS Vatican Borg. 367	1026/1617	King of the Mice	C
MS Dublin 4201	16th century CE	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	Manuscript in disorder
MS London Add. 7413	Before 1036/1626	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS Paris 3471	1053/1643	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS München 617	1070/1659	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS Manchester 537	1083/1672	None	A
MS Paris 3472	1080/1669	None	C
MS Riyadh 6146	Before 1118/1706	Manuscript incomplete	C
MS Arch. Museum EY 344	410/1019 but actually later probably 17–18th century CE	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel Dove, Fox and Heron	E variant*
MS London 3900	1166/1753	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	E
MS London Add. 7414	1173/1760	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS Paris 3478	18th century CE	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel Dove, Fox and Heron	E variant*
MS Riyadh 7053	1178/1764	None	C
MS Tübingen Ma VI 35	1243/1827	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS Baghdad 350	Attributed to 19th century CE	Two Kingfishers and a Whimbrel	C
MS Chicago A 12101	Undated	Manuscript incomplete	Manuscript in disorder

and Older Hebrew translations. Three out of its four Arabic manuscripts also include the rare Kw and Df chapters. However, the oldest copy of this group, MS Riyadh 2536, includes only Kw. The sequence E and the presence of the rare chapters Kw and Df, as well as the rare introductory chapter Sv, bring this group into the proximity of the Old Castilian and the Older Hebrew translations. As mentioned above, both translations also include a full description of the king's dreams, which are given as seven in the Old Castilian and eight in the Older Hebrew. All of these have therefore been subsumed under an "Iberian continuum."

The second subgroup of the Dreams group is the P3471-group attested in eleven manuscripts. This subgroup includes six manuscripts with the sequence C that place the unstable chapter Kw at the end of each. Three further copies share the same sequence but omit the Kw chapter. The remaining two are incomplete manuscripts in disorder, one of them MS Dublin 4201, probably the oldest copy of this version found so far, which preserves two folios from Kw. The text version of the P3471-group is significant, being the result of a cross-copying process based on many *Vorlagen*. Among these are copies similar to MS Riyadh 2536, MS Parker 578, and MS Paris 3466. The distinctiveness of this version is also confirmed through idiosyncratic elements, such as verses of poetry, a saying by Luqmān, and sub-stories found so far only there (Solomon and the Phoenix, The Man and the Lion with the Thorn). In general, this group includes the largest number of sub-stories of all Arabic copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

The third and last subgroup of the Dreams group includes MS Vienna AF 298 and its copy MS Vatican Borg. 367. This group belongs to a variant of sequence C and adds the rare Km chapter after the Kd chapter. In this variant, the Im and Lv prefaces usually switch places, such as in MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221) and MS London 8751 (dated 799/1396). But in this subgroup, the versions of the beginning of the book, including the incipit, a long table of contents, and the introductory chapters, are quite similar to MS Ayasofya 4214 (datable before 761/1360). This manuscript belongs to a different text group and includes neither Km nor the key passage on dreams from the Kd chapter. All these elements produce the impression that these two manuscripts likely include a cross-copied version, since only a mixture of *Vorlagen* can explain the existence of those elements in one version.⁶⁹

Regarding the last manuscript in the list above, MS Manchester 537, the case is even less clear. This copy belongs to the sequence A but adds Sv to the introductory chapters. This preface is usually found in the E sequence, and MS Manchester 537 does not include any other rare chapter. The inclusion of the key passage on the king's dreams in Kd and of the Sv preface makes this copy similar to the first subgroup, despite its diverging chapter sequence.

Besides the subgroups that have been mentioned, constituting the dream group proper (seven dreams) the passage on the king's dreams allows to distinguish two smaller groups, in which the description of the king's visions is absent, and the number of dreams is different. The first group includes the

69 On this structural group, the First *Risāla* group, see Beatrice Gruendler and Khoulood Khalfallah, "Anthologizing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*: The Incipit of the First *Risāla*," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 105–60.

MS Rabat 3655 copy (dated ca. 1265–1280 CE)⁷⁰ and its verbatim copy MS Paris 3475 (dated 1175/1761).⁷¹ In that version, the king has nine dreams, but in the interpretation by the wise sage, only eight dreams are mentioned.

فبينما الملك نائماً ذات ليلة في غرفة له إذ رأى تسعة أحلام يتنبه عند آخر كل حلم منها

As the King was sleeping one night in his room, he had **nine dreams**, waking up at the end of each one of them. (MS Paris 3475, fol. 161v, online edition, unit Kd 17 King Dreams)

The second and last group distinct from but related to the Dreams group proper consists of six copies (largely overlapping with the Wetzstein subgroup of P-c), in which the king has three visions. These manuscripts are MS Montreal 117953 (dated 1055/1645), MS Princeton 169H (997/1588), MS Paris 3473 (dated 1110/1699), MS Wetzstein 11 672 (dated 1246/1830), and MS Malek 1669 (dated 1169/1748), a cross-copied version. MS Riyadh 2407 (dated 1103/1691) also belongs to this group, although it lacks the first folio of the Kd chapter.

فبينما الملك نائماً في غرفة له كانت وفي ذات يومٍ إذ قام الملك من منامه مرعوباً مذعوراً
فزغاً ثم عاد نومه ثم قام كذلك مراراً وهو أنه رأى في منامه ثلاثة أحلام

As the King was sleeping in his room one day, he woke up terrified, scared, and frightened. He then went back to sleep and woke up again many times. That was because he had in his dreams **three visions**. (MS Paris 3473, fol. 88r, online edition, unit Kd 17 King Dreams)

The passage and the manuscripts containing it—subsumed as the Dreams group—has been shown to align with other groupings based on text versions, continua, or shared structural changes.

This particular passage's apparent “volatility” represents an ideal opportunity to distinguish groupings of *Kalila wa-Dimna* manuscripts. The passage cannot therefore serve as the only criterion of classification on which the Dreams group is based, but it is an indication that allows scholars to identify small groups of manuscripts and look for matching parameters throughout the book.

⁷⁰ O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, 218.

⁷¹ 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.

In general, both the Dreams group and the Queen continuum can be divided into smaller subgroups on the basis of further criteria. Both intersect in the sequence E, shared by two Q-c versions and the Iberian continuum, a subgroup within the Dreams group. As much as this result shows us that most of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* copies are in one way or another related, it makes us realize that they all represent individual and unique works that should be considered as versions of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, except for the verbatim or near-verbatim copies.

This analysis demonstrates that any grouping—be that at the level of formulations or the chapter sequence—can only be defined by a sum of parameters, and that these are never fully present in all members of a group. Taken together, however, their presence indicates that several types of grouping probably intersect.

The basic idea of this article has been not only to make a classification of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* manuscripts. This is a goal that can also be achieved by taking into account other chapters of the book as well as other elements of it, such as the codicological information related to each manuscript. The purpose of this article has rather been to investigate how, starting from a single key passage and a few narrative elements, we can identify clues that allow us to group certain manuscripts together and link them to certain translations and other equally important criteria, as was done in the case of the sequence grouping proposed by Sprengling.

The combination of these features makes the classification increasingly clear. Some idiosyncratic cases—by which I mean the cases of manuscripts that have been cross-copied quite intensively, making it difficult to recognize the models used—can of course be studied separately, as their integration into a more general classification may be counterproductive. The identification of these “customized” cases is only possible if certain patterns are identified. These patterns refer to a set of criteria that generally appear together in a specific group, which can be called the “core group” or the “cluster group.” Around this group, there is a set of manuscripts that revolve around this core group and represent the “orbital zone” of this core group. In other words, they represent, in general, a set of manuscripts that differ a little or a lot from this core group, but that all contain some features that tie them to this core group. On the other hand, idiosyncratic cases that usually include criteria belonging to two or more core groups are “customized.”

Another valuable outcome of the identification of these cluster groups is the possibility of finding a representation of the core versions in other sources, such as translations or versifications. One can then state that certain core

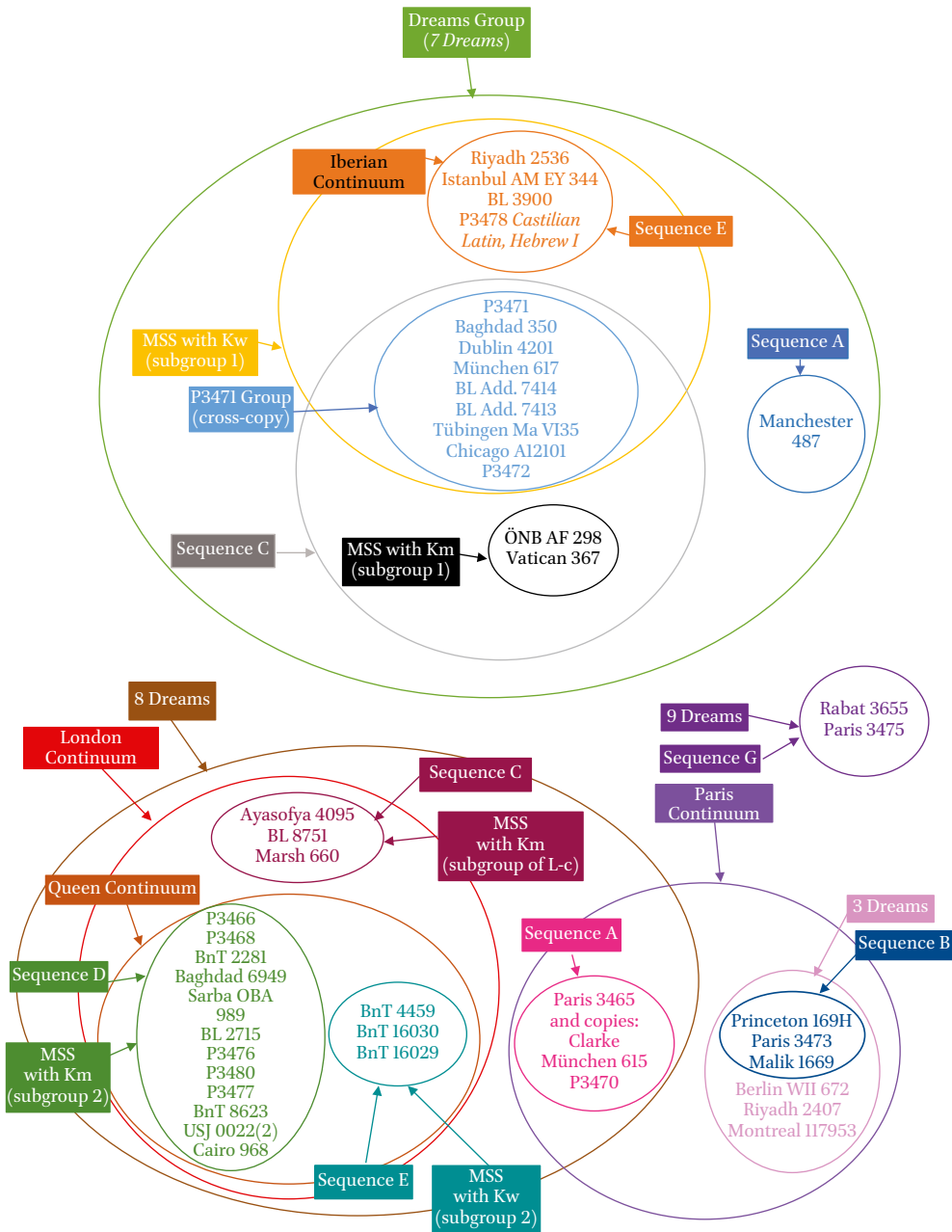


FIGURE 3.4 Overview of salient Arabic versions of KD in the chapter of the King and His Dreams (based on number of dreams and presence of dream description passage) including both continua and cross-copies and considering chapter sequence and rare chapters

groups have played a rather important role in the history of the transmission of the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This is the case of the Iberian continuum, which can be directly linked to the Old Castilian, Hebrew, and Latin versions.

These core groups therefore represent a crossroads mirroring the exchange between several languages and cultures. It is crucial to recognize these junctions and to see how all these texts and versions have developed from each other. There are cases where it is not possible to find or recognize such core groups, and where only the orbital zone versions that rotate around them are available. All the same, it is important to visualize the temporal and spatial dimensions in which these manuscripts circulated as a space in which interactions of some versions have been “life-giving” and essential for the existence of the rest, and to recognize that various links and nodes coexist between these versions.

Illustrations in Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts

What Is Their Story?

Rima Redwan

1 Introduction¹

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 (*aṣḥāgh, 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 through its quality kings and common people shall use it, it shall be copied often and not fall into disuse and become obsolete with the passing of the days, so that illustrators, painters, and copyists may benefit from it forever (MS Paris 3465, fol. 33v online edition, units Im 157 The Book Has Four Aims, Im 159 The Second Aim Is to Please Kings, and Im 160 The Third Aim Is to Benefit Craftsmen).

Together with al-Ḥarīrī's (d. 516/1122) *Maqāmāt*, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* belongs to the most famous Arabic literary works containing illustrations—leaving aside non-literary works of medical, veterinary, botanical, astronomical, or other scientific content,² which are also often illustrated. Its images played a crucial role in the book's popularity, and as its text diversified in multiple yet related versions, so too its images evolved along their own trajectory. The purpose of the present chapter is to elucidate this process.

The above-cited quotation from a seventh/thirteenth-century manuscript of Ibn al-Muqaffa's (d. 139/757) preface to the work, which elaborates on the role of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a book, mentions illustrations and details their double function. This includes both entertaining princes and enhancing the

1 The *Kalīla and Dimna*—*AnonymClassic* project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635.

2 See Anna Contadini, *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Na't al-ḥayawān) in the Ibn Bakhtīshū' Tradition*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.

attraction, value, and currency of the book as a whole. The fact that the illustrations and their components are addressed in the textual tradition by its Arabic translator-redactors—or more precisely in a number of extant versions, among them one of the oldest Arabic manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*³—emphasizes the significance of images as a major element of the book and their relevance for various audiences.⁴

Such illustrations involved the work and effort of various professionals, e.g., the copyist who wrote the captions⁵ 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 sometimes happens that captions are written in a different hand, so that we must assume a second copyist.⁶ However, the motifs in Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts are recurring. The term “motif” designates the image’s elements, figures, objects, and composition, as distinct from the particular *style* in which they are rendered, since both dimensions align differently.⁷ One explanation for the recurrence of motifs could be that the illustrators used a kind of *Vorlage*-catalogue with illustrations, which would imply that either such a catalogue existed as a physical reference to select the motifs for a particular manuscript, or that experienced painters retained the repertoire of frequent images in their memory.⁸ Considering that we do not have any guidelines or handbooks of the artistic practices, methods, and workflow of illustrators, and that none of

3 This passage concludes the translator’s preface in manuscripts of the Paris continuum. Its oldest witness is MS Paris 3465, dated to ca. 1220 CE. For the topic of manuscript continua, see Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler.

4 See Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, “Searching for Mani’s Picture Book in Textual and Pictorial Sources,” *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* No 1 (2011): 233–62, <https://doi.org/10.11588/TS.2011.1.6173>, accessed August 10, 2023.

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

6 On captions, see Bernard O’Kane, “The Uses of Captions in Medieval Literary Arabic Manuscripts,” in *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, ed. Anna Contadini, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007, 135–144.

7 On the recurrence of motifs of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in different works, see Anna Contadini, “Intertextual Animals: Illustrated *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts in Context,” in *Les périples de Kalila et Dimna: Quand les fables voyagent dans la littérature et les arts du monde islamique*, eds. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden and Boston: 2021, 112–15.

8 Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer, *Kalila und Dimna: Ibn al-Muqaffa’s Fabelbuch in einer mittelalterlichen Bilderhandschrift: Cod. arab. 616 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1981, 40–43.

these hypothetical motif catalogues survive, the analysis will have to be based on the illustrations and their elements themselves.

The chapters of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* reunite many facets, whose combination differs in each chapter. Originating as a mirror for princes, a genre falling under the category of wisdom literature, it was perceived as a serious text that imparted advice to rulers and ministers. However, the illustrations often have a comical and entertaining flavor.⁹ Similarly, the enframed stories tend to be entertaining and comical, as well as moralizing. This coincidence can be explained by the high frequency with which images depict enframed sub-stories, in contrast to the rare cases in which they depict the framing narrative. In other words, illustrations and sub-stories are intimately connected.

In the later phase of its history (from the tenth/sixteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century), the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* came to serve a broad audience and enjoy worldwide popularity. Even today, it figures on school curricula in some regions of the Middle East, presented in simplified redactions that are adapted to the student's ages by leaving out content and images deemed unfit for this audience. It is a didactic book that can be accommodated to almost any kind of readership, any language, and every corner of the world. Meanwhile, the illustrations wander, often retaining identical motifs in different existing versions.

2 The Relation between Text-Based Classifications and Image-Based Classification of Manuscripts

As for relations among illustrated manuscripts, similar text versions¹⁰ do not automatically correspond to similar versions in terms of images. Conversely, similar motifs may appear in different text versions of the book. Indeed, illustrations could be added at different moments in a manuscript's history, resulting in an asynchrony between the textual manuscript production and the addition of illustrations.¹¹

9 Christine van Ruymbeke, "The Donkey's Ears and Heart: Reshaping, Rewriting, Adapting, and Enlightening the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Text in Two Medieval Persian Versions," in *Les périples de Kalīla et Dimna: Quand les fables voyagent dans la littérature et les arts du monde islamique*, eds. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden and Boston: 2021, 43–59.

10 On the interrelation of the text versions and the parameters selected, see chapter 2 as well as Chapter 3 by Khoulood Khalfallah, and Chapter 8 by Johannes Stephan.

11 MS Ayasofya 4214 is not illustrated, but its near-verbatim copies MS Paris 5881 and MS Dar al-Kutub 1169 are. Likewise, MS Princeton 169H is not illustrated, while its near-verbatim copy MS Paris 3473 has captions in the main text (as centered lines, with or without a

In the following, the sequence of images (hereafter: the *image cycle*) contained in a particular codex is used as parameter to identify relationships between manuscripts. However, since the motifs used to illustrate each manuscript also vary, assembling a repertoire of the motifs is first required to be able to identify those that appear more frequently and to clarify the connection between the manuscripts. As mentioned, sub-stories figure prominently as motifs. At the same time, these illustrations of the sub-stories structure and punctuate the text, which means that they can serve as navigation tools.

There are further noteworthy features that help classify the image-based groups, that is, groups of manuscripts that can each be assigned to a particular image cycle. In some manuscripts, illustrations of humans are more frequent than those of animals (e.g., MS Bodleian 253, dated 1227/1812). In others, the execution of each of the illustrations has been carried out in an idiosyncratic manner, especially when it comes to the later witnesses of the tenth/sixteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth century. In some manuscripts, for example MS Dublin 4201, attributed to the sixteenth century CE, or MS New York 1981.373, datable before 1026/1617, we encounter a variety of artistic executions and styles, which means that several artists could have been involved in one particular manuscript and that the work may have been carried out in different workshops.¹²

Sometimes, the text is written in a proficient and polished handwriting. The *mise-en-page* is carefully designed, including the insertion of the illuminations, the marking of chapter titles (and occasionally of sub-stories), and the subdivision of the narrative with paragraph signs or highlighted words. The illustrations of such luxury manuscripts (mostly from the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries) were carried out with great sophistication. Their readers immediately noticed the artistic effort and material investment placed in them, as well as the higher monetary value and artistic prestige of these manuscripts.

frame around them) but without gaps, which may point to a lost illustrated intermediate copy or indicate that the copyist only took over the captions from another version. Conversely, MS Dublin 4201 (a fragment from the tenth/sixteenth century) contains illustrations, but almost all its later near-verbatim copies, such as MS Paris 3471, lack images. The only exception to this is MS Paris 3472.

- 12 For information on MS Dublin 4201 and MS New York 1981.373, see Annie Vernay-Nouri, "Histoires de transmissions: un manuscrit arabe du XIII^e siècle et ses copies tardives," in *Les périples de Kalila et Dimna*, eds. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden and Boston: 2021, 130–71; Éloïse Brac de La Perrière, "Les tribulations d'un manuscrit à peintures, ou comment fabriquer une illustration à partir de plusieurs modèles," in *Les périples de Kalila et Dimna: Quand les fables voyagent dans la littérature et les arts du monde islamique*, eds. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden and Boston: 2021, 233–67.

Later copies, in contrast, were executed with less effort.¹³ Presumably, they were copied more often, catering to a broadening readership willing and able to acquire a copy of the famous *Kalīla wa-Dimna* but at a lower price or to readers willing to produce a copy for their own use.¹⁴ Thus, the visual depictions of stories in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, once a major ingredient, became rare. But if the illustrations were left out, the captions were often retained, even without any visible intention to add the images later (such as leaving gaps), either by inserting them in the running text separated by a drawn frame (MS Paris 3473) or by adding them in the margins (MS Wetzstein II 672; on captions, see section 4).

Below, in sections 5–6, one chapter of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, namely the King and His Dreams, also titled “*Īlādh wa-Bilādh*” (in various spellings of the names)¹⁵ will be used as an exemplary case study to demonstrate how a relation between manuscripts can be established on the basis of illustrations and captions. As will be shown, the repertoire of images fits into a limited number of cycles whose motifs still overlap to a large extent, even though they vary slightly in number and style. What can they add to the classification of the manuscripts? And what is the logic behind these cycles?

3 The Motif Repertoire of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Within the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts that have been assembled and surveyed by the AnonymClassic team so far, illustrations have proved an essential parameter for arranging and organizing the manuscript witnesses.

13 This could be because only the luxury manuscripts survived, whereas cheaper copies did not.

14 After the eleventh/seventeenth century, gaps appear increasingly in place of illustrations. The overall impression of the period is that copyists put less effort into every single copy, with a few exceptions. This might be because *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was copied more often and not produced for private libraries of the elite, but rather for a sub-elite readership that was interested in the book. For example, MS Wetzstein II 672, held in Berlin, was copied by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ (d. after 1254/1838) for himself (see Chapter 8). Al-Rabbāṭ was a famous Damascene book collector with an interest in popular literature who lived in the late twelfth/eighteenth to early thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. On Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ, see Ibrahim Akel, “Aḥmad al-Rabbāt al-Halabī: sa bibliothèque et son rôle dans la réception, diffusion et enrichissement des *Mille et une nuits*,” doctoral thesis, Sorbonne Université, Paris, 2017. If illustrations are included during this period, they are less professionally executed compared to older witnesses. More often they are replaced entirely by captions describing the motif that should have been drawn, which then occasionally serve as marginal titles.

15 On the text versions of the King and His Dreams, see Chapter 3.

The illustrations further indicate relations among the manuscripts. The depicted motifs (disregarding at the moment their respective styles) intervene in the narrative plot at certain places, and therefore, it is necessary to examine how they structure the plot and which scenes of the framing narrative and the sub-stories¹⁶ they highlight.

Over the last six years of the AnonymClassic and Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan projects, 160 *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts have been identified, of which 119 have been acquired in digitized form and inspected. Twenty-nine of these are illustrated, and a further group of twelve manuscripts has gaps for illustrations, often with captions that give a short description of the missing motif, and which appear unfinished. Two further manuscripts have only captions without gaps, amounting to forty-three witnesses.¹⁷ This significant number empirically confirms the importance of illustrations in the corpus of Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, as stated in the initial quote from the Arabic translator-adaptor's preface. However, there is still next to no manuscript evidence for the period between Ibn al-Muqaffa's (lost) version, produced in the second/eighth century, and the earliest complete witnesses of the book, from the seventh/thirteenth century. It is worth noting that the preserved Geniza fragments of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, datable to ca. 950–1250 CE, of which two are in Arabic script (T-S Ar. 40.9 and T-S 51.60), each contain a colored illustration. Two further fragments in Hebrew script (T-S Ar. 6.32 and T-S NS 97.16), however, do not contain illustrations. For this reason, it is impossible to make assumptions about the lost manuscripts of the earlier period.

Table 4.1, listing all known illustrated manuscripts in chronological order, shows the gradually decreasing proportion of illustrations over time. The table begins with the seventh/thirteenth century (shaded orange), comprising two complete specimens and two fragments; there are in total three complete manuscripts, including unillustrated ones, from this period. This is followed by the eighth/fourteenth to the ninth/fifteenth centuries (yellow) with ten illustrated specimens within the total number of fifteen manuscripts preserved from the period. The manuscripts of the tenth/sixteenth to the eleventh/seventeenth centuries (green) with seventeen specimens are the largest group of illustrated specimens in the table; the total number of manuscripts of the period is twenty-seven. So far, illustrated manuscripts have constituted roughly

16 Cf. section 6.1 below on the sub-story of the Two Doves.

17 One of the most exciting manuscripts with gaps and captions is MS Paris 3466, datable before 854/1450, a manuscript with collation marks and readers' notes that seemed to have been very popular, although it remained "unfinished."

one-third of all extant dated and datable manuscripts. The latest period, the twelfth/eighteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century (blue), is the richest in complete manuscripts, namely forty-nine, though only a low proportion of them (eight specimens) is illustrated. In other words, after including this latest period the proportion of the illustrated manuscripts has decreased to less than one-sixth of the total number of manuscripts preserved.

Beyond specific group characteristics to be discussed below, table 4.1 provides evidence that each witness, besides overlapping in some illustrations with other manuscripts, was unique in several ways. The frequency of images is not constant within a given manuscript. Each manuscript has a different number of illustrations, with the number of illustrations per manuscript ranging between 33 and 180. The exact original number of illustrations is currently impossible to determine, because many older manuscripts, such as MS Paris 3465, were often restored.¹⁸ In these specimens, illustrations were often added in the restored parts, especially at the beginning and the end by other artists or illustrators.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the younger manuscripts are more likely to have captions, independently of whether illustrations are present, unfilled, or completely omitted. In the following, captions will also be considered in classifying the manuscripts, since they function in a similar way to illustrations by serving as markers that highlight specific passages and thus structure the text. For this reason, I will also include in this analysis cases such as manuscript MS Riyadh 7053, dated 1178/1764, which displays mere gaps without any indication of what should have been illustrated there. Documenting the locations of these spaces and comparing them to other manuscripts can still provide important clues about illustrations that should have been there.

Finally, it needs to be said that the results of the text grouping and the grouping by illustrations (or captions) may differ from each other and that findings from both perspectives should be considered together. After analyzing the images of a group, the result must be compared with the analysis and comparison of their text versions.

18 See Vernay-Nouri, "Histoires de transmissions," 130–70, which identifies the craftsmen of this manuscript's restorations with the illustrators of its near-verbatim copies, MS Clarke Or. 9 and MS Paris 3470. In MS New York 1981.373, illustrations were added in four different phases. See Brac de la Perrière, "Les tribulations," 233–67. Other early illustrated witnesses lack a beginning or end (or both), such as MS Rabat 3655, MS Pococke 400, and MS London 4044.

TABLE 4.1 Chronological list of illustrated manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, including those with gaps and captions

Manuscripts	Date	Number of folios / illustrations and/or gaps	Illustrated/gaps/with or without captions
Paris 3465	ca. 1220 CE	146 fols. (22 later replacement)/98 ills. (8 are restored)	illustrated / labelled
Rabat 3655	ca. 1265–80 CE	113 fols. (incomplete)/122 ills.	illustrated / no captions
Geniza T-S40.9	ca. 950–1250 CE	1 folio/1 ill.	illustrated / caption
Geniza T-S51.60	ca. 950–1250 CE	1 folio/1 ill.	illustrated / legend
Sultan Ahmed III 3015	727/1327	78 fols./4 ills and 44 gaps	partly illustrated / captions
Riyadh 2536	747/1346	156 fols./65 ills.	illustrated / captions
Pococke 400	757/1354	155 fols./78 ills.	illustrated / captions
München 616	ca. 1340–50 CE	129 fols. (22 not original)/73 ills.	illustrated / captions (not consistent)
Paris 3467	ca. 1350–60 CE	119 fols. (incomplete) 50 ills. (47 original)	illustrated / captions
Parker 578	14th century CE	136 fols./120 ills.	illustrated / no captions
London Add. 24350	14th century CE	162 fols.(first 16 fols. are restored) / 90 ills.	gaps / captions
Clarke Or. 9	14th century CE	125 fols./97 ills.	illustrated / labelled and captions
Schiller	843/1439	63 fols./85 ills	illustrated / no captions
Paris 3466	bef. 854/1450 (reader's note)	345 pp./103 ills.	gaps / captions
London 4044	15th century CE	135 fols./76 ills.	illustrated / no captions
Paris 3469	14th/16th century	353 fols./67 gaps	gaps / no captions
Paris 3470	16th century CE	122 fols./79 ills.	illustrated / labelled and captions
New York 1981.373	bef. 1026/1617 (reader's note)	108 fols./75 ills.	illustrated / captions
Manchester 2	1040/1631	117 pp./75 ills.	illustrated / captions
München 618	1046/1636	110 fols./127 gaps	small gaps / captions
Azhariyya 66947	1048/1639	91 fols./46 gaps	gaps / no captions
Montreal 117953	1055/1645	130 fols./95 ills.	illustrated / captions

TABLE 4.1 Chronological list of illustrated manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (cont.)

Manuscripts	Date	Number of folios / illustrations and/or gaps	Illustrated/gaps/with or without captions
Marsh 673	1063/1653	145 fols. /102 ills.	illustrated / captions
Paris 3473	1110H/1669 CE	102 fols./19 captions	no gaps / captions in text
Manchester 537	1083H/1672 CE	160 fols./113 ills.	illustrated / captions
Paris 3472	1080H/1669 CE	165 fols./33 ills.	illustrated / captions
Paris 5881	1092H/1681 CE	91 fols./98 ills.	illustrated / captions
Riyadh 2407	1103H/1691 CE	215 fols./99 gaps	gaps / captions
Sprenger 1234	17th century	MTM, fol. 99v–110v	gaps / captions
Chicago A12101	17th century	140 fols./79. ills.	illustrated / captions
Dublin 4201 (incomplete)	17th century	70 fols./27 ills.	illustrated / captions
Arch. Museum EY 344	dated 410/ 1019, probably 17th–18th century	158 fols./ 104 ills.	illustrated / captions
München 615	17th–18th century	120 fols./102 ills.	illustrated / captions
Paris 3475	1175/1761	199 fols. /180 ills. and 95 gaps	illustrated but unfin- ished / no captions
Riyadh 7053	1178/1764	146 fols./12 ills. and 34 gaps	gaps / no captions
Bodleian 253	1227/1812	100 fols./16 ills.	illustrated / captions
Wetzstein 11 672	1246/1830	131 fols./80 ills.	no gaps / captions on margins
Dar al-Kutub 1169	bef. 1290/1874	121 fols./96 ills.	illustrated / captions
Paris 3478	18th century	211 fols./109 gaps	small gaps / captions
Aleppo 406	18th century	119 fols./55 gaps	gaps / captions
Riyadh 12965	fragment undated	16 fols./3 ills.	illustrated / no captions

	12th–13th century
	14th–15th century
	16th–17th century
	18th–19th century
	Undated

4 Captions and Their Contexts

Several important studies have been conducted on the illustrations in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts. Nevertheless, these often mainly focus on the illustrations proper, thus not considering the version of the text in which they appear, nor the captions. This presents only part of the picture, as underlined by Bernard O'Kane in his emphasis on the importance of captions: "There is no text more intimately related to an image than its caption, a text that can perform several roles, including an intermediary one between the main text and the image."¹⁹

Captions, usually introduced by the terms "image" (*ṣūra*), "description" (*ṣifa*) or more rarely (*tashwīh*) "rendering in contrasting colors,"²⁰ were usually placed on the edges of the illustrations "to familiarize the reader with the subject matter."²¹ As mentioned above, however, the usual workflow (or *chaîne opératoire*) of the production of a manuscript is unknown, so that it is difficult to establish when the captions were added and by whom. Was it the redactor-copyist who chose and added the captions within the main text, or did this person merely copy them from another *Vorlage*? Did they then serve as instructions or notes for the illustrator? Furthermore, there are cases in which the captions were added later in some manuscripts, when the illustrations were already in place. In these cases, a caption's function would be to give an explanatory note to the existing image. A rare case is Manchester 2 [formerly 486], in which the images were placed before adding text and captions.

We cannot be certain how the copying process affected the image cycles. In some cases, two manuscripts share almost every detail, whereas, in others, their text is very similar, while the illustrations or captions differ. However, it is important to bear in mind that many manuscripts are undated. Most of them mention neither the place of production nor the patron or artist involved in the process. Analysis of the style and execution of a manuscript's illustrations can make it possible to date it and identify its place of production.²²

As mentioned, captions take several forms in the collection of the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, starting with the following example of the very

19 O'Kane, "Uses of Captions," 135.

20 See Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes.*, s.v. (1927).

21 Serpil Bağcı, "From Translated Word to Translated Image: The Illustrated Şehnâme-i Türkî Copies," *Muqarnas* 17/1 (2000): 165.

22 A few workshops have been identified: see Contadini, "Intertextual Animals," 104; see also Bernard O'Kane, "Confluence of Cultures: The Rabat *Kalīla and Dimna* and Its Copy," in *Les périples de Kalīla et Dimna: Quand les fables voyagent dans la littérature et les arts du monde islamique*, eds. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière et al., Leiden and Boston: 2021, 187.



FIGURE 4.1 This is the image (*šūra*) of a man who felt thirsty. He came to a well and looked inside it (*naẓara fihi*). And there, beneath his 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 he distracted himself with it from the danger he was in and the perdition coming upon him. (MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, page 32; see transcription of legend below)

famous motif of the Man in the Well, which appears to be one of the best known in the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition.

The illustration of the Man in the Well allegory in MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, provides a long and detailed caption (fig. 4.1; on this motif, see section 6.2). This particular manuscript displays mainly extended captions, describing not only what is depicted but also including parts of the plot not visible in the image, such as the emotions of the depicted figures or later events in the story. Occasionally, captions in MS Manchester 2 are added in the margin and written by a different hand than the main text. Furthermore, the language level contrasts with the one in the main text, containing, for example, more Middle Arabic features.

There are further cases (also true for fig. 4.1) where we see captions contain information that diverges from the text. The beginning of the caption in MS Manchester 2, in a different hand from the main text, mentions that the man

headed to the well because he was thirsty. Most manuscripts mention an elephant, while in others the danger he is fleeing from is not specified.²³ However, the cause is rarely depicted in Arabic manuscripts, as opposed to other traditions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.²⁴

وهذه صورة رجل أدركه العطش فجاء إلى بئر ونظر فيه فإذا تحت رجله
أربع ثعابين قد أخرجوا رؤوسهم إليه فتعلق بغصنين ثابتين على
شفير البئر فإذا بجريذين أتيا يقرضان الشجرتين ليقع في البئر ونظر
في قعر البئر فإذا به تتين عظيم فأتى فاه له ليلدغه فينما
الرجل كذلك إذ نظر إلى كوة نخل فيها غسل فاشتغل بالغسل الذي
في الكوة عن ما هو فيه من الخطر والهلاك الذي نازل به

Despite all its detail, the caption fails to convey that the man actually fell into the well, letting the reader gather this from the depiction. In another instance, MS München 618, dated 1046/1636, a caption inserted directly into the main text, written by the same hand, limits itself to a brief mention of the figures to be depicted (fig. 4.2). The caption is stretched over the entire width of the text block and separated from the previous text by two paragraph signs which act here as space fillers, creating a new line. The gap has shrunk to a mere placeholder measuring a height of two lines, a space too small to fit an actual illustration. It is therefore unsurprising that the content of the captions was never depicted in this particular manuscript. In fact, it is possible that the spaces were never meant to be filled in with illustrations.

In later instances of gaps in this manuscript, the captions simply continue the main text before the two-line gap, occasionally (but not always) separated by a small space and only identifiable by the phrase (*hādhihī ṣūra*) or simply the word *ṣūra* followed by the caption's text.

In other manuscripts where illustrations and captions diverge, the question arises of whether the illustrator even read the captions written by the copyist or just inserted an illustration he thought fitting at a specific point in the text. Generally speaking, *mistakes* by illustrators in depicting something other than what the main text is concerned with indicate that the illustrator and the copyist were for the most part not the same person or that specific images were

23 In the Persian text, it is an enraged camel that the man is fleeing from. On the parable of the Man in the Well, see Monika Zin, "The Parable of 'The Man in the Well': Its Travels and Its Pictorial Traditions from Amaravati to Today," *Art, Myths and Visual Culture of South Asia, Warsaw Indological Studies* 4 (2011): 33–93.

24 There is one exception in MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], where a camel is depicted as the cause of dread.

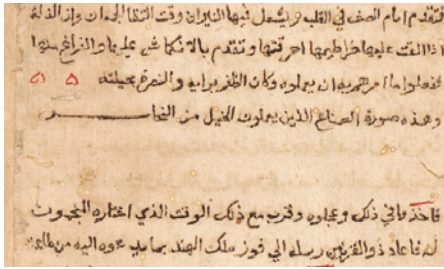


FIGURE 4.2

MS München 618, dated 1046/1636, fol. 2v.
The caption reads: "This is an image (*ṣūra*) of the craftsmen who made the copper horses"

just copied from another manuscript that included the wrong image.²⁵ A case in point is MS Manchester 2. On page 33, the manuscript features two superimposed images, the lower of which, depicting characters of the main story, has a marginal note to the left of it (in addition to the caption, which is on the right). The note specifies that the image is wrongly placed, as there should be no image at this point (*hādhā ghalat laysa fī hādhā l-mawḍi' ṣūra*). The note continues to explain that this image should have instead taken the place of the next one (which depicts a sub-story that follows later in the text). That latter image appears one position too early, and all further images are therefore one position off, so that at the end, one place is missing an image. The writer of the note was correct: The illustrator, by mistake, shifted all images one position forward.

In the following example, MS Wetzstein II 672,²⁶ dated 1246/1830, the caption (in the same hand as the main text) is written in the margin without any space left for an image (fig. 4.3). The writer, Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ, uses the term "description" (*ṣifāt*) in the plural, as if denoting each of the scene's elements.

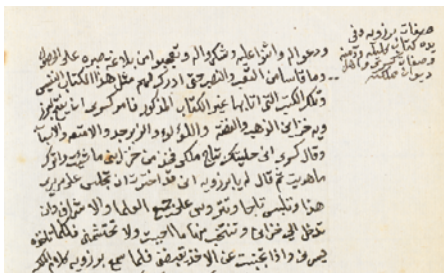


FIGURE 4.3 MS Wetzstein II 672, dated
1246/1830, fol. 20v

25 See O'Kane, "Confluence," 187–91. See also pages 140–41 below.

26 See Chapter 8.

Descriptions (*ṣifāt*) of Burzoy with the book of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in his hand and descriptions (*ṣifāt*) of Kisrā and the dignitaries of his kingdom.²⁷

Information about when and by whom captions were written is therefore essential, as it may give hints about how a manuscript was produced. The form and appearance of captions differ from manuscript to manuscript. Nonetheless, captions are often written by the same copyist as the main text, even though a different ink color or *qalam* size may highlight the caption as an immediately visible indicator of the illustration.²⁸

Gaps of various sizes, whether large enough for an image or not, serve the same highlighting and structuring function as images, as has been shown for instance in the two-line gaps in MS München 618 (see fig. 4.2). Usually, illustrations were the quickest way for readers familiar with *Kalīla wa-Dimna* to navigate in the book and find a particular passage or sub-story. Gaps and captions have a similar function, while captions specifying the motifs (if not the styles) can determine which illustration is meant to be inserted.

Distinct captions, written in the margin, can be quickly consulted by readers leafing through a codex, not unlike the *ajzāʾ* and *aḥzāb* indications in Qurʾān codices. As important placeholders for illustrations, they might be described as “unpainted images.” However, not all captions were clearly set off; some continue within the text block and are not followed by any blank space (such as in MS Paris 3473, though in some instances the captions are within a frame). Furthermore, the positioning of a caption in relation to its illustration also varies per manuscript. Most often, the captions appear above the images. In other examples, they are placed vertically in the margin next to them (see fig. 4.1). A caption may also be separated from its image by a page break (such as in MS Paris 5881). In rare cases, the captions are replaced by short designations written inside the image. For example, names or short designations (also termed “legends”) are inscribed above each figure of an image in MS Paris 3465.²⁹

In sum, the text of a caption serves several functions. In some cases, the caption describes the depicted scene. In others, it comments on and contextualizes a scene within a story, as in MS Manchester 2 (fig. 4.1). Throughout this manuscript, the copyist often summarizes the action, or he anticipates its outcome with a brief summary placed next to the image that informs the reader of part of the plot that is still to come (see fig. 4.5 below). Therefore, the

27 He also uses *ṣifa* in the singular.

28 See Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, 24.

29 The labeling in MS Paris 3465 is identified to be of a later date.

captions, illustrations, and gaps can tell a story parallel to the main text. Even though the main text provides the narrative content of an image, the phrasing of the caption may depart from it.

5 Image Cycles within Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts

In order to gain a first impression of the image cycles, the chapter of the King and His Dreams has been chosen to analyze its depicted motifs and their recurrence.³⁰ This parable is of Buddhist origin,³¹ and its message is to teach rulers to use prudence (*ḥilm*)³² and select wise counselors. It is the work's third longest chapter, after the Lion and the Ox and the Owls and the Crows, but in contrast to these chapters, rich in sub-stories, the King and His Dreams contains only two of them, told by the vizier to the king. In the following comparison, each scene, or motif, is given a brief label to mark its place within the plot.

For the reasons outlined above, this study includes both illustrations and captions. The chapter's illustrations are charted in all illustrated witnesses for comparison. Likewise, each caption is transcribed for comparative reasons. On this basis, certain manuscript clusters can be established. In a second step, several noteworthy motifs of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*'s motif-catalogue will be compared and discussed, for example, the Man in the Well. This second analysis supports the results of the first overall comparison, namely by numerous similarities among the motifs of the paintings, but also shows differences in their stylistic execution.³³

Such an approach has advantages and limitations: Choosing a chapter from the middle of the book minimizes uncertainties resulting from lacunae or restored parts common at the beginning and end of a manuscript 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.

30 The same chapter has also been used to identify text groups. See chapter 3 in the present volume.

31 Esin Atıl, *Kalīla wa Dimna: Fables from a Fourteenth-Century Arabic Manuscript*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981, 88; and de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 13.

32 The semantic spectrum of this term further encompasses foresight, self-control, perspicacity, and kindness. In the relevant chapter, it is the opposite of rash and unreflected action; see also Chapter 3, 73.

33 O'Kane, "Confluence," 187–91.

5.1 *The Sample Chapter: The King and His Dreams (Kd)*

I will begin by briefly summarizing the chapter's plot, with the letters in parentheses marking the illustrations, charted in tables 4.2 and 4.3 below, which depict the plot's narrative moments. Kd is introduced, like the other chapters, by a frame dialogue, in which an Indian king asks a philosopher about a ruler's most important quality. The answer is prudence (*ḥilm*), followed in importance by a good advisor and a smart and caring wife (b), which the philosopher then illustrates with the chapter's main story: An Indian king has disturbing dreams (c) and asks Brahmins to interpret them (d). They use the occasion, however, to obtain revenge for the recent execution of twelve thousand of their number 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 (e). His grief is evident to his vizier Bilād, who draws the queen, Īrākht, into his confidence (f). She advises the king (g, h, i) to consult the sage Kābāriyūn (in various spellings), who interprets the dreams to the opposite effect, as auspicious tidings of the imminent arrival of messengers with gifts (j, k, l), a prediction that is shortly borne out (m, n, o). The grateful king summons the queen and his favorite concubine, but he gives Īrākht the first choice between two gifts: a crown and a garment (p, q). Uncertain which to take, she glances at the vizier, who indicates with his glance the garment as the better choice, but the king spots the gesture. Concerned that the king may guess that they plotted together (which led to his rescue) and pretending ignorance of the wink, Īrākht quickly chooses the crown instead, in order not to compromise Bilād and herself. The story continues with an account of the king visiting the queen and the favorite concubine on alternate nights. One night when he visits Īrākht, who is wearing the crown, the jealous concubine passes by wearing the garment. The king, fascinated by her beauty, calls Īrākht 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 over the king's head (r). In equal haste and fury, the king orders Bilād to execute her on the spot. Knowing the king's impulsiveness, the vizier pretends to do so while hiding the queen (s) and waiting for the king to regret his order. This moment of tension is prolonged with narrative retardation: The vizier fends off the king's anxious questions with a long series of maxims (t) and two sub-stories (u, v), during which the king's grief and remorse increase (w). Finally, the vizier returns the queen safely to the king (x, y). The king recognizes his error and orders the Brahmins executed (z).

5.2 *Distribution and Frequency of Illustrations and Captions*

One way to compare the illustrations of this chapter is based on their positions in the plot, i.e., the narrative moments selected for depiction, as has been done in the following table 4.2. This table charts all manuscripts with illustrations, captions, and gaps. Some manuscripts lack illustrations but provide some information by labeling the gaps.³⁴ Other manuscripts cannot be placed within this table, 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 captions (e.g., MS Azhariyya 66947, dated 1048/1639, and MS Riyadh 7053, dated 1178/1764). Therefore, the last two types of manuscripts have not been included in tables 4.2 and 4.3. Further specimens are fragments, or cases where the illustrations cannot be placed precisely within the text, such as MS Bodleian 253, which usually contains one miniature image per chapter in an ornamental band above the chapter title but on occasion a second one, and MS London 4044, where an illustration of the frame story has been added in the margin. The purpose of table 4.2 is to show merely the positions of illustrated scenes within the manuscripts and to group together those manuscripts which have the most illustrations at the same places. However, two scenes that recur in different figure constellations and even within the same manuscript have been subdivided (table 4.2, cols. g, h, i and j, k, l respectively).

The motifs are each given a label that briefly captures what the illustration shows. The labels thus function almost like the captions; they designate the figures included and identify the event of the scene. Each green box represents an image (or several) and/or a caption, based on the shared occurrence of illustrations at identical positions in the plot, or in other words, the coincidence of motifs. This might be one or several motifs per narrative moment. The images are arranged horizontally in the table (and labeled alphabetically for convenience), and their sequence shows how they “punctuate” the narrative. The arrangement disregards the dates of the manuscripts and groups them solely by proximity to each other in the positions of the illustrations.

In some instances, there are several different realizations of the same scene or motif. For example, in the motif in which the queen converses with the king (g–h), the queen is at times depicted on the king’s right side, and at others, she

34 These are MS London Add. 24350, MS Paris 3466, MS München 618, MS Riyadh 2407, MS Aleppo 406, and the partial version of MS Sprenger 1234. MS Wetzstein II 672 retains the captions as side titles, and MS Paris 3473 retains them as centered lines within the main text, at times placed within a frame.

m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Kd King Speaks to His Court about Gifts	Kd Gifts Arrive	Kd King with White Elephant	Kd Choosing of Gifts	Kd Queen and Concubine	Kd Queen Pours Rice over King	Kd Vizier Hides Queen in His Palace	Kd King Speaks to Vizier/ Vizier with Sword Speaks to King	Kd Ape on Tree and Sleeper	Kd Two Doves Fight	Kd Vizier Lectures King	Kd Vizier Returns Queen to King	Kd Queen Kneels before King	Kd Execution of Brahmins
	130v				132r		132v	120r			122v		
	157v				159v		160r	134r	133v	135r			
	108r				108v		108v	110r	161v	163v			
	98v			99v			100v	101r	101v	104r, 105r, 106r, 107v, 108r, 5 ills.	111v		
	167r			168v			169v	170v	170r	171r, 173r, 175r, 176v, 177v, 179r, 180r, 7 ills.	180v		
	125r				125v		126r	127v	127r	128v	135r		
					p. 237		p. 244	p. 241	p. 240		p. 253		
	103r				103r				104r		108r		
	105v	106r	106v		107r	107v	108r	108v			114r		
	113v						115r	115v			117r		
	133r						133r	135v				137r	
	110v						112r					114r	
							75r		75v	78r	79r		
							96v		98r	102r	103v		
					134r	135r			135v	136r	139v		140r
					123v				125r	125v	129r		130r
					p. 93				p. 95		p. 97		
					107v				108v		111v		
					98v				99v				
					145r				146v	148r	149r		150r
					93r				94r		94v	98v	99v

TABLE 4.2 Distribution of illustrations in the chapter of the King and His Dreams (*cont.*)

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
Manuscripts	Kd Title Illustration	Kd Dabshalim and Bidpay	Kd King Dreams	Kd King Speaks to Brahmins about Dreams	Kd King Concerned, Sitting	Kd Vizier Speaks to Queen about King's Fears	Kd Queen Speaks to King; Queen on the Right	Kd Queen Speaks to King; Queen on the Left	Kd King Lies next to Queen	Kd King Speaks to Sage; Horse	Kd King Kneels before Sage	Kd King Speaks to Sage
ms Schiller				53v			56r					
Montreal 117953				114v, 116v, 2 ill.			117v					119v
Riyadh 2407				124v								126r
Paris 3473				88r			90r					90v
Paris 3472												
Aleppo 406												
Bodleian 253	73r										76r	
Wetzstein 11 672												
London 4044		111v										
Numer of occurences							11					
cmt							characters					

one image

several images

m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Kd King Speaks to His Court about Gifts	Kd Gifts Arrive	Kd King with White Elephant	Kd Choosing of Gifts	Kd Queen and Concubine	Kd Queen Pours Rice over King	Kd Vizier Hides Queen in His Palace	Kd King Speaks to Vizier/ Vizier with Sword Speaks to King	Kd Ape on Tree and Sleeper	Kd Two Doves Fight	Kd Vizier Lectures King	Kd Vizier Returns Queen to King	Kd Queen Kneels before King	Kd Execution of Brahmins
	54r		54v						122v			59r	
									129r				
								122r	121v	122v			
	PDF 89 left												
114r			114v										
11	key moment			key moment			12	11	18	10	14		
							key moment	sub-tale	sub-tale		key moment		

stands on his left. Occasionally, the king is depicted lying next to the queen (i), which conveys their connectedness. Another example is the motif of the king speaking to the sage. One of these instances shows the king meeting the sage, where the king is standing and speaking, with or without the horse (j, l). The other motif is the king kneeling before the sage (k);³⁵ the relevant manuscripts have been clustered together. These symbolic gestures must be considered in the analysis. Their distinctions prove that there were different *Vorlagen* or ideas about how a motif could be realized.

This table merely groups motifs in manuscripts together. It does not consider the stylistic executions of the motifs and their stylistic closeness to each other. Therefore, the clusters do not necessarily coincide with the image groups defined below. These are based on similarities between the specific motifs occurring at the same position in the plot. Their discrepancy is significant in showing that image sequences and renditions of motifs are not necessarily congruent, which translates into the fact that the illustrator relied on models and sometimes combined different ones, such as in the case of MS Clarke Or. 9, attributed to the fourteenth century CE.

Charting the mere positions of the illustrations makes it possible to spot correspondences between them. Table 4.2 shows the positions of all the illustrations in one chapter, the King and His Dreams, across all illustrated manuscripts. The focus is on the relationship between these illustrations and their respective elements and configurations. This approach allows for identifying overlaps and differences.

Table 4.2 does not yet aim to divide the manuscripts into groups. Rather, it displays them as a whole collection and serves to visualize the image distribution and frequency within the Kd chapter. The illustrations are distributed throughout the whole chapter, but specific scenes are popular for visualization. The most frequent illustrations (occurring between eleven and eighteen times) show key moments or a key passage of the plot or a sub-story.

Among these scenes is the one showing the king and queen in conversation at the beginning of the story. In two versions, the queen is portrayed on the left side of the image (h), whereas the image of the queen standing on the right of the king constitutes the more popular motif of this scene (g). Another frequently illustrated scene is the depiction of the vizier and the king in conversation. The illustration of the king's feeling of regret as a result of his order to execute the queen (t) is followed by the two sub-stories (u and v), the Ape and the Lentil Dish and the Two Doves, respectively. Both these stories are

35 The dark green boxes indicate that there are several illustrations of one motif; the number in the box quantifies the motif; on the king's kneeling, see also chapter 3, 84.

told by the vizier. The scene of the vizier telling the stories is also illustrated in many manuscripts. However, there is a marked tendency to distribute the illustrations in a certain way throughout the chapter. The illustrations become denser toward the end of the chapter, whereas at the beginning, they are more scattered, as can be seen from Table 4.2. What Table 4.2 shows is therefore the (lower or higher) recurrence of particular moments of the plot in illustration.

All manuscripts 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 each manuscript shares several images with others, other images fluctuate, so that almost every manuscript exhibits a unique selection of them.³⁶ In showing both overlaps and variations in the book art of the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition, the table thus exhibits a visual intertextuality.

Table 4.3 refines Table 4.2 by adding up the instances of a particular illustrated scene (represented again by illustration, caption, or both), as well as by providing the sequence of illustrations per manuscript in serial numbers. The order is slightly adjusted to group together manuscripts sharing one image cycle (the basis for defining the groups in more detail are based on the findings in Tables 4.4–4.6). The variation of the groups' motifs is not yet taken into account. This is why the manuscripts of image groups A and B are followed each by a single "unclassified" manuscript. The vertical columns show the total number of instances of each illustration across all manuscripts. The figures show even more clearly that—beyond resemblances in overlapping motifs—each manuscript is unique in the precise selection of its images (with one exception mentioned above). Regarding the number of images per manuscript, MS Parker 578 MS Marsh 673, MS Paris 3475, and MS Rabat 3655 contain the highest numbers, between twelve and sixteen (including the multiple depictions of scene w), and *mutatis mutandis*, MS Paris 3466 contains the highest number of gaps with ten captions. The single most frequent illustration, included in twenty of the thirty-one manuscripts, is the sub-story of the Two Doves (v). In second place (included fifteen 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 of the narrative climax of the parable. The popularity of a particular depiction of a scene is determined by the number of occurrences of the images. The frequency of the illustrations in each manuscript also demonstrates the connections between the manuscripts.

36 Only MS Arch. Museum EY 344 and MS Paris 3478 completely overlap in this chapter.

TABLE 4.3 Numbers and congruence of illustrated scenes of manuscripts in image groups

Groups	Mss/Units	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
		Kd Title Illustration	Kd Dabshalin and Bidpay	Kd King Dreaming	Kd King Speaks to Brahmins about Dreams	Kd King Concerned Sitting	Kd Vizier Speaks to Queen About King's Fears	Kd Queen Speaks to King; Queen on the Right	Kd Queen Speaks to King; Queen on the Left	Kd King Lies next to Queen	Kd King Speaks to Sage; Horse	Kd King Kneels before Sage	Kd King Speaks to Sage
A	Riyadh 2536		1										2
	Paris 3475				1			2					3
	Rabat 3655							1			2		
	Parker 578				1		2	3			4		
	Arch. Museum	1	2					3					
	EY 344												
	Paris 3478	1	2					3					
B	Schiller				1				2				
	Clarke Or. 9				1			2				3	
	Paris 3465							1	2			3	
	München 615							1				2	
	Paris 3470	1						2				3	
	Montreal 117953				1/2			2					3
	Riyadh 2407				1								2
C	Paris 3473				1			2					3
	London												1
	Add. 24350												
	Pococke 400												1
	München 616				1								
	Manchester 2												
	Manchester 537	1							2				

m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
Kd King Speaks to His Court about Gifts	Kd Gifts Arrive	Kd King with White Elephant	Kd Choosing of Gifts	Kd Queen and Concubine	Kd Queen Pours Rice over King	Kd Vizier Hides Queen in His Palace	Kd King Talks to Vizier/Vizier with Sword Speaks To King	Kd Ape on Tree and Sleeper	Kd Two Doves Fighting	Kd Vizier Lectures King	Kd Vizier Returns Queen to King	Kd Queen Kneels before King	Kd Execution of Brahmins
								3				4	
	4		5	6			7	8	9	10/7 ills.	11		
	3			4			5	6	7	8/5 ills.	9		
5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12					
	4				5		6	7	8	9			
	4				5		6	7	8	9			
	3		4									5	
	4						5	6			7		
	4						5	6			7		
	3			4			5	6	7			8	
4							5					6	
									4				
									3				
					2	3				4	5	6	7
					2					3	4	5	6
					2					3		4	
					1					2		3	
					3					4	5	6	7

[illegible]

5.3 *Grouping by Motif into Image Cycles*

The positional tables (Tables 4.2 and 4.3) have permitted an initial clustering of certain manuscripts by virtue of the position of images and/or captions in the narrative structure of the text. This needs to be further defined and complemented by a study of the motifs. Motifs are not limited to one group (image group) in which they occur; some occur in several groups,³⁷ but it is rather the *combination* of several motifs and their various renditions that characterize an image group. Each image group has one or two core motifs, shared by most of its manuscripts, and others that only appear in a smaller number of manuscripts.

5.3.1 Image Group A

Group A comprises five manuscripts (MS Riyadh 2536, MS Paris 3475, MS Rabat 3655, MS Parker 578, and MS Arch. Museum EY 344), of which eight shared illustrations are selected for analysis (see Table 4.4). It has as one core motif the moment when the king meets the sage (j, k, l), but only in two of these instances can we see the king's horse standing next to him (j). This variant of the motif is found in MS Parker 578 and MS Rabat 3655, the oldest manuscript in the group.

A second core motif is that of the vizier holding a blood-stained sword, pretending he has executed the queen, as the king has commanded (t). This motif is only present in this group (disregarding the unclassified manuscript MS Paris 5881). The motif is detailed in the caption of MS Arch. Museum EY 344, reading, "The image of Bilād as he comes to the king with a blood-stained sword." The caption, in this case, describes the vizier's appearance, as he pretends to have executed the queen. It is necessary to read the main text to uncover his scheme, which is to make the king regret his command and then to reveal to him that the queen is still alive.

A third core motif is the queen talking to the king at the beginning of the chapter (g, h), when 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 the background is empty so that the two figures appear to be floating in space. This rendition is consistent throughout the group; see below Table 4.4 for a comparative arrangement of the group's selected motifs. A further motif, the dreaming king (d), characterizes those manuscripts of group A that belong to the Iberian continuum, which form part of the eponymous Dreams group discussed in chapter 3. Although MS Riyadh 2536 is textually close to MS Arch. Museum EY 344, the two manuscripts still differ in

37 The sub-story of the Two Doves (v) also occurs in all image groups.

the depictions and selection of motifs. In the case of MS Rabat 3655 and MS Paris 3475, both resemble each other in image cycle and motifs in the text, while MS Paris 3475 is also a near-verbatim copy of the text of MS Rabat 3655. Therefore, to keep them together, MS Riyadh 2536 is placed above them in the table.³⁸

One of the most frequent images among the illustrated manuscripts is the scene of the vizier bringing the living queen back to the king after his strategy has been unveiled. There are two ways in which this particular scene is depicted. Either the vizier presents the queen to the king by standing next to her (x), or the queen is portrayed kneeling in front of the king (y, mostly occurring in image group B, see below). Interestingly, in image group A, the queen is in the center of the image, which shows the vizier presenting her to the king while standing behind her with outstretched arms (x). One exception is MS Riyadh 2536: Here, the queen is hiding behind the vizier and looks apprehensively at the king. In this illustration, the vizier is at the center of the depicted scene, thus reflecting his role in orchestrating their reunion.

5.3.2 Image Group B

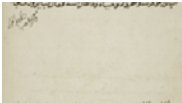
The cohesion of group B (in distinction from group A) does not appear clearly in Table 4.3, but results from comparing the motifs in detail. The image group B consists of five manuscripts (MS Paris 3465, MS Paris 3470, MS Clarke Or. 9, MS München 615, and MS Montreal 117953, with the last four on the list following the model of the first, MS Paris 3465) which contain seven shared illustrations.³⁹ MS Paris 3465 is one of the oldest extant copies of the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (including manuscripts with and without illustrations), and it has been copied almost word by word and motif by motif several times. Its oldest portion is dated to the early seventh/thirteenth century, based on the style of illustrations, but the beginning and end of the manuscript have been lost and restored at a later date.⁴⁰

38 For the interrelations between the manuscripts' text versions, see chapters 2, 3, and 8 in the present volume.

39 The text versions of all these manuscripts are near-verbatim copies of the oldest illustrated text, MS Paris 3465, except for MS Montreal 117953, which is a near-verbatim copy of MS Paris 5881. They form the P3465-subgroup of the Paris continuum. See chapter 2 in this volume.

40 Bernard O'Kane, *Persian Painting: Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2003; Hugo Buchthal, "Hellenistic' Miniatures in Early Islamic Manuscripts," *Ars Islamica* 7/2 (1940), 125–33. For the history of the premodern restoration of MS Paris 3465, see Vernay-Nouri, "Histoires de transmissions."

TABLE 4.4 Core motifs of image group A in the chapter Kd

Short labels of illustrations		g Kd Queen speaks to King Queen on the Right, h Kd Queen Speaks to King; Queen on the Left	j Kd King Speaks to Sage Horse, k Kd King Kneels before Sage, l Kd King Speaks to Sage	n Kd Gifts Arrive	r Kd Queen Pours Rice over King
MSS					
Group A	Riyadh 2536				
		fol. 117v			
	Paris 3475				
		fol. 164v	fol. 165r, gap and caption incl. horse	fol. 167r	
	Rabat 3655				
		fol. 97r	fol. 97v	fol. 98v	
	Parker 578				
		fol. 103v	fol. 104v	fol. 106v	fol. 107r
Arch. Museum EY 344					
		fol. 128v		fol. 130v	fol. 132r

t Kd Vizier with Sword Speaks to King	u Kd Ape on Tree and Sleeper	v Kd Two Doves Fight	y Kd Vizier Returns Queen to King	z Kd Execution of Brahmins



fol. 120v



fol. 122v



fol. 169v



fol. 170v



fol. 170r



fol. 180v



fol. 100v



fol. 101v



fol. 101r



fol. 108v



fol. 108r



fol. 108v



fol. 114r



fol. 132v

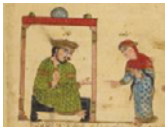
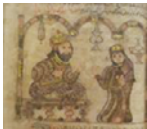


fol. 134r



fol. 133v

TABLE 4.5 Core motifs of image group B in chapter Kd

Short labels of illustrations		g Kd Queen speaks to King Queen on the Right	k Kd King Kneels before Sage, l Kd King Speaks to Sage	n Kd Gifts Arrive	r Kd Queen Pours Rice over King
Group B	Montreal 117953	 fol. 117v	 fol. 119r		
	Paris 3465	 fol. 130v	 fol. 132v	 fol. 133r	
	Paris 3470	 fol. 108v	 fol. 110r	 fol. 110v	
	Bodleian Clarke Or. 9	 fol. 112r	 fol. 113r	 fol. 113v	
	München 615	 fol. 106r	 fol. 107v	 fol. 108r	 fol. 108v

t Kd King Talks
to Vizier

u Kd Ape on Tree
and Sleeper

v Kd Two Doves Fight

x Kd Vizier Returns
Queen to King,
y Queen Kneels
before King

z Kd Execution
of Brahmins



fol. 122v



fol. 134v



fol. 135v



fol. 137r



fol. 112r



fol. 114r



fol. 115r



fol. 115v



fol. 117r



fol. 110v



fol. 110r

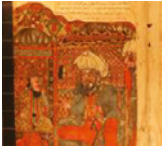


fol. 110r



fol. 111v

TABLE 4.6 Core motifs of image group C in chapter Kd

Short labels of illustrations		g Kd Queen speaks to King j Kd King Speaks to Queen on the Right, h Kd Queen Speaks to King Queen on the Left	
Group C	New York 1981.373		
	Pococke 400		
	Manchester 537		
	Paris 3467		
	München 616		
	Manchester 2		

r Kd Queen Pours
Rice over King

v Kd Two Doves Fight

x Kd Vizier Returns
Queen to King

z Kd Execution of
Brahmins



fol. 98v



fol. 99v



fol. 101r



fol. 123v



fol. 125r



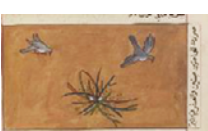
fol. 129r



fol. 130r



fol. 145r



fol. 146v



fol. 149r



fol. 150r



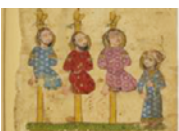
fol. 93r



fol. 94r



fol. 98v



fol. 99v



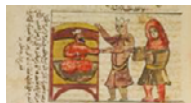
fol. 107v



fol. 108v



fol. 111v



p. 93



p. 95



p. 97



FIGURE 4.4 MS Clarke Or. 9, attributed to the fourteenth century CE, fol. 113r; MS Paris 3465, dated ca. 1220 CE, fol. 132v

An example can serve to illustrate this process. MS Clarke Or. 9 has been dated to the fourteenth century CE based on the style of its illustrations. However, its motifs show an obvious connection with MS Paris 3465, although that manuscript was copied two centuries earlier. The second core motif of the scene of the Indian king prostrating himself before the sage, whom he is consulting on the topic of his ominous dreams, may serve as an example (k). In fig. 4.4, MS Clarke Or. 9 is placed on the left side and MS Paris 3465 on the right. Several aspects of the motif visibly overlap: first, the posture of the figures, with the king's prostration and the sage being seated and gesturing with his hand; 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 parallels the witnesses' text versions, which are so similar as to make the one a near-verbatim copy of the other.

In image group B, the images in MS Paris 3465 are noteworthy because the figures are partly Hellenistic and partly Eastern (typically Arabic) in style, and the architectural elements can be traced to Byzantine models. Hugo Buchthal established the manuscript's similarity to MS Paris 6094 of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*. In both manuscripts, the illustrations are framed by arches. This architectural element is also present in all five manuscripts of group B, although they are rendered differently.

A first core motif in image group B is the queen talking to the king (Table 4.2, column g): The queen always stands 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 and gestures with his hands in all manuscripts. This motif also appears in group A, but there the figures float on the page, without a basic “ground,” 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 second core motif in this group is that of the king kneeling in front of the sage (only once is he depicted standing; k, l). This illustration is also framed by floral elements, which provide it with a structure. Further motifs in this group are the arrival of the gifts (column n) and the ape on the tree (column u).

A further notable motif is that of the king and the Brahmins (d) in MS Clarke 9 and MS Montreal 117953 (though it also appears in groups A and C). As for the main text, the manuscripts also belong together since MS Clarke Or. 9, MS München 615, and MS Paris 3470 are near-verbatim copies of the version of MS Paris 3465.⁴¹ The illustrations provide additional evidence of the connection between the manuscripts. There is one exception to this, however. The illustrator of MS München 615 seems to have taken his inspiration from elsewhere. The scene of the queen pouring rice over the king’s head after he has called her choice foolish (r) receives an illustration, whereas the motif is lacking in other manuscripts of group B. In MS München 615, a motif from the sub-story of the Two Doves (v), is also depicted, thus pointing to the following group C (see below). The illustrator of this particular manuscript seems to have taken his inspiration from several manuscripts. Unlike the other manuscripts of this group, it has no short legends within the images, but full captions. This demonstrates once again that the illustration of a manuscript took place after the text (and its captions) was copied.⁴²

41 On the relation between the illustrations in MS Paris 3465, MS Clarke Or. 9, and MS Paris 3470, see Vernay-Nouri, “Histoires de transmissions,” 131–71.

42 In producing such a prestigious book, the manuscript codex often involved many people. On the one hand, there were copyists who often also copied the captions or just left the spaces open for someone else. On the other hand, the illustrators finished the manuscripts by adding the described motifs (mentioned in the captions). These two processes explain why grouping manuscripts can be tricky. The illustrators may have had another motif-*Vorlage* than the one supposed to be used in the copied manuscript. To clarify: The production of the text (and here, the captions may also have been included in the copying workshop) and the process of adding the images were different tasks. This can explain why we sometimes have near-verbatim copies of the text of a particular version, whereas the images lead us to another version. This is often the case with copies that are termed cross-copies (referring to the many different elements of several versions gathered in one). One example of this is MS München 615, a near-verbatim copy of MS Paris 3465. In this case, many illustrations in the manuscript are very similar to those in the Paris manuscript, but MS München 615 also contains motifs that instead occur in group C.



FIGURE 4.5 MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486], dated 1040/1631, p. 93

5.3.3 Image Group C

Image group C consists of six manuscripts (MS New York 1981.373, MS Pococke 400, MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], MS Paris 3467, MS München 616,⁴³ and MS Manchester 2 [formerly 486]) which share six illustrations. The group contains the core motif of the queen pouring rice over the king (column 1, excepting MS Manchester 2). The manuscripts MS Pococke 400, MS München 616, and MS Paris 3467, all dated to the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, are also similar in style. The artist of MS Paris 3467 shares the arch of MS Pococke 400 but in different colors. A closer look at the figures in MS München 616 shows that the illustrated figure next to the queen is a woman wearing a headscarf. With the exceptions of MS Pococke 400 and MS Paris 3467, which depict the vizier, the figure standing next to the queen in group C is a woman, which is also the case in MS München 615 (group B).

The motif in MS Manchester 2 is peculiar (fig. 4.5); it is placed wrongly at the beginning of the story (as the illustrator has made an error in the sequence, see p. 115) and lacks the vessel in the queen's hand. Nonetheless, it has the same composition as the rice-pouring motif in the earlier MS München 616, freely redrawn here. The contours of the crown on the queen's head are emphasized, as is the headscarf of the concubine standing next to the queen; some of the colors (the king's and the queen's garments and the concubine's headscarf) have likewise been adopted from MS München 616. The caption (in a different hand from that of the main text) confirms this to be a motif of a later event in

43 On MS München 616, see Bothmer, *Kalila und Dimna*.

the story, but instead of describing the image, it narrates the consequences of the queen's offense not visible in it: "This is the image of the king who called his vizier and commanded him to kill his wife, Īlādh. The vizier took her to him until the king's rage had subsided. The king then repented of his command, and the vizier told the king that she was hidden in his palace, and the king rejoiced."

This caption foretells the happy end of the story, which in the narrative follows only after a long series of maxims, which the king (and the reader) must endure.⁴⁴

While a motif (such as the depiction of the vizier bringing back the queen, x) might be present in several groups as far as the persons depicted (king, queen, vizier) are concerned, their positioning and gestures differ between certain image groups. For example, image group C places the vizier at the center, in contrast to image group A, where the queen is at the center instead (except in MS Riyadh 2536, as mentioned above p. 131).

A second core motif of image group C is that of the Two Doves (v), created from a similar template in MS New York 1981.373, MS Pococke 400, and MS München 616, while MS Manchester 486 [formerly 2] freely redraws the composition and adopts the colors of MS München 616. This motif is present in many manuscripts (including group A), but in image group C, it depicts the scene of the male killing the female.

MS Manchester 537 [formerly 487], dated to 1083/1672, evinces here an entirely different style. The ornamented background in solid colors is reminiscent of Persian miniatures. Human figures (in h, r, x) are rendered in the manner of Christian iconography.⁴⁵ In another motif of this manuscript, the famous "Man in the Well," the artist of this manuscript reveals his *Vorlage* to be Persian. Arabic versions do not show the cause for the man's falling into a well, but MS Manchester 537 includes the enraged camel he is fleeing from. A look at this motif in Persian versions shows the connection.⁴⁶

The third core motif of image group C shows the executed Brahmins (column z). It is found in three of the manuscripts: MS Pococke 400, MS Paris 3467, and MS Manchester 537, with the last one varying in the style of rendition.

Based on one chapter, the preliminary grouping of manuscripts into image groups permits two general observations. First, the classification documents the interrelations within manuscript groups through image cycles, i.e.,

44 The case of another long caption in this manuscript has been discussed above, see fig. 4.1, p. 113.

45 Buchthal, "Hellenistic' Miniatures," 125–33.

46 Zin, "The Parable of 'The Man in the Well.'"

recurring series of illustrated scenes with shared motifs. However, within these image cycles, each manuscript 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 “image cross-copying” is different from the cross-copying of text versions,⁴⁷ but the question of whether these two practices are related remains to be investigated.

Second, in group B, the image group overlaps with the text group (P3465-subgroup). In the two other image groups (A and C), this is not the case, which means that images were transmitted between manuscripts along different trajectories than their text versions.

6 Frequent Motifs

Beyond the role of illustrations for manuscript classification, it is worth delving into how illustrators select and depict moments of the narrative. Among the many dimensions of images in the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna* manuscripts (as in other illustrated works), one of their functions is to lead the reader through the text, while another is to support the narrative by visualizing it. Nevertheless, illustrations have many other functions, such as to entertain the reader while they are internalizing ethical lessons, in the same way the sub-story does through its intercalation in the main narrative. These often emotionally charged sub-stories are frequently illustrated. They also offer the artist a greater choice of motifs than, for instance, the relatively static scenes of dialogue of the frame story between the Indian king and the philosopher and the equally frequent dialogues of characters within the chapters.

6.1 *The Two Doves*

As expected, in Kd the motif of the male dove killing the female dove, taken from the sub-story of the Two Doves, appears in nearly every illustrated manuscript (or as a caption next to a gap). The plot runs as follows: A couple of doves agree to store their grain for the winter. However, when summer comes, the grain has dried and lost volume. In anger, the male pigeon accuses his mate of having eaten some of the grain and pecks her to death. When the winter returns and the rains start, the corn swells again to its original volume. The male pigeon recognizes his injustice and dies of regret and grief for her (see also chapter 3, 56).

The vizier tells this sub-story to the king to reflect upon his hasty death sentence for his wife. Like other wandering sub-stories, it also figures in *The*

47 See chapter 2 in this volume.



FIGURE 4.6 MS Arch. Museum EY 344, dated 410/1019, but actually later, 133v



FIGURE 4.7 MS Manchester 537, [formerly 487] dated 1083/1672, 146v

Thousand and One Nights and in *The Seven Viziers* (*al-Wuzarā' as-sab'a*), in MS Glaser 166, dated to 1688 CE, held at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.⁴⁸ The tale's popularity may have contributed to its frequent depiction. The particular scene of the tale chosen as motif varies from manuscript to manuscript. In many cases, the motif is the dramatic scene of the male pecking his mate to death. In others, but more rarely, one sees the two dead doves of the story's final scene. In MS Manchester 537 (fig. 4.7), the perspective is from above, showing the full volume of corn at the center and the doves lying at its side (as the marginal caption correctly describes). MS Arch. Museum EY 344 shows the dead doves lying on their backs on a slope (fig. 4.6). The artist may have been creative or followed an unusual *Vorlage*. He did not pay attention to the caption above to the image, which specifies the same constellation 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." But the nest is presented in a different way. At first glance, the viewer sees what looks like the slope of a hill covered with leafy branches. By reading the caption (and the text), one understands that this represents the nest upon which both doves now lie dead. The illustrator has thereby created his own visualization of the scene in this manuscript.

The two motifs select different moments in the enframed story. The first motif, 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, it emphasizes the analogous relationship of the two situations. In the second motif, the dead doves next to the nest full of grain show the tragic error of the male dove and the fatal end of both, so that the motif seems to function as

48 See Rima Redwan, "One Against Seven: Variations on the Misogynistic Nature of The Seven Sages in Different Arabic Manuscript Copies (17th–18th century)," in *The Seven Sages of Rome as a Global Narrative Tradition*, eds. Bettina Bildhauer, Jutta Eming, and Nora Schmidt, *Das Mittelalter Journal* 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.17885/heiu.p.mial.2023.1.24767>.

an forewarning about a similar outcome in the main story—which is indeed averted by the actions of the vizier. In this sense, the images act as a parallel or counterpoint to the enframed stories and the framing narrative.

6.2 *The Man in the Well*

The widespread parable of the Man in the Well, or the Perils of Life, and the equally frequent illustrations of it,⁴⁹ already discussed above in the context of captions, is placed in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* at the end of the preface containing the Life of Burzūya (Bu). The parable is of Indian origin and 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. The illustration is found already in the earliest manuscripts, MS Paris 3465, MS Pococke 400, and MS Parker 578. The Arabic versions of this depiction, in contrast to Persian ones, do not depict the enraged camel leading to the man's fall. Rather, they show only the resulting scene of him holding onto branches while a dragon waits for him at the bottom of the well. As such they give visual support to the text's extended analogy of the man's situation with human life.

The visual challenge centers on the issue of depicting everything narrated about this situation in the well, and it is resolved by showing all the elements that belong to the scene as a diametrical cut through the well, visualizing the different elements in a way that a realistic depiction from the outside could not (see figs. 4.8–4.10).



FIGURE 4.8 MS Paris 3465, dated to ca. 1220 CE, fol. 43v



FIGURE 4.9 MS Pococke 400, dated 755/1354, fol. 36v

49 See p. 113 and fig. 4.1 and Zin, "The Parable of 'The Man in the Well,'" 33–93.



FIGURE 4.10
MS Parker 578, dated to the
fourteenth century CE, fol. 27v

6.3 *The Queen Pouring Rice over the King's Head*

One case of a repeatedly illustrated scene in many variations of the main story in Kd is the moment when the queen pours rice over the king's head. Here again, the depictions differ. In some depictions, the queen is still holding the rice bowl in her hand (MS München 615, fig. 4.11), and in others, she is pouring the rice over the king's head (MS Pococke 400, fig. 4.12). The second of these alternatives is the more dramatic scene, a moment of high tension and immediate consequence.

The caption of MS München 615 reads, "The image of the king and of Īrākht [the queen] wearing the crown, and Hūraftāh [the concubine] wearing the beautiful dress (*badla*).” The caption of the latter reads, "The image of Īlādh after she has thrown the rice on the king's head and the image of Bilādh, the king's vizier.” In MS Paris 3466, page 237, only the caption appears next to a gap,



FIGURE 4.11
MS München 615, attributed to the
seventeenth/eighteenth century CE,
fol. 108v



FIGURE 4.12
MS Pococke 400, dated 755/1354,
fol. 123v

“image (*ṣūra*) of Īrākht, who has hit the head of the king with the rice⁵⁰ bowl, and Ḥūraftāh is on the side.” The latter depiction shows the queen’s scandalous act and creates suspense for the further events of the plot.

7 Conclusion

This study has analyzed some of the multiple interrelations between illustrations and text in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition and also made the case that captions standing in for unfilled illustrations contribute information and should be included in research. On a basic level, illustrations are helpful in dating manuscripts, notably in the case of the oldest ones, which have often lost those parts of the book, such as the incipit and the colophon, that are crucial to dating them (notably, MS Rabat 3655, MS Paris 3465, and MS Pococke 400). Image-based dating applies, however, primarily to the physical codex and not necessarily to its text version, which in some cases is considerably older (MS New York 1981.373 and MS Arch. Museum EY 344).⁵¹

To return to the questions posed at the beginning of this article, the current study has demonstrated that manuscripts are connected through the selection and placement of their illustrated motifs. These motifs, and in some cases their exact rendition, might be copied from other manuscripts, either alongside their accompanying captions or without them. A majority of the images belong to recurring motifs (similar figures and objects, constellations of these figures and objects, and additional structural elements), which were at times reproduced from an identifiable *Vorlage*. This could take place either through techniques of copying (such as by powder strewn through holes punched in the original),⁵² or through free-hand redrawing. Some illustrators must have had several different *Vorlagen* at their disposal, as we can see from motifs that reunite elements from different renditions. Other manuscripts provide evidence of the unique renderings of motifs, demonstrating that they have changed their *Vorlage* (such as in MS Paris 3475, which departs from MS Rabat 3655 in a few cases not only in style but also in motif) or even left out elements. Conversely, depicted figures with no counterpart in the narrative also occur.⁵³ This practice parallels the cross-copying of the text from different *Vorlagen* in various ways,

50 The line with the bowl’s description, *ṣafḥat al-ruzz*, ends with a smudge. In the text, the bowl is described as golden or made of turquoise; see also chapter 3, 75 and 84.

51 See chapter 2, 22 and 27, note 31.

52 See Brac de la Perrière, “Les tribulations,” 258 and fig. 8.18.

53 MS Parker 578 (image group A), for instance, combines the kneeling king (k) of group B with the horse (j) of group A; see tables 4.4 and 4.5.

a phenomenon that can be documented from the eighth/fourteenth century onwards and that occurs notably in MS Parker 578 (and MS Pococke 400). The later MS Manchester 537 also contains an Arabic text collage of several different versions. The simultaneity of these recombination processes, which add to a codex's artistic and literary value, needs further investigation, specifically into the possibility that the copyist-redactor and illustrator drew inspiration from each other (if they were not the same person).

Despite a distinct motif repertoire comprising many almost identical scenes across the manuscripts, the actual renditions differ in style and iconography. In a few cases, the coherence of the pictorial repertoire and stylistic character in a group of manuscripts points to a school of painters, notably in image group B. Even without exact knowledge about the workings of such schools, on which sources are sparse, the three image groups (A, B, and C) of manuscripts clearly demonstrate interrelations. Nevertheless, this is only part of the findings; various manuscripts with unique motifs or unusual combinations cannot be assigned to any one 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., MS Paris 3465 and MS Clarke Or. 9), are not entirely identical in their execution.⁵⁴

The case study of one chapter (Kd) has made it possible to identify which points of the narrative were selected for depiction. Since *Kalila wa-Dimna* is a frame narrative with enframed sub-stories, the trope of conversing figures recurs frequently, and especially in the book's prefaces. In Kd, this leads to many depictions of the king, queen, and vizier in varying combinations in dialogue. This is complemented by selections of the moments of dramatic tension in the main story, which is 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 it is comparatively poor in sub-stories, confirms this.⁵⁵ Again, the prominent role of sub-stories, challenging artists with their diverse animal motifs, parallel to a certain extent the role of sub-stories that were extracted for independent story-telling (e.g., MS Paris 3593) or reintegrated into other works (MS Paris 3612 within *The Thousand and One Nights*). Depictions are, moreover,

54 The relation between MS Paris 3465 and MS Paris 3470 is closer, as the two copies are practically identical.

55 Compared to the longer chapters of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, Kd contains fewer enframed stories than Im, Lo, Di, or Oc. In Kd, the narratological level varies not as much as in the chapter Lo, for example, which has five narrative levels and, therefore, the highest number of enframed stories (depending on the version, up to thirteen enframed stories). See also Stephan and Gruendler, *Framing Narratives*.

the quickest way to locate a story in the book since they serve as visual book-marks, which is probably the reason why they were retained in codices that no longer make space for images (MS Paris 3473, MS Wetzstein II 672).

The case study of the investigation into image cycles presented here, based on the chapter of the King and His Dreams, has sought to exemplify the benefits of including illustrations in the consideration of interrelations between manuscripts of the rich textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. It exemplifies the benefits that can be drawn from placing the texts and images of this ever-shifting work in a comprehensive view.

PART 2

Traveling Tales



What Makes a Good Friend?

Analysis of the Two Syriac Translations of the Mouse and the Cat

Jan J. van Ginkel

1 Introduction

In the present article I will discuss how the two Syriac versions of *Kalīla and Dimna* treat one specific fable and highlight the particular characteristics of each version, before providing a full translation of both of them.¹ The story about the Mouse and the Cat (Mc) was originally part of the *Mahābhārata*, a famous Sanskrit epic, consisting of eighteen *Parvans* or Books. In the Twelfth Book, the *Śānti-Parvan* or Book of Peace, there is a collection of stories illustrating the duties of a good ruler and good governance. It resembles the *Pañcatantra* in its goal and set-up. A ruler asks a wise man a question about 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 create a more elaborate mirror for princes by adding some of the material from the *Śānti-Parvan* to the material of the *Pañcatantra*.²

2 The Cultural Environments of the Two Syriac Versions

The Older Syriac version was created in the Sasanian empire of the sixth century CE. Although the Middle Persian collection is linked to Khusraw I (531–79 CE), our translation most likely took place at the end of his reign or under Hormizd IV (579–90 CE), his successor. Christian communities, most

1 The *Kalīla and Dimna*—*AnonymClassic* project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635.

2 See Introduction to this volume, 5–6.

notably the Church of the East (often referred to as “Nestorians”),³ were a sizeable minority in the empire, especially in the Mesopotamian region of modern-day Iraq. Their (religious) leaders and educated elite were well-integrated in society, up to its highest echelons.

During the Sasanian period, Middle 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 Romance*⁴ and *Kalīla and Dimna*. In addition, there was a circle of scholars working on Aristotelian philosophy who also integrated Middle Persian material into their work.⁵ Nevertheless, although 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 circles of the Church of the East in the late Abbasid period of the tenth or eleventh century CE, when the role of Syriac Christians in the development of Arabic culture and literature began to wane. In the early Abbasid period, Christians had been heavily involved in the translation and adaptation of Greek science into Arabic. By the tenth century, however, they seem to have lost some of their standing, both culturally and socially, and most of their literary production was geared towards an internal audience. No more serving as a bridge between Greek and Arabic culture, the Syriac tradition shows a gradual increase in translating from, and integrating, Arabic literature which would become a significant feature of Syriac culture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE.

3 Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

4 The Syriac *Alexander Romance*, however, may not have had a Middle Persian *Vorlage*, but may have only been translated in a New Persian environment. See Jan J. van Ginkel and Faustina Doufekar-Aerts, “The Alexander Tradition in Syriac. A Search for its Origin and Pivotal Role,” in *Beyond the European Myth: Alexander the Great in the Written, Oral and Artistic Traditions of the Middle East, Africa and Asia*, ed. Faustina Doufekar-Aerts, Leiden (forthcoming).

5 Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur: Mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Nachdruck der Ausg. Bonn 1922, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968, 123.

3 Syriac Versions⁶

After various Sanskrit texts had been combined into the Middle Persian fable collection known as *Kalilag and Dimnag*,⁷ this text was almost immediately (around 570 CE) translated into Syriac-Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Christian communities in the Near East and Persia [the “Older Syriac version”]. This translation has left very few traces in the later Syriac literary tradition, but some short quotations can be found in the dictionary of Bar Bahlul.⁸ In addition, Abdisho’ bar Brikā of Nisibis⁹ (d. 1318 CE) mentions a certain Būd, the Periodeutes, as the translator of *Kalilag and Dimnag* in his *Catalogue of Syriac Books*.¹⁰ 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 that he was aware of this version and not of the Younger Syriac 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 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 above, compilers of reference works like Syriac-Arabic dictionaries and Abdisho’s *Catalogue* were clearly

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- 6 For the text and (German) translation of the chapter of the Mouse and the Cat in the Older Syriac Version, see Friedrich Schulthess, *Kalila und Dimna: Syrisch und Deutsch*, 2 vols., Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911. See 1: *Syrischer Text*, 86–91 and 11: *Übersetzung* 85–88. For the edition and translation of the chapter in the Younger Syriac version, see William Wright, *The Book of Kalilah and Dimna or the Fables of Bidpai*, transl. from Arabic into Syriac, reprint of the edition Oxford & London 1884, Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1981, 262–72, and I.G.N. Keith-Falconer, *Kalila and Dimna or The Fables of Bidpai: Being an Account of Their Literary History with an English Translation of the Later Syriac Version of the Same and Notes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1885, 172–77.
 - 7 Although the combination of these texts could have happened in India, it is more likely that it occurred when the Middle Persian version was created. Some arguments for this will be discussed in this chapter.
 - 8 Hasan Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule: voces syriacas græcasque cum glossis syriacis et arabicis complectens*, ed. Rubens Duval, 3 vols. (Collection orientale 15–17), Paris: Reipublicæ typographæ, 1888–1901.
 - 9 J.W. Childers, “‘Abdisho’ bar Brikha Ebedjesus (d. 1318),” in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, eds. S.P. Brock, et al., 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 at a literary history of Syriac culture.
 - 10 Josephus Simonius Assemanus, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3, Rome: 1725, reprint, Rome: 1975, 219–20. Assemani argues that Būd was active around 570 CE (see n. 2 on 219). For a discussion of the date, see Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, xliii–xlvi.

aware of its existence. However, that awareness was based only on entries in older, now lost, reference works, or on knowledge of manuscripts where the full text cannot be established. Larger fragments, or even references, have not come down to us in other Syriac works. Intriguingly, the Syriac form of Aesop's *Fables* seems to have fared slightly better.¹¹

In the Syriac tradition, there is also a second translation [the “Younger version”], which is based on an early Arabic version.¹² 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 CE, probably 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, although it is unique in putting Kd and then Bu last.¹³ This Syriac translation shows some elements that seem to have been lost or heavily redacted in the later Arabic versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.¹⁴ As such, this version—along with other translations of *Kalīla and Dimna* in Hebrew and other languages—provides a glimpse of this earlier phase in the evolution of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the Arabic tradition. In addition, the text is also thoroughly reworked and adapted to a Christian audience. As will be shown below, the creator of the Younger Syriac version saw it as a book of moral instruction for his community, which in his view 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.¹⁵ 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 does not have a detectable afterlife in the Syriac tradition. It also does not surface in translated form in other traditions either.

11 Bruno Lefèvre, *Une version syriaque des fables d'Esop, conservées dans huit manuscrits. Texte syriaque édité et traduit en français*, Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1941.

12 Wright, *Book of Kalīlah*, esp. xiv–xxiv.

13 De Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage* 62. This is close to, but not identical with, chapter sequence F.

14 The Arabic manuscripts, and the versions they contain, all date from some centuries after the translation into Syriac. For the process of rewriting, see Introduction by Beatrice Gruendler and Isabel Toral and Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler.

15 For a similar situation among the West Syrian community a few centuries later, see Dorothea Weltecke, “Überlegungen zu den Krisen der syrisch-orthodoxen Kirchen im 12. Jahrhundert,” in *Syriaca: zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen*; 2. *Deutsches Syrologen-Symposium (Juli 2000, Wittenberg)*, ed. Martin Tamcke, Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002, 125–45.

The survival of both Syriac versions of *Kalīla and Dimna* is a coincidence, and their manuscript transmission is problematic.¹⁶ The Older version survived in only one manuscript, copied by a certain deacon named Hormizd, near Amadiya in northern Iraq in 1524. This manuscript was rediscovered in the library of the Chaldean Patriarchate in Mardin in 1870. After being copied four times for the two Western scholars Gustav Bickell and Eduard Sachau, the manuscript was brought to Paris, where it was photographed by the Société asiatique and later described by François Nau.¹⁷ Sadly, since then it has not been possible to locate either the manuscript or the 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 Friedrich Schulthess.

William Wright published an edition of the Younger Syriac version on the basis of the unique manuscript, now in Trinity College, Dublin. Besides the fact that it is a unicum, the manuscript also has a checkered past. Although it was originally copied in the late thirteenth century, large parts had to be restored and rewritten in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries CE. In 1613, several passages needed additional restoration. These rewrites may, in part, explain the many textual problems and scribal errors in the manuscript.

4 Plot of the Sanskrit Fable

Within the Sanskrit tradition, the *Mahābhārata* itself also went through various evolutions and has many regional variations. Although three chapters in *Kalīla and Dimna* are clearly closely related to those in the *Mahābhārata*, the differences may—at least in part—be caused not only by the translator and editors in the Middle Persian, Syriac, and Arabic traditions, but may also reflect Sanskrit variation that has not been preserved in the manuscripts we have today.¹⁸ In Book XII, following a set-up similar to that found in the *Pañcatantra*, a conversation takes place between a king, Yudhiṣṭhira, and a wise man, Bhīṣma, on matters of governance.

16 Jan J. van Ginkel et al., “An Interim Report on the Editorial and Analytical Work of the AnonymClassic Project,” *Medieval Worlds* 11 (2020): 245–47.

17 François Nau, “Un manuscrit de Mgr Graffin: l’ancien manuscrit du Kalila et Dimna syriaque,” *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 16 (1911): 200–4.

18 For an early survey, see the Prolegomena in *The Mahābhārata. 1, The Ādiparvan: being the first book of the Mahābhārata, the Great Epic of India / for the first time critically edited*, ed. Vishnu S. Sukthankar, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1933, 1–CX.

This particular fable¹⁹ raises the question of what a weak ruler must do when he is surrounded by enemies. The wise man, Bhīṣma, answers Yudhiṣṭhira, the king, that enemies can become friends and friends can become enemies, depending on the necessities of time and place. Sometimes one must even make peace with long-time enemies. The story about the unexpected cooperation between a (wild) cat (Lomaśa) and a mouse (Palita) illustrates the point.

The basic storyline of the story runs as follows: The cat and the mouse both live under a banyan tree, where the mouse is on the cat's menu. One day, a hunter comes to the region and sets up traps at dusk. The cat gets caught in one of these traps. When the mouse comes out to forage, he sees the cat trapped and experiences some joy at the sight. Being a little bit careless, he is all of a sudden surprised to find a mongoose behind him on the forest floor and an owl above him in the tree. Surrounded by three enemies, the mouse must rely on his intelligence to get out of trouble. Because the cat is in trouble herself, she might be willing to help against the others in return for being freed. The mouse therefore appeals to the cat, suggesting that they should trust and help each other. The cat agrees to a pact, and the two greet each other as friends and embrace. The owl and mongoose leave disappointed, because they do not dare to challenge the cat. After they have left, the mouse very slowly gnaws through the ropes of the trap, making the cat nervous, because she fears the mouse may not fulfil his part of the pact. The mouse then tells her that he will gnaw through the last rope only upon the arrival of the hunter to make certain the cat will flee and not think of eating the mouse after all. Even though the cat protests, the mouse sticks to his plan. When at dawn the hunter returns to check on his traps, the mouse finally frees the cat, and they both scurry away and run for safety.

After the hunter has left, disappointed, the cat returns to the mouse's hole and proclaims her eternal gratitude. She will be a friend to the mouse, forever! The mouse, however, declines the friendship by referring to the general rule that friends can become enemies easily, depending on the necessities of time and place. Blind faith and trust in friends and eternal fear of enemies can be fatal. It is therefore essential to always look out for one's own interests. If the cat were therefore willing not to chase the mouse anymore, he would be more than happy. But he would always fear the cat as the weak must always fear the strong. When the cat promises and swears that she will always honor their friendship, the mouse is impressed, but still reiterates 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 Bhīṣma applying these general rules to governance.

19 *The Mahābhārata*, vol. 14, *Śāntiparvan* pt. 2, *Āpaddharma* and concordance, edited by Shripad Krishna Belvakar, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Inst., 1954, chapter 138.

It is 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 part of the story that precedes it. In addition, there are several references in the story to its narrator, Bhīṣma, who is highlighting certain “truths.” Both main characters, the cat and the mouse, use wisdom sayings to make their points—and several of the ones used by the mouse are also used by Bhīṣma in the introduction and in the latter, didactic part of the story.

5 The Syriac Versions of the Mouse and the Cat: 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 Mouse and the Cat 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, whereas many other chapters are built according to a multi-layered structure of stories within stories. As stated before, in the Sanskrit version the frame story occasionally 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 Older 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.²⁰

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 significantly abridged in both Syriac and other related versions. This abridgement 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 and Dimna* collection, the composer of the collection was more interested in the fable itself and reduced the frame story elements from the *Mahābhārata*. One reason could be that the compiler wanted to bring these *Mahābhārata* stories more into line

20 The Younger Syriac version ends with a general statement: “This is a parable of enemies who become friendly and familiar with one another and afterwards part.” In the Arabic versions, the mouse is substituted by a rat.

with the *Pañcatantra* structure, where the princely frame is also very limited in scope and does not reappear at the end of a story.

In addition, the Younger Syriac version also reduces the introductory part of the frame story 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 who must 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." The answer of the advisor only discusses the changes between love and hate that may occur, where Arabic versions explicitly refer to escaping from peril and a person's use of reasonable judgement to come to a decision and stick to it.²¹ In reducing the frame elements, the version's composer seems to have put even more focus on the fable in comparison to the framework.

It is noteworthy that the Older Syriac version, unlike the Younger version, lacks the normal reference to the issue of the previous chapter, which characterizes the *Pañcatantra* chapters and the textual tradition of *Kalīla and Dimna* after Ibn al-Muqaffa'.²² As this internal linkage does not occur in the *Mahābhārata* and was introduced by the (Sasanian) compiler when he added these stories to the *Pañcatantra* stories, the omission of it and the fact that in this account the old names of the king and his advisor as used in the *Mahābhārata* are still present seem to be an indication that the integration was not yet complete when the translation into Syriac took place.

The Older Syriac version also displays a unique sequence of chapters where the fable of the Mouse and the Cat appears as the fifth chapter of the collection, while the third chapter of the *Pañcatantra* on the Owls and Crows was moved to the sixth position.²³ This, however, was not a characteristic of the Middle Persian *Vorlage* of Ibn al-Muqaffa', where the sequence of the *Pañcatantra* has been retained. It therefore constitutes an error by the translator, or, more likely, by a later copyist.

6 Observations on Style

In general, the Older Syriac version stays closer to the Sanskrit text, but it is not a straightforward translation of any of the Sanskrit versions we are familiar

²¹ André Miquel, *Le livre de Kalila et Dimna ou Fables de Bidpai*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1957, 229.

²² Most chapters in the various *Kalīla and Dimna* versions start with something like "I have heard this story ..., but ..." by which the frame story links the previous account with the following one.

²³ See the Introduction and Sprengling, "Kalīla Studies," 97.

with, as some of it seems abridged and, at times, it is more like a retelling of the text. The Sanskrit sayings and analogies 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 free to adapt the material to the world of his audience, in an instance of cultural translation or domestication. An example of this cultural translation technique can be found in the adaptation of an analogy. Whereas in the Sanskrit text the cooperation between the cat and the 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 Older Syriac version is the first in the tradition to preserve an “adaptation” of the imagery by stating that the safety of a human being depends on a ship and that of a ship on human beings [i.e. by the crew of the ship] in order for both to cross the sea.²⁴

The Younger Syriac version contains far more analogies and sayings,²⁵ most of which have been added to the fable in the evolving Arabic textual tradition, although some seem, according to the present state of knowledge, unique to this version of *Kalīla and Dimna*. As a result, the chapter in the Younger Syriac version is nearly twice as long as the one in the Older version.

However, although most of the adaptation seems to aim at making the story more accessible to a non-Indian audience, some parts of it 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 analogy of being like a man sitting on the tusk of an elephant. In the Arabic textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the tusk is retained, but in the Younger Syriac version this image is turned into one of riding an elephant as such. In the Sanskrit, however, this element seems to be missing. The mouse in the *Mahābhārata*, in a different part of the narrative, does refer to elephants, but only by mentioning 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 analogy 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.

24 Schulthess, I: *Syrischer Text*, 89; Schulthess, II: *Übersetzung*, 87.

25 E.g., “through idleness destruction befalls a man,” “heal the ulcer of enmity by the soothing medicine of love remote from deceit,” “knocking on death’s door” (Wright, *Book of Kalīlah*, 264–65; Keith-Falconer, *Kalīla*, 173). Some are part of the “Christianization” of the text and its message; see, e.g., note 30.

A clear example of an innovation in the imagery in the Older Syriac version, in the sense that it is lacking in the Sanskrit, is the use of the analogy of the suckling animal that follows its mother around for as long as it can get milk. When the milk production comes to an end, the young animal loses interest in its mother, and the two go their separate ways. Similarly, friendship only lasts as long as there is a profit in it for the participants.²⁶ Intriguingly, this metaphor is preserved in the Arabic textual tradition, but not in the Younger Syriac version.

7 The General Argument of the Fable for Mutual Aid

Regarding the contents of the fable, the Older 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 his strength. The Older Syriac is a first stage of this development of losing the weakness element.

In the Older Syriac version, the argument for befriending a (previous) enemy stays close to the logic of the Sanskrit version that states that one should befriend an enemy when he could be useful. Conversely, when a friend is harmful, one 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, helping him against his other enemies.

In the Younger Syriac 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 Syriac version there is a discussion of two types of enmity and love/friendship, of which there are traces in the Arabic tradition as well.²⁷ The first is dependent on circumstances (necessity), the second is “implanted by nature” and can never be completely changed into its opposite.²⁸ Although the main question of the fable focusses on the first type, it is the second type that is used to explain the

²⁶ Schulthess, I: *Syrischer Text*, 90; Schulthess, II: *Übersetzung*, 88.

²⁷ Miquel, *Le livre de Kalila*, 234.

²⁸ Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 271; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 177. See the online edition of select Arabic versions, unit 85 Enmity Turns into Friendship in Times of Need in MS Paris 3466, matching the position in the Younger Syriac version. The term *ʿadāwajawhariyya* occurs also in units 78 and 87 in MSS Paris 3475 and London 4044; <https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/collations>.

wariness of the mouse towards the cat. Their innate enmity can, in his opinion, never entirely disappear. In the Older Syriac version, it is the usefulness of the friendship and self-interest that explains his lack of trust after the main events of the fable, and it is an important argument for not extending the friendship.

Another innovation that can be found in the Younger Syriac version is the emphasis on emotions.²⁹ For example, the despair of the two main characters, and especially of the cat as being without a helper, is expressed much stronger than in the Sanskrit or in the Older Syriac version. Even the mouse, upon realizing that he is facing a three-way threat of mongoose, owl, and cat, first falls into despair 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 as it draws the reader into the account.

The link between the more emotional language and a religious, and more specifically a Christian,³⁰ language can be seen throughout the chapter. When the cat despairs, he expresses it as follows: "I [...] am knocking at death's door³¹ and am far from temporal life and pleasures, because I have no helper³² except God."³³ When using the analogy of a ship in a storm, he uniquely elaborates on it and provides 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 (ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܠܟܐ), because He knows the purity of their conscience, does not despise their petition, but immediately allays the angry sea. His command restrains its waves ..."³⁴

However, the divine is also used to express solemnity, when the pact between the cat and the mouse is witnessed by God,³⁵ and deceit is described as a form of not fearing God,³⁶ a sin (ܐܝܬܐܢܐ).³⁷ In general, it is God who will

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

30 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 preface on the Life of Burzūya (Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 402; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 264.). A comparison with Arabic versions has—as yet—identified no equivalents of most of the phrases.

31 Cf. Psalms 107:18.

32 Cf. Psalms 74:12 or 22:11.

33 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 265; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 173.

34 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 267; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 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. See also the online edition, unit 31 Sailors Depend on Ships and Vice Versa.

35 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 266–267; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 174.

36 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 268–269; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 175–76.

37 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 272; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 177.

ultimately provide a way out of their predicament,³⁸ provided both of them act in a God-fearing way. The religious language seems even ultimately 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.³⁹

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 the additional idea that God is always an active participant in life as well. Most of the Christian phraseology is an expression of cultural translation, without losing the core of the original tradition, which makes the story more relatable to a Christian audience.

The composer, elsewhere, explicitly states that his work is intended for a Christian audience. Although the goal of instructing “princes” in God’s will is mentioned⁴⁰—preserving the mirror-for-princes theme—the composer goes on, in his adapted version of the Life of Burzūya, to address a slightly different audience than that of secular princes: “We find, o my honored 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 Excellency⁴¹ that this book should be brought to light and translated from Arabic into Syriac.”⁴² The reference to “honored brethren and distinguished teachers” is not very specific, but it 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.⁴³

However, 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 it is laid

38 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 267, 272; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila* 174, 177.

39 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 269; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 176. The preceding sentence about laying down one’s life for one’s brother seems to be a paraphrase of John 15:13.

40 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 401; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 264.

41 It is unclear whom the composer is referring to. A high-ranking church member seems likely, but due to a lack of context, it is impossible to know precisely.

42 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 402; Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 264. The composer, taking on Burzūya’s voice, substitutes the unnamed king, addressed in the Arabic versions, with God.

43 Also see the use of terminology like ܠܗܘܐ ܡܠܟܐ (nobility) for protagonists in the fables, suggesting an elite setting.

in the dust of the earth.”⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

In the chapter of the Mouse and the Cat, 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 Burzūya. The main explicit adaptation of the message of the fable is that God has given both the cat and the mouse deliverance.

8 Syriac Versions of the Mouse and the Cat: Intriguing Details

The first striking element of the Older version lies in the names of the protagonists. The king is called ܙܕܫܬܪ, (Zd'shtr),⁴⁶ which reflects the name of Yudhiṣṭhira from the original story.⁴⁷ The advisor is also still called Bhiṣma. In all other chapters of *Kalīla and Dimna*, even those taken from the *Mahābhārata*, the king is either anonymous or called ܕܒܫܪܡ (Dbshrm), reflecting the king's name of the *Pañcatantra*.⁴⁸ The fact that the Middle Persian *Vorlage* in this case erroneously retained the old names of the *Mahābhārata* would suggest that the process of the incorporation of the *Mahābhārata* stories into *Kalīla and Dimna* had not been completed by the time the Older Syriac version came into existence. The most likely explanation would be that the stories had merged in the process of the creation of the Middle Persian collection, and that this had not taken place in an earlier Sanskrit phase.⁴⁹

By the time the Younger Syriac version was created, the frame story had been harmonized, and the king and his advisor have been anonymized. In fact,

44 Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, 402; Keith-Falconer, *Kalīla*, 264. The text continues with a long exposition of all kinds of evils in the world, seemingly committed by these teachers and pastors. See also note 42.

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

46 Vocalization is dubious as it was added later in the manuscripts. See van Ginkel et al., “Interim Report.”

47 The z instead of y is not an unexpected copyist's mistake.

48 The advisor is called ܕܒܫܡܐ (Bydwg), which ultimately derives from the Sanskrit “Vishnu Sharma”.

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

this had already occurred in the Arabic textual tradition, where this inconsistency is not present in any manuscript. It is, therefore, not an innovation by the Younger Syriac translator and composer.

In the Older version, the Sanskrit is also reflected in the names of the cat and the mouse, ܦܪܝܬ (Parit), from the Sanskrit Palita (i.e., gray), and ܪܗܡܝ (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 ܡܝܫܐ (mouse) and ܕܡܝܐ (cat), reflecting the Arabic names of Farīdūn (or Faridūn, Afrīdūn, Fayrūz) and Rūmī.

In the Younger Syriac version, the main characters are also explicitly referred to as nobility (ܐܝܪܐ and ܐܕܝܐܝܐ), a term used for the imperial elite since Roman times, and wise, possibly connecting them to their potential audience, whereas in the Older version the animals are not socially “qualified.”

As is to be expected, both translations are influenced by the language of their respective *Vorlagen*. The Older version retains some of the Persian grammar and may have been influenced to make particular translation choices. For example, Syriac retains the names of the titular main characters, Kalilag and Dimnag, where the g-sound reflects the Middle Persian ending, which in time would soften and is not retained in the Arabic tradition. The Younger version refers to “Kalilah” and “Dimnah,” based on the Arabic names. Also, the use of ܪܫܘܓ (rasug) for mongoose and ܦܪܪܗܝܐ (parrhesia) for an oath, a word of honor, seem to have a Persian background.⁵⁰ The influence of the Arabic text on the Younger version can be illustrated by the use of ܡܬܠܐ (matlā) for fable.

9 Syriac Versions: General Conclusions

In comparing the two Syriac versions with each other and considering also 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 CE was more on the fables and less on the frame story. As a result, in both Syriac versions, the more elaborate frame stories of the chapters from the *Mahābhārata* have been reduced, making them similar to the *Pañcatantra*. It is worth noting that the Younger Syriac version also reduces the question of the king and the answer of his advisor to their 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

50 E.g. Schulthess, I: *Syrischer Text*, 87–89; Schulthess, II: *Übersetzung*, 86–87.

Older Syriac 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 Older Syriac version, even though it gives us an abridged version of the Sanskrit story, still retains most of its tone and texture. 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 *Kalīla and Dimna* textual 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 in the Arabic tradition of these specific references that has come down to us.⁵¹ In addition, some of the language shows a clear link to biblical texts, including a potential quotation. This version of the Mouse and Cat story is an example of how the editor of the Younger Syriac version adjusted *Kalīla wa-Dimna* to his new aim of using this work to educate his audience in Christian morality.

This highlights a difference between the Older and the Younger Syriac versions. The Older version, by and large, seems to have stayed true to the Middle Persian *Vorlage* and exhibits only slight adaptations. The Younger version is in essence a new creation which retells the stories with a new purpose. In the transmission of the *Kalīla and Dimna* collection, both versions are examples of the gradual evolution of the narrative, not necessarily in a straight line, but more like water seeking its way in various directions. The Older version reflects the oldest phase, just after the collection had come into being in Middle Persian. Even though the translator tried to stay close to its *Vorlage*, he seems at times 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, or *mouvance*. The second, Younger Syriac version is a case in point. It is not a new version of the Older version—it seems not to be aware of its existence—but rather, it is a clear and conscious adaptation of an Arabic *Vorlage* that aims to present an adapted message to a specific, i.e., Christian, audience.

51 In some Arabic versions, the religious (Islamic) component in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is also more prominent than in the Older Syriac version, e.g., MS London 4044 and Paris 5881 abound with theophoric formulae.

This raises the issue of the intended audience in general. The composer of the Younger version clearly intends his work to be part of a battle against “immorality,” in part specifically on the part of the religious leaders. While the Sanskrit mirror for 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 Syriac version wishes elite and other members of his community to learn about good behavior, emphasizing that God rewards good behavior 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 Older Syriac version is more complicated in this respect. The Middle Persian version was created and aimed at the Sasanian court, an elite audience. Whether it was meant for the princes, or rather for high-ranking courtiers, is open to debate. But, in both cases, why bother with a Syriac version? No clear answer can be given. In the higher court circles, however, 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, such as court physicians. Although this Christian and Aramaic elite would be a potential audience, it is worth noting 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.

Putting the Mouse and the Cat fable from both Syriac accounts next to each other illustrates how Syriac was able in different circumstances to present itself as part of a multilingual and multicultural community. The texts have no real connection within the Syriac tradition, but when they are considered in the kaleidoscope of languages which together make up the “Arabic World” of the first millennium CE, they become branches of an enormous tree that is still growing. The Older Syriac one is a tiny sprout, almost from the roots of the Sanskrit texts, next to the tree of the Arabic tradition. The Younger one is much higher up on the tree, forming a very distinct side twig—with Christian mistletoe woven into it—of an obscure and vaguely visible Arabic branch. They are closely connected to each other and to 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.

Appendix

*Older Syriac Version (Sixth Century)*⁵²

*Younger Syriac Version (Tenth/
Eleventh Century)*⁵³

1⁵⁴ Chapter⁵⁵ of the Mouse and the Cat

[Title is lacking]

[Abstract missing]

[Abstract missing]

3 And Zd^cshtr said to Bīshm:

“If a **weaker** person happens to be among enemies, and they plot against him, show me how he through his knowledge can plan and turn one from the multitude of the haters to friendship and agreement, 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 the one who was suited for it.”

3 The King said: “I have heard your parable.⁵⁶ 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 (how) he plans his deliverance from them.”

52 For the Syriac text see Schulthess, *1: Syrischer Text*, 86–91.

53 For the Syriac text see Wright, *Book of Kalīlah*, 262–72.

54 The numbers preceding the paragraphs refer to the matching units in the online edition of select Arabic versions, <https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/collations/Mc>. Numbers of units that are in a different sequence than any Arabic version are marked orange. Passages in red color within the Older Syriac version, and occasionally in the Younger Syriac one, mark salient parallels with Paris 3466. Passages in blue in the Younger Syriac version mark substantial changes and additions by its translator-redactor.

55 Also “door” (ܕܥܕܐ).

56 *Matlā*.

4 Bishm said:

"One should not always think of a friend as a friend, nor of 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 A wise person sometimes gives his pledge (*prhsy*) to his enemy, and sometimes receives⁵⁷ trust (*prhsy*) from him. Whoever 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.

4 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, *in every way hatred, which is hiding inside the heart, reveals itself.*

7 Sometimes, also, necessity invites love and (banishes) fear and makes those that are far apart familiar so that they approach each other,

10 An example of this is the story that happened to the mouse with the cat."

10 as happened to the mouse with the cat, when they both agreed on one goal and then made a plan and delivered themselves from the hands of their enemies."

11 Zd'shtr said: "How does this story go?"

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

Bishm said:

The teacher said:

12 There was tree called **Nyru**t. It was big and had many branches. In its shade lived all kinds of animals, and birds

12 They say that in one of the provinces⁵⁸ there was a tree called Bayruz.⁵⁹ And underneath it was a

57 Literally: "perceives."

58 Literally: "cities."

59 Probably: *bayrud* (cf. Old Castilian *vairod*, Arabic MS Paris 3466 *yabrūt* **اليبروط**; MS London 4044 *bahrūd* **الهرود**; and MS Paris 3471 *nayrūd* **النيرود**).

were nesting in its smaller branches. At the foot of the tree there lived a mouse, whose name was Prt (Parit), and a certain cat, whose name was Rhwmy (Rhoma), had its hole there. 13 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 snares. 14 And the mouse at feeding time came out of his small hole and wandered discreetly around in that place. He saw the cat, caught in the nooses, and was glad. 15 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 him (with the hope of) to devour him. While he had happened to get among his enemies, he considered: If I turn around, I will fall into 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.

(certain) hole belonging to a mouse named Aphrywdyun,⁶⁰ and in the neighborhood of that place was a (certain) burrow belonging to a cat, called Rummy. 13 And there was a custom that trappers came to that tree and (tried to) trap 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, the cat came out of his hollow to look for something he needed. And hunger blinded his eyes, and he came and fell into the hidden snare. (264) And he lost hope for his life because there was for him no helper towards whom he could lift up his gaze.⁶¹ 14 The mouse left on some business (??)⁶² and saw the cat, lying in the trap. 15 And he turned away his gaze and behold, there was a weasel⁶³ on his right, lying in wait to destroy him. And he raised his eyes up towards the tree, and behold, there was 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 where he was, that the cat would see some way to free himself from the snare in which he lay and kill him. And [the mouse] was in a state of having lost hope.

60 Faridun. For the Arabic variants, see p. 164.

61 On "lifting the gaze," cf. Psalms 121:1–2.

62 Text is corrupt, corr. Keith-Falconer, *Kalila*, 296 (supported by Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, lxxii); other option ܡܕܠܚܡܐ—for "eating."

63 (Bar) auruzd.

16 But I will keep my composure and think hard and make a plan,

19 because the intellect of the wise is a deep source, and regarding good and bad firmly established. 20 And regarding good they are not intoxicated and regarding bad not (88) depressed, but they plan, full of self-control and with comprehension.

21 I have examined [my situation] and in this distress, I do not know (another) solution except an agreement with the cat. Because of what has happened to her and because nobody is able to help her except me, she may perhaps, when she hears my straightforward argument, understand her benefit and come to an agreement with me. And in that way, I will be saved."

16 Next, he began to think to himself, while saying: "Because of what am I fallen into 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].

18 But now I will examine the matters and investigate them, 19 because he who investigates the great sea of every kind sometimes reaches its depths with the help of a clear mind.⁶⁴ *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 complex. Like the understanding of the great sea is not difficult for divers (265) who descend and search for pearls in it, likewise it is not difficult for the sound mind to bring up good ideas as good pearls.*

21 As for me, now there is nothing for me in this trial except to get close to this cat, who has fallen in a difficult situation and is very shaken himself and longing to get up out of it. And it is not possible that he be delivered from this trap, except by me. *Now I will approach 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 wax⁶⁵ when mixed, [they] calm swollen and hard ulcers."*

64 The text seems corrupt.

65 Read *ḥāṣṣ*.

22 Then he spoke with her and said to her:
“How is your life, cat?”

23 She replied: “Thus, I live in distress, as you would want.”

25 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 I do not want your death. Also, no one is able to save you from your ropes except me.

26 Listen to what I say to you, and be aware that I do not speak falsely, because the weasel and the owl are my enemies, and I am weak and despised compared to them. The weasel behind me and the owl 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 and deliver me⁶⁶ and save me from

22 And the mouse approached towards the cat and said to him: “How are you, little brother?”

23 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 [removed] from temporal life and pleasures because there is no helper for me except God.”⁶⁶

25 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, I am also knocking on the door of death, and I am surrounded by waves of distress. When I had considered the situation, I saw that there was for me no escape and freedom from these miseries that surround me, except through you. And neither is there a release from this prison in which you are caught except (266) through me.

26 When you search this matter in your mind, which I am telling you about, 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, for 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,

66 Cf. Psalm 107.

67 The manuscripts read: “Help you and deliver you.”

their hands, I will also cut your snares and let you leave them. 27 Because whoever does not trust anyone (89) [will in turn not be trusted by anyone], and they are considered deceitful and unwise, and their life is full of fear.

28 But as for you, make an agreement with me and have trust without delay. When you have made your promises, I will be diligent.

30 And as your life is wanted by me, thus also my life will [only] be preserved by me by [preserving] your life.

they are yours as well in a way. I have directed my thoughts towards deliverance, [both] mine and yours. I have found the only one action that must be done by me and you.”

The cat said: “What is it?”

28 The mouse said: “You have to agree to a genuine pact with me and give me a legal pledge⁶⁸ and make [as a] witness between me and you [that Witness that searches the secrets/hidden places of the heart](#).⁶⁹ [Promise] that you will not hurt me when I approach you and cut the strings of this trap, in which you lie, and free you from this prison, in which you are caught.

30 And for myself, there will be deliverance and freedom from these enemies that surround me.

27 And know, O my beloved, that there is no blinder and more misfortunate soul than two people who are in one prison and know that if they agree with each other, they will achieve freedom for themselves, but they neglect it and don't

68 Lit: “the (right) hand of righteousness.” This phrase can also indicate “ordination to the priesthood.”

69 Cf. Psalms 44:21.

31 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 [together] master the sea. And so, we will save ourselves, one [saving] the other.

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

“True and fitting is your word.”

do it. Now, little brother, consider what I have said to you, and weigh the words on the balance of the mind, and examine them with love, far from deceit, and their rightfulness will outweigh everything that was done straight.

31 [...] 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 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. For His venerated glory, which knows the purity of their conscience(s), does not reject their supplication and at that very moment makes the wrath of the sea peaceful. His command restrains its surging waves, and there is a great calm.

32 In the same way, let us do this also for each other.”

34 When the cat had heard these [words], he believed them and knew that they had been spoke truthfully by the mouse.

The cat said to the mouse: “I see that what you have said is 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 to a pact with the mouse, and he made God a witness over himself, that he would not act fraudulently with his promises.

35 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 depart in despair. And I will be without fear, and then I will cut your ropes.”

37 Then the cat gave him her pledge (*prhsy*) 38 and she pressed him to her breast. 39 When the weasel and the owl saw them with each other in loving friendship, they despaired and departed.

41 And when the mouse started to cut the snares, he gnawed slowly.

42 When the cat saw it, she said to him as follows: “My dear, why is it that you were so diligent in your affair, but in my affair you are cold and yours has reached its culmination.

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

37 The cat said: “Little brother, let it be as you wish.” 38 Then, the mouse approached the cat, and they embraced each other and saluted one another and enjoyed each other’s company. 39 When the owl and the weasel saw (it), they wondered (268) about them and were amazed, and they left and turned away from them, stupefied. 41 And the mouse began to cut the strings of the trap sluggishly and not diligently.

[lacuna]

42 “In the⁷⁰ matter perhaps, if you 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.

70 Perhaps **ḏm** missing (in lacuna): “in that matter.”

43 But this action is not [typical] of honest [people], that they disregard the affairs of their loved ones. 44 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.*"

43 This is not inherent to wise men and to those who fear God and to noble [people]. 44 For you have gathered many benefits for yourself from your approach of me and deliverance from your enemies, and in return for these it would be right for you to give thanks to him who planted some of the fruits of peace in your reasoning. 45 Now vigor is required from you, and it is a duty owed on the grounds of your nobility that you strive for my deliverance from this snare in which I lie. 45 Let not come up in your heart [some of] the earlier things,

46 *because He who has brought us to brotherhood with each other has revealed my full commitment to 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 to his inner heart.*⁷¹ *You, o beloved, know what a bad ending and (269) a deep pit deceit digs for whomever resorts to it.*

47 For 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 no healing for the fracture he has received. *Have you not heard, little brother, about the man whose brother slips in one of his causes or who commits a certain error in one of his affairs and asks forgiveness from his brother, while confessing his sin and*

⁷¹ Possibly a gloss that has been inserted into the text.

affirming his transgression? [Have you not heard that] if 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 [him] any transgression?"

56 The mouse told her:

"Faithfulness is not the issue, but I am fearful for myself, namely that you, when you have escaped, might pounce⁷² upon me."

56 The mouse said: "He who works hard to finish [his task] is he who makes plans for the satisfaction of two sides and is careful that neither of them fall in the snares of evil. 49 He whose obedience is steadfast will put himself on the line for his brother, like in the words of the wisest man, who says: "..."⁷³ He who happens to do this, and not from the necessity that was upon him, but from the steadfastness of love, in perpetuity he will remain by his friend. 53 But he who is near to him because of the necessity that was upon him, will, when they quarrel, depart from him because of the reproaches. And it becomes clear that he is not perfect in the fear of God,⁷⁴ (270) and he imitates the love of the worldly people, i.e., not approaching towards a fellow, except to plunder his possessions and then leave him behind.

61 Behold, I am approaching, and I am cutting the strings of the trap. But I will leave one string, that will remain until the moment of distress."

⁷² Literally, "pour."

⁷³ The saying/quotation seems to be missing. Cf. John 10:18.

⁷⁴ Text: Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, lxxiii. Additions and corrections 269: 16–19.

Then with oaths (90) [the cat] asserted the agreement so that he would trust her.

57 And he began **fearfully** to cut. 63 And while they were in this conversation with each other, dawn broke, and the trappers appeared. 64 When the cat saw [that], **she became upset**. 66 Then it seemed good to the mouse that that moment had come to cut the ropes. 67 He cut them hastily, 69 and the cat fled to the tree, and the mouse entered her small hole. **And in this way, they were both at the same time delivered.**

70 And after the trappers were gone, the cat descended and called out to the mouse, but he did not come to her.

72 She said to him: "Friend, who has fulfilled for me this kindness, you, come to me, 73 for now it is right that you eat the fruits of your loving friendship. Behold, you have labored on my behalf. Come! For whosoever has gained a friend and does not take care of him will also not find fruits from his friends.

74 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

62 The mouse approached and cut the strings of the trap, but he left one string. 63 When he saw the trapper, who **had crept near, little by little**, and was coming near to them, 67 [the mouse] approached and cut that string **when he was about three paces away from them**, 67 and he hastily entered a fissure before him, which he had prepared before he severed the last string. 69 The cat sprang up and climbed up the tree. The trapper came and approached them and saw that the strings of the trap were cut, and he turned back in frustrated.

70 After a short while, the mouse came out to see what news there was of the trapper. The cat saw him from the tree and said to him: "**Little brother**, you are worthy of much gratitude. 72 For what reason are you agitated and anxious regarding us? **Let not your heart be troubled or your mind divided, for our love for each other a sword cannot cut, nor fire burn it up, nor anything else like earthly gold and pearls could bring about a change in it. Therefore, believe my words and come out towards me in order that we may enjoy each other's company,** 74 because the kindness that you have done me cannot be expressed,⁷⁵ and the debt, which rests on me, cannot

75 Text: Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, lxxiii. Additions and corrections 270: 24 (رحمته الله).

fruits of your kindness. But come here,
and whatever is mine, consider it yours.
75 And fear not!"

And she swore an oath to him.

76 And he replied to her:

"Whosoever wants friendship from an enemy and does not distinguish between enemy and friend makes himself into an enemy. 79 And when he falls into his hands, he sees himself to be like the one 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.

82 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.

84 A wise man is he who knows his benefit and his detriment.

be repaid. Everything I amass (271) of riches, I will put before you, as long as I am in this life. 75 Do not shrink away, nor doubt the sincerity of my words."

77 Then the mouse replied, saying:

"There is a type of enmity that is hidden inside the heart, while from the outside it appears that the mind which owns it is carrying love, but its blow is more bitter than the blow of enmity that is manifest. 79 And he who is not on guard against it suffers that which happened to the man who rode on the back of an elephant, and overcome by sleep, fell before the feet of the elephant, **who trampled and killed him.**

80 The matter that is called brotherhood between brothers and closeness between the distant,⁷⁶ or familiarity towards strangers,⁷⁷ makes up the amount of help which one gets from one's companion. 83 And in the same manner that a cloud, when it rains, makes gloomy, and sometimes the rain pours down, and then disperses and there is a clear sky and the sun shines, 84 in that manner love sometimes exists between many, and sometimes it removes itself from them, and a change comes upon them.

76 Not members of one's family.

77 No relationship at all.

85 Everything, also, has a limit and a cause. There is love, which is fixed in nature, like that of 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 simpler than the one **fixed in nature**. Our enmity toward each other is fixed in nature, **and there is no cause to it from a transient**⁷⁸ deed.

The love between us was introduced by a **chance occurrence**. 86 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) [water] is heated,⁷⁹ it is not restrained from extinguishing the fire, when it is poured upon it. 89 (also 92) Thus, it is right for an enemy who understands that his enemy is stronger and mightier than him that he should not go near him, **88** because we have approached each other by an accidental necessity. And now that the merciful God has given a liberation⁸⁰ to us all and deliverance to both sides, let each of us remain in his burrow.

78 I.e., not eternal, but limited in time and circumstances. See also note 28 above.

79 Text: Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, lxxiii. Additions and corrections 272: 1 (محدث).

80 Text: Wright, *Book of Kalilah*, lxxiii. Additions and corrections 272: 6 (مخلص).

99 I (91) was helped thus. And when I,
 in the future, cherish you and, from now
 on, want your best, **which I did not want
 before**, for you can harm me, 100 **you
 should also, if it please you, not reward
 the good deed with falsehood, and
 remember your friendship from afar."**

105 And in this manner the mouse and
 the cat were saved.

99 Behold, I salute you and I will part
 from 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."**

105 This [is] the parable of [two]
 enemies who became close and familiar
 with each other, and then separated.

Naṣr Allāh Munshī's Preface to *Kalīla and Dimna*

Theodore S. Beers

1 Introductory Notes

What follows is an unabridged, fairly literal English translation of the preface that Abū l-Ma'ālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī added to his adaptation of *Kalīla and Dimna*, written ca. 540/1146.¹ 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 translation² of *Kalīla and Dimna* from a copy of the Arabic version attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. ca. 139/756–57), 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 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 (i.e., prosimetrum); references to scripture and other texts are incorporated for aesthetic effect or to strengthen the author's argument; and the reader is enchanted by a mixture of seriousness and jest

1 The *Kalīla and Dimna*—AnonymClassic project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635. I am grateful to my AnonymClassic colleagues for their ongoing support of my research on the Persian *Kalīla and Dimna* tradition. Isabel Toral deserves special recognition for her patient and fastidious editorial work on our collected volume. I would also like to thank Devin Stewart for reading a draft of this translation. His comments allowed me to fix numerous errors. Any that remain—and there are bound to be some—are my fault alone.

2 I use the term “translation” broadly, rather than refusing to apply it where it seems not to fit perfectly—as in this case. Translation can involve a range of approaches. For Naṣr Allāh, it meant rendering his Arabic source into Persian while adding a profusion of new material.

(*al-jidd wa-l-hazl*), edification and entertainment.³ 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 syntactic patterns, rhetorical devices, etc.⁴ Suffice it to say that his bold, original approach to writing Persian prose has been recognized as a key influence in the literary tradition.⁵ Only a handful of medieval Persian books—for instance, the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī* (470/1077)—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 quotes from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, selections of poetry in both Persian and Arabic—some of it self-composed, some taken from the *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām (d. ca. 231/845) or from famous poets such as al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965)—wisdom sayings (*amthāl* and *ḥikam*), and beyond. Apart from these insertions, the largest change that Naṣr Allāh made to *Kalīla and Dimna* was his addition of an original prefatory chapter, i.e., the section whose full translation is presented below. There was precedent for attaching new prefaces to this book. Anyone who has studied *Kalīla and Dimna* will have noticed that, while the "real" first chapter is that which tells the story of the Lion and the Ox, this comes after a series of prefatory chapters, including (depending on the version or manuscript) some or all of the following: an introduction attributed to one 'Alī ibn al-Shāh al-Fārisī;⁶ an introduction attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa'; the story of the voyage of the Iranian physician Burzūya (i.e., Burzoy) to India, in which he retrieves this book of wisdom; and the (auto)biography of Burzūya. Naṣr Allāh Munshī was thus far from the first individual to leave his mark on *Kalīla and Dimna* through translation and appending a new preface. And he would not be the last. (The subsequent Persian rewriting by Ḥusayn Vā'iẓ Kāshifī, d. 910/1504–05, for example, comes with a large introductory chapter of its

3 On prosimetrum, see Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Prosimetrical Genres in Classical Arabic Literature," in *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997, 249–75. On *al-jidd wa-l-hazl*, see Geert Jan van Gelder, "Mixtures of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Arabic Literature* 23/2 (1992): 83–108; 23/3 (1992): 169–90.

4 I have discussed some of these points in a recent article, "Scripture as Frame in Naṣr Allāh Munshī's *Kalīla and Dimna*," in Johannes Stephan and Beatrice Gruendler, eds., *Framing Narratives in Premodern Literature: Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, themed issue, Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 24/1 (2024): 131–51, <https://journals.uio.no/JAIS/issue/view/836>.

5 See, for example, Mahmoud Omidasalar, "*Kalīla wa Dimna* ii. The translation by Abu'l-Ma'ālī Naṣr-Allāh Monṣī," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online version.

6 See A.F.L. Beeston, "The 'Alī ibn Shāh' Preface to *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*," *Oriens* 7/1 (1954): 81–84.

own.) 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 particular, 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 (especially Bahrāmshāh), and to anecdotes from the history of the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75), effective founder of the Abbasid caliphate and supposed patron of Ibn al-Muqaffa'.⁷ But the main argument, to 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 serves to provide the rationale for the interweaving of quotes from the Qur'an and Ḥadīth that we find throughout all the chapters. Naṣr Allāh is not merely showcasing his erudition and skill as an *adab* composer; he is applying an interpretive framework. It will thus 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 Thackston.⁸ Furthermore,

7 Naṣr Allāh claims that it was during the reign of al-Manṣūr that Ibn al-Muqaffa' translated *Kalīla and Dimna* into Arabic (see section 4.6 below), and he strongly implies that this was done under caliphal patronage—that al-Manṣūr deserves some credit for the endeavor. According to the traditional biography of Ibn al-Muqaffa', however, he was never in al-Manṣūr's entourage. In fact, Ibn al-Muqaffa' is said to have offended al-Manṣūr shortly after he assumed the caliphate, and to have been put to death as a result (ca. 139/756–57). In any case, it is understandable that Naṣr Allāh wishes to associate the translation of *Kalīla and Dimna* with al-Manṣūr, given the ruler's towering legacy. For a concise overview of the career of Ibn al-Muqaffa', see Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kalīlah and Dimnah: Fables of Virtue and Vice*, ed. Michael Fishbein, trans. Michael Fishbein and James E. Montgomery, New York: New York University Press, 2021, xiii–xvi.

8 See Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Kalīla and Dimna*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2019. Thackston has striven 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 labels “excessively long-winded.” There is also a German translation of Naṣr Allāh's text, by Seyfeddin Najmabadi and Siegfried Weber, in which such abridgments have not been made. See Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Kalīla und Dimna: Fabeln aus dem klassischen Persien*, trans. Seyfeddin Najmabadi and Siegfried Weber, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996. Naṣr Allāh's preface occurs on pp. 359–86. (The introductory chapters have been moved to the end of the book.) For discussion of the critical edition of the Persian, see section 3.

any study of Naṣr Allāh's *Kalīla and Dimna* must reckon with the preface as an integral part of the text.

2 An Overview of the Preface

Naṣr Allāh's preface can be divided roughly into ten sections. This division is not entirely arbitrary—it follows the author's transitions from one topic to the next, and (as can be seen in the text below) he gives clear indications. The subsections are set apart with headings in my translation, which is obviously not the case in 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 Minuvī—the standard critical edition that serves as 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), the account of 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.⁹ 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 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 pithiest expression of this claim comes in the form of an Arabic saying, which Naṣr Allāh introduces as a *ḥadīth*: “Kingship and religion are twins” (*al-mulk wa-l-dīn taw'amān*; p. 4). 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 the Day of Judgment); 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 large and robust religious community without joining it to political power.

9 Page numbers cited parenthetically here—and in square brackets in the translation—refer to Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Kalīla va Dimna*, ed. Muḥtabā Minuvī (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1964).

From this point, Naṣr Allāh transitions into a discussion of the importance of justice in kingship (pp. 6–8). He continues to insert a variety of references, including part of the story of the Prophet David; an anecdote involving an unbeliever at the dawn of Islam, who converted after hearing a particular Qur'ānic verse; and a wise saying by Ardashīr-i Bābakān (d. 242 CE), founder of the Sasanian Empire. 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" (p. 7). From the practice of justice flows everything else that a ruler will need.

The question that would naturally follow this tying of Islam to kingship, and of kingship to justice, is how a ruler might be instructed to follow the correct path. Naṣr Allāh will address this in due course—the answer, unsurprisingly, is to study a book 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. 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 resolved to produce 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 a certain extent, interrupted by these passages, there is a logic to their inclusion.

After Naṣr Allāh has explained the circumstances in which he became interested in translating *Kalīla and Dimna*, he moves on 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, the owner of a business, one will benefit from reading this. Naṣr Allāh also mentions the significance of the entertaining quality of *Kalīla and Dimna*: "Just as the elite of the people will incline toward that [book] for the discernment of experiences, common folk will also read [it] because of its playfulness, and gradually those points of wisdom will become fixed in their disposition" (p. 18; this echoes a line from

the preface of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, which Naṣr Allāh also includes in his translation, while partially reattributing it to Buzurgmihr). 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 emphasizes the role of Kīsrā (Khusraw) Anūshīrwān, who had the book brought from India to Iran and translated into Middle Persian; and even more so that of the caliph al-Manṣūr, under whose auspices, we are told, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ authored an Arabic translation.

From here, Naṣr Allāh digresses to describe the blessed status of Baghdad, the capital founded by al-Manṣūr, and he continues with 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.¹⁰ Naṣr Allāh freely admits that he has strayed far from his main topic, and he returns (pp. 23–25) 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 b. 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 repeatedly is that, throughout history, the strongest rulers have tended to be those who recognized the value of this book: Kīsrā Anūshīrwān, al-Manṣūr, Naṣr b. Aḥmad, and now (conveniently) the Ghaznavid Bahrāmshāh.

The penultimate section (pp. 25–27) 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 studies Naṣr Allāh's text will notice, there is still a great deal of Arabic here, and the reader needs to be functionally biliterate. This is due to the frequent quoting of Qurʾānic verses, Ḥadīth, lines of poetry, proverbs, and so forth. Naṣr Allāh defends the addition of these references to other sources by arguing that they

10 In fact, this distinction between the core argument and more digressive passages is reflected in the *Sīyar al-mulūk*, an Arabic retranslation 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. I have a recently published article on the *Sīyar al-mulūk*, coauthored with my colleague, Khoulood Khalfallah. See Theodore S. Beers and Khoulood Khalfallah, "The *Sīyar al-mulūk* of 'Umar b. Dāwūd al-Fārisī: A Quasi-Plagiaristic Translation of *Kalīla and Dimna*," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022): 72–104.

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 into the final passage of the preface (pp. 27–28), which consists of a few paragraphs of effusive praise for Bahrāmshāh. Again, the Ghaznavid sultan is linked to a series of great rulers who have invested in the transmission of *Kalīla and Dimna*.

3 Notes on This Translation

As has been noted above, the standard critical edition of Naṣr Allāh Munshī's *Kalīla and Dimna* is that of Muḥtabā 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 text and the translation to do so.¹¹

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 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. 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 render the meaning of the text accurately and maintain a clear correspondence with the Persian, ideally 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. These insertions are

¹¹ While the Mīnuvī edition provides a good reference text, I have occasionally needed to check a manuscript for the reading of a troublesome passage. For this purpose, I have consulted Persian ms 68 at the John Rylands Library of 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.

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.

4 Translation

4.1 *Introductory Praise of God and the Prophet*¹²

In the name of God, the Merciful, the 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 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.¹³ In bringing entities into being, He did not require a minister or advisor, nor assistance or support; and He made the marvels of creation manifest in the realm of generation and decay; and He distinguished humankind 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. He selected the last of them by turn and first by rank, the sky of rightness and sun

12 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.

13 As Minuvī has noted in the Persian, the spider-thread refers to a story in which the Prophet Muḥammad and his companion Abū Bakr spent a night in a cave, hiding from the 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. The pursuers therefore passed by the cave, with Muḥammad and Abū Bakr safe inside. As for the mosquito-bite, Minuvī 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 of great miracles through humble vessels.

of truth, lord of the apostles and seal of the prophets, leader of the exceptional, Abū l-Qāsim **Muḥammad** b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim b. '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 humankind], 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 became obvious, and it was clear to the wise people of the world that [the deniers] would not pay heed to logical proofs or perceptible miracles. At that time, the verses (*āyāt*) relating to *jihād* came down, and the obligation of holy struggle—in accordance with both religious law and wisdom (*khirad*)—was established. And heavenly support and the firm resolve of the master of *sharī'a* were joined to that [effort], and the good fortune of divine guidance showed the right path to the champions of truth. 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, and carried the true religion (*millat-i ḥanīfī*) to the corners and horizons of the world, and situated the truth in the center of their being.

Let there be paise, praise, praise
for the one who grants virtues if He is thanked;
And may my salutations be conveyed day and night
to the one who is at Yathrib—
The greeting of one who longs to be guided,
through praise, to precious rewards.¹⁴

May divine salutation, greeting, benediction, and blessings be upon the sublime essence and holy spirit of the chosen one (*muṣṭafā*),¹⁵ and upon his companions, followers, friends, and partisans—a salutation whose moments of utterance should continue until the end of time, and whose breath should clear the dust from the perfume-shop: *God and His angels bless the Prophet. O believers, do you also bless him, and pray him peace.*¹⁶

14 Three lines of Arabic poetry in the *wāfir* meter. I have not been able to find another source for this, and it may be the author's.

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

16 *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* (Q 33), verse 56. All translations of Qur'ānic verses are by Arberry. See Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted: A Translation*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

4.2 *On the Need for Rulers in Upholding Islam*

[4] 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 community will reach what was shown to me*—God empowered the successors (*khulafāʾ*) of the Prophet—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 believers, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.*¹⁷ 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.*¹⁸ 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 their own opinion, and the legitimate principles and religious laws would have become disordered and neglected. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb says: *The sultān restrains more than the Qurʾān.*¹⁹

17 *Sūrat al-Nisāʾ* (Q 4), verse 59.

18 This is presented as a *ḥadīth*. Mīnuvī notes that it should be attributed instead to Ardashīr-i Bābakān. My impression is that this was a popular saying with multiple attributions. It occurs, for example, in the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, ed. Badawī Aḥmad Ṭabāna, 4 vols., Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, n.d., 1:18.

19 This quote has more often been attributed to ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. See, for example, Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt, 4 vols., Mecca: H.M. Aḥmad, n.d., 3:988. ʿUmar b. Shabba (d. ca. 264/877) uses the following wording: *la-mā yazaʿu l-sultānu l-nāsa ashaddu mim mā yazaʿuhumu l-qurʾān* (“the restraint of the sultan over the people is stronger than the restraint of the Qurʾān over them”).

And the source of this meaning [5] is from the sublime Qur'ān: *Why, you arouse greater fear in their hearts than God; that is because they are a people who understand not.*²⁰ 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 (*shūr*) of the bath.²¹

As for the person who seeks repose in the shadow of the banner of the scholars until she nears the sun of revelation (*kashf*): with knowledge alone, that grandeur and awe will appear in her mind, whose extent cannot be grasped through fancies, whose core cannot be reached through idle thoughts.²² [God's] word, may He be exalted: *Only those of His servants fear God who have knowledge.*²³

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 the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great might, and many uses for men.*²⁴ 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

20 *Sūrat al-Ḥashr* (Q 59), verse 13.

21 One line of Persian poetry in the *khafif* meter. I have not been able to find another source for this, and it may be the author's.

22 The gender of the person referred to in this sentence is unspecified in the Persian and arbitrary in my translation. I have tried to follow a gender-neutral approach, except for a few cases in which choosing a singular pronoun helps the clarity of the text.

23 *Sūrat Fāṭir* (Q 35), verse 28.

24 *Sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57), verse 25. The *sūra* is named for this verse.

the fire of discord (*fitna*) would be infeasible without the fear of the gleaming sword, [6] the obligation to obey 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, obedience, devotion, and sincerity of intentions toward them among the pillars of the faith; and, in serving them, will consider the external (*ẓāhir*) and internal (*bāṭin*) to be of equal importance.

It must be acknowledged without hesitation that, if a person thinks about opposing the great leader (*imām-i aʿẓam*) or permits the damage of treason, small or large, to spread to the borders of his realm and the edges of his kingdom, [that person] 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 elite and the common folk of the community will fall into pain and hardship.

4.3 *On the Need for Justice in Kingship*

This part of the virtues of rulership—that it is entailed by 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 approach (*jānib*) of brevity and conciseness will be followed, with the assistance and facilitation of God.

[God] said, may He be exalted: *David, behold, We have appointed thee a viceroy in the earth; therefore judge between men justly.*²⁵ 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 it has come down that one of the deniers (*munkirān*) of the prophethood of the master of *sharīʿa* heard the following verse: *Surely God bids to justice and good-doing and giving to kinsmen; and He forbids indecency, dishonor, and insolence, admonishing you, so that haply you will remember.*²⁶ [The denier] was stunned, and he said, “Everything on earth that would be of use for the civilization of the world, and [all that] ordinary people would need in order to govern themselves 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.”

25 *Sūrat Ṣād* (Q 38), verse 26.

26 *Sūrat al-Naḥl* (Q 16), verse 90.

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 that [space]? [The denier] accepted the faith 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: It will not be misunderstood, and there is no need for explanation or clarification.

In the account 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.* The meaning [i.e., translation]²⁷ 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 types of generous acts and varieties of favors definitely have a limit, and the extension of that [munificence] to [both] elite and commoner is clearly infeasible. But the profits of *these* two qualities [i.e., justice and sound governance] apply to all people. 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, the succession of revenues, the reviving of wastelands, the comforting of the poor, the provision of the necessities of life, the acquisition of the masters of professions, and the likes and kin of those [things], are connected to *justice*. And the security of roads, the subduing of evildoers [i.e., brigands], the control of routes, 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, which good conduct could have this distinction, that reformers are soothed [by it], and corrupters are ground down? Any time that these two aspects come to be observed as obligatory, complete power will follow. The hearts of the elite, the commoner, the soldier, [8] and the peasant will become settled on the basis of affection and friendship. Friend and foe will come together under the yoke of obedience and service, and vexation will not

27 This is the first of several instances in which Naṣr Allāh follows an Arabic quote with its Persian translation. I have added notes in brackets to make this clearer.

take shape in the minds of the weak. The disobedient will no longer be capable of recalcitrance. And news of this will spread to the horizons; and the robe of kingship will be ornamented; and the pledge of permanence in this regard 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 governance. Now we will turn to other purposes. God is the one who will grant success in completing [this work], through His grace and the vastness of His generosity.

4.4 *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, mercy, 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 [i.e., the Abbasid caliph], protector of humankind, right hand of the state,²⁸ 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 (*awliyāʾ*), subjugator of the enemies of God, master of the kings of the Arabs and the Persians (*ʿArab wa ʿAjam*), 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 God's proof, 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*), proof of the truth (*ḥaqq*; i.e., God), winner of the lands of the mortal realm, manifest of the sublime word of God, patron of favors (*waliyy al-niʿam*), **Abū l-Muẓaffar Bahrāmshāh**, son of the noble ruler, exalted of the state, brilliance of the religious community (*milla*), light of the nation (*umma*), **Abū Saʿd Masʿūd**, son of the contented ruler, supporter of the state, helper of the religious community, protector of the nation, **Abū l-Muẓaffar Ibrāhīm**, son of the martyred ruler, defender of the religion of God, supporter of the vicegerent of God, [9] **Abū Saʿd Masʿūd**, son of the former ruler, right hand of the state, guardian of the religious community, order of the religion, refuge of Muslims, **Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd**, son of the just commander, supporter of the religion and imperial fortune, **Abū Maṣṣūr Sabuktāgīn**, pillar of the vicegerent of God, commander

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

of the faithful—may God strengthen his [i.e., Bahrāmshāh's] supporters and double his power.²⁹

[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. 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 religious community and nation 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 [Bahrāmshāh's] governance and management; and He has fortified his kingly resolutions with the support of manifest victory and the persistence of the help of the Almighty—so that on every side that he commands a movement [of his army], triumph and victory will deem it obligatory that his banner and his standard be welcomed and accepted. 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.³⁰

He led cavalry at the age of fifteen
while his contemporaries were too preoccupied;
Their caprices held them back, and for him towered
the ambitions of kings and the vehemence of heroes.³¹

O you who have grasped the rule of the world in one blow,
sun of kingship, shadow of the Sustainer ...³²

On this account, if the demon of discord settled in the heads of the Bū Ḥalīm until they placed their feet outside the bounds of servitude,³³ [10] in the handling of their affair, [Bahrāmshāh] carried out the customs of mobilizing and

29 Here Naṣr Allāh has traced the whole Ghaznavid line from Bahrāmshāh, his patron, back to Sabuktāgīn (d. 387/997), founder of the dynasty.

30 This last phrase is repeated in equivalent form using Arabic, then Persian words: *qudva-yi mulūk-i dunyā* and *dastūr-i pādshāhān-i gītī*. I have usually kept 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.

31 Two lines of Arabic poetry in the *kāmil* meter. This is attributed to an Umayyad-era poet of Persian origin, Ziyād al-A'jam (fl. second/eighth century).

32 One line of Persian poetry in the *ramal* meter. This may be the author's.

33 The Bū Ḥalīm were a family of military commanders who served the later Ghaznavid sultans. They rebelled against Bahrāmshāh and were duly struck down. See C.E. Bosworth, "Bu Ḥalīm Ṣaybāni Family," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online version.

outfitting the army³⁴ 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 listing of its virtues.

His sword did not just erase the signs of the rebellion;
indeed it scrubbed the dishonor from the face of time.³⁵

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 periphery 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 the malefactors of the borderlands drew in their breath and bowed their heads,³⁶ and the hearts of elites and commoners and soldier and peasant were at peace in obedience and servitude. Royal commands were followed in all respects, 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.

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 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 servant³⁷ to utter praise of the victorious state? Since ...

[۱۱] If the kingdom had a tongue,
it would speak praise of the king of the world:
Abū l-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,

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

35 One line of Arabic poetry in the *basīṭ* meter. I have not been able to find an attribution, and this line may well be the author's.

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

37 *Man banda*; lit. "I, the servant."

and there were a hundred declarations in each act of speech;
 And if all the hairs on his body became fingers,
 and there were a pen at each fingertip;
 Then, if all 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 story.³⁸

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 attainment³⁹

[i.e.,] the numerous praiseworthy and agreeable signs which, in the presentation of the principles of justice and governance, belong to the former ruler,⁴⁰ right hand of the state⁴¹ and guardian of the Islamic nation, order of the religion, refuge of Muslims, **Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd**—may God illuminate his proof and weigh his balance with good deeds. Furthermore, in reviving the precedents of the just commander, helper of the religion⁴² 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.⁴³

[Maḥmūd] rendered his [i.e., Sabuktagīn's] laudable customs fresh and alive, and he at once erased the blameworthy habits that oppressors and irresponsible people had put in place, [12] until [all] the creatures on the face of

38 Eight lines of Persian poetry in the *mutaqārib* meter (i.e., the meter of the *Shāhnāma*). This is probably the author's.

39 One hemistich of Arabic poetry in the *basīṭ* meter. This is attributed to Dhū l-Rumma d. ca. 117/735.

40 In Mīnuvī's edition, the word *khudāvand* occurs here in a way that I was unable to parse. I checked the Manchester manuscript, to which Mīnuvī did not have access, and the word is absent there (fol. 8r). I have chosen to omit it for purposes of translation.

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

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

43 This paragraph represents one of the more difficult passages in the Persian. The syntax becomes rather obscure.

the earth, at peace and contented, set their backs against the wall of security and leisure. Friend and foe [alike] acknowledged the exaltation of ambition and the perfection of governance of that pious ruler—may God envelop him in the cloak of His forgiveness. And his orders were absolutely obeyed throughout the kingdoms. The proud ones of the age sought refuge in the safety of his sanctuary, and they recognized their nobility and prosperity in obedience and submission to him.

All the kingdoms of Ghaznīn, Zābulistān, Nimrūz, Khurāsān, Khwārazm, Chaghāniyān, Gurgān, Ṭabaristān, Qūmis, Dāmghān, Ray, Iṣfahān, and the lands of Hindūstān and Mūltān came under the control of the command of that great⁴⁴ emperor—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 Tirmiz, and a third is Khwārazm, and the fourth is the course of the Ganges river.” Anyone who has read the *Book of Routes and Realms*,⁴⁵ and who has learned the length and breadth of these countries, will understand the extent to which [Maḥmūd’s] kingdom reached.

At that point, he restricted his ambition to the glorification of the word of God (*kalima-yi ḥaqq*), 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, Maṣṣūra, Sūmnāt [i.e., Somnath], Sarandīb, and the shores of the ocean and the environs of Egypt; and from the side of Quṣḍār, all the surroundings of Yemen, Sibapūra, Sind, Sīvastān [i.e., Sīstān], Sila-yi ‘Umar,⁴⁶ and Yawziya, and the environs of Kirmān and the coasts of Tīz and Mukrān—[Maḥmūd] added on the order of two thousand *farsangs* [13] to the territory of Islam.

The sun of the Aḥmadī [i.e., Muslim] religious community shone on those countries from the reflection of the moon of the Maḥmūdī banner.⁴⁷ 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. Mosques were built in

44 I have read this as *muḥtasham*, though Mīnuvī has it voweled *muḥtashim*—which would mean “modest.”

45 I.e., the *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik* of Iṣṭakhri (d. after 340/951–52). The order of words in the title is inverted in Mīnuvī’s edition, but the Manchester manuscript has it correct (fol. 8r).

46 This is not clear to me at all. Some of the place names in this list have come out differently in the Manchester manuscript (fol. 8v), but not in ways that are easier to interpret. There are points at which the copyist seems to have been hesitant.

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

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 Qurʾān. 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.

Over 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,⁴⁸ male and female believers will be born from their begetting and procreation. And all of them acknowledge the unity of their Creator and Sustainer. Blessings and rewards and merits are being amassed for that king of kings, conqueror [in the name of the religion], **Maḥmūd**, and [for] all the kings of this family.

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—have many virtues and good qualities, since each one of them has been, in governance, administration, justice, and mercy, a religious community unto himself.

Indeed the elite of the tribe is one person;
as for the Banū Ḥanīfa, all of them are elite.⁴⁹

But the explanation and analysis of that [greatness] is not possible, since speaking about it insufficiently would be blameworthy;⁵⁰ 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, through the blessings of those good intentions and pure convictions, the emblem of kingship and the qualities of world-rulership [14] have become eternal, permanent, lasting, and perpetual in this great family. The conduct of the emperors of this polity—may God strengthen it—has become

48 *Dāman-i qiyāmat*; lit. "skirt of resurrection."

49 One line of Arabic poetry in the *kāmīl* meter. I have not been able to find an attribution.

50 At a few points in this preface, Naṣr Allāh uses the term *ishbāʿ* (or a derivative thereof), whose literal meaning is "satiation," in the sense of treating a topic in the manner that it deserves. (Here *ishbāʿ* is used with negation, to mean "insufficiently.")

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 this has been written with the pen of Mercury on the body of the sun.

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 the Greeks 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.⁵¹

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. May He convey [the king] to the limit of his ambition and the extremity of his desire in religious and worldly [pursuits]. May He ornament the pulpits of Islam, in the east and west, with the aura and precious value of the august epithets, and [with] the beauty of the blessed name of the king of kings. 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.

4.5 *Autobiographical Notes*

[15] So says the servant and son of a servant, Naṣr Allāh [b.] Muḥammad [b.] ‘Abd al-Ḥamid, Abū l-Ma‘ālī—may God the Generous take care of him with His grace.⁵²

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

51 Two lines of Arabic poetry in the *basīṭ* meter. This is apparently the author’s.

52 In the Persian, the patronymics here would be indicated by way of *izāfa*.

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 furthermore accept the petitions of each one 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 to be needed [in describing it]—

In Ghazna he set down his staff, and his good repute
perfumes what is between Iraq and Egypt.⁵³

Consequently, everyone had attained tranquility and contentment at his side, and they were placing footsteps of sincerity in the arena of friendship and affection.⁵⁴

[16] People are too smart to praise a man,
until they see by him signs of beneficence.⁵⁵

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. [They included] Qāzī Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ishāq, Burhān al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rashīd b. Naṣr, and the *imāms*: 'Alī Khayyāt ("the Tailor"), Ṣā'id Mayhanī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bustī, Muḥammad Sayfī, Muḥammad Nishāpūrī, Muḥammad b. 'Uṣmān Bustī, Mubashshir Raḥavī Adīb ("the Littérateur"), 'Abd al-Raḥīm Iskāfī, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Zāhidī ("the Ascetic"), Maḥmūd Sagzī, Fākhīr b. Nāṣir, and Sa'id Bākharzī; and at times the *imāms* Muḥammad Khabbāzī ("the Baker") and Maḥmūd Nishāpūrī—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

53 One line of Arabic poetry in the *ṭawīl* meter. This is probably original.

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

55 One line of Arabic poetry in the *basīṭ* meter. This is attributed to Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Khwārazmī, a fourth/tenth century Iranian littérateur (writing in Arabic) and court secretary, whose best-known work is a monumental encyclopædia titled *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm* (*Keys to the Sciences*).

and to participate in works. I was restricting the limit of my keen desire to [the goal] [17] that I might get to know one of them, and [that] I could seek fellowship through 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 when the imperative of fairness lifts the veil of the evil eye from the beauty of oneself, and [when] the signs of proficiency and miracles of craft—several of which this book mentions and portrays—are given appropriate consideration, 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 being over other living things—[one] cannot achieve this status.⁵⁶

Noble qualities are allocated in proportion to hard work.⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸

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

Seriousness all year eats away the life of people⁵⁹

—from time to time, jocularity would occur [in me], and there would be an inclination toward histories and evening tales.

56 This is one of the more convoluted sentences in the chapter, with Naṣr Allāh delicately expressing modesty while describing the quality of his education.

57 One hemistich of Arabic poetry in the *wāfir* meter. This seems to be popularly attributed to Imam al-Shāfiʿī, often with the verb *tuktasab* in place of *tanqasim* (with no real change in the meaning).

58 One hemistich of Arabic poetry in the *ṭawīl* meter. This is from al-Mutanabbī. For the full text of the *qaṣīda* containing this line, see Abū Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalabī (4 vols., Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1936), 1:188–201. The same line is quoted in the preface of the aforementioned *Ṣiyar al-mulūk* of ʿUmar b. Dāwūd al-Fārisī. See note 10 above, and Beers and Khalfallah, “*The Ṣiyar al-mulūk*,” 94.

59 One hemistich of Persian poetry in the *hazaj* meter. I have not seen any other attribution for this.

During this period, a learned jurisprudent, [18] 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl—may God perpetuate his success—who, among the young legal scholars 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, but his temperament admitted little change as far as the overturning of his inner state—brought as a gift a copy of *Kalīla and Dimna*.⁶⁰ Although several other copies of it were among [my] 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 was thereby made permanent—may God reward him with the best recompense and grant him his wishes in his first [life] and his next.⁶¹ In short, an attachment to that copy [of *Kalīla and Dimna*] occurred [on my part], and, with consideration and contemplation, the merits of the book better showed their beauty.

4.6 *Praise of Kalīla and Dimna (and of Baghdad)*

[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 elite of the people will incline toward that [book] for the discernment of experiences, common folk will also read [it] 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. 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.

They [once] 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

60 This is another complex sentence that is somewhat difficult to interpret. I believe the idea is that 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm, despite having reached a high station, did not lose his good nature.

61 What Naṣr Allāh means here, I think, is that he has demonstrated his gratitude to 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm in a lasting way by using the gifted manuscript of *Kalīla and Dimna* as the basis for a translation—although he owned other copies. Naṣr Allāh's text, however, gives the impression of a combination of *Vorlagen*, and it deserves further analysis for its exact Arabic models. See Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler, 25, note 25.

ones,' [19] who, by hearing that [speech], are revived and achieve eternal life on the path of knowledge. 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."⁶²

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 Nūshirwān* [i.e., Anūshirwān]—may God grant him comfort—the renown of whose justice and mercy remains on the face (*vajh*) of time, and the mention of whose strength and [sound] governance is established in the hearts (*ṣudūr*) of the chronicles, to such 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"—*Anūshirwān* ordered that [his servants] bring that [book] from the lands of India to the kingdom of Persia by stratagems,⁶³ and he [had it] translated into the Pahlavī language. 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 the elite and the common folk. 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 Iran (*ʿAjam*).

When the countries of Iraq 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 Jaʿfar *Manṣūr* b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās—may God be pleased with them—who was the second caliph from the family of the uncle of the Prophet—may God's prayers be upon him, and may He be pleased with his uncle—*Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ* translated that [book] from the Pahlavi language into the Arabic language (*luḡhat-i tāzī*). And that ruler [i.e., al-Manṣūr] accepted [the book] completely, and the other great ones of the religious community followed that example.

62 The Brahmin's speech begins with a hemistich from a poem by Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 198/813–14; this quote is also retained in the *Sīyar al-mulūk*): *ḥafīẓta shayʿan wa-ghābat ʿanka ašhyāʾu*. The hemistich preceding the quoted one mentions philosophy: *fā-qul li-man yaddaʿfi l-ʿilmi falsafatan*. It is interesting that Naṣr Allāh has a Brahmin quoting an Arabic saying and then explaining its meaning.

63 I.e., by any means necessary.

The condition of [al-Manṣūr's] exaltation of ambition and capability in 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 Baghdad, which, today, is absolutely the center of the caliphate, [20] the dwelling-place of the imamate, 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.

Among 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 pleased with him—passed 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. Commander of the Faithful Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Manṣūr, 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. Commander of the Faithful Abū Muḥammad Mūsā b. al-Mahdī, whose epithet was **al-Hādī** ("the Guide"), [died] at 'Īsā-Ābād. Commander of the Faithful Abū Ja'far **Hārūn** b. al-Mahdī, whose epithet was **al-Rashīd** ("the Rightly Guided"), [died] in Ṭūs. And Commander of the Faithful Abū l-'Abbās 'Abd Allāh b. Hārūn, whose epithet was **al-Ma'mūn** ("the Trusted"), [died] at Ṭarsūs.⁶⁴

Muḥammad **al-Amīn** was killed at Baghdad, but in that situation he was not caliph, and a majority of the religious community had agreed upon his deposition. In this recent age, Commander of the Faithful Abū Manṣūr al-Faḍl, whose epithet was **al-Mustarshid bi-Llāh** ("the Seeker of Guidance from God"), was martyred within the borders of Iraq. And they [i.e., geographical authorities] indicate a full day's journey between that site and the majestic abode of Baghdad. The merits of this city are many, and every person among the historians has delved into this [topic], and they have brought to completion its explanation and description.

4.7 *Anecdotes about the Caliph al-Manṣūr*

Now a few points from the words of Commander of the Faithful **Manṣūr** will be cited,⁶⁵ although this is not the place for it—but it is possible that, for readers, there may be a benefit from it.

64 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.

65 This is perhaps a loose translation of the compound verb used in the Persian, *irād kardā āmad*.

One day, [al-Manṣūr] was saying to his companions, "How badly I need for there to be at my door four [people] as I desire them!" [The companions] said, "Who are they?" [Al-Manṣūr] said, "Those without whom my kingdom will not remain standing, just as a throne will not stand without its four legs. As for the first of them, it is a judge whom the censure of a critic does not make deviate [from the path of] God.⁶⁶ 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 who does not oppress the subjects—for I can do without oppressing them."⁶⁷ 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 are the details of their titles (*asāmī*)?" 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 who does not stray from the path of piety and the matter of faithfulness in issuing rulings of religious law, 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."

Among [al-Manṣūr's] commands, he decreed, "Entice your enemy to flee by abandoning eagerness in pursuing him if he is routed, and know that each one who is in your army [represents] an eye on you." The meaning [i.e., translation] 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 each one who is in your army [22] is spying on you."

And he [once] summoned an official to the court, [and that official] made an excuse and stood back and refrained [from appearing]. [Al-Manṣūr] signed the order of [the official] with the following statement: "If it is burdensome for him to come before us in his entirety, then we will be content with part of him

66 *Lā ya'khudhuhū fī Llāh*; this is a bit terse, and my translation is based partly on the way that Naṣr Allāh has rendered it into Persian below.

67 I prefer this reading of *fa-innī ghaniyy 'an ḡulmihā*, but note that it differs slightly from Naṣr Allāh's Persian translation.

and lessen his trouble; so let his head be carried to the court (*al-bāb*) without his body." The meaning [i.e., translation] 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."

During tutelage, [al-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 in moderation, and restrain them graciously, and enrich them with hope, and do not be [overly] generous with them in gifts." The meaning [i.e., translation] 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 moderation, 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 [i.e., translation] 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."

One day he said to Rabī,⁶⁸ "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 [i.e., translation] 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 sage has spoken truly, 'Keep the dog hungry so that it will run after you.'"

[23] One day they said to [al-Manṣūr], "Such-and-such prominent individual (*fulān muqaddam*) has been 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." [Al-Manṣūr] replied, "Whoever is not satisfied with the vicegerency of

68 This presumably refers to al-Rabī' b. Yūnus (d. ca. 168/785), a freedman who became a senior official at the Abbasid court during al-Manṣūr's reign.

God on His earth, will not be satisfied by the estates of orphans and poor people.” The meaning [i.e., translation] 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., al-Manṣūr] are without end, and the histories of the ancients speak to that. In particular, the *Ghurar al-siyar* of Tha‘alibī—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 (*arkān va ḥudūd*)⁶⁹ 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 [polity], and could not give way to any harm to its mid- and lower-ranking people.

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 humankind—if the changing 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.⁷⁰ 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.

4.8 *Further Praise of Kalīla and Dimna*

In sum, the intention of the course of this discussion was [to show] that this kind of emperor took an interest in this book. When the rule of Khurāsān passed to the stalwart commander Abū l-Ḥasan Naṣr b. Aḥmad⁷¹ 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 rule] 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.

69 This phrase may refer metaphorically to the nobles.

70 I.e., it should come as no surprise.

71 I.e., Naṣr II, r. 301–31/914–43.

Dābshalīm, the raja of India, at whose command they made this collection [of stories]—**Bīdpāy** the Brahmin, the original author, was among his circle—[also] had the mark 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 manifest for any [normal] effort to have the ability to construct [such things]. For anyone who has a share of wisdom, the excellence of that [book] will not be concealed; and the one 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?⁷²

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,⁷³ and from the point at which we reached the mention of **Anūshirwān** up to here, it is all stuffing; and of course it has no relation to the topic of the book.⁷⁴ The intention was [25] for it to be recognized that wisdom has always been prized, especially among kings and nobles. 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.

4.9 *On Translating Kalīla and Dimna*

After the translation of **Ibn al-Muqaffa'** and the versification of **Rūdakī**, [others] have made translations of this book, and each person has left a footprint in the field of discourse according to the measure of their 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.

72 One line of Persian poetry in the *khafif* meter. This is sometimes attributed to Nāṣir Khusraw (d. after 462/1070), including in the entry for the word *kūr* ("blind") in the Dehkhoda dictionary; but I have not found a secure source.

73 The word translated here as "confirmation," *ibrām*, could alternatively mean "insistence"—i.e., the insistence of Naṣr Allāh on praising *Kalīla and Dimna* from many angles.

74 I.e., Naṣr Allāh is apologizing for having digressed.

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 [*Kalīla and Dimna*] should be translated, and that, in the explanation of its speech and the unveiling of its allusions, a sufficient measure⁷⁵ should be reached. It should be reinforced with Qur'ānic verses (*āyāt*) and reports (*akhbār*; i.e., Ḥadīth) and lines of poetry and proverbs, so that this book, which is the choice extract of a few thousand years, might be revived, and that people not be deprived of its uses and benefits. In this way, [the project] was begun, and the conditions of speech-adornment were carried out through the insertion of proverbs, the interweaving of verses of poetry, and the explanation of symbols and allusions. And the translation and praise of [the book] were accomplished.

One chapter, which is restricted to discussion of the doctor **Burzūya** and attributed to **Buzurjmihr** [i.e., Buzurgmihr], 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. 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 purpose,⁷⁶ has its beginning with the story of the Lion and the Ox, [26] which is the original [beginning of *Kalīla and Dimna*];⁷⁷ 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 words that are pleasing and to his liking—and a few sections were granted the honor of his sublime attention. [With his] perfect knowledge of speech and kingly discernment,⁷⁸ he was pleased by that [writing], and he granted the honor of praise and approval. He issued a command, based on the principles of beneficence and cultivating hope, and limited to various kinds of

75 *Ishbā'*; lit. "satiation." See note 50 regarding this term.

76 *Laṭāfat-i muvāradat*: This is a puzzling construction. It occurs consistently across the manuscripts that I have checked—see, for example, fol. 15r in the Manchester copy—and Minūvī, in his edition, has added a footnote indicating that he also found this unclear.

77 However obscure parts of this sentence may be, its overall meaning comes across: Naṣr Allāh's adornment of the text of *Kalīla and Dimna* will begin not with the biography of Burzūya but with the chapter of the Lion and the Ox.

78 *Az ānjā kih kamāl-i sukhan-shināsī ... ast*; lit. "from that place which is the perfection of speech-knowledge ..."

servant-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, support, eminence, and pride, and he [i.e., Naṣr Allāh] 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*), for the people of the world it is well established 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 active intellect and the guide to the sacred spirit. Neither from contemplation of the allusions and experiential wisdom (*tajārib*) of this book could a sharpening of his [i.e., Bahrāmshāh's] 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?⁷⁹
 What fragrance could a rose gain from ten bottles of rosewater?
 What glow could the moon attain from a hundred lanterns?⁸⁰

[27] 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. The reward for that was saved for the age of the exalted emperor.

4.10 *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 sages, 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 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

79 The term *āb-i ḥayāt* may refer to some kind of drink, as *eau de vie* refers to distilled spirits in French.

80 Two lines of Persian poetry. The meter is difficult to scan—especially in the second hemistich—but it seems to be a variant of *muḏārī*. This poetry may be by Naṣr Allāh.

deposited to his kingly justice, mercy, 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 time⁸¹

—[Bahrāmshāh] gave this same order [to have *Kalīla and Dimna* translated],⁸² and he rendered permanent and eternal the name and reputation of his fortunate reign, which is the golden age⁸³ of virtue and excellence.

May God the blessed and exalted make the utmost ambition of the kings of the world the ascendancy of the imperial fortune and celebration of the prosperity and felicity of this servant-nurturing emperor.⁸⁴ 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.

81 One line of Persian poetry in the *muẓārī* meter. I have not seen any other attribution for this, and it may well be the author's.

82 The preceding paragraph is simply a circumlocutory 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.

83 *Rūz-i bāzār*; lit. "market day."

84 I.e., may God make it so that the aspiration of other, inferior rulers is to honor Bahrāmshāh.

PART 3

Responsive Readers



The Book of *The Panther and the Fox*

A Sibling of Kalila wa-Dimna?

Isabel Toral

1 Introduction

As stated in the introduction to this volume, one important aim of this book on *mouvance* is to reconstruct the extraordinarily rich reception history of *Kalila wa-Dimna* and investigate how this textual tradition was read, valued, commented on, and understood at different times and by various cultures and people. Moreover, the volume aims to explore how *Kalila wa-Dimna* accommodated to varying expectations among its readers.¹ The preceding chapters have focused on the agency and interference of copyist-redactors and translators. Here, the focus will be on readers' responses, assuming that they can be explored by studying adaptations, commentaries, and other transformations, as well as indirect tradition. The present chapter will approach this issue by focusing on one of the earliest responses to *Kalila wa-Dimna* that has been preserved, namely the Book of *The Panther and the Fox* (*al-Namir wa-l-tha'lab*), attributed to Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 251/830). From its beginnings, the booklet was perceived as intricately connected to *Kalila wa-Dimna* by Arabic readers. Sahl b. Hārūn's text not only emulates and responds to many aspects of Ibn al-Muqaffa's text, but it also reuses and quotes much of its material, which, as will be shown, belongs to the earliest layer of *Kalila wa-Dimna*. How can this booklet contribute to a better understanding of readers' responses to *Kalila wa-Dimna* in the Abbasid period?

1 This publication was made possible by funding from the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize 2017 (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) for the research project "Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan" and the European Research Council (ERC) project "*Kalila and Dimna*—AnonymClassic" (Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 742635), both hosted at Freie Universität Berlin.

2 The Author and His Oeuvre

Sahl b. Hārūn b. Rāhawayh² al-Baṣrī al-Dastmaysānī was a well-known personality in the early Abbasid era. Of Persian background, he was a *littérateur* and an eminent member of the bureaucratic class of Baghdad, the *kuttāb* (secretaries). Significantly, his *laqab* (nickname) was *Buzurgmihr al-Islām* (the Buzurgmihr of Islam),³ because, like that famous minister of the Sasanian king Khusraw (Kisrā) Anūshirwān (r. 531–579 CE), Sahl was credited with being a wise man, a *ḥakīm*, and a political advisor.

Sahl's family, originally from Nishapur, had moved to Dastmaysān and then to Basra, hence his second *nisba* of al-Baṣrī.⁴ His early education in Basra, which was then a thriving cultural hub, remains obscure. He first became known as the secretary of Hārūn al-Rashīd's vizier Yaḥyā b. Khālīd b. Barmak (d. 193/808),⁵ under whom he oversaw certain public payments as *ṣāḥib al-dawāwīn* (head of the chanceries). He managed to survive the fall of the Barmakids in 187/803⁶ and served as secretary for several viziers until he embarked on a career as a *littérateur* under the caliph al-Ma'mūn

2 There are many variants of his grandfather's Iranian name, like *Rāhibūn*, *Rāmnūy* and others, cf. the list in Lisa Karp, *Sahl b. Hārūn: The Man and His Contribution to "adab,"* ProQuest Dissertations Publishing: Harvard 1992, 49–50, with further references. Sahl's full name indicates that he was a second-generation convert.

3 See Karp, *Sahl*, 51 and n. 154 for references. For the semi-legendary figure of Buzurgmihr, supposedly the vizier of Anūshirwān, cf. Henri Massé, "Buzurgmihr," in *ET*², online version. It is interesting to note that Buzurgmihr plays a certain role in the reception history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, since the name of Burzoy, the supposed author of the Pahlavi version and contemporary of Khusraw Anūshirwān, is not only related to Buzurgmihr (Borzūya could be a shortened form of Borzmehr), but it can also easily be confused. Cf. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Borzūya," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV, 4:381–82 and de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage*, 48–50. Buzurgmihr is also mentioned in several versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the preface Burzūya's Voyage (long version) and as the author of the preface Life of Burzūya.

4 Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel et al., Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1871, 120 and ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, 4 pts. in 2 vols., London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009, 1:373–43. For his time in Basra, cf. Karp, *Sahl*, 62–63.

5 Yaḥyā b. Khālīd was Hārūn al-Rashīd's vizier between 170/786 and 187/803 and the most influential member of the Barmakid family. The beginnings of the Barmakids in Balkh are difficult to ascertain. Khālīd b. Barmak, Yaḥyā's father, played an important role in the taxation administration under the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775), and later became vizier and governor of several provinces. Yaḥyā b. Khālīd's son Ja'far b. Yaḥyā b. Barmak became the boon companion of Hārūn and the tutor of his son 'Abdallāh (the future al-Ma'mūn). He was executed in 803/187 by Hārūn al-Rashīd in a famous and brutal episode that resonated widely in the Arabic tradition. Cf. *infra*, "Autobiographical aspects."

6 For Sahl's involvement in the downfall of the Barmakids, cf. *infra*, section 7.

(r. 197–218/813–833). The caliph is said to have found pleasure in Sahl b. Hārūn's literary knowledge and erudition, and therefore to have put him in charge of the *khizāna* or *bayt al-ḥikma*, the caliphal palace library, in 203/819. This was a sort of treasury-house where books were preserved, copied, bound, and sometimes translated from Middle Persian into Arabic.⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm reports that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was part of this library, and adds that Sahl was one of the men preparing summaries and extracts of this book.

لهذا الكتاب جوامع وانتزاعات عملها جماعة منهم ابن المقفع وسهل بن هارون

For this book (i.e., *Kalīla wa-Dimna*), there are summaries and extracts made by a group of people, among them Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Sahl b. Hārūn.⁸

Sahl was described as a partisan Shu'ūbī⁹ and a Shī'ī, and it seems that he was influenced by Mu'tazilī thinking, like many other people of Basran background.¹⁰ He is regularly associated with intellectual personalities and poets of similar ethnic and social backgrounds, like Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200/815–16)¹¹ and 'Alī b. 'Ubayda al-Rayḥānī (d. 219/834).¹² All these men were also of Iranian origin, acted as translators from Middle Persian into Arabic, and functioned as Iranian-Arabian "double agents," like Ibn al-Muqaffa' had in the previous generation.¹³

7 For a critical assessment of the Bayt al-Hikma, cf. Dimitri Gutas and Kevin van Bladel, "Bayt Al-Ḥikma," in *EI*³, online version.

8 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, 305/ed. Sayyid, 2:326; Karp, *Sahl*, 68.

9 The *Shu'ūbiyya* was a literary-political movement which opposed the privileged status of Arabs within the Muslim community. The vast majority of the Shu'ūbīs were Persian. The movement was primarily concerned with preserving Persian culture and protecting Persian identity. Cf. Susanne Enderwitz, "al-Shu'ūbiyya," in *EI*², online version.

10 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, 120/ed. Sayyid, 1:373–43. For an extended discussion of his intellectual background, cf. Karp, *Sahl*, 1–96.

11 Abān b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī (d. ca. 200/815). His ancestors were said to have been Jews from Fars. Like Sahl, he grew up in Basra and then emigrated to Baghdad, where he attached himself to the Barmakids. He is famous for having versified various works, among them *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. See Tilman Seidensticker, "Abān al-Lāḥiqī," in *EI*³, online version.

12 For him, cf. Mohsen Zakeri, "'Alī ibn 'Ubaida ar-Rayḥānī: A Forgotten Belletrist (*adīb*) and Pahlavi Translator," *Oriens* 34 (1994): 76–102. He was a secretary of the caliph al-Ma'mūn, from a Khurasanian family that had settled in Basra and then moved to Baghdad.

13 I am borrowing this term from Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, where he uses it for Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

Sahl is said to have translated at least one work from the Middle Persian, namely the *al-Wāmiq wa-l-‘adhrā’* (*The Lover and the Virgin*), an epic allegedly collected in the time of Khusraw Anūshirwān.¹⁴ He was a very skilled translator, and apparently he even composed books in the “Iranian style.” His younger contemporary al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) says that:

يَسْتَطِيعُونَ أَنْ يُولِّدُوا مِثْلَ تِلْكَ الرِّسَالِ وَيَصْنَعُوا مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ السِّيرِ

They were capable of producing the likes of those treatises [i.e. Persian books] and fashioning histories like those tales.¹⁵

Sahl’s eminent role in the development of early Arabic artistic prose and *adab* (fine education, cultivated manners) has already been studied and evaluated extensively by Lisa Karp in her doctoral thesis. Al-Jāḥiẓ praised Sahl as a superior orator and master of style, and thanks to him, we have some information about Sahl’s activities as a *littérateur*, despite the fact that the majority of his oeuvre is lost. The preserved list of his books indicates a strong interest in political subjects and mirrors for princes, featuring titles like *Tadbīr al-mulūk wa-l-sīyāsa* (*The Management of Kings and Politics*). Besides the book discussed in this chapter, he also produced two titles that seem to have been animal fables. First, according to al-Mas‘ūdī (282–345/896–956),¹⁶ Sahl composed the *Tha‘la wa-‘Afra* (*Tha‘la and ‘Afra*):

وَقَدْ صَنَّفَ سَهْلُ بْنُ هَارُونَ الْكَاتِبُ لِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمَأْمُونِ تَرْجَمَةَ ثَعْلَةٍ وَعُفْرَةٍ يَعَارِضُ فِيهِ كِتَابَ كَلِيلَةِ وَدَمْنَةَ فِي أَبْوَابِهِ وَأَمْثَالِهِ

Sahl b. Hārūn composed for the caliph al-Ma‘mūn the book entitled *Tha‘la and ‘Afra*, in which he emulated *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in its chapters and proverbs.¹⁷

14 Neither the original nor the translation has been preserved. Cf. the references in Karp, *Sahl*, 82, note 299.

15 ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 parts in 2 vols., Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1985, 2 (part 3), 29. The sentence is part of a larger polemic passage where al-Jāḥiẓ questions the authenticity (*ṣaḥḥ*) of the literature translated from Persian and polemicizes against the *Shu‘ūbiyya* in general.

16 ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. Yūsuf As‘ad Dāghir, 2 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1984, 1:96; Karp, *Sahl*, 81 and note 295.

17 A certain confusion surrounds this book title, since Karp, *Sahl* gives it as *Tha‘la wa-‘Afra*, al-Mas‘ūdī has *ثَعْلَةٌ وَعُفْرَةٌ*, but we also find *ثَعْلَةٌ وَثَغْرَةٌ* (*sic*). Cf. the discussion in Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 122, note 319.

Unfortunately, only a few excerpts of this book have been preserved.¹⁸ According to a certain Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), quoted by István T. Kristó-Nagy, the book featured talking animals:

وقد وضع سهل بن هارون بن رهبويه الكاتب الفارسي، صاحب المأمون، كتاب ثعلة
وعفرة يعارض به كتاب كليلة ودمنة جعله على ألسن الطير والبهائم وذكر فيه حكم
العرب كما صنع ابن المقفع في كليلة ودمنة

Sahl b. Hārūn b. Rahbūyeh, the Persian secretary and friend of al-Ma'mūn, wrote a book called *Tha'la wa-Afra* in the voices of birds and animals. He included Arabic proverbs in them, thereby imitating Ibn al-Muqaffa' in *Kalila wa-Dimna*.¹⁹

The second book that probably contained some sort of animal fable was the *Kitāb al-Ghazālayn* (*The Two Gazelles*), but no information has been preserved about its contents.²⁰

The animal fable *al-Namir wa-l-tha'lab* (*The Panther and the Fox*), is thus one of Sahl's few original works that have survived.²¹ It is preserved, probably as an abridgement, in an undated single manuscript that has been edited twice: first in 1973, accompanied by a translation into French, and second, in a revised version in 1980. The manuscript (in Maghribi script) was discovered in 1964 by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mahīrī (Abdelkader Mehiri) in the Bibliothèque 'Ibdiliyya in Tunis (R 288) and consists of twenty-one folios. It was al-Mahīrī who first edited and translated the text into French in 1973. In addition to being undated, the manuscript does not provide the name of the copyist. According to the editor's introduction, it is lazily copied and contains lacunae in the form of ambiguities and orthographical mistakes or idiosyncrasies. Since it is a unicum and there are no known quotations of the book in later works, the text was not easy to establish.²² Therefore, it is important to compare the older edition by Mehīrī

18 Unfortunately, I did not have access to A. Muhammed Yāgī, *Sahl ibn Hārūn. Édition des fragments avec traduction précédée d'une introduction sur cet auteur et ses oeuvres* [doctoral thesis], Sorbonne Université 1956, unpublished, where these extracts have been discussed.

19 Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 122 with references, cf. also *ibid.* note 319.

20 Karp, *Sahl*, 84, note 303.

21 The only other complete text attributed to Sahl, the *Risāla fī-l-Bukhl* (*Epistle on Miserliness*), quoted in full within *al-Bukhalā'* (*The Misers*) by al-Jāhiz, is of contested authenticity. Cf. the discussion in Karp, *Sahl*, 85–93.

22 Cf. al-Mahīrī's introduction in Sahl b. Hārūn, *al-Namir wa-l-tha'lab*, ed. and trans. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mahīrī, Tunis: Kulīyyat al-Adāb wa-l-'Ulūm al-Insāniyya, 1973, 31–33, where he reproduces a facsimile copy of the first folio.

with the one by Munjī al-Ka'bī from 1980, which also contains earlier corrections by Shawqī Ḍayf and 'Uthman Būghānīmī.²³ Al-Ka'bī also adds a list of twenty-one quotations from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and other parallels between the two works,²⁴ which will be discussed below.

3 Plot and Protagonists

The booklet (consisting of seventy-two pages in both editions) tells the story of the secretary-fox Marzūq, the governor-wolf Mukābir, and the panther-king al-Muzaffar b. Maṣṣūr. It begins with a formal *ḥamdala* and a short exposition of the goals of the book:

أما بعد أيّدك الله بتوفيقه وعصمك بتسويده فأني رأيت أن أصنع لك كتاباً في الأدب
والبلاغة والترسيل والحروب والحيل والأمثال والعالم والجاهل وأن أشرب ذلك
بشيء من المواعظ وضروب من الحكم وقد وضعت من ذلك كتاباً مختصراً موعباً شافياً
وجعلته أصلاً للعالم الأديب والعافل الأريب مما أمكنني حفظه واطرد لي تأليفه والله
نسأله العون والتأييد والتوفيق والتسديد ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

To proceed: I have considered it useful (may God give you his assistance and protect you through his help) to compose for you a book on fine culture (*adab*) and eloquence and the art of letter-writing, and on warcraft, stratagems, and proverbs, and on the wise man and the ignorant, and I peppered it with some exhortations and various sorts of wise sayings. Thus, I have composed this as a brief, comprehensive, and satisfying book, and I made it as a basis for the wise and cultivated, and the intelligent and clever, on the basis of that which I was able to memorize and rapidly compose. We ask God for help, support, success and direction, and there is no might or power except in God the Almighty.²⁵

After this *muqaddima* (introduction), the main text starts with a plain *dhukira* (it is told), without any reference either to the textual origins, an *isnād* (chain

23 Cf. Sahl b. Hārūn, *al-Namir wa-l-tha'lab*, ed. Munjī al-Ka'bī, Tunis: al-Sharika al-Tūnisiyya li-Funūn al-Rasm, 1980, 3–5.

24 Sahl, *al-Namir*, ed. al-Ka'bī, 87–100.

25 Sahl, *al-Namir*, ed. al-Ka'bī, 12.

of authorities), or an author or authority. The content can be summarized as follows:

The fox Marzūq (with the *kunya* Abū l-Ṣabāḥ²⁶) is urged by a friend named Ṭāriq (with the *kunya* Abū l-Mughallas, probably also a fox) to leave his home in a valley, warned about the danger of an impending flood. Marzūq does not follow this advice, but decides to stay, after having listened to the advice of his wife. However, the flood comes and drives them from their home. Marzūq is left stranded on an island (his wife is not mentioned anymore), where he meets an unhappy wolf. Asked about the reasons for his bad mood, the wolf Mukābir (*kunya* Abū l-Firā'/Abū l-Idā')²⁷ tells him about the king of the island, who is an oppressive, tyrannical, and avaricious ruler. This is the panther al-Muẓaffar b. al-Manṣūr. Marzūq suggests to the wolf that he ask the king to appoint him as governor of a rich province, so as to allow him 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 rulers, and the necessity of diplomacy, deceit, and cunning to succeed in life²⁸—the wolf Mukābir puts this plan into action. The king grants him the post of *walī* (governor) of a distant province, and Mukābir appoints the fox Marzūq as his vizier-secretary (*al-wazīr al-kātib*). The wolf becomes rich and powerful as governor, but soon the relationship to the sovereign grows tense, because Mukābir does not shower the panther-king al-Muẓaffar with gifts and revenues as is expected of him. There follows an exchange of eight highly rhetorical epistles between the king and the fox, who, as the secretary, writes the letters in the name of the wolf. Despite the fox's brilliant letters to the king and his endeavors to give moderating advice to the wolf (who never follows his advice), the tension escalates and ends in an open rebellion by the wolf. The king-panther sends his troops, who defeat the wolf and execute him and his entourage. The fox is also in danger of being killed, but at the last minute he convinces the king to pardon him by reminding him of his talent as an advisor. The king then commands his ministers to test the capacity of the fox as advisor by posing a long series of questions about human nature, ethics, religion, the importance of rhetoric and fine speech, knowledge, virtues, and so on. Covering approximately the next forty 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 *adab* (whose topics are the nature of knowledge, of reason, of virtue, etc.). As is to be expected, the fox passes the exam, the king

26 A *kunya* is a component of an Arabic name, a type of epithet, in theory referring to the bearer's first-born son, and rarely to his daughter.

27 Al-Maḥīrī reads Abū l-Firā'; Ka'bī reads Abū l-Idā'.

28 See section 6 for a detailed discussion of this passage.

is impressed by the beauty of the fox's mind (he is *ḥasan al-ʿaql*) and the excellence of his speech and appoints him as his advisor until the fox's death.

4 Style and Structure

The storyline can be subdivided into four key sections that correspond to different scenes:

- *Fox Intro*: the paratextual introduction (two pages in the edition by al-Mahīrī)
- *Fox Flood*: the story about the flood and how the fox arrives on the island (three pages)
- *Fox Epistles*: the time of the fox as advisor to the wolf, particularly the epistles (twenty-nine pages)
- *Fox Exam*: the exam by the ministers (forty pages).

In terms of style, the book encompasses a broad spectrum. The style varies between:

- plain prose in the short narrative passages
- moderately rhetorical passages of dialogue interwoven with proverbs, poetry, Qurʾān verses and *ḥikam* (wisdom sayings)²⁹ in *Fox Flood* and the beginning of *Fox Epistles*
- highly rhetorical and parallelistic passages, often in *saǰʿ* (artistic prose), in the epistles in *Fox Epistles* and in the explanatory sermons of *Fox Exam*.

As for the narrative structure, *The Panther and the Fox* 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 dramatic turns of events (the flood, the fights, and the war) are very brief and summarized and seem only to serve as connectors to explain the change of scenes. As demonstrated above, the focus is rather on the dialogues, sermons, and epistles. This gives Sahl the chance to display his mastery as a 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, and no prolepses or analepses; the plot is simple and at certain moments almost dispensable. For instance, the initial flood episode (*Fox Flood*) seems not to serve any purpose for the rest of the book, except possibly to give Sahl the opportunity to insert a very misogynous section in describing Marzūq speaking with his “stupid and short-sighted” wife.

29 Many of these seem to be quotations from *Kalīla wa-Dimna*; see section 6 for the discussion of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* parallels in *The Panther and the Fox*.

5 Comparison and Connections between *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and *The Panther and the Fox*

In comparing *The Panther and the Fox* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 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 mirrors for princes. This is a hybrid genre that became famous in Arabic literature with *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, and it is found in other emulations of it. One example of this is in *al-Asad wa-l-ghawwās* ("The Lion and the Pearl-Diver"), an anonymous work from the fifth/eleventh–twelfth century with a complicated connection to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that has previously been studied by Ulrich Marzolph and Ewald Wagner.³⁰ In all likelihood, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* became a literary model and served to show that "talking animals" could be used in political literature as an effective literary strategy to divert responsibility away from the author and avoid censorship by depicting sensitive political situations and statements in an overtly fictional, timeless setting. Giving and accepting advice was important for good government, and politics offered great career opportunities for ambitious, talented people, also from lower social backgrounds. However, life in higher political spheres was risky and precarious for social climbers, and caution, indirect communication skills, cunning, vigilance, and smarts were crucial to survival. This aspect will be discussed below in more detail.

There are also striking similarities in the scenes of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and *The Panther and the Fox*. The section *Fox Exam* contains the situation frequently found in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (e.g., in the chapters Di and Oc): The king/ruler poses questions to his advisors/ministers, either to his favorite one, who in return offers didactic speeches, or to several of them, whose varying answers represent the different options the ruler has in making a decision. We also

30 Anonymous, *al-Asad wa-l-ghawwās*, ed. Riḍwān al-Sayyid, Beirut: Ibn al Azraq Center for Political Heritage, 2012; Ulrich Marzolph, "Review of Gernot Rotter, Löwe und Schakal," *Fabula. Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung / Journal of Folktales Studies / Revue d'Etudes sur le Conte Populaire* 25/3–4 (1984), 362–366 and Ewald Wagner, "Die Quellen des anonymen arabischen Fürstenspiegels 'Löwe und Schakal'," *Asiatische Studien* 50 (1996): 479–89. As Wagner argued, this work is based on a reworking of the chapter of the Lion and the Jackal (Lj) in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, but with the main characters of the chapter of the Lion and the Ox (Lo). On the Lj chapter, see Beatrice Gruendler with Oualid El Khattabi and Mahmoud Kozae (contributing authors), "Miscarriage of Justice and Dissenting Re(d)actions in *Kalīla* and *Dimna*," in: *Variants in Classical Textual Traditions: Errors, Innovations, Proliferation, Reception?* ed. Glenn W. Most, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024, 337–76, <https://doi.org/10.1515/978311054360>. For an older corpus of scattered Arabic fables, see Ulrich Marzolph, *The Arabic Fable: Towards an Inventory of Fables in Premodern Arabic Literature*, forthcoming.

find the dramatical trial situation (a person is in danger of being executed, and several ministers give contradictory advice),³¹ 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 of panther-king, wolf-governor, and fox-secretary in *The Panther and the Fox* echoes the constellation in the Lion and Ox chapter of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In Lo, the lion king is introduced as being surrounded in his court by “wolves, jackals, and foxes,”³² and the panther (or leopard) appears in the chapter of Di as another member of the court. One could say that *The Panther and the Fox* tells the story about these other animals at the court as a kind of “spin-off” or “sequel” to the Lo chapter in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The trial of the fox in *The Panther and the Fox* in *Fox Exam* also parallels the one of Dimna, since, like him, Marzūq is his own advocate. However, Marzūq is never portrayed to be as cunning and deceitful as Dimna, and in contrast to him, he is absolved and spends his further life as a favorite advisor of the king like the redeemed jackal advisor in (most versions of) Lj.³³

The differences between *The Panther and the Fox* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are also significant and deserve a deeper investigation. First, in contrast to the sophisticated system of framing narratives characteristic of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, *The Panther and the Fox* features a simple (and even dull) narrative structure, lacking entertaining embedded stories that illustrate the moral advice. Second, *The Panther and the Fox* does not feature any plots based on court intrigues and ruses, as we can frequently find in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The problems between the king and the governor in *The Panther and the Fox* result simply from the non-payment of an expected tribute and the governor’s refusal to follow the advice of his smart counselor. Third, *The Panther and the Fox* has a clear Islamic flavor (with eulogies, the Arabic names and *kunyas* of the animals, Qur’ānic quotations, and formal elements, such as, the *ḥamdala*), whereas *Kalīla wa-Dimna* only rarely contains Islamic reminiscences. Fourth, the general focus in *The Panther and the Fox* is on ethics and (Muslim) morality; *Kalīla*

31 For instance, in the chapters Di and Oc in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

32 Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, eds. Ṭahā Ḥusayn and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, Cairo: Dar al-Ma’ārif, 1941, 75. These animals also appear in *al-Asad wa-l-Ghawwāṣ*. For a detailed discussion of animal counselors (particularly jackals) and lion-kings in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and beyond, cf. István T. Kristó-Nagy, “Wild Lions and Wise Jackals: Killer Kings and Clever Counsellors in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*,” in *Prophets, Viziers and Philosophers: Wisdom and Authority in Early Arabic Literature*, ed. Emily J. Cottrell, Eelde, The Netherlands: Barkhuis, 2020, 147–209.

33 See below the discussion in section 7. For the redeemed jackal advisor, see Gruendler, “Miscarriage of Justice.”

wa-Dimna, in contrast, is a collection of fables dealing with practical, even utilitarian and Machiavellian political and everyday strategies. Fifth, whereas *Kalila wa-Dimna* was originally written in elegant but plain prose, *The Panther and the Fox* has many passages written in a sophisticated artistic prose style (*sajʿ*), particularly in *Fox Epistles* and *Fox Exam*. Sixth, the trope of translation is pervasive and central to *Kalila wa-Dimna*, whereas *The Panther and the Fox* does not present itself as a translation of foreign origin. All these points require a deeper analysis that cannot be undertaken here.

6 Quotation Practices

A remarkable feature of *The Panther and the Fox* is its high degree of intertextuality. As will be shown in the following, it demonstrates implicit and explicit reuse of previous texts, particularly in *Fox Flood*, and to a lesser degree in *Fox Epistles*. One could say that *The Panther and the Fox* already functions like classical *adab* compilations and anthologies, which are well-known for their pervasive intertextuality.³⁴ In contrast, though *Kalila wa-Dimna* insists on its status as a translated text, and thus inserts itself into a chain of previous versions, the earliest Arabic versions of it hardly quote nor allude to pre-existing intertexts. In this respect, it is notable that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ even presents *Kalila wa-Dimna* as a book that makes other books dispensable.³⁵

In the following, I will show the quotation and text reuse strategies to be found in *The Panther and the Fox* based on selected passages. First, I quote here some passages found in the second part, namely in *Fox Flood*.³⁶ When Tāriq comes to the valley and warns Marzūq that he is living in a dangerous area, Marzūq responds in the following way:

يا أبا المغلس وما الذي أنكرت عليّ منه وغمصت عليّ فيه؟ فأنت من لا آتهم من عقله
و نصيحتهم لأهل مودّته وما عقالك لهم أنشودة إني لعلّ ذراعك والمؤمن مرآة
أخيه؟ وقد كان عمر بن عبد العزيز رحمه الله قال رحمه الله من أهدى إلينا عيوبنا

34 For a recent evaluation of the state of research on *adab* collections and anthologies, cf. the recent volume edited by Bilal Orfali and Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, *Approaches to the Study of Pre-Modern Arabic Anthologies*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021.

35 Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kalila wa-Dimna*, ed. 'Azzām, 50:

فمن قرأ هذا الكتاب فليقتد بما في هذا الباب؛ إني أرجو أن يزيد بصراً ومعرفة فإذا عرفه
أكفى واستغنى عن غيره.

36 Sahl b. Hārūn, *al-Namir*, ed. and trans. al-Mahīrī, 172 (Arabic page 9).

O Abū l-Mughallas, what do you reproach 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.”³⁷ I am “a cord that you tighten in your hand”³⁸ and “[isn’t] a believer a mirror for his brother”?³⁹ And did not the deceased, may God have mercy on him, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, say: “May God have mercy on any man who points out our faults to us”?⁴⁰

The texts quoted are proverbs, a *hadīth*, and a saying ascribed to a frequently cited authority, the pious Umayyad caliph, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99–101/717–720).

The practice of continuously quoting famous texts is particularly impressive (and even hilarious) in the scene where the flood threatens to kill the fox Marzūq and his wife. In this dire situation, he tries to convince her to leave the place by quoting poetry and proverbs, and the vixen responds similarly.⁴¹

فِينَا هُوَ عَلَى تِلْكَ مِنْ حَالِهِ حَتَّى جَاءَ السَّيْلُ فَظَنَرُ إِلَيْهِ مَرْزُوقٌ فَقَالَ لَزَوْجَتِهِ خَذِي
الْأَمْرَ بِقَوَائِلِهِ وَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ مَا قَالَ الْقَطَامِي فِي شَعْرِهِ
وَحَيْرُ الْأَمْرِ مَا اسْتَقْبَلَتْ مِنْهُ * وَلَيْسَ بِأَنْ تَتَّبِعُ إِتْبَاعًا
وَقَالَ بَعْضُ الْحُكَمَاءِ: شَرُّ الرَّأْيِ الدَّبَرِيُّ وَقَالَ مِمَثَّلًا: قَبْلَ الرَّيِّ يُرَاشُ السَّهْمُ فَالْنَجَاةُ
الْآنَ وَلَا تَحِينَ مَنَاصُ
قَالَتْ لَهُ زَوْجَتُهُ مَا كُلُّ أَزْبَ نَفُورٌ

He was in this situation until the flood came, and Marzūq saw this and said to his wife: “You have to pay attention to precursory signs,”⁴² and you know quite well the verses by al-Qutāmī:⁴³ “The best thing is to

37 Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maydānī, *Majma‘ al-amthāl*, ed. ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 4 vols., Cairo 1977–1979, 2:278.

38 Al-Maydānī, *Amthāl*, 2:388, meaning: “I am a good friend of yours.”

39 *Ḥadīth*, quoted also in Abū ‘Umar Aḥmad Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, *al-Iqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al., 7 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1990, 3:77.

40 The saying is frequently put in the mouth of his previous namesake, namely ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. For instance, Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī, *The Epistle of Forgiveness* ed. and trans. Gregor Schoeler and Geert Jan van Gelder, 2 vols., New York: New York University Press, 2016, 62. For this passage in Sahl, *al-Namir*, see note 36.

41 Sahl, *al-Namir*, ed. and trans. al-Mahīrī, 171–170 (Arabic pages 10–11).

42 Al-Maydānī, *Amthāl*, 1, 231.

43 “The falcon,” epithet of several early poets, the most famous being ‘Umayr b. Shuyaym b. ‘Amr, probably died in 101/720. See H.H. Bräun and Charles Pellat, “Al-Ḥuṭāmī,” in *ET*², online version.

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 shooting, feather the arrow." Let us save ourselves, "before it is too late."⁴⁴

The vixen responded: "Not every hairy [camel] is a coward."⁴⁵

If we then look at the selection of references in *The Panther and the Fox* we will find a selection of the usual suspects of *adab*: pre-Islamic and Umayyad poetry, Qur'ān, hadith, and proverbs, and 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 precedes Sahl's lifetime.

Particularly intriguing is the frequent and non-acknowledged reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This means, in fact, that quotations from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are treated like Qur'ān verses, Hadīth, and proverbs, and that they are incorporated in the speeches as a sort of *iqtibās*.⁴⁶ The quotations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that have been identified so far by the AnonymClassic team seem to be almost exclusively found in the first half of *The Panther and the Fox*, i.e., in *Fox Flood* and in the beginning of *Fox Epistles*. It is also important to underline that the reused material from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* proceeds almost exclusively from the many *ḥikam* (wise sayings and proverbs). These textual elements thus belong to the relatively stable and formulaic elements of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that would be subject to *mouvance* to a lesser extent than the narrative passages. A preliminary comparison of the quotations in *The Panther and the Fox* with textual parallels in the manuscript corpus of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* has shown that the scope of variation is relatively small, which also means that they belong to the early layer of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. It is also important to highlight that an exhaustive qualitative and quantitative critical evaluation of the reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and other non-acknowledged intertexts in *The Panther and the Fox* has not yet been undertaken.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there are parallels with other texts belonging

44 Al-Maydānī, *Amthāl* 2:101 and *Sūrat Šād* (Q 38), verse 3.

45 Anonymous proverb in the sense of "A camel with hairy eyebrows turns away (*naḡūr*) when the wind blows [because the wind is bothering it], but that does not mean it is a coward," cf. Muṣ'ab b. 'Abdallāh al-Zubayrī, *Kitāb Nasab Quraysh*, ed. Évariste Lévi-Provençal, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'ārif, 1953, 238. For the passage in Sahl, *al-Namir*, see note 41.

46 For this rhetorical device, cf. Bilal Orfali, "Iqtibās," in *EL*³, online version.

47 Al-Ka'bī identified more quotations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* than Mahīrī (cf. Sahl, *al-Namir*, ed. al-Ka'bī, 1980, 87–100), and there are more parallels to be expected when compared with the whole manuscript corpus and translations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

to the corpus attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffā', for example *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr*, and there might be more yet to be identified.⁴⁸

The main concentration of reused material is to be found in the conversation between the wolf and the fox on the advantages and disadvantages of engaging in politics and approaching the inner circle of a ruler.⁴⁹ This is no coincidence, since the scene in *The Panther and the Fox* echoes in many respects the conversation between the jackals Kalīla and Dimna found at the beginning of the Lo chapter, in which they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a career in higher politics.⁵⁰ The reticent wolf Mukābir stands in for the cautious Kalīla, while the ambitious Marzūq doubles for the trickster Dimna. Most borrowings in *The Panther and the Fox* derive from this dialogue in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*; only one is from a different chapter (from Rd). I quote here the whole passage to illustrate the reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the context of this dialogue. The quotations from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are in red/bold:

قال الذئب: يا أبا الصباح إنه كان يقال اتقوا مقارنة الحريص الغادر فإنه إن رآك في
القوة رأى منك أخبث حالاتك وإن رآك في الفضول لم يدعك وفضولك
قال الثعلب: يا أبا العداة إنه ليس الريّ عن التشاف. **من عاش غير خامل الذكر
والمنزلة إذا أفضل على نفسه وأصحابه فهو وإن قلّ عمره طويل العمر ومن كان عيشه في
ضيق وقّل خيره على نفسه فهو وإن طال عمره قصير العمر**⁵¹
قال الذئب: إنه كان يقال: في أمور ثلاثة لا يجترئ عليها إلا أهوج ولا يسلم منها
إلا قليل: صحبة سلطان واثمان النساء على الأسرار وشرب السم على التجربة⁵²
قال الثعلب: قد يبلغ الخضم بالضم ويركب الصعب من لا ذلول له. وليس يواظب
على باب السلطان أحد فيلقى عن نفسه الأنفة ويحمل الأذى ويكظم الغيظ ويرفق
بالناس إلا خلص إلى حاجته من السلطان⁵³

48 For the corpus of texts attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffā' cf. Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*; István T. Kristó-Nagy, "On the Authenticity of *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr* Attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffā' and Problems Concerning Some of His Titles," in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 62, 2 (2009), 199–218, with further references.

49 Sahl, *al-Namir*, ed. and trans. Mahīrī, 166–165 (Arabic pages 15–16).

50 Ibn al-Muqaffā', *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, ed. 'Azzām, 75–78.

51 Ibid., 76.

52 Ibid., 78.

53 Ibid., 77.

قال الذئب: إته كان يقال لا تغتبط بسلطان مع غير عدل ولا بغنى من غير حل ولا بلاغة من غير صدق ولا بجد بغير إصابة ولا بحسن عمل من غير خشية
 قال الثعلب: إته ينبغي للعقل أن يداري الزمان مداراة الرجل الساج في الماء الجاري. وقال ممتلاً: ارض من المركب بالتعليق
 قال الذئب: السبب الذي يدرك به العاجز حاجته هو السبب الذي يحول بين الحازم وطلبته

قال الثعلب: المال زيادة في القوت والرأي وليس الإخوان والأهل والأعوان إلا مع المال ولا يظهر المروءة إلا المال لأن من لا مال له إذا أراد أو يتناول أمراً قعد به
 العدم فقصر عنه⁵⁴

قال الذئب: إن للسلطان سكرات فننها الرضى عن بعض من يستوجب السخط والسخط عمن يستوجب الرضى ولذلك قيل: قد خاطر من لجج في البحر وأشد منه
 مخاطرة من صحب السلطان⁵⁵

قال الثعلب: من لم يركب الأهوال على صعوبتها لم ينل الرغائب ومن ترك الأمر الذي لعله أن يبلغ فيه حاجته مخافة ما لعله يؤقاه فليس ينال جسيماً وقد كان يقال
 أعمال ثلاثة لا أحد يستطيعها إلا بمعونة ارتفاع همّة وعظم خطر: صحبة الملوك وتجارة
 البحر ومناجزة العدو⁵⁶

The wolf said: "O Abū l-Ṣabāḥ, they say 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 insignificant, he will not leave you in peace in this situation."

The Fox said: "O Abū l-Idā', 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 years."

The wolf said: "They say there are three things that only the fools dare to undertake and which few people survive unscathed: keeping

54 Ibid., 129.

55 Ibid., 92-93.

56 Ibid., 78. For the passage in Sahl, *al-Namir*, see note 49.

the company of rulers, trusting a woman with a secret, and drinking poison for a test."

The fox said: "One can swallow the core part in little bits and ride on difficult paths without a good camel. **And everyone who frequently visits the antechamber of the ruler and gives up arrogance, suffers vexations, restrains anger, and shows friendliness to all, will end up realizing his goal with the ruler."**

The wolf said: "Do not find joy in rulership without justice, [do not pursue] illegal wealth, [do not delight in] insincere eloquence, and [do not] be generous without a purpose. A good deed without piety is worthless."

The fox said: "The intelligent man should trick people like a swimmer who swims with the current," and quoting a proverb, he said: "Content yourself with clinging to a boat."

The wolf said: "The reason for the weak man to reach his goal is the same reason that keeps the resolute man from attaining his own."

The fox said: "Money guarantees your living and good judgment. **Without money, there are no brethren, no family, and no 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 aim."**

The wolf said: "Power has the whimsiness of drunkenness: It favors those who deserve anger, and its anger turns towards those who merit grace. 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 keep the company of power."

The fox said: "Whoever does not confront dangers, even if they are challenging, cannot achieve his goals. And the one who renounces the plan that might have helped him to achieve his objective, out of fear for his safety, will not achieve anything. They say that there are three activities that can only be undertaken by people with high ambition and great courage (literally: under great danger): the association with rulers, maritime trade, and the fight against the enemy."

As demonstrated above, the text reuse of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is so pervasive in this passage that it could even be termed plagiarism, were it not for the fact that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was a famous text whose close connection to *The Panther and the Fox* was well known. There are various possible explanations for the textual overlap.

First, it is possible that both Sahl and Ibn al-Muqaffa' were drawing on a common anonymous source. It could have been used by both since the theme

was the same and triggered the same associations. Since Arabic prose literature was still *in statu nascendi* at the time of Ibn al-Muqaffa', and written anthologies were rare at this stage, their common source would most likely have been an oral corpus of Arabic sayings or some type of informal, private notebook. This would mean that Ibn al-Muqaffa' peppered his translation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from Pahlavi with Arabic *ḥikam* material from the same collection used later by Sahl.

Second, it cannot be excluded that *The Panther and the Fox*, an *adab* text scarcely known and not quoted elsewhere, is a later falsification plagiarized from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and inspired by the mention found elsewhere that the famous Sahl had "emulated" (*yu'āridu*) *Kalīla wa-Dimna*" (quoted in section 2). This hypothesis would require a meticulous study of possible anachronisms and other incongruities in *The Panther and the Fox*.

Third, it could be that Sahl reused *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, either directly or through a summary/selection arranged by himself. As mentioned above (section 2), he produced summaries of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In that case, he failed to acknowledge it because he did not deem it necessary. This assumption, which seems the most plausible, would open a further set of possibilities. To begin with, it could either mean that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* had acquired a prestige comparable to the Qur'ān or the Ḥadīth ("common prestigious knowledge") already in the time of Sahl. Alternatively, it could also mean that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* 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.

7 Autobiographical Aspects

The storyline in *The Panther and the Fox* is centered on the theme of the rebellious minister/governor who is punished and executed by the king/ruler, but it also contains the theme of the smart and astute secretary who survives thanks to his talent. Both elements resonate not only with Sahl's life experience, but also with the sociopolitical context in the second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries, a moment when *mawālī* of Iranian background were climbing up the social ladder in the state administration.⁵⁷

57 My thanks to Lara Harb for her feedback on the topic of the autobiographical dimension.

Sahl b. Hārūn was a typical representative of the class of Iranian *kuttāb*. Having grown up in Basra amongst Iranians, in a vibrant city that had become a multicultural melting-pot,⁵⁸ he moved to Baghdad soon after its foundation in 145/762—the city that had become the new “place to go.” Like many ambitious young talents of his generation, he did this by seeking out the patronage of the Barmakids, who had enjoyed excellent connections to the caliphal court since the rise of the Abbasids and particularly since Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 169–193/786–809) had come to power.⁵⁹ Like him, the Barmakids were originally from Khurāsān and had settled in Basra. According to al-Jāhīz, 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.⁶⁰ 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 ups and downs of political life at the caliphal court.

First, he became Yaḥyā’s secretary at a time when the Barmakids were at the height of their power. Soon after, he experienced their loss of the caliph’s favor. He became a witness to 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 sources.⁶¹ Sahl somehow managed to survive this life-threatening crisis, however.

Sahl then appears in the environment of a person who could be considered his second patron, the vizier al-Faḍl b. al-Rabīʿ (d. ca. 207/823), Yaḥyā’s successor since 187/803 under Hārūn al-Rashīd and then al-Amīn (r. 193–197/809–813). He was the son of al-Rabīʿ b. Yūnus, courtier and prominent enemy

58 After its demilitarization by the Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj in the first/seventh century, Basra had become a melting-pot populated by Arabs, Persians, and Indians. The province was also closely connected to Khurāsān, which had been conquered by troops from Basra. Cf. Charles Pellat, *Le milieu basrien et la formation de Ḡāḥīz*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953, 34 ff. For Sahl’s time in Basra, cf. Karp, *Sahl*, 62–63.

59 Cf. Barthold and Sourdel, “Al-Barāmika,” in *ET*², online version.

60 Cf. Karp, *Sahl*, 63. Yaḥyā had the power 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 thrown into prison and died in 193/808.

61 It is possible that he even became eyewitness to the events. A report preserves Sahl’s account of his personal experience as the first-person narrator of the dramatic downfall of the Barmakids (to be found in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbiḥ, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, 5: 58–64, transmitted by al-Jāhīz). The attribution of this report to Sahl via al-Jāhīz is, however, controversial, cf. Andras Hamori, “Going down in Style: The Pseudo-Ibn Qutayba’s Story of the Fall of the Barmakīs,” *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1994), 89–125; Walter Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farīd des Andalusiers Ibn ‘Abdrabbih*, Bd. 70, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1983, 344–47 and 383–85 considers it authentic.

of the Barmakids.⁶² Often portrayed as a cunning intrigant in favor of al-Amīn, al-Faḍl fell from grace under al-Ma'mūn in 198/814, who accused him of having encouraged his brother to deprive him of his hereditary rights.⁶³ Sahl again managed to overcome the downfall of his patron.

Under al-Ma'mūn, Sahl won the sympathies of the new caliph's vizier, al-Faḍl b. Sahl b. Zadhānfarūkh, another Iranian who owed an ascending career to the Barmakids.⁶⁴ His father, a convert to Islam, had put his two sons under their protection, and al-Faḍl had been taken into the service of Ja'far b. Yaḥyā. He became a very powerful minister, but his open partisanship for the Iranian cause led to him being accused of planning to restore Iranian rule by having 'Alī al-Riḍā nominated as heir. He was assassinated under mysterious circumstances in 202/817–818. Rumors persisted that al-Ma'mūn had been the instigator of this death, as the caliph both feared his power and had changed his Shī'ī policy. Again, Sahl survived his patron's disgrace and rallied with al-Faḍl's brother, also named Sahl, who had learned his lesson and 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 214/830.

Two important points must be highlighted here. First, Sahl's trajectory demonstrates the high extent to which his social class—the *kuttāb*—maintained a well-functioning network in the first decades of Abbasid rule. It is easy to discern a certain pattern here: All of them were first or second-generation converts of Iranian background, were bilingual and bicultural, had grown up in Basra, the first Arabian metropole, and then moved to Baghdad, and all of them soon climbed the social ladder into the highest ranks of society. The Barmakids were the first family of viziers to gain power in the early decades of Abbasid rule, and under their protection many others of similar bicultural background gained influential positions, like the descendants of Zadhānfarūkh and Sahl b. Hārūn himself. Many other notable people belonged to this milieu, several of them men of letters. For instance, the poet Abān al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200/815–816), of Basran and Persian-Jewish background, composed panegyrics dedicated to the Barmakids and produced a versification of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.⁶⁵ Another

62 Dominique Sourdel, *Le vizirat 'abbāside de 749 à 936*, 2 pts. in 1 vol., Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1959, 118–21; Aziz Suryal Atiya, "al-Rabī' b. Yūnus," in *EI*², online version. He was of humble origin, born as a slave in Medina around 112/730. In the sources, he is the protagonist of various intrigues against the Barmakids.

63 Cf. Dominique Sourdel, "Al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī," in *EI*², online version; Sourdel, *Le vizirat*, 183–94.

64 Dominique Sourdel, "Al-Faḍl b. Sahl b. Zadhānfarūkh," in *EI*², online version; Sourdel, *Le vizirat*, 195–217.

65 Abān b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī (d. ca. 200/815). His ancestors are said to have been Jews from Fars. Like Sahl, he came from Basra, emigrated to Baghdad, and then managed to

important figure was ‘Alī b. ‘Ubayda al-Rayḥānī (d. 219/834), originally from Khurāsān. He grew up in Basra and later became a secretary to the caliph al-Ma’mūn, as well as a prolific translator from Pahlavi.⁶⁶ There are also famous poets like Abū Nuwās (d. 198/813) and Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/783), both of Persian background with ties to Basra. Most of them are depicted as sympathizers of the *Shu‘ūbiyya* who demonstrated a cultural and political pro-Iranian attitude. This was the social class that promoted the Iranization of early Arabic culture through translations and adaptations and functioned as catalysts of cultural hybridization. Ibn al-Muqaffa’, the Basran Iranian-Arab “double agent” of an earlier generation, son of a Basran tax-collector under the Umayyads and secretary to Abbasid officers, was their senior forerunner.

Second, Sahl’s biography also shows that he was a smart survivor in the “shark pool” of political life, as he was capable of overcoming the death or downfall of at least three patrons and viziers. The rapid success of this new administrative elite demonstrates both the opportunities and the high risks of the extraordinary social mobility of early Baghdad.

It is unavoidable to think of this background when considering the figure of Marzūq in *The Panther and the Fox*, 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 he ends happily as the favorite advisor of the ruler at court. His figure seems to be a benevolent and self-indulging alter-ego of Sahl, though we do not know to what extent Sahl owed his survival only to his splendid literary talent and his *adab*. Furthermore, the fox Marzūq and the happy ending to his story clearly serve as a positive counterpart and response to the cunning jackal Dimna in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, who is also an ambitious underdog of high intelligence, albeit of questionable morals, and who ends up a fatal victim of his own political ruses.⁶⁷ One could even speculate that Sahl might have seen himself as a more fortunate counterpart to Ibn al-Muqaffa’, who tragically fell victim to political intrigues at a young age.

The storyline of both texts thus resonates with the life experience of the many *mawālī* of Persian and Basran background in the higher ranks of society between 132/750 and the early decades of the third/ninth century. The existence

attach himself to the Barmakids. He is famous for having versified various works, particularly *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. See Tilman Seidensticker, “Abān al-Lāḥiqī,” in *ET*³, online version.

66 For him, cf. Zakeri, “‘Alī Ibn ‘Ubaīda.” He was a secretary of al-Ma’mūn, from a Khurāsānian family that had settled in Basra and then moved to Baghdad.

67 On a side note, Ibn al-Muqaffa’ himself was executed in a political intrigue at a young 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 Ruzbeh.

of a "spin-off" to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* several decades later, roughly developing the same theme found in the chapter Lo of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*—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 *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the first place not only continued to exist and to experience comparable anxieties, but that it expressed these in a similar way.

8 Preliminary Conclusions and Further Perspectives

What can we say more specifically about the connection between the two texts, and how does it contribute to understanding early readers' reception of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*? I think it can safely be said that the "Book of the Panther and the Fox" is a "hypertext" to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, since it evokes *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a "hypotext" without mentioning it, and since it acquired further levels of meaning if the reader already knew *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.⁶⁸ The exact nature of this relationship needs further investigation, however, since many quotations and parallels are still to be discovered, particularly if *The Panther and the Fox* is compared to the rich *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscript corpus, or to other collections of Arabic sayings and proverbs. What is clear is that Sahl not only silently reuses many passages from *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (and, to a lesser degree, from other texts of Ibn al-Muqaffa's corpus, such as, *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr*), but also partly adopts storylines, sceneries, and characters from *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, and develops further the idea of combining an animal fable with political advice and *adab*. This might be related to the fact that *The Panther and the Fox* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna* were produced by authors of a similar milieu—the social-climbing Iranian *mawālī-kuttāb*—who were of a comparable bicultural mindset and shared similar anxieties. Moreover, the fact that Sahl b. Hārūn decided to compose a spin-off on *Kalīla wa-Dimna* without acknowledging it, expecting his readers to catch the reference, indicates that it was widely circulated in this milieu and had already become a commonly known reference text, either directly or in the form of abridgements or anthologies. The deeper analysis of quotation techniques and intertexts in *The Panther and the Fox* will help to further clarify this aspect.

68 I am using here the terminology coined by Gérard Genette, who writes: "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." Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newmann and Claude Doubinsky, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 5.

Sahl's 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*. This might indicate a slight change in literary taste among the courtly elites. *The Panther and the Fox* 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 states in the introduction mentioned above.⁶⁹ *The Panther and the Fox* expects a cultivated reader familiar with many intertexts (the Qur'ān, early Arabic poetry, sayings, proverbs, and, of course, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*) who finds pleasure in reading fine Arabic artistic prose and poetry. This might reflect the gradual evolution of the *kuttāb* class since Ibn al-Muqaffa's time, as it had become more institutionalized, Islamized, and Arabized by the beginning of the third/ninth century. The reasons why Sahl did not take over the framing narrative structure featured by *Kalīla wa-Dimna* need to be investigated further, but they are probably connected to the same tendency: the predominance in "the Book of the Panther and the Fox" of the didactic and aesthetic elements over the entertaining ones.

In terms of textual *mouvance*, a very preliminary comparison (which needs to be further elaborated) between the quotations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the "Book of the Panther and the Fox" and the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscript corpus has yielded results that are at once meager and rich. On the one hand, the variation is comparatively small, so the findings outlined above do not contribute much to reconstructing the early layers of the text. On the other hand, they confirm that the *ḥikam* passages are the most stable elements in the stream of the textual *mouvance* of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* since its early beginnings. *Mouvance*, in sum, seems to be a much more noticeable phenomenon in narrative passages that are less fixed in form and content, thereby inviting engaged readers and copyist-redactors to intervene actively.

69 *Ja'altuhū aṣṣān li-l-'ālimi l-adīb wa-l-'āqili l-arīb* = "for the knowledgeable/cultivated and the intelligent and clever" (see p. 220 and note 25).

Poetic Moments

The Literary Significance of Middle Arabic in Kalila wa-Dimna Manuscripts from the Early Modern Period

Johannes Stephan

1 Introduction

Mouvance in *Kalila wa-Dimna* has many facets.¹ Besides variations in the chapter order and the inclusion or exclusion of certain chapters, sub-stories and narrative segments,² this textual tradition also displays remarkable linguistic differences from one copy to another. The question of how we are to make sense of linguistic variation within this rich textual corpus forms the topic of this article. Before presenting my outline, I would like to stress three aspects regarding the nature of the material.

First, I call *Kalila wa-Dimna* a textual tradition because the continuous practice of copying, rewriting, paraphrasing, and making other use of its story material suggests an ongoing process of transmission, a constant remaking of what Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the second/eighth 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 *Kalila wa-Dimna* from a viewpoint of textual practice, asking the following questions: What has been constructed, written, and performed as *Kalila wa-Dimna*, and what are the aesthetic implications of this tradition? Second, I should note that although it is often considered a milestone within classical Arabic literature, the *textus receptus* is very much a Post-Formative and Early Modern phenomenon that took shape between the seventh/thirteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. The earliest dated copy of

1 For an elaboration on the concept of *mouvance*, see the Introduction by Beatrice Gruendler and Isabel Toral. This publication was made possible through funding via the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize 2017 (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) research project “Arabic Literature Cosmopolitan” and the European Research Council (ERC) project “*Kalila and Dimna*—AnonymClassic” (Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 742635), both hosted at Freie Universität Berlin.

2 See Chapter 3 by Khoulood Khalfallah.

the “Indian book” (as it is often called in the Arabic textual tradition)³ dates from the 1220s. The whole Arabic textual tradition, however, contains at least eighty manuscripts that stem from the tenth/sixteenth to the early thirteenth/nineteenth centuries,⁴ a circumstance that provides ample ground to refer to it also as an Early Modern textual tradition. It is specifically within this later corpus from the early and mid-Ottoman period that creative rewritings occur and where we find remarkable variation from one recension to another. Third, especially during this later period, the textual 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 in so-called “Middle Arabic,” which includes shifts in orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. This linguistic dimension further widens the range of *mouvance* in this tradition.

Thus, the high degree of variation within the whole *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, particularly in Ottoman times, urges us to pay attention to the textual practices from that period. In the following, I try to pave the way for this by focusing on the question of linguistic and stylistic variation. Here it is important to note that I understand the term “Middle Arabic” as that of an idiom which combines features from the classical standard *fuṣḥā* with colloquialisms while following specific writing conventions.

Focusing on these variations, my paper showcases how Middle Arabic is neither simply the outcome of linguistic deficiency nor a mere appropriation of colloquial registers.⁵ Rather, Middle Arabic is itself a flexible register in which writers develop their own style of writing. On this account, I further formulate the hypothesis that the use of Middle Arabic is often a deliberate practice that can have literary implications, which again lead to what I term “poetic moments.” These moments, I argue, occur when on whatever minor scale a copyist chooses to notably deviate from a previously produced version.

3 Johannes Stephan, “Modalities of Fictionality in the Arabic Tradition: *Kalīla wa-Dimna*’s readers from the third/ninth to the sixth/twelfth century,” *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9 (2022), 8–39. I discount here the earlier Geniza fragments of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, which are limited to a few folios or bifolios.

4 These are distributed as follows: 5 manuscripts date from the tenth/sixteenth century, 23 from the eleventh/seventeenth, 31 from the twelfth/eighteenth, and 21 from the thirteenth/nineteenth; see also the chronological list of manuscripts in the Appendix. The sum of eighty is still a low estimate, as a large number of the manuscripts is still undated.

5 See Jérôme Lentin, “Comparing the Language of Manuscript Versions of Two Tales. Promise and limitations,” in *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, 354; see also Humphrey T. Davies, “Dialect Literature,” in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_0086, accessed August 1, 2023.

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 on several case studies on the use of Middle Arabic to show how copyists of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* must have reworked their texts, ranging from a rather minimalistic to a remarkably elaborate fashion. I will begin with a group of manuscripts, collected in Paris in the late eleventh/seventeenth century, in which texts deviate from each other in mostly orthographic terms. I will then move to an example from the twelfth/eighteenth century (MS Vatican Sbath 267), which is certainly the outcome of a cross-copying process⁶ 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 and poetry at the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, who produced a rewrite in which Middle Arabic syntax and lexicon are paired with a peculiar style of narration. In the concluding section, I will elaborate on the literary implications of Middle Arabic.

2 Middle Arabic: A Broad Linguistic Spectrum

The academic concept of Middle Arabic first emerged during the 1950s and 1960s⁷ and gained some prominence in the seminal studies of Joshua Blau. Jérôme Lentin, who further nuanced Blau’s notions, articulated the view, which later evolved into a consensus, that Middle Arabic is “the language of numerous Arabic texts distinguished by its linguistically (and therefore stylistically) mixed nature.”⁸ 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.⁹ Within linguistic scholarship, different points of focus led to different concepts of Middle Arabic, defining it either as a language variant pertaining to a particular historical period¹⁰ or as

6 See the Introduction, 5 and 12–13.

7 Gunvor Mejdell, “Luḡa wuṣṭā,” in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_SIM_000004, accessed August 1, 2023.

8 Jérôme Lentin, “Middle Arabic,” in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_vol3_0213, accessed August 1, 2023.

9 Ibid.; Geoffrey Khan, “Middle Arabic,” in *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*, ed. by Stephan Weninger, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012. By “dialect” I mean the colloquial variants which are in oral use, cf. Soha Abboud-Hagggar, “Colloquial,” in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_SIM_0020, accessed August 1, 2023.

10 See Joshua Blau, *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic*, Jerusalem: The Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation, 2002, 14.

an idiom spoken mostly within certain religious communities, such as among Jews or Christians.¹¹ Besides, the emphasis on the epithet “middle” entails the possibility of a sociolinguistic interpretation of the term, 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 who fall in between the learned elite and the lower, illiterate groups of society, making the register characteristic of their literature. The latter understanding would suit what Aboubakr Chraïbi calls “Arabic Middle Literature,” (*littérature moyenne*)¹² which is a textual archive to which the versions of *The Thousand and One Nights* belong: a sphere between the elitist realm of classical literature and the literature of common people with little to no access to written sources.

In my use of the term, however, I will consider Middle Arabic first and foremost as a hybrid written register moving between two poles: the colloquial language and the classical *fushḥā* standard.¹³ This hybridity applies to orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. The concept is, therefore, first and foremost used in a descriptive and analytical sense rather than 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 from a particular period, Middle Arabic can be encountered in almost all periods of Arabic history.¹⁴ As a linguistic form reflected in written texts, the register has existed since the Formative period, only beginning to disappear as some sort of written standard with the advancement of print culture during the thirteenth/nineteenth 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, having previously been a widely used register.¹⁵ Although features known from Middle Arabic texts still occur in different forms of written and oral communication in Modern Standard Arabic up to the present day, the context of its use is fundamentally different to its use in written culture predating the twentieth century CE due to the contemporary standardization of the language system. Additionally, although the use of Middle Arabic stretches over several periods

11 See Jaques Grand'Henry, “Christian Middle Arabic,” in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_0055, accessed August 1, 2023; Khan, “Middle Arabic.”

12 Aboubakr Chraïbi, *Les mille et une nuits. Histoire du texte et classification des contes*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008, 15–20; Aboubakr Chraïbi, “Introduction,” in *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, 62–64. In addition to “littérature moyenne,” Chraïbi also uses “littérature médiane.”

13 Jérôme Lentin, “Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l'époque moderne,” [doctoral thesis], Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, 1997, 25.

14 Lentin, “Middle Arabic.”

15 Ibid.

of premodern history, it is particularly the Early Modern period in which variants of it 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 rather as designating whole texts, or at least larger textual units.¹⁶ This is to say that the single occurrence of words, expressions, or certain grammatical features does not by itself qualify a text as Middle Arabic, but that the text must contain some consistency in its deviance from what we know as the *fushḥā* standard. Hence, following Lentin's suggestion to read Middle Arabic as a continuum between the *fushḥā* 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.¹⁷

As this contribution will show, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is a text in which Middle Arabic was used to some extent in a systematic fashion, and in some cases, its use might have been a deliberate choice and 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 aesthetics and the practical dimension of *mouvance*. Since the use of Middle Arabic was widespread during the Early Modern Period, and most of the manuscript copies in our corpus date from the eleventh/seventeenth to the early thirteenth/nineteenth centuries, I will focus on this period. Bringing to the fore linguistic variation and literary production in the context of an Arabic classic (however “unruly”)¹⁸ during this time is also important, I believe, as this may impact our view of (Arabic) literary history.

3 Copying and Rewriting *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the Eleventh/Seventeenth to the Thirteenth/Nineteenth Centuries

Kalīla wa-Dimna was translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' into Arabic in the second/eighth century, but it was also popular among textual scholars and interested audiences in the Early Modern period. Many of the manuscript copies, if not

16 Joshua Blau, *On Pseudo-Corrections in Some Semitic Languages*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970.

17 Lentin, “Recherches,” 11–20, although there he still gives preference to the term “Mixed Arabic” (arabe mélangé).

18 See the title of and the introduction to this volume.

all, reflect a continuous interest in a clear, yet simple prose language for the purposes of teaching and moral instruction. If we look specifically at the time of Ottoman rule in the Arab lands, the transregional character of the tradition is remarkable. By that time, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was circulating in different prose and versified forms through different languages. The Ottoman scholar Kātib Çelebī notes ten different versions of the originally “Indian book” in his *Kashf al-ẓunūn* from the early eleventh/seventeenth century.¹⁹ With the Persian Kāshifī’s *Anvār-i Suhaylī* and the Ottoman *Humāyūn-nāmeḥ*, both of which Kātib Çelebī mentions among the ten versions, the book had gained a transregional popularity in the Muslim world. At the same time, it had significant impact also on European literary culture already before the eighteenth century CE. It was none other than Antoine Galland, the famous translator of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1646–1715), who began to translate the above-mentioned Turkish adaptation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the *Humāyūn-nāmeḥ*, into French.²⁰

Although Galland’s knowledge of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* did not play a role in his translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* at the beginning of the eighteenth century CE, a comparison 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, and they are in different ways outstandingly significant during the Early Modern period. In what follows, I shall briefly note some of the main differences between the two famous traditions.

As described by Muhsin Mahdi,²¹ the story-telling language (*luḡhat al-ḥikāya*) of *The Thousand and One Nights* is consistent overall, though it conveys an “air of orality,”²² an expression that alludes to features of oral

19 Kātib Çelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn ‘an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn* (*The Removal of Doubt from the Names of Books and the Sciences*), eds. Muhammad Sharaf al-Dīn Yāltaqāyā and Rif‘at Bilgah al-Kilisī, 2 vols., Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1941–1943. Çelebi relies to a considerable extent on an older Ottoman-Arabic bio-bibliographical source titled *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda* (*The Key to Happiness and the Lantern of Rule*, 3 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1985), which was composed during the sixteenth century by Ahmet Taşköprüzade (899–968/1494–1561). Compared to Kātib Çelebī’s account, Taşköprüzade presents a rudimentary version of the book’s history in vol. 1, 266–68.

20 Dagmar Riedel, “Kalila wa Demna i. Redactions and Circulation,” in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/kalila-demna-i>, accessed August 1, 2023. Galland also contributed to Barthélemy d’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque orientale*, which was mainly based on Çelebi’s *Kashf*.

21 Muhsin Mahdi, “al-Muqaddima,” in *The Thousand and One Nights* (*Alf Layla wa-Layla*). *From the Earliest Sources*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi, Leiden: Brill, 1984, 1:37–51.

22 Borrowed from Patrick Russell’s “air of novelty,” quoted below, p. 260.

transmission. David Pinault, emphasizing the variation between different versions of *The Thousand and One Nights*, has hinted at features of a mixed transmission history between the written and the spoken word.²³ The conjecture of orality parallels the diverging Middle Arabic character of both textual traditions. *The Thousand and One Nights* is also crucially impacted by the morphology and syntax of Arabic dialects, which is equally the case for its sister book, *A Hundred and One Nights*.²⁴ Looking at various manuscripts of *The Thousand and One Nights* between the ninth/fifteenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries, Lentin comes to the conclusion that the linguistic register of *The Nights* in general is Middle Arabic.²⁵

This statement cannot be made for *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. For example, the oldest known complete witness to the tradition, MS Ayasofya 4095 (dated 618/1221), cannot be generally classified within this register, although it contains some Middle Arabic features. Some contemporary or slightly later manuscripts, such as MS Paris 3465 and MS Rabat 3655, also show very rare deviations from the *fuṣḥā* register. In addition, the fact that the text is repeatedly presented as a “book” (*kitāb*—and less as a *ḥadīth* or *ḥikāya*, both meaning story) both in the preface by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ as well as by its earliest recipients²⁶ does not point to a predominantly oral tradition. An interference of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with orality cannot be excluded, as will be discussed in further detail below. Here it suffices to mention that in contrast to *The Thousand and One Nights*, only a part of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition displays an elaborate Middle Arabic character.

It is important to note that the examples which this study is based on are all different in nature and style. They are taken from different continua of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition, but they also demonstrate close relationships with other manuscript copies, as will be shown later in more detail (see section 4). For some texts that contain a considerable amount of Middle Arabic features, it has to be assumed that they are not based on one *Vorlage* but are rather an outcome of what Beatrice Gruendler has termed “cross-copying,” i.e., the act of mixing passages from different versions and continua.²⁷

23 David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, 15.

24 See Bruce Fudge, “Note on the Text,” in *A Hundred and One Nights*, ed. and trans. Bruce Fudge, New York: New York University Press, 2016.

25 Jérôme Lentin, “La langue des manuscrits de Galland et la typologie du Moyen Arabe,” in *Les mille et une nuits en partage*, ed. Aboubakr Chraïbi, Arles: Actes Sud (2004), 434–55, and Jérôme Lentin, “La langue des Mille et une nuits,” in *Les mille et une nuits. Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Institut du monde arabe*, ed. Élodie Bouffard and Anne-Alexandra Joyard, Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2012, 54–58.

26 See Stephan, “Modalities.”

27 See Chapter 2 by Beatrice Gruendler, 27–28 and 41–42; see also note 6.

Let me now turn to presenting the three different texts in which a varying 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 a few orthographical aspects, the second features besides orthographical divergence a change in the morphology, and the third includes Middle Arabic features in all areas: orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexical specificities. In order to compare different versions, I have chosen four extracts from *Kalila wa-Dimna* that appear in all manuscript versions and which are both of varying narrative nature and of varying length: (1) the introductory passages of Ibn al-Muqaffa's famous preface (Im), (2) the short embedded story of the Hare and the Lion from the first chapter of the Lion and the Ox (Lo), (3) the complete chapter of the Ascetic and the Weasel (Aw), and (4) a lengthy scene containing mostly direct speech: a dialogue from the chapter of the King and His Dreams (Kd) that takes place between the vizier and the king's wife.

3.1 *ms München 617*

Having prepared the first complete critical edition of *Kalila wa-Dimna* in 1816, the famous Orientalist Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) deemed MS München 617 to be of poor quality.²⁸ The codex's colophon contains a peculiar copyist's note referring to someone named Luṭfallāh al-Ṭabīb (the physician), belonging to the Christian community (*madhhab*) and descending from a family in Kairouan (present-day Tunisia).²⁹ Produced in 1070/1659, this manuscript was first part of Silvestre de Sacy's library and was later moved to Munich,³⁰ and it bears a strong resemblance to an allegedly slightly older copy. For the purpose of preparing his edition, Silvestre de Sacy used among several manuscript copies a variant that must have been produced only a few years earlier (MS Paris 3471, copied in 1053/1643). At that time, it was owned by the Bibliothèque du Roi (in the collection Colbert). In the note on the manuscripts he consulted while preparing his edition, Silvestre de Sacy refers to this variant, while also mentioning yet a third one. This copy had been bought in Aleppo in 1673 but already produced in 1080/1669, only twenty-six years later than

28 Antoine Silvestre de Sacy, *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1842, 59.

29 Both the reference to *al-madhhab al-masiḥī* and the use of the *hijrī* dating are rather unusual for the copying practice of a Christian scribe.

30 Joseph Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, Munich: Palm, 1866, 269.

MS Paris 3471 (and is numbered Paris 3472 today).³¹ It therefore seems that MS Paris 3472, as well as MS München 617, are based on the older MS Paris 3471. Together, these three manuscripts form part of a larger group of manuscripts that contain more sub-stories and episodes than most other versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.³² Khoulood Khalfallah has ascertained that this group of manuscripts must stem from an earlier copy produced in the tenth/sixteenth century which has survived as an incomplete codex that is today housed in the Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin.³³

A much older copy, namely the seventh/thirteenth-century manuscript that Silvestre de Sacy mainly based his editing work on (MS Paris 3465), was sent to Paris by the manuscript hunter and priest Johann Michael Wansleben (Vansleb).³⁴ It is likely that such collecting activities caused even more manuscript copies to be sent to Paris through intermediaries from trade centers such as Aleppo or Istanbul. Regardless of whether Wansleben was also responsible for sending some of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts mentioned above to Paris, it is likely that they originate from the Levant, and more specifically from Aleppo.

The two Parisian manuscripts (MS Paris 3471 and MS Paris 3472) each contain a reader's note by Wansleben's friend, Buṭrus Diyāb (or Dīb), also called Pierre Dipy. Dipy was a Melkite Catholic from Aleppo, at that time living in Paris, who served both as royal interpreter and antiquarian. Dipy also produced the first French catalogue of Arabic books in 1677, in which he mentions *Kalīla wa-Dimna* by referring to two manuscripts. These are obviously the aforementioned MS Paris 3471 and MS Paris 3472, produced and acquired during his lifetime and kept in Paris up to the present day.³⁵

31 Antoine Silvestre de Sacy, *Calila et Dimna ou Fables de Bidpai en arabe*, Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1816, 59.

32 I owe this information to Khoulood Khalfallah, who defines this as a subgroup of the Dreams group. The text version of this group is heavily cross-copied in many (but not all) chapters.

33 See Chapter 3, 96–98, and fig. 3.4.

34 Wansleben traveled through the Levant, Egypt, Anatolia, and Istanbul between 1671 and 1676. He was entrusted with sending manuscripts and antiquities to the French capital, which he did in several extensive batches from different cities during his trips. See Nadine Urbiczek, "Johann Michael Vansleb," in *Manuscript Hunters*, eds. Ronny Vollandt and Nathan Gibson, Munich: LMU München (2019), <https://www.manuscripthunters.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php/vansleb/>, accessed August 1, 2023, and Alastair Hamilton, "Introduction," in *Johann Michael Wansleben's Travels in the Levant, 1671–1674*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Leiden: Brill, 2018. MS Paris 3465 is also the oldest witness of the Paris continuum (see Chapter 2, 25) and belongs with its near-verbatim copies to image cycle B (see Chapter 4 by Rima Redwan, 131, 134–35 with table 4.5, and 138–40). On the history of its many restorations, see Vernay-Nouri, "Histoires de transmissions."

35 MS Paris 4484 (dated 1677), fol. 298r.

The interest of Wansleben, Dipy, and others in manuscripts 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 Levant with an eye to selling them to travelers in the service of early Orientalism. It is noteworthy that it is the late eleventh/seventeenth-century context of exchanging manuscripts through travels and transregional trade which made possible the transmission of the oldest known copy of *The Thousand and One Nights* to Galland.³⁶ Likewise, the Western archive of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is informed by such pre-colonial activities of manuscript trade, an aspect of literary history that has not yet been duly highlighted within scholarship.

As far as the shape and style of MS München 617 and its Parisian predecessor MS Paris 3471 are concerned, it is clear 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 of it. It is evident that he changed the orthography and, in a few instances, also intervened on the morphological and syntactic levels of the text.

In the following, I shall focus on two sections from the very beginning of Ibn al-Muqaffa's preface (here titled: *bāb 'Abdallāh b. al-Muqaffa'* in contrast to the more common *gharaḍ al-kitāb*). Ibn al-Muqaffa's opening is a shared section 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 b. al-Shāh al-Fārisī and Buzurgmihr and before an autobiographical frame narrative to the book by Burzūya, another Persian wise man.³⁷ Looking at the first couple of lines from Ibn al-Muqaffa's preface in the various manuscripts from the eleventh/seventeenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth centuries, we can see that the beginning of this preface remains relatively stable in terms of word choice (even though it is occasionally moved to the end of the preceding preface, Burzūya's Voyage (long version), which is attributed to Buzurgmihr, e.g., in Parker 578 and Paris 5881). Therefore, nuances in terms of linguistic shifts can be easily delineated. As is discernible in the following table, the differences between the two manuscript copies rest almost exclusively on the varying choices of letters and vocalization (The manuscripts' original vocalization has been retained in all quoted passages).

36 Ibrahim Akel, "Quelques remarques sur la bibliothèque d'Antoine Galland et l'arrivée des Mille et une Nuits en Occident," in *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.

37 For a list of the prefaces, see the Introduction, 15; and the Arabic preface, see Chapter 2, 30–37. For the presence and sequence of the various prefaces, see Stephan, "A Sense of No Ending."

MS Paris 3471, 23r

MS München 617, 21v

هذه كتاب كليله ودمنه وهو ما وضعه علماء
 الهنـد من الأمثال الاحاديث والتمسوا 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 ويتغون في اخراج ما عندهم من اللعل
 حتي كان من ذلك وضع هذا الكتاب علي
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 ويلزمون انفسهم العناية بذلك ويناقض
 بعضهم البعض ويحتالون في ذلك بصنوف
 الحيل ويتغون في اخراج ما عندهم من اللعل
 حتي كان من ذلك وضع هذا الكتاب علي
 افواه البهايم والطير

This is the book of *Kalila and Dimna*, composed as parables and stories by the scholars of India. They sought to include in it the most eloquent speech they could find, in the style they desired. Wise men from all communities and people of all tongues at all times desire that wisdom be taken from them, and they take it upon themselves to attend to this. They debate among each other and appropriate all kinds of devices and aim to establish arguments. For this reason, this book was composed in the speech of animals and birds.³⁸

What the scribe of MS München 617 did when presumably copying from MS Paris 3471 or a related copy was to omit some of the diacritics, more specifically by substituting *dhāl* (ذ) with *dāl* (د) and *thā* (ث) with *tā* (ت), something he does consistently throughout the manuscript. This has therefore become a stable feature of his recension and not a scribal error, and it may simply be due to some influence of Levantine (or other Arabic) colloquialisms.³⁹ These slight changes of consonants through the use of diacritics, especially with regard to *dhāl/dāl*, is a very common feature of Early Modern texts. It appears frequently in the famous Galland manuscript of *The Thousand and One Nights*,

38 My translation. This is a translation of both versions, as there is no difference in lexicon and syntax. In München 617 above *بعضاً* and *اللعل* are represented as in the original.

39 See Jérôme Lentin, "Damascus Arabic," in *EALL*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_0077, accessed August 1, 2023.

which stems from the eighth/fifteenth century.⁴⁰ A morphological peculiarity in the case of MS München 617 is that the copyist changed the initial masculine demonstrative “this” (*hādhā*) in front of “book” (*kitāb*) into the feminine form.

Additionally, the scribe of MS München 617 and to a lesser degree the scribe of MS Paris 3471 occasionally resorted to syntactic oddities. A typical feature of Middle Arabic is the use of the accusative form (*manṣūb*) when the classical syntax would call for the nominative (*marfūʿ*) or the genitive (*majrūr*). This grammatical substitution also sometimes occurs in the opposite direction.⁴¹ Both manuscripts, MS München 617 a bit more than MS Paris 3471, contain linguistic deviations, which are for the most part orthographical in nature.

We can conclude from this that the use of a different register is at least to some extent deliberate, as the manuscripts demonstrate a certain consistency. A similar consistency in altering the written form of certain words can be observed in a manuscript belonging to the Vatican Sbath collection, to which I shall turn below.

3.2 *MS Vatican Sbath 267*

This manuscript belongs to a collection in the Vatican which, according to Paul Sbath's (d. 1945) preface to his catalogue from 1928, is based on his book collection gathered from private households in Aleppo.⁴² After his death, his family gave large parts of his collection to the Vatican Apostolic Library. This manuscript's last folios appear to be missing, although this does not seem to affect the main text in the codex. The manuscript is the work of a Christian copyist, as indicated by the *basmala* variant (*bismi llāh al-wāḥid al-ḥayy al-azalī*).⁴³ It is possible that this manuscript is the work of two hands, as the size and style of the handwriting change between folios 31 and 32. The linguistic design, however, seems unaffected by this change. The overall appearance of the manuscript, including the colored writing as well as the (albeit peculiar) vocalization features, indicates that it was not intended as just a simple private copy, but rather as a book for broader use. Arabic-speaking Christians occasionally produced copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, notably during the eleventh/seventeenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries, often in connection with their link to the West. This can be illustrated by the experience of the bishop Athanasius Safar,

40 See Mahdi, “al-Muqaddima,” 40–41.

41 MS München 617, fol. 99r (*kāna yajrī ʿalayhī rajulan min al-tujjār*); 21v (*fa-nadima nadāmatin shadida*); see also below, section 4, the example from the Lion and the Hare fable (39r). On this aspect cf. Lentin, “Recherches,” 686–709.

42 Paul Sbath, *Bibliothèque de manuscrits*: Catalogue. Tome 1, Cairo: H. Friedrich et Co., 1928, 1.

43 MS Vatican, Sbath 267 (eighteenth century CE), 1v.

who traveled to Europe and America and produced two Arabic manuscripts in Karshūnī script when he was in Rome.⁴⁴ Given that MS Vatican 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 provenance like the ones Silvestre de Sacy provided for the group of manuscripts mentioned above.

Although it generally fits within one type of chapter sequence according to the list of manuscript families made by Martin Sprengling, MS Vatican Sbath 267 is still specific, if not to say unique, in terms of its chapter arrangement.⁴⁵ This version differs in many respects from the group that emerged around the MS Paris 3471 manuscript mentioned above. In the Sbath Vatican manuscript, the chapter on Dimna's trial, for instance, is included in the long chapter of the Lion and the Ox.⁴⁶ Moreover, none of the prefatory chapters bears an independent title, and the chapter of the Ascetic and the Guest comes as usual at the end, but in this case, it is titled "On the mention of some story" (*fī dhikr ba'ḍ aḥādīth*).⁴⁷ These are just two idiosyncrasies of the manuscript. Like so many others, this manuscript seems either to be the outcome of a copying activity that considered different source texts or to be based on a cross-copying *Vorlage* which has not come down to us. Probably, as will be deduced later in this chapter, it contains features of an oral transmission practice. While this manuscript does not contain many colloquial expressions, it is replete with orthographical 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, a phenomenon that is not found in many other manuscripts from the tradition. Remarkably, this feature occurs in a long passage of direct speech, in the chapter on the King and His Dreams, which I deem representative for what occurs in many instances in this manuscript. When the vizier, the central character of this narrative, is worried about the sovereign, he approaches the king's wife:⁴⁸

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- 44 John-Paul A. Ghobrial, "Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (2017), 154. One, MS Rome LP 018, is from the Maronite Mār Anṭūniyūs Monastery in Rome, and the other, MS Mardin 491, is held in the Chaldean Cathedral of Mardin, Turkey.
- 45 Sprengling, "Kalila Studies," 92–97. It follows the C sequence (Kd placed between the Indian blocs), but Lj is moved to the added tales before the final Ag.
- 46 MS Vatican Sbath 267, 53v.
- 47 MS Vatican Sbath 267, 136v.
- 48 MS Vatican Sbath 267, 102r.

فأني إلى امرأة الملك وقال لها لا أعلم أن الملك ركب امرئ صغيراً ولا كبيراً منذ كنت معه
 إلا بمشورتني إذ كنت صاحب سره ولا يكتُمُ شيء طري عليه وكان إذا حزنه امرأ
 أعزني نفسه وأصبره علي ما نزل به وإذا ذكر لي ذلك أزيله عنه برفق ما يكون والآن
 أراه مستخفياً بجماعة البراهمين منذ سبعة أيام احتجب بها عن الناس وأنا خائف
 أن يكون قد أطلعهم علي سره ولسْتُ آمنهم فادهي إليه واسأله عن امره وحاله وما
 بلغه وما الذي ذكره له وأعلميني فاني لا أستطيع أن ادخل عليه

He went to the king's wife, telling her: I don't think that from the day I first began to be by his side he has considered any affair, 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 make him accept what happened. When he mentions something to me, I take it away from him in the gentlest fashion. Now seeing him secluded with the group of Brahmins for seven days, staying away from everybody else, I am afraid that he shared his secret with them, as I do not trust them. So, go then, look after him, and ask him about the 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 features mentioned above, this section demonstrates certain idiosyncrasies typical of the idiom of the manuscript. I will consider here those aspects that go beyond a mere orthographical deviation and which may have to do with the oral use of the material.

The first issue concerns the *naṣb* form (morphological accusative), as mentioned above. The *naṣb* seems in some cases to be used to stress particular words. This rhetorical function may be used in the language of public performance to preserve a certain tone. In spoken Arabic as well as in the performance of popular tales, the so-called epics (*siyar*), and books like *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, endings are traditionally not fully vocalized, in contrast to in poetry or *maqāmāt*, which are written in rhymed prose. The manuscripts of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition rarely feature full vocalization. However, in the case of accusative forms, the scribes sometimes stress the word ending and thus add to the literate tone—albeit in a pseudo-correct manner—or to the overall melody of the performance.

Secondly, 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 the feature is not meant for a reading performance. In this case, the scribe shows his ability to make use of the appropriate form without writing it fully out, as it ought not to be read. In any case, this is not a dialect feature, but a writing notation.

A third peculiar feature of this text is, also, the use of vowel signs, which may again be due to a performative consideration. Vocalization often seems arbitrary in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts, with the exception of some of the few classical texts from the tradition that are fully vocalized. In this respect, MS Vatican Sbath 267 is different. In a few instances, the vocalization with *ḍamma* is indicated. Judging this feature from a *fuṣḥā* standard perspective, the usage of the *ḍamma* is often 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 the emulation of a dialect tone, in which the case of the noun does not need to be signaled, and the suffix pronoun can be simply referred to by a simple, often stretched *ū* (or dialectal *ō*). The scribe may therefore have chosen this option either because his knowledge of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was informed by oral performances or because he wished to address the register of everyday language and provide the basis for an oral performance.

Moreover, the use of the accusative in places where it ought not be used is an example of pseudo-correction. Kees Versteegh understands such forms as “breaking the rules without wanting to.”⁴⁹ In this context, I would question whether an intention to follow grammatical rules can be sensibly assumed here. It seems more important to envision that writers attempted to apply a certain register or develop their own style. Here, the writer’s use of both vocalization features and other forms which deviate from the *fuṣḥā* standard indicates a systematic fashion of writing which may not be unintended. However, keeping in mind the existence of many classical *Vorlagen* of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, it is possible that this scribe did not mean to use a fully-fledged *fuṣḥā* standard here, but rather resorted to conventions of a specific writing context which is still largely unknown to us. In this regard, he may have tried to make the text easier to read or sought to integrate performative purposes in his writing. It is hardly tenable to suggest that he was only aiming to follow the rules of the *fuṣḥā* standard. The feature of hypercorrection appears too regular to be an

49 Kees Versteegh, “Breaking the Rules without Wanting To: Hypercorrection in Middle Arabic Texts,” in *Investigating Arabic. Current Parameters in Analysis and Learning*, ed. Alaa Elgibali, Leiden: Brill, 2004, 3–18.

intended but flawed standard form. Rather, it represents a distinct writing style that suggests a particular performative setting.

Two further aspects, the first one of which, again, concerns orthography and the second grammar, still need to be mentioned. Within the first dialogue of the chapter of the Ascetic and the Weasel (Aw), 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 is finally pregnant. The man then expresses his strong hope that she will give birth to a boy, saying:⁵⁰

فاني ارجوا ان تلدين غلاما

I would wish for you to give birth to a boy.

This sentence contains two notable features. The first, orthographic, one is the so-called *alif al-wiqāya* following the *ū* in the verb *arjū* (to wish), which is a Middle Arabic scribal convention that normally has nothing to do with pronunciation. It may stem from the ordinary use of such an additional *alif* in third-person plural perfect forms or as an orthographical intervention to emphasize the length of the *ū*.⁵¹ The second, grammatical, feature is the case of the verbal mode in which a subjunctive verb form required by the classical standard is replaced by a verb in the indicative mood, yielding *talidīn(a)* instead of *talidī* (you (fem.) give birth).

In the case of the above-mentioned manuscript group from Paris commented on by Silvestre de Sacy (section 3), this sentence is kept in its *fuṣḥā* standard form. However, a manuscript of this group from a later stage, MS Wetzstein II 672, features the sentence in the exact same syntactical hyper-corrected form. In many regards, however, this last manuscript offers yet a different variant of fashioning *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the Middle Arabic register.

3.3 MS Wetzstein II 672

MS Wetzstein II 672 was written by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī in 1830 as a “copy for himself.”⁵² Al-Rabbāṭ was a poet who owned a large private library in

50 MS Vatican Sbath 267, 99r.

51 See Lentini, “Recherches,” 70. This *alif al-wiqāya* is, however, also part of Qur’ānic orthography.

52 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830), 131r.

Damascus. The library held for some time at least one hundred codices dating from the eighth/fourteenth to the early thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. A considerable number of these books fall within the category of belles-lettres. They include (different versions of) *The Thousand and One Nights*, *al-Ṣādiḡ wa-l-bāḡhim* by Ibn al-Habbāriyya (an emulation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*), *The Seven Viziers*, and the *Sīrat al-Zāhir Baybars*.⁵³ Al-Rabbāṭ owned two other manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* besides the one he had produced for himself. One dates from 1173/1760 and now belongs to the British Library, shelfmarked MS London Add. 7414.⁵⁴ It must have been in his possession, probably as a loan for some while, as concluded by Ibrahim Akel.⁵⁵ The other is MS Dar al-Kutub 967, which bears his ownership note.⁵⁶ When al-Rabbāṭ wrote his own recension of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, he did not seem to copy from the other manuscripts (the above-mentioned MS London BL 7414 and MS Dar al-Kutub 967) that he had at some point had in his collection. Rather, the writer and poet decided to refashion the “Indian book” in his own way. His text is remarkable as one of the last creative rewritings of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from the period right before textual modernity.

Around the time al-Rabbāṭ composed his recension, Silvestre de Sacy’s first critical edition was in the making. This edition would also come to affect copying practices, as several scribes working in areas located in present-day Syria and Lebanon took Silvestre de Sacy’s printed volume and turned it into manuscript texts. Especially in Christian milieus, Silvestre de Sacy’s edition was first reproduced verbatim in manuscripts and later used as the basis for Arabic print editions.⁵⁷ This beginning practice of standardizing *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, however, did not affect al-Rabbāṭ, who did not seem to be at all interested in a standardized, accurate, and unified version of the ancient framing narrative. Rather, he ostensibly devoted himself to another literary rewriting, reminiscent of local performative purposes. Owning copies of both classical and popular literary works al-Rabbāṭ used a pronounced Middle Arabic register both for copying manuscripts as well as for composing his own *dīwān* and other poetry.⁵⁸

53 Ibrahim Akel, “Ahmad al-Rabbāt al-Halabī: Sa bibliothèque et son rôle dans la réception, diffusion et enrichissement des Mille et une nuits,” [doctoral thesis], Sorbonne Université, Paris, 2017, 114.

54 This belongs to the Paris 3471 subgroup of the Dreams group, see notes 32 and 33.

55 Ibid., 269–70.

56 See Chapter 2, 38, note 60.

57 ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, “al-Muqaddima,” in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Cairo: Hindāwī, 2014, 11–12. For those manuscripts, see Chapter 2, 20, note 9 and Chapter 3, 80–81.

58 Akel, “Ahmad al-Rabbāt al-Halabī,” 60–68 and 115–21.

It is due to the collecting activities of Johann G. Wetzstein (1815–1905), who brought much of al-Rabbāṭ's library to Germany, that this copy ended up in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, where it remains until today.

Considering the linguistic oddities of the Wetzstein manuscript, I would like to emphasize here that it does in many cases deviate from previously discussed forms of Middle Arabic. In contrast to MS Vatican Sbath 267, this manuscript is characterized by its almost standard *fuṣḥā* orthography and the nearly complete absence of vocalization or endings. The text shifts from section to section between its use of either standard Arabic syntax or a highly colloquial one. It also contains several words from a (Levantine) dialect lexicon and a fair amount of hypercorrect forms. A few examples will suffice here. In terms of syntax, al-Rabbāṭ uses the verbal sentence in a way that is typical for Middle Arabic texts, substituting the singular verb form for a plural one. Thus we find *ما صنع علماء الهند* (23r, instead of *ما صنع علماء الهند*) or *فقالوا البراهمة* (110r, instead of *فقال البراهمة*). He also sometimes replaces the indicative plural verb form by the colloquial form written without the letter *nūn*: *فيتغلبوا براهم* (112v, instead of *فيتغلبون براهم*). He also changes the grammatical case, replacing accusative or genitive forms with nominative and the reverse, and he does not always conform to agreement rules in terms of number and gender. An example of this is the use of *وزيد الفيلتان السود* (109v, instead of *وزيد الفيلتين السوداوين*). Furthermore, in regards to verb forms, he occasionally deviates from the *fuṣḥā* standard rule of using the jussive (*majzūm*) in verbs negated with *lam*, a form which necessitates a shortening of long vowels: e.g. *لم تزال* (23r, instead of *لم تزال*). Moreover, he uses particular words from the lexicon of colloquial Arabic, for example such widespread verbs as *جاء* (23v, he brought) and *شاف* (28v, he saw) and a typical contraction like *منشان* (109r, because; in this case: about/concerning).

That said, this manuscript contains both a considerable number of colloquial features and writing conventions only known from Middle Arabic texts. Al-Rabbāṭ's practice of adding features typical of the colloquial or hypercorrect features of the Middle Arabic register sometimes coincides with dramatic intensification, which is especially the case in dialogues of some of the stories. Let me shed light on the above-quoted section again through another popular manuscript, MS Paris 3473 from the eleventh/seventeenth century, which belongs to one of the branches of the tradition al-Rabbāṭ must have been familiar with (Both manuscripts form part of the Wetzstein subgroup of the Paris continuum; see Chapter 2, 25, note 24).

MS Paris 3473, 89v

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ لِلْمَلِكِ أَمْرًا وَلَا عَمَلًا مِنْذُ صَحَبْتُهُ
 إِلَّا صَدَرَ مِنْهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي وَمَشَاوَرَتِي وَلَمْ أَزَلْ
 فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ صَاحِبَ مَشُورَةٍ وَرَأْيٍ وَارِيٍّ
 الْمَلِكُ قَدْ سَرَّ مَنِي أَمْرًا لَا أَدْرِي مَا هُوَ غَيْرَ
 أَنَّهُ اسْتَخْلَى بِالْبَرَاهِمِينَ مِنْدُ تِسْعِ لَيَالٍ وَهُوَ
 مُحَجَّبٌ فِيهَا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَأَنَا خَائِفٌ مِنْ أَنْ
 يَكُونَ قَدْ أَظْلَعَهُمْ عَلَيَّ سِرِّي وَأَنَا لَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ
 يَشِيرُونَ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا دَخَلَ عَلَى الْمَلِكِ
 مِنْ سُوءٍ فَقَدْ دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ فَقُومِي وَادْخُلِي عَلَيْهِ
 وَأَسْأَلِيهِ عَنْ شَأْنِهِ وَأَمْرِهِ فَلَسْتُ أَقْدِرُ عَلَيَّ
 الدخول ...

MS Wetzstein II 672, 111r

وَأَنَا قَدْ سَمِعْتُ أَنَّ الْمَلِكَ مَهْمُومًا مَغْمُومًا
 وَمَا أَطْلَعَنِي عَلَى سِرِّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ خُلُوهِ
 بِالْبَرَاهِمَةِ وَأَنْتِي مُتَيَقِّنٌ أَنَّهُمْ أَعْدَاءُ وَمَنْ
 خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَهُوَ مُتَجَنِّبُ الْخَلْقِ وَأَنَا
 خَائِفٌ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى مَلِكِهِ مِنْ أَعْدَاءِ الْبَرَاهِمَةِ
 وَخَائِفٌ لَا يَكُونُوا شَارُونَ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا يَضُرُّهُ
 وَأَنْتِي تَعْلَمِينَ أَنَّ كُلَّ سُوءٍ يَدْخُلُ عَلَى الْمَلِكِ
 يَصِيبُنِي فَانْهَضِي وَادْخُلِي عَلَيْهِ وَأَسْأَلِيهِ عَنْ
 شَأْنِهِ لِأَنَّهُ يَقْرَأُ لِي لَكُونَكِي عِنْدَهُ عَزِيزَةً
 مَبْجُلَةً فَلَا إِلَى عَادِهِ ادْخُلِي عَلَيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ
 طلب ...

Still, whereas the use of non-classical orthography is rather moderate in the Wetzstein manuscript, its copyist-redactor adds words and phrases to the direct speech of the vizier that demonstrate several morphological and syntactic peculiarities. Among other things, he modifies the suffix for the second person singular feminine from a vocalized *kāf* (ك) to a *kāf* followed by a *yā'* (ي). While this is unusual to the modern reader's sensibility, for the one listening to the text it does not make a big difference, as it simply recalls the colloquial tone. The same applies to the use of the second person singular as *intī* (or *anti* instead of *anti*). Since al-Rabbāṭ avoids vocalization, this additional *yā'* may emphasize that the dialogue is conducted with a female addressee. A reader of this text, especially a reader desirous of performing it in front of an audience, would be aided in using the correct gender, even when reading the text without any *fushḥā* standard vocalization.

Other morphological features stemming from a colloquial fashioning would be reflected when the text of the manuscript was performed. The copyist writes the second-person feminine form of "to know" without a final *nūn* (*ta'lamī*, instead of *ta'lamīna*), a form reflecting 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 a *tanwīn* is the only grammatical marker highlighting the specific status of a predicate and, again, accentuating these adjectives.

In addition to the linguistic features, al-Rabbāṭ dramatizes the narrative's emotional dimension in this passage by explicitly referring to different terms for emotions and the strong bond that exists 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 the word *khawf* (or variations of it) twice, while also stressing that the king must have deep concerns and that all matters affecting the king also have an effect on the vizier. In the same section, he further emphasizes the benefit for the whole kingdom of Ibrakht, the king's wife, having 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 the manuscript. Overall, al-Rabbāṭ's text demonstrates a lively individual character when compared to other versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. To summarize the main features of the manuscripts that I have discussed in this section I will provide a table of the famous tale of the Lion and the Hare (*al-asad wa-l-arnaba*) from the chapter of the Lion and the Ox before presenting my conclusion.

4 Orality and Deviations from the *Fuṣḥā* Standard

Since every copy is different, I have chosen to quote the text from Fishbein and Montgomery's recent translation, which is based on yet another manuscript:

The lion grew angry. "Come with me," he said, "and show me this lion." So she took him to a deep well filled with clear water. "This," she said, "is the lion's lair. I'm afraid of him, but if you hold me in your arms, I'll show him to you." So he held her in his arms. "Look down into the well," she said, "and you'll see the lion." He looked down and caught sight of his own reflection and the reflection of the rabbit in his arms. When he saw his and the rabbit's reflection, he leapt into the well and drowned, and the rabbit escaped.⁵⁹

59 The translation, based on the manuscript MS London 4044, is from the edition by Michael Fishbein. See Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kalīla and Dimna*, ed. Michael Fishbein, trans. Michael Fishbein and James Montgomery, New York: New York University Press, 2021, 97. In

Table 8.1 below juxtaposes eight manuscript copies that either represent salient groups of the *Kalīla-wa-Dimna* tradition (namely the continua, the early group of manuscripts falling outside them, and cross-copied manuscripts) or bear a close similarity to the variants I have dealt with above. Looking at the manuscripts of MS München 617 and MS Vatican Sbath 267, we can discern mostly orthographical features that are typical for these texts. Besides, MS München 617 clearly deviates from its *Vorlage* (Paris 3471), adding orthographical replacements and a hypercorrected accusative form. MS Vatican Sbath 267 substitutes *tā'* for *thā'* and adds a syntactic oddity to the material: *wa-huwa ẓannahū asadun*, which, being a *ḥāl*, or a phrase of adverbial character, would require a verb in the imperfect tense (*muḍāri'*) in a text written in the *fushḥā* standard. Moreover, the required accusative has here been turned into a nominative. Furthermore, MS Vatican Sbath 267 includes some particular aspects in this story that once more showcase the mixed influence on such manuscripts stemming from different branches of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition. Although in other chapters it deviates strongly from MS Paris 2789 (another manuscript of the Paris continuum), it shows here some proximity to it in terms of content, as both recensions emphasize the state of the well as being full (*'āmir*).⁶⁰ Be that as it may, MS Vatican Sbath 267 adds a unique twist to one of the following sentences: The lion, who considers himself to be a king, jumps into the well willing to, as he says with some irony, “fight his own shadow.” The rendering of the passage in the Wetzstein manuscript is equally idiosyncratic, as it contains words and phrases typical for Levantine colloquial use, such as *quddāmuḥ* (before him), *mal'ān* (full), *laykuḥ* (over there), *fā-rāḥ* (so he went), *li-l-wuḥūsh*, (instead of: *ilā l-wuḥūsh* “to the animals”).

Hence, the manuscripts MS Vatican Sbath 267 and MS Wetzstein 11 672 both demonstrate a highly elaborate Middle Arabic character, with the Wetzstein manuscript being closer to colloquial language as we know it today. At the same time, they also seem to be texts that contain passages of creative rewriting. What becomes evident from this table and deserves further attention is that in several cases, the rewriting of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* coincides with an intensification of Middle Arabic features.

contrast to the other versions quoted above, the rendition in MS London 4044 contains an extended version of segment 3a (see table 8.1 below).

60 This is a feature they share with an older manuscript, namely MS Paris 3465 (seventh/thirteenth century) though pointed as *ghāmir*; see table 8.1, segment 2.

TABLE 8.1 *al-Asad wa-l-arnaba*

	Paris 3471 (47v) 17th c. CE	München 617 (39r–39v) 17th c. CE	Ayasofya 4095 (26v–27r) 13th c. CE	Sbath 267 (38v) 18th c. CE	Paris 3465 (58r) 13th c. CE	Paris 2789 (186r) 17th c. CE	Paris 3473 (43v) 17th c. CE	Wetzstein II 672 (52v) 19th c. CE
1	فقال انطلقى فاربنى هو	فقال انطلقى فاربنى اين هو	فقال انطلقى معى فاربنه	قال الاسد انطلقى امامى واوربنى مكان هذا الاسد	فقال الاسد انطلقى فاربنى موضع هذا الاسد	فقال الاسد انطلقى معى امامى واربنى الاسد	فَعَصَبَ الاسدُ وقال انطلقى فاربنى هذا الاسد	وقلها انطلقى قدامى واربنى هذا الاسد
2	فانطلقت به الى صافى فيه ماء صافى صافى فاطلعت فيه	فانطلقت به الى الى بير فيها ما صافى فاطلعت فيه	فانطلقت به الى جب صافى الما صافى فاطلعت فيه	فانطلقت به الى جب ما صافى عامر	فانطلقت الارنب الى جب فيه ما صافى فاطلعت فيه	وان الارنب انطلقت الى جب فيه ماء صافى فاطلعت فيه	فانطلقت به الارنب الى جب فيه ماء صافى فاطلعت فيه	فانطلقت قدامه الارنبه الى جب غميق ملئان ماء صافى واطلعت فيه
3	وقالت بها هنا وقالت هاهنا نزل	وقالت بها هنا نزل	فقاتل هذا مكانه وهو فيه فاحملنى في صدرك	وقالت له في هذا الجب	وقالت هذا المكان	وقالت له هذا الكان	وقالت هذا مكان الاسد	وقالت له ليكه والارنبه بجانبه

5 Conclusion

The Middle Arabic features demonstrated in the manuscripts discussed above are the outcome of a more or less deliberate reworking of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* material where some copyists have imposed their personal style and tone. With my contribution on details in the orthographical, morphological, syntactic, and lexical variation both within a single manuscript and between different manuscripts, I have attempted to cast light on an aspect of Premodern and Early Modern literary culture. Not only does textual *mouvance* come into play in narrative re-composition, but it also seems to be a main characteristic of an open textual tradition like *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The change of words, letters, vowels, and syntactic structures is not an exception. It is the rule.

Still, the extent and range of linguistic variation for textual traditions other than *The Thousand and One Nights* require further research. One might think of so-called popular epics, the *ṣīyar* tradition, or other frame narratives of Indo-Persian provenance such as *The Seven Viziers*, also known as *The Book of Sinbād*, which both contain a very obvious Middle Arabic dimension.⁶¹ The *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tradition, however, constitutes a different case, for unlike *The Book of Sinbād* and the *ṣīyar*, it can be considered as being fully integrated into the scholarly discourse of the Formative period of Arabic writings. In this sense, it is a classic. Therefore, the question of whether other classics of Arabic literature are as flexible in their linguistic appearance as *Kalīla wa-Dimna* remains to be answered.

For now, I shall return to the possible reasons for linguistic variation. How can we make sense of the varieties of Middle Arabic in different manuscript copies? Emphasizing the literary character of the manuscripts in their linguistic fashioning reverberates with what the Scottish physician and resident of Aleppo Patrick Russell (1726–1805) described in his *Natural History of Aleppo*. Russell 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.”⁶² Although

61 On the *Seven Viziers*, see Rima Redwan, “One Against Seven. Variation on the Misogynist Nature of ‘The Seven Sages’ in Different Arabic Manuscript Copies (17th–18th Centuries),” in *The Seven Sages of Rome as a Global Narrative Tradition*, eds. Bettina Bildhauer, Jutta Eming, and Nora Schmidt, special issue of *Das Mittelalter* 28/1 (2023) 49–66; and for the *ṣīyar* tradition, see among others Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire. Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.

62 Alexander Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo*, vol. 1., revised by Patrick Russell, London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1794, 149.

Russell is in this case addressing narrative re-composition, it is likely that storytellers (and copyists) also engaged in linguistic refashioning, both in performative settings and in written texts, when adopting material to their own or to their audience's taste.⁶³

This perspective helps us to reformulate the significance of Middle Arabic, which cannot be dismissed as a deficient idiom or an assemblage of odd conventions. Rather, the logic of the Middle Arabic idiom lies in reminding the reader of the artistry of Arabic by combining the language of everyday life with the *fushḥā* standard. Middle Arabic can relate the poetic or artistic language to the oral narrative. In this regard, it is not the two written registers in isolation, but rather their entanglement that contributes to the reader's aesthetic experience.

A more detailed examination of Middle Arabic features in the textual tradition of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* could shed light on the contribution of orality to the production of manuscripts and the importance of *mouvance* in the tradition. This is because there are several ways in which the Middle Arabic character of the discussed texts may be impacted by orality. First, the models or *Vorlagen* for rewriting were both oral and written. While producing a new manuscript, copyists may have had both an older codex in front of them and at the same time remembered the story material from other occasions. Alternatively, some texts may have been written with an eye to oral performance. A third possibility is that some versions were dictated to a scribe who automatically adapted the material to his own orthography (or according to the author's or copyist's idiom), thereby producing a new variant.

Be that 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 to train 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, enhances the reader's experience.⁶⁴ As a genuine register of Arabic writing and literary performance within the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* textual tradition, the use of Middle Arabic may imply that the real friction is not between a literary textual language and everyday language, but is rather the expression of an actual performance in the rewriting of a classical work.

63 On this aspect concerning the *ṣīyar* tradition, and on *Sīrat Baybars* in particular, see Thomas Herzog "Orality and the Tradition of Arabic Epic Storytelling," in *Medieval Oral Literature*, ed. Karl Reichl, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, 645.

64 Viktor Shklovsky, *A Reader*, ed. and trans. Alexandra Berlina, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, 80.

To paraphrase Shklovsky: At some point in time, the overuse of a literary language necessitates a linguistic change, to prolong the aesthetic experience, which often results in a commitment to a (more) vernacular register.⁶⁵ Hence, instead of categorizing Middle Arabic as a less literary language, such a reading would focus on the register's literary potential. As it constitutes the linguistic and stylistic difference from one manuscript copy to another, I suggest calling this aspect of constant defamiliarization "the poetic moment." It is these poetic moments that seem to occur again and again up until the thirteenth/nineteenth century. Beginning with Silvestre de Sacy's edition, the standardization of this "unruly classic" becomes the rule, and the notions of both literariness and textual rewriting are comprehensively redefined.

65 Ibid.

PART 4

Wisdom Encoded



Software Use in the Kalila and Dimna Project

Mahmoud Kozae

1 Introduction

Decisions about software are central to edition projects. The choices are determined not only by research goals, as the goals evolve and are adjusted based on the abilities and availabilities of software. In the AnonymClassic project, the final goal is to produce a synoptic critical edition of *Kalila wa-Dimna*.¹ Scholars who envisioned this task before the age of computers deemed it infeasible. The large number of manuscripts and the variations among them constitute the biggest challenges to the endeavor. Even with modern software and powerful computers, the task is far from simple.

The current project follows a long tradition of scholarly editing of Arabic manuscripts and borrows many practices from scholars working with other languages. Digital techniques have been most widely adopted for languages written in Latin script. Therefore, adapting these techniques for Arabic texts has constituted an extra challenge. Relying on publications of concluded and ongoing edition projects proved insufficient for deciding on all the aspects of the computer-assisted workflow in AnonymClassic. Most surveyed projects² have not thoroughly documented their software usage while creating their digital editions; they often merely provide the digital edition website, sometimes with the raw data, and briefly hint at the technologies that have been used. For this reason, communicating directly with scholars, meeting them in conferences, and holding workshops has been necessary to resolve intricate and detail-sensitive matters that arise during digital editing. Another approach was to take a step away from the set of practices usually labeled as DH (digital

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- 1 The Kalila and Dimna—AnonymClassic project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union's H2020-EU.1.1.—EXCELLENT SCIENCE program, Advanced Grant no. 742635.
 - 2 See Appendix, section 9 for more information on the surveyed editions. For an external survey, see Greta Franzini et al., “A Catalogue of Digital Editions,” in *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices*, ed. Elena Pierazzo and Matthew James Driscoll, Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2016.

humanities) and seek solutions in computer science, and more specifically from the subfields of software engineering and HCI “Human-Computer Interaction,” both of which investigate the best ways to optimize human activities through software use.

This chapter documents the challenges that the AnonymClassic team faced while deciding on and developing software solutions. It aims to provide a framework for scholars embarking on an extended textual scholarship project and who are aiming to contemplate, discuss, and decide on software use and development.

2 Establishing Terminology for Discussing Software

Software is the most versatile of the three components of computing systems. The other two components are hardware and firmware. “Hardware” refers to the physical electronic components of the system, while “software” and “firmware” are sets of instructions to store on and operate these components. The instructions are encoded in binary format (sequences of ones and zeroes), whose physical form differs according to hardware technology. The simplest examples of these physical forms are arrays of on and off switches or areas carrying and areas missing an electric charge on a magnetic strip. The main difference between software and firmware is that firmware tends to be harder to change.³ As a groundwork for the following sections, this section provides short explanations of software requirements: functional, structural, and operational,⁴ and software design components:⁵ data, calculations, and actions.⁶

3 It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explain more modern and sophisticated examples of physical forms of binary or to discuss firmware.

4 Structural and operational requirements are more commonly called non-functional requirements.

5 There are multiple models for software design. The model presented here is the functional architecture model with the terminology adjusted for better distinction; as in this model, calculations and actions are more commonly called pure and impure function, or functions without and with side-effects, respectively.

6 This description of the functional model is adapted from Eric Normand, *Grokking Simplicity: Taming Complex Software with Functional Thinking*, New York: Manning Publications, 2021, 29–59.

2.1 *Requirement Analysis*⁷

Since the early days of software, its goals have been to optimize real-world processes by automating trivial and repetitive tasks and empowering people with the superior speed of computers in mechanical reasoning. However, with the progression of time, almost every real-world process has to some extent become supported by software. Thus, the goal of new software has changed slightly from “optimizing real-world processes” to “optimizing existing software.” “Requirement analysis” refers to the process of defining the software’s goals and the feasibility of building software that can fulfill these goals. Software engineers, the stakeholders, and users of the software must confer extensively about the real-world process of interest to determine these requirements. Defining the software requirements is the third phase of the requirement analysis process. The first phase is understanding the research goals and requirements.⁸ The second phase focuses on the activities that are to achieve these goals, which are called user requirements. The third phase is determining the extent to which software can support these activities and the form of the support, which is the first aspect of the software requirements: the functional requirements. Next, the engineers consider different types of software design and their potential operational requirements. “Functional requirements” encompass the desired outcomes of the software and the needed patterns of human–computer interaction to reach these outcomes. Operational requirements define the necessary hardware to run the software and the associated costs. Structural requirements are related to design optimizations that ensure the software is scalable, extensible, and reusable. Building the software often takes place in iterations after ranking the requirements by urgency; the engineers strive to deliver the software with the most urgently needed features at the beginning, then extend this software with the rest of the features iteratively.

2.2 *Data*

Data as a software component can be either abstraction, records, or both. Data abstraction is a description of how the record is structured, while the data record is the actual information stored on an electronic medium. Data

7 Requirement analysis or requirement engineering is an extensive discipline. For a more detailed introduction, see Karl Wiegers and Joy Beatty, *Software Requirements*, Microsoft Press, 2013, 3–60.

8 In most software engineering literature, this phase is referred to as “business requirement analysis.”

in either way is in binary format; viewing or interacting with the data by a human user requires an action or series of actions, another software component to be discussed in section 2.3. Abstractions are not strictly required for all implementations of software, as many programming languages are efficient at inferring the structure of the data by performing analysis on it once it has been received. Depending on the software technology, data abstraction can have different names. For most database technologies, e.g., SQL,⁹ it is called a data schema; for most programming languages, it is called a type definition. Figures 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 present abstractions for representing basic information about books using SQL (database technology), C#¹⁰ (programming language), XML,¹¹ and JSON¹² (data representation formats).¹³

```

1. CREATE TABLE Books (
2.     Title TEXT,
3.     Author TEXT,
4.     PublicationYear INTEGER,
5.     PageCount INTEGER
6. );

```

FIGURE 9.1 An example of an SQL schema

```

1. class Book {
2.     string Title {get; set;}
3.     string Author {get; set;}
4.     uint PublicationYear {get; set;}
5.     uint PageCount {get; set;}
6. }

```

FIGURE 9.2 An example of a C# class definition

9 SQL stands for Structured Query Language and is regulated by ISO standard ISO/IEC 9075-1:2016.

10 C# is pronounced like the musical note “see-sharp.” It is an open-source technology developed and maintained by Microsoft. Its regularly updated documentation can be found at the link: learn.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/csharp (accessed July 12, 2023).

11 XML stands for Extensible Markup Language. It is regulated by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Documents and publications related to the XML standard can be found at [w3.org/XML](https://www.w3.org/XML) (accessed July 12, 2023).

12 JSON stands for JavaScript Object Notation and is regulated by ISO Standard ISO/IEC 21778:2017. Extensive multilingual guidelines can be found at json.org (accessed July 12, 2023).

13 The abstractions are provided to demonstrate the variety of options. See the respective technology documentation for explanations of the structures and the keywords.

```

1.  {
2.    "$schema": "http://json-schema.org/draft-07/schema#",
3.    "title": "Book",
4.    "type": "object",
5.    "properties": {
6.      "Title": {
7.        "type": "string"
8.      },
9.      "Author": {
10.        "type": "string"
11.      },
12.      "PageCount": {
13.        "type": "number"
14.      },
15.      "PublicationDate": {
16.        "type": "number",
17.      }
18.    },
19.    "required": [
20.      "Title",
21.      "Author",
22.      "PageCount",
23.      "PublicationDate"
24.    ]
25.  }

```

FIGURE 9.3 An example of a JSON schema

```

1.  <xs:schema xmlns:xs="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema">
2.    <xs:element name="Book">
3.      <xs:complexType>
4.        <xs:sequence>
5.          <xs:element type="xs:string" name="Title"/>
6.          <xs:element type="xs:string" name="Author"/>
7.          <xs:element type="xs:number" name="PageCount"/>
8.          <xs:element type="xs:number" name="PublicationDate"/>
9.        </xs:sequence>
10.      </xs:complexType>
11.    </xs:element>
12.  </xs:schema>

```

FIGURE 9.4 An example of an XML schema

SQL abstraction is imperative, while the other schema definition languages are declarative. It is worth noting that automatic conversion between abstractions is common. For example, C# as a programming language is primarily used

for implementing actions and calculations. Therefore, conversion is necessary for storing or fetching data in an SQL database. As previously mentioned, the records are always in binary format; for SQL and C#, there is no intrinsic or standard way to represent data records. In both technologies, an extra piece of software (an action) can be integrated to display the data in JSON, XML, or any other format. Figures 9.5 and 9.6 show examples of data represented in XML and JSON, respectively. Data records in XML and JSON have the advantage of being simultaneously human- and machine-readable.

```

1.  <?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
2.  <Book>
3.    <Title>The Lord of the Rings</Title>
4.    <Author>J.R.R. Tolkien</Author>
5.    <PageCount/>
6.    <PublicationYear>1955</PublicationYear>
7.  </Book>

```

FIGURE 9.5 An example of an XML data representation according to the schema in figure 9.4

```

1.  {
2.    "Title": "The Lord of the Rings",
3.    "Author": "J.R.R. Tolkien",
4.    "PublicationYear": 1955,
5.    "PageCount": null
6.  }

```

FIGURE 9.6 An example of a JSON data representation according to the schema in figure 9.3

2.3 *Calculations and Actions*¹⁴

Operations that process data and produce new data are classified as calculations. In contrast, actions are operations that interact with peripheral hardware: either by fetching data from, e.g., a storage device, a scanner, or a network, or by delivering data to, e.g., a display, a speaker, a storage device, or a network. Each calculation operates in isolation from peripheral hardware, takes its input from an action or another calculation, and delivers its output in the same way. Thus, a calculation or a series of calculations is always in the middle of an execution flow that starts with an action that fetches or receives data or instructions and ends with another action that displays, sends, or saves data. A simple example of a calculation is a software component that transforms data from XML to JSON. Naturally, all mathematical operations belong to this category, for example in converting a hijri date to a Gregorian one or in converting meters to inches. Rendering graphical user interfaces and taking

¹⁴ Calculations and actions are less relevant to the subsequent discussions than data and requirements. The explanation is provided for the sake of completeness.

instructions through them are examples of actions. Reading and writing data from and to disks and sending and receiving emails are also common actions.

When building software, separating actions from calculations and clearly defining sets of needed calculations and actions are integral to structured computational problem-solving. Such separation serves the versatility and reusability of applications.

3 Existing Computer-Assisted Scholarly Editing Practices

The discipline of scholarly digital editing (SDE) dates back to the 1980s.¹⁵ Seemingly, it existed and developed in almost complete isolation from the discipline of software engineering. Research literature on scholarly editing that utilizes software engineering theories, methods, or terminology is hard to find and assumed to be virtually non-existent. From a software engineering perspective, SDE has mainly focused on the data components of software. Using mark-up languages to build data repositories took center stage in SDE early on.¹⁶ Currently, the SDE literature usually recommends that the goal of edition projects is to produce texts marked up in XML according to the TEI¹⁷ guidelines.¹⁸ This goal is driven by the fact that XML is non-proprietary, cross-platform, and has a set of supporting technologies that facilitate querying (e.g., XPath and XQuery¹⁹) and displaying (e.g., XSLT²⁰) the data. Using TEI, an XML data abstraction, serves the uniformity and interoperability of edition projects, although it does not guarantee them.²¹ XML/TEI data is often labeled as raw text data, i.e., it does not include visual formatting instructions. Some XML schemas are geared towards visual formatting, e.g., the Office Open XML,²² which sets the standards for formatting files for Microsoft Office software.

15 See *tei-c.org/about/history* (accessed July 12, 2023).

16 This statement is due to the fact that most extant digital editions are based on XML/TEI. See appendix 10 for examples.

17 TEI stands for Text Encoding Initiative. Refer to *tei-c.org* for more information.

18 An example of this recommendation can be found in Pierazzo and Driscoll, *Digital Scholarly Editing*, 114.

19 XPath and XQuery stand for XML Path and Query, respectively. Both are part of the XML standard mentioned in footnote 11.

20 XSLT stands for Extensible Stylesheet Language Transformations. Like XML, it is a W3C standard. Documentation for the latest version can be found at *w3.org/TR/xslt-30* (accessed July 12, 2023).

21 TEI is highly customizable and therefore requires an extra effort to achieve interoperability. For more details, see Burnard, Lou, "What is TEI Conformance, and Why Should You Care?," *Journal of the Text Encoding Initiative* 12/12 (2019), online version.

22 Office Open XML is regulated by ISO standard SO/IEC 29500.

Setting XML data production as a primary goal is counter-intuitive to software engineering problem-solving, as the choice of technology conventionally happens after the goals are identified. Additionally, many technologies are more efficient and less complex than XML for fulfilling the purpose of scholarly editing, or of any data representation endeavor overall. Furthermore, for interoperability, any digital data not initially created as XML/TEI can be transformed into XML/TEI once a schema has been determined.²³

As mentioned in the introduction, most surveyed edition projects did not document their software use. Some digital edition websites provide the source XML/TEI files without mentioning the software and workflows used to produce them. Producing XML needs two components: taking input from the user and validating this input based on an XML schema file. Any simple text editor software can be used to input XML encoded text. However, simple text editors are rarely used, as many alternatives provide helpful features like XML syntax highlighting and real-time schema validation. Due to the lack of documentation and publications, most information in this section is based on first-hand experience, workshops, conference attendance, and direct communications with scholars and practitioners.²⁴

3.1 *Scholarly Editing Using General Software*

Software that can serve in several workplaces and domains is characterized as general software. Two classes of such software are prevalent in SDE: word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word and LibreOffice Writer) and text editors (e.g., Windows Notepad, MacOS TextEdit, and Oxygen²⁵). Word processors are geared towards producing print documents, and text editors are geared towards curating raw textual data. Even though the goal is to create XML raw text files, word processors are often initially used to input a transcription which is later copied into a text editor and restructured as XML. This reliance on word processors is due to the familiarity with them that most practitioners have already acquired and to the intuitive visual assistance that such software provides. For example, a line break in an XML file is meaningless, and XML syntax has to be utilized for representing line breaks, while line breaks are meaningful and readily detectable in word documents. Figure 9.7 shows a short paragraph with line breaks highlighted using the XML element “lb.”

23 The discussion on abandoning XML-centered workflow continues in section 4.

24 For an interesting survey of how humanities researchers characterize their software use, see Claudia Müller-Birn, Alexa Schlegel, and Christian Pentzold, “Softwarenutzung in der geisteswissenschaftlichen Forschungspraxis,” in *Mensch und Computer 2016—Tagungsband*, eds. Wolfgang Prinz, Jan Borchers, and Matthias Jarke, Aachen: Gesellschaft für Informatik e.V. (GI), 2016.

25 Software homepage: oxygenxml.com (accessed July 12, 2023).

1. <p>
2. <lb n="1"/>Scorn not the sonnet; critic, you have frowned,
3. <lb n="2"/>Mindless of its just honours;with this key
4. <lb n="3"/>Shakespeare unlocked his heart the melody
5. <lb n="4"/>Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound
6. </p>

FIGURE 9.7 Example of using the "lb" element to highlight line breaks

Note: The example is retrieved from the TEI Guidelines: *tei-c.org/Vault/P5/2.2.0/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/examples-lb.html* (accessed July 12, 2023). Note that the text is formatted for human readability: An XML parser software cannot ascertain the existence of line breaks without the presence of the "lb" elements. However, an extra text-parsing step can be integrated to locate such line breaks.

The most commonly used text editor for XML is Oxygen, a proprietary software for editing XML. It is a desktop application available for all common operating systems: Mac, Windows, and Linux. Oxygen can also be extended to resemble a word processor: plug-ins can be built to produce XML data while the users visually interact with the document in a manner similar to office software. As a specialized XML editor, an XML schema can be loaded into Oxygen, which is then used to validate the data's correctness in real time and provide syntax highlighting and autocompletion for XML elements and keywords. An additional concern when working with XML is managing the XML files. ExistDB²⁶ is an example of database software that facilitates such tasks.

3.2 *Using Specialized Scholarly Editing Software*

Few examples of specialized software for scholarly editing exist, and only a tiny subset of the available ones is actively maintained. Developing software is often a costly undertaking, in terms of both money and time, that most edition projects cannot afford. The cost is the central reason for the lack of sufficient options for specialized software, in addition to the fact that the time needed to design and build working software often exceeds the planned lifetime of a project. A time-efficient option is to develop software that can be used simultaneously or successively by multiple projects. However, sharing specialized software causes multiple layers of logistic complexity due to the variety and divergence among the participating projects' research questions, source materials, and scholar-preferred methodologies. The following sections present examples of software specially developed for scholarly editing and a brief discussion of each.

26 Software homepage: *exist-db.org* (accessed July 13, 2023).

3.2.1 TextGrid²⁷

TextGrid is a virtual research environment for editing projects based on XML/TEI. The project behind the software was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from June 2012 to May 2015. Ten different universities and research institutions participated in its development. TextGrid later became part of the DARIAH-DE initiative.²⁸ At least ten different edition projects used TextGrid, all of which are for Latin-script languages and most of which are in German.

TextGrid has two components: TextGrid Laboratory and TextGrid Repository. The first is a desktop application serving as the interface that includes tools for working with XML/TEI documents. The second is the infrastructure, to which laboratory users can save, publish, and share their editions. The repository has a website that serves as the digital library of TextGrid. Using the software is free, but it requires either registration or affiliation with a German university. Further restrictions are listed in the software terms of use.

3.2.2 Ediarum²⁹

Ediarum bundles and extends many existing software solutions to form a unified environment for XML/TEI-based edition workflows. The project does not offer a plug-and-play software and necessitates some software development expertise to set up the edition workflow. Ediarum has four layers of tools. The first layer is for building data abstraction on XML schemas. The second is for storing XML documents and is based on ExistDB. The third is for editing and managing XML files based on the Oxygen XML editor and ExistDB. The final layer is a presentation layer for either transforming the XML files into formatted PDFs or communicating the data for display on a website. Currently, the Ediarum website lists five edition projects that have made use of its environment.

4 The Decision to Develop Specialized AnonymClassic Software

The preference for creating a specialized workflow and abandoning the standard XML/TEI-based methods in the present project emerged for two reasons: the challenges of using XML as a principal data repository and the steep

27 Homepage: *textgrid.de* (accessed July 13, 2023).

28 Homepage: *de.dariah.eu* (accessed July 13, 2023).

29 Homepage: *ediarum.org* (accessed July 13, 2023).

learning curve of TEI. A later reason was the aspiration to more user-friendly and intuitive user interfaces.

XML offers enormous flexibility in terms of structuring data. This flexibility means that the software developer must make a greater number of arbitrary decisions in comparison to other database technologies. The high number of decisions increases both the complexity and the likelihood of error. Furthermore, such tasks divert attention away from other issues more critical to the research requirements. Using XML files as a backend for a user interface is inefficient. Computationally processing XML files is also slower than most other technologies. An XML file cannot be partially updated. Instead, it has to be fully loaded into memory, where the targeted edit takes place, then again entirely rewritten into the storage hardware. This operation becomes slower and more computationally expensive the larger the XML file is. Directly editing XML files using a text editor is also not user-friendly, especially for Arabic and any other right-to-left script.³⁰

TEI guidelines greatly limit the arbitrary decisions tied to XML use. However, the reduction comes with a cost in time and an increased workflow complexity. The TEI-P5 guidelines are around 2,000 pages long. Although they are well-structured and easy to search and navigate, making decisions is still not an easy feat and requires at least some deliberations with the project scholars and TEI experts. Additionally, sufficient schooling is needed for any contributor to start participating in an edition workflow using TEI.

The XML/TEI-based software of TextGrid and Ediarum have greatly aided in abstracting many of the complexities related to XML and TEI. Furthermore, they eliminate the need for a project to train all contributors in TEI/XML, as a few experts can do all the programmatic tasks while the rest of the members focus on editing. However, AnonymClassic opted to use neither of these two types of software. Besides the reservations against XML and TEI, there were compatibility issues with the Arabic script. The AnonymClassic team could have solved these issues. However, the team ultimately decided that it was more worthwhile to spend the time and effort developing specialized software tailored to all the research requirements. For Ediarum, AnonymClassic would have needed to invest the effort of adjusting plug-ins for Oxygen, which is proprietary software. Depending on Oxygen would have required

30 XML is unpopular among software developers. Reservations against XML do not make it to scientific publications, however, and it is mainly traceable in online discussions. See for example [quora.com/Why-do-so-many-developers-dislike-XML](https://www.quora.com/Why-do-so-many-developers-dislike-XML) (accessed July 13, 2023).

AnonymClassic, as well as any any other project in the future looking to follow the AnonymClassic workflow, to purchase licenses. TextGrid is based on open-source software; however, when researching software options, the code was not publicly available. For this reason, the team could not independently decide on the feasibility of adjusting it for use with the Arabic script. Such a decision would have required extensive communication and coordination with the TextGrid team. Based on experience, such communication tends to be drawn out and lead to uncertain outcomes. Accordingly, the team deemed it more efficient to start designing and developing new software directly.

5 Pinpointing Software Needs: Research and User Requirements in AnonymClassic

By nature, research projects involve experimental settings and tasks. For this reason, it is difficult to establish from the beginning a clear set of requirements for software that do not change or expand. At the broadest possible level, the requirement in AnonymClassic can be characterized as “collecting the data necessary for constructing the digital synoptic edition.” However, both “editions” and “digital editions” have no universal forms or definitions.³¹ Even though many extant digital editions³² could be taken as a model, at the beginning of the project and before performing enough analysis and examinations on the available manuscripts, it was difficult to decide which aspects of these editions to imitate and to compile an upfront definition and design for the final digital edition.

Consequently, the general requirement had to be adjusted to the goal of “facilitating the analysis of the corpus of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscripts.” This adjusted goal effectively postpones the final design of the digital edition until enough data and insight have been gathered. The computer-assisted analysis

31 For a discussion of the various definitions, see Patrik Sahle, “What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?,” in Pierazzo and Driscoll, *Digital Scholarly Editing*, 23–28. Additionally, see the final chapter and second appendix of David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994.

32 See Appendix, section 9, for examples.

is expected to produce the structured data necessary for the edition, keeping in mind that the data structure most suitable for active analysis is potentially different from the structure needed for representation in the to-be-designed digital edition. Nonetheless, this difference is not an obstacle; it simply means that a transformation procedure would be needed to reshape the data into the desired representation format.

After the initial goal of facilitating analysis has been set, the second phase of defining the user requirements for meeting this goal starts. In this phase, specific procedures and exact workflows must be defined. The first procedure is scholarly editing, which involves transcribing manuscript pages while using the critical apparatus defined by the project for highlighting codicological phenomena, narrative structure, and editing decisions. Each line and word in the transcription must be easily connected to its origin on the page facsimile. Transcriptions must also be easily retrievable, navigable, and editable by all project members. Additionally, transcriptions need to be collated for close reading and variation detection. The second procedure is the collection of descriptive and analytical data, which includes facts about each manuscript and the systematic insight into them contributed by the project scholars. Finally, there is the optional requirement of automation, which would only be integrated if it delivers at least similar results to manual, interactive work. For some tasks, automation is already common, e.g., in managing and versioning transcription data. For others, extensive research and experimentation are still required, for example in the automatic detection of text variations.

6 Realizing the Functional Requirements and Designing the Necessary Software

The design process for the AnonymClassic software, named “The Kalila Platform,” was human-centered instead of data-centered. Easy usability was the main goal, and there was no commitment to a specific data technology. Instead, data implementations were governed by the general requirements of being structured, homogenous, and of use to the immediate needs of the research. The human-centered design strives to model the software according to the context of the user’s environment, activities, and expertise. The software was then designed to imitate the existing workflow and make switching from the old workflow as frictionless as possible. A new user would only need minimal briefing, usually one session of no more than an hour, before using the software to contribute to the edition.

6.1 *Edition Activities and Workflows*

Activities in the project can be classified into five types:

- a) Collection of descriptive data of manuscripts
- b) Transcription of the content of manuscripts
- 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 the general examination of a manuscript and recording assertions about 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 labeling the images. Literary analysis mainly involves identifying narrative units within the text, segmenting it based on these units, and then collating segmented texts from multiple manuscripts. It becomes more practicable to find analogous passages and quotations from other sources once the text is broken down into smaller pieces and viewable side by side with other texts.

6.2 *Collection of Descriptive Data and Intertextuality Analysis*

The descriptive data of manuscripts³³ are gathered according to four classes: codicology, version, redaction, and relation; more specific details on the data schema can be found in sections 7.2 and 7.3. 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 that of keeping the data uniform. Various editors would record the data in different structures according to their experience, 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 and then input the same data again in another spreadsheet. The third challenge concerns versioning and keeping track of the evolution and changes to the data. Version conflicts arose when different people edited the same file simultaneously. Manual versioning led to duplication, as different team members followed varying file-naming conventions for version information. The workflow described in this section also

33 Sometimes referred to as “metadata.” This term, however, was abandoned in the project as it is less indicative of the nature of the data and creates confusion with the uses of the term specific to software engineering.

TABLE 9.1 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using general purpose software

Step	Task	Software	Automatic/interactive
1	Retrieve files from the project's shared storage	Operating system	Interactive
2	Record description of a manuscript	Word processor	Interactive
3	Record summary data of the description in a survey spread sheet	Spreadsheet editor	Interactive
4	Save files to the shared drive updating file names with the date	Operating system	Interactive

TABLE 9.2 Workflow for collecting descriptive data, using specialized software

Step	Task	Software	Automatic/interactive
1	Retrieve current data from the database	Kalila Platform	Automatic
2	Record description of a manuscript		Interactive
3	Aggregate data for display in a summary table		Automatic
4	Save and version data to the database		Automatic

applies to intertextuality analysis tasks, as they are technically similar to manuscript description tasks, in the sense that they involve tabulating data, but they are undertaken after the text is transcribed.

Providing a web-based solution was needed to overcome these challenges. The Kalila Platform would provide an interface dedicated to the collection of descriptive data. This interface would include 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 can be automatically aggregated and later viewed in a separate table. Upon input, data with versioning would be automatically saved to a central database.

TABLE 9.3 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using general-purpose software

Step	Task	Software	Automatic/interactive
1	Transcribe	Word processor and image viewer	Interactive
2	Segment	Word processor	Interactive
3	Record summary data of the transcription and segmentation in a survey spread sheet	Spreadsheet editor	Interactive
4	Create XML files	Text editor	Interactive
5	Upload XML files to LERA	LERA	Interactive

6.3 *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 are continuously revised, edited, and improved. Transcription workflow has been oriented towards producing texts that can be viewed using LERA,³⁴ a web-based software that makes it possible to view multiple texts side by side, provided that these texts are segmented. The LERA team provided dedicated instances of the software for AnonymClassic.³⁵ Data can be imported in multiple formats into LERA. The AnonymClassic and LERA teams chose the XML format for importing data, as it makes it possible to segment the text and give unique names to each segment.

A transcriber started 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

34 Thomas Bremer et al., “Zum Einsatz digitaler Methoden bei der Erstellung und Nutzung genetischer Editionen gedruckter Texte mit verschiedenen Fassungen,” in *Editio: Internationales Jahrbuch für Editionswissenschaft* 29, eds. Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth and Bodo Plachta, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015, 29–51.

35 Beatrice Gruendler and Marcus Pöckelmann, “Adjusting LERA for the Comparison of Arabic Manuscripts of Kalila wa-Dimna,” in Jonathan Girón Palau, Isabel Galina Russell, eds., *Digital Humanities 2018, Bridges, Book of Abstracts, Mexico City*, Mexico, June 26–29, 2018, 467, Red de Humanidades Digitales A. C., 2018. Regarding the selection of the manuscripts to be edited, it was explorative at the beginning, but with increased understanding of their interrelation, enabled by the very edition process, it became more targetted, in the sense that salient witnesses mapping a maximal spectrum of variation were chosen.

TABLE 9.4 Workflow for transcribing and segmenting, using specialized software

Step	Task	Software	Automatic/Interactive
1	Visual analysis		Interactive
2	Line detection		Semi-automatic
3	Transcribe	Kalila Platform	Interactive
4	Aggregate data for display in a summary table		Automatic
5	Post to LERA		Automatic

manuscript page to be transcribed was displayed. The text of the page, and subsequent pages, was 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 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 manual revision by the principal investigator. Afterward, literary analysis was performed on the text to determine a plan for segmenting the text of a chapter into numbered and labeled narrative units and matching these units across multiple manuscripts. The beginnings and ends of these narrative units were then manually marked up in the running text of each file. A separate spreadsheet was compiled to keep track of the units, their orders, and their occurrences across the manuscripts. This spreadsheet was internally called a “master-list,” and there was one per chapter. The data then needed to be prepared for LERA; a file was prepared per chapter instance from a manuscript. Separate XML elements were 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 used these *xml:ids* to align corresponding segments.

The workflow dependent on general-purpose software posed many challenges. Revisions were especially difficult, as the files of the transcribed texts and the original facsimiles were saved separately, and a reviewer would have to manually determine which transcribed page and line were representative of which places in the facsimile. Duplications were a problem, as there were two files for each transcribed chapter: 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 performed in two places. Maintaining master-lists was also time-consuming and highly error-prone.

In the specially developed Kalila Platform, the transcription process was reimagined as a three-step process. First, in the visual analysis step, parts of the layout of each page are extracted and saved separately, distinguishing between text and image elements. Text elements are further subdivided into main body elements, captions, 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 is able to manually correct mistakes using an interactive interface. Finally, in the transcription step, text is inputted line by line and the final transcription is saved this way in the database. In this way, the transcribed text is directly linked to the corresponding line facsimile, and when retrieving a transcribed part, the corresponding facsimile is automatically retrieved as well. There is 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 begins and ends. Upon segmenting a chapter, it would be automatically posted to a LERA instance and could 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 Platform would save the time spent manually managing and versioning the data.

6.4 *Image Cycle Analysis*

This task set is still only dependent on general-purpose software, and the specialized software in the early design phase. The workflow involves locating and labeling similar images across the manuscripts, as well as collating and comparing them. The comparison involves style elements and execution. Such comparison helps identify which manuscripts have a closer relation to one another. It is planned to develop it further to support the kind of image cycle analysis carried out in chapter 4 by Rima Redwan.

7 **The Resulting Software (the Kalila Platform)**

The set of tools developed for the project are combined in a web application known as “The Kalila Platform,” named after one of the work’s main characters. The platform bundles the tools built for assisting the edition workflow and activities in the project according to the functional requirements described

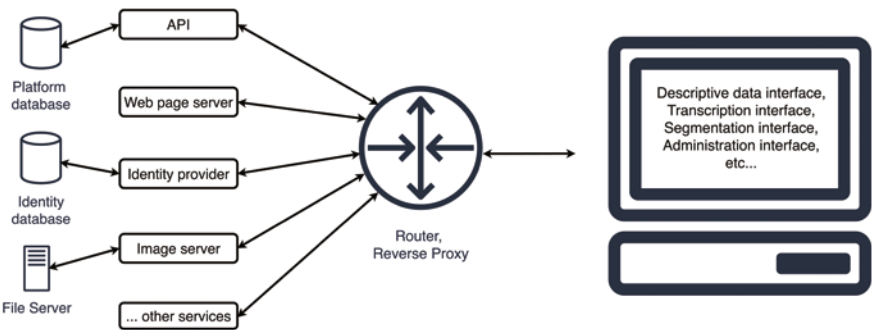


FIGURE 9.8 Structure of the Kalila Platform

in the previous section. Work on this platform was begun in January 2018. It is tailor-made for the needs of the AnonymClassic project, and as of May 2024, it is only available within the intranet of Freie Universität Berlin though a new version in progress is viewable at <https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de>. Nonetheless, the platform has been designed from the beginning with reusability in mind, and it can be customized to serve other projects as well. All code is deployed on GitHub and to be made publicly available in the future. This section describes some technical aspects of the platform.

7.1 Platform Architecture

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 of one another.³⁶ This design choice was necessary as the same data must be processed in different ways by the user, i.e., via different interfaces. For example, the text data must be transcribed via one interface and segmented via another.

7.2 The Data Schema

Data must be saved in a way that makes both writing and reading operations as simple as possible. The circles in figure 9.9 below represent the main entities, i.e., the tables of the data schema, with the arrows representing relations among them in the direction of containing entity to contained entity. 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

36 Andrew Troelsen and Phil Japikse, *Pro C# 10 with .NET 6: Foundational Principles and Practices in Programming*, Berkeley, CA: Apress, 2022, 1273–1309.

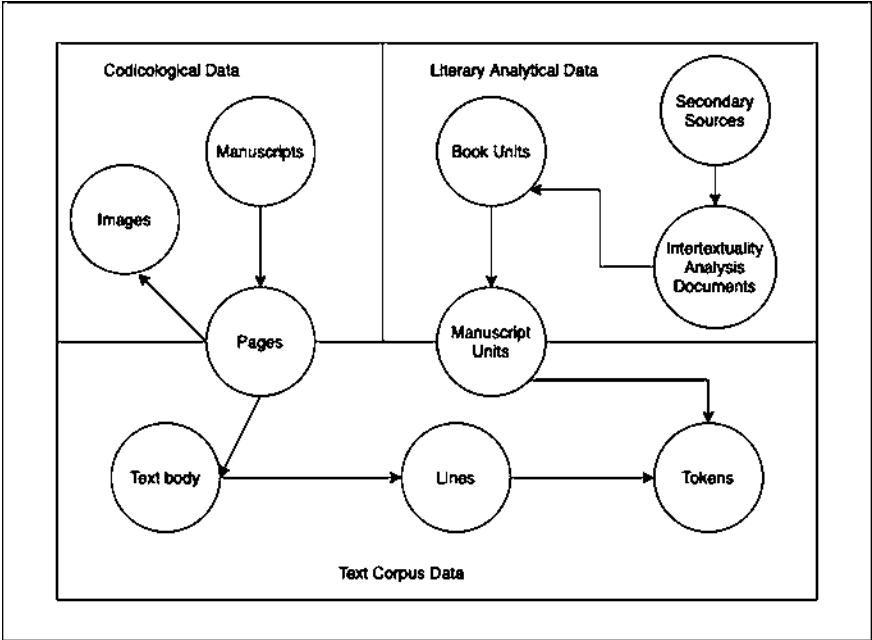


FIGURE 9.9 Visualization of the data schema

tokens in a separate entity makes it possible to query them without the need to go 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. The data entry schema sidesteps many technical details of the infrastructure and facilitates the user's interaction with the data.

7.3 The API

The Application Programming Interface (API)³⁷ 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 was written in Python in the beginning and later migrated to C#, as the second programming

37 No universal definition or strict specifications exist for APIs. Generally, APIs provide ways of programmatic interaction with a software, either by another software or by a human user.

language demonstrates a faster performance and is better suited to larger projects.³⁸

7.4 *The User Interfaces*

Each of the user interfaces is dedicated to one edition activity. All the interfaces are Single Page Applications (SPAs) that were developed using Angular, an open-source framework developed by Google.³⁹ Descriptions of the usage of the interfaces can be found in section 2. The interfaces are 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 the impression of a single website. Demonstrations of the functionalities of the interfaces are difficult to achieve in print; however, some screenshots are provided in Appendix, section 10.

7.5 *The Supporting Services*

The platform includes various other services:

- The identity provider, which handles the authentication and authorization.
- An IIIF image server,⁴⁰ which facilitates fetching images or specific parts of an image.
- An image-processing service, which carries out the automatic line detection.
- A LERA service, which overtakes the communication between the Kalila Platform and LERA.

8 *Future*

The Kalila Platform has undoubtedly led to an increase in the research team's productivity. In the future, even more can be achieved by adding more automation to the software. Techniques for automatic transcription (handwriting recognition) and automatic segmentation (text clustering) are currently being tested.

38 TechEmpower (<https://www.techempower.com/about/>, accessed July 13, 2023) provides yearly benchmarks for software. As of 2023, C# provides the seventh fastest web framework (Asp.net Core) overall, while the fastest Python framework (Flask) is ranked 90th. ([techempower.com/benchmarks](https://www.techempower.com/benchmarks), accessed July 13, 2023).

39 Official website: angular.io (accessed July 13, 2023).

40 Detailed information is on the website: iiif.io/about (accessed July 13, 2023).

It is uncertain how long the platform will be maintained beyond the AnonymClassic project's lifetime since this is governed by the policies for hosting research data of Freie Universität Berlin. What can be planned for now is the release of more extensive software design documentation that can serve future projects operating in similar circumstances. It might be feasible within the project's lifetime to extract individual modules from the platform and build desktop applications, which scholars and other projects would be able to use without needing to set up complex infrastructure. In conferences, the need for such software has been expressed by scholars investigating comparable, widely diverging textual traditions. In particular the expanding research on the Middle Arabic texts, characterized by greater variation, will likely increase this need.⁴¹

9 Appendix: Examples of Digital Editions That Cite Used Software

Almost 300 digital editions were surveyed, some of which are listed in the table below. The catalogue of digital editions under the following link was used as a main source for researching editions. Only edition websites containing descriptions in English or German and that were created after 2010 were examined.

[digitale-edition.de](https://www.digitale-edition.de)

Additionally, the data from the project “Closing the Gap in Non-Latin Script Data” of the Berlin University Alliance (BUA) were used for specifically accessing non-Latin script editions, which were retrieved from the following link:

github.com/M-L-D-H/Closing-The-Gap-In-Non-Latin-Script-Data
(see also the project's website: <https://www.berlin-university-alliance.de/commitments/research-quality/forschung/ongoing/closing-the-gap/index.html>)

⁴¹ A continuation of the research and a more exhaustive analysis can be found in Mahmoud Kozae, “Developing Transcription Software for the Kalila wa-Dimna Project: Applying a Software Engineering Process in Arabic Textual Scholarship” [master's thesis], Freie Universität Berlin, 2022

The absence of software documentation is not a deficiency in a digital edition, and documenting software use is not conventionally a deliverable of an edition project in the humanities. Nonetheless, this absence makes it harder to research and make decisions about software usage.

Averroes Edition	Link	averroes.uni-koeln.de
	Data	Initially TEI/XML, later migrated to SQL
	Software	Specialized internal software: The Averroes Project Manager (APM)
correspSearch	Link	correspsearch.net/en/home.html
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	Several mentioned: correspsearch.net/en/about.html#technology
Scripta Qumranica	Link	qumranica.org
Electronica	Data	SQL/MariaDB
	Software	Specialized internal software: Virtual Research Environment (VRE)
Clusius Correspondence	Link	clusiuscorrespondence.huygens.knaw.nl
	Data	SQL/PostgreSQL
	Software	eLaborate: elaborate.huygens.knaw.nl
Theodor Fontane Notebooks	Link	fontane-nb.dariah.eu
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	TextGrid: textgrid.de
Ferdinand Gregorovius	Link	gregorovius-edition.dhi-roma.it
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	Ediarum: ediarum.org
Lebenswelten Digital	Link	lebenswelten-digital.bbaw.de
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	Ediarum: ediarum.org
Sibley Watson Digital Archive	Link	dslab.lib.rochester.edu
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	Oxygen and ExistDB
Die Ministerratsprotokolle	Link	mrp.oeaw.ac.at/pages/index.html
	Data	TEI/XML
	Software	Workflow extensively described: mrp.oeaw.ac.at/pages/show.html?document=workflows.xml&directory=meta

10 Appendix: Screenshots of the User Interfaces in the Kalila Platform

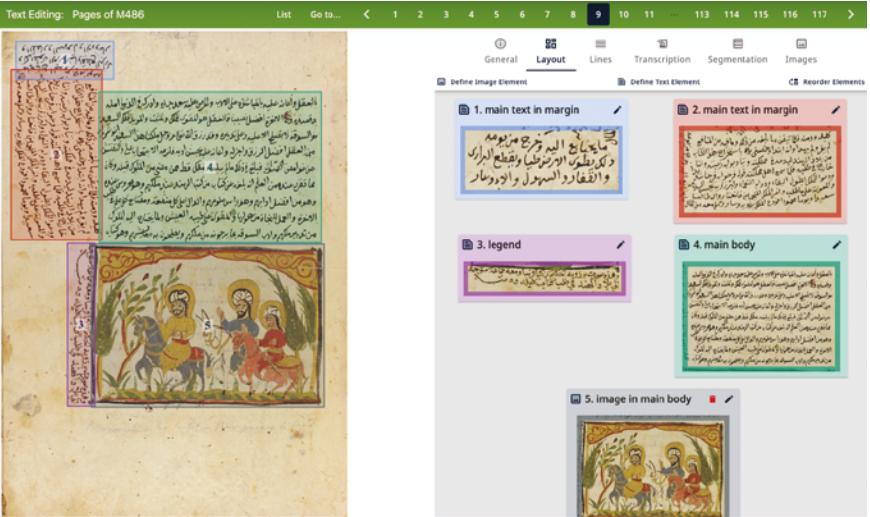


FIGURE 9.10 A screenshot of the layout analysis tool

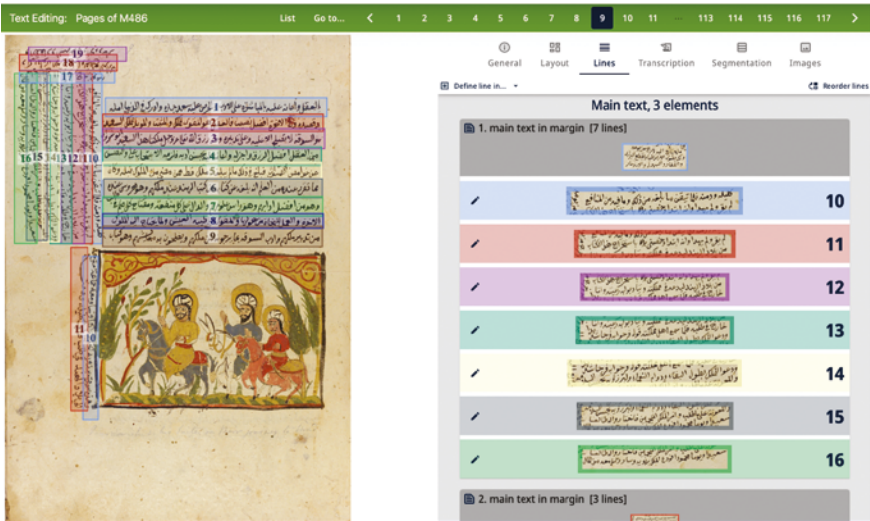


FIGURE 9.11 A screenshot of the line detection tool

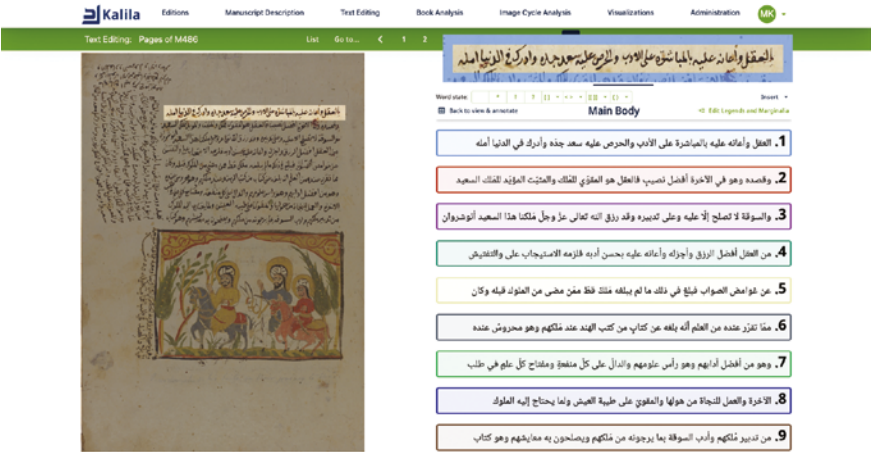


FIGURE 9.12 A screenshot of the transcription tools

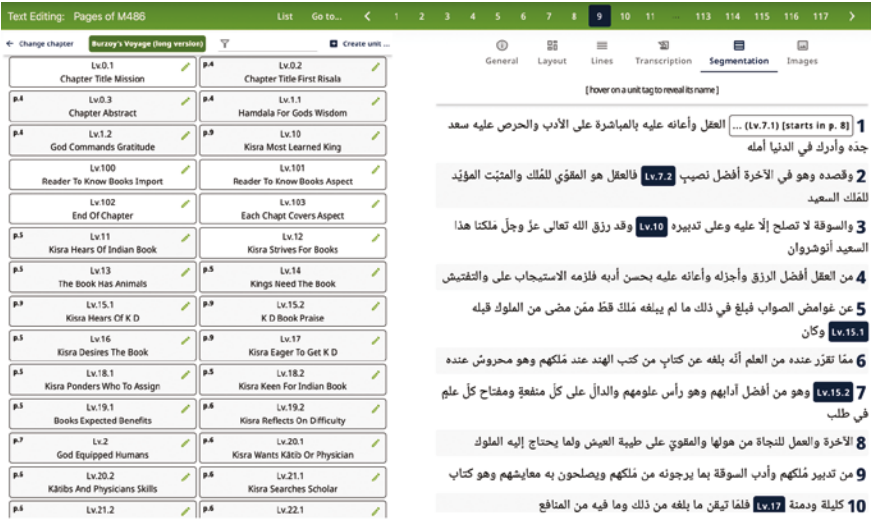


FIGURE 9.13 A screenshot of the narrative segmentation tools

Manuscript Description

Edit BWI file...

Export BWI file as PDF

Export BWI file as JSON

Siglum	Script								
	Type	Hands	Execution	Size	Line spacing	Word spacing	Letter spacing	Stroke direction	Stroke width
A4095	naah	one	naah	normal	noticeably narrow	noticeably narrow	noticeably wide	vertical	
A4213	naah	one	professional	noticeably small	noticeably wide	noticeably narrow		vertical	
A4214									
Al1231									
Al940									
B0022									
B1248									
BE00960									
BE01875									
BW11672	naah	one	naah	noticeably large	noticeably narrow	noticeably narrow		oblique	
C5354									
C6647									
CA11991									
CCCP28	naah	one	naah	normal	noticeably wide	noticeably wide	noticeably wide	vertical	
H170									
I3015									
I344	naah	two	naah					vertical	
L3900	naah	one	naah	normal	noticeably wide			vertical	
L4044	naah	two	naah		noticeably wide			vertical	
L7413									

1 to 20 of 40Page 2 of 4

FIGURE 9.14 A screenshot of a part of the manuscript description summary table

Manuscript Description - Editing BWI file

Catalogue

Pagination

Script

Production

Relation to other manuscripts

Location

Mfm

Orthography

Incipit

Redaction

Dating

Composite manuscript

Language

Explicit

Attachments

Preservation

Layout

Manuscript notes

Table of contents

Binding

Illustrations

Marginalia

Kud

Top

Save

Script

Type

naah

Hands

one

Execution

naah

Size

noticeably large

Line spacing

noticeably narrow

Word spacing

noticeably narrow

Letter spacing

Stroke direction

oblique

Lower curves

Stroke thickness

stable

FIGURE 9.15 A screenshot of a part of the manuscript description input form

Alphabetical List of Manuscripts

Manuscripts of *Kalīla and Dimna*

(119 Arabic and 2 Persian MSS, including fragments and MTMs containing the full or partial text)

MS Aleppo 143 = Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde Salem, Ar. 143 (dated 1241/1826)

MS Aleppo 406 = Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde Salem, Ar. 406 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

MS Arch. Museum EY 344 = Istanbul, Archaeology Museum (Arkeoloji Müzesi), EY 344 (dated 410/1019, and tentatively attributed to the 18th century CE)

MS Ayasofya 4095 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 4095 (dated 618/1221)

MS Ayasofya 4213 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 4213 (dated 880/1476)

MS Ayasofya 4214 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 4214 (datable before 761/1360)

MS Azhariyya 66947 = Cairo, al-Azhariyya, Ms. 66947 (dated 1048/1639)

MS Azhariyya 53544 = Cairo, al-Azhariyya, Ms. 53544 (dated 1230/1815)

MS Baghdad 350 = Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, Ms. 350 (attributed to the 19th century CE)

MS Baghdad 6949 = Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, Ms. 6949 (dated 1114/1704)

MS Beirut 0022(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, Ms. 0022(2) (dated 1263/1847)

MS Beirut 00360(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, Ms. 00360(2) (attributed to the 20th century CE)

MS Beirut 01875 = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, Ms. 01875 (attributed to the 18th century)

MS Bodleian 253 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arab. Ms. 253 (dated 1227/1812)

MS Cambridge Or. 1488 = Cambridge University Library, Or. 1488 (dated 1176/1763)

MS Cambridge Add. 3270 = Cambridge University Library, Add. 3270 (dated 1177/1764)

MS Chicago A 11991 = Chicago, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (formerly Oriental Institute), A 11991 (attributed to the 17th century CE)

MS Chicago A 12101 = Chicago, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (formerly Oriental Institute), A 12101 (undated)

MS Clarke Or. 9 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, E.D. Clarke Or. 9 (attributed to the 14th century CE)

MS Daoudia 285 = Tetouan, Private collection (undated)

MS Dar al-Kutub 824 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 824 (datable before 1276/1860)

- MS Dar al-Kutub 967 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 967 (dated 1030/1621)
- MS Dar al-Kutub 968 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 968 (undated)
- MS Dar al-Kutub 1169 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 1169 (datable before 1290/1874)
- MS Dar al-Kutub 4616 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 4616 (dated 1210/1795)
- MS Dar al-Kutub 9599 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. 9599 (dated before 1159/1746)
- MS Dayr al-Shīr = Dayr al-Shīr, Lebanon (dated 749/1348)
- MS Dublin 4201 = Dublin, Chester Beatty Library. 4201 (attributed to the 16th century CE)
- MS Esad Efendi 3542 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 3542 (undated)
- MS Geniza T-S 40.9 (folio, Arabic script, attributed to ca. 950–1250 CE)
- MS Geniza T-S 51.60 (folio, Arabic script, attributed to ca. 950–1250 CE)
- MS Geniza T-S NS 97.16 (bifolio, Hebrew script, attributed to ca. 950–1250 CE)
- MS Geniza T-S Ar. 006–032 (six bifolios, Hebrew script, attributed to ca. 950–1250 CE)
- MS Gotha A2691 = Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. Orient. A2691 (dated 1192/1778)
- MS Hamburg 170 = Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, cod. orient. 170 (datable before 1321/1904)
- MS Laleli 1793 = Istanbul, Süleymanie Kütüphanesi, Laleli 1793 (dated 1122/1710)
- MS Leiden 1544 = Leiden University Libraries, MS Or. 1544 (datable before 1851)
- MS Leiden 1590 = Leiden University Libraries, MS Or. 1590 (datable before 1786)
- MS London Add. 7413 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 7413 (datable before 1036/1626)
- MS London Add. 7414 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 7414 (dated 1173/1760)
- MS London Add. 23466 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 23466 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
- MS London Add. 24350 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 24350 (attributed to the 14th century CE)
- MS London 2715 = London, British Library, Or. 2715 (dated 1143/1731)
- MS London 3900 = London, British Library, Or. 3900 (dated 1166/1753)
- MS London 4044 = London, British Library, Or. 4044 (attributed to the 15th century CE)
- MS London 8751 = London, British Library, Or. 8751 (dated 799/1396)
- MS Majlis-i Shūrā 16288 = Tehran, Islamic Consultative Assembly Library (Majlis-i Shūrā), Ms. 16288 (dated 601/1205, but actually later)
- MS Malek 1669 = Tehran, Malek National Library and Museum, Ms. 1669 (dated 1161/1748)
- MS Manchester 2 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms. 2 [formerly 486] (dated 1040/1631)
- MS Manchester 60 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms. 60 [formerly 488] (dated 1240/1825)
- MS Manchester 68 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms. 68 (dated 616/1219)
- MS Manchester 537 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, Ms. 537 [formerly 487] (dated 1083/1672)

- MS Mardin 491 = Mardin Chaldean Cathedral Ms. 491 (dated 1115/1704)
- MS Marsh. 68 = MS University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. 68 (dated 616/1219)
- MS Marsh 660 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. 660 (undated)
- MS Marsh 673 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh, Ms. 673 (dated 1063/1653)
- MS Montreal 117953 = Montreal, McGill University Library Ms. 117953 (dated 1055/1645)
- MS Mosul 283 = Mosul, Dominican Friars of Mosul, Ms. 283 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
- MS München 615 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 615 (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE)
- MS München 616 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 616 (dated to ca. 1310–50 CE)
- MS München 617 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 617 (dated 1070/1659)
- MS München 618 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 618 (dated 1044/1634)
- MS New York 1981.373 = New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ms. 1981.373 (datable before 1026/1617)
- MS Ouazzane 442 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, Ms. 442 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
- MS Ouazzane 444 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, Ms. 444 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
- MS Ouazzane 463 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, Ms. 463 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
- MS Paris 2789 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 2789 (dated 1041/1631–1632)
- MS Paris 3465 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3465 (dated to ca. 1220 CE)
- MS Paris 3466 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3466 (datable before 854/1450)
- MS Paris 3467 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3467 (datable before 856/1452)
- MS Paris 3468 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3468 (dated 1005/1597)
- MS Paris 3469 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3469 (attributed to the 14th/16th century CE)
- MS Paris 3470 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3470 (attributed to the 16th century CE)
- MS Paris 3471 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3471 (dated 1053/1643)
- MS Paris 3472 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3472 (dated 1080/1669)
- MS Paris 3473 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3473 (dated 1110/1699)

- MS Paris 3474 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3474 (dated 1156/1744)
- MS Paris 3475 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3475 (dated 1175/1761)
- MS Paris 3476 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3476 (dated 1169/1755)
- MS Paris 3477 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3477 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
- MS Paris 3478 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3478 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
- MS Paris 3479 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3479 (dated 1184/1770)
- MS Paris 3480 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3480 (dated 1200/1786)
- MS Paris 3593 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3593 (undated)
- MS Paris 5881 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5881 (dated 1092/1681)
- MS Parker 578 = University of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, 578 (dated 8th/14th century CE)
- MS Princeton 17L = Princeton University, Garrett Library 17L [Hitti no. 177] (dated 1154/1741)
- MS Princeton 169H = Princeton University Garrett Library 169H [Hitti no. 176] (dated 997/1588)
- MS Pococke 400 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 400 (dated 755/1354)
- MS Rabat 879 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 879 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
- MS Rabat 3655 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 3655 (dated to ca. 1265–1280 CE)
- MS Rabat 4418 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 4418 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
- MS Rabat 4837 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 4837 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
- MS Rabat 5437 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 5437 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
- MS Rabat 12156 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, Ms. 12156 (dated 1110/1699)
- MS Riyadh 1850 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, Ms. 1850 (dated 1208/1794)
- MS Riyadh 2407 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, Ms. 2407 (dated 1103/1691)
- MS Riyadh 2536 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, Ms. 2536 (dated 747/1346)
- MS Riyadh 5786 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, Ms. 5786 (undated)
- MS Riyadh 6146 = Riyadh, King Saud University, Ms. 6146 (datable before 1118/1706)
- MS Riyadh 7053 = Riyadh, King Saud University, Ms. 7053 (dated 1178/1764)
- MS Riyadh 12965 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, Ms. 12965 (undated)
- MS Rome LP 018 = Rome, Saint Anthony Abbot Monastery, LP 018 (dated 1113/1701)
- MS Sarba 989 = Sarba (Jounieh), Ordre Basilien Alepin, Ms. 989 (dated 1127/1715)
- MS Sprenger 1234 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. Or. Sprenger. 1234 (attributed to the 17th century CE)

- MS Sprenger 1246 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. Or. Sprenger. 1246 (dated ca. 900/1494)
- MS Strasbourg 4217 = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale universitaire (dated 1254/1838)
- MS Süleymaniye 03542/6 = Uyûnu Kitab Kelile ve Dümne, Süleymaniye, Esat Efendi 03542/6 (undated MTM, fols. 101v–106r)
- MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015 = Istanbul, Ahmet III Kütüphanesi, Ms. 3015 (dated 727/1327)
- MS Tübingen Ma VI 35 = Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, Ma VI 35 (dated 1243/1827)
- MS Tunis 2281 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 2281 (dated 1076/1666)
- MS Tunis 4459 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 4459 (dated 1277/1861)
- MS Tunis 8623 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 8623 (datable before 1229/1814)
- MS Tunis 9760 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 9760 (datable before 1320/1902)
- MS Tunis 16029 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 16029 (dated 1290/1873)
- MS Tunis 16030 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 16030 (dated 1173/1760)
- MS Tunis 20684(2) = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, Ms. 20684(2) (undated)
- MS Vatican Borg. 213 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Borg. Collect. 213 (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE)
- MS Vatican Borg. 367 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Borg. Collect. 367 (dated 1026/1617)
- MS Vatican Sbath 267 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Sbath Collect. 267 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
- MS Vienna AF 298 = Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. A.F. 298 (dated 1000/1592)
- MS Wetzstein II 672 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830)
- MS Yale A 270 = New Haven, Yale University Library, A 270 (attributed to the 19th century CE)

Other Works

al-Ḥarīrī, *Maqāmāt*

MS Paris 6094 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 6094 (dated 619/1222)

The Seven Sages (here: *Mukhāṭabāt al-wuzarāʾ al-sabʿa*)

MS Glaser 166 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Glaser 166 (dated 1079/1668)

The Thousand and One Nights

MS Paris 3612 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3612 (attributed to the 17th century CE)

Dipy (Diyāb) d'Alep, Pierre, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque du Roi, rédigé en 1677*

MS Paris 4484 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS arabe 4484 (dated 1677)

Uyûnu Kitab Kelile ve Dümne

MS Süleymaniye 0342 = MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi 03542-006 (undated)

Chronological List of Manuscripts

Manuscripts of *Kalila and Dimna*

(119 Arabic and 2 Persian MSS, including fragments and MTMS containing the full or partial text)

950-1250: 4 MSS

1. MS Geniza T-S 40.9 (folio, Arabic script)
2. MS Geniza T-S 51.60 (folio, Arabic script)
3. MS Geniza T-S NS 97.16 (bifolio, Hebrew script)
4. MS Geniza T-S Ar. 006-032 (six bifolios, Hebrew script)

13th century: 4 MSS

1. MS Manchester 68 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS. 68 (dated 616/1219)
2. MS Ayasofya 4095 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, 4095 (dated 618/1221)
3. MS Paris 3465 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3465 (dated to ca. 1220 CE)
4. MS Rabat 3655 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, MS. 3655 (dated to ca. 1265–80 CE)

14th century: 11 MSS

1. MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015 = Ahmet III Kütüphanesi, MS. 3015 (dated 727/1327)
2. MS Riyadh 2536 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, MS. 2536 (dated 747/1346)
3. MS Dayr al-Shīr = Dayr al-Shīr, Lebanon (dated 749/1348)
4. MS München 616 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 616 (dated to ca. 1310–50 CE)
5. MS Pococke 400 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 400 (dated 755/1354)
6. MS Ayasofya 4214 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 4214 (datable before 761/1360)
7. MS London 8751 = London, British Library, Or. 8571 (dated 799/1396)
8. MS Parker 578 = University of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, 578 (dated 8th/14th century CE)
9. MS Clarke Or. 9 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, E. D. Clarke Or. 9 (attributed to the 14th century CE)
10. MS London Add. 24350 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 24350 (attributed to the 14th century CE)
11. MS Paris 3469 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3469 (attributed to the 14th/16th CE)

15th century: 5 MSS

1. MS Paris 3466 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3466 (datable before 854/1450)
2. MS Paris 3467 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3467 (datable before 856/1452)
3. MS Ayasofya 4213 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 4213 (dated 880/1476)
4. MS Sprenger 1246 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, ms. Or. Sprenger. 1246 (dated 900/1494)
5. MS London 4044 = London, British Library, Or. 4044 (attributed to the 15th century CE)

16th century: 5 MSS

1. MS Princeton 169H = Princeton University Garrett Library 169H [Hitti no. 176] (dated 997/1588)
2. MS Vienna AF 298 = Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. A. F. 298 (dated 1000/1592)
3. MS Paris 3468 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3468 (dated 1005/1597)
4. MS Paris 3470 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3470 (attributed to the 16th century CE)
5. MS Dublin 4201 = Dublin, Chester Beatty Library. 4201 (attributed to the 16th century CE)

17th century: 23 MSS

1. MS New York 1981.373 = New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, MS. 1981.373 (datable before 1026/1617)
2. MS Vatican Borg. 367 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Borg. Collect. 367 (dated 1026/1617)
3. MS Dar al-Kutub 967 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, MS. 967 (dated 1030/1621)
4. MS London Add. 7413 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 7413 (datable before 1036/1626)
5. MS Manchester 2 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS. 2 (dated 1040/1631)
6. MS Paris 2789 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 2789 (dated 1041/1631-1632)
7. MS München 618 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 618 (dated 1044/1634)
8. MS Azhariyya 66947 = Cairo, al-Azhariyya, MS. 66947 (dated 1048/1639)
9. MS Paris 3471 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3471 (dated 1053/1643)
10. MS Montreal 117953 = Montreal, McGill University Library, MS. 117953 (dated 1055/1645)

11. MS Marsh 673 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh, MS. 673 (dated 1063/1653)
 12. MS München 617 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 617 (dated 1070/1659)
 13. MS Tunis 2281 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, MS. 2281 (dated 1076/1666)
 14. MS Paris 3472 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3472 (dated 1080/1669)
 15. MS Manchester 537 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS. 537 (dated 1083/1672)
 16. MS Paris 5881 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5881 (dated 1092/1681)
 17. MS Riyadh 2407 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, MS. 2407 (dated 1103/1691)
 18. MS Rabat 12156 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, MS. 12156 (dated 1110/1699)
 19. MS Paris 3473 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3473 (dated 1110/1699)
 20. MS Chicago A 11991 = Chicago, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, A 11991 (attributed to the 17th century CE)
 21. MS Sprenger 1234 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS. Or. Sprenger. 1234 (attributed to the 17th century CE)
 22. MS Vatican Borg. 213 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Borg. Collect. 213 (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE)
 23. MS München 615 = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 615 (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE)
- 18th century: 31 MSS
1. MS Rome LP 018 = Rome, Saint Anthony Abbot Monastery, LP 018 (dated 1113/1701)
 2. MS Baghdad 6949 = Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, MS. 6949 (dated 1115/1704)
 3. MS Mardin 491 = Mardin Chaldean Cathedral, MS. 491 (dated 1115/1704)
 4. MS Riyadh 6146 = Riyadh, King Saud University, MS. 6146 (datable before 1118/1706)
 5. MS Laleli 1793 = Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli 1793 (dated 1122/1710)
 6. MS Sarba 989 = Sarba (Jounieh), Ordre Basilien Alepin, MS. 989 (dated 1127/1715)
 7. MS London 2715 = London, British Library, Or. 2715 (dated 1143/1731)
 8. MS Princeton 17L = Princeton University, Garrett Library 17L [Hitti no. 177] (dated 1154/ 1741)

9. MS Paris 3474 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3474 (dated 1156/1744)
10. MS Dar al-Kutub 9599 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, ms. 9599 (datable before 1159/1746)
11. MS Malek 1669 = Tehran, Malek National Library and Museum, ms. 1669 (dated 1161/1748)
12. MS London 3900 = London, British Library, Or. 3900 (dated 1166/1753)
13. MS Paris 3476 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3476 (dated 1169/1755)
14. MS London Add. 7414 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 7414 (dated 1173/1760)
15. MS Tunis 16030 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, ms. 16030 (dated 1173/1760)
16. MS Paris 3475 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3475 (dated 1175/1761)
17. MS Cambridge Or. 1488 = Cambridge University Library, Or. 1488 (dated 1176/1763)
18. MS Riyadh 7053 = Riyadh, King Saud University, ms. 7053 (dated 1178/1764)
19. MS Cambridge Add. 3270 = Cambridge University Library, Add. 3270 (dated 1177/1764)
20. MS Paris 3479 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3479 (dated 1184/1770)
21. MS Gotha A2691 = Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, ms. Orient. A2691 (dated 1192/1778)
22. MS Leiden 1590 = Leiden University Libraries, MS Or. 1590 (datable before 1200/1786)
23. MS Paris 3480 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3480 (dated 1200/1786)
24. MS Riyadh 1850 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, ms. 1850 (dated 1208/1794)
25. MS Dar al-Kutub 4616 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, ms. 4616 (dated 1210/1795)
26. MS Paris 3477 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3477 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
27. MS Paris 3478 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3478 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
28. MS Beirut 01875 = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, ms. 01875 (attributed to the 18th century)
29. MS Aleppo 406 = Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde Salem, Ar. 406 (attributed to the 18th century CE)
30. MS London Add. 23466 = London, British Library, Or. Add. 23466 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

31. MS Vatican Sbath 267 = Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Sbath Collect. 267 (attributed to the 18th century CE)

19th century: 21 MSS

1. MS Bodleian 253 = University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arab. ms. 253 (dated 1227/1812)
2. MS Tunis 8623 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, ms. 8623 (datable before 1229/1814)
3. MS Azhariyya 53544 = Cairo, al-Azhariyya, ms. 53544 (dated 1230/1815)
4. MS Manchester 60 = Manchester, John Rylands Library, ms. 60 (dated 1240/1825)
5. MS Aleppo 143 = Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde Salem, Ar. 143 (dated 1241/1826)
6. MS Tübingen Ma VI 35 = Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, Ma VI 35 (dated 1243/1827)
7. MS Wetzstein II 672 = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 672 (dated 1246/1830)
8. MS Strasbourg 4217 = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale universitaire (dated 1254/1838)
9. MS Beirut 0022(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, ms. 0022(2) (dated 1263/1847)
10. MS Leiden 1544 = Leiden University Libraries, ms Or. 1544 (datable before 1851)
11. MS Dar al-Kutub 824 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, ms. 824 (datable before 1276/1860)
12. MS Tunis 4459 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, ms. 4459 (dated 1277/1861)
13. MS Tunis 16029 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, ms. 16029 (dated 1290/1873)
14. MS Dar al-Kutub 1169 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, ms. 1169 (datable before 1290/1874)
15. MS Baghdad 350 = Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, ms. 350 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
16. MS Rabat 4418 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, ms. 4418 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
17. MS Rabat 879 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, ms. 879 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
18. MS Rabat 4837 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, ms. 4837 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
19. MS Rabat 5437 = Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat, ms. 5437 (attributed to the 19th century CE)
20. MS Mosul 283 = Mosul, Dominican Friars of Mosul, ms. 283 (attributed to the 19th century CE)

21. MS Yale A 270 = New Haven, Yale University Library, A 270 (attributed to the 19th century CE)

19th/20th century: 6 MSS

1. MS Tunis 9760 = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, MS. 9760 (datable before 1320/1902)
2. MS Hamburg 170 = Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, cod. orient. 170 (datable before 1321/1904)
3. MS Ouazzane 442 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, MS. 442 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
4. MS Ouazzane 444 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, MS. 444 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
5. MS Ouazzane 463 = Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif Mosque Library, MS. 463 (attributed to the 19th/20th century CE)
6. MS Beirut 00360(2) = Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, MS. 00360(2) (attributed to the 20th century CE)

Problematic colophons: 2 MSS

1. MS Arch. Museum EY 344 = Istanbul, Archaeology Museum (Arkeoloji Müzesi), EY 344 (dated 410/1019, and tentatively attributed to the 18th century CE)
2. MS Majlis-i Shūrā 16288 = Tehran, Islamic Consultative Assembly Library (Majlis-i Shūrā), MS. 16288 (dated 601/1205, but actually later)

Undated: 8 MSS

1. MS Chicago A 12101 = Chicago, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, A 12101 (undated)
2. MS Daoudia 285 = Tetouan, Private collection (undated)
3. MS Dar al-Kutub 968 = Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, MS. 968 (undated)
4. MS Marsh 660 = Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. 660 (undated)
5. MS Riyadh 12965 = Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library, MS. 12965 (undated)
6. MS Tunis 20684(2) = Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, MS. 20684(2) (undated)
7. MS Paris 3593 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 3593 (undated)
8. MS Süleymaniye 03542/6 = Uyûnu Kitab Kelile ve Dümne, Süleymaniye, Esat Efendi 03542/6 (undated MTM, fols. 101v-106r)

List of Manuscripts Online

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

MS Sprenger 1234: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN826489192&PHYSID=PHYS_0007
MS Sprenger 1246: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN826495370&PHYSID=PHYS_0007
MS Wetzstein 11 672: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN872626938&PHYSID=PHYS_0004
MS Glaser 166: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN822102633&PHYSID=PHYS_0577&DMDID=DMDLOG_0002

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library

MS Parker 578: <https://purl.stanford.edu/yg734tn1217>

Cambridge, Geniza Fragments

MS Geniza T-S 40.9: <https://geniza.princeton.edu/en/documents/8261/>
MS Geniza T-S 51.60: <https://geniza.princeton.edu/en/documents/8299/> (no picture)
Further Geniza fragments of Kalila are available on this site: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/search?author=&excludeText=&expandFacet=&facetCollection=Cairo%20Genizah&facetSubject=Cairo%20Genizah&fileID=&fullText=&keyword=T-S&language=&location=&page=4&place=&recallScale=0.0&shelfLocator=&subject=&tagging=1&textJoin=and&title=>

Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

MS Hamburg 170: <https://resolver.sub.uni-hamburg.de/kitodo/PPN167755598X>

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (registering an account is required)

Ayasofya 4095: <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/205338>
Ayasofya 4213: <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/205656>
Ayasofya 4214: <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/205657>
Laleli 1793: <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/299829>
Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi 03542-006: <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/189310>

Leiden University Libraries

MS Leiden 1544: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:3668514>
MS Leiden 1590: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:3668403>

Manchester, The University of Manchester Library

MS Manchester 2: <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~91~1~376315~125577?sort>

MS Manchester 60: <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~91~1~446338~291386>

MS Manchester 68: <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Man4MedievalVC~4~4~990836~144805>

MS Manchester 537: <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~91~1~376327~220513?qvq=q:Arabic%20MS%20537>

Montréal, McGill Library

MS Montreal 117953: <https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-117953-1402/page/n5/mode/2up>

München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

MS München 615: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00077202-5>

MS München 616: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00045958-2>

MS München 617: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00130221-0>

MS München 618: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00130222-6>

MS München 619: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00126183-2>

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

MS New York 1981.373: <https://www.metmuseum.org/de/art/collection/search?q=kalila+dimna&material=Codices&era=A.D.+1400-1600&sortBy=AccessionNumber>

Oxford, Bodleian Library

MS Pococke 400: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/8face4cc-d7dc-4ec6-8315-64b8c171dd76/>

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

MS Paris 2789: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105154068>

MS Paris 3465: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84229611>

MS Paris 3466: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10329769c>

MS Paris 3467: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84152188>

MS Paris 3468: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515455w>

MS Paris 3469: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10510992c>

MS Paris 3470: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10536274g>

MS Paris 3471: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515457s>

MS Paris 3472: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8453971j>

MS Paris 3473: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515454f>

MS Paris 3474: <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc31370j>
MS Paris 3475: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84539771>
MS Paris 3476: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515407q>
MS Paris 3477: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515468n>
MS Paris 3478: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10510991x>
MS Paris 3479: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515459p>
MS Paris 3480: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105154530>
MS Paris 3593: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11003175f>
MS Paris 3612: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11003000x>
MS Paris 4484: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11003978t>
MS Paris 5881: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84539756>
MS Paris 6094: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422967h>

Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie

MS Tunis 2281: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1839012/>
MS Tunis 4459: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1200697/>
MS Tunis 8623: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1831488/>
MS Tunis 9760: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1831485/>
MS Tunis 16029: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1796964/>
MS Tunis 16030: <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1796954/>
MS Tunis 20684(2): <https://www.bibliotheque.nat.tn/BNT/doc/SYRACUSE/1814620/>

Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

MS Vatican Borg. 213: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.ar.213
MS Vatican Sbath 267: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Sbath.267

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Index of Names and Works

- Abān al-Lāḥiqī 7n23, 217, 233
 Abbasid(s) 152–154, 183, 194, 207n68, 216,
 232–234
 ‘Abdallāh b. Hārūn 205. *See also* al-Ma’mūn
 ‘Abd al-Ḥamid Zāhidī (“the Ascetic”) 201
 ‘Abd al-Jabbār, Qāḍī 219
 ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Iskāfī 201
 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bustī 201
 Abdisho’ bar Brikā 153
Catalogue of Syriac Books 153
 Abraham 188n13. *See also* Ibrāhīm
 Abū Bakr (caliph) 188n13
 Abū Nuwās, al-Ḥasan b. Hānī’ 204n62, 234
 Abu Tammām 182
al-Ḥamāsa 182
 Aesop 154
Fables 154
 Akel, Ibrahim 253
 Aleppo 244–245, 248, 260
 ‘Alī al-Riḍā 233
 ‘Alī b. al-Shāh al-Fārisī (Bahnūd b. Ṣaḥwān)
 15, 69nn2 & 77, 182, 246
 ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismā’īl 186, 203
 ‘Alī b. ‘Ubayda al-Rayḥānī 217, 234
 ‘Alī Khayyāt (“the Tailor”) 201
 Amadiya (town) 155
 Amīn, Muḥammad al- 205, 232–233
 Anonymous
al-Asad wa-l-ghawwās 223
Alexander Romance 152
 Indian Book, The 238, 242, 253. *See also*
Kalīla wa-Dimna
Kalilag and Dimnag 151, 153, 157, 164
Karīrak ud Damanak 6
The Thousand and One Nights 2n6,
 3n8, 36n54, 142–43, 147, 240, 242–243,
 246–247, 253, 260, 296
 Anūshirwān. *See* Khusrav
Aparīkṣitakāritva 79. *See also* Pañcatantra
 Ardashīr-i Bābak 185, 190n18, 193. *See also*
 Ardashīr-i Bābakān
 Ardashīr-i Bābakān. *See* Ardashīr-i Bābak
 Ape and Tortoise (*al-qird wa-l-ghaylam*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 Arabic Preface, The (*gharaḍ al-kitāb*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 Ascetic and His Guest, The (*al-nāsik
 wa-l-dayf*) (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 Ascetic and Weasel, The (*al-nāsik wa-bn ‘irs*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 ‘Azzām, ‘Abd al-Waḥhāb 3, 20, 91
 Baghdad 186, 203–205, 216, 217nn11–12,
 232–234
 Bahnūd b. Ṣaḥwān. *See* ‘Alī b. al-Shāh
 al-Fārisī
 Bahrāmshāh, Abū l-Muẓaffar (Ghaznavid)
 181, 183, 186–187, 194–196, 211–212
 Banū Ḥanīfa (tribal name) 199
 Bānūsī (place name) 198
 Bar Bahlul 153
 Barmakid(s) 216, 217nn11, 232–234
 Barzawayh. *See* Burzūya
 Bashshār b. Burd 234
 Basra 216–217, 232–234
 Baydabā’ 73. *See also* Bīdpāy
 Bayhaqī, al-
Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī 182
 Bhiṣma 155–157, 163
 Bīdpāy (Persian spelling) 120, 122, 126, 128,
 209. *See also* Baydabā’
 Bilād (variants Bilād, Bilādh, Iblād, Īlādh)
 15, 73, 89–90, 107, 118, 130, 145
 Bilād. *See* Bilād
 Bilādh. *See* Bilād
 Bī’r Maymūn (place name) 205
 Blau, Joshua 239, 241
 Bū Ḥalīm (family) 195
 Būd 153
 Bulaq Press 13
 Burhān al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rashīd b. Naṣr 201
 Burzōe 216n3. *See also* Burzūya
 Burzoy. *See* Burzūya
 Burzūya (variants Barzawayh, Burzōe,
 Burzoy) 15, 77–78, 182, 184, 210, 246
 Burzūya’s Voyage (long version) (*ba’tḥat
 Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*) (chapter). *See*
Kalīla wa-Dimna
 Burzūya’s Voyage (short version) (*ba’tḥat
 Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind*) (chapter). *See*
Kalīla wa-Dimna
 Buzurgmihr 15, 30, 77–78, 186, 210, 216, 246

- Cairo Geniza 11, 35, 108, 110
 Cairo Geniza fragments 108, 238n3.
See also MS Geniza in List of Manuscripts
- Çelebi, 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī
Humāyūn-nāmeḥ 7, 242
- Çelebi, Kātib 242
Kashf al-ẓunūn 242
- Chaghāniyān (place name) 198
- Cheikho, Louis 3, 20, 91
- Chraībi, Aboubakr 240
- Dabshalīm (variant Sādūm) 73, 77, 120, 122, 126, 128, 209
- Dāmghān (place name) 198
- Dastmaysān (place name) 216
- David (prophet) 185, 192
- Dehkhoda 196n36, 209n72
- Dhū l-Rumma 197n39
- Dipy, Pierre. *See* Buṭrus Diyāb
- Diyāb (Dīb), Buṭrus 245–46
- Dove, Fox, and Heron, The (*al-ḥamāma wa-l-tha'lab wa-malik al-ḥazīn*) (chapter).
See *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
- Egypt 198, 201, 245n34
- Faḍl b. al-Rabī', al- 232–33
- Faḍl b. Sahl b. Zadhānfarūkh, al- 233
- Fākhir b. Nāṣir 201
- Farīdūn (Farīdūn, Afrīdūn) 164
- Fayrūz (name of rat in Mc) 164
- Galland, Antoine 242, 246–247
- Ghazālī, al- 190m18
Iḥyā' ulūm al-dīn 190m18
- Ghaznavīd(s) 181, 183, 185–187, 194
- Ghaznīn 198
- Gurgān 198, 205, 208
- Ḥādī, al- 205. *See also* Muḥammad Mūsā b. al-Mahdī
- Halbat. *See* Īrākht
- Halīth. *See* Īrākht
- Ḥarīrī, al- 103, 139, 295
Maqāmāt 103, 138, 295
- Hārūn b. al-Mahdī 205, 232
- Hasan Bar Bahlul. *See* Bar Bahlul
- Hindūstān 198
- Hormīzd 70n6, 151, 155
- Ḥūraftāh 89, 149
- Ibn 'Abd Rabbiḥī 226n39, 232n61
al-Iqd al-farīd 226n39, 232n61
- Ibn al-Habbāriyya 7n23, 72, 92, 253
Natā'ij al-fitna 72n14
- Ibn al-Muqaffā', 'Abdallāh (Rozbeh)
 6–9, 24, 30–32, 45, 46–54, 77–78, 80–81, 103, 108, 158, 165, 181–186, 204, 209, 215, 217, 219, 225, 228, 230–231, 234–237, 241, 243–244, 246
al-Adab al-saghīr 228, 235
- Ibn Zafar al-Ṣiqillī 7n23
- Iblād 73. *See also* Bilād
- Ibrāhīm. *See* Abraham
- Ibrāhīm, Abū l-Muẓaffar (Ghaznavīd) 194, 196
- Ibrākht 73, 84–85, 90, 256. *See also* Īrākht
- Ibzākht 89. *See also* Īrākht
- Īlādh 107, 141, 145. *See also* Bilād
- Īrākht (variants Ibrākht, Halbat, Halīth) 15, 118, 145–146
- 'Isā-Ābād (place name) 205
- Iṣfahān 198, 208
- Iṣṭakhrī, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al- 198n45
al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik 198n45
- Ja'far b. Yaḥyā (Barmakīd) 216n5, 232–33
- Jāḥiẓ, 'Amr b. Baḥr al- 218, 232
al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn 218n15
al-Bukhalā' 219n21
- Kabābirūn (variants Kabābirūn, Kanāyirūn, Kanābābirūn, Kābāriyūn; Syriac: Kint'run; Persian: Kar-Idun) 71–72, 75, 91
- Kābāriyūn 118. *See also* Kabābirūn
- Kābul 198
- Kalīla wa-Dimna*, prefaces and chapters
 Ape and Tortoise (*al-qird wa-l-ghaylam*) (At) 15, 79
 Arabic Preface (*gharaḍ al-kitāb*) (Im) 15, 26, 30–31, 36–37, 246
 Ascetic and His Guest (*al-nāsik wa-l-ḍayf*) (Ag) 15, 80, 82, 249

Kalīla wa-Dimna (cont.)

Ascetic and Weasel (*al-nāsik wa-bn 'irs*)

(Aw) 15, 79, 244, 252

Burzūya's Voyage (long version) (*ba'that*

Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind) (Lv) 15,

184, 216n3, 246

Burzūya's Voyage (short version) (*ba'that*

Burzūya ilā bilād al-Hind) (Sv) 15,

79n2, 77–78, 82

Dove, Fox, and Heron (*al-ḥamāma*

wa-l-tha'lab wa-malik al-ḥazn) (Df)

15, 79n2, 88

King and Bird (*al-malik wa-l-tā'ir Fanza*)

(Kb) 15, 79

King and His Dreams (*Bilād/Īlād wa-Bilād*

wa-Īrakht) (Kd) 15, 69–102, 107,

117–118, 120–124, 148, 244, 249

King of the Mice (*Mihṛāy/Mihṛār malik*

al-jurdhān) (Km) 15, 79n2, 81, 88–89,

97

King's Son and His Companions

(*ibn al-malik wa-aṣḥābuhū*) (Ks) 15

Life of Burzūya (*Burzūya li-Buzurgmīhr b.*

al-Bakhtikān) (Bu) 15, 162, 184, 216n3

Lion and Jackal (*al-asad wa-bn āwā*

wa-l-nāsik) (Lj) 12, 15, 24n21, 25n25,

223n30, 224, 249n45

Lion and Ox (*al-asad wa-l-thawr*) (Lo)

11n31, 15, 224, 228, 234n67, 235, 244

Lioness and Horseman (*al-labwa*

wa-l-aswār wa-l-sha'har) (Lh) 15

Mouse and Cat (*al-juradh wa-l-sinnawr*)

(Mc) 15, 24n21, 29n36, 37–40,

43–44, 60, 67–68, 163–80

Owls and Crows (*al-būm wa-l-ghirbān*)

(Oc) 13, 15, 24n21, 25, 42n68, 43,

147n55, 158, 223–224

Preface by 'Alī b. al-Shāh (*muqaddimat*

al-kitāb) (As) 15, 69n2, 77

Ring-Dove (*al-ḥamāma l-muṭawwaqa*)

(Rd) 11n31, 13, 15, 25, 79, 86, 228

Traveller and Goldsmith (*al-sā'ih*

wa-l-ṣā'igh) (Tg) 15

Trial of Dimna (*al-faḥṣ 'an amr Dimna*)

(Di) 15, 26n26, 79–80, 184

Two Kingfishers and Whimbrel (*al-'uljūm*

wa-l-mirzam) (Kw) 12, 15, 28, 82, 89,

91, 96–98, 101

Kālinjar (place name) 198

Kar-Idun 71n11. *See also* Kabābirūn

Kāshifī, Ḥusayn Vā'iz 94, 182, 242

Anvār-i Suhaylī 7, 94n63, 242

Khurāsān (place name) 198, 208, 232, 234

Khusraw (Kisrā) Anūshirwān 77–78, 151,

186, 216, 218

Khwārazm (place name) 198

Khwārazmī, Abū Bakr, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad

al- (poet and secretary) 201n55

King and Bird (*al-malik wa-l-tā'ir Fanza*)

(chapter). *See Kalīla wa-Dimna*

King and His Dreams, The (*Bilād/Īlād*

wa-Bilād wa-Īrakht) (chapter). *See Kalīla*

wa-Dimna

King of the Mice, The (*Mihṛāy/Mihṛār*

malik al-jurdhān) (chapter). *See Kalīla*

wa-Dimna

King's Son and His Companions, The (*ibn*

al-malik wa-aṣḥābuhū) (chapter). *See*

Kalīla wa-Dimna

Kint'run 71n11. *See also* Kabābirūn

Kirmān (place name) 198, 208

Kisrā. *See* Khusraw

Labdhapranāśana 79. *See also* Pañcatantra

Lentin, Jérôme 239, 241, 243

Life of Burzūya, The (*Burzūya li-Buzurgmīhr*

b. al-Bakhtikān) (chapter). *See Kalīla*

wa-Dimna

Lion and Hare (*al-asad wa-l-arnaba*)

(tale) 248n41, 256

Lion and Jackal (*al-asad wa-bn āwā*

wa-l-nāsik) (chapter). *See Kalīla*

wa-Dimna

Lion and Ox (*al-asad wa-l-thawr*) (chapter).

See Kalīla wa-Dimna

Lioness and Horseman (*al-labwa wa-l-aswār*

wa-l-sha'har) (chapter). *See Kalīla*

wa-Dimna

Lomaša 156, 164

Luqmān 98

Ma'mūn, 'Abdallāh al- 216, 218, 233–234

Ma'mūn, al- ("the Trusted"). *See* 'Abdallāh b.

Hārūn

Mahābhārata 6, 8, 11, 24, 70, 79–83, 151, 155,

157–159, 163–165

- Mahdī, al- (“the Rightly Guided”). *See*
 Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr
 Maḥmūd, Abū l-Qāsim (Ghaznavid) 194,
 197–199
 Maḥmūd Nishāpūrī 201
 Maḥmūd Sagzī 201
 Man in the Well (allegory) 113–114, 117, 141,
 144
 Maṣṣūr, Abū Jaʿfar al- 204–205
 Maṣṣūra 198
 Mardin 155
 Marzūq, Abū l-Ṣabāḥ (fictional character)
 220–21, 224–26, 228–29, 234
 Māsabazān (place name) 205
 Maṣʿūd, Abū Saʿd (Ghaznavid) 194
 Maṣʿūdī, al- 218
 Merchant and His Partner, The (tale) 31, 33,
 36–37, 51–52, 57
 Mīnuvī, Muḥtabā 184, 187
 Mouse and Cat (*al-juradh wa-l-sinnawr*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 Mubashshir Razavī Adīb (“the Littérateur”)
 201
 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamid b. Ishāq, Qāzī
 201
 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib
 (Prophet) 184, 189
 Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr 205
 Muḥammad b. ʿUṣmān Bustī 201
 Muḥammad Khabbāzī (“the Baker”) 201
 Muḥammad Mūsā b. al-Mahdī 205
 Muḥammad Nishāpūrī 201
 Muḥammad Sayfī 201
 Mukābir, Abū l-Firāʾ or Abū l-Idāʾ (fictional
 character) 220–221, 228, 234
 Mukrān (place name) 198
 Mūltān (place name) 198
 Mustarshid bi-Llāh, al- 205. *See also* Abū
 Maṣṣūr al-Faḍl
 Mutanabbī, Abū Tayyib al- 182
 Muzaʿfar b. al-Maṣṣūr, al- (fictional
 character) 220–21

 Nahrwāla (place name) 198
 Naqqāsh, Jalāl al-Dīn al- 7n23
 Naṣr 11 b. Aḥmad, Abū l-Ḥasan (Samanid)
 186

 Naṣr al-Dīn. *See* Sabuktagīn
 Naṣr Allāh Munshī, Abū l-Maʿālī 7, 13,
 25n25, 72, 93n60, 181–212
 Kalīla wa-Dimna 181–212
 Nau, Francois 155
 Nimrod 188n13
 Nīmruz (place name) 198
 Nishāpūr 216
 Nöldeke, Theodor 78

 Owls and Crows (*al-būm wa-l-ghirbān*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

 Palita (name of mouse in Mc) 156, 164
Pañcatantra 6, 8, 11, 70, 79–83, 151, 155, 158,
 163–164
 Paris 239, 245, 252
 Parit (name of mouse in Mc) 164, 169
 Parvan 151. *See also* *Mahābhārata*,
 Śānti-Parvan
 Pinault, David 242
 Pradyōta, Canda (king) 70
 Preface by ʿAlī b. al-Shāh, The (*muqaddimat*
 al-kitāb) (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

 Qannawj (river) 198
 Qūmis (place name) 198
 Quraysh (tribal name) 188n13
 Qurʾān 9, 116, 182–183, 190–191, 199, 222, 227,
 231, 236. *See also* *sūra*
 Quṣḍār (place name) 198
 Quṭāmī, ʿUmayr b. Shuyaym al- 226

 Rabbāt al-Ḥalabī, Aḥmad al- 13, 107n14, 115,
 239, 252–256
 Rabīʾ b. Yūnus, al- 207n68, 232
 Rashīd, al- (“the Rightly Guided”). *See* Hārūn
 b. al-Mahdī
 Ray (place name) 198, 208
 Rhoma (name of cat in Mc) 164, 169
 Ring-Dove, The (*al-ḥamāma l-muṭawwaqa*)
 (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
 Rozbeh. *See* Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ
 Rūdakī (poet) 186
 Rūmī (name of cat in Mc) 164
 Russell, Patrick 260–261
 Ruzbeh (fictional character) 234n67

- Sabuktagin, Abū Maṣṣūr Nāṣir al-Dīn
(Ghaznavid) 194, 197–198
- Sādūm 92. *See also* Dabshalīm
- Safar, Athanasius 248
- Šāghānī, al- 7n23, 92
- Sahl b. Hārūn 10, 215–219, 232–235
al-Namir wa-l-tha'lab (The Panther and the Fox) 10, 215, 219
Tadbīr al-mulūk 218
Tha'la wa-'Afra 218–219
al-Wāmiq wa-l-'adhrā' 218
- Samanid(s) 186, 208
- Šānti-Parvan 151, 156n19. *See also*
Mahābhārata
- Sarandīb 198
- Sa'īd Bākhazī 201
- Šā'id Mayhanī 201
- Sbath, Paul 248
- Seven Sages, Seven Viziers* 143, 253, 260
- Shāfi'ī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs al- 202n57
- Shklovsky, Victor 261–262
- Sibapūra (place name) 198
- Sila-yi 'Umar (place name) 198
- Silvestre de Sacy, Antoine 10, 13, 19–20,
77n24, 80–81, 91, 244–245, 249,
252–253, 262
- Sinbad, Book of (Sindbād-nāma)*. *See* *Seven Sages/Seven Viziers*
- Sind (place name) 198
- Sivastān (Sistān) (place name) 198
- Solomon 98
- Sprengling, Martin 5, 80, 82, 88, 100, 249
- Sūmnāt (Somnath) (place name) 198
- Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (Q 33:56) 189n16
- Sūrat al-Ḥadīd (Q 57:25) 184, 191n24
- Sūrat al-Ḥaṣhr (Q 59:13) 191n20
- Sūrat al-Naḥl (Q 16:90) 192n26
- Sūrat al-Nisā' (Q 4:59) 190n17
- Sūrat Fāṭir (Q 35:28) 191n23
- Sūrat Ṣād (Q 38:3) 227n44
- Sūrat Ṣād (Q 38:26) 192n25
- Ṭabaristān 198, 208
- Ṭāriq, Abū l-Mughallas (fictional character) 221, 226
- Taşköprüzade, Ahmet 242n19
Miftāh al-sa'āda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda 242n19
- Thackston, Wheeler 183, 187
- Tha'ālibī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'il 208
Ghurur al-siyar 208
- Tirmiz 198
- Tiz 198
- Traveller and Goldsmith (*al-sā'iḥ wa-l-ṣā'iḡh*) (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
- Trial of Dimna, The (*al-faḥṣ 'an amr Dimna*) (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
- Two Kingfishers and Whimbrel (*al-'uljūm wa-l-mīrzam*) (chapter). *See* *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
- Ṭūs (place name) 205
- 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (caliph) 190, 226n40
- 'Umar b. Dāwūd al-Fārisī 81, 93n60, 202n58
Siyar al-mulūk 81, 93n60, 186n10,
202n58, 204n62
- 'Umar b. Shabba 190n19
- 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (caliph) 226–227
- 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (caliph) 190n19
- Vansleb. *See* Wansleben
- Versteegh, Kees 251
- Wansleben, Johann Michael 245–246
- Wetzstein, Johann G. 254
- Yaḥyā b. Khālīd b. Barmak 216, 232
- Yamīn al-Dawla. *See* Maḥmūd, Abū l-Qāsim
- Ya'qūbī, Abū l-'Abbās al- 82
Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī 82n43
- Yawziya (place name) 198
- Yazdijird-i Shahriyār (Sasanid) 204
- Yudhiṣṭhira 155–156, 163
- Yemen 198
- Zābulistān (place name) 198
- Ziyād al-A'jam 159n31

Index of Subjects and Terms

- abridgement(s) 157, 219, 235
- actualization, linguistic 5, 34
- adab* 9, 32, 181–183, 187, 218, 220–221, 225, 227–228, 231, 234–236
- adaptation, linguistic 5
- al-jidd wa-l-hazl* 182
- allegory 78, 113
- amthāl*. *See mathal*
- analogy, analogies. *See mathal*
- animal fables. *See fables*
- animals, talking 219, 223
- anonymity, anonymous 1, 2, 5, 14, 41, 163, 222–223, 230, 242
- anthology, anthologies 225, 231, 235
- Application Programming Interface (API) 284
- ‘arabīyya*. *See classical Arabic*
- Aramaic 152–153, 157, 166
- āyāt*, sing. *āya* 189, 210

- bāṭin* 35, 192
- bayt al-ḥikma* 217, 233
- bicultural 233, 235
- bilingual 166, 182, 233
- biliterate 186
- Brahmin(s), Brahman(s) 70–77, 84–87, 91, 118, 120–122, 126–130, 133–139, 141, 203, 209, 250
- Buddhism, Buddhist 6, 70–71, 73, 80, 94, 117
- Byzantine 138

- calculations 40, 266, 270–271
- caliph 183, 186, 194, 204, 205, 208, 216–218, 226, 232–234
- caption(s) (of image) 5, 30n37, 88, 104, 106–119, 125, 130, 132, 139–146, 282
- Castilian. *See Old Castilian*
- chaîne opératoire* 112
- chapter(s)
 - blocks of 11
 - sequence of 5, 158, 246,
 - stable 28n34, 69–70, 77
 - unstable 28n34, 69, 77, 81–83, 90–91, 97
- Chinese 1n2, 5n16, 71, 94
- Christian(s) 21, 32, 141, 151–154, 161–166, 240, 244, 248, 253
 - Arabic-speaking 248
- christianization 40n65, 159n25
- Church of the East 152
- classical Arabic 9, 20, 23, 32, 237–238.
 - See also fushā*
- cluster group (of manuscripts) 100
- collation marks 108m17. *See also* manuscripts notes
- colloquial language/register 238–241, 257
- colloquialism. *See colloquial language/register*
- commentary 9–10
- continuum, continua 5, 11–14, 22–44, 55–58, 67, 83–91, 96–97, 100–104, 130–131, 241, 245n34, 254, 257. *See also Iberian Continuum*, London continuum, Paris continuum, Queen continuum
- Coptic 32
- copy, copies, near-verbatim 13–14, 20, 22m15, 25–28, 35, 40–44, 55, 71, 80–88, 90–101, 107, 112, 114, 131, 139, 147, 155, 181, 185, 203, 237, 241–257, 260, 262
- copyist(s) 1, 5, 13, 28, 30, 34, 69, 72, 86, 103–104, 107n14, 114, 116, 140n42, 154, 158, 198n46, 238–239, 244, 246, 248, 255, 260–261
- copyist-redactor(s) 5, 12–13, 20, 23, 28–29, 33–34, 41–42, 112, 147, 215, 219, 236, 255
- core group (of manuscripts) 100, 102
- cross-copying (of text) 5, 12–13, 27–28, 38n60, 40–41, 44, 55–59, 81, 86, 98–101, 139n42, 142, 146, 159, 239, 243, 245n32, 249, 257; (of images) 142, 146
- cultural hybridization 234

- data abstraction 267–268, 271, 274
- data record 267, 270
- defamiliarization (*ostranenie*) 261–262
- descriptive data 278–279
- dialect. *See colloquial language, register*
- didactic 105, 157, 221, 223, 236
- digital infrastructure 3
- digital tool(s) 4

- digitalization 3
dihqān 192
- Ediarum 274–275, 287
- edition(s), synoptic 41, 276. *See also*
 scholarly digital edition
- enframed stories 105, 144, 147*n*55. *See also*
 narratives
- enrichment (of versions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*)
 12, 14. *See also* cross-copying
- explicit 29, 41, 91, 163
- Extensible Markup Language (XML) 268,
 270–275, 280–281, 287
- fable(s), animal fable(s) 6, 9, 69–73, 79–80,
 83, 96, 151, 153–166, 185–186, 218
- firmware 266
- frame (around text block) 106*n*11, 107, 116,
 119*n*34
 ~ dialogue 30, 41, 73, 77, 142, 147,
 157–158, 163–164, 242, 246, 260. *See also*
 narrative
 ~ story 77, 119, 142, 157–158, 163–164.
See also stories, embedded/enframed
- friendship 37–40, 63–68, 79, 156, 160–162,
 165, 167–168, 174, 177–178, 180, 193, 201,
 203, 226
- fushā* (classical standard, “pure language”)
 238–241, 243, 249, 251–252, 254–257,
 261. *See also* classical Arabic
- gap (missing image) 88, 104*n*5, 107–111, 114,
 116–117, 119, 132, 142, 145
- governance 151, 155–157, 185, 190, 192–195,
 197–199, 203–204, 209–210, 212. *See also*
 kingship
- government scribes. *See* *kuttāb*
- Greek 5*n*16, 7, 10, 12, 32, 152
- group (of manuscripts) 4–6, 11–15, 21–22,
 25–28, 57–58, 79–84, 87–93, 96–102,
 106, 108–109, 117, 119, 124–126, 128,
 130–147, 201, 217, 239–240, 245,
 249–250, 252, 257, 281. *See also* core
 group; cluster group
- Ḥadīth (corpus) 9, 182–186, 227, 231
ḥadīth (single item) 190*n*18, 210, 226, 243
- hardware 266–267, 270, 275
- Hebrew 7, 11–12, 26, 44, 72, 82, 96–97,
 101–102, 108, 154
- Hellenistic 138
- ḥikma*, pl. *ḥikam* (wisdom; wisdom sayings;
 wise sayings) 30, 55, 75, 182, 222, 227,
 231, 236
- ḥilm* 73, 117–118
- Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)
 266–267
- hypercorrection. *See* pseudo-correction
- hypertext 235
- hypocorrection. *See* pseudo-correction
- hypotext 235
- Iberian Continuum (I-c) 11–12, 14, 26, 41,
 44, 55–58, 82*n*45, 96–97, 100–102, 130.
See also continuum
- idiosyncrasies, linguistic 219, 249–250
- illustrations, illustrator(s) 8, 14, 34–35, 83,
 88, 103–148
- image cycle(s) 5, 8, 14, 106, 112, 117, 125,
 130–131, 141–142, 148, 245*n*34, 278.
See also image group
- image group(s) 14, 124–126, 128, 130–132,
 134, 136, 139–142, 146*n*53, 147. *See also*
 image cycle
- image sequence 124
- impulses (in the textual history of *Kalīla*
wa-Dimna) 10, 14
- incipit 1*n*2, 8*n*24, 13, 29–30, 98, 146
- inquit 30
- instruction, political and moral 32, 35–36,
 51, 57, 78, 154, 163, 166, 178, 183, 209,
 242
- intertextuality, visual 125
- intertextuality 225, 278–279
- jihād* 189
- Kalīla Platform 277, 279, 281–283, 285, 288
khalīf, *khulafāʾ* 190. *See also* caliph
khayālāt, sing. *khayāl* (images) 103. *See also*
 illustration
- khilāfat* 192. *See also* governance
- kingship 183–186, 190, 192–196, 199,
 205–206, 211–212. *See also* governance
- kuttāb* sing. *kātib* (secretaries) 10, 216,
 232–233, 235–236

- lahn* 32
- Latin 7–8, 11–12, 26, 44, 71, 94, 96, 101–102, 266, 274, 286
- layout 282, 288. *See also* *mise-en-page*
- Levantine dialect(s); colloquialisms;
colloquial use 247, 254, 257
- lingua franca 153
- Locate, Explore, Retrace and Apprehend
complex text variants (LERA) 22m6,
280–282, 285
- London continuum (L-c) 11–13, 25–27,
31–33, 35–36, 38–41, 43, 55–58, 67,
85–86, 101. *See also* continuum
- lughat-i tāzī* (Arabic) 204
- macrostructure 8n24, 28n34
- manuscript(s) 2–15, 19–42, 55, 69, 71, 77–78,
80–93, 96–148, 154–155, 163n46, 172n67,
187, 210n76, 237 240, 243–246, 248–251,
253, 256–257, 260–261, 265, 276, 278,
280–282
- manuscript notes 29, 96, 108n17
readers' notes 14, 108m17. *See also*
manuscript notes
- mathal*, pl. *amthāl*
(parable, fable) 30, 35, 41, 45, 52, 57,
59–60, 117, 125, 144, 167, 180, 247
(proverb) 186, 202, 210, 218–220, 222,
226–227, 230, 235–236
(analogy) 32, 39, 55, 75, 144, 159–161
- mesostructure 28
- microstructure 8
- Middle Arabic 2n6, 9, 24, 34n50, 35, 70–71,
92, 94, 113, 237–244, 246, 248, 252–254,
256–257, 260–262, 286
- Middle Persian, Pahlavi 6–9, 26, 32, 70, 78,
80, 92, 151–153, 155, 157–159, 163–166,
186, 204, 216–218, 231, 234
- milla*, *millat* 190, 194
- mirrors for princes 9, 218, 223
- mise-en-page* 106
- motif (of image) 5, 104–108, 113, 117, 119,
124–125, 130–147
repertoire of ~ 107, 147
rendition of ~ 124
catalogue of ~ 117
- mouvance, mouvant 1–3, 8–9, 21, 23–24,
165, 215, 227, 236–238, 241, 260–261.
See also *texte mouvant*; variance
- munshī* (secretary) 181
- muṣawwir*. *See* illustrator
- narrative(s) 10, 23, 30, 33, 36, 38, 41–42,
55, 69, 73, 83, 90–91, 94, 100, 106, 108,
117–119, 125, 141–142, 146–147, 159, 165,
183, 222, 227, 236–237, 244, 246, 249,
256, 260–261, 289
~ structure 130, 222, 224, 277
~ units 5, 27, 91, 278, 281–282
~ embedded 222, 252
~ framing 105, 108, 144, 224, 236, 253
- naṣb*, *maṣnūb* (accusative) 248, 250–251,
254, 257
- nāsikh*. *See* copyist
- navigation (through images) 31n39,
106, 116, 119, 148. *See also* table of
contents
- Nestorians. *See* Church of the East
- New Persian 81, 152n4, 181, 186. *See also*
Persian
- New Persian literature 181
- Old Castilian 26, 44, 72, 78, 82, 94, 96–97,
102
- orality, oral performance 2, 242–243, 251,
256, 261
- Oxygen 272–275, 287
- Pahlavi. *See* Middle Persian
- Pali 71
- parable(s). *See* *mathal*
- paragraph sign(s)/symbol(s) 30, 106, 114
- paratexts 28, 29n35
- Paris continuum (P-c) 11–14, 25–28, 33–36,
38–39, 41, 43, 55–58, 67, 85, 101, 104n3,
131n39, 245n34, 254, 257. *See also*
continuum
- performance 190, 250–251, 261, 285
- performative purposes 251, 253
- Persian
~ artistic prose (*naṣr-i fannī*) 7, 9, 181
~ ornamented prose (*naṣr-i maṣnū'*)
181
~ prose 181–182, 186, 195n30
- Persianate 186
- persianization 181
- philology, Arabic 2
- philosophy, Aristotelian 152

- poetry 9, 98, 181–182, 183*n*8, 186, 189*n*14, 191*n*21, 195*n*31 & 32, 196*n*35, 197*n*38 & 39, 199*n*49, 200*n*51, 201*n*53 & 55, 202*n*57, 58 & 59, 209*n*72, 210, 211*n*80, 212*n*81, 222, 226–227, 236, 239, 250, 253
- popular epics. *See* *ṣīyar*
- popular literature, Arabic 2, 3*n*8, 9, 21, 35*n*54, 107*n*14, 231, 250, 253, 260
- preface(s) 4*n*13, 8*n*24, 9, 12, 15, 24, 26, 28, 30–37, 45–58, 69*n*2, 77–78, 98, 103–104, 108, 144, 147, 161*n*30, 181–188, 199*n*50, 202*n*58, 211, 243–244, 246, 248
- print, printings, printing technology 13, 240, 272, 285,
- printed edition; recopied 3–4, 13, 20, 253
- prosimetrum 181, 182*n*3
- proverb(s). *See* *mathal*
- pseudo-correction 241, 251
- qaṣīda*, pl. *qaṣā'id* 200
- Queen continuum (Q-c) 13, 25, 28, 34–36, 41, 43–44, 55–58, 83–84, 86, 88, 100–101. *See also* continuum
- quotation(s), quotes 9–11, 31, 103, 153, 162, 165, 182–183, 215, 219–220, 222*n*29, 224–225, 227–228, 231, 235–236, 251
- rasm* 23, 38
- rasm* reinterpretation 5
- readership 13, 105, 107
- reading performance 251
- reception 4, 7, 9–10, 22*n*15, 166, 215, 235
- redactor(s), redaction 2, 8, 10, 14, 29, 278
- regionality 11, 12*n*34
- register, linguistic 9, 70*n*7, 238–241, 243, 248, 251–254, 261–262. *See also* colloquial; vernacular; classical Arabic, Middle Arabic
- rephrasing 5, 14
- reprint 10
- research requirements (of software) 275
- retroversion 1*n*2, 7, 81, 93
- rewriting 8, 14, 22, 24, 29, 37*n*58, 40*n*65, 182, 237–238, 241, 253, 257, 261–262
- saǰʿ* (ornate prose) 14, 222, 225
- Sasanian(s) 6, 151–152, 158, 166, 185, 216
- Sanskrit 5–6, 8, 37, 69–71, 78–79, 94, 151, 153, 155, 157–166. *See also* *Mahābhārata*; *Pañcatantra*
- ~ blocks 5
- ~ sources 6
- scholarly digital edition (SDE) 271–273, 276*n*31
- script
- Arabic ~ 4, 11*n*31, 108, 275–276
- Hebrew ~ 11*n*31, 108
- Karshūni ~ 249
- Latin ~ 265, 274, 286
- sequence group (of chapters) 11–12, 15, 81–82, 90–91, 100. *See also* chapters
- sharʿa* 189, 192
- Shīʿī 217, 233
- Shuʿūbī, Shuʿūbiyya 217, 218*n*15, 234
- ṣīfa*, pl. *ṣifāt* (description(s)) 112, 115–116. *See also* illustration
- Single Page Applications (SPAs) 285
- ṣīyar* (popular epics) 250, 260
- software 4, 9, 265–289
- ~ development 274
- ~ engineering 266, 267*n*8, 271–272, 278*n*33
- stabilization 13
- stationer 34
- stemma, stemmatic 2, 20, 24
- stories, embedded/enframed 12, 143, 224, 244. *See also* narrative
- storytelling, oral 9, 31*n*41, 210
- subgroups (of versions/manuscripts) 5, 22, 25, 89, 91, 96, 98, 100
- ṣūra*, pl. *ṣuwar* (image) 34, 112–115, 146. *See also* illustration
- synoptic edition. *See* edition
- Syriac 6, 9, 32, 152–158, 162, 164, 166
- Syriac version, Older 6, 40, 70, 80, 89, 92, 151, 153, 158–161, 163, 165–167
- Syriac version, Younger 7, 78, 82, 152–155, 158–167
- table of contents 98
- tajārib*, sing. *tajriba* (experiential wisdom) 211
- tales, popular 9, 250. *See also* narrative; storytelling
- tashwīh* (rendering of image in contrasting colors) 112. *See also* illustration

text

- ~ highlighting 30. *See also* layout
- ~ reuse 225, 230. *See also* rewriting
- ~ subdivision 30, 106. *See also* layout

text editor 272–273, 275, 280

Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) 271–275, 287

TextGrid 274–276, 287

texte mouvant 3

textual

- ~ fluidity 2, 21
- ~ history 7, 9, 19
- ~ tradition 1–9, 13, 20, 22, 24, 28, 70, 90–91, 94, 104–105, 113, 125, 146, 148, 158–160, 164–165, 215, 237–238, 241, 243, 250, 260–261

Tibetan 70–71, 73, 94

title

- chapter ~ 45–46, 60, 77n23, 106, 119
- marginal ~ 107m14
- side ~ 119n34

tradition, indirect 1, 10–11, 19, 27, 31, 35, 215

transcription 272, 277–278, 280–282, 285–286, 289

translation. *See also* version(s)

- ~ Arabic 31–32, 186, 231
- ~ cultural 5, 8, 37n57, 159, 162
- ~ French 72m6, 219
- ~ German 94n64
- ~ Hebrew 11–12, 72m6, 94
- ~ Latin 7, 11–12, 26, 94, 96
- ~ linguistic 8
- ~ literal 5
- ~ Middle Persian 9, 71, 152, 159
- ~ Old Castilian 11–12, 26, 72, 78, 82, 94, 96
- ~ Older Hebrew 26, 72, 82, 97
- ~ Older Syriac 6, 151, 158, 164
- ~ Persian (New Persian) 7, 92, 181–183, 185–187, 193n27, 209–211, 212n82
- ~ Younger Syriac 152–154, 166

translator(s), translation(s) 5–12, 19, 24, 26, 31–32, 51, 57, 70–72, 78, 82, 92, 94, 96–97, 100, 104, 108, 151–166, 181–188, 193, 206–211, 215, 217–219, 225, 231, 234, 241–243, 256

transmission, mode of 8

trial 15, 26, 79–80, 170, 184, 223–224, 249

Turkic, Turkish 6, 242

umma, ummat 190, 194

units. *See* narrative units

segments. *See* narrative units

variance. *See also* mouvance

variant(s) 3, 9, 81–83, 88, 97, 98, 130, 239, 241, 244, 248, 252, 257, 261

variation 1, 3–4, 8–9, 12, 33, 40, 125, 145, 155, 185, 190, 227, 236–239, 241–242, 256, 260, 265, 277, 286. *See also* mouvance

Vedic-Hindu 70

vernacular register 241, 262. *See also* colloquial language/register

versifications(s) 7, 92, 100

version(s)

Arabic ~ 3–4, 6–8, 24, 26, 30, 37n57, 40–41, 69–71, 73, 77, 81, 89, 101, 141, 144, 154, 161n29, 164, 167nn53 & 55, 181, 225

Chinese ~ 1n2, 5n16, 71, 94n64

Greek ~ 5n16, 11–12

Hebrew ~ 44, 102

Latin ~ 26n27, 44, 102

Middle Persian (Pahlavi) ~ 6–8, 78, 153n7, 216n3

Old Castilian ~ 11, 44, 102

Older Syriac ~ 6, 40, 70, 72, 89, 92, 151, 153, 155, 157–161, 164–167

Persian ~ 1n2, 7, 12–13, 81, 94, 141

Sanskrit ~ 157, 160

Tibetan ~ 70, 73, 94

Younger Syriac ~ 78, 82, 151–155, 158–161, 164–167

Vorlage 12n33, 20, 23, 25, 27–29, 42, 88, 90, 98, 112, 124, 141, 143, 146–147, 154, 158–159, 163–165, 243, 249, 251, 257, 261

Vorlage-catalogue (of images) 104

vowel signs, vocalisation 251

walī, pl. *awliyāʾ* 194

warrāq. *See* stationer

wazīr, pl. *wuzarāʾ* 221

Wetzstein subgroup 25, 29n36, 38–39, 43, 55, 99, 254

wisdom literature 105. *See also* *ḥikma*

wisdom sayings 30, 157, 182, 222. *See also* *ḥikam*

Word processor 272–273, 278–281

workflow, also computer-assisted workflow 104, 112, 265, 272, 274–287

writing convention(s) 238, 254

zāhir 35

zoology 9

Index of Manuscripts

Kalīla wa-Dimna

MS Aleppo 143

Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde
Salem, Ar. **143** (dated 1241/1826) 80

MS Aleppo 406

Aleppo, Fondation George et Mathilde
Salem, Ar. **406** (attributed to the
18th century CE) 10, 110–111, 119n34,
120–123, 126–129

MS Arch. Museum EY 344

Istanbul, Archaeology Museum (Arkeoloji
Müzesi), EY **344** (dated 410/1019, and
tentatively attributed to the
18th century CE) 22n15, 26, 44–54,
59–68, 82, 96–97, 101, 110–111, 120–123,
125n36, 126–129, 130, 132–133, 143, 146,
290

MS Ayasofya 4095

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi,
Ayasofya **4095** (dated 618/1221) 3n9,
11n31, 12, 20, 25, 43, 45–54, 59–68,
70–71, 82, 85–86, 92–98, 101, 243,
258–259, 290

MS Ayasofya 4213

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi,
Ayasofya **4213** (dated 880/1476)
29n35, 83, 290

MS Ayasofya 4214

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi,
Ayasofya **4214** (datable before
761/1360) 10, 12, 24, 28–30, 41, 44, 81,
98, 105n11, 290

MS Azhariyya 53544

Cairo, al-Azhariyya, Ms. **53544** (dated
1230/1815) 290

MS Azhariyya 66947

Cairo, al-Azhariyya, Ms. **66947** (dated
1048/1639) 19, 110–111, 290

MS Baghdad 350

Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, Ms. **350**
(attributed to the 19th century CE)
96–97, 101

MS Baghdad 6949

Baghdad, Iraq Museum Library, Ms. **6949**
(dated 1115/1704) 88–89, 101

MS Beirut 0022(2)

Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph,
Ms. **0022(2)** (dated 1263/1847)
25n22, 38n59, 44, 88, 101, 290

MS Beirut 00360(2)

Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph,
Ms. **00360(2)** (attributed to the
20th century CE) 83, 290

MS Beirut 01875

Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph,
Ms. **01875** (attributed to the
18th century CE) 290

MS Bodleian 253

University of Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Arab. Ms. **253** (dated 1227/1812) 14,
28nn32 & 33, 44, 106, 111, 119–123,
126–129

MS Chicago A 11991

Chicago, Institute for the Study
of Ancient Cultures, A **11991**
(attributed to the 17th century CE)
29n35, 290

MS Chicago A 12101

Chicago, Institute for the Study of Ancient
Cultures, A **12101** (undated) 96–97,
101, 111

MS Clarke Or. 9

University of Oxford, Bodleian Library,
E. D. **Clarke Or. 9** (attributed to the
14th century CE) 25, 43, 80, 101,
109n18, 110, 120–121, 126–127, 134–135,
138

MS Dar al-Kutub 1169

Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. **1169** (datable
before 1290/1874) 28n32 & n33, 44,
81, 105n11, 111, 120–121, 128–129

MS Dar al-Kutub 967

Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. **967** (dated
1030/1621) 13, 38, 44, 253

MS Dar al-Kutub 968

Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Ms. **968** (undated)
88–89, 101

MS Dayr al-Shīr

Dayr al-Shīr, Lebanon (dated 749/1348)
3n9, 11n31, 20n8, 26n26

- MS Dublin 4201
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, **4201**
(attributed to the 16th century CE)
96–98, 101, 106, 111
- MS Geniza T-S 40.9
(folio, Arabic script) 11731, 35, 108, 110
- MS Geniza T-S 51.60
(folio, Arabic script) 11731, 26726, 35,
108, 110
- MS Geniza T-S Ar. 6.32
(six bifolios, Hebrew script) 11731, 108
- MS Geniza T-S NS 97.16
(bifolio, Hebrew script) 11731, 108
- MS Hamburg 170
Hamburg, Staats- und
Universitätsbibliothek, **cod.**
orient. 170 (datable before 1321/1904)
25, 33, 43, 45–54, 83, 290
- MS London 2715
London, British Library, **Or.** 2715 (dated
1143/1731) 88–89, 101
- MS London 3900
London, British Library, **Or.** 3900 (dated
1166/1753) 2215, 26, 44, 82, 96–97,
101, 290
- MS London 4044
London, British Library, **Or.** 4044
(attributed to the 15th century CE)
379, 2078, 29736, 30737, 38, 43,
45–54, 59–68, 81, 85752, 109718, 110,
119, 122–123, 128–129, 165751, 168759,
256759, 290
- MS London 8751
London, British Library, **Or.** 8571
(dated 799/1396) 43, 45–54, 59–68,
82, 98, 101
- MS London Add. 23466
London, British Library, **Or. Add.** 23466
(attributed to the 18th century CE)
25, 43, 83
- MS London Add. 24350
London, British Library, **Or. Add.** 24350
(attributed to the 14th century CE)
27731, 42, 81, 110, 119734, 120–121,
126–127
- MS London Add. 7413
London, British Library, **Or. Add.** 7413
(datable before 1036/1626) 14,
96–97, 101, 290
- MS London Add. 7414
London, British Library, **Or. Add.** 7414
(dated 1173/1760) 96–97, 101, 253
- MS Majlis-i Shūrā 16288
Tehran, Islamic Consultative Assembly
Library (Majlis-i Shūrā), **Ms.** 16288
(dated 601/1205, but actually later)
2079, 81
- MS Malek 1669
Tehran, Malek National Library and
Museum, **Ms.** 1669 (dated 1161/1748)
99, 101
- MS Manchester 2
Manchester, John Rylands Library, **Ms.** 2
[formerly 486] (dated 1040/1631)
26729, 27731, 30739, 42, 81, 110, 113,
115–116, 120–121, 126–127, 136–138, 140,
288–289
- MS Manchester 537
Manchester, John Rylands Library,
Ms. 537 [formerly 487] (dated
1083/1672) 95–98, 101, 111, 114724,
120–121, 126–127, 136–137, 140–141, 143,
147
- MS Mardin 491
Mardin Chaldean Cathedral, **Ms.** 491
(dated 1115/1704) 249744
- MS Marsh 660
University of Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Marsh, **Ms.** 660 (undated) 101
- MS Marsh 673
University of Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Marsh, **Ms.** 673 (dated 1063/1653) 110,
120–121, 125, 128–129
- MS Montreal 117953
Montreal, McGill University Library,
Ms. 117953 (dated 1055/1645) 81, 99,
101, 110, 122–123, 126–127, 131, 134–135,
139
- MS Mosul 283
Mosul, Dominican Friars of Mosul,
Ms. 283 (attributed to the
19th century CE) 2079, 81
- MS München 615
München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
Cod. arab. 615 (attributed to the
17th/18th century CE) 25, 43, 80,
101, 111, 120–121, 126–127, 131, 134–135,
139–140, 145

- MS München 616
München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
Cod. arab. 616 (dated to ca. 1310–50 CE)
30n39, 42, 77n25, 110, 120–121, 126–127,
136–137, 140–141
- MS München 617
München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
Cod. arab. 617 (dated 1070/1659)
96–97, 101, 244–248, 257–259
- MS München 618
München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
Cod. arab. 618 (dated 1044/1634) 14,
29n36, 38n59, 42n68, 44, 110, 114–116,
119–121, 128–129
- MS New York 1981.373
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Ms. 1981.373 (datable before 1026/1617)
14, 26n29, 27n31, 29n35, 43, 76, 77n25,
81, 106, 109n18, 110, 120–121, 128–129,
136–137, 140–141, 146
- MS Ouazzane 442
Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif
Mosque Library, **Ms. 442** (attributed to
the 19th/20th century CE) 80
- MS Ouazzane 444
Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif
Mosque Library, **Ms. 444** (attributed to
the 19th/20th century CE) 80
- MS Ouazzane 463
Ouazzane, Moulay Abdullah Sharif
Mosque Library, **Ms. 463** (attributed to
the 19th/20th century CE) 81
- MS Paris 2789
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 2789 (dated 1041/1631–1632)
10, 25, 30n37, 33, 43, 45–54, 257–259
- MS Paris 3465
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3465 (dated to ca. 1220 CE)
10n26, 13, 14n41, 20n8, 23n17, 25,
30n39, 33, 35, 43, 45–54, 59, 60–68,
71, 80–81, 86, 91–92, 101, 103–104,
109–110, 116, 120–121, 126–127, 131,
134–135, 138–139, 140n42, 144, 146–147,
243, 245n34, 257n60, 258–259
- MS Paris 3466
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de
France, **arabe 3466** (datable before
854/1450) 12, 23n17, 24n20, 25n22,
29n36, 44–54, 59–68, 82, 86–88,
90–91, 98, 101, 108n17, 110, 119n34,
120–121, 125, 128–129, 145, 160n28,
168n59
- MS Paris 3467
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de
France, **arabe 3467** (datable before
856/1452) 26n29, 27n31, 43, 77n25,
81, 110, 120–121, 128–129, 136–137,
140–141
- MS Paris 3468
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3468 (dated 1005/1597) 14,
24n20, 82, 88, 101
- MS Paris 3469
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3469 (attributed to the 14th/
16th century CE) 110
- MS Paris 3470
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3470 (attributed to the
16th century CE) 25, 43, 80, 101,
109–110, 120–121, 126–127, 131, 134–135,
139, 147n54
- MS Paris 3471
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3471 (dated 1053/1643) 10, 12,
28nn32 & 33, 30n37, 40n64, 42, 44–68,
82, 93–94, 96–97, 101, 106n11, 168n59,
244–249, 258–259
- MS Paris 3472
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3472 (dated 1080/1669)
96–97, 101, 106, 111, 122–123, 128–129,
245
- MS Paris 3473
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3473 (dated 1110/1699) 10,
13, 23n17, 25n24, 33–34, 39, 43,
45–54, 59–68, 81, 99, 101, 106n11,
107, 111, 116, 119n34, 122–123, 126–127,
148, 254–255, 258–259
- MS Paris 3475
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3475 (dated 1175/1761) 11n31,
22n15, 27n31, 39, 43, 45–68, 83, 99, 101,
111, 120–121, 125–127, 130–133, 146

- MS Paris 3476
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3476 (dated 1169/1755) 82, 88,
101
- MS Paris 3477
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3477 (attributed to the
18th century CE) 28n32, 44, 82, 88,
101
- MS Paris 3478
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3478 (attributed to the
18th century CE) 22n15, 26, 82,
96–97, 101, 111, 120–121, 125n36, 126–127
- MS Paris 3479
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3479 (dated 1184/1770) 82
- MS Paris 3480
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3480 (dated 1200/1786) 82,
88, 101
- MS Paris 3593
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 3593 (undated) 14, 30n37,
31n41, 147
- MS Paris 5881
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
arabe 5881 (dated 1092/1681) 28nn32
& 33, 32n46, 40n64, 41, 44–68, 81,
105n11, 111, 116, 120–121, 128–130, 131n39
- MS Parker 578
University of Cambridge, Corpus Christi
College, Parker Library, 578 (dated
8th/14th century CE) 11n31, 12,
27n31, 28nn32 & 33, 39, 44, 59–68,
71n12, 72, 91–92, 98, 110, 120–121,
125–127, 130, 132–133, 144–145, 147,
290
- MS Pococke 400
University of Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Pococke 400 (dated 755/1354) 23n17,
26n29, 27n31, 28n32, 30n39, 42, 45–68,
77n25, 81, 91–92, 94n61, 109n18, 110,
120–121, 126–127, 136–137, 140–141,
144–147
- MS Princeton 169H
Princeton University Garrett Library **169H**
[Hitti no. 176] (dated 997/1588) 10,
13, 25n24, 43, 81, 99, 101, 105n11
- MS Rabat 3655
Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat,
Ms. 3655 (dated to ca. 1265–80 CE)
14, 22n15, 23n17, 27n31, 35, 71, 83, 99,
101, 109n18, 110, 120–121, 125–127,
130–133, 146, 243
- MS Rabat 4418
Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat,
Ms. 4418 (attributed to the
19th century CE) 80
- MS Rabat 4837
Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat,
Ms. 4837 (attributed to the
19th century CE) 80
- MS Rabat 5437
Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat,
Ms. 5437 (attributed to the
19th century CE) 80
- MS Rabat 879
Rabat, Bibliothèque royale de Rabat,
Ms. 879 (attributed to the
19th century CE) 20n9, 80
- MS Riyadh 2407
Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library,
Ms. 2407 (dated 1103/1691) 25n24, 33,
43, 45–54, 59–68, 81, 99, 101, 111, 119n34,
122–123, 126–127
- MS Riyadh 2536
Riyadh, King Faisal Center Library,
Ms. 2536 (dated 747/1346) 22n15, 26,
36, 44, 59–66, 67–68, 72, 74, 82, 92n59,
93, 96–98, 101, 110, 120–121, 126–127,
130–133, 141
- MS Riyadh 6146
Riyadh, King Saud University, **Ms. 6146**
(datable before 1118/1706) 96–97
- MS Riyadh 7053
Riyadh, King Saud University, **Ms. 7053**
(dated 1178/1764) 97, 109, 111, 119
- MS Riyadh 12965
Riyadh, King Saud University, **Ms. 12965**
(undated) 111
- MS Sarba 989
Sarba (Jounieh), Ordre Basilien Alepin,
Ms. 989 (dated 1127/1715) 88–89, 101
- MS Schiller
privately owned (dated 843/1439 but
probably 943/1537) 110, 122–123,
126–127

- MS Sprenger 1234
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, **Ms. Or. Sprenger. 1234** (attributed to the 17th century) 111, 119n34
- MS Sprenger 1246
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, **Ms. Or. Sprenger. 1246** (dated 900/1494) 290
- MS Sultan Ahmed III 3015
Ahmet III Küttüphanesi, **Ms. 3015** (dated 727/1327) 24n20, 81, 93, 110, 290
- MS Tübingen Ma vi 35
Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, **Ma vi 35** (dated 1243/1827) 96–97, 101
- MS Tunis 16029
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, **Ms. 16029** (dated 1290/1873) 14, 25n22, 70, 87–91, 101
- MS Tunis 16030
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, **Ms. 16030** (dated 1173/1760) 88–89, 91, 101
- MS Tunis 2281
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, **Ms. 2281** (dated 1076/1666) 14, 29n36, 34, 35n53, 44–54, 88
- MS Tunis 4459
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale de Tunisie, **Ms. 4459** (dated 1277/1861) 84–85, 88–91, 101
- MS Tunis 8623
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale, **Ms. 8623** (datable before 1229/1814) 88–90, 101
- MS Tunis 9760
Tunis, Bibliothèque nationale, **Ms. 9760** (datable before 1320/1902) 88
- MS Vatican Borg. 213
Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, **Borg. Collect. 213** (attributed to the 17th/18th century CE) 14, 23n17, 42
- MS Vatican Borg. 367
Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, **Borg. Collect. 367** (dated 1026/1617) 82, 96–98, 101
- MS Vatican Sbath 267
Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, **Sbath Collect. 267** (attributed to the 18th century CE) 239, 248–249, 251, 252n50, 254, 257–259
- MS Vienna AF 298
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, **Cod. A. F. 298** (dated 1000/1592) 96–98, 101
- MS Wetzstein II 672
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, **Wetzstein II 672** (dated 1246/1830) 13, 25, 29n36, 30n37, 33, 35n53, 38n60, 43, 45–54, 59–68, 81, 99, 101, 107, 111, 115, 119n34, 122–123, 128–129, 148, 252, 255, 257–259, 290
- MS Yale A 270
New Haven, Yale University Library, **A 270** (attributed to the 19th century CE) 20n9, 80

In this collected volume, members of the *Kalīla and Dimna* project discuss, from different perspectives, a core aspect of their work with this textual tradition: the study of variation and mutability. The aim is to shed light on *Kalīla and Dimna*'s so-called *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. As will be shown, the progressive digitalization of philology in the last decades has offered the unique opportunity of putting the concept of *mouvance* into practice.

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