Wild Lions and Wise Jackals: Killer Kings and Clever Counsellors in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

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1. Introduction

1.1. Goals

The different versions of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* (*Kalīla and Dimna*) together constitute one of the most influential texts of political advice literature in the history of mankind. It is one of the most translated pre-modern texts and held a special prestige among ruling elites.[2] It was adapted to and adopted by various civilisations,[3] social strata and age groups[4], while translators and editors, or rather, authors of translations and editions rewriting the text, also shaped it according to their perspectives and motivations.

Kalīla wa-Dimna consists of a collection of edifying fables and tales featuring both animal and human characters. It includes versions of all the five chapters of the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra*, three that are part of the *Mahābhārata*, as well as further chapters and a series of introductions.[5] The introductions of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* present the text as having originated in India, translated into Pahlavi (Middle

1 I would like to express my gratitude to Emily Cottrell for her careful editing, as well as to Omar Anchassi, Mohammed Asiri, Abdessamad Belhaj, Joanne Cornish, Regula Forster, William Gallois, Jan van Ginkel, Jennifer London, Martin Lindsay, Camille Mulcaire, Catherine and David Roughton, Christine van Ruymbeke, James Scanlan, Amirah Shaker Bukhari and Vasileios Syros for their helpful comments on previous versions of this chapter.

2 See Kinoshita, "Translatio/n".

3 For the "horizontal", travel of the text across civilisations see, de Blois, *Burzōy's* (especially 1-11); Riedel D., "KALILA"; Kinoshita, "Translatio/n"; Taylor, *The Fall*, 1-26; van Ruymbeke, "Murder" (especially 208-26); Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, (especially 3-38); and Shamma, "Translating".

4 For an example, Cheikho's/Shaykhū's "school edition", see below, n. 46.

5 On the different chapters of the book and their origin, see de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 12-7.

Persian) by Burzawayh,[6] and then into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (ca. 103-139/721-757). This Sanskrit-Pahlavi-Arabic origin is mostly accepted by present-day scholarship,[7] and will to some extent corroborated by this present study.[8] However, the focus of this chapter will not be on the genealogy of the text, but on the adaptations performed by the translator-editor-authors, which give insight into the context of their versions, their possible intentions, the strategies they used, and the constraints they faced.

The Pahlavi version is lost, but it is considered to be the source of two independent versions: the "old Syriac version", which is still extant,[9] and the Arabic text produced by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘. *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is the title of the Arabic version (or, rather, versions) of the book. No coeval copy of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s text survives, but a multitude of variants exists in manuscripts that date centuries after its composition. The Arabic version was also the origin of a multitude of further translations. Different versions of the collection were produced in countless languages and new translations and versions are produced even today. In spite of its immense importance, the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* remains heavily understudied by modern scholarly research. This is, in part, due to the deterrent philological complexity that its research requires;[10] other reasons that will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

Five chapters of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* derive from the *Pañcatantra*. Two of them deal with the behaviour of rulers and courtiers. These are the fables of "The Lion and the Ox" and of "The Owls and the Crows".[11] The goal of the present contribution is to explore the image of rulers and their advisers as presented in these two chapters. Further chapters of various origins that are not part of the *Pañcatantra* but were integrated into *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and are relevant to the topic of rulers and their advisers will also be studied.

While the study of a single version of the text is a more straightforward task and can lead to precious results, this chapter will engage in the close reading and comparison of various versions in different languages. This approach aims to demonstrate the enduring validity and versatility of the core political contents of

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6 The name برزويه found in the Arabic text is vocalised and transliterated in various ways: Burzawayh, Burzuwayh, Barzuwayh, Barzawayh, Burzūyah, Barzūyah and so on. Its reconstructed Pahlavi form is transcribed Burzōē, Burzōy or Borzūya. See also below, n. 38.

7 See above, n. 3. See also, however, below, pp. 5-6. INTERNAL REF

8 See for instance below, pp. 32-33. INTERNAL REF

9 On the old Syriac version, see de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 1-3 and below, p. 7. INTERNAL REF This version is different from the "later Syriac version", published by Keith-Falconer, *Kalīlah*. For a brief description of the latter, see de Blois' *Burzōy's*, 5; and Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 16.

10 See van Ruymbeke, "Dimna's", 549-50.

11 As de Blois' *Burzōy's* is the most rigorous overall study of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* known to me, the titles of most of the chapters will be given in the form mentioned there.

the collection for premodern courtly elites, and to indicate the modifications required by the different cultural contexts.[12]

According to Francois de Blois's study, while the *Pañcatantra* is a pragmatic piece of political advice literature illustrating through fables the means for survival and success, the text gained layers of moral guidance through its transcultural history.[13] However, McComas Taylor convincingly argues that the *Pañcatantra*—at least in Pūrṇabhadra's recension, dated of 1199 CE, which is the subject of his research—can be interpreted as presenting the caste, *varṇa*, system as a universal law of nature. Both the ox'/bull's and the owls' disaster is a necessary consequence of their trust in and friendship with animals of another kind, *jāti*, who are their born enemies. This is the case of the ox/bull betrayed by two carnivores: Dimna, the jackal, and the king, who is a lion. Similarly, the reason for the owls' destruction is in their failure to realise that the crows' vizier is their natural nemesis, who would outsmart them.[14]

This present chapter will build on both these fundamental studies, and reassess the question of the "moral evolution" *Pancatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna*. It will focus on the astute individuals, more specifically advisers, who take advantage from their enemies' fatal overstepping of their natural limits, while also stretching those of their own, by leading or misleading rulers. The "amorality" of the *Pañcatantra* is relative, as the chapter of "The Owls and the Crows" can be considered the counterpoint of the "The Lion and the Ox". On the one hand, Dimna, the amoral arch-villain of "The Lion and the Ox", is well aware of the existence of ethical principles; however, instead of letting them shape his own behaviour, he uses them as devices to misguide others. On the other hand, the crows' vizier, the protagonist of "The Owls the Crows", is no less resourceful a trickster than Dimna, but he puts his intelligence into the service of his king and his people while altruistically exposing himself to torture and danger.

The comparison between the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions will demonstrate the trans-civilisational character of both the moralistic and pragmatic nature of late antique and early Islamic political thought. It will also enable us to see that the vision of rulers and their advisers reflected in both chapters (and in the entire collection) was carefully modified by

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12 Such research will be largely facilitated by the realisation of a project envisioned in a pioneering paper by Gruendler, "Les versions", which developed into synoptic digital edition in progress, see the research project *Kalīla and Dimna – AnonymClassic* led by Beatrice Gründler, available online at https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/kalila-wa-dimna/index.html.

13 "By the time Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ had finished his translation the number of stories had not only increased to fifteen, but the tendency of the whole work had shifted. The amoral character of the work had been mitigated." De Blois, *Burzōy's*, 17.

14 For the dating of Pūrṇabhadra's recension, see Taylor, *The Fall*, 24. Regarding "The Lion and the Ox/Bull", see *ibid.*, 76-84, and regarding "The Owls and the Crows", see *ibid.*, 92-4. Dimna, the cynical jackal, resembles the "devote cat" of the chapter "The Owls and the Crows", see ʻAzzām, 162-4; Cheikho, 149-151; Shaykhū, 166-7, Jallad, 157-8; Edgerton, 369-371; Schulthess, 97-98. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 91-2 and below, n. 157.

one of the editors, most likely by the author of the Pahlavi translation, and that the author of the Arabic translation, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, also engaged with the text of the chapters discussed here.[15]

Ultimately, this chapter aims to show what the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* reveals about the realm of power. The collection was fashioned and refashioned again and again for the elites of societies where unelected and unaccountable rule was the norm. The fables served as a visor for the adviser, and they were meant to guide rulers, but also to counsel those who guided them. The device of embedding countless political maxims into educative fables can appear alien, meaningless and uninspiring for readers reared in liberal democracies. Yet, the lessons these fables and maxims offer about the nature of power and the behaviour and the interactions it generates in and between those who are in its vibrating halo—from its centre to its periphery— remain valid today.

1.2. Methodology and Sources

In order to achieve its goals this chapter will compare different versions of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection, as they were adapted through its transmission from a civilisation to another. The very success of the collection makes such studies important and difficult at the same time. It exists in countless versions, but key texts, such as the Indian version from which the Pahlavi translation was made, this Pahlavi translation itself, and the original form of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s Arabic translation of it, are lost, and the philological status of the extant versions is complicated. Identifying which alterations are noteworthy, making sense of the changes and avoiding hasty conclusions are major challenges that are difficult to fully overcome. Due to their vast number, most idiosyncratic or stylistic changes will not be discussed, but the variations that are relevant for this study, as they reflect different approaches to the role of rulers and advisers, will be highlighted.

The few previous studies analysing parts of the collection by comparing versions produced in different languages demonstrate both the difficulty and the fruitfulness of this venture. One should first ask which versions should be compared. Ibrahim Dawood produced a study based on Pūrṇabhadra’s recension of the *Pañcatantra*,[16] the Arabic versions[17] and Sir Thomas North’s *The morall*

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15 Due to a number of inaccuracies and unevidenced statements regarding Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Tarek Shamma’s “Translating” has to be used with caution. Nevertheless, it gives worthy insights into the ideological and social background of the translation movement to which Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s contribution was fundamental.

16 In the English translation of Ryder, *The Panchatantra*; based on Hertel’s edition, *The Panchatantra*. See Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 8-10 and 80, n. 18

17 Mostly on ‘Azzām’s edition, see below, n. 46, and on Irving’s translation, see below, n. 48.

[*sic*] *philosophy of Doni*, which is its first known English version[18]. His study gives a number of valuable insights, but it also shows that instead of general statements about the Hindu, Islamic and Christian world-vision,[19] the differences of the studied versions would require a focused analysis of the context of their production. It is also misleading in ascribing the detected changes to the authors of the studied translations without taking into consideration the intermediary texts. Alterations that Dawood ascribes to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ and explains by the Islamic context[20] are present in the old Syriac version as well, and this indicates that they were most likely already part of the Pahlavi translation.

Claude France Audebert published two eminent studies on *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In an appendix to the first one, she explores parallels for the image of the Lion and the Bull in ancient myths.[21] This idea could be developed further with the inclusion of art history; lions attacking bulls were often represented in ancient art, on various scales and media-types, including Mesopotamia cylinder seals, Iranian reliefs, Greek vases and sculptures, Etruscan stone and metalwork, and Roman mosaics. In the second, she compares key concepts of the Sanskrit and of the Arabic versions.[22] Another comparative study, by Marianne Marroum, provides an important contribution comparing the ideas of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s introduction to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* on the meaning and the form of the text with thoughts of Horace, Bocaccio and Stanley Fish.[23] The genre of the fable and the reasons for its choice to communicate political wisdom are also discussed in an excellent study of the Arabic version by Makram Abbès[24], an elaborate article by Bahaa-eddin M. Mazid,[25] as well as in a highly inspirational paper by Jennifer London[26].

Studies by Christine van Ruymbeke highlight the difficulty to establish with certainty the origin and the chain of transmission of the various versions the book. She questions the reality of the Indian and Pahlavi versions preceding Ibn al-

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18 See Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 23-4.

19 See Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 39-82, 149-54.

20 See for instance Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 83, 132-3. A number of studies take Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ as the author (in the sense of originator) of the ideas expressed in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. This is a common simplifying overstatement; according to nearly all studies on the history of the text, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ did not invent most of the text but translated it. The way he modified it is, however, a very interesting question.

21 Audebert, “La violence”, 41-3.

22 Audebert, “La condition”.

23 Marroum, “Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s”. The reader needs to be cautious, however, about the errors on its first pages.

24 Abbès, “L’ami”, 11-17. See also Abbès, “Le sage”, 36-7.

25 Mazid, “Date-palms”. This study is on the chapter of “The Ascetic and His Guest”, which was interpolated into *Kalīla wa-Dimna* probably by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘. The same chapter is also the topic of Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 145-7; and Kristó-Nagy, “The Crow”.

26 London, “How to Do”. An emended version of this article will be included in London, *Fighting*. See also below, nn. 200 and 252.

Muqaffa‘’s *Kalīla wa-Dimna*,[27] and suggests that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* can be a “pseudo-translation” authored by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘.[28] The doubt about the relationship between the different versions does not undermine, however, the importance of their comparison. Van Ruymbeke produced an impressive study based on a multitude of versions of the tale of “The Lion and the Hare”, which will also be explored in the present chapter. Instead of tracing the history of the alterations, she analyses their significance and presents the richness of the different readings and interpretations of the tale.[29] Her paper on the chapter of “The Investigation of Dimna’s Conduct” is mainly based on a 15th-century Persian version, the *Anvār-i Suhaylī* by Vā’iz Kāshifī.[30] Nevertheless, its analysis also contributes to the understanding of the previous versions of this tale.

As the present chapter aims to investigate both the endurance and the evolution of the message of the tales in the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna*, it will focus—similarly to de Blois’ monograph[31]—on the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as compared with the previous versions. Some caveats are, however, necessary.

As the original version of the Sanskrit text is lost and the—possibly different—version used for the Pahlavi translation is not extant either, the reconstructed Sanskrit version produced by Franklin Edgerton will be used.[32] Regarding the date of the composition of the original work, there is to my knowledge no clarity aside from Franklin Edgerton’s claim in 1924: “I think it is at present impossible to say more about the date than that it was earlier than the sixth century A. D., in which the Pahlavi translation was made, and later than the beginning of the Christian era.”[33] Concerning the author of the original, Edgerton affirms that he “was an orthodox Hindu; that is not a Buddhist or a Jaina”,[34] who might have produced the text in India (the exact place of the composition remains unknown) certainly in Sanskrit.[35]

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27 See van Ruymbeke, *Kāshefī’s*, 323-48, van Ruymbeke, “*Kalīla*”.

28 See van Ruymbeke, “*Kalīla*”, 257. This study is also important in demonstating that using present day translation theories to classical texts can be useful for our understanding of the texts studied as well as for testing the range of the validity of the theories.

29 See van Ruymbeke, “Murder”.

30 See van Ruymbeke, “Dimna’s”.

31 De Blois, *Burzōy’s*.

32 In the present study, the references will be to the volume II, *Introduction and Translation*, of Edgerton, *The Panchatantra* [hereinafter and above: Edgerton], which makes systematic references to the sections and verses of the Sanskrit text published in the first volume; see Edgerton, 270. When Edgerton established his reconstructed Sanskrit version, he considered not only the Indian variants but also derivatives of the Pahlavi translations (see Edgerton, 40-8). See Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 8-10, for his, in my view unsatisfactory, arguments for his preference for Pūrṇabhadra’s recension in Hertel’s edition, *The Panchatantra*. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 6-26, especially, 9-10, 14-5 and 20-1.

33 Edgerton, 182. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 10.

34 Edgerton, 183.

35 Edgerton, 183-5.

The Arabic versions (and versions deriving from the Arabic translation) include two introductory chapters that present Burzawayh, the translator of the Pahlavi version; these are the story of Burzawayh's mission to India[36], followed by his intellectual autobiography[37]. Thus Burzawayh, the translator of the book, became also one of its heroes.[38] The introductory sentence to his autobiography describes him as "the head of the physicians of Persia".[39] We learn from the chapter on his mission that Burzawayh was commissioned by the Sasanian king Chosroes I (Pahlavi: Khusrōy Anōshagruwān)[40] (r. 531-579 A. D.) to produce a Pahlavi translation. Unfortunately, however, this Pahlavi version does not exist anymore and we can only surmise its content from the translations made of it, namely the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions. When a passage that is not part of the reconstructed Sanskrit version appears in the old Syriac text and in any of the Arabic versions, we can assume that it was introduced to the text during the composition of the Pahlavi translation, *or* by the author of any unknown version between the Sanskrit as reconstructed by Edgerton and the old Syriac. In order to avoid tedious repetition in this chapter, when the first possibility is suggested, it will also indicate the second.

The old Syriac version survives in four copies of a 16th-century manuscript,[41] of which the oldest was used by Gustav Bickell, who published his edition in 1876 (with an introduction by Theodor Benfey).[42] The text was reedited by Friedrich Schulthess, who could access three further copies of the manuscript.[43] In this chapter, this later edition will be used.[44] The author of the old Syriac translation was identified as "Bōḏ the perideutes", who lived "under the Patriarch Ezechiel, around the year 570".[45]

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36 'Azzām, 15-26; Cheikho, 19-29; Shaykhū, 23-34; Jallad, 58-65. See also de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 40-60.

37 'Azzām, 27-43; Cheikho, 30-44; Shaykhū, 35-50; Jallad, 66-77. See also Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 113-25.

38 The historicity and the memory (within the collection itself) of Burzōy's figure and mission is the main topic of de Blois, *Burzōy's*. See also Khaleghi-Motlagh, Djalal, "BORZŪYA"; 'Azzām 19, with n. 4 (*ibid*., 320).

39 'Azzām, 29; Cheikho, 30; Shaykhū, 35; Jallad, 67.

40 Regarding the name of the king see: de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 96, from whom I borrow the transliteration of the Pahlavi names. Chosroes I is known in Arabic as Kisrā Anūshirwān (with variations in the spelling).

41 De Blois, *Burzōy's*, 1-2.

42 Bickell, *Kalilag*.

43 Schulthess, *Kalīla*, vol. I, ix-xv.

44 In the present study, references will be given to vol. II of Schulthess, *Kalīla* [hereinafter and above: Schulthess], i.e. the German translation, which includes the corresponding page numbers of the Syriac text published in vol. I in the margins. See, however, van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 209, stating her preference in several cases for Bickell's understanding of the fable she analysed.

45 For the sources of this unconfirmed information, see de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 2.

Throughout this chapter, the reconstructed Sanskrit version and the old Syriac translation will be systematically consulted and referenced together with the two oldest Arabic manuscripts that are published,[46] but the text will be quoted in an enjoyable modern English translation.[47] In some cases, references will also be made to the first Spanish translation. In spite of the doubts regarding its date (1251?),[48] it is certainly the first known version translated directly from Arabic into the western Christian tradition.[49]

2. Rulers and Advisers in the Chapters of Kalīla wa-Dimna

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46 Namely the second, revised edition of ʻAbd al-Wahhāb ʻAzzām [hereinafter and above: ʻAzzām]; and the first edition provided by the Jesuit father Louis Cheikho. I agree with the following statement by de Blois (*Burzōy's*, 4): "On the whole, one gains the impression that ʿAzzām's manuscript represents a rather drastically abridged version of *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, and that in Shaykhū's more extended version a smaller amount of authentic material has been omitted. In general, students are best advised to use the two editions side by side." Cheikho's first edition [hereinafter and above: Cheikho] is a scholarly edition of the manuscript he used (but see also below, n. 263). His "new, school edition", *ṭabʻa jadīda madrasiyya*, contains unmarked but useful changes based on other manuscripts and editions. Due to its educative purpose, it is bowdlerised, and, in its later editions, the first half of the text is vocalised. The edition referenced here [hereinafter and above: Shaykhū] is the 8th edition *al-ṭabʻa al-thāmina* (*ṭabʻa madrasiyya*). For the information above on the different versions of Cheikho's/Shaykhū's edition, see Shaykhū, 2-3. ʻAzzām's edition was translated into French by André Miquel, *Le livre*. Occasional references will also be made to de Sacy, *Calila* [hereinafter: de Sacy], which is the first modern edition of the text, based principally on the manuscript of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Arabe 3465, complemented by six other manuscripts (see de Sacy's introduction, 57-64). De Sacy's edition was used for the English translation by the Rev. Wyndham Knatchbull, A. M., *Kalila*. For a critique of de Sacy's edition, see de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 3.

47 The translation quoted throughout this present chapter is the most recent one: Jallad, *The Fables* [hereinafter and above: Jallad]. In his foreword, 23-4, Jallad writes about the "Bulaq imprint" of 1817 as derived from de Sacy's edition, and on the same page he indicates "the popular Bulaq edition" as the main source of his translation, with the exception of the chapter "Mehrize, King of the Rats" or "The King of the Mice", which he translated from ʻAzzām's edition (on which see below, part 2.3. and n. 223). I could not access the "Bulaq imprint" of 1817, but Jallad's translation considerably differs from de Sacy's text. The text published by the Wizārat al-Maʻārif al-ʻUmūmiyya in 1902 and republished by al-Maṭbaʻa al-Amīriyya bi-Būlāq in Cairo in 1937 shows similarities but also differences with Jallad's translation, thus it is unlikely to be the "the popular Bulaq edition" that he used. His translation does not seem to correspond to any of the editions I could check.

48 See the remarks of Cacho Blecua and Lacarra, *Calila*, 13-9. The translation by Irving, *Kalilah* [hereinafter: Irving] is based on this Spanish translation and on Cheikho's edition, which Irving collated with an edition published by al-Yāzijī in 1888 in Beirut but not with ʻAzzām's edition (see Irving, xii-xiii). The introductory chapters are not included in Irving.

49 See de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 6-7.

2.1. "The Lion and the Ox"

"The Lion and the Ox"[50] is the first and the longest story of the text. The tale depicts the dangerous desire to become the ruler's favourite and illustrates the means to acquire this high status and winning it back when it is lost.

The story presents the stratagems of Dimna the jackal, an extremely skilful and ingenious, and at the same time purely amoral, careerist. Dimna's less ambitious and more prudent brother, Kalīla, tries to convince him not to aspire for high positions but fails to restrain him. Kalīla warns Dimna not to interfere with the business of the king and reminds him of their low status at the court.[51] The fact that in the reconstructed Sanskrit version Karaṭaka and Damanaka[52] are "hereditary ministers" belonging to the close circle of the lion[53] might explain why this element is not present in this version.[54] It appears, however, already in the old Syriac text.[55] This indicates that it was probably interpolated during the composition of the Pahlavi translation, which is lost, though considered to be the common source of both the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions.

In his response to Kalīla, Dimna argues that the selfish are not those who want to acquire wealth and power but those who are happy with less. His convoluted logic remains ever familiar. Egoistic politicians of all societies tend to explain their greed for might and fame by such legitimate necessities as self-defence and such noble purposes as the will to help others. They, as Dimna, tend to blur the distinction between their personal ambitions and the interests of their community. In Dimna's answer to his brother, he states the following:

> But you should know that not all who approach kings do so for selfish motives. Some approach them to obtain favours that help their friends and restrain their enemies. Those who lack high station in this world may be content with whatever they may have, and modest additional boons: like a dog that is pleased with a dry bone. But the noble-hearted and chivalrous will not be so easily satisfied, for they have high aspirations. They are like the lion that has just caught a hare but will toss it aside to chase a camel, not like a

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50 The Arabic term *thawr* means both "bull" and "ox", but the placid nature of Shatraba makes "ox" a more fitting translation. Nevertheless, when quoting Jallad's translation, I will retain the term "Bull" which he uses throughout unchanged. The fable is found in Edgerton, 274-328; Schulthess, 1-51; 'Azzām, 47-98; Cheikho, 53-101; Shaykhū, 60-114; Jallad, 78-117.

51 'Azzām, 52; Cheikho, 55; Shaykhū, 63; Jallad, 81.

52 Damanaka is the original form of the name Dimna, and Karaṭaka is the original form of Kalīla. According to Edgerton, 276, n. 6: "The name Damanaka means something like 'Victor;' what Karaṭaka means is not clear." They are called respectively "Dmng" and "Ḳlil̤g" in Schulthess, 3 (see also 172, n. 13 and 14).

53 See Edgerton, 276. See also below, p. 13. (§ after fn 75 and until fn 77) INTERNAL REF

54 See Edgerton, 277.

55 See Schulthess, 3.

> dog who wags his tail continuously … for a scrap of bread. Notice the eating habits of the mighty elephant: He will consume his fodder only after he receives a large helping of attention and flattery.
> Whoever has wealth and is generous to himself, his family and his friends will be remembered for a longer time after his death. But one who lives in hardship and in misery, and is unable to spend adequately on himself or his relatives, is better dead than alive. However, someone who works selfishly only to satisfy his basic desires and needs,[56] is not very different from a mere beast.[57]

It is quite ironic that the one who makes these comparisons is a jackal. To his brother Dimna, Kalīla answers that: "If a person is settled in his position and status, he should be content with it."[58]

This warning by Kalīla is not present in the reconstructed Sanskrit version,[59] but it does appear in the old Syriac text.[60] This fact, considered together with the similar addition just mentioned above,[61] indicates that the concern over social climbing appeared in the lost Pahlavi text, from which both the old Syriac and the Arabic versions derive. According to the reconstructed Sanskrit version, Karaṭaka's and Damanaka's status is already very high, so Damanaka's ambitions do not contrast with his standing. This is clearly different in the case of Dmng (in the old Syriac text) or Dimna (in the Arabic versions).[62]

Kalīla's argument, however, fails to impress Dimna—who is aware of the difficulties of social climbing but considers ambition to be a virtue:

> Positions and status are the focus of strong competition that is very much related to the magnanimity of character. A person's magnanimity may elevate him from a lowly position, but the reverse is also true: those who are not magnanimous may fall from exalted heights to the pit of ignominy. One rises to a high and honourable status with great effort; falling is so much easier. A person might find it difficult to heft a heavy stone onto his shoulder, but letting it fall on the ground is no strain at all. For us the position to excel is highly

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56 'Azzām, 54, reads: لِيُعَدَّ من البقر والغَنَم من لم تكن هِمَّتُه إلّا بطنَه وفرجَه i.e. "The one whose only concern is his belly and sex is to be counted among the cows and sheep". In Cheikho, 56 and Shaykhū, 64, the sentence is slightly different and it does not include the term *farj*, "genitals". As only the "belly" and not the "sex" is mentioned in Edgerton, 278, and Schulthess, 5, we can assume that the latter was not part of the Pahlavi version. It is questionable whether it was part of the Arabic version created by Ibn al-Muqaffa' or was interpolated later.

57 Jallad, 83 (cf. 'Azzām, 52-4; Cheikho, 55-6; Shaykhū, 64; Edgerton, 277-8; Schulthess, 4-5).

58 Jallad, 83 (cf. 'Azzām, 54; Cheikho, 56; Shaykhū, 65).

59 See Edgerton, 278-9.

60 See Schulthess, 5.

61 See above, p. 9 with the n. 55. INTERNAL REF

62 See below, p. 13. (§ after fn 75 and until fn 77) INTERNAL REF

> appreciated. Why should anyone be content with the level where he finds himself, if the opportunity to pursue higher ambitions is wide open?[63]

Dimna also knows the means to reach the high position he looks for:

> I will find a way to meet the Lion at an opportune time and befriend him. The Lion, you know has his weaknesses. If I approach him he might grant me a lucrative position. Then I will enjoy the status and influence I crave.[64]

In the text published by Cheikho we read a more articulate version of this thought:

> The lion's discernment is weak and both he and his soldiers are confused. In this situation, I can perhaps approach the lion with advice and reach with him an eminent position.[65]

The reconstructed Sanskrit version is even more outspoken about the king and does not mention the jackal's own rise in status:

> It is evident that this our lord (Piñgalaka[66])[67] is a coward, and his followers too, and that he is dull of wit.[68]

On its side, the old Syriac version is not much more laudatory for the king, but at least it calls only his entourage and not the king himself a coward.[69] Considering the Arabic versions, it seems that as the text evolved, the reproach of the king became less explicit.

But Dimna is right, the lion is trying to hide that his heart is terrified by an unknown sound in the forest: the bellowing of an ox, which has been abandoned there by its owner. Replying to Kalīla's questions Dimna explains:

> If I study him and take enough time to understand his behaviour, then I assure you I will manage well, and he shall like me. I will appease, rather than oppose

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63 Jallad, 83 (cf ʻAzzām, 54; Cheikho, 56; Shaykhū, 65; Edgerton, 278-9; Schulthess, 5).

64 Jallad, 83 (cf ʻAzzām, 54; Cheikho, 56-7; Shaykhū, 65; Edgerton, 279; Schulthess, 5).

65 Cheikho, 56-57; and Shaykhū, 65 (ʻAzzām, 54, is slightly abbreviated): فإن الأسد ضعيف الرأي وقد التبس عليه وعلى جنوده أمرهم ولعلي على هذا الحال أدنو من الأسد بنصيحة فأصيب عنده منزلة وجاها.

66 According to Edgerton, 275, n. 4, the name of the lion means "Tawny". The name of the lion does not appear in Cheikho; Shaykhū; nor Schulthess; but he is named بنكلة in ʻAzzām, 52. This form is created by the editor as a reconstruction based on the شكلَه found in the manuscript and on the Sanskrit name, see ʻAzzām 322, n. 12. The form given in Miquel, *Le livre*, 51, § 111 (see also 328, n. 30) is Bankala.

67 The parentheses in Edgerton's translation indicate that the enclosed text cannot be attributed to the original with entire confidence (see Edgerton, 270).

68 See Edgerton, 279.

69 See Schulthess, 5.

> him. Whatever he thinks is right, I will make it look even better, and appreciate the results, and cheer him on. I will make sure that he is pleased with whatever he chooses to do. On the other hand, if he makes a poor decision I will identify his mistake and its consequences, and point out why it should be reversed as best I can. The more effective I become, the more my credit with the Lion will rise.[70]

Kalīla tries to remind him again of the dangers he will face:

> The company of the kings is risky.[71] […] Scholars also compare kings to a mountain too difficult to climb. It may offer delicious fruit, precious stones, and plants with useful medicinal powers. Yet it is also a place full of lions, tigers, wolves and many harmful predators. It is too difficult to climb, and even more difficult to inhabit.[72]

Dimna further summarizes his opinion in a passage which is not present in the reconstructed Sanskrit text[73] but was most likely part of the Pahlavi version, for the old Syriac version includes a related variant[74]:

> But it is known that whoever refuses great challenges will never claim valuable rewards. Whoever backs away from satisfying his ambition for fear of risk will not go far in this life. […] Scholars also taught that the most challenging human endeavours are to enjoy the grace and company of kings and to worship with monks. This reminds me of the elephant, whose beauty and splendour are manifested in either of two places: in the wild, or as a mount for kings.[75]

Dimna manages to attract the attention and the liking of the lion. In the old Syriac and the Arabic versions, when Dmng/Dimna first meets the ruler, the lion asks those who are with him about the jackal. When they identify Dimna to him, he says that he knew Dimna's father.[76] It is not clear whether this is true, or whether the lion is lying to show how knowledgeable he is, or to justify his interest in

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70 Jallad, 84 (cf. 'Azzām, 55; Cheikho, 58; Shaykhū, 66-7; corresponding roughly to Edgerton, 279-80; and more closely to Schulthess, 5-6).

71 'Azzām, 65; Cheikho, 58; Shaykhū, 67, follow the same variant: أحذرك صحبة السلطان فإن صحبته خطر عظيم "I warn you about the companionship of the sultan. Indeed, his companionship is an immense danger." (In Ibn al-Muqaffa''s writings, *sulṭān* means both governmental power and its wielder.) As expected, the Arabic versions are closer to the old Syriac (Schulthess, 7) than to the reconstructed Sanskrit text (Edgerton, 280).

72 Jallad, 85 (cf. 'Azzām, 55; Cheikho, 58; Shaykhū, 67; Edgerton, 280; Schulthess, 7).

73 See Edgerton, 280.

74 See Schulthess, 7.

75 Jallad, 85 (cf. 'Azzām, 55-6; Cheikho, 58-9; Shaykhū, 67-8).

76 Jallad, 85 (cf. 'Azzām, 56; Cheikho, 59; Shaykhū, 68; Schulthess, 8).

Dimna. In the reconstructed Sanskrit text, it is unambiguous that the king knows Damanaka and the latter is of the high status.[77]

> Dimna exhibits his enthusiasm to serve the king. He says:
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> I have been waiting outside the King's gate for a long time, watching and hoping that one day he might notice me, and assign me a task whereby I can earn my way. I know that there are many responsibilities in the King's Court that require an unimportant person to perform them. Thus even the most unimportant person may be of some use. Even an uninteresting stick that is thrown on the ground and left to rot may one day prove useful […][78]

Ibn al-Muqaffa', the author of the Arabic translation, added his own introduction to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, in which he wrote about the instructional weight of the book.[79] He starts his *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba* (*Letter about the entourage/retinue [of the Caliph]*)—an epistle addressed to the ruler—with a *captatio benevolentiae*.[80] The humble tone of this panegyrical introduction is similar to Dimna's words when the jackal introduces himself to the lion. Ibn al-Muqaffa' clearly deemed Dimna's posture *de rigueur* in approaching the ruler.

Due to the jackal's higher status in the reconstructed Sanskrit version compared to the old Syriac and the Arabic versions deriving from the Pahlavi translation, Damanaka is more straightforward and assertive in his first sentences. He says:

> Your Majesty has had no need of my services. And yet, when the time comes, it is not permissible (for ministers)[81] to refrain from speaking. (That is why I have come.) [82]

As the king, who is in fact desperate to get some help, reacts positively to Dimna's advances, Dimna goes further in commending his own merits by contrasting them with the uselessness of others:

> Too many inexperienced aides could prove counterproductive. Success at work may depend, not on the number of administrators and assistants, but on their quality. […] A person interested in studying the trunk of a tree finds all the branches around it a bother. Therefore the King is right not to despise the gracious qualities found in a man who may be of lowly status. Such a

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77 See Edgerton, 280-1. See also above, p. 9. INTERNAL REF

78 Jallad, 85 (cf. 'Azzām, 56; Cheikho, 59; Shaykhū, 68; Schulthess, 8).

79 'Azzām, 5-14; Cheikho, 45-52; Shaykhū, 51-9; Jallad, 28-37.

80 See below, pp. 24 and 30. INTERNAL REF.

81 See above, n. 67 for Edgerton's uncertainty about the text.

82 Edgerton, 281.

> commoner, once given the opportunity, might come up with great achievements. He may be very much like the nerve that is plucked out of a dead body and strung into a bow, thus becoming valuable. The bow is vital to the King for sport, and in the battlefield as well.[83]

The essence of this argument echoes the reconstructed Sanskrit version, but Damanaka is much less prudent and humble in addressing his words to the king than Dmng or Dimna.[84]

Excited by Dimna's eloquence the lion presents him with many gifts and delivers a royal speech. It is quite clear that his only concern about his subjects is to rule safely over them:

> A king should not persist in trampling the rights of his people, for they may be divided into two types. The first type is belligerent, like a poisonous snake. It may not strike the first time it is stepped on, but the deadly bite will surely come if he is stepped on again. The second type of person is simple, and resembles sandalwood. If it is subjected to prolonged friction it will become hot enough to burn anyone who touches it.[85]

Dimna becomes a trusted friend of the lion. He discovers that the source of his king's secret fear is strange sound, and he offers to investigate its origin. The lion agrees, and Dimna goes to meet the ox, called Shanzaba[86]. He tells him to submit and render allegiance to the lion, in order to avoid the anger of the king. Shanzaba understands that he has no choice but to follow Dimna and meet the lion.

But this glorious moment in Dimna's career brings unexpected consequences. As the ox happens to be a valuable companion himself, Dimna loses his primacy as the favourite of the lion. He complains to Kalīla about his misfortune and reveals to him that he has decided to get rid of the ox. Of course, he tries to explain that he is acting in the interest of the lion and not solely in his own. Moreover, he does not fail to point out the otherness of the ox, who, he says, is different than himself, Dimna, different than his interlocutor Kalīla, and is not the like of their king the lion either. The ox is after all only a herbivore:

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83 Jallad, 86 (cf. 'Azzām, 58; Cheikho, 60; Shaykhū, 69; Schulthess, 10).

84 See Edgerton, 281-3.

85 Jallad, 86 (cf. 'Azzām, 58; Cheikho, 61; Shaykhū, 70; Schulthess, 11). A variant of the snake parable above appears in the text of the reconstructed Sanskrit version (Edgerton, 281) but as part of Damnaka's speech.

86 This is the name of the ox in 'Azzām, 51 and thereinafter (see also 322, n. 7, according to which this form شنزبة is closer to the Sanskrit than the form شترة and others). It is called Shatrabah in Jallad, 80 and throughout; شتربة (unvocalised) in Cheikho, 54 and throughout; شَتْرَبَة (Shatraba) in Shaykhū, 61 and throughout; Snzbu̯g in Schulthess, 2 and throughout (see also 172, n. 9). According to the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the name of ox (bull) is Saṁjīvaka, meaning "Rejoicer" and "Enlivener", see Edgerton, 275 with n. 3.

> When I considered what might help restore me to my previous status, and pondered the reasons for my failure, I resolved to have the grass-chewer, the Bull,[87] eliminated. That is the only way to regain my position with the Lion. It may also serve the Lion well, since his excessive friendship with the Bull is odd and possibly compromising.[88]

Damanaka's arguments are different in the reconstructed Sanskrit version. The fact that the ox is a herbivore is not one of them, but it appears already in the old Syriac text,[89] and thus was probably inserted in the composition of the Pahlavi translation.[90] In the reconstructed Sanskrit version Damanaka does not mention his will to regain his lost status, but explains that because of the "dearth of food" caused by the fact that the lion spends too much time with the ox—a situation for which ultimately Damanaka himself was responsible[91]—he wants to separate the lion from the ox and save him from the evil state he is in.[92]

When Kalīla reminds him that the body of the ox is much stronger than that of Dimna and that he also has more supporters, Dimna clarifies that he will use the strength of the weak, that is intelligence, and will find out some stratagems to alienate the ox and the lion from each other. He tells a series of tales to illustrate the superiority of intelligence over physical strength.

One of these stories is also a parable of how an intelligent subject can liberate all his fellows from a tyrant. According to the plot, the beasts of a very fertile land made a deal with a fierce lion, who kept them in constant fear. The deal was that they would offer him an animal every day in return for which he would leave them in peace. This is quite a telling example of the real nature of the kind of protection offered by many rulers to their subjects.[93] But one day a hare designated to be offered to the lion for his lunch invents a stratagem. The hare arrives late and alone, and tells the lion:

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87 See above, n. 50.

88 Jallad, 90.

89 See Schulthess, 19.

90 It is missing from 'Azzām, 66; Cheikho, 68; and Shaykhū, 78; but present in de Sacy, 98.

91 See Edgerton, 288.

92 See Edgerton, 292-3.

93 Van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 206, describes this agreement as "a Hobbesian 'social contract' *avant-la-lettre*". For her detailed analysis on this contract, see *ibid*., 233-5 and 247. It is also interesting that the predatory nature of this ruler, whose social contract is rather an extortion racket, is reflected in Neẓāmi Ganjavi's (d. 1209) take on the tale where the lion is labelled as "usurer," see Neẓāmi Ganjavi, *Kolliyat*, vol. I, Khosrow o Shirin, chapter 92, b. 7, quoted in van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 240 (see also *ibid*., 217). Usury is against Islamic law *(sharī'a*), which is conceived to be rooted in God's will and the ultimate pact between God and the Muslim community. Neẓāmi Ganjavi's combination of the notion of the illegality of usury with the lion's predatory violence is even more successful in the light of the universal experience that usurers tend to use further illegal and violent means.

> "I am the beasts' messenger. They sent me with another rabbit for your lunch as agreed. Alas, another lion stalked us and seized the rabbit, and then arrogantly said to me, 'In this land, I alone have the priority over all beasts.' I explained, 'Please, this is the King's lunch, which the beasts entrusted to me for delivery. I beg you not to annoy him.' When the lion heard that, he cursed you and your ancestors. I hastened here to give you the bad news." The Lion angrily ordered the Hare: "Come with me and show me this insolent lion."[94]

The hare brings the lion to a deep pool and shows him their own reflection in the water that the lion takes for the other lion and the other hare. He jumps into the water to kill his rival and drowns.

It is highly significant that while the hare's intelligence results in a happy ending for the tyrannised animals, the authors of several versions of the text abhorred the (indirect) regicide his scheme resulted in.[95] In fact, while in the reconstructed Sanskrit version Karaṭaka simply assents to Damanaka's plan,[96] in the old Syriac and the Arabic versions, he does it only with the condition that it should not harm the lion.[97] This change probably appeared in the Pahlavi version and its spirit is in harmony with other alterations observed in this version.

Dimna's lion is not very different from that of the hare, but he is a bit less fierce and more prudent. His hidden fear and tendency to suspect anyone is the weak point that Dimna exploits. He cleverly convinces the king that the ox is plotting against him. Shanzaba's power and support, he suggests, is already too far-reaching and the lion should act before it becomes too late. He explains to the king that he should prepare to fight the ox at the latter's next visit to the court. Dimna advises the lion to watch the behaviour of the ox and to attack him if it is suspicious.

Now the jackal goes to the ox. Dimna reminds Shanzaba their bond and what had brought him to the lion's company. Proceeding, he tells the ox with feigned difficulty that the lion plans to kill and eat him. After this psychological build-up

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94 Jallad, 96, cf. 'Azzām, 70; Cheikho, 73; Shaykhū, 84. In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, there is only one hare, see Edgerton, 297. We can observe, however, a change, which presumably appeared in the Pahlavi translation: in both the old Syriac text (Schulthess, 23) and the Arabic versions, a second hare appears on the scene. The role of this hare would be to accompany the lunch-victim to the lion, but the latter wants to go there alone and manages to convince the guard to stay behind. Arriving to the lion, the hero-hare claims to be the guard from whom the pretended other lion robbed the king's lunch. Thus the hare's position becomes less dangerous and the story more complex and credible. See also van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 224-5.

95 See all the analysis of van Ruymbeke, "Murder", especially 228-33, and 244-50.

96 See Edgerton, 298.

97 See Schulthess, 23 (the term for the lion is missing from the Syriac text and was interpolated/reintroduced into in the translation, see Schulthess, p. 181, n. 91), 'Azzām, 70; Cheikho, 73; Shaykhū, 84; and Jallad, 96. See also van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 245-6.

the jackal's words have full credit for the ox.[98] They start to discuss bitterly the nature of rulers. Dimna says:

> Regarding their infidelity to their companions and their nonchalance of those they lose, they are like whores; when a client goes away another comes in his place.[99]

Interestingly, the reconstructed Sanskrit version only declares the impossibility of intimacy and friendship with teachers and rulers, but it does not mention prostitutes.[100] This is astonishing, as this version of the text is usually less subtle than the old Syriac and the Arabic versions when it comes to criticising rulers. We will see later that the change is not against this this general tendency.[101] In the old Syriac text, a comparison between the unfaithfulness of teachers, whores and rulers appears.[102] In the Arabic versions, only the rulers and whores remain, while the teachers are spared.[103]

The unfortunate ox reflects on the lion's reasons for plotting to kill him. The Arabic versions include a section that is not found in the reconstructed Sanskrit version nor in the old Syriac text.[104] It offers a little *mirror for courtiers* that lucidly presents the image of the ideal adviser. The ox ponders on the mistakes that might have turned the king against him, and sees only one possible error in his occasional and respectful disagreement with the ruler:

> If the Lion thinks I have done him harm, I am honestly unaware of it. I may have disagreed with some of his opinions; possibly he thought I was too blunt. Even so, that is surely no crime. Actually, I have rarely disagreed with him,

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98 See Edgerton, 304-5; Schulthess, 30; 'Azzām, 78; Cheikho, 80; Shaykhū, 92; Jallad, 102.

99 إنما مَثَلهم في قِلّة وفائهم لأصحابهم وسخاء أنفُسهم عمن فقَدوا منهم مَثَل البَغيِّ كلما ذهب واحد جاء آخر مكانه. 'Azzām, 78. In his edition published for scholars (Cheikho, 80), Father Cheikho kept the comparison unchanged; in the "school edition" (Shaykhū, 91), however, he replaced the whore with an "innkeeper" صاحب فندق. The comparison is also present in de Sacy, 114; but missing from Jallad, 101. I aim to explore the history of the sexual content of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and its bowdlerisation in a separate paper.

100 Edgerton, 304. Though Damanaka does not compare rulers to prostitutes, he places them together with women in a series of rhetorical question: "Who in this world has not had his heart broken by women? Who, pray, is a friend of kings?" This series of rhetorical questions is found also in the Arabic versions (the question about women is missing from Jallad, 101), see 'Azzām, 77; Cheikho, 80; Shaykhū, 91; de Sacy, 113; as well as in the old Syriac text (Schulthess, 29). The jackal's words are echoed by the ox, who compares kings' and women's accessibility to base men (Edgerton 305, 308, not present in any of the Arabic versions nor in the old Syriac text).

101 See below, section 2.2.

102 Schulthess, 29.

103 Though in Cheikho, 80, we find a third element of comparison, the مكيث, which is clearly a corrupted form, possibly from مُكتِب or مُكتِّب meaning a (literacy) teacher.

104 See 'Azzām, 79; Cheikho, 81-2; Shaykhū, 93-4; Jallad, 103.

> and only on behalf of just decisions in court cases. I never shared my disagreements with his Companions or staff.[105] I purposely waited until we were alone, and discussed them with him soberly, respectfully, and in private. It is my experience that rulers who seek only agreeable advice from their counsellors, or agreeable medicines from their physicians, or accolades form scholars, are unlikely in times of difficulty and uncertainty to welcome or even appreciate the profound benefits and value of knowledge. They will definitely aggravate their problems and place their Companions in an impossible situation.[106]

The speech of the ox can be contrasted to Dimna's description of his planned conduct in befriending the lion.[107] The ox and Dimna are both skilled courtiers, the difference being that while the ox Shanzaba aims to serve the right cause, Dimna's single right cause is his own ascent. In the Arabic versions, this section is followed by the image of the drunkenness of the ruler with power.[108]

The ox further surmises that some malicious rival courtiers may have turned his friend, the lion, against him, but Dimna insists that there can be nothing behind the lion's plan to kill Shanzaba but the lion's treachery.[109] Shanzaba tells Dimna the story of a camel who associated himself with a lion who had three other companions living off the leftovers of the lion's prey: a wolf, a crow and a jackal.

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105 In Cheikho, 82 (the passage is shortened and vocalised in Shaykhū, 93) we read:
[...] لاني لم اخالفهُ في شيء من ذلك قط على رؤوس جندهِ الَّا وقد تُدُبر فيه المنفعة والزين. ولم أجاهرهُ بشيء من ذلك قط على رؤوس جندهِ ولا عند خاصّتهِ وأصحابهِ [...].
What is important here is that the ox says he never brought up any controversial issues publicly in front of the lion's *jund* (army), or in the presence of his *khāṣṣa* (elite/retinue) or *aṣḥāb* (companions). 'Azzām, 79, gives a shortened version where only the *jund* (army) remains from the three key terms. For the term *jund* in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, see Audebert, "La condition", 296-7. For the other two words in Ibn al-Muqaffa''s works, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 212, 216-20, 238, 251-5, and 265.

106 The root of this last idea also appears in the reconstructed Sanskrit version (see Edgerton, 305), but it is not present in the old Syriac text. This might indicate that the section is not added to the Arabic but lost from the old Syriac text and left out for some reason from the reconstructed Sanskrit version, as the remaining sentence alone seems to be part of a truncated longer argument. However, if this section was not part of the Pahlavi version at the time of the creation of the old Syriac translation, it could be interpolated (by Ibn al-Muqaffa'?) at the same time as the following chapter on Dimna's trial "The Investigation of Dimna's Conduct" (see below, pp. 22-22 and 35). INTERNAL REF It is a lesson for courtiers, showing them that one may think of oneself as the best possible adviser and still be killed by the king.

107 See above, pp. 12. (§ before fn 70) INTERNAL REF

108 See 'Azzām, 79; Cheikho, 82; Shaykhū, 94. In Jallad, 103: "the addiction to power that often afflicts rulers". For other occurrences of this image in texts of Pahlavi origin, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 163, n. 491.

109 The ox's suspicion and the jackal's clever reaction is more manifest in the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions than in the reconstructed Sanskrit version, see Schulthess, 30-2; 'Azzām, 78-80; Cheikho, 81-3; Shaykhū, 92-5; Jallad, 102-4; cf. Edgerton, 305-7.

One day after the lion fought an elephant and was so badly wounded that he could not hunt, his companions contrived that the lion should kill the camel so that they could eat it together. The crow puts the proposition to the king, who refuses to break the promise he gave to the camel. The crow, however, tells the lion that he will find a way to bring the plan to completion without harming his honour. The king gives his consent by silence. The three companions then follow a secret plan: each of them offer his flesh as a meal for the king, but the others will ridicule their friend arguing that the flesh so offered is of miserable quality. When, constrained by the situation, the poor camel offers himself, the group immediately accept his generous proposal and tear him to pieces.

It is rather ironic that the tale is narrated by Shanzaba to Dimna, who will play a role in the destiny of the ox analogous to that of the crow in the case of the camel. Furthermore, in the reconstructed Sanskrit version, when the crow argues with his companions for the killing of the camel, he makes the same point as does Dmng in old Syriac and Dimna in the Arabic, when the latter justifies to Kalīla his decision to kill Shanzaba, namely that the camel like the ox is a herbivore.[110] Nevertheless, the ox fails to heed his own tale, and he seals his own destiny by believing his comrade, who—like the crow in the case of the camel—has become his treacherous enemy due to changing circumstances. His blindness to reality is even more striking as he himself is very aware of his condition as a herbivore.[111] The lion is also blind to reality, after Dimna had persuaded him that the ox, a herbivore, could aim to kill him and take his throne.[112]

Dimna wants to make sure that the ox and the lion do not speak to each other and uncover his machinations. He advises the ox to watch the behaviour and gestures of the lion carefully when he enters the court. Thus prepared, when the lion and ox finally meet, both see the other as ready for a fight. Before being attacked and killed by the lion, the ox murmurs to himself:

> How true it is that the friend of the ruler is very much like a person who keeps a snake as a house pet; he will never know when it will attack and bite him.[113]

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110 Edgerton, 309. The story shows variations in the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions, but the camel is called a "grass eater" in all of them (twice in Schulthess, 34 and 35; and twice in ʿAzzām, 82; Cheikho, 85; Shaykhū, 97; once in Jallad, 106). Audebert, "La violence," 27-32, also points out that both the bull [ox] and the camel are not only herbivores, but also foreigners. On "Meat-Eaters and Grass-Eaters", see also Taylor, *The Fall*, 76-88, discussing the fate of the bull and of the camel, as well as some other examples.

111 Edgerton, 307; Schulthess, 32; ʿAzzām, 80; Cheikho, 83; Shaykhū, 95; Jallad, 104.

112 Edgerton, 301; Schulthess, 27; ʿAzzām, 75; Cheikho, 77; Shaykhū, 88; Jallad, 99. Audebert, "La violence", applies a theory presented in René Girard's *Le bouc*, and discusses the possibility of considering the killing of the ox and the camel as sacrifices performed in a weakened regime.

113 Jallad, 112. This version is considerably shortened compared to ʿAzzām, 89; Cheikho, 92; Shaykhū, 104-105; Schulthess, 41; and Edgerton, 316.

While the lion fights and eventually kills the ox, he is also is hurt and exhausted in combat. Seeing that, Kalīla reacts rebuking Dimna for his egoism and disloyalty. But Kalīla's scolding of his brother is as late and useless as the lion's sorrow when he realises that he has killed his best friend. The lion is wounded and remorseful, the ox is dead, and Dimna remains as opportunistic as always; he goes to the lion and comforts him.

In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the consolation ends differently than in the other versions:

> A kingdom cannot be ruled according to the common standards of men. For what are vices in men [in general][114], the same are virtues in a king. […] True and false, harsh and gentle in speech, savage and at the same time compassionate, avaricious and generous, lavish in spending yet taking in great amounts of wealth from many sources—like a harlot, the conduct of kings is changeful.[115]

This is a majestic conclusion for a chapter dealing with the nature of the powerful. Almost hymnic, it presents rulers in the light of the idea of *coincidentia oppositorum*, which is used to characterise the divine in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*[116]. As it is missing in both the old Syriac[117] and the Arabic versions[118] it was probably excised by the author of an earlier edition, presumably the Pahlavi translator. He did not remove the comparison between rulers and prostitutes entirely, but moved it to a less prominent location.[119]

"The Lion and the Ox" is a drama with four actors, if we do not count the introductory and enclosed tales. The *dramatis personae* are the two jackals, the lion, and the ox. It is remarkable that the tale of these four personages presents the life and the power dynamics of a ruler's entire court so vividly. Dimna is bright, but absolutely unscrupulous and selfish. Kalīla is not much better than him, only less ambitious and more prudent. He is in fact more of an interlocutor than an actor, given that he limits himself to reminding Dimna of the difficulties of his venture and reproving him at the end. He does not stop Dimna's intrigues, and pays only lip service to the high moral values of an ideal adviser. He could be interpreted as Dimna's—rather inefficacious—conscience.[120] The lion's only

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114 This interpolation (between brackets) is by Edgerton.

115 Edgerton, 328.

116 See Feuerstein and Feuerstein, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, chapter 11, "The Vision of [the Lord's] All-Form", 221-246.

117 See Schulthess, 51.

118 See 'Azzām, 98; Cheikho, 101; Shaykhū, 114; Jallad, 117.

119 See above, pp. 17-17. INTERNAL REF

120 This interpretation is suggested by Abbès, "L'ami", 16, n. 18. According to Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 54, "the narrator establishes [Karaṭaka] as representative of the moral voice".

concern is his safety and he lacks any wisdom; he appoints and dismisses his advisers carelessly and kills his best friend at the first suspicion.

The sole guiltless personage of the tale is the ox. He is a strong and smart, but harmless foreigner who had formerly served men, but was stuck in a forest ruled by predators and scavengers. The cause of Shanzaba's tragedy lies in his very excellence and innocence. On the one hand, his excellence results in Dimna's loss of eminence as the favourite of the king although it also inclines the lion to believe Dimna's calumnies, according to which the ox seeks to topple his king. On the other hand, Shanzaba is not sagacious enough to detect Dimna's intentions and survive his machinations.[121]

In the *Pañcatantra* the tale ends with the victory of Dimna, representing the triumph of unethical intelligence. The reconstructed Sanskrit version presents the story of the success of a talented careerist courtier. Karaṭaka rebukes Damanaka only because, while following his desire to be the single favourite adviser of the lion, he caused damage to their king. Damanaka is a "hereditary minister", and thus he plots within his own circle/class/caste.[122] Dawood interprets the tale of the *Panchatantra* in the light of the caste system and the concepts of Karma and Samsara.[123] The influence of these two concepts is clearly present in the reconstructed Sanskrit version, and the caste system is also the key of Taylor's highly elaborate interpretation.[124] It is worth noting, however, that in spite of its Indian origin the tale does not necessarily reflect the rule of the caste system. In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, Karaṭaka says to Damanaka:

> A man's nobility lies not in the regulations of his caste […]

Edgerton adds, however, that the last word in this sentence could also be understood as meaning "family".[125] The subsisting Indian versions of the *Pañcatantra* show varied attitudes to the caste system.[126]

Collating the reconstructed Sanskrit version with both the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions, we can detect, however, a change of attitude that might have occurred in the composition of the Pahlavi translation. Dmng in the old Syriac text and Dimna in the Arabic versions is a social climber. Artful dodger as he is, the Sanskrit Damanaka is nearly a straightforward gentleman, compared to Dmng or Dimna, who is depicted as a much more despicable villain. Being of base birth with high aspirations makes his character perceived as even more vile and sly.

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121 Audebert, "La violence," 27-8; and van Ruymbeke, "Murder", 211 and 227 discuss the bull's responsibility for his own fate in the light of different textual (and editorial) variants.

122 See above, beginning of section 2.1.

123 Dawood, *The Panchatantra*, 49-57.

124 For Taylor's interpretation, see above pp. 3-3. See also below, pp. 32-33.INTERNAL REF

125 Edgerton, 327, n. 46.

126 I am grateful to Camillo Formigatti for this clarification.

The alteration of the jackal's original social status[127] and the further darkening of his character concur with the corresponding changes to the course of the story and its ending. The amoral moral of the chapter certainly did not satisfy all audiences. In fact, in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* the story continues and reaches a different conclusion. One of the editors, possibly Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the author of the Arabic translation, added an entire chapter[128] to the fable of "The Lion and the Ox". After a long and complicated trial, Dimna is executed in the most horrible manner.

This addition to the text has been the subject of some excellent studies,[129] and most of them agree that, as this new chapter is not part of the old Syriac text, it was probably interpolated by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.[130] János Jany, however, demonstrates that while aspects of Dimna's trial do conform to Islamic practices, others correspond to the Sasanian juridical system.[131] Nevertheless, I do not think this enables us to state that the chapter was composed before Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, who himself was a Persian transposing through his texts written in Arabic the Sassanian heritage into the Islamic present. His oeuvre reflects and promotes the fusion of the two civilisations. It is possible that the description of Dimna's trial reflects the procedures of the caliphal court before and/or after the "'Abbāsid revolution",[132] which included such practices rooted in Sasanian law that later became obsolete when the doctrines of the Islamic law schools were crystallised. Such an interpretation of the legal element of the trial emphasises the significance of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s writings for the study of the formative period of Islamic law.[133]

It is worth mentioning that the aristocratic disgust against the rise of outclass parvenus appears also in other texts translated or composed by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.[134] He was a Persian nobleman in the service of the highest Arab dignitaries of the Islamic empire, whom he was teaching Sasanian manners.[135]

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127 See above, beginning of section 2.1, as well as pp. 15-15. INTERNAL REF

128 ʿAzzām, 99-124; Cheikho, 102-24; Shaykhū, 115-42; Jallad, 118-31.

129 Bürgel, "Language"; Hámori, "Shameful"; Forster, "Fabel"; Jany, "The Origins"; van Ruymbeke, "Dimna's"; Monroe, *Some Remarks*. I am grateful to Professor James Monroe for giving me a copy of this unpublished study. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 13 and 215.

130 See also de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 14-7.

131 Jany, "The Origins".

132 Though a number of studies takes for granted that Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation was created during the rule of al-Manṣūr, to my knowledge we do not have any means to state when he composed it. For recent studies on early Islamic courts, see Tillier (ed.), *Le pluralisme*; and Tillier, "*Qāḍī*s".

133 Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba* is a key document for the formation of Islamic law. The most recent studies known to me on this aspect of the epistle are Lowry, "The First"; and Yousefi, "Islam".

134 See Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 158-9, 252-3; and Arjomand, "'Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffa'", 31-2.

135 For Ibn al-Muqaffa''s biography, see below, n. 284. For his oeuvre, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 81-107. See also Kristó-Nagy, "Marriage".

The interpolation of this new chapter on Dimna's trial reflects a similar spirit as the changes in the chapter of "The Lion and the Ox" discussed above, which were probably made by the author of the Pahlavi translation (as they are both included in the old Syriac and Arabic versions). It is worth noting that the actual murderer of the ox, the lion, remains unpunished. Kings are above accountability.[136] The manifest or superficial moral message of the tale equates morality with loyalty to royalty. Dimna's sin is not his lethal plot against a fellow courtier (who fails to realise that Dimna's ambition makes him his rival), but the harm he causes to his king. This layer is meant to satisfy a royal or royalist reader, as it wraps brutal power in a moral mantle.

There are, however, further conclusions to derive from the two chapters that narrate Dimna's story. While Dimna manages to make the king kill his favourite, in the fable narrated by Dimna, the hare makes the lion kill himself. In the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions, Dimna has no other justification for his machinations than his own ambition, the hare, however, liberates the community from a predatory tyrant. The hare's trick is laudable and successful, while Dimna's plot is shameful and injurious[137]. Dimna's figure is similar to that of Lucifer/Iblīs[138] or Don Giovanni (as in Da Ponte's libretto and Mozart's opera). All three figures are victims of their own hubris, which ultimately resides in their pride and egoism. They are tragic figures because Don Giovanni's, Lucifer's and Dimna's extreme ambition is coupled with the same level of talent.[139] Thus their

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136 According to the recent analysis of van Ruymbeke, "Dimna's", 559: "In fact the story is neither about the moral punishment of slander, nor about royalty meting out justice, nor about their harmonious collaboration, but rather about the ruthless clash of two levels of manipulation: political against rhetorical with the ultimate and desirable victory of the former, crushing the dangerous rhetorical agent." Bürgel, "Language", 195 writes: "Protestations of innocence, logical stringency, moral arguments, religious overtones (even if scriptural allusions are lacking in this text), all this is linguistic material which can be used, or rather abused, by a reprobate. So what we have before us, is in fact a deconstruction of the reliability of language". Bürgel, *ibid.*, justly points out that in the case of Ibn al-Muqaffa', the use of double language was also connected to his heresy. It is also emphasised together with the distinction between the esoteric (*bātin*) and exoteric (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the text in Monroe, *Some Remarks*. On Ibn al-Muqaffa''s personality and religion, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, especially 65-79 and 341-4. For the anti-Islamic texts attributed to him, see below, n. 190.

137 To quote the title of Hámori, "Shameful and Injurious".

138 Iblīs was seen in a tragic light by outstanding *ṣūfī* authors. See Awn, *Satan's*.

139 Dimna's outstanding achievement in his apology is excellently summed up in van Ruymbeke, "Dimna's", 571: "Ibn al-Muqaffa' pitches the difficulties for Dimna. He is placed in the most delicate of all rhetorical corners: he is defending himself, and his is a *causa turpis*. He has only the help of rhetoric to defend this foul cause, in the face of an inimical audience, whose distrust is activated by his very proficiency at rhetoric! He is guilty of what he is accused of and he stands on a very sticky wicket because, in order to deflect the accusations, he should point at the actual murderer who unfortunately, happens to be the King, the ultimate decision-maker in this judiciary case. All these could seriously handicap Dimna as orator for the defence, but he rises magnificently to the challenge."

failure is clearly a loss, but also a relief, for in their hubris they are harmful to others and destructive for the norms of their societies. Their stories demonstrate that talent without virtue has no value, or, if any, a negative one, as it harms both the community and eventually even the individual, who, though possessing outstanding qualities, is also possessed by misplaced desires. However, the more the virtue and the value of the heroes opposing these admirable villain anti-heroes is questionable (as in the case of Don Giovanni and Dimna's opponents), the more dubious the moral of the drama.[140]

2.2. The Owls and the Crows[141]

The tale begins with a devastating defeat inflicted by the owls' army on the crows in a night raid. The story ends, however, with the complete victory of the crows killing all the owls in that land. Their success is due to an intelligent king able to assess the varied quality of the advice given to him by his advisers. He listens to five of them and follows the advice of the fifth, who manages to deceive the owls and to win the war, risking his life by pretending he has switched camp. All the owls believe him with the exception of one, but the king of the owls fails to listen to his best adviser, leading to their complete annihilation.

In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the crow's king addresses this vizier as "father", and the vizier instructs him in a paternal tone, teaching him about the right conduct to pursue, including the importance of good counsellors.[142] The old Syriac text and the Arabic versions present the vizier's attitude as less magisterial and emphasise an element that is already present in the reconstructed Sanskrit version: the vizier conditions the ruler to accept his advice by attributing to his king the glorious qualities necessary for taking his counsel.[143] This technique was also used by Ibn al-Muqaffa' in the introduction of his own epistle addressed to the caliph.[144]

Before announcing his scheme to his king, the vizier explains the "historical" reason for the hatred between the owls and the crows. According to this story, a

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140 Iblīs, as the symbol of the individual rebelling against social norms sanctified as divine laws is discussed in Kristó-Nagy, "Who Instigated"; and Kristó-Nagy, "The Devil".

141 Edgerton, 358-92; Schulthess, 89-117; 'Azzām, 151-84; Cheikho, 143-66; Shaykhū, 160-82; Jallad, 147-68.

142 Edgerton, 360-3.

143 Edgerton, 362; Schulthess, 91; 'Azzām, 156; Cheikho, 146; Shaykhū, 162-3; Jallad, 150.

144 See above, p. 13 and below, p. 30180. INTERNAL REF.

group of birds[145] wanted to elect a king[146] and they were about to choose an owl, but a crow dissuaded them, provoking an animosity between owls and crows that lasted forever. In this tale within the tale, we read yet another story told by the crow, who advised the birds not to choose the owl for their king. In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the crow introduces the fable of the "Elephant, Hares and Moon" by stating that the owl:

> […] cannot be used [even][147] in a bluff. And it is said: 'Even in a bluff may lie success, if a king is without power. By the bluff of the moon the hares dwell in peace'.[148]

Interestingly, as compared to the reconstructed Sanskrit version, both the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions display a similar change, which probably occurred in the composition of the Pahlavi version. In the old Syriac version this introduction is already modified, suggesting that life can be good even with a king whose understanding is limited, provided that those who are close to him manage his affairs well.[149] This message is further amplified in the Arabic versions where the crow advising the birds about the owl formulates the all-important role of the competent entourage of an ignorant ruler.[150] The variant we find in Jallad's translation has clearly been simplified and "democratised":

> I am sure it would be far better for you not to let owls rule you. You can rule yourselves well enough and use your own faculties and good judgment, just like the Hare who claimed that the Moon was her King, and acted accordingly.[151]

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145 Edgerton, 364; Schulthess, 94; 'Azzām, 157; Cheikho, 147; Shaykhū, 164. In Jallad, 151, the birds are said to be cranes.

146 The story presents interesting similarities with the Aesopian fable "The Frogs Asked for a King". See both the Latin text by Phaedrus and its English translation in Babrius and Phaedrus, *Fables*, 192-5. See also below, n. 178.

147 Interpolation by Edgerton.

148 Edgerton, 365.

149 Schulthess, 94.

150 Cheikho, 148 conserves here the probably corrupted version of the manuscript: إلّا تمليكها (كذا) وتقصير الأُمور دونها [...].
Shaykhū, 164 presents the emendations of the editor: إلّا أن تملّكَتها وأنتنّ المدبّرات الأُمور دونها برأيكُنّ وعقولكنّ. فإذا كان الملك جاهلًا ووزراؤهُ صالحين نفذ أمرهُ وتمَّ رأيهُ واستقام عملهُ ودامت مملكتهُ [...].
See also 'Azzām, 158-9: إلّا أن ترين تمليكه وتدبيرَ الأُمور دونه؛ فإنّ الملك وإن كان جاهلًا، إذا كان يُقدَر على الدنوّ منه وكانت قرابينُه ووزراؤه ورسلُه صالحين، نفذ أمره ورأيه واستقام له ملكه [...].
De Sacy, 185: الّا ان ترين ان تملّكنها وتكنّ انتنّ تدبّرن الأمور دونها برأيكنّ وعقولكنّ [...].

151 Jallad, 151. Here the translator (or the text of "the popular Bulaq edition"—see above, n. 47—which he used and I could not access) departs from the text in the other versions quoted in the previous note. In Jallad's version, the king of the crows (and that of the owls) have previously been elected, Jallad, 147. This is not mentioned in the Arabic versions consulted for this present study.

The following fable narrated by the crow is quite similar to that of the lion and the hare narrated by Dimna.[152] The plot is that a troop of elephants crushed many hares to death while approaching a spring. One of the surviving hares goes to the elephants' king and tells him that he was sent to him by the Moon to whom the spring belongs. According to the message of the Moon, the elephants' king made a fatal mistake by disturbing the water of his spring. The hare shows the full moon to the elephant's king as reflected in the water. When the king plunges his trunk into the water and sees the moon trembling from anger he believes the hare. According to the conclusion of the fable:

> So the King of the Elephants knelt once more to the Moon, apologized for what he had done, and vowed that neither he nor any of his subjects would ever repeat what they had done to the Hares.[153]

The old Syriac text[154] and the Arabic versions[155] present differences, but they are similar by comparison to the reconstructed Sanskrit version,[156] where the plot is longer and it explains the link between the Moon and the hares. The story was probably shortened when the Pahlavi translation was composed.

In all versions, the clever and courageous adviser to the king of hares successfully employs the power of a fictitious king and his own shrewdness against a much stronger opponent. The role of his king is limited to listening to him and allowing him to act according to his own plan. By telling this story—though put into the beak of the crow who caused the conflict between the crows and the owls—the crows' vizier conditions his king unobtrusively to do the same. Luckily for the crows, their king is intelligent enough to heed his best counsellor's advice and to let him execute the dangerous mission he sets up for himself.

The apologues of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection represent the nature of all sorts of interactions in the real jungle of society.[157] They display the

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152 See above, pp. 15-1616 INTERNAL REF (§ including fn 93 and § including fn 95)

153 Jallad, 155.

154 Schulthess, 95-7.

155 'Azzām, 159-62; Cheikho, 147-8; Shaykhū, 148-9; Jallad, 151-5.

156 Edgerton, 365-8.

157 See Abbès, "L'ami", 15-7. According to Taylor, *The Fall*, 187-8: "Social constructs are perceived in the natural world of the forest and are then cited in the narratives, as it were, as a means of validating those very constructs. The discourse of division instilled in the creators of the narratives certain preconceptions that colored their perception of the natural world. They employed their image of the realm of the forest to make certain points about human society; for example, that it is against nature and therefore impossible for individuals to attempt to change their natures, better their positions or betray their own kind. They drew corroborating evidence from the natural world to support these preexisting theses about the social world. The evidence they drew from nature is nothing more than a projection of the social phenomena they sought to validate in the first place." See also *ibid.*, 144, 149, 151, 169 and 184.

use of the ruse as ethically laudable, for it demonstrates the superiority of intelligence to brute force and helps the wiser to victory while avoiding unnecessary losses.[158] The tales also encourage rulers to empower their wise advisers.[159] In fact, they present the key to a ruler's success in being wise enough to ask for advice and to choose the wisest advice and advisers.[160]

The crow-king follows his wisest adviser's plan. Overpowered by the owls, all the crows have to leave their nest with the exception of the vizier, who asks his king to torture him badly and visibly. The vizier is later found by the owls in deplorable shape and they decide to spare his life, accepting his story as true, namely that he disagreed with his king, who punished and abandoned him, for which reason he seeks revenge. Only one of the advisers of the owl-king insists on killing him, but the owls and their king underestimate the intelligence of this adviser, as well as that of his counterpart, the crow vizier, and they take the latter with them to their nest.

In a passage of the reconstructed Sanskrit version—which is among those that "cannot be attributed to the original with entire confidence"[161]—when the wise vizier of the owls realises that he is unable to convince his peers or his king, and that they will allow their clever enemy to destroy them, he gathers his followers and abandons his king and people to their fate.[162] He can be compared to Ulysses who does his best to lead his men, but who when he cannot save them because they do not listen to him, saves himself. This episode of the vizier's desertion is not included in the old Syriac text,[163] nor in the Arabic versions of the owls' story.[164] If it was part of the version of the *Pañcatantra* that was used for the Pahlavi translation, then it was cut out by the author of the latter who decided to create a version where the owls' vizier had to die. Indeed, how could a vizier survive if he is unable to save his people and king? This omission is congruous both with de Blois' views on the less amoral, or with the findings of this present study on the more loyalist character of the Pahlavi version (and that of its derivatives: the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions), as compared to the *Pañcatantra*. It is interesting to note that the author of the Arabic translation, Ibn al-Muqaffa', changed patrons a number of times.[165] In his *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*

158 See Abbès, "L'ami", 36-8.

159 The ideal of the wise king in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is personified in Chosroes I, and Abbès, "Le sage", 33-4, rightly points out the importance Chosroes I gives his attendants.

160 Abbès, "Le sage", 34: "Ainsi le souverain parfait est celui qui, pour le bien de son règne, ne répugne pas à associer les sages-conseillers à la réalisation de son dessein."

161 See Edgerton, 270.

162 Edgerton, 382.

163 Schulthess, 110.

164 'Azzām, 176; Cheikho, 160; Shaykhū, 176; Jallad, 163.

165 See Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 52-7.

(*The great book of manners*), he gives a hint to the reader on the possibility to find an acceptable way to liberate himself from the service of an unworthy lord.[166]

The chapter of "The King and the Bird"[167], is one of those fables that were inserted into the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection at the creation of the Pahlavi version, or before. It demonstrates that when the relationship between the ruler and his confidant is severed by irreconcilable conflict, the latter must leave forever; otherwise, the rancour of the king will bring him to death. In the case of that tale, however, the conflict between the king and his favourite is personal, not political, and concerns only the two of them, not the entire community.

Back to the tale of "The Owls and the Crows", when the crows' vizier discovers the way to annihilate the owls, he flies to inform his king, who is ready to comply with his instructions. In a sentence that is not part of the reconstructed Sanskrit version,[168] but appears both in the old Syriac text[169] and in the Arabic versions,[170] he says:

> The soldiers and I are under your command, so give the orders you see fit to secure our victory.[171]

Considering that the purpose of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection was the education of the political elite, such interpolations in the text are significant. They clearly meant to influence rulers to empower their advisers. This is a clear example of how men of the pen who counselled men of might could cleverly claim power. Translation of past authorities was an ideal cover, for only the translator—who could well be an adviser as well—would know what had been added to the text. On the other hand, the text also teaches advisers how to hide the fact that they are teaching their rulers. This idea is formulated in the following way in the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ:

> Teach them, but show them that you are learning from them; educate them, but as if they were educating you.[172]

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166 See Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 52-7. See Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 56; and for a French translation, Tardy, "Traduction d'*al-Adab al-Kabīr*" [hereinafter: Tardy], 193. On the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, composed by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ but including older materials, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 181-210. For the title of this text, see *ibid*. 181, and Kristó Nagy, "On the authenticity", 213-6.

167 See below, section 2.3.

168 Edgerton, 383.

169 Schulthess, 110.

170 ʿAzzām, 176; shortened compared to Cheikho, 160; Shaykhū, 176; and Jallad, 163.

171 Jallad, 163.

172 تُعلّمهم وأنت تريهم أنك تتعلم منهم، وتُؤَدِّبهم وكأنّهم يُؤدِّبونك
Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 70.This key sentence is present only in two of the sources used by Kurd ʿAlī to establish his edition, see *ibid*., 39 and 70, n. 11. This fact

This sentence is included in the conclusion of a section of the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* that advises those who are in the ruler's entourage.[173] Astonishingly, this section follows immediately another one, the purpose of which is to advise the ruler.[174] The contrast between these two sections, the first being a *mirror for princes*, and the second, a *mirror for courtiers*, is sharp.[175] While the first prescribes how rulers should act in theory, the second presents a more realistic portrayal of their actions. The opposition between the portrait of the ideal ruler and the real ones is even more striking than in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* for the advices in the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* are not enveloped in tales.

The crows' army follows their vizier and they burn all the owls to death. While celebrating their triumph, the crow-king extols his vizier and asks him to share the reasons for their success and the owls' collapse. In a sentence that is not present in the reconstructed Sanskrit version,[176] but exists in the old Syriac text and in the oldest Arabic published manuscripts,[177] the king states that the reason for the owl-king's defeat was his injustice and lack of foresight as well as that of the advisers he listened to.

To describe his forbearing behaviour amongst the enemy, the vizier starts to tell the story of an old snake that realised it could not catch frogs anymore and decided to offer itself as a mount to the king of the frogs. The king happily accepted its offer and presented it with two of his subjects to eat every day.[178] This behaviour of the king of the frogs in the tale told by the vizier of the crows is in stark contrast with the ensuing portrayal of his own king. The crows' vizier attributes all success to the king who listened to his advice. Thus he states:

> All we accomplished was due to the prudent judgement of the King, and his education, knowledge, and nobility […] One should not contend with a

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indicates either that it was interpolated into the text or that it was omitted from it. For a French translation, see Tardy, 200. See also Kristó-Nagy, "Who Shall Educate", 290.

173 See Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 54-70; Tardy, 191-200.

174 See Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 44-54; Tardy, 185-91. This *mirror for princes* section is translated into English in Gelder, *Classical*, 170-5.

175 The term *mirror for princes* is European (see Marlow, "Advice"), but it is commonly used for non-European works of political advice literature as well. Its generalised use is due, however, more to convenience than accuracy, even in the case of European works, see the criticism, especially concerning its usage for antique texts, of Haake, "Writing to", and Haake, "Across". The term *mirror for courtiers* is rarely used, but I find it helpful in the context of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s oeuvre.

176 It includes instead references to the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*, which would have been of course meaningless to the readers of the Pahlavi version and its translations, see the Edgerton, 383-384.

177 Schulthess, 110; 'Azzām, 180; Cheikho, 161; Shaykhū, 178. Missing in Jallad.

178 Edgerton, 386-7; Schulthess, 113-4; 'Azzām, 180-1; Cheikho, 162-3; Shaykhū, 179-80; Jallad, 165. Interestingly, the image of a snake eating frogs also appears in an Aesopian fable dealing with kingship mentioned above, n. 146.

> shrewd, resourceful, skilful and persistent king who resists vanity during good times, and despair in calamity. It would be a self-defeating endeavour, particularly when such a king is like ours: fully knowledgeable of the duties and responsibilities required to accomplish any task, and meticulously careful in balancing might with leniency and anger with benevolence. Our King knows when to act, prudently waiting the most effective moment. The King deals with the present, with one eye on the future.[179]

This little *mirror for princes* is strikingly similar to the ideals one finds in other *adab* works by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘. It also corresponds to passages of official letters he wrote on behalf of the rulers, or addressed to them, where ancient political wisdom is applied to actual political reality. The beginning of the *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba* is a *captatio benevolentiae* and a *mirror for princes* that is applied as a panegyric to the ruler who is the addressee of the epistle.[180] The entire text of *al-Yatīma* (*The peerless pearl*) is meant to explain that the actual ruler (of a new dynasty, obviously the ‘Abbāsids) is the ideal ruler.[181]

In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the tone of the vizier’s speech is more instructional than flattering. This is accepted by the king who still calls his adviser “father” in his reply.[182] This tone was probably altered in the composition of the Pahlavi translation as it is reflected in both the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions.[183] The (pseudo-)royalist author of the change clearly considered it inappropriate and replaced it with subtler and smarter manipulation. There is a further modification in the Arabic versions that is not part of the old Syriac text: Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ seems to have added a hint to the importance of the “helpers”, “assistants” or “guards” of the king.[184]

When the king admits that it was the vizier’s wisdom that enabled victory, we find in the old Syriac text and in the Arabic versions that the vizier returns the compliment to the ruler, replying that he followed the king’s guidance.[185] In an addition of the Arabic versions, the king gives the following praise to his vizier:

> I am pleased to say that you are God’s great gift to us.[186]

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179 Jallad, 166.

180 See Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba*, 16-23. See also above, pp. 13 and 24. INTERNAL REF For a study of the entire text, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 213-66.

181 See especially Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *al-Yatīma*, 382-9. For a study of the subsisting fragments of the text, which is otherwise completely undiscovered by research, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 267-77. See also Kristó-Nagy, “Marriage”, 171-5, and below, n. 244.

182 See Edgerton 388-9. See also above, at the beginning of section 2.1.

183 See Schulthess, 114-5; ‘Azzām, 181-2; Cheikho, 163-4; Shaykhū, 179-80.

184 أعوان See ‘Azzām, 181; Cheikho, 164; Shaykhū, 180. Missing in Jallad.

185 See Schulthess, 115; the term used the Arabic is أدب, see ‘Azzām, 182; Cheikho, 164; Shaykhū, 180; it is translated as “ideals” in Jallad, 166.

186 Jallad, 166-7; cf. ‘Azzām, 183; Cheikho, 165; Shaykhū, 180.

In his reply, the vizier reminds the king indirectly but emphatically of his duty towards those he rules:

> I pray to God, who vanquished the King's enemies, to grant him much enjoyment throughout his reign, and to provide for the welfare of his subjects and permit them to share the happiness and delight of his mastery of his kingdom. For if the King's subjects do not share in that happiness, then it is not better than the goat's beard, which the kid keeps on sucking in vain, thinking it a teat.[187]

The reference to God as the final author of the king's success with the vizier as his agent only appears in the Arabic versions. It is likely that it was introduced into the text by Ibn al-Muqaffa', who also used this *Qur'ān*ic pattern in his own official texts. In fact, ascribing to God the ruler's victory over his enemies appears in several of his works.[188] On the one hand, Ibn al-Muqaffa' was influenced by the text he translated, but on the other hand, he also affected them.[189] Especially intriguing is to see how he "Islamised" the text while putting it into Arabic, in spite of the fact that his own attitude to Islam was highly controversial.[190]

When his king asks the crows' vizier to describe the enemy and their king he blames them all, but praises their wise vizier highly. On answering the crow-king's question about the signs of the owls' vizier's intelligence, the crows' vizier answers at length. He outlines the portrait of the ideal adviser—a *mirror for courtiers*—to introduce a miniature *mirror for princes*. His words present an extraordinary example of the description and immediate application of the indirect speech that has to be used when addressing the powerful:

> Two traits, O King. The first was his advice to kill me. The second was that he never withheld from the King and his Companions any advice, no matter

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187 Jallad, 167; 'Azzām, 184; the word الله "God" is missing in Cheikho, 165, but added to Shaykhū, 181; cf. Edgerton 390; Schulthess, 116.

188 See Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba*, 16-7; and Ibn al-Muqaffa', *al-Yatīma*, 376-83, 388-9. In the *Risāla fī l-Ṣaḥāba*, 26-7, we also find the same pattern mirrored, when Ibn al-Muqaffa' designates Satan as the author of a statement that results in equality amongst men and makes them devoid of a leader (*imām*) and of any weight against their enemy. Regarding the idea that the wise men free their rulers of their enemies, see Abbès, "L'ami", 35; and Cheikho, 15; Shaykhū 19.

189 On Ibn al-Muqaffa''s additions to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 109-47; see also above, pp. 5-6 with the nn. 20 and 25 as well as pp. 13, and 22-23, and below, pp. 46-47 and 50. INTERNAL REF

190 On Ibn al-Muqaffa''s attitude towards the Arabs and Islam and the anti-Islamic texts attributed to him, see Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, especially 65-79, 145-7, 287-344 and 438-61; Kristó-Nagy, "The Crow"; and Kristó-Nagy, "Marriage", 178-80.

> how minor.[191] He never used harsh and strong language, but spoke in a gentle and respectful manner, and he even pointed out some of [his] own mistakes[192]. He would [not][193] frame his advice directly and literally, but resorted to examples and fables to show its cogency. He would explain the misgivings of others so the King might be able to see his own. That way his King would not misdirect his anger and punish him. I heard him once saying to his King, 'A king must never neglect his duties and responsibilities, for it is too grave a matter to leave them unattended. Very few people are given this singular opportunity of kingship.
>
> 'Such responsibility can never be fulfilled except through shrewd, prudent and timely action. Kingship is a precious trust. Whoever attains it should care for it and fiercely defend it. Its duration was likened by past scholars to the short shade cast by the leaf of the water lily. Monarchy can swiftly vanish, and as quickly be restored, only to disappear again; it is like the wind, which comes in sudden gusts. Its capacity to survive challenges is as durable as that of a sensible and reflective person to survive challenges and evil people. Yet it is as fragile as a raindrop hitting the ground.'[194]

It is clear that the behaviour displayed by the crows' vizier is the opposite of that of Dimna. Moreover, the behaviour expected by the vizier from his king is the opposite of that of Dimna's king, the lion of the fable "The Lion and the Ox".

What makes this speech even more thought-provoking is that the reader might notice a point the crow-king could not have known. The reader can well remember the owls' vizier insisting on killing the crows' vizier, as well as the two tales[195] he used to illustrate the guile of the latter. In fact, the public discussion between the crows' vizier and the owls' vizier that leads to the tale of the "Mouse-Maiden" is very interesting. It unmistakably reflects two Indian concepts that were in stark opposition with mainstream Zoroastrianism, Islam and Christianity. It is indeed striking that the idea of the transmigration of souls and the glorification of self-

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191 Instead of "no matter how minor", I would translate the Arabic وان استقلها in de Sacy 207; 'Azzām, 184; Cheikho, 165; and Shaykhū, 181, as "even if he [i.e. the king] cared little about it [i.e. the advice]". Cf. Schulthess, 116.

192 The word "his" is missing from Jallad's translation. I think we should understand here that the *vizier* pointed out the *king's mistakes* in a gentle manner. In de Sacy, we read ببعض عيوبه; in Cheikho, 165 we find لعينهِ; which is emended into بعيبهِ in Shaykhū, 181; and also appears in 'Azzām, 184.

193 This word is missing in Jallad; but it is there in de Sacy, 207. The first part of this sentence is missing in the other versions, but the second part is present in 'Azzām, 184; Cheikho, 165; Shaykhū, 181; and Schulthess, 116.

194 Jallad, 167-8; cf. de Sacy, 207-8; 'Azzām, 184; Cheikho, 165-6; Shaykhū, 181-2; Schulthess, 116-7.

195 Only one of the two tales (the "Mouse-Maiden", cf. Edgerton, 380-2; Schulthess, 108-9; 'Azzām, 174-6; Cheikho, 159-60; Shaykhū, 175-6) appears in Jallad, 162-3, while the tale of the "Cuckold Carpenter" (Edgerton, 378-9; Schulthess, 105-7; 'Azzām, 172-3; Cheikho, 156-7; Shaykhū, 173-4) is omitted.

immolation by fire survived the transmission of the tales from the Indian context of Hinduism (Buddhism and Jainism) to Sasanian Iran, and further to the Islamic empire and Catholic Spain. (Possibly, this is due to the conceptual similarity between the self-immolation of the crow in the story and the phoenix motif, which was deeply rooted in the Mediterranean and in the Persian World.) The tale itself might reflect the ideology of a caste system, or, in general, the disbelief in the suitability or feasibility of changing one's nature (and status).[196]

The reader cannot, however, remember anything of the exhortations of the owls' vizier to his ruler regarding the fragility of kingship, for they are not in the tale! It is possible that the crows' vizier heard the owls' vizier saying such counsel but it is not unlikely that he never said anything like this, and that it is the crows' vizier who is giving his own opinion, referring to an exemplary past authority—and in this case, of the very recent past. There is surely no way to verify his report, as all the owls are dead. In all cases, it is clear that the crows' vizier is using this high feat to gently edify his king.

In the reconstructed Sanskrit version, we cannot find either the crows' vizier's reproach of the owls and their king, or his praise of their vizier. There, it is the crows' vizier himself who admonishes his king about the rulers' responsibilities towards his people and the dangers of the instability of power.[197] We find, however, that the crows' vizier mentions the owls' vizier in both the old Syriac text and in the Arabic versions.[198] In the old Syriac version, the exhortation of the king is even more indirect, as the owls' vizier (quoted by the crow's vizier) puts the speech in the mouth of an anonymous man.[199] The passage in which the crows' vizier criticises the owl-king and his advisers, and further extols and quotes their isolated vizier, was probably interpolated into the Pahlavi version. It wraps the lessons given to rulers in further layers, making the advice more indirect and impersonal, and it also teaches those who advise the mighty the way they should put their views into the mouths of fictitious authorities.[200]

2.3. The Added Chapters

196 See Edgerton, 380; Schulthess, 107-8; 'Azzām, 173-4; Cheikho, 158-9; Shaykhū, 174-5; Jallad, 161-2; Cacho Blecua and Lacarra, *Calila*, 243. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 93.

197 Referring also to Hindu mythology, see Edgerton, 390-2.

198 Jallad, 167; cf. 'Azzām, 184; Cheikho, 165; Shaykhū, 181; Schulthess, 116.

199 Schulthess, 116.

200 London, "How to Do", 190-1, shows how the crow's words here demonstrate that people can be both frank and indirect simultaneously—which goes against the presumption in Western political thought that to be frank speakers we must speak directly and in the first person. On the practice of referring to anonymous, or near-mythical authorities of the past, as a way to lend authority to the text, see Taylor, *The Fall*, 107-8 and 111-2.

Before concluding this study, it is worth summarising what we read about rulers and advisers in those chapters that were introduced into *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (being absent in the *Pañcatantra*) and are relevant for this topic. Three of them, the chapters of "The King and the Bird", "The Lion and the Jackal" and "The King and his Eight Dreams" are of Indian origin and were incorporated into the collection in the composition of the Pahlavi version, or before.

The chapter of "The King and the Bird"[201] is a rather violent story and deserves special attention for its biting criticism of rulers. The plot is that a king has an intimate friend, a bird. The bird gets a chick and when the king has a son, the two of them become a pair of inseparable friends. One day the chick lets some of his droppings fall on the boy, who furiously smashes it to death on the floor. When the bird comes back and discovers what has happened it erupts in bitter laments about the nature of kings:

> Shame on the kings who honour no promise and renege on their commitments. Woe to those afflicted by the friendship of kings who have no affection or respect for others. Those kings do not cherish anyone, and do not act generously except to those whose wealth they may temporarily need, or whose knowledge they may urgently require. They treat them kindly until they obtain what they want. As soon as they do, they show no affection, friendship, intimacy, or any sign of goodwill. They would exhibit neither mercy nor forgiveness, nor attempt even to exercise justice. Their lives are built fundamentally on hypocrisy and corruption. They belittle the grave crimes they themselves commit, and visit their wrath on misdemeanours that thwart their whims. […][202]

The bird's words are in harmony with the discussion between Dimna and Shanzaba on kings, as well as with the section of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* that describes the rulers for those who are in their entourage.[203] When the bird finishes wailing, he attacks the king's son and plucks out his eyes. Then he flies up to the highest balcony of the palace. The king arrives and tries to beguile the bird telling him that he recognises that his immediate retaliation was legitimate. The bird, however, knows all too well that the king's real intention is to take vengeance. The bird does not allow him this consolation. He tells him:

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201 Schulthess, 118-23; 'Azzām, 247-54; Cheikho, 211-6; Shaykhū, 220-4; Jallad, 187-91. The Sanskrit version is in the *Mahābhārata*, book XII, chapter 139.

202 Jallad, 187-8. This version and de Sacy 229 have added elements as compared to the others, such as the reference to the kings' (temporary) need for someone's knowledge; cf. 'Azzām, 250; Cheikho, 212; Shaykhū, 220-1; Schulthess, 119.

203 See above, pp. 27-29. INTERNAL REF

> Rancour, wherever it lies, is always feared. But there is no rancour like that in the hearts of kings. They are known to cultivate revenge as an obligation, and pursue it with valour and pride.[204]

Finally, before leaving the king and his kingdom forever, the bird gives him some final lessons including the following sentence, where he sums up the definition of a bad king:

> The worst king is the one who instils fear in innocent people and fails to protect and defend his realm.[205]

The chapter of "The Lion and the Jackal"[206] portrays the perfect agent and adviser of a ruler in the figure of a wise jackal, who is not attracted to power but gives up his serene ascetic life when called to help his ruler. His example suggests that the ideal wise man in the worldview of the collection is similar to a Bodhisattva who reaches the perfection of a renunciant, but renounces the comfort of his liberated retreat and joins the king in order to serve society.[207] The fable continues with the depiction of other envious courtiers' machinations against him, and ultimately concludes with his final glorification by the ruler. The solution of this chapter was also used as a model for the chapter of "The Investigation of Dimna's Conduct":[208] in both cases, it is the mother of the lion who manages to rectify the error of her son. In the chapter "The Lion and the Jackal," the lion's mother saves the life of the righteous jackal, whom her son would have put to death, and in doing so she is the opposite of Dimna, whose achievement is to make the lion kill his most intimate friend. In the chapter "The Investigation of Dimna's Conduct", the lion's mother appears on the scene when the ox is already dead, and she becomes the nemesis of Dimna. When studying *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with a focus on gender, the laudable role of the rulers' mothers influence is important to notice.

The king's favourite wife is also a positive figure in another added chapter, "The King and his Eight Dreams".[209] The tale starts with the king's dreams, which

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204 Jallad, 189; cf. 'Azzām, 252; Cheikho, 213-4; Shaykhū, 222; Schulthess, 121.

205 Jallad, 191 is longer again than the other versions, but the second part of the sentence, which looks an addition, might be just another way to interpret the statement that is in passive voice in the old Syriac text; cf. 'Azzām, 254; Cheikho, 216; Shaykhū, 224; Schulthess, 123.

206 Schulthess, 124-33; 'Azzām, 255-70; Cheikho, 217-27; Shaykhū, 225-34; Jallad, 192-9. Sanskrit version is in the *Mahābhārata*, book XII, chapter 111.

207 See Dimna's views above, section 2.1., as well as the renunciant heroes of the other added chapters below. For the ideal of renunciation both for the sake of the salvation in this world and the other world see, Audebert, "La condition", 310-1.

208 See above, pp. 22-22. INTERNAL REF

209 Schulthess, 134-57; 'Azzām, 203-26; Cheikho, 178-204; Shaykhū, 193-213; Jallad, 200-12. On this chapter, see London, "How to Do", 195-210 and 207-8. For this and other examples of the positive acts of women in the collection, see Audebert, "La condition",

are consciously misinterpreted by the Brahmans. Similarly to Dimna, who schemed against the ox who became the lion's best friend, the Brahmans want to make the king kill his most beloved, including his favourite wife, his wise vizier, his secretary (*kātib*) and a wise man whose identity is described variously in the different versions. The Brahmans say to the king that this is the only way to save himself, but they actually aim to destroy him. The king's shrewd vizier and wife notice the grief of the king, and decide that she should find out its cause. When she manages to elicit from the king what the Brahmans told him, she prudently assures him that she would be happy to sacrifice her life for him, but suggests that instead of relying on the Brahmans advice, the king should request the interpretation of his dreams from the wise man the Brahmans aim to eliminate.

The king goes to meet this person and prostrates in front of him both before and after hearing his reading of the dreams.[210] He is clearly not a "secular" adviser, but some kind of religious figure, superior and opposed to the Brahmans. It is important to stress that the king twice prostrates in front of him, because this act clearly indicates his supremacy over the king. Some of the illuminated manuscripts also emphasise this scene by depicting it in miniature.[211] In the Spanish version we read that when in the presence of the wise man, the king "humillósele"[212], which is best translated in this context probably as the king "kneeled down in front of him". However, in the *Liber de Dina* [*sic*] *et Kalila* by Raimundus de Biterris [Raymond de Béziers],[213] which is the Latin translation of this Spanish version, the illustration that depicts the king greeting the hermit represents both figures standing,[214] and on the next miniature, the king is sitting while in discussion with the hermit standing.[215] This Latin translation was commissioned by Queen Joan I of Navarre and presented to her husband, Philip

292-3. See also Maaouia, "La femme", 40-4. According to de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 13, this story "is derived from the Buddhist legend Caṇḍa Pradyōta".

210 Schulthess, 139 and 141; 'Azzām, 209; Cheikho, 183; Shaykhū, 197 and 199; Jallad, 205 and 206.

211 See the manuscript of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Arabe 3465, fol. 132v, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84229611/f278.image.r=kalilaarabe%20arabe; and Paris, Arabe 3470, fol. 110, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10536274g/f223.image.r=Kal%C4%ABla%20wa-DimnaArabe%203470%20Arabe%203470.

212 See Cacho Blecua and Lacarra, *Calila*, 286.

213 For the title and the name of the author, see the manuscript of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Latin 8504, fol. bv, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10035878t/f4.item.r=Biterris.

214 See *ibid*., fol. 125, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10035878t/f145.image.r=Biterris.

215 See *ibid*., fol. 125v, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10035878t/f146.image.r=Biterris. Reproductions in colour can be accessed online at http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/rechercheExperte.jsp.

IV "the Fair", or "the Iron King" of France in 1313. Its author, Raymond de Béziers, justly labelled it then *liber regius*.[216]

Back to the tale, the wise man's interpretations are all perfectly and miraculously correct. Due to the intelligence of the king's favourite wife, the vicious Brahmans' machination is unveiled and they are all executed. Unexpectedly however, in the moment of her greatest glory, she makes a foolish mistake out of jealousy, and her furious husband and king decides to put her to death. She would end up killed but for the perspicacious vizier, whose example shows how a clever adviser has to control and manipulate his ruler. He is a positive hero, a counterpoint of Dimna and of the Brahmans. While these villains contrive to foster conflict between the king and someone dear to him, he works on rescuing this other person's life, as well as on saving the king from the distress that would necessarily follow his own mistake, and finally on delivering his own self from being held responsible by the king for not having prevented him from committing an error. When the king gives the impetuous order to decapitate his favourite wife, the wise adviser spares her life and conceals her, delaying the execution of the king's order.

The adviser's morality, like that of Kalīla,[217] does not go, however, beyond the limit of avoiding what might eventually harm his king and himself. Should he find that the king does not change his mind, he is ready to kill the king's wife.[218] He only reveals to the king the fact that she is alive after a long and tense dialogue, which he uses to make absolutely sure that the king regrets his foolish decision and will welcome the news that the vizier disobeyed it.

The fable teaches kings to be patient with their counsellors[219] (and that includes their clever wives), and it teaches counsellors how to counsel kings and survive. While the counsellor's rhetoric in the story serves one purpose, which is his survival, the same rhetoric in the book serves another, which is the education of the readers. Rulers will learn their lesson while empathising with the ruler in the fable, counsellors will learn theirs, while empathising with the counsellor.[220]

This chapter is a powerful demonstration of the corrupting nature of power. The king is not an intrinsically evil person, but his mind is distorted by his might. As he has no responsibility to anyone, he cares only about his own fears and feelings. This age-old historical experience rendered in a literary form in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is famously summarised in John Dalberg-Acton's maxim: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost

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216 See *ibid*., fol. 1, available online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10035878t/f5.item.r=Biterris; Kinoshita, "Translatio/n", 378; de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 6.

217 See above, at the beginning of section 2.1.

218 Schulthess, 143-4; 'Azzām, 213-4; Cheikho, 178-204; Shaykhū, 201; Jallad, 207-8.

219 See London, "How to Do", 195-201 and 207-8. For a succinct version discussing also the importance of the text for contemporary students of political theory, see London, *Lessons*.

220 In the article cited in the previous note, London discusses the ways this fable engenders empathy between readers and listeners—mediating power dynamics and distinctions—.

always bad men […]".[221] It is also congruent with the result of a recent study based psychological experiences.[222] Those who live close to the ruler have to know his condition, otherwise they perish in the whirlpool of competition for power that revolves around him.

The relationship between rulers and advisers remains an important theme in several chapters of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* that are not of Indian origin. Both the chapter of "The King of the Mice"[223] and introductory chapter on Burzawayh's travel to India were most likely added in the composition of the Pahlavi version. "The King of the Mice" echoes "The Owls and the Crows" and displays the merits of an ideal adviser. Representing the image of a model king and that of his exemplar attendant, the introductory chapter on Burzawayh's travel to India tells of how the physician Burzawayh, sent by the Sasanian king Chosroes I, acquired the book in India, translated it, and was rewarded by the king.[224] According to some versions of the Arabic text, the interpolation of this chapter on the mission of Burzawayh was authored by Chosroes I's famous counsellor Buzurjmihr (Arabic form of the Pahlavi Wuzurgmihr) as the reward requested by Burzawayh when asked by king what he wished to honour him for his success. The incorporation of Buzurjmihr into the story of the creation of the Pahlavi version of the book is not astonishing, as he was the archetype of the ideal Sasanian adviser.[225]

The chapter of "The Investigation of Dimna's Conduct", discussed above,[226] was interpolated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' at the latest. Finally, the introduction under the name of Bahnūd b. Saḥwān and/or 'Alī b. al-Shāh al-Fārisī was probably added later.[227] It offers the triumphal example of an ideal wise man taking the life-risking challenge of guiding a ruler drunk with power[228] to the path of right conduct.[229]

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221 See Dalberg-Acton, *Historical*, 504.

222 See Bendahana, Zehnder, Pralong, and Antonakis, "Leader".

223 Schulthess, 158-70; 'Azzām, 227-35; Cheikho, 205-10; Shaykhū, 214-9; Jallad, 213-22. On this chapter, including a discussion on its Indian or Persian origin, see de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 14-4.

224 See above, section 1.2.

225 See Cheikho, 27-9 as well as 19 and 30; Shaykhū 32-4, 23 and 35; corresponding to 'Azzām, 25-6, and 17 and 29. See also de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 48-50, 53-5, etc.

226 See above, pp. 22-22 and 35. INTERNAL REF

227 See Beeston "The "'Alī ibn Shāh's"; and de Blois', *Burzōy's*, 24-5.

228 See above, p. 18 with the n. 108. INTERNAL REF

229 On this chapter, see Cheikh-Moussa, "Du discours"; Abbès, "Le sage"; Ismā'īl, "Tarhīn". None of these studies consider Beeston's arguments for the posteriority of this introduction to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s version. They take for granted that it was already part of the text translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa' and discuss him as its author. This is not the case in Kilito, "How Should We Read". See also Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 127-30, and below, n. 252.

3. Conclusions

The conclusions of this chapter will reflect its three principal goals:

I. To explore the reasons for the success of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* amongst premodern elites across civilisations, by examining the content and the formulation of its lessons on power in general, and the relationship between rulers and counsellors in particular.
II. To scrutinise how the depiction of this relationship evolved when the *Pañcatantra* became *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, through its translation from Sanskrit to Pahlavi and from Pahlavi to Arabic.
III. To question why this book, which was considered a royal treasure by premodern elites, ceased to be regarded as such by the elites of modern times, and whether its messages did indeed become obsolete.

I.– The *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* is one of the most reproduced, edited, translated and imitated collections of advice literature for kings and courtiers ever written.[230] The cross-culturally high status of the book is indicated by that of the personages for whom it was translated. The overall pattern in the history of its consecutive translations is that they were often made for lords striving for stability in periods of fundamental transition, by bicultural translators who were both in positions of eminence and yet on the edge of their societies, and whose origin, faith and loyalty laid under suspicion. The translation process involved crossing political, religious and linguistic borders, working through cultural collaboration and betrayal, mediation and negotiation.

We saw that the book itself tells us that it was translated for the Sasanian king Chosroes I, by Burzawayh "the head of the physicians of Persia". The story of Burzawayh's successful espionage mission to India,[231] where he acquired the text with the help of an Indian friend is a fascinating account of cultural appropriation. This Indian friend of Burzawayh is an interesting figure himself. The chapter gives him a key role in the history of *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the universalisation of the wisdom in the book of which he becomes an episodic hero, presented in positive light. He could, however, be also described as a collaborator or even a traitor.[232] As for Burzawayh, his intellectual autobiography narrates that the limitations of medicine in fighting illness and death instigated him to investigate religions; then his subsequent discovery of their irrationality and the

230 For the versions of the *Pañcatantra* used in Edgerton reconstruction, see Edgerton, 12-48. See also above, nn. 3 and 32.
231 See above, section 1.2.
232 See also Kilito, "How Should We Read", 23-25.

worldly motivations of their leaders led him to interreligious morality and asceticism.

The Arabic translation by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is one of the first masterpieces of Arabic literature, made by a Persian with a highly "suspicious" religious stance.[233] In fact, the outstanding scholar and "Indologist" al-Bīrūnī (b. 362/973, d. 440/1046) denounced Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ for adding Burzawayh's chapter to the text in order to spread religious doubt and propagate Manicheism.[234] Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ was, however, linked as secretary-adviser (*kātib*) to political figures at the highest level political power in the Islamic empire of the times around the "'Abbāsid revolution".[235] For lords, the role of both their physician and their secretary-political adviser was of such vital importance and personal intimacy, that confidence in them possessing supreme skills and expertise overwrote the common requirement of reliable religious and cultural affiliation. This also applies to spies and translators.

The first known Latin translation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was made for a cardinal (between 1263 and 1278) by John of Capua, a Jewish convert to Catholicism.[236] The Spanish translation, of utmost importance for the genesis of Spanish literature was made for the future Alfonso X "the Wise" (in 1251?),[237] and, as already mentioned,[238] a splendidly illuminated Latin translation from a Spanish version (probably the one made for Alfonso X) was a present from Joan I of Navarre to her husband, the French King Philip IV "the Fair" (in 1313), produced by the otherwise unknown Raymond de Béziers (Béziers being part of "an area of the French kingdom known for its Jewish physicians")[239]. It is noteworthy that when the Baron Silvestre de Sacy—who was the son of a *notaire parisien* and was made baron by Napoléon in 1813—[240] published the first European scholarly edition of the text in Arabic in 1816, he dedicated it[241] to the French King Louis XVIII, who restored the French monarchy in 1814, and again in 1815, after the "Hundred Days" of Napoléon's return.

A key reason for the success of the *Pañcatantra-Kalīla wa-Dimna* collection was the cross-cultural validity and adaptability of both its messages and their expression. The collection conveys transcultural wisdom and trans-religious values. It also provides advice of moral relativity and political versatility

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233 See above, nn. 135 and 190.

234 See al-Bīrūnī, *Fī taḥqīq mā li-l-Hind*, 123; and the concurring remark of the *qāḍī* 'Abd al-Jabbār (b. ca. 325/936-937, d. 415/1025), *Taṯhbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 72. See also Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 120-4. For the question of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s religion, see *ibid*., 75-9.

235 See above, nn. 132 and 135. On the importance of the translation of political literature for the Arab imperial elite, see Belhaj and Kristó-Nagy, "Ancient".

236 See de Blois, *Burzōy's*, 44.

237 See above, p. 8 with the n. 48. INTERNAL REF

238 See above, p. 36 with the n. 213. INTERNAL REF

239 Kinoshita, "Translatio/n", 376.

240 See Messaoudi, "Silvestre de Sacy".

241 See de Sacy, iii-iv.

presenting "mirrors" both for princes and for courtiers. These mirrors are garbed in fables, which conveyed the advisory content through continents and centuries.

The *Pañcatantra-Kalīla wa-Dimna* is a collection of educative tales that couches counsel in diverting narratives. It is a combination of wisdom literature with fiction; the tales animate the message of the wise author(s). The stories are further enlivened by illustrations that form an integral part of the text. Some of the earliest surviving manuscripts of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are lavishly illustrated and a section of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s preface indicates that this tradition might go back at least to the Arabic original.[242] Illustrations can act as an alternative to performance for the lone reader, or complement the performance of the reader to the audience.[243]

The *Pañcatantra-Kalīla wa-Dimna* teaches the ways to both practical and moral success, mostly in the sphere of politics and at the level of the elites. In the ideal case, wisdom results in the attainment of moral and practical success and ensures the prosperity of all. This is illustrated by the depiction of Chosroes I's court, where a wise king, attended by wise adviser-administrators rules over a happy and successful community.[244] The chapter "The Owls and the Crows" shows the clash between two communities; one led to victory by a wise king, who allowed his wisest adviser to execute his heroic plan, and one led to death by fire by a foolish king who failed to listen to his wisest adviser. The case of Dimna is that of an egoistic genius in the court of a mediocre ruler. The story was altered through its rewritings, and while Dimna's character is the most intriguing, the qualities and flaws of such figures as Kalīla, Shanzaba and the lion's mother further deepens the complexity of the tale.

The two chapters of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* derived from the *Pañcatantra* and presenting the relations between rulers and their advisers display diametrically opposed moral attitudes. Considering the different ethics at play in the chapters "The Lion and the Ox" and "The Owls and the Crows", we see that the court of the lion is ruled by tyranny, as is also the case with the subjects of the other lion and those of the elephant king in their respective tales. Cunning advisers triumph and benign courtiers are killed. In the crows' kingdom, however, the solidarity between the ruler, his ministers and his subjects leads them to success.

The contrast between the two tales is made less directly didactic by the fact that we find many moral ideas in the tale of the amoral court as well as amoral ideas in the tale of the moral court. This combination gives life to the stories and

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242 The existence of an illustrated copy is mentioned some 84 years after Ibn al-Muqaffa''s death, see O'Kane, *Early*, 28.

243 On the performativity of the text, see Wacks, "The Performativity".

244 As Ibn al-Muqaffa' explains in his *al-Yatīma*, 376-81, there are four sorts of eras: the best is when both the shepherd (i.e. the ruler) and the flock are righteous; the second is when the *Imām* is righteous, but the people are corrupt; the third is when the people are righteous, but the ruler is corrupt; and the worst is when both the ruler and the people are corrupt. See also Kristó-Nagy, "Who Shall Educate", 288-9.

reflects the complex realities of political life rather than showering readers with sterile, merely ideological and two-dimensional preaching.[245]

In *Kalīla wa-Dimna* it is clear that every polity must have a head, even if only an empty-headed figurehead.[246] The hierarchy of most medieval societies was in theory topped by a single person. The ruler personifies the unity of the polity. He is also the symbol of its order, the keystone holding together the web of the ribs of power. Rulers are usually represented as God's agents and the only source of power on earth.[247]

This ideology appeared also in Islamic political thought, and one of its sources was Sasanian political thought, in the transmission of which Ibn al-Muqaffa' played a key role. A prime example is his *al-Yatīma*. This epistle was most likely composed as a piece of propaganda supporting a ruler of the new, 'Abbāsid, dynasty. It is celebrated by classical authors as a text of the highest quality. Unfortunately, most of the text is lost, but a section on the necessity of the rulers' existence is quoted in several later works. Here, Ibn al-Muqaffa' explains that the insignificance of the damages set against the multitude of advantages caused by the *sulṭān* (i.e. the governmental power and its wielder) can be compared to those produced by nature. The rain, wind, winter and summer, as well as night and day, are all God's gifts to people, and their existence is beneficial for the majority, in spite of the occasional damage they cause to some. Had not they presented also harm, this world would be Paradise. Everything of significance in this world causes some degree of harm, yet, if benefits are general while harms are particular, they should be considered as a general good.[248]

The lack of structures for collective decision-making heightens the role of the ruler and that of his entire entourage, including his advisers, who are often also his head administrators, both preparing and executing his orders. Adviser-administrators are the mediators and communicators of the ruler's power and they influence both the making and the actual execution of his decisions. They form the link between rulers and the reality of their realms.

While the incompetence of a ruler can advance the career of Dimna-like swindlers, it challenges the committed officials. Both seek to influence the ruler with the aim of promoting their ignoble or noble purposes. In practice, rulers' and

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245 As explained in the last paragraph of Abbès, "L'ami", 41: "En montrant qu'il est impossible de fixer des règles permanentes et des principes stables propres à la science politique, Ibn al-Muqaffa', comme Machiavel, fait de l'art politique l'art des configurations produites par et dans le réel historique, et non pas l'art des principes abstraits et transcendants que le roi-philosophe cherche à appliquer dans la cité."

246 See above, pp. 24-25. (§ and quote after fn 144 and before fn 151). INTERNAL REF

247 For some fundamental studies in this field, see Al-Azmeh, *Muslim*; Al-Azmeh, "Monotheistic"; Crone, *Medieval*; and Marlow, *Hierarchy*. See Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 267-77. On the figure of the ruler in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, including its portraits, see Audebert, "La condition," 294-8 and 311-2.

248 *Al-Yatīma*, 392-404; see also Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 267-77. On the figure of the ruler in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, including its portraits, see Audebert, "La condition", 294-8 and 311-2.

advisers' abilities and ambitions range and change on a scale whose ends could be defined as absolute competence and morality or their opposites. This relativity is not theorised in the text, but it suffuses it in its different "case studies" or rather "case stories".

While their role also includes reminding the ruler of his moral obligations, in the fables of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, advisers are never given the image of "nobler" (i.e. stronger) animals than their patrons. In the chapters of "The Lion and the Ox" and "The Owls and the Crows", advisers and other commoners are shown as jackals or other beasts serving lions or as hares resisting elephants, but they can also belong to the same species as their king: crows, owls, frogs, or humans. This book was not written and re-written, however, by rulers, but by men of intellectual authority, wishing to educate both their lords and their own ilk. Kings can be comforted by the lofty image of the animals representing them, yet their attendants are not inferior to them in intellectual or moral values, but only in power.[249]

The greater the disparity between intellectual and effective power, the more those who actually think for the ruler must employ "king-deceiving devices" to conceal the disturbing fact that instruction is coming from the wise advisers up to the ruler, while in theory both instruction and directions are supposed to descend in a hierarchical fashion.[250] Storytelling was used as a screen by the adviser heroes who appear in the fables,[251] as well as the successive authors, translators and editors (admitting that in the transmission these roles were not entirely distinct and that the same person, like Burzawayh or Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, was both a translator and editor) of the collection. They knew that fictitious authorities—whether powerful rulers (like the Moon), or wise sages of the past—can be put on as masks or helmets, shielding the face of the clever speaker.

As Jennifer London has argued, the form of the fable, in which the political content of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* was presented, is the epitome of indirect speech, and in some contexts, indirect speech can be more effective than direct speech. Rather than confronting its advisee with direct strictures and commands, the fable prepares its recipient to receive a message by involving the

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249 As Abbès, "L'ami", 32, sums up brilliantly, in the vision of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* "le pouvoir *est*", the existence of power is a fact. The role of the philosopher is to use his reason to transform domination in governance. See *ibid*, 33: "il faut présenter la nécessité d'associer le sage au gouvernement comme le seul moyen permettant de conserver le pouvoir. Autrement dit, le sage doit convaincre le pouvoir que son rôle n'est autre que de servir l'intérêt suprême du prince et de réaliser la fin qui lui est naturellement propre, la domination."

250 Kristó-Nagy, "Who Shall Educate". See also, Abbès, "Le sage", 35-6, connecting beautifully the message of the tales of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* to a fable by Francis Bacon.

251 With the words of Abdelfattah Kilito: "[…] the interlocutors are in a hierarchical relationship, such as a lion and a jackal. Which then feels the need to narrate? Obviously the one who feels he is inferior. The lion sometimes listens to stories, but at no time does he tell one. What need does he have to tell a story, to try to persuade anyone of anything, when with a mere blow of his paw he can annihilate his interlocutor? The story is the weapon of the deprived […]." Kilito, "How Should We Read", 19.

listener/reader in an imaginative and emotional experience that leads him/her to internalise the acquired moral.[252] Fables can help bridge gaps of power and understanding between age groups, social strata, and civilisations.

For youngsters and adults of various species, including humans, playing games is a way to get experiences at a "lower cost" than in "real life". Listening and reading stories offers a similar benefit. It stimulates both emotions and reasoning, and can also help to deal with unprocessed real experiences. When it comes to assessing an argument, stories can bring abstract reasoning alive, by involving their recipient in an imaginary experience. Narrating, enacting and even listening to stories is a form of play.[253] Fables are stories, which, as compared to real-life accounts, add a filter of unreality that protects the recipient and, in the case of their political use, the presenter, too. The unreal elements of the fable make it more playful (by being un-real) and put the story into the safer distance of the clearly imaginary, as through the screen of a shadow play.

Playing games is not without real stakes or consequences, for the experiences learnt through games can be powerful substitutes for real ones, and one function of them is to define the hierarchy between the participants. The same is true for stories, including fables.[254] The more a story is internalised by its recipients, the more it becomes a "real experience" affecting them. Certain stories, mythological or religious, are regarded by their adherents as super-real, truer and more important than reality. Indeed, their psychological goal can be to overcome reality, while their social goal is to sanctify it. The unreal element of the fable is considered, however, fiction, and this makes fables less serious, unless included in a holy text. In the case of the fable, the security valve of the imaginary helps not to harm its recipient, whether a child or a ruler, and not harming a powerful recipient also permits the presenter to remain unharmed.

II.– The reconstructed Sanskrit version represents a masterpiece of political didactics, enriching political advice with the use of fables and indirect speech. Certainly, the various Indian versions of the text reflect different ideological

252 See London, "How to Do", where the use of fables in *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is discussed in detail and contrasted with Greek *parrhēsia*, which in rhetoric was seen as the ideal of direct and bold speech. London develops this argument in a book she is writing currently on the political thought of Ibn al-Muqaffa', tentatively entitled *Fighting for Inclusion in Autocracy: The Political Thought of Ibn al-Muqaffa'*. On the concept of the *parrhēsia* and the role of the philosopher confronting the tyrant and legitimising the monarch in the Greek treatises titled *Peri basileias* (*On Kingship*), see Haake, "Writing down". Interestingly, this expectation towards the philosopher is also present in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, in the introduction under the name of Bahnūd b. Saḥwān and/or 'Alī b. al-Shāh al-Fārisī, see above, p. 38.

253 See Brown, "Play", 256.

254 For relevant theories, see Mazid, "Date-palms"; and the introduction of McCracken, *In the Skin*.

stances and social realities, though their analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. The findings of this study indicate that the translated versions of the investigated chapters were progressively reworked in the course of consecutive translations. Comparison between the chapters "The Lion and the Ox" and "The Owls and the Crows" in the reconstructed Sanskrit version and the direct derivatives of its lost Pahlavi translation, namely the old Syriac text and the Arabic versions, reveals that the text was edited (probably by the author of the Pahlavi version) in a consistent manner. In appearance, the tales were made more moralistic, or rather more loyal and royalist. But under this careful cover, the new text advises advisers on how to advise and prudently tame their rulers, while it also teaches rulers to listen to their advisers. The added chapters reflect the same spirit, with the exception of the chapter "The King and the Bird", which serves to demonstrate that in the case of an irreconcilable personal conflict between adviser and ruler, the latter should never be trusted, and the adviser should leave him forever.[255] In comparison with the reconstructed Sanskrit version, the Pahlavi version and its Arabic translation become increasingly indirect and intricately layered.

The *Pañcatantra* and its translations address two audiences simultaneously: rulers, whose power is absolute, and their counsellors, who have intellectual prowess, but whose effective power is indirect, as it depends on their influence on the ruler. The *Pañcatantra* teaches kings to appreciate the mutual character of this dependence and the symbiotic nature of the relationship:

> "Whatever good befalls a minister, the same is profitable to the king as well. What would the ocean be without its waves, that rise on high and gleam like gems?"[256]

It also warns courtiers (and kings) of the precariousness of their situation, as demonstrated above.

The authors of the Pahlavi and the Arabic translations learnt this lesson and applied it in rewriting the text itself. While in the *Pañcatantra*, the fables are employed mainly for the purpose of elucidating a message, in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, they are used simultaneously for hiding another message. The subtle changes in the fables reflect different attitudes to the hierarchy between intellectual authority and effective power. Both in the *Pañcatantra* and in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the use of the fable form reflects a hierarchical relationship between the author and the receiver. However, while the intellectual authority openly claims superiority in the *Pañcatantra*, the authors of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are acutely aware of the inferiority of their effective power as compared to that of their royal addressees. The *Pañcatantra* is more didactic in teaching rulers and courtiers alike; *Kalīla*

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255 See above, section 2.3.

256 Edgerton, 319; cf. Schulthess, 44; ʻAzzām, 91; Cheikho, 94; Shaykhū, 109; Jallad, 113.

wa-Dimna is more manipulative in masking the fact that the intellectual hierarchy is attempting to subvert the hierarchy of power.

The authors of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* use the form of the fable for yet another purpose: that of conveying hidden advices for their colleagues. They communicate the secret art of guiding rulers to the readers who are able to read between lines. The situation of these receivers is similar to that of the authors in both the hierarchy of intellectual authority and in the hierarchy of power; they are their peers in the present and future.[257]

Due to the fact that none of the investigated versions—that is, the Sanskrit text that was the basis for the Pahlavi translation, the Pahlavi translation itself, and the original of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s Arabic translation of it—are extant, we can only surmise the exact dating and social context of the changes that occurred in the text. The introduction of the reconstructed Sanskrit version tells us it was authored by Viṣṇuśarman, a wise and old Brahman, to educate the three foolish sons of a king. This introduction thus ascribes to the author of the book a clearly higher status than its addressees; he is from a superior caste, age and intellectual level.[258] His very first sentence, introducing his reply to the king’s request, voices his self-confidence:

> Sir (hear this is my lion’s roar! […])[259]

Here the lion is not the king but the Brahman. We saw a similar relationship between the crow’s king and his wise adviser, in the reconstructed Sanskrit version. As the role of the fables of the *Pañcatantra* is to help the wise man’s pupils to comprehend his teaching; its approach is openly instructive.

But not all advisers have the privileges of Brahmans. *Kalīla wa-Dimna* describes its Pahlavi translator, Burzawayh, as a physician, while the Arabic translator, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, was a secretary (*kātib*). In *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, the intelligent counsellor is more of an *underjackal*, who, unlike a Brahman, has no superior caste status, nor official religious authority, so that he must negotiate for power and resources in subtle ways and has to be cautious in advising his colleagues. Intriguingly, in one of the Arabic versions,[260] the *shāhanshāh* (king of kings) Chosroes I explains the merits of physicians and secretaries before he orders Burzawayh the task of finding and copying the book. As this introduction is not part of the extant version of the old Syriac translation, and the reference to

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257 Though in traditional societies, where the idea of change is usually unwelcome, anteriority in time also means superiority in authority. See Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 270-1.

258 Edgerton, 271-3. See also Taylor, *The Fall*, 108-11.

259 Edgerton, 272. The parentheses indicate that the enclosed text cannot be attributed to the original with entire confidence (see Edgerton, 270). They certainly originate, however, in an Indian version, and illustrate well the authority accorded to Viṣṇuśarman, the Brahman.

260 ‘Azzām, 18-9.

the secretaries is absent in the other consulted Arabic versions,[261] it remains uncertain whether the secretaries were already included in the Pahlavi text, or if they were inserted by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (or by a later editor of the Arabic text) in order to enhance the status of secretaries, like Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ himself.

The following sentences conclude some versions of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s preface to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*:

> As for its structure, Kalilah and Dimnah has four elements. There are fables where dialogue among animals is used. The reason is to entice young people to read them in a light-hearted way as animal roguery in an attractive and entertaining genre. There are colourful fantasies involving animals that even kings find amusing. Kings ought also care to keep this book alive and famous, as it may allow them to relax and freely deploy their imaginations.[262] There are insights intended for the royalty, the gentry, and common folk as well. It is intended for wide circulation, and will bring employment to the copyists and illustrators involved in its production. And there is a wisdom here ultimately and exclusively meant only for philosophers.[263]

The purpose of the book was originally education and its primarily targeted audience was not the wise men, but the men of power of the day and of the future. Advisers gave guidance to rulers; wise jackals were teaching and taming wild lions. Whilst the intellectual authority was on the side of the authors, the effective power was on the side of the readers. Therefore, the advice of the educators had

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261 Cheikho, 20; Shaykhū; 24, de Sacy, 33; and Jallad, 60. On the variants of this passage, see de Blois, *Burzōy’s*, 44.

262 These sentences in Jallad’s translation, 36; are considerably different from the text in Cheikho, 52; and Shaykhū, 59 (and the nearly identical version in de Sacy, 58), which explains rather the use of illustrating of the fantastic stories (i.e. fiction) by colourful images (i.e. illumination), in order to make the book more desirable for the hearts of kings: اظهار خيالات الحيوانات بصنوف الألوان والاصباغ ليكون انسا لقلوب الملوك ويكون حرصهم اشد للنزهة في تلك الصور.
The “gentry” mentioned in the next sentence is not part of the Arabic text of versions studied here.

263 Jallad, 36; de Sacy, 58; Cheikho; 52; Shaykhū, 59; not present in ‘Azzām. It is to be noted that in Cheikho’s edition, most of this preface attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ was based on a manuscript dated 1200/1785-6, rather than the manuscript dated 749/1339, which was used for most of the book, see Cheikho’s preface, 22, 24, 25, as well as 36 of the Arabic text. Whether this passage was written by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ or was added to his preface by someone else is difficult to prove, and the section translated by Jallad as “the gentry, and common folk as well. It is intended for wide circulation, and will bring employment to the copyists and illustrators involved in its production” gives reasons to suspect an interpolation. Nevertheless the passage offers a useful summary of core ideas of the preface it concludes, and it also remind us of the primary importance of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in Arabic fiction writing and illumination (see also above, n. 242). On the differences of the extant versions of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s preface, see Beatrice Gruendler, “Les versions”, 405-11. On the passage quoted above, see *ibid.*, 410 with 407, n. 23.

to be sugar-coated with entertainment in order to be accepted by their mighty students, who could accept it as a service, not as a lesson. The secondary audience, the peers of the authors, sages of later ages and far lands were expected to decode the deeper message of the text.

We saw above that a sentence in a *mirror for courtiers*, which is part of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-Kabīr*, formulates in astoundingly explicit way how the wise have to educate the mighty.[264] *Mirrors for princes* are intellectually condescending though this is well masked by the subservient posture of their authors, which was appropriate to their subordinate position in the ranks of power.

III.– Considering its immense prestige in pre-modern times, this collection of tales has been astonishingly little studied in modern research. Doris Lessing, in her preface to a modern English rendering of *Kalila and Dimna*, writes about the past glory and recent oblivion of this transcultural literary monument.[265] This decline is paradoxical. Printed and online versions and translations of the *Pañcatantra*, including variants and translations of its Arabic text, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, are more accessible and have probably more readers today than ever. However, the proportion of those men and women who read this book amongst those who are able to read anything at all is way smaller than it was some centuries ago. Most importantly, while the book was written for the political elite, it is probably more studied today by scholars of the *history* of political thought and literature, or paged as a rather cumbersome children's book. Having lost their original readership and function, the tales of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* are being censored and simplified, in order to satisfy the expectations from a sublime "classic" of literature and a children's book.[266] What explains the changes in the usage and prestige of this collection?

When the *Pañcatantra* and its premodern translations were written, possessing books was the privilege of the elites. As the use of the Arabic term *khizāna* for both treasury and library reflects, books were indeed amongst the most expensive treasures both for their content and material form. In spite of the prestige of aural and oral transmission,[267] codices represented the most advanced technology in recording and transmitting knowledge, and were often made also precious objects of art.

Nevertheless, with the introduction of the use of paper into the Islamic empire, which happened after the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was produced,[268] then with that of printing, books became cheaper and more accessible for those within the

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264 See above, pp. 28-29. INTERNAL REF

265 *Kalila and Dimna. Selected fables of Bidpai. Retold by Ramsay Wood. Introduction by Doris Lessing. Illustrated by Margaret Kilrenny*, ix. The title of this English version is quoted in full here, for it reflects well the history of the book, which was always *retold*, subject to *selections* and *additions*, including that of new *introductions*, and richly (or poorly) *illustrated*.

266 See above, n. 99.

267 See Bloom, *Paper*, 94-8 and 113-6.

268 See *ibid.*, 48.

lower social strata. Even prior to this, the common practice to read and discuss books in company[269] allowed the diffusion of the stories that were written in them. While the elite culture was nourished by folk elements such as tales and proverbs, it was also a source for the latter. Adages and fables could become proverbs and folk tales, moving in and out from texts serving different tastes.[270] With changing audiences, style and content also altered. In the case of the "genre" of the *tale enveloped wisdom literature*, the more sophisticated the audience, the more heavily wisdom sayings and/or the intricacy of the *belles-lettrist* formulation dominated, while the less lettered were more interested in lighter-styled, animated fiction and action.

Variations are adaptations, but they can also have their artistic goal and value.[271] The differences in the Arabic variants of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* produced by their performers(?)-copyists-editors can be conceptualised in part by comparing them to variations by singers displaying their skills on a theme known by the audience. According the inventory completed by ʿĀṭūfī, librarian of the Ottoman Sultan Bāyezīd II, in 909/1503-4, the library of Bāyezīd II contained thirteen copies of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.[272] One way to explain the high number of manuscripts of the 'same' book is the appreciation for their differences, both in the text and the illustrations.

In order to be successful, all products, including literary works have to be shaped according to their "market" (audience), and, in order to achieve worldwide success, they have to be reshaped to fit into different markets. Translation from one language to another is the most obvious of such reshapings, but the translation from one culture to another is also essential. Linguistic and cultural translation can be horizontal, from one region to another, but it also can be vertical, from the "high" to the "low" strata of society, from the court to the marketplace.

The relative loss of esteem that *Kalīla wa-Dimna* has suffered in recent times is due to its original "configuration". Animal fables are mostly understood today as purely children's literature. However, the plentiful maxims in the text of *Kalīla*

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269 See Wacks, "The Performativity".

270 See also Kristó-Nagy, "The Crow".

271 According to Davidson, "Aetiologies", 50: "The presence of variation in the texts of the Arabic *Kalīla wa Dimna* does not mean that the differences we find are arbitrary. They are organic. For example, an analysis of the various different versions of *The Sage and the Mouse Maiden* as we find this fable attested in the textual traditions of the Arabic *Kalīla wa Dimna* shows that the variations are not merely textual: they are also performative. That is, the multiformity of the textual traditions of the Arabic *Kalīla wa Dimna* is the result of multiformity in the actual performance of such fables as *The Sage and the Mouse Maiden* for real audiences. And such acts of performance need to be explained in terms of the oral traditions at work in the telling of fables."

272 See Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 311, referring to the page 189 of the manuscript MS Török F. 59 of Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára Keleti Gyűjtemény (Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). This manuscript has been recently published together with a volume of studies dedicated to it, see Necipoğlu, Kafadar and Fleischer (eds), *Treasures*.

wa-Dimna slow down the stories and are burdensome not only for children, but for any reader looking for fiction. The collection does not fit to the expectations of scholars of philosophy either. They usually find more delight in "proper" philosophical treatises, the conclusions of which are supported by formal argumentation, instead of adages offered in piecemeal, mingled with tales and pictures, written in an artful but more or less openly condescending manner and with pedagogical, practical and pragmatic intentions.

As modern scholars of philosophy tended to disregard advice/wisdom literature, its importance as a living carrier of philosophical ideas and as philosophy in application escaped most of them. Authors of advice literature were, however, not by definition less deep and original thinkers than philosophers, and they were often considerably more influential. Furthermore, the two fields were not necessarily as distinct in the view of the authors of either philosophical or advice literature texts as it has been too often in modern academia. The first to write a Greek treatise titled *Peri basileias* (*On Kingship*) was probably Aristotle, to his disciple, Alexander.[273] On the "other side" of the coin, Ibn al-Muqaffa''s oeuvre is a prime example of the philosophical nature of advice literature. The introduction of his *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-Kabīr* builds on the Aristotelian concept of virtues, and philosophy is explicitly at the heart of the Arabic version of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Strikingly, in the Arabic versions, the wise man advising the ruler is consistently termed *faylasūf*, philosopher, using the Arabicised Greek word. This was probably introduced by Ibn al-Muqaffa', as in the old Syriac text, both the king and his advisor of the frame story are always mentioned by name.[274] The term itself, corroborated by the guidance given in Ibn al-Muqaffa''s preface, demonstrates that he presented this most prominent text of advice literature as a book of philosophy enveloped into entertaining examples. Its fables and tales teach politics, rhetoric and ethic in application, and the inserted intellectual autobiography of Burzawayh, the Pahlavi translator, exhibits his quest for a meaningful life, resulting in deep religious scepticism and a transreligious morality. This introduction of philosophy into Islamic civilisation is even more significant considering that Ibn al-Muqaffa' was murdered approximately a century before the death of al-Kindī, labelled "the first Arab philosopher". The attribution to Ibn al-Muqaffa' (or to his son) of the first Arabic translation of a 'proper' philosophical text—titled *al-Mantiq* (*The Logic*), and based on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's various texts—has been debated, but it is certainly not out of context, and it can be a translation of a compendium in Middle Persian.[275]

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273 See Haake, "Writing down", 168 and 172.

274 The expression "the head of the philosophers" in the translation by Schulthess, 1, occurs in the section missing from the Syriac text and reconstructed on the basis of Cheikho, 53 (رأس الفلاسفة), see Schulthess, 171, n. 1.

275 For more about the role of Ibn al-Muqaffa' and advice literature in the integration of Greek philosophy into Islamic civilisation, see Belhaj and Kristó-Nagy "Ancient".

The decline of the fable as a political genre is also connected to the process of the democratisation of society. Fables may be seen as too indirect. The idea that readers of a wise text are expected to discover a hidden message reserved for the initiated is not congenial to the democratic ideals of equality and openness.

Pre-modern intelligentsia often adhered to a double-layered elitism. They supported the superiority of the military-political elite over the masses, but also cherished the idea of their own spiritual superiority over both. This stance was not intended to be popular but magisterial in confronting the commoners. It provided ideology for the intelligentsia's identity, ammunition in their negotiations for power in the face of the military-political elite, and solace in subordination.

The rule of commoners was seen as a monstrous absurdity by most pre-modern intellectuals.[276] We saw above that in spite of all the trans-civilisational travel of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna*, this possibility is not considered in it. Dimna, the jackal, does not aim to topple the lion; the hare that tricks a lion into killing himself does not takes his place; and even when the birds want to choose a king, it is a *king*. We also saw that the process of editing and translating is still modifying the text, as reflected in the subtly "democratised" passages in the version translated by Jallad.

However, while pre-modern ruling elites claimed qualitative—sacralised—superiority, in democracies, differences in power and wealth are downplayed as purely quantitative. In his *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-Kabīr*, Ibn al-Muqaffa' advised rulers to "adorn" their rule in order to make it stronger by acceptance,[277] and he also argued that religion is the best way to make it acceptable.[278] Indeed, the less power is sacralised, the more the holders of power need to enhance popular support in other ways. According to the principles of democracy, they are in office not as being chosen by God to rule over their subjects, but as elected by free citizens and ultimately responsible to them.

The changes in the real and the professed chains of authority affect also the forms of communication. If the principle is the rule of the common people (democracy) they must be courted rather than dismissed in the communication of the elites. The use of indirect speech to educate rulers and advise fellow courtiers in a monarchical system is replaced in democracies, often by demagogic appeals to the public. The overtly indirect communication between courtly elites is frequently superseded by the covert manipulation of sophisticated populism. This does not apply only to modern democracies. The thriving of demagogy in democracy is already a theme of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

The use of double language subsists, however, in societies where the lack of the freedom of expression echoes the contexts of the composition of the

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276 An Arabic term used for the common people by pre-modern political authors, including Ibn al-Muqaffa', is *al-'āmma*.

277 Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 54; Tardy, 191; van Gelder, *Classical*, 175. See also Syros, "Soft".

278 Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 49; Tardy, 188; van Gelder, *Classical*, 173. See also Mahassine, "Deux genres", and Kristó-Nagy, "Reason".

Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna. This was the case of the "communist" or "socialist" countries under Soviet control, where, as a substitute for free political debate, literature flourished conveying and covering coded meanings. George Orwell's *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* was also inspired by Stalinism.

Mirrors for princes and *mirrors for courtiers* were "how to do books" for premodern elites. Their formulation reflect the ideals and realities of pre-democratic (or undemocratic) regimes. However, democracy has not changed politics enough to make their essential content obsolete. While the current tendency in the evolution of the text is to transform the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* into children's literature and animated cartoons, *mirrors for princes* and *mirrors for courtiers* could be re-adapted again and transformed into current "how to do books" for presidents, prime ministers, CEOs and for any high or low officials and administrators, in fact for anyone working in any organisation, as human nature and the nature of possible power relations and structures are similar everywhere, across time.[279]

The lessons given by these fables on power and its patterns are as valid as ever. Collaboration in large, super-individual structures[280] tends to be marked by external and internal, open or concealed, contests for authority, power and resources. The hierarchical, lopsided relations that characterise such structures, including political and economic organisations, produce a depersonalising and dehumanising effect. In such contexts, leaders remain as faithful to their subordinates as prostitutes are expected to be to their clients whom they take to be replaceable means for their purposes.[281] Between leaders and subordinates, the character of the relationship is mutually utilitarian—though both sides often claim, and even believe, the contrary—yet, wise jackals must be mindful of the lions' incontestable share of sheer power.

The influence of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* on Western literature, including La Fontaine, has long been recognised,[282] but calls for further studies. The heroes of the *Panchatantra* are also probably amongst the "ancestors" of the characters of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The modern and contemporary influence of the collection deserves a study of its own. That *Kalīla wa-Dimna* remains still interculturally inspiring is perhaps best illustrated by the success of a drama by Sulayman Al Bassam (1972-), *Kalila wa Dimna, or, The Mirror for Princes*, which was written in English, and performed in Kuwait, Bahrain, Kyoto, Tokyo, Sharjah, London and Oxford. Other modern literary works with political messages referring to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* include the play *Muḥākamat Kalīla wa-Dimna* (*The Trial of Kalīla and Dimna*) by Mu'īn Tawfīq Bisīsū (1926-1984) and a recent

279 Van Ruymbeke, "Murder", is very right indeed in "celebrating rewritings" (as in the subtitle of the paper, 203) of the *Pañcatantra—Kalīla wa-Dimna* referring to classical texts but also to the modern version by Ramsay Wood, introduced by Lessing.

280 See Kristó-Nagy, "Violence", 8-9.

281 See above, n. 95.

282 See Miquel, "La Fontaine".

poem by Na‘īm Ḥāfiẓ, *Al-Hiwār wa-l-murshid, nasaq Kalīla wa-Dimna (Dialogue and the Guide According to* Kalīla and Dimna).

4. Coda

All the political writings ascribed to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘—the author of the Arabic translation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*—demonstrate his deep familiarity with the means and dangers of instructing the mighty. Nevertheless, according to the most detailed and gruesome description of Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s death, his vertiginous career and life ended at the age of thirty-six; he saw his limbs hacked off one by one and cast into the fire.[283] But this is another tale, for another day.[284]

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283 As reported in al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā’ wa-l-kuttāb*, 103-107 (Cairo ed.) / fols 55b-57b//110-114 (Leipizg ed.), written before 942 A.D.

284 On Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s biography, see Sourdel, “La biographie”; Kristó-Nagy, *La pensée*, 49-63; and Kristó-Nagy, “Marriage”, 163-5. It inspired also modern dramas, such as ‘Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, (1910-69), “Ma’sāt”; and Al Bassam, *Kalila*.

285 In order to facilitate access to sources, their online availability, when possible, is indicated.

and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8XgntEFFXA.

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