



# ***HUMOR MEKUVVAN***

## ***A Research Journal in Humor Studies***

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**October 2011**

**Editor-in-Chief: Arie Sover**

**Associate Editor: Ephraim Nissan**

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***The Israeli Society for Humor Studies***

# Humor Mekuvvan

## A Research Journal in Humor Studies



**Issue No. 1**  
**October 2011**

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***Humor Mekuvvan: Research Journal in Humor Studies***  
 Issue 1 October 2011

Table of Contents

	page
<b>Papers in English</b>	
Inaugural Editorial — <b>Ephraim Nissan and Arie Sover</b> .....	E1
Jokes and Pranks: The Compulsive Liar Healed, the Congregation Made to Behave Awkwardly, and the Character 'Such a One' Reduced to a Dog. Baghdadi Jewish Variants, Heretofore Unsignalled, Respectively Amenable to the International Tale Types 1543 C* (Oicotypised); Vaguely 1828* (an Oicotypised <i>Predigtschwank</i> ), and 1138 (Quite Loosely, Unadapted) — <b>Ephraim Nissan</b> .....	E4
Neuroscience of Humor Processing: A Selective Review — <b>Roman Rozengurt</b> .....	E73
<b>English abstracts of the Hebrew papers</b>	E80
<b>Papers in Hebrew</b>	
Inaugural Editorial — <b>Ephraim Nissan and Arie Sover</b> .....	3
Emotional Intelligence and Humor: A Kaleidoscope on the World — <b>Daniella Keidar</b> .....	5
The Language of Verbal Humor — <b>Arie Sover</b> .....	15
Transgressed Conversational Maxims and Ambivalent Information in Hebrew Comedy Sketches — <b>Dror Kastel</b> .....	26
Humor - A Salvation from Salvations? — <b>Lydia Amir</b> .....	47
Imbided With Humor, Not Wine: An Examination of the Anthology of Poems <i>Bat Yayin (Daughter of the Wine)</i> by Bracha Serri — <b>Lea Baratz</b> .....	58
<i>Illustrated Poems for Children in Yiddish and Hebrew</i> , by Shmuel Tsesler — Three presentations:	
About the Bilingual Book <i>Illustrated Poems for Children in Yiddish and Hebrew</i> — <b>Yechezkel Szeintuch</b> .....	77
Humor for Children from Argentina — <b>Adina Bar-EI</b> .....	79
Humor in the Translation of Shmuel Tsesler's Poems from Yiddish into Hebrew — <b>Ruth Zakovitz</b> .....	80
<b>Hebrew abstracts of the English papers</b>	85

## **Inaugural Editorial**

### ***Humor Mekuvvan: A Research Journal in Humor Studies, 1 (2011)***

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It is with pleasure that we publish the inaugural issue of *Humor Mekuvvan: A Research Journal in Humor Studies*. There are two reasons to rejoice: this is the first Israeli periodical in humour studies, and this particular issue is the first one providing a forum primarily to Israeli scholars. The inaugural issue contains seven articles, spanning among them various themes and disciplines within humour studies. Five of those articles are in Hebrew, whereas two are in English.

Daniella Keidar's article is concerned with an emerging area in humour studies, namely, the connection of emotional intelligence to humour. Human beings are able to relate thought and feelings to effective personal and interpersonal behaviour and self-management. The ability to conduct oneself with a smiling attitude in the social environment is according to emotional intelligence, a sublime cultural behaviour rendering good service to the human mind. This scholarly approach touches upon an innovative domain: positive psychology. The two compartments of knowledge — emotional intelligence and positive psychology — resulted from lines of research that already yielded outcomes which found expression in humour studies at a much earlier period, beginning toward the end of the nineteenth century with the studies of Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud, and later on with Viktor Frankl and his therapeutic method, i.e., logotherapy.

The second article in the Hebrew part of the issue is by Arie Sover, and is concerned with the mechanism underlying verbal humour. The method relies upon the study of patterns and genres of verbal humour, as well as upon the cognitive aspects beneath those patterns. Sover's article draws a distinction between verbal and visual humour, and claims that verbal humour is more demanding of the perceiver, in terms of intellectual and cognitive abilities, than visual humour is. (This claim may be challenged, but the very debate would be fruitful.) Moreover, the appreciation of verbal humour, as well as of humour in general, is culture-bound as well as affected by further factors, pertaining to personality and to the environment.

The third article is by Dror Kastel, who is concerned with the transgression of Grice's conversational maxims and with ambivalent information in Hebrew comedy. In his article, Kastel examines verbal humour in such comedy sketches that are intended to generate a sustained comical effect. That is to say, humorous states are more numerous than in mere jokes. A joke is short, and its structure allows for just one humorous state. Kastel emphasises incongruity theory, one of the leading classes of approaches within humour studies. He also underscores the verbal comical pattern of a thwarted expectation. We first come across that theory in Kant, who marked the beginning of humour studies from the psychological and cognitive viewpoints. Kastel's article enumerates various genres within verbal humour, including double sense, abundance, and the absurd.

The fourth article in the Hebrew part of the inaugural issue is by Lydia Amir. It is in the philosophy of humour. The Hebrew title plays upon "redemption from redemptions", or "release from releases". Amir asks whether humour solves problems, or rather enables to elude problem-solving. Amir's approach refutes, up to a point, the positive conception of humour in relation to emotional intelligence, a conception expressed in Keidar's article. Amir is sceptical about humour being conducive to a better world, and in this she perhaps partakes of the company of other philosophers, Plato and Hobbs, who considered laughter stemming from situational humour to be nothing more than deriving pleasure from the plight of others. Or then perhaps Amir's

stance may be somewhat likened to Baudelaire's dubbing a laughing response to human conditions, *the flowers of evil*. Both approaches, the one well-disposed towards humour-induced laughter, and the other approach, which considers it negatively, still have followers.

Lea Baratz's is the fifth paper in the Hebrew part of the issue. She discusses an anthology, *Bat Yayin (Daughter of the Wine)*, by the poetess Bracha Serri. Baratz maintains that it is possible to read Serri's poems from that anthology in different manners: a gender-based reading, a subversive reading, an autobiographical one, or then a lyric one, as agreeing with the eye of the beholder. Serri's poetry moreover lends itself to be read in different ways: linguistic, psychological, and social. The focus of Baratz's article is on the linguistic aspect of the poems, while considering its components within psychological, personality, and social contexts. Baratz's analysis uncovers both overt and hidden compartments within Bracha Serri's poetry. Humour, according to Baratz, enables a suitable perspective for seeing what the universe undergoes under Serri's wand or under her witty tongue.

Let us turn to the English part of the inaugural issue. The first English paper is by Ephraim Nissan. It is a long paper in folklore studies. It analyses three humorous stories that were told in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic. These tales are considered within the communal cultural context, as well as within both international and Jewish folklore worldwide. A comparison is drawn with tales from the Israel Folklore Archives. The the first Baghdadi tale, a compulsive liar who asked to be healed is made to stir diluted yoghurt with dung, and when he complains about the smell, he is told that as he said the truth, he is healed. This is simply a local variant of a clearly identifiable international tale type. Not so the other two tales introduced in this article. The tale about the prankster rabbi Zambartut can only be placed among the many *Predigtschwänke* from around the world known to folklore studies, but his particular trick in this tale — causing the congregants to call out like ravens, when he deliberately misreads in public a word from the biblical prohibition of tattooing, thus prompting them to correct him — eludes classification. Clearly his victims are not morons. It is precisely the competence of the congregants that causes them to fall into his trap, and this is rather like tales about a trickster who win an astute opponent.

The third tale, about the dog Mithlu (Such a One), is even more elusive, when it comes to classifying it. The dog owner, who was bathing, runs into the street in order to recover her dog, does not notice she is holding an empty frame while trying to cover herself, and when asking the people in the street whether they saw Such a One, they equivocate. This tale does partake in a motif, but not in a tale type. There exist tales about a trickster who has himself called Such a One, or Nobody (like Ulysses when he outsmarts the blinded giant Polyphemus), and so forth. The name causes equivocation, when the victim of the prank then looks for the bearer of that name. In contrast, the dog Such a One just ran away, and is no trickster at all. His owner then suffers indignities caused by the dog's ambiguous name.

Thus, in a sense all three tales are stories about somebody duped, but only the first two have a prankster, as in the third tale the prankster from the international tale type that shares the motif is demoted into a dog (who may be at least as hare-brained as his owner). Clearly the most Judaised tale is the one about Rabbi Zambartut, whereas the story about the dog that ran away is totally un-Judaised, and was actually told in 1965 in Tel-Aviv.

The second English paper (the seventh and last article in the inaugural issue) is by Roman Rozengurt. It surveys the main theoretical frameworks which apply neuroscience to research into humour. The subject is neural processing of humour in

the brain. This paper thus completes the multidisciplinary panoply in this journal issue. Complex processes occur in the brain and in the neural system in general during the perception of humour states on the part of an individual, with the cognitive and emotional aspects associated with that perception. The survey refers to studies of humor in patients with localised brain damage, as well as studies of normal subjects using neuroimaging techniques and electrophysiological studies. Progress in measurement techniques has enabled an increasing role of neuroscience within humour studies.

The Hebrew part of the inaugural issue also comprises three texts which discuss a new book, Shmuel Tsesler's *Illustrated Poems for Children, in Yiddish and Hebrew*. In the book, the Yiddish original poems are accompanied with a Hebrew translation. The book was published in collaboration by the Chair of Yiddish and the Dov Sadan project at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and constitutes an important contribution to the preservation of Yiddish cultural riches. Hebrew readers get exposure to the Jewish humour which is inseparable from Yiddish culture. Translating poetry is difficult. Doing so with works of humour is a much bigger challenge. We surmise how difficult it must have been. The quality is excellent, and leaves you with a smile. Also David Hall's enchanting illustrations are humorous. The three contributions concerned with Shmuel Tsesler's book are by the members of the team that prepared it for publication, namely, Yechiel Szeintuch (Chair of Yiddish at the Hebrew University), Adina Bar-El, the book's editor, and Ruth Zakovitz, the translator.

We conclude by thanking those collaborating in publishing the inaugural issue of this journal: Avivit Gera for editing the Hebrew text, Marianna Palucik, also in relation to desk-editing, and Michal Avigdor for the pagination of the issue and as website administrator. We are grateful as well to the anonymous referees who contributed their time, competence, and efforts, and whose role was crucial. Sometimes a referee also reviewed a paper again, upon revision. In order to preserve the anonymity of these referees, for the time being we are not going to list their names, waiting for a cumulative list only to appear once enough has been published to make the connection between referees and articles untraceable.

We hope that reader satisfaction will reward the efforts invested in this journal. May our audience derive both professional growth and personal pleasure from this diverse offering. We would like as well to announce that within 2011, we also expect the inaugural issue of our *Israeli Journal of Humor Research: An International Journal* to appear. That other forum will publish articles and book reviews in English, and possibly French. Its international advisory board includes prominent scholars from all over the world. The combined experience of developing both journals will hopefully be reflected in a high quality of the output in both forums.

**Ephraim NISSAN | Arie SOVER**

**Jokes and Pranks: The Compulsive Liar Healed, the Congregation Made to Behave Awkwardly, and the Character “Such a One” Reduced to a Dog. Baghdadi Jewish Variants, Heretofore Unsignalled, Respectively Amenable to the International Tale Types 1543 C\* (Oicotypised); Vaguely 1828\* (an Oicotypised *Predigtschwank*), and 1138 (Quite Loosely, Unadapted)**

**Ephraim Nissan\***

**Abstract.** Three previously unsignalled jokes or pranks are discussed. The tales, heard in the Baghdadi Jewish vernacular, are to varying degrees amenable to international tale types about humorous pranks: the compulsive liar healed (Type 1543 C\*), here having been made to stir diluted yoghurt with dung (he complains about the smell, without ingesting); a prank causing a congregation to behave awkwardly (thus, one of the *Predigtschwänke*, cf. Types 1828\* and 1826), which in this case, is their cawing like a raven in order to correct a misreading from *Leviticus*; and a character (in this version — told in Tel-Aviv in the dialect, but perhaps not from Iraq — reduced to a dog, triggering a crisis, but not a prankster) called “Such a One” (which only for that motif, is loosely amenable to Type 1138). The main aim of the paper being the presentation of new data and taxonomical contextualisation; there also is some theoretical discussion. In the end, we refer for comparison to IFA 1430 (a tale from Egypt about a prankster who claims for himself several false names, cf. Tale Type 1138), IFA 3163 (a Hasidic tale of Type 1543 C\* about a scoffer who, detected, is made to swallow a disgusting medication), and IFA 17029 (Galician women repeat unthinkingly something that the woman leading them in prayer said).

1. Introduction

PART ONE

2. The Compulsive Liar Healed (Type 1543 C\*)
  - 2.1. The Variant and Its Source
  - 2.2. Place Within International Classification, and Methodological Considerations
  - 2.3. An Eye Ailment Made Worse by the Patient Touching It, and International Proverbs
  - 2.4. An Opportunity Unexploited by the Tale: The Liar Paradox
3. Judaizing and Localising Features of the Oicotypised First Tale
  - 3.1. The Material Culture, and Potential Interference from Textual Culture
  - 3.2. Some Folk Medicine, and Biographical Relevance to the Teller
4. Features of the Teller of the First Tale
5. “Three Ailments, One Medication” (IFA 3163): A Misnagdic Scoffer Seeking Hasidic Taumaturgy, and Getting What he Deserves

PART TWO

6. A Prank of Ḥakhām Zambartūt (Approximating Type 1828\*)
  - 6.1. The Baghdadi Jewish Tale About the Congregation Made to Caw
  - 6.2. The Place Within International Classification, and Jewish Aspects
  - 6.3. Further Considerations About Classification
  - 6.4. The Raven in This Oicotype Is **Not** an Associate of the Clergy or Clericalism
7. Birds’ Human Talk, vs. Bird Calls Imitated as Human Utterances: The Hebrew *Pereq Shirah* and Its Raven, vs. the Tibetan *Precious Garland of the Birds’ Law*
8. A Facilitating Factor for the Iraqi Tale: Dialectal Lexicon and Grammar
9. The Galician *Zogerin* (Woman Leading Women in Prayer) Emulated When Calling Out to the Butcher’s Wife: “Sheindl, Thanks for the Gut!”

PART THREE

10. A Character Called “Such a One”: A Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic Version Related in Tel-Aviv in 1965, and Perhaps of Non-Iraqi Derivation
11. Conjectured Origination, and What Makes This Variant Remarkable
12. The Trickster Who Gave False Names: “Black Cat” (IFA 1430), a Tenuously Judaized Tale from Egypt

13. Concluding Remarks

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## 1. Introduction

This article approaches three Baghdadi Jewish jokes or stories of pranks (“Baghdadi Jewish”, because related by Baghdadi Jews in their Judaeo-Arabic vernacular) from the viewpoint of the typology of the international folktale, then proceeding to examine in Sections 5, 9, and 12 the three tales from the Israel Folklore Archives that apparently come closest. Basically this is a data paper, but method is also discussed (e.g., in Sec. 2.2). This paper’s value is mainly in its data, and its purpose is to signal interesting versions, previously unsignalled, of a few tale types from standard classification. Because of the very nature of folktale classification, how good a match is, between a given tale variant, and the types in the classification, is bound to vary from case to case. As we are going to see with the three Baghdadi Jewish tales we introduce as data, they approximate types in the classification to decreasing degrees. The three tales were first heard by the present author, at different times, from relatives in the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic dialect (see on it, e.g., Blanc 1964a, 1964b, Mansour 1991). In Ch. 4, we are going to consider the teller of the first tale from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Heda Jason’s *Folktales of the Jews of Iraq* (1988) is a classic for its own subject, and it caters to specialists in international folklore, as it mainly consists of a classification according to international tale types. On the evidence of such international repertoires as Uther (2004), which comprises over two thousand tale types, most of these occur through much of Europe, and often also in other parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> We also consider El-Shamy’s (2004) “Demographically Oriented Tale-Type Index” of folktales from the Arab world (DOTTI-A): that index signals variants from Arabic-speaking *milieux* (including variants from Jewish repertoires) by relating them to standard international classification. El-Shamy (2004, introduction) is right to point out that some precursors he enumerates tended to be rather Eurocentric even when approaching Near Eastern data,<sup>2</sup> or then that some scholars misunderstood or even mangled their Near Eastern data for the sake of making them fit some given theory.<sup>3</sup> El-Shamy in turn, adopting a

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<sup>1</sup> As this journal is interdisciplinary, this explanatory note will hopefully be useful for such readers who are not conversant with folklore studies. Uther’s classification is a revision of the classification of Aarne and Thompson, itself a fundamental tool in the scholarship of the folktale. Antti Amatus Aarne (1867–1925) died shortly before Vladimir Propp published his ground-breaking study of the Russian folktales (Propp 1928), which paved the way also for story-grammars (Rumelhart 1975, 1980) in cognitive science and automatic story processing within artificial intelligence (Nissan, in press). Propp’s booklet is a work that “has had epochal significance in [almost] all areas of the study of traditional literature” (Beatie 1976, p. 39). English-language editions of Propp’s monograph however only appeared starting in 1958, and the 1958 edition is standard in the U.S.; in Europe on the Continent, one is more likely to use the later, French translation of the Russian second edition. Notwithstanding this chronology, the work of Aarne is still essential, albeit since recently this is through Uther’s revision (2004). Aarne established a system for indexing tale-plot, which was translated from the German and enlarged by Stith Thompson (Aarne and Thompson 1928, 1961). Apart from tale types, an elementary unit, the motif, was indexed in Thompson’s (1955–1958) *Motif Index of Folk-Literature*. Two articles, respectively by Dundes (1962, repr. 1975) and Jones (1979), became the foundation of the structural narratological study of folktales. Narratology is associated with structuralism. The study of narrative themes is thematics. Thematology is the study of the evolution of a thematic series (a story, or rather the cluster of its variants) throughout a given culture, and its methodology is related to narratology. Cf., e.g., Doležel (1972), Ben-Amos (1980), Lakoff (1972).

<sup>2</sup> One often comes across comparisons of folktales from parts of the world far away from each other. For example, Klipple (1992) examined African folktales with foreign analogues.

<sup>3</sup> This same concern is why at times I cannot help cringing at the late Alan Dundes insisting that presenting the data is not enough, and that it is the theoretical discussion that gives a presentation its

pragmatic and quite sensible course of action, adopts, adapts, or corrects the extant classification, notwithstanding its core’s historical Eurocentrism stemming because of how it was devised. As he notes, the standard classification has the advantage of being open-ended, with the potential of being enlarged.

As an anonymous referee pointed out:

The theoretical implication behind this concept is the fact that many, if not most, narratives in the Indo-European tradition may be classified in the tale-type system. The method applied to find out whether narratives actually may or may not constitute variants of tale-types is the “historic-geographic method” (for which see, e.g., Satu Apo in Don Haase, ed., *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales & Fairy Tales*, Westport, Conn. 2008, pp. 452–4).

By discussing the narratives as tale types, this paper puts to practice one of the main methods of comparative folk narrative research. The narratives presented are rather short and humorous, to some extent amenable to being considered jokes. After presenting the actual text of the narrative, we add our commentary on the socio-cultural background, hereby deducing two narratives to constitute oicotypes of internationally distributed folk narratives, while one is regarded as an import from Western tradition.

In actual instances of international folk types, it is often the case that *oicotypisation* reshapes the tale: in the given locale and given generation when a version of the tale was told (and as reported about one or two generation later on), there was a cultural environment (*oicotype*) whose circumstances suggested a given customisation of some *motifeme* (an abstraction of a motif) into a given actual motif.<sup>4</sup>

In my present paper, Baghdadi Jewish kinds of oicotypisation are discussed, for two international folktale types apparently not ascribed to that group in the literature. We then proceed to discuss a third tale, related by a Baghdadi Jew in the mid 20th century, and which in practice shows no oicotypisation, and in contrast, features of global Western modernity and secularity.

## PART ONE

### 2. The Compulsive Liar Healed (Type 1543 C\*)

#### 2.1. The Variant and Its Source

The adaptation of an international folktale type to local conditions (denominational, social, and material culture) is discussed here, concerning two Baghdadi Jewish folktales, apparently unreported in the literature. Tales do not rise from some “anonymous” tradition, but always have a teller. This teller’s background and the actual situation of performance might add further valuable information on the tale’s meaning. Of the three tales we consider in this article, the first one was related by a relative of mine within the family (to his sister and me, a nephew). Well-educated, and interested in the French *belles lettres* in his youth, his performance delivery as a

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value. The risk is always there that the theory would take central place, and that the data would have to match the Procrustean constraints of the theory, instead of it being the other way around.

<sup>4</sup> *Motifeme* is a concept introduced by Alan Dundes (1962, repr. 1975). *Oikotype* or *oicotype* or *oecotype* is a concept originally introduced by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1948).

teller was with a vivacious intonation. When he told this story, he was in his late middle age. His delivery in the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic dialect is always in the *mesolect* (i.e., the average sociolect),<sup>5</sup> and this is rather significant considering that, while being from a family of the communal elite and himself well-educated, in some situations he enjoys adopting a basilectal delivery (be than in Israeli Hebrew, in Italian, or in Japanese). More about the teller is found in Sec. 4 below, along with considerations especially from sociolinguistics,<sup>6</sup> but also reflecting on what in a sense is a dilemma, in the study of folktales, when working with informants.

The first tale is as follows. (There is no attempt to capture the vivacious performance on the part of the teller.) A man complains to a rabbi because he, the former, is a compulsive liar, and would invariably lie. Then the rabbi orders this man to keep stirring *shnīna* (diluted yoghurt) in which goat dung was put inside. Eventually the man is so nauseated (the teller mimicks this during his storytelling performance) that he complains: “It’s shit!” (“Khara!”), and the rabbi retorts by pointing out that he told the truth (and thus declaring him healed of his lying).

Unlike in other variants of this tale type, including Jewish variants, here the liar only smells the stuff (after stirring it), and does not actually eat it. Arguably, apart from the storytelling performance being in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the only thing that makes this tale Iraqi Jewish is that *shnīna* is involved. That drink is also Turkish however (but is known by Turkish by another name).

Yoghurt and puddings loom large in the Turkish cuisine, and were possibly introduced to the Near East by the Turks in the Middle Ages, even before the Ottoman conquest. After the Seleucid and early Parthian periods, Iraq fell under the dominion of a succession of other empires: Arsacid and Sassanian Persian, Arab under the Sunni Caliphate, Shamanist and eventually Islamised Mongol, and — after Turkish tribal rule and the interlude of Tamerlane’s<sup>7</sup> quite cruent conquest, in 1401, when the

<sup>5</sup> As opposed to the *acrolect* (socially higher than the norm), and to the *basilect* (socially lower than the norm).

<sup>6</sup> The interaction of folklore studies and sociolinguistics is, and should be indeed, a matter of course. See, e.g., Hymes (1971).

<sup>7</sup> Tamerlane, or Timur. The territory of Timur’s dominions encompassed areas in present-day southeastern Turkey (the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I was made prisoner in 1402), Syria (in 1400, he massacred the inhabitants of Damascus, but deported the artisans to Samarkand), Iraq (in 1401, he massacred the inhabitants of Baghdad), Kuwait and Iran (in the latter, cultivated regions were permanently desertified because of the deliberate destruction of irrigation works), as well as areas in Central Asia (the region that benefited from his rule) encompassing part of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, as well as areas in the Caucasus (of present-day Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia), and in the east, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (where Delhi was destroyed in 1398, its inhabitants massacred), and part of China, in whose present-day territory his rule approached Kashgar. He actually died in 1405, during his campaign against Ming China. He had also sent scouts to Mongolia. It has been pointed out that his conquests extended from the Irtish and the Volga to the Persian Gulf, and from the Hellespont to the Ganges River.

Nissan (2008a) analysed a tale about him, and sent it into so-called *episodic formulae*. Tamerlane had visible handicaps. According to the tale analysed, Tamerlane invited three painters in turn, and commissioned from each, his own portrait. The first painter painted the king as a very handsome man, and Tamerlane had him beheaded, to punish him for his excessive flattery. The second painter represented the king realistically, if one means by that: warts and all. Tamerlane had him beheaded, as he found it intolerably offensive to see himself represented with hideous features. The third painter portrayed the king in the act of shooting an arrow, and did so “realistically”, yet without revealing the physical defects, because the posture was such that these would not be apparent. How did the third painter portrait Tamerlane? In fact, in order to shoot the arrow from his bow, Tamerlane was kneeling down, so one would not notice that one leg was shorter. On shooting an arrow, an archer would also hunch his back, so one would not notice that Tamerlane was a hunchback. To aim, Tamerlane shut an eye, so one could not tell out the squint which affected his eyes (because you need to see both of them

inhabitants of Baghdad were massacred (this apparently caused a provisional disappearance of Jews from Baghdad) — Sunni Ottoman (1534–1623), Persian again (this time, Safavid Shi‘i: 1508–1534, 1623–1638), and Sunni Ottoman again (1638–1918). The modern borders of Iraq were defined by the British under a mandate granted them by the League of Nations after the First World War. With those borders, in Iraq there were two Jewish communities distinguished by their vernacular: the “Iraqi” (“Babylonian”) Jews, speaking Judaeo-Arabic, and the Kurdish Jews, speaking Neo-Aramaic vernaculars.

## 2.2. Place Within International Classification, and Methodological Considerations

In this article, we quote Uther’s (2004) formulation of this or that folk type, because of two considerations. Firstly, this is an interdisciplinary journal, and non-folklorists among the readers are unlikely to be conversant with a tale-type index such as Uther (2004), so quoting from there would make the discussion more intelligible. Secondly, quoting verbatim the description of a tale type is useful in order to make it palpable, so to speak, that generally speaking, there is some degree of arbitrariness in deciding what should be a type in a classification of folktales. An anonymous referee remarked:

The “arbitrariness” in tale-type classification [...] is certainly a given fact. But the frequently applied diligent empirical assessment of all available variants of a given tale has proved beyond doubt that this “arbitrariness” can be limited to an absolute minimum. Thus, it should never serve as an argument for loose or approximate classification.

At any rate, it is only with part of our data (and, in particular, only with the first story, of the three we report) that one does find a good match to tale types in the standard classification. This is inherent with approaching the typology of folktales. The system has drawbacks and limitations, but its great advantage is that it can be adjusted and revised or augmented.

One usually cannot expect to neatly place a given tale variant in a drawer or pigeonhole. Rather, one tries to find coordinates in relation to tale types. Sometimes, what one comes up with is a combination of motifs, elements that are known to occur in some stories or story types (and this is what we are going to find out when discussing the third story with which this article is concerned).

This first story from Iraq can be classified unambiguously. It is an instance of Tale Type 1543 C\* from Uther (2004, Vol. 2, p. 284):

*The Clever Doctor.* A man complains to a doctor that he has no sense of taste, can never tell the truth, and has a bad memory. The doctor treats him with three capsules filled with faeces (puts dung in his mouth). The first restores his sense of taste, after the second, he is able to speak the truth, and when he takes the third, he proves that his memory is good.

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open, to tell out). This way, the life of the third painter was saved. The tricks adopted by the third painter have an equivalent in the following anecdote, which has a modern setting. Reportedly, the French actor Jean-Pierre Aumont was once asked how he managed to look young for his advanced age. His answer was that anybody could apply what he was doing: “I am always smiling, and when one is smiling, all the wrinkles on one’s face look as though they were provisional”.

In some variants, a clever doctor heals a patient by diverting his attention. For example, in a Jewish variant a king has an inflamed eye because he touches it all the time. The doctor tells him that he is pregnant and will give birth in nine months. The king begins to worry about his stomach and touches it: Thus his eye is able to heal. When the birth does not take place, the doctor explains his trick and is made court physician.

The Jewish variant (the one about the king’s eye) was reported by Heda Jason (1988, concerning Iraqi Jewish tales), and more recently included in Haboucha (1992, concerning Judaeo-Spanish tales). Uther lists references to these, and also lists, providing citations to the scholarly literature, versions including Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Dutch, Frisian, Polish, and “US-American”. Note that Uther’s list per country or culture following each tale type is very inclusive, and contains bibliographical citations to be looked up in Uther’s (2004) Vol. 3, with the expectation that on finding the bibliographic entries, the interested reader would access those publications as per the citations provided at the given tale type. In fact, generally speaking, variation is quite high, so “odd bedfellows” can be expected to occur amid the variants for which bibliographic citations are given at the same tale type. The thematic entries in the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*<sup>8</sup> provide more direct information, so readers trying to orient themselves find themselves right away on a surer foot. Such scholarly sources are intended to complement each other.

An anonymous referee made this comment:

In fact, Uther’s catalogue as the main source of reference for the international distribution is also highly problematic, in the first place. For instance, the two texts listed by Uther as tale type 1543 C\* might as well be regarded as being so distinct from each other that they ought to be regarded as two separate tale types. Furthermore, even if one tolerates two different tales listed under one heading, the related equivalence of variants in Uther’s bibliography is unclear. Thus, an uncritical quotation of a given tale type’s distribution bears little relevance. Rather than referring to Uther’s catalogue, the author would be well advised to use the detailed information published in the German language *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (*EM*).

The first tale correctly corresponds to tale type 1543C\*. This tale’s earliest variant, not listed in Uther, can be found in Latin author Poggio’s fifteenth century *Facetiae*, no. 166: A man who wants to learn soothsaying, is given a pill made of dung. The tale corresponds to Thompson,<sup>9</sup> *Motif Index K* 114.3.1 (see *EM*, s.v. Poggio, vol. 10, col. 1104).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The *Enzyklopädie des Märchens: Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung* is an encyclopaedia prepared in Göttingen, and published by Walter de Gruyter in Berlin from 1975. It has long been directed by Rolf Wilhelm Brednich. By 2011, 13 volumes have been published.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson (1955–1958). Among Arabic folktales, El-Shamy (2004, p. 1107) has motifs K0113, K0113.1, K0115.3, but not K114.3.1.

<sup>10</sup> The Tuscan humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) was employed in the Roman Curia. He became apostolic secretary of two antipopes of the Pisan party, but once that party lost at the Council of Constance in 1415, Bracciolini lived in Germany (looking for rare manuscripts) and then, until 1423, in England. He then returned to Rome, having found employment at apostolic secretary to Pope Martin V. In 1453, he became chancellor of the city of Florence. In *Contra hypocritas* (Against Hypocrites, 1447–1448), Bracciolini “indict[ed] those who preach the withdrawal from civic life”, and this he did “in a tone at once sardonic and injuriously polemical that Bracciolini contributed to legitimize as a viable form of expression and for which he would be criticized by, among others, Erasmus of Rotterdam”. His “moral philosophy [is] reminiscent of Lorenzo Valla’s Christian Epicureanism: an ethos in which the principles of Christian charity were assimilated to the values

This in turn calls for comment. Devising a classification, and in particular, a folktale classification, is an empirical task with some arbitrariness involved, and generally speaking it can only be expected that here and there, some choice made would turn out to be either infelicitous, or less than satisfactory. This is inescapable. It is bound to occur. One may take exception with this or that detail, but generally speaking, it is unlikely to ever be the case that scholarship will have the “perfect” classification available. This kind of problem is more likely to become evident when a scholar is dealing with some given set of data, trying to match its elements to items in the classification, than when simply reading a classification.

Let us consider in turn three *analogues* of tale type classification; they apparently haven’t come yet to the attention of folklorists, and they deserve their notice:

1. Even when applying mathematical techniques from *data analysis* to a body of data, there is a lingering sense of messiness that does not sit well with the crystalline neatness one expects of mathematics. Arguably the closest analogue to classifying tale types in folklore studies is mathematical techniques for *clustering* data.<sup>11</sup>

This is part of *pattern matching*, a major area within computer science. There is no doubt at all that devising or using a tale type classification is a kind of pattern matching as intended in computer science. It may be that advances in natural-language processing and in the automated processing of narratives would eventually result in the raise of sophisticated tale type classification software, but for the time being there only appear to have been some work on databases, and even so, tale type classification would be used by software (see Oinonen et al. 2006), rather than software carrying out “intelligent” tasks in the service of human scholarly work on folktales.

Nevertheless, bear in mind that already Michael Dyer’s (1983) BORIS multi-paragraph story understander from Yale University was matching narrative situations to a classification, and in particular, emotional displays of characters

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inherent in secular life”. In this, Bracciolini was apparently “influenced by his reading of Lucretius’ *De rerum naturae*, a text that he himself had rediscovered.” All quotations in this note are from Rubini (2008, p. 304).

The salacious language and the witticism language and the criticism of contemporaries found in the *Contra hypocritas* is also at the basis of the work that made Bracciolini internationally known and turned him into an unchallenged model for satirical writing: His notorious *Facetiae*, a term that can be translated as “witticisms” or “jests”, written between 1438 and 1452. The anecdotes and short stories that comprise the collection lay bare the fallibility and ludicrous nature of human beings. Even though the clergy is reserved a special treatment, Bracciolini’s insightful eye considers every possible human typology. While the *Facetiae* were soon translated into the vernacular, Bracciolini himself asserted in his preface to the collection that he meant to prove that Latin could be made to accommodate a subject as base as this. The straightforward nature of his language, which never shies away from calling things by their proper name, is definitely part of the background of any polemical discourse against the linguistic abstruseness of the literati up until and including Pietro Aretino and Giordano Bruno.

The *Facetiae* were first published in 1452. *The Facetiae*, an English translation by Bernhardt J. Hurwood, appeared in 1968, published by Award Books in New York.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Kaufman and Rousseeuw (2005); Lingras and Peters (2011); Pfeiffer and Neville (2011); Mitra et al. (2006); Maji and Pal (2007). Berry (2003) applies clustering to text mining, a kind of data mining. Moens et al. (1999) are concerned with clustering for the purposes of abstracting of legal cases. Feng and Chen (2004) apply clustering to scans of the brain.

in a narratives were related to a character's plan failure, and this was matched to Thematic Organisation Units (TAUs) which were often associated with some proverb. See an overview in Nissan (in press).

2. Turning to yet another analogue from yet another disciplinary area, let us consider *ontologies*.<sup>12</sup> These have been a burgeoning field since the 1990s, being conceptualisations and maps of the interrelationship among the concepts identified in a great many domains of application (e.g., bioinformatics,<sup>13</sup> or law, or engineering).

Some ontologies appear not to lend themselves so much to criticism, to the extent that, say, one can map the anatomy of malaria-carrying mosquitoes onto a large set of terminological and conceptual entries<sup>14</sup> (and even then, there is

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Staab and Studer (2004). We quote from Uschold and Grüninger (1996):

'*Ontology*' is the term used to refer to the shared understanding of some domain of interest which may be used as a unifying framework to solve the above problems in the above-described manner. An ontology necessarily entails or embodies some sort of world view with respect to a given domain. The world view is often conceived as a set of concepts (e.g. entities, attributes, processes), their definitions and their interrelationships; this is referred to as a *conceptualisation*. Such a conceptualisation may be implicit, e.g. existing only in someone's head, or embodied in a piece of software. [...] However, the more standard usage and that which we will adopt is that the ontology is an explicit account or representation of [some part of] a conceptualisation. *What does an ontology look like?* An [explicit] ontology may take a variety of forms, but necessarily it will include a vocabulary of terms and some specification of their meaning (i.e. definitions). The degree of formality by which a vocabulary is created and meaning is specified varies considerably. [...] A formal ontology is a formal description of objects, properties of objects, and relations among objects. This provides the language that will be used to express the definitions and constraints in the axioms. This language must provide the necessary terminology to restate the informal competency questions. If we are designing a new ontology, then for every informal competency question, there must be objects, attributes, or relations in the proposed ontology or proposed extension to an ontology, which are intuitively required to answer the question. [...]

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Stevens et al. (2004).

<sup>14</sup> For example ([http://anobase.vectorbase.org/anatomy/mosquito\\_anatomy.obo](http://anobase.vectorbase.org/anatomy/mosquito_anatomy.obo)):

```
[Term]
id: TGMA:0000002
name: adult head
def: "The anterior section (tagma) of the insect body bearing the compound eyes, antennae
and mouthparts; separated from the thorax by the cervix." [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]
comment: Fig 01,02,03,04 in ISBN:0-937548-00-6.
is_a: TGMA:0001840 ! organism subdivision
```

```
[Term]
id: TGMA:0000003
name: adult cranium
def: "The sclerotized skull-like part of the head." [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]
synonym: "head capsule" RELATED [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]
synonym: "Kopfkapsel" RELATED [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]
is_a: TGMA:0001842 ! anatomical cluster
relationship: part_of TGMA:0000002 ! adult head
```

```
[Term]
id: TGMA:0000006
name: adult tentorium
```

some degree of arbitrariness when the ontology also tries to handle physiological functions).<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, the development of an ontology is much more arbitrary when the ontology is being developed to some field like some area of business, and even supposedly critical applications such as to fraud-detection have in practice resulted in some ontology that immediately strikes one as less than perfect.

Generally speaking, the problems with devising an ontology are not a very good analogue for the problems of clustering folktales into tale types, because even though, say, the anatomy of individuals displays variation, relatively an ontology for anatomy is straightforward, and it is rather the ontology of more fluid processes that is more likely to be frayed with arbitrariness. I am nevertheless mentioning ontologies here in relation to tale type classifications because arguably, *a classification of tale types is an ontology*. I concede that this notion of tale-type classification is not necessarily exactly what most folklorists mean it to be. Let this be an issue for further discussion.

3. Yet another analogue may be with some difficult and messy tasks in cartography. Consider for example trying to match some verbal or visual representation of geographical space that has come down from some earlier historical period, to geographical maps from the present day. Mismatches will be worse than instances of warping, because the relevant historical culture

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def: "The pair of endoskeletal struts of the cranium formed chiefly of the fused anterior and posterior tentorial arms." [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]  
 is\_a: TGMA:0001835 ! compound organ component  
 relationship: part\_of TGMA:0000003 ! adult cranium

<sup>15</sup> For example (*ibid.*):

[Term]  
 id: TGMA:0000000  
 name: hemolymph  
 def: "The bloodlike fluid of invertebrates having open blood-vascular systems."  
 [URL:http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=onlinedictinvertzoology "Online Dictionary of Invertebrate Zoology"]  
 synonym: "haemolymph" EXACT  
 [URL:http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=onlinedictinvertzoology "Online Dictionary of Invertebrate Zoology"]  
 is\_a: TGMA:0001824 ! portion of organism substance

[Term]  
 id: TGMA:0000001  
 name: hemocyte  
 def: "Differentiated cells with the ability to defend insects against pathogens, parasites and other foreign bodies, which entered in the hemocoel." [PubMed:PMID:15857775]  
 synonym: "haemocyte" EXACT  
 [URL:http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=onlinedictinvertzoology "Online dictionary of invertebrate zoology"]  
 is\_a: TGMA:0001833 ! cells

[Term]  
 id: TGMA:0000004  
 name: adult gnathal appendages  
 def: "The set of the appendages on the adult head used in feeding." [ISBN:0-937548-00-6]  
 is\_a: TGMA:0001842 ! anatomical cluster  
 relationship: part\_of TGMA:0000002 ! adult head

may have thought about the spatial arrangement of places, partly in radically different ways that defy any attempt to map such representation onto our current representations of geographical space. Some other times instead the mapping from old maps or itineraries to current maps is going to be almost straightforward.<sup>16</sup>

El-Shamy remarks (2004, pp. xvii–xviii):

Rarely does the identification of the tale-type to which a narrative may belong prove to be a simple process. Usually it is only within the context of evident variants, potential variants, and texts with some similarities, that the typology of a tale can be established. Considering the fact that most orally-told tales combine episodes typically associated with various tale-types, the determination of whether the text may be classified primarily as one or the other becomes a function of the contextual factors — including the position of the theme within the narrative, and what the other tales [are] that may have accompanied it — as perceived and interpreted by the classifier. This perceptual phenomenon is known as the “adaptation level”, and has been treated in numerous studies.

### 2.3. An Eye Ailment Made Worse by the Patient Touching It, and International Proverbs

Concerning an eye ailment made worse by the patient touching it, consider the proverb, known from several languages, which advises to never touch one’s eyes (other than with one’s own elbow, which is impossible). Arthaber (1929, p. 465, §918) lists the following:

- ❑ English *You should never touch your eye but with your elbow;*
- ❑ French *À oeil malade ne touche pas que du coude;*
- ❑ Spanish: *Al ojo con el codo;*
- ❑ German: *An die Augen darf man nur mit dem Ellbogen rühren;* and

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. the following (Simon et al. 2010, p. 135):

When analysing historical maps, geo-registration — i.e. knowledge of a defined correspondence between the map’s coordinates and a well-defined geographical coordinate system — may not necessarily be a requirement. In fact, establishing such a correspondence may be problematic, even impossible, in some cases (e.g. for some medieval mappae mundi, which are often a depiction of the religious and cultural view of the world rather than a depiction of geography).

Nevertheless, a toolset that allows for comparing and matching the geometry of a historical map with modern counterparts is useful: Not only does it provide insight into the accuracy of the map; it may also help understand its method of construction (Tobler 1966), give hints about possible underlying projections (Boutoura 2006), and can generally aid in supporting or refuting hypotheses about technical aspects of the map’s creation (e.g. surveying methods or source material used (Jenny et al. 2007)).

Establishing a correspondence between the image-coordinate space of a historical map with unknown projective properties and a well-known geographical projection system requires knowledge about the map: At least, a set of properly distributed control points – recognizable points on the historical map to which the geographical coordinates are known – must be available. These control points can then be used as a basis for translations between both coordinate spaces: [...]

- Italian *Gli occhi s’hanno a toccare con le gomita* (archaic or dialectal for *gomiti* ‘the elbows’), with a Tuscan variant: *Chi vuol tener l’occhio sano, leghisi la mano* (i.e., literally: “He who wants to keep his eye healthy, let him bind his hand”).

This applies to the patient, not to the physician, who typically is socially trusted to know what s/he is doing if s/he chooses to touch a patient’s eye. How to apply proverbs is a social skill. Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes pointed out (1964, p. 70):

The impersonal power of proverbs is perhaps most apparent in the well-known African judicial processes [(see Messenger 1959)] in which the participants argue with proverbs intended to serve as past precedents for present actions. In European courtrooms, of course, lawyers cite previous cases to support the validity of their arguments. In African legal ritual, an advocate of a cause uses proverbs for the same purpose. Here clearly it is not enough to know the proverbs; it is also necessary to be expert in applying them to new situations. The case usually will be won, not by the man who knows the most proverbs, but by the man who knows best how to apply the proverbs he knows to the problem at hand.

The distinction just made is expressed succinctly in the remark of an Ibo youth, studying at the University of California at Berkeley, which we have quoted as an epigraph: “I know the proverbs, but I don’t know how to apply them”. He explained that his Western-oriented education in Nigeria had cut him off from the daily use of proverbs. Thus, while he did recall the texts of a great number of proverbs, he was not really certain as to precisely how and when they should be employed in particular situations.

#### 2.4. An Opportunity Unexploited by the Tale: The Liar Paradox

In the Baghdadi Jewish version of the tale we are considering, the rabbi’s statement that the man is healed of his compulsive lying depends upon the assumption that if he was made to tell the truth once, then he is no longer a compulsive liar. Interestingly, this raises a problem with the Liar Paradox, i.e., the proposition, known from ancient Greece, about the Cretan who claims that Cretans always lie. Cf. in Thompson’s *Motif Index*, the folk motif X1505.2, “Land where all are cheaters”.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In the 20th century, the archetype for a flimsy pretext, “My dog ate my homework”, was very frequently instantiated, and still is. See Nissan (2008b; 2011a). My own automated inventor of explanations seeking self-exoneration, ALIBI, when confronted with an input charge difficult to refute, would come up with pretexts which are arguably perceived as humorous because the accused is trying *too* hard. In one session with ALIBI, the input accusation states that the accused broke the glass of a jeweller’s display window, got inside, shot and wounded the jeweller, and then ran away carrying valuables with him. In the output explanation generated by ALIBI, the person charged states in the first person that “he” broke the glass accidentally, and that “he” got inside in order to leave a note with his coordinates. (If the accusation states that the accused opened e.g. a drawer where money was held, or even the cash-register, then a possible pretext is that he was looking for a pencil and paper, so he could leave his name and address.) The output claims that the accused was carrying a weapon in legitimate circumstances. He shot the jeweller accidentally. Or then, he may play the hero, and claim that he heard voices from which he reckoned that the jeweller was in danger, and then he got inside in order to help. Once the jeweller was wounded, the accused ran away in order to seek medical help, as he could not provide it himself. He took away the valuables in order to return them, because the wounded jeweller could not guard his own property (in fact, incapacitation is an effect of being wounded); the accused, while going out to seek medical help, would guard the goods in the meanwhile, on the owner’s behalf. The output is not a single account: the user is provided with alternatives. Prototypes of ALIBI were

The man had told the rabbi that he always tell lies, but then, either this, too, was a lie, and he does not always tell lies, or then he was telling the truth, but then it is untrue that he always tell lies. Interestingly, this tale type does not exploit the opportunity to dwell upon the Liar Paradox, of which it takes no notice.<sup>18</sup> Spade (2005) remarks:

The medieval name for paradoxes like the famous Liar Paradox ("This proposition is false") was "insolubles" or *insolubilia*. From the late-twelfth century to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond, such paradoxes were discussed at length by an enormous number of authors.

Spade (2005, Sec.1) relates the origins of the Liar Paradox in antiquity. A remark made by a Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Philosophers* II.108) caused the discovery of the Liar paradox to be ascribed to Eubulides the Megarian, who lived in the fourth century B.C.E., "although in fact Diogenes says only that Eubulides discussed the paradox, not that he discovered it" (Spade, *ibid.*). Moreover, "the poet and grammarian Philetus (or Philitas) of Cos (c. 330-c. 270 BCE), if we are to believe the story in Athenaeus of Naucratis's *Deipnosophists* IX.401e, worried so much over the Liar that he wasted away and died of insomnia", according to a testimony in Athenaeus concerning Philetus' epitaph (Spade, *ibid.*). The logician Chrysippus (c. 279–206 B.C.E.) apparently authored various works concerning the Liar Proposition, and these were listed by Diogenes Laertius (VII.196–198), but they have not come down to us. Various ancient Roman authors either mentioned or formulated the Liar paradox, e.g., in the second century C.E., Aulus Gellius in his *Attic Nights* (XVIII.ii.10), who asked "When I lie and say I am lying, am I lying or saying the truth?". Spade (2005, Sec.1.1) also notes the following about Cicero:

Cicero's *Academica priora*, II.xxix.95–xxx.97, contains a fairly clear formulation: "If you lie and speak that truth, are you lying or speaking the truth? ... If you say you lie, and you speak the truth, you lie; but you say you lie, and you speak the truth; therefore, you lie." But this passage is never cited in the *insolubilia*-literature.

Spade claims that even though one would rather think that it plausibly was instead Paul of Tarsus who gave an initial stimulus to the medieval discussions of the Liar Paradox, when he stated in the *Epistle to Titus* 1:12: "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, 'The Cretians [= Cretans] are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies'" (and that Cretan is traditionally held to have been Epimenides), nevertheless, "blatant as the paradox is here, and authoritative as the Epistle was taken to be, not a single medieval author is known to have discussed or even acknowledged the logical and semantic problems this text poses" (Spade 2005, Sec. 1.2). Rather, Spade points out, Scriptural commentaries "seem to be concerned only with why St. Paul should be quoting pagan sources". Spade also avers: "It is not known who was the first to link this text with the Liar Paradox" (*ibid.*). Spade (2005, Sec. 1.3) pinpoints the ancient source that did instead have an impact on the medieval discussions of the Liar paradox:

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implemented by students of mine under my supervision. ALIBI was first described in Kuflik et al. (1989) and Fakher-Eldeen et al. (1993).

<sup>18</sup> About the Liar Paradox, see, e.g., Spade (2005, 1988, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1987, 1991), Parsons (1984), Visser (1984, 2004), Barwise and Etchemendy (1987), McGee (1991), Koons (1992), Simmons (1993), Gupta and Belnap (1993), Yaqub (1993), Beall (2003), Read (2002), Martin (1993), and Roure (1970).

By contrast with these passages, none of which was cited in the *insolubilia*-literature, there is a text from Aristotle’s *Sophistic Refutations* 25, 180a27–b7, that, from almost the very beginning of the *insolubilia*-literature to the end of the Middle Ages, served as the framework for discussing insolubles. It occurs in Aristotle’s discussion of the fallacy of confusing things said “in a certain respect” (*secundum quid*) with things said “absolutely” or “on the whole” (*simpliciter*). In this context, Aristotle supposes a man who takes an oath that he will become an oath-breaker, and then does so. Absolutely or on the whole, Aristotle says, such a man is an oath-breaker, even though with respect to the *particular* oath to become an oath-breaker he is an oath-keeper. Then Aristotle adds the intriguing remark, “The argument is similar too concerning the same man’s lying and speaking the truth at the same time” (180b2–3).

We see then that there was an array of “missed opportunities” concerning the tradition of the Liar Paradox. It is therefore unsurprising that the tale type from international folklore we have been discussing “missed the opportunity” to engage the Liar Paradox, even though there is something that defies logic in declaring the self-confessed compulsive liar to be healed as the therapy caused him to tell the truth once.

### 3. Judaizing and Localising Features of the Oicotypised First Tale

#### 3.1. The Material Culture, and Potential Interference from Textual Culture

“Thorough knowledge of the social and cultural conditions within which a text is elicited is essential for relating that text to a specific tale-type” (El-Shamy 2004, p. xviii). The Baghdadi Jewish folktale about the liar “healed” has the liar being made to stir *shnīna*, a refreshing drink consisting of diluting yoghurt (usually eaten with cut cucumber inside), with goat dung. The liar finds this intolerable, and tells the truth. In Turkey, the same drink of yoghurt and water is called *ayran*. One is left wondering, whether the choice of drink being *shnīna* had any function, in the Iraqi Judaeo-Arabic tale, other than that of a very refreshing drink being juxtaposed to something as repulsive as dung being mixed inside.<sup>19</sup> There is little that makes our version of the tale of the liar healed into one that is peculiarly adapted to the Iraqi Jewish oicotype, not even in folk medicine<sup>20</sup> (but consider some lore from folk medicine in Sec. 3.2). Perhaps *shnīna* was appropriate, because preparing it requires stirring, and it is precisely stirring that makes dung even more disgusting. But possibly a punning allusion to Hebrew is involved: Hebrew *shnīnā* means ‘jest’, and in the Hebrew Bible,

<sup>19</sup> In Ch. 3 of the medieval Latin *Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi*, the trickster Marcolf approaches King Solomon with a pot of milk upon which he has set a cow turd (Ziolkowski 2008, p. 202). Solomon had ordered him “to cover that pot from the same cow” (*ibid.*, p. 79), intending milk products (*ibid.*, p. 238). Marcolf’s mother placed upon the pot a pie smeared with milk, but he ate it, and replaced it with a cow pie. He is as bold as to tell these events to the King the way they unfolded.

<sup>20</sup> Dung is not unknown to folk-medicine. Patai (1945, p. 215) quoted this charm from the Hebrew work *Toldot Adam*, 3:1: “Take the excrements of a pig, dry it, pound it finely and give it to her to drink and you should immediately have intercourse with her and she will conceive”. Next, Patai remarked (*ibid.*): “Animal dung and droppings were often recommended by Galen and other ancient writers, and adopted by practitioners down to the time of Quincy’s dispensary. They are found in Arabic and Jewish ‘dispensaries’ [sic] also”. Patai (1945, p. 217, fn. 90) noted: “Among the Swahili barren women drink a beverage made of elephant’s excrement and various roots, Ploss-Bartels-Reitzenstein, [(1927)], II, 312.” Weideger (1985) is an English-language distillation of Ploss’s 1885 edition of *Das Weib*.

becoming *māshāl* and *shēnīnā* means becoming a byname (a similitude: *māshāl*) and the object of ridicule, or the subject matter of jokes (*shēnīnā*), having endured infamously memorable mistreatment (*Deuteronomy* 28.37, *I Kings* 9:7, *Jeremiah* 24:9, *2 Chronicles* 7:20). According to the rules of adaptation of terms from Hebrew into Judaeo-Arabic, Hebrew *shēnīnā* (last syllable stressed) would have become (penultimate syllable stressed, and the consonantal cluster-breaking *ě*, required by the communal phonetics of Hebrew, reduced to zero).

### 3.2. Some Folk Medicine, and Biographical Relevance to the Teller

Arguably, the Baghdadi Jewish version, even though it is vulgar, was denominationally too inhibited to place faeces, all the more so human faeces, inside the mouth of a Jewish man, one who is supposed to pray, and whose mouth therefore must not be defiled. Bear in mind that when the prophet Ezekiel receives the divine order to eat faeces and tell the Jews that this is their fate, Ezekiel retorts that he (who after all is a *kohen*, bound by priestly rules of purity) always avoided defiling himself; he is permitted therefore to replace the human faeces with cattle dung (*Ezekiel*, Ch. 4). Let us consider what a Baghdadi ritualist was stating, concerning a folk medicine custom from Baghdad.

Rabbi Joseph Ḥayyim al-Ḥakham (this is his family name) of Baghdad (1834–1909) is the best-known Iraqi rabbi from the last two centuries, and he is especially known in present-day Israel, because Levantine Jewish communities (not only Iraqis) have adopted his normative compendium, *Ben Ish Ḥay*, for popular use. In *Ben Ish Ḥay*, among the other things Rabbi Joseph Ḥayyim took issue with women’s traditional custom of putting urine (a woman’s urine) in the mouth of a child with measles, out of the belief that this would prevent him having a bad-smelling mouth later in life because of the measles.

*Ben Ish Ḥay* points out that doctors retort that in Europe no urine is used for that purpose, yet children do not (all) grow up with a bad-smelling mouth. (That is to say, halitosis is not an effect of measles.) *Ben Ish Ḥay* acknowledges that women counteract that argument, by invoking the different climate of Europe and Iraq. Given that state of affairs, *Ben Ish Ḥay* warns at least adults to be careful, lest they would be unwittingly subjected to that dubious treatment if they contract measles as adults.

Based on oral sources, even among siblings there was a therapeutic difference between a boy contracting measles as a child, when he wasn’t a bar-mitzvah as yet, and his brother contracting measles after he was bar-mitzvahed. The former used to be treated by having him drink *bōl u-šābāgh* (urine and aloe). By contrast, had the boy already been bar-mitzvahed when he contracted measles, so he was treated to *kāzābhā u-māy wāghd* (coriander and rose-water; the dot under the *m* of the word for ‘water’ velarises the pronunciation of that consonant).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ben-Yaacob (1992) is the standard book about such herbalists’ *materia medica* among the Jews of Iraq. Concerning the denotation of Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic *šābāgh* (Arabic *šābir*, *šābr*) and *kāzābhā*, i.e., respectively, ‘aloe vera’ (*Aloe* sp.) and ‘coriander’, I checked for comparison in Honda, Miki and Saito’s (1990) *Herb Drugs and Herbalists in Syria and North Yemen*. In Aleppo, the form *šābra* was recorded at one herbalist’s shop (p. 8), but *šāb<sup>2</sup>r* at another such shop (p. 16), and then again, at shops in Damascus (p. 4) and Aleppo (p. 13), the descriptor given was the phrase *šāb<sup>2</sup>r šqotrī* ‘aloe of Soqotra’, i.e., literally, whereas in Ṣan‘a, in Yemen, the same phrase appears (p. 19) in the form *šābr šuqtrī*.

What is more, a person reporting about this to me was still subtly resentful about the disparity of treatment. The point is that the unobjectionable, not unpleasant mix of rose-water with kusbara (ground coriander which, though bitter, was mixed with sugar) was recognised as a valid traditional remedy. But apparently the harsher treatment was considered more effective, and was only avoided, for one who had already been bar-mitzvahed, because a mouth that prays must not be defiled.

As it turns out, this is relevant for the performance of the tale by the particular teller. He was the person who as a child, was treated with rose-water and coriander, thus being spared the practice, somewhat akin to coprophagy (even though no urine was ingested), which his elder brother, while middle-aged, still resented. It so happen, that the teller of the story (who moreover, is the one who keeps the keys of the synagogue at which he prays in Israel) is the one who told the quasi-coprophagy tale, while biographically, he was the brother spared quasi-coprophagic therapy because of religious qualms about keeping the mouth (an already praying mouth) clean.

The bitterness of aloe is reflected in the following. It is from the Arabic name for ‘aloe’, *aṣ-ṣabr* (الصَّبْر), that the Spanish noun *acíbar* originated. It denotes ‘aloe’ (the plant) and ‘aloe juice’ (which is bitter), as well as ‘bitterness’, ‘grief’, ‘distaste’. In Spanish, there also is another name for ‘aloe’, *zábila*, that is used mainly in Latin America, and is allegedly derived from Andalusian Arabic *ṣabíra*.

As to cleansing a child’s mouth with urine in Baghdad, consider the following. A family friend, a Sunni officer, who already in quite a young age had befriended the family of my great-grandmother in maternal line. He once confided to an uncle of mine that in young age, he once referred to a Jewish neighbour (our relative) as “aunt”, and that for that reason, his grandmother (a Shi’i who was habitually dour even to her Sunni offspring, and who perhaps was herself wed into a Sunni family for economical reasons) washed his mouth with urine to cleanse it. Apparently this was intended to teach him the proper place of Jews in the social order, but (unlike his quite different, pro-Nazi, heavy drinking officer brother) he failed to acquire that prejudice.

#### 4. Features of the Teller of the First Tale

“The meaning of a given performance can only be ascertained with reference to a particular interaction between **A** individuals gathered at **B** place at **C** time for **D** reasons” (Briggs 1985, p. 807). Susan Ervin-Tripp explained what she meant by ‘setting’ (1964, p. 86):

We shall use the term setting here in two senses, that of locale, or time and place, and that of situation, including the “standing behavior patterns” (Barker and Wright 1954:45–46) occurring when people encounter one another. Thus, situations include a family breakfast, a faculty meeting, a party, Thanksgiving

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As to kusbara (coriander), the same book records from Damascus and Aleppo the form *kəzbara*. This is coriander. Yet, also note, from a shop in Aleppo (p. 17), the phrase *kəzbaret əl-bir* for the species *Adiantum capillus veneris*, i.e., ‘maidenhair’, a plant that is also used by Levantine herbalists (at any rate, such is the case in Syria).

That Syrian Arabic phrase, *kəzbaret əl-bir*, literally means ‘kusbara (coriander) of the well’. I have never come across that expression in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, but if one was to translate it word by word, then it would be *\*kəzəbyət-əl-bīy*. By contrast, the phrase *šə‘əy-əl-bənāt* — literally ‘hair of maidens’ — does exist and is in common use (note the general Iraqi Arabic form *bənāt* for ‘daughters’ or ‘girls’, vs. Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic *bnāt*), and denotes ‘spun sugar’ (cf. Italian *zucchero filato*, vs. French *barbe-à-papa*, i.e., literally, ‘dad’s beard’).

dinner, a lecture, a date. Social situations may be restricted by cultural norms which specify the appropriate participants, the physical setting, the topics, the functions of discourse, and the style. Obviously, situations vary as to which of these restrictions exist and the degree of permissible variation, so that a sermon may allow less style variation than a party. By altering any of these features, one might either create a reaction of social outrage, change the situation to a new one (date becomes job interview), or enter a situation lacking strong normative attributes and allowing maximal variation.

One of the major problems for sociolinguists will be the discovery of independent and reliable methods for defining settings. The folk taxonomy of a given society (Conklin 1962:120) might provide lexical categories for the definition of settings. However, the folk taxonomy may be too gross or too fine to indicate classifications of value to the social scientist.

The Baghdadi Jewish story we have considered thus far was originally delivered in a convivial setting comprising the teller, his sister, and her adult son (myself).<sup>22</sup> The circumstances were that the teller was on visit, and the opportunities to meet in person were infrequent. Entertainment is a component that occurs as well in part of our phone conversations, up to the present. Let us consider now some broader components of identity in the sectorial demographic sense.<sup>23</sup> The teller was born in Baghdad in 1930, and was middle aged when he told this story in my presence. In Sec. 2.1, I have pointed out concerning the teller:

His delivery in the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic dialect is always in the *mesolect* (i.e., the average sociolect), and this is rather significant considering that, while being

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<sup>22</sup> When he left Israel in 1963, I could not communicate in the communal dialect of my family, so until then we always communicated in Hebrew. It was communicational needs after I moved to Milan in 1965 that required me to learn Judaeo-Arabic, and to relearn Italian, with French and Latin soon following at school, and English later on. Whereas all relatives could communicate in the living European languages mentioned (and in fluent French and English, from childhood), the communal dialect was (not unsurprisingly) at an advantage, in a family setting.

<sup>23</sup> Role taking in interaction involves identity at a micro level, as opposed to demographic categories. Telling jokes, as well as other kinds of verbal interaction, involve a kind of identity that is different from what is usually taken to be the identity of a person in a sociolinguistic context. Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 591) pointed out the difference between stable identity as a collection of broad social categories, and the micro details of identity as interaction unfolds, a subject that is an emerging area of research:

[...] more recent sociocultural linguistic work has begun to investigate the micro details of identity as it is shaped from moment to moment in interaction. At the most basic level, identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants, such as evaluator, joke teller, or engaged listener. Such interactional positions may seem quite different from identity as conventionally understood; however, these temporary roles, no less than larger sociological and ethnographic identity categories, contribute to the formation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse. On the one hand, the interactional positions that social actors briefly occupy and then abandon as they respond to the contingencies of unfolding discourse may accumulate ideological associations with both large-scale and local categories of identity. On the other, these ideological associations, once forged, may shape who does what and how in interaction, though never in a deterministic fashion.

Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) "own perspective therefore broadens the traditional referential range of identity to encompass not only more widely recognized constructs of social subjectivity but also local identity categories and transitory interactional positions", namely: "Identities encompass (a) macro-level demographic categories; (b) local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles."

from a family of the communal elite and himself well-educated, in some situations he enjoys adopting a basilectal delivery (be than in Israeli Hebrew, in Italian, or in Japanese).

He was a businessman in Japan (in Kobe, commuting from Osaka) during the 1960s (he moved there from the Tel-Aviv area, where he had been driving a cab, in order to join a family business in 1963, while I was a child), and learned the Japanese language (his brother earned a university degree in business administration in Tokyo, being taught in Japanese). He is able to utter Japanese in a “polite” average register, but while this writer was a teenager in Milan in the 1970s, at an international fair this uncle introduced himself in Japanese to a Japanese man at a stand, in a more popular tone, and apparently with regional features, as his interlocutor, looking unimpressed, replied he understood he is from Osaka.

This is quite unlike a situation he described from his years in Japan: he lived in Japan in 1962–1965, and was able to communicate in Japanese. Slim, bald and sporting a moustache, he did not look Japanese, and so once when he approached a local man in Tokyo, the latter immediately told him “No Ingrishu” (“No English”), before my uncle could tell him anything. But now he replied: “*Símmaséndeskadó!*” (“Excuse me one moment!”), using a nasal tone and sounding like a manager. His local interlocutor listened transfixed, and thereafter accompanied him for one hour, showing him places with alacrity. My uncles were usually treated politely, and often with considerable interest. As the brothers sometimes rode on an American army surplus jeep, they would be sometimes shouted at: “Yankee, go home”.

In Milan, Italy, in the late 1960s, this uncle became fairly proficient in Italian, but by deliberate choice, he would adopt sometimes a southern (thus socially dispreferred)<sup>24</sup> speech delivery, unjustified by his own experience or background. That is to say, in Italian communication he would choose where, among the locals in Milan, he would position himself, and phonological alignment with one local identity was, socially, a stylistic choice. Labov remarked (1964, p. 165):

In New York City, the speech of most individuals shows a great many oscillations and fluctuations, seemingly in defiance of the need for a coherent linguistic system for rational communication; but when this behavior is placed in the context of the structure of stylistic and social variation characteristic of the community, it appears as part of a highly determined system.

Arguably, the occasional adoption of southern linguistic features in Italian was an instance of *crossover*. For example, in Hill (1998), “Mock Spanish is compared to White ‘crossover’ uses of African American English” (*ibid.*, p. 680), where (*ibid.*):

language mixing, required for the expression of a highly valued type of colloquial persona, takes several forms. One such form, Mock Spanish, exhibits a complex semiotics. By direct indexicality, Mock Spanish presents speakers as possessing desirable personal qualities. By indirect indexicality, it reproduces highly negative racializing stereotypes of Chicanos and Latinos. In addition, it indirectly indexes “whiteness” as an unmarked normative order.

In contrast, I argue that this same person’s choice of how to speak Hebrew, in relation to those features of Israeli Hebrew that are associated with his ancestral communal

<sup>24</sup> Bucholtz et al. (2008) discusses a similar phenomenon in perceptual dialectology from Californian English, encompassing “the normative north and the stigmatized south”.

background in the Near East, carry a very different meaning, one much more deeply felt, in relation to an assertion of identity as being an alternative to self-effacement of ethnicity (which is something of which many speakers, including him, are capable).

From my childhood in Israel in the late 1950s and early 1960s, I remember the same relative speaking Israeli Hebrew without the Oriental inflection he later (from the 1970s to the 2000s) came to use, apparently deliberately. Arguably this is a way to make a social point of rejecting a socially preferred norm. I once read about a journalist of Greek background in France who, after speaking French without an accent for years, afterwards adopted a Greek accent which was allegedly a social choice and a social commentary, in that it was an assertion (as opposed to an attempt to be self-effacing about) of one’s group identity, albeit socially dyspreferred.

This kind of choice in the what we may metaphorise as a “coordinate space” of sociolinguistic variation is best understood as *socially strategic stylisation* in relation to identity statements, a subject within sociolinguistics which has been researched e.g. by Julia Snell (2010), but her analysis was based on data from “an ethnographic study of the language practices of nine- to ten-year-old children in two socially differentiated primary schools in north-east England” (*ibid.*, p. 630). Snell’s approach is based on “Ochs’ [(1992, 1993, 1996)] and Silverstein’s [(2003)] approaches to indexicality, and [...] the related sociolinguistic concepts of ‘stance’ and ‘stylisation’” (*ibid.*, p. 631).

By *stance*, speakers use language to position themselves socially. *Style* within sociolinguistics is the subject of Eckert and Rickford (2001). Snell points out that “stances often involved (at least some degree of) self-conscious performance, a form of stance-taking that I will refer to as ‘stylisation’ (Coupland 2001, 2006, 2007; Rampton 1995, 2006, 2009). Stylisation was an important mode of meaning making for the children in this study” (Snell 2010, p. 632). Snell explains the scholarly background of the concepts she resorts to (*ibid.*, p. 631):

Ochs (1992, 1993, 1996) argues that few features of language directly index social identity categories; rather the relationship between language and social categories is mediated by social meanings at a more local level. Linguistic features index social stances, acts and activities in interaction, and these local social meanings help to constitute social identity meanings. Ochs illustrates her argument in relation to gender, but states that the model can be applied to social identity categories more generally. The link between linguistic form and social identity is indirect (i.e. it is mediated by speaker acts), but over time it may be perceived as direct because the original associations with interactional acts fade or undergo ‘erasure’ (Irvine 2001). Sociolinguists who adopt an indexical approach to language and identity thus pay attention not only to the distribution of linguistic forms across social categories (which reveal indirect correlations) but also to the way these forms are used in ‘strategic social action’ (Coupland 2006).

*Stance* is a concept in sociolinguistics to which Alexandra Jaffe has devoted an edited book (2009), cf. Auer (2007). Snell proceeds to explain ‘stance’ (*ibid.*, p. 631):

‘Stance’ is a central component of Ochs’ model and has become an important concept in much recent sociolinguistic work (see e.g. Jaffe 2009). Stance refers to the processes by which speakers use language (along with other semiotic resources) to position themselves and others, draw social boundaries, and lay claim to particular statuses, knowledge and authority in ongoing interaction (cf.

Du Bois 2007: 163). Building on Ochs’ approach to indexicality, researchers have argued that language indexes particular kinds of interactional stance (e.g. affective, epistemic, evaluative) which in turn — and through a process some have termed ‘stance accretion’ (Rauniomaa 2003, as cited in Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 596) — help to constitute more enduring social identities (e.g. Bucholtz 2009; Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Eberhardt and Kiesling 2008; Johnstone 2007; Kiesling 2009; Podesva 2007). Meanings indexed by interactional stances may be fleeting, but speakers who habitually take such stances become associated with a particular social position, which is conventionally associated with a particular social identity.

It is significant that in a notebook from this uncle’s army years in the early 1950s, he wrote down from memory French Romanticist poetry, and that while driving a cab he would declaim to his former teacher verse from Corneille’s *Cid*, asking her whether he should paste his diploma to the car’s ceiling — and yet, in that period of professional vs. educational incongruity (stemming from what Israeli society was, in terms of communal relations policies, in the 1950s and to an ample extent informally remained so afterwards in spite of aspirational statements since 1977), he was in control of his sociolectal delivery in Israeli Hebrew, communicating in the preferred norm at will; and that it was after his return to Israel in the 1970s that he rejected the prestigious speech norm, and also came to flaunt dislike for intellectual pretensions. When, in the 1980s, this writer reminded him once in the street that he had been Tel-Aviv’s best educated taxi-driver, he looked aside in anger, and made no comment. When told in 2011 over the phone that a referee required information to be provided on him as having been the storyteller, this relative found the request objectionably intrusive. Such objections are legitimate. True, it is fairly standard now to expect some information about storytelling as a performance, and about the storyteller, when recording a folktale. (One would often record the performance itself, rather than just the gist of the story.)

Nevertheless, this raises an interesting question for folklorists and anthropologists, concerning how they actually relate to informants. Does it impose a quasi-social hierarchy? Is scholarship several things for sure, yet one of those things being that it is a social posture legitimising pretensions of superiority *vis-à-vis* the object of study and its carriers and tradents, the ones we call ‘informants’?<sup>25</sup>

##### **5. ‘Three Ailments, One Medication’ (IFA 3163): A Misnagdic Scoffer Seeking Hasidic Taumaturgy, and Getting What he Deserves**

The tale we are going to discuss now, for comparison, was kindly supplied by Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginsberg of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) named in honour of Dov Noy, at the University of Haifa. She supplied this representative tale from IFA (the holder of the copyright for it), and it comes close to the Iraqi Jewish healed liar’s tale. This was in reply to my own query for tales approximating features of the following item:

A liar is healed of his lying, by being given a therapy he truly avows is intolerable.

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<sup>25</sup> Of course, critical examinations of the role of the interviewer and the interview in ethnographic fieldwork are nothing new (e.g., Briggs 1983, 1984). The performance of the stories I am reporting about in this article was in an entertainment context, originally with no ethnographic pretence.

The tale supplied in reply is Hasidic: ‘Three Ailments, One Medication’ (IFA 3163). A scoffer seeks the help of a Hasidic rabbi thaumaturgist, and gets what he deserves. The Misnagdic (“Opponents”) challenge to Hasidism within Eastern European Jewry between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries originated with strictly observant Jews who were not swayed by the kind of pietism that Hasidism proposed, namely, personal rather than institutional territorial allegiance to a religious authority, departures from the traditional liturgy, and the ascription of thaumaturgical and pneumagogical powers (i.e., wonder-making therapeutics of intercessions, and praeternatural shepherdship of souls) to one’s spiritual director.<sup>26</sup> Apart from the Misnagdic challenge to Hasidism, the Maskilic (“Enlighteners”) challenge to the both those camps, advocating Westernisation even by coercive measures, made a special target of the Hasidim.

Whereas Maskilic literature strove to emulate Biblical Hebrew, a variety of rabbinic Hebrew was resorted to within Maskilic literature in *Mgalle-Tmirin* (*The Revealer of Secrets*), the venomous satirical epistolary novel by Josef Perl, from 1819, as authorial mimesis: Perl was parodying those whose language variety that was, and whom he (admittedly in the novel) loathed to their death. In the end of *The Revealer of Secrets*, Perl, to whom the spread of Hasidism was like cancer, had his Hasidic characters die, after they cowered in fear of an informer. And Perl himself was an informer indeed: “he bombarded officials with memoranda hostile to Hasidism, hoping the authorities would suppress the movement” (Meir 2008; cf. Rubinstein 1974). Perl’s novel ends with death and gloat indeed. Hasidism had no dearth of scoffers to resent.

‘Three Ailments, One Medication’ (IFA 3163) is a tale recorded in Hebrew in 1961 by Zalman Baharav<sup>27</sup> as having been heard by the same, in his childhood somewhere unspecified in Eastern Europe, from Rabbi Abraham the Hassid, “a well-known personality from the court of Rabbi Barukh Tverski. A great-grandchild and grandchild [literally so?] of Rabbi Nachum of Černobyl, the ancestor of the Tverski dynasty.” Beharav relates that Rabbi Abraham, who had visited various countries, used to visit the court of Rabbi Barukh Tverski twice every year and to perform as a storyteller after festive banquets.

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<sup>26</sup> Clearly, the emotions played a prominent role in the teachings of the Hasidic movement and of its branches, since the eighteenth century. Some maintain that it prescribed euphoria as opposed to the previous trend of stern moralists to inculcate dysphoria in their sermons. This is not entirely correct according to current scholarship. But the way it was put once on Israeli television, the recipe prescribed by the movement was rather “mania [Israeli Hebrew: *mánya*] instead of depression [*deprésya*]”. Such a popularistic view requires cautious and rigorous reformulation. It is true that stern moralists, adept at bringing about constant contrition in congregations, were replaced in Hasidic widening circles with an insistence on joyful worship.

Hasidism is a spiritual and social movement that started to take shape in the mid eighteenth century in Eastern Europe. Its founder was Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov (Ukraine, 1700–1760). Called acronously the Besht, he was active especially in Międzybóž (Medzibezh, in Podolia). Hasidism emphasised (it still does) a number of notions: the direct link of any Jew, even the humblest and most unlearned, to G-d; longing for *děveqút* (Eastern European pronunciation: *dváykis*; i.e., communion with G-d); worship even through material aspects of life; the intermediation of a *tzaddiq*, a Righteous Master, between his flock and G-d.

There is a quite extensive scholarly literature about Hasidism. So extensive, indeed, that we refrain from trying to cite from it even select general works for adequate orientation. But see, e.g., Assaf (2000/1), Etkes (1991, 2000/1), Hundert (1991), Rapoport-Albert (1996), Safran (1988), Idel (1995), Piekarcz (1990, 1994), Gries (1989). We do cite such texts that proved useful to us as sources; therefore, there is a prevalence of citations in Hebrew.

<sup>27</sup> I understand from Dr. Pintel (pers. comm. 4 September 2011) that Zalman Baharav “was born in 1902, in the Jewish community of KALINKOVITCH, in the MINSK county of BELARUS.”

One of the tales related by Rabbi Abraham was about a Hasidic rabbi (unnamed by Beharav) who used to visit small towns and meet local Hasidic congregations. He had the knowledge to prescribe traditional cures and medications. In some towns, there were opponents of Hasidism (only Misnagdic? or any opponents, such as the Makilim?), and among these, there used to be ones who would relish scoffing at Hasidic rabbis. One such scoffer, a notorious prankster and buffoon, once paid visit to the rabbi when he visited the scoffer's town. The scoffer postures as though he was a *bona fide* seeker of the rabbi's healing, and as though he believed that the rabbi had a remarkable record of healing people, even from deadly conditions. He claimed he suffered from various ailments. Asked to explain what his illness was, the scoffer in disguise claimed he was suffering from three ailments. Firstly, he was a compulsive liar, and he was tormented by this condition. Secondly, no matter what he was made to eat (by his wife or at festive banquets), he felt no taste in food, other than some foul taste. Thirdly, he suffered from bad memory, and could not remember events from the previous day. As soon as he would like to relate them to friends, he could not retrieve those events from his memory. This, he claimed, was the worst ailment of the three he had enumerated. For these illnesses he was requesting the rabbi's therapeutic intervention. Beharav reports that the rabbi was thinking to himself: "Wait, you buffoon, just wait and I'll teach you a lesson!". He told the postulant: "Tomorrow morning pay me a visit, son. Eat and drink nothing, and I'll give you a medication. A quite effective medication" which, he was confident, would heal him entirely. The rabbi sent his butler to the pen, asking him to bring in some excreta of goats and sheep, to reduce them into powder the way a pharmacist would do, to wrap this in paper carefully, to let on this some drops of perfume, and to be ready for that buffoon who was about to come on the next day.

At 11 am, that buffoon of a Misnagged [Opponent] went to the hotel. The rabbi and his followers [= his Hasidim] were waiting for him. Once the young man came in, the rabbi told him: "Look, son, there are these three powders for you. One for each one of your ailments. The medication is the same. I'd like you to ingest one of these three here in my presence, mine and of the people present".

That buffoon of a Misnagged took from the rabbi's hand the powder, and swallowed it down, but immediately started to vomit and spit. He shouted: "Rabbi, what did you give me? It's foul, it's manure!"

"You said the truth", the rabbi told him. "First of all, you are not lying. Secondly, you are already feeling taste. Thirdly, this will be a good lesson for you. From now on, you'll have a strong memory, and will not forget this lesson all your life. Starting with today, you'll no longer scoff at the rabbi and his medications, which are effective with everybody, especially with those Misnagdim who, buffoons, intend to deride the rabbi and his followers [= his Hasidim]".

Note that the scoffer in disguise was not claiming he was not feeling any taste at all — for which the rabbi's remedy of having him experience a foul taste would have been some "remedy" indeed, in the sense that it was a departure from his usual condition. He was claiming that "he felt no taste in food, other than some foul taste". So what is special about what he was made to experience owing to the rabbi's medication? Arguably, the very fact that he felt a difference and could tell it, was something remarkable. It must be said however that as per the performance reported (which by the way appears to have been somewhat literarised by Beharav), the rabbi is no longer game to the scoffer's posture, as the rabbi is so to speak tearing the prankster's mask, averring that he had himself played a prank on him.

At any rate, this tale from Eastern Europe is a good match for the prototypical gist of Tale Type 1543 C\* the way Uther formulated it (2004, Vol. 2, p. 284):

*The Clever Doctor.* A man complains to a doctor that he has no sense of taste, can never tell the truth, and has a bad memory. The doctor treats him with three capsules filled with faeces (puts dung in his mouth). The first restores his sense of taste, after the second, he is able to speak the truth, and when he takes the third, he proves that his memory is good. [...]

Beharav’s tale is a fuller match for that tale type than the Baghdadi Jewish tale about the compulsive liar healed with diluted yoghurt and dung, we had considered in Sec. 2. In fact, in the Baghdadi tale the only ailment of the patient is his compulsive lying, whereas in the tale from Eastern Europe, all three ailments are present: compulsive lying, having no sense of taste, and a bad memory. Note moreover that the Hasidic oicotypisation gives the postulant a hostile identity, and thus the healer has the motivation to take revenge on him. In the Baghdadi tale the way I heard it, there was no indication that the patient was posturing, or had the intention to mock the rabbi. Perhaps this depends on the last performance, the one I saw and listened to — or any link in the chain of performances which traded down the tale in the Baghdadi context — having dispensed with some details. This, however, is mere speculation.

## PART TWO

### 6. A Prank of Ḥakhām Zambarṭūṭ (Approximating Type 1828\*)

#### 6.1. The Baghdadi Jewish Tale About the Congregation Made to Caw

The second tale we consider<sup>28</sup> is about the trickster rabbi, Ḥakhām Zambarṭūṭ (who is typically claimed to have actually existed). He once bet with friends of his, that on the next Saturday, the congregation would be cawing like ravens. He kept his word. That Saturday, he read in public the pentateuchal weekly portion, which was *Qedoshim*, and when he got to *Leviticus* 19:28, which proscribes having oneself tattooed, he read the word for ‘tattoo’, *qa‘aqá’* (צִבְעָה), as though it was *qa‘qá’* (צִבְעָה). Immediately, the congregants shouted to correct him: *Qa‘aqá’! Qa‘aqá’! Qa‘aqá’!* Bear in mind that both /q/ and /‘/ are pronounced back in the throat (respectively, the voiceless uvular stop, and the voiced pharyngeal fricative), and that in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the name for both ‘raven’ and ‘crow’ is *bqē’*. The call of corvids is described as follows, in the dialect: “*Qā’! Qā’!*” *yisáwwī* (i.e., “It does: ‘Caw! Caw!’”).

This Baghdadi Jewish tale cannot be as readily matched to a tale type as the first tale was. This time, our classification is, of necessity, vague, since only the first narrative we have considered can more or less unambiguously be classified. The other classifications (for the present second tale, and for the third tale we shall consider in this article) are vague and link the Jewish narratives discussed to larger contexts to which they might or might not belong.

What does this tale peculiarly Iraqi Jewish. Not much. Consider however that it has not been possible to identify any tale — from either international folklore, or the folktales of Jewish communities worldwide — that is quite similar to this one. Note

<sup>28</sup> I heard this one, too, from one of my maternal uncles, as far as I recall, it was in the 1970s, whereas I heard the first tale in a later decade.

moreover that when told, this story introduces the protagonist as putatively historical, even though, unlike a long list of Baghdadi or Iraqi rabbis who are known from the 17th to the 20th century, no historical Ḥakhām Zambartūt is actually known other than in relation to his pranks. This appears to be a culture hero exclusively standing out in the role of a trickster, in particular as a prankster.

There is a facet of the tale which points to a specifically Iraqi locale, as opposed to other locations in the Arabic-speaking countries or, more generally, in the Islamic world. The Arabic phoneme /q/ is pronounced [g] in Egypt. In Syria, it sometimes becomes a glottal stop (and there exists an Iraqi lewd joke about a Syrian who by hypercorrectism, wrongly “reinstates” [q] for the glottal stop, thus transforming ’ūtī ‘ironing’ into qūfī ‘my membrum virile’).

In the pronunciation of both their Arabic vernacular, and liturgical Hebrew, Iraqi Jews preserve the phonetic value [q] of the phoneme [q], which is not the case of Muslim Baghdadi Arabic, in which it becomes [g]. An influx of Bedouin tribes in the late Abbasid era caused the Muslim dialects of central Iraq, including Baghdad, to become Beduinised, whereas Jews and Christians in Baghdad preserved their respective vernaculars, which resemble the Arabic dialects of northern Iraq.

Arguably, it is the throat pronunciation of both consonants (the voiceless uvular stop /q/, and the voiced pharyngeal fricative /‘/) in the congregants calling out: *Qa‘aqá‘!* *Qa‘aqá‘!* *Qa‘aqá‘!* — along with the name for ‘raven’ and ‘crow’ being *bqē‘* — that give the tale much of its poignancy. (Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic does not differentiate lexically among the different corvid species.)<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Rook, *Corvus frugilegus* (in Israeli Hebrew: עורב־הַמְזוּרָע — literally ‘crow of the sowed field’) is called *corbeau freux* in French, simply *corvo* in Italian, *Saatkrähe* in German, *gawron* in Polish, and *грач* (*grač*) in Russian. Names for the Rook in further European languages are listed in Jørgensen’s *Nomina Avium Europaeorum* (1958, p. 64, §370).

The raven, *Corvus corax* (in Israeli Hebrew: עורב־שָׁחֹר — literally ‘black crow’) is called *grand corbeau* in French, *corvo imperiale* in Italian, *Kolkrabe* in German, *cuervo* in Spanish, *corvo* in Portuguese, *korp* in Swedish, *ravn* in Norwegian and Danish, *kruk* in Polish, and *ворон* (*voron*) in Russian (Jørgensen 1958, p. 64, §367). Note that the German name *Raben* is given by the zoologists to none of the species of *Corvus* in particular.

The Hooded Crow (or Grey Crow, which is also the literal sense of the Israeli Hebrew name for this species, עורב־אָפֶר, *Corvus corone cornix*, is also called *Corvus cornix*, a scientific name increasingly preferred. Its French name is *corneille mantelée*; its Italian name, *cornacchia bigia*; its German name, *Nebelkrähe*; its Polish name, *wrona siwa*; and its Russian name, *серая ворона* (*seraya varona*); further names in other languages are listed in Jørgensen (1958, p. 64, §369). In Israel, the raven is widespread especially in the hilly regions (this being the all-black subspecies *Corvus corax laurencei*, also found in Europe), whereas the species *Corvus cornix* is especially common along the coast. The raven subspecies *C. corax ruficollis* is found in the Negev region, usually in storms. The back of its neck is brown, and its size is 50 cm, thus smaller than the all-black raven (62.5 cm as found in Israel). The species of *Corvus* found in Israel are enumerated in Dor (1965, p. 242).

The Carrion Crow, *Corvus corone corone*, the all-black crow of western Europe, is not found in the eastern Mediterranean. Its French name is *corneille noire*; its Italian name, *cornacchia nera*; its German name, *Rabenkrähe*; its Polish name, *czarnowron*; and its Russian name, *черная ворона* (*černaya varona*). Cf. Jørgensen (1958, p. 64, §368).

*Corvus corone*, ‘crow’, is the *cornacchia* (Italian), *corneille* (French), *corneja* (Spanish), *gralha* (Portuguese), *Krähe* (German), *kråka* (Swedish). Names of the type *cornacchia* or *corneille* correspond to the Latin *cornicula*, being a diminutive of *cornix* ‘crow’.

In present-day Greek, *κόραξ* is used for the rook and the raven, whereas *κορώνη* denotes the crow. For the Graeco-Roman period, Arnott (2007), s.v. *Korōnē* (Greek), *cornix* (Latin), identifies (*ibid.*, p.113) that Greek bird-name as most commonly denoting the Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*). “Two references to the *Korōnē* in reputable authors corroborate this identification: Aristophanes (*Birds* 967), where the bird is described as grey, and Pliny (*NH* [*Naturalis Historia*] 10.124), who mentions the existence of an amazingly all-black Crow in Spain (sc. the Carrion Crow, *C. corone*, which is the Crow of much of

I have heard this tale while in Milan either during the 1970s, or, perhaps more likely, sometime around 1980. I heard it in the dialect, but around 1985 I had the opportunity to tell the story myself, in Hebrew, while exemplifying metalinguistic phenomena to a colleague from Australia at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel. Of course, it is possible to tell the story in any language (in this article, it is told in English), but it requires explanations that in the traditional Iraqi Jewish context are unnecessary.

## 6.2. The Place Within International Classification, and Jewish Aspects

Clearly, the story about the prankster who makes the congregants crow is a “farce about a preacher”, a *Predigtschwank*. We are not as well placed to match the second tale to some given tale type. The closest we come to is Tale Type 1828\* from Uther (2004, Vol. 2, p. 433):

*Weeping and Laughing.* A clergyman makes a bet that he can give a sermon that will cause half the congregation to laugh and half to weep. Or, a clergyman wants to show his bishop (the lord of the area) how badly his congregation behaves. He preaches a moving sermon that causes half his audience to weep. But he wears no trousers under his gown

Uther (*ibid.*) refers to items from the scholarly literature concerning several versions, including Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Danish, Spanish, Dutch, Frisian, German, Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Ukrainian, African American, Cuban, and South African. It must be said that the character of a trickster clergyman, who to Baghdadi Jews is Ḥakhām Zambartūt, is also known, for example, from Western Christianity: this is the case of the Italian Pievano Arlotto. Importantly, the Jewish arrangement is found here, by which an ordained rabbi does not necessarily live off the public purse, and lives perhaps off his own or his family’s

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western Europe, but unknown to Greece and Italy). Despite the colour differences between the Hooded Crow and the all-black Raven, however, Latin writers often confuse their *cornix* with their *corvus*, and very occasionally in Greek the Korōnē and Korax were assumed to be alternative names for the same bird (e.g. Hesychius κ 3739). The Hooded Crow’s familiarity ensured that most of its ancient descriptions were accurate.”

Arnott (2007, s.v. *Korax*, pp. 109–110, his brackets) explains that ancient Greek κόραξ and Latin *corax* or *corvus* denote “Mainly the [Common] Raven (*Corvus corax*), the largest of the corvids (54–67 cm), but ancient Greek and (particularly) Roman writers sometimes confused it with the Hooded Crow and other corvids (see on KORŌNĒ). Its name comes from its hoarse unmusical call (e.g. Pindar *Olympians* 2.87–8, Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1472–4, Aristophanes *Birds* 860–1, Aelian *NH* [*Naturalis Historia*] 2.51; cf. Varro *De Latina Lingua* 5.75), a repeated *pruk* or *krok*, so it is no surprise that in the linguistically unrelated Tibetan dialect spoken by sherpas in nepal it is ‘Gorawk’.” Elsewhere however, by κόραξ Aristotle (*Historia animalium* 593b18–20) meant a black web-footed bird that to Arnott is the cormorant and the shag (*Phalacrocorax carbo* and *Ph. aristotelis*) — cf. Rashi’s gloss to the biblical bird-name *shalakh* as ‘orev hammayim (lit., ‘water crow’: cormorants are dark and hunt in the water), and by *shalakh* Christian and Jewish usually understood ‘cormorant’ indeed — and Pliny (*Historia naturalis* 11.130) apparently meant the bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*).

The cormorant used to be known in Latin as *corvus marinus*, i.e. literally ‘sea crow’. Also consider that Hesychius’ entry for *aithya* (at α 1893) “identifies the birds as ‘Sea Crows’” (Arnott 2007, p. 7). This is because of the blackness of the cormorants. A report in the London newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* of 8 November 2010 began as follows (Gray 2010): “Fishermen shot more than 2,000 cormorants last year after the Government decided to sanction the killing of the so-called ‘crows of the sea’.” The English compound *crows of the sea* was in double quotes; arguably, this was because the environmental reporter felt it to be interesting enough to mention, yet not known enough to be set without resorting to double quotes.

business (this was appreciated among Baghdad Jews), and moreover by which a member of the laity often performs the service, or then reads by himself the pentateuchal weekly portion. Moreover, this is a traditional society, in which many congregants can be expected to know the weekly portion well; or then, they are able to see for themselves the Hebrew morphophonology as set down in the vowel diacritical marks of the word *qa'aqá'*. Bear in mind that the one reading from the Torah scroll sees the text without any diacritics other than the letters of the alphabet in the text in front of him. He therefore has to know by heart both the vowels, and the intonation of the cantillation. The congregants instead have both of these indicated by the diacritics in the printed books they are reading from. If the officiant makes a mistake while reading from the Torah (but not if he does so while reading the Haftarah from the Prophets), and is not made to repeat that portion of the text correctly, this invalidates the public reading of the weekly portion.

A layman addressing the congregation is a social possibility in Judaism as well as in Islam. Where Christian folktales have a clergyman, Muslim variants may have a layman such as Nasreddin Hodja. Such is the case of Tale Type 1826 (Uther 2004, Vol. 2, p. 431), which is unlike the tale from Baghdad we related:

***The Clergyman Has No Need to Preach.*** A clergyman (often a layman, Nasreddin Hodja) asks his congregation whether they know what his sermon will be about. They do not know, so he berates them for their stupidity. He repeats his question the following week. This time they say they know, so he thinks he needs not preach any more. The third week, the congregation is divided in their answer to the question: half say no and half say yes. The clergyman tells those who understand to teach the others [...]. In some variants, a clergyman has to preach a sermon about a certain saint on the appropriate saint's day. In order to avoid preaching this sermon, he announces that, since the saint performed no miracles that year, he need not give a sermon about him.

Uther remarks: "Documented since the 10th century in Arabian [sic] jestbooks. The form with the sermon about the saint appears in the 15th century [in] Poggio, *Liber facetiarum*". A variant is ascribed to the Italian trickster clergyman, Pievano Arlotto. Uther provides bibliographical citations of the scholarly literature concerning variants including Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Spanish, Catalan, German, Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Siberian, Tadzhik, Chinese, Iraqi, and Egyptian. Uther also cites Haboucha (1992) concerning a Judaeo-Spanish version.

As to cawing inside a shrine, in the Baghdadi Jewish tale we have seen that it is the congregants who are unwittingly made to do it. Calling like a bird (in this case, a rooster's crowing, rather than a corvid's cawing) within liturgy in church appears rather differently in Tale Type 1828 (Uther, 2004, Vol. 2, p. 433):

***The Rooster at Church Crows.*** During the service, a rooster flies into a church through an open window. He crows and wakes the sexton, who thinks it is his cue to answer part of the liturgy (sing a certain song).

Clearly, here it is the English lexicon that impinges upon the appropriateness of our use of the verbal form *crowing*, which deceptively resembles the bird name *crow*.<sup>30</sup> Uther signals: "Documented in jestbooks in the 17th century". He cites

<sup>30</sup> Beryl Rowland's article 'Melville and the Cock That Crew' begins with the sentence "'Cock-a-doodle-doo!' is a story about the crowing of a cock." That story was published in December 1853. In

variants from Finnish, Finnish-Swedish, Estonian, Swedish, Danish, English, German, Italian, and Hungarian. This narrative is unlike the Baghdadi tale. An anonymous referee aptly commented as follows, about the second tale from Baghdad:

The second tale might at best be classified as one of the “Predigtschwänke” (EM10, cols. 1280–1291),<sup>31</sup> while no exact equivalent is known to exist. Thus, the author’s remarks about the distribution of vaguely similar tales in Uther (tale type 1828\* and 1826) only put the tale in larger context without having a direct bearing on this tale.

More are going to offer some comments in Sec. 6.3, and then to consider, for comparison, a Jewish tale from eastern Galicia in Sec. 9.

### 6.3. Further Considerations About Classification

Among Arabic folktales, El-Shamy (2004, p. 1032) was able to list tale type 1826, but neither 1828, nor 1828\*. El-Shamy (2004, p. 1032) lists tale types 1832\* (“Inappropriate Actions in Church: various [indiscretions]”), and 1825D\*: “Fire in the Boots, [(Nose Caught in Crack, etc.)]. [Congregation to pray like imam; repeat pain cries].”

The latter occurs in a tale from Egypt (*ibid.*, p. 933). Motif J 2417.1.1 “Congregation is to pray like the imam. He is injured: worshippers repeat his cries of pain (“Oh! My nose!”, or the like)” defines Tale Type 1825D\* indeed, but the same motif also occurs in Tale Type 1694: “The Company to Sing Like the Leader. [Cries for help mistaken for prayers].” El-Shamy (2004, p. 914) mentions examples from Egypt of Tale Type 1694. We are going to provide a good match for this in Sec. 9, but that other tale is a Jewish tale from Eastern Europe.

Even though in the Baghdadi Jewish story about the congregants who shout a word that sounds like cawing, they are in fact repeating a word similar to the officiant’s latest uttered word, it is crucial to this tale that what they in turn utter is different from what he uttered: the trickster manages to make them shout, precisely because they felt (and were expected to feel) the dutiful urge to correct him.

This is central to the story, and sets it quite apart from Tale Type 1825D\*, in which a congregation is to pray like the priest or imam, and they unintelligently repeat his cries of pain because they misunderstood what they are. By contrast, the congregants in the Baghdadi Jewish tale are quite competent in what the man conducting the service is supposed to say, and are able to correct him, but they do not realise that he had bet he would manage to make them utter something that resembles cawing.

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fact, “Socrates’ bird is the agent that enables the narrator to witness the miraculous death of an entire family and to solve his own problems through a psychological metamorphosis that causes him to crow like a cock.” (Rowland 1981, p. 593).

Importantly, in English the verb *to crow* (whose past is *crowed* or *crew*) describes uttering the loud shrill cry of the cock (as done by the cock himself, or by a person imitating a cock), or then it describes a baby uttering a cry of delight, and in figurative language, *to crow* denotes ‘to boast’, whereas *to crow over* denotes ‘to praise one’s own success and mock (the loser)’ (*Longmans English Larousse* [Watson 1968], s.v.). The verb *to crow* does **not** denote ‘to make a caw’, ‘to make the call of rooks, crows and ravens’, for which the verb *to caw* is used instead.

In Hebrew in the *Babylonian Talmud*, at *Shabbat*, 60b, “this cock that called out in the manner of a crow”, *tarnegol ze she-qara ‘orvit* (תַּרְנַגּוּל זֶה שֶׁקָּרָא עֲרֻבִית), is an unusual situation. The sense is understood in that manner in Even-Shoshan’s Hebrew dictionary, s.v. עֲרֻבִית

<sup>31</sup> In Vol. 10 of the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*.

A trickster who causes some other character to utter something which unwittingly on the part the latter character, achieves some goal of the trickster, occurs in international folklore in situational contexts quite unlike that of the congregation made to caw. Namely:

- a) Tale Type 853, “The Hero catches the Princess with her Own Words”, which includes motif H507.1, “Princess offered to man who can defeat her in repartee”. Lies the princess is told cause her to say “That is a lie”, and this tricks her into defeat. See El-Shamy (2004, p. 474), and *ibid.*, p. 1236, s.v. “Lies”, where only one example from the Arab world (from Qatar) is mentioned.
- b) In Jewish disputation tales, pitting an unlearned Jewish disputant against a skilled non-Jewish opponent and nevertheless won by the Jew,<sup>32</sup> one class of versions have a cleric boast he knows everything about Jewish doctrine. He even asks to be beheaded<sup>33</sup> as soon as he would say “I don’t know”. The Jewish disputant asks his opponent what the Hebrew sentence *Enéni yodéa’* means, and the cleric translates correctly “I don’t know”, and is immediately executed. As recorded in Judaeo-Spanish (the informant was “Y.Z., 1991”) and published in Italian by Matilde Cohen Sarano (1993, under the title “Il concorso”, pp. 112–113) the Christian disputant is a cardinal, whereas the Jewish contender is an unlearned sexton who volunteers claiming that he has no family, so nobody would feel his loss if, as likely, he would be executed. The cardinal feels cardinal, and proposes that the Jew should be let to ask a question first. The sexton asks him what *Enéni yodéa’* means, and as soon as the cardinal answers “I don’t know”, the King says: “He does not know!” and has him beheaded. Later on, the sexton is celebrated, and the other Jews ask the sexton how it ever occurred to him to ask that question. The sexton replies that in recent days, it occurred to him to see a little boy at school ask the rabbi what *Enéni yodéa’* means, and the rabbi had replied “I don’t know”; therefore, if even the rabbi did not have that knowledge, all the more so the gentile at the disputation would certainly not know. This is an instance of a tale in which the unlearned Jewish contender wins the disputation, but he is too ignorant to understand what actually went on.

#### 6.4. The Raven in This Oicotype Is Not an Associate of the Clergy or Clericalism

It must be said that there is no hint of anticlericalism in the Baghdadi tale about the congregation made to call like ravens. The raven — unlike in western Europe — does not stand for the clergy. Rabbis in Baghdad in the 19th and 20th centuries were not associated with dark dress, and they used to wear a turban as shown in photographs. Men, and in particular, merchants, too, used to wear turbans until the first few years of the 20th century, when they changed it with the Ottoman red fez, and then, under the new Iraqi monarchy, with the new national Iraqi hat, the brimless *sīdāra* (also known as *faysaliyya*). Until the 1880s, even children used to wear a turban. This was changed by teachers at the school of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. In the first half of the 20th century, it was the general practice for men not to cover their heads other than when praying, and this did not meet with objections from rabbis. Men who were

<sup>32</sup> See Jason (1988, Tale Type 922 \*C), listing 15 versions from the Israel Folktale Archives, namely: 1. IFA 505: Ica (+AT 924 A); 2. IFA 641: Iba; 3. IFA 661: Iab; 4. IFA 1991: Iab; 5. IFA 2460; 6. IFA 3127; 7. IFA 3156: IA; 8. IFA 8294: IC; 9. IFA 4062: IC; 10. IFA 4431 (=IFA 6475): Icb; 11. IFA 5015: IB, IC; 12. IFA 5996; 13. IFA 7413, task: AT 924 A; 14. IFA 7590: I Ba, II; 15. IFA 11629.

<sup>33</sup> Historically, during the Renaissance, the humanist Pico della Mirandola, endowed with a prodigious memory, asked to be beheaded, should he make an error while declaiming in public by heart, in reverse, a long text.

scrupulous about keeping kosher and keeping the Sabbath, and prayed regularly, nevertheless did not cover their head at home or in public. If they did wear a *sīdāra*, it was because of a convention in the secular realm. Had they been always wearing a skullcap (let alone a turban), it would have been perceived as though they were claiming for themselves something that belonged to rabbis. Headcover had evolved into a symbol of pride which was legitimate (if a turban) for rabbis.

It must also be said that there was no organised anticlericalism within the Jewish community in Baghdad, except, up to a point, at leftist youth organisations in the 1940s, i.e., on the eve of the mass exodus of Jews from Iraq in 1950s. In the 1870s and 1880s there had been assertive attempts by some teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle to secularise their pupils, and it was a scandal when one teacher invited his pupils to write to the French consul, and the latter, in his letter in reply, urged them to disregard what the rabbis were teaching them. It must be understood that the Baghdad Jewish community, ruled by a confident bourgeoisie, was economically strong, and the elite successfully imposed upon the Alliance Israélite Universelle that it would be the local community that would control the curriculum, to suit its own interests; deculturation would not be countenanced.

Whereas that conflict definitely had something to do with the struggles, under France’s Third Republic, concerning the secularisation of the schools (and for the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the ideal for Jewish children to whom they reached out was, like for French Jews, to be a secular Frenchman), this conflict was a foreign import that was not assimilated, and it never took the form of anticlericalism within the local Jewish community. Some families may have become lax in their observance (and this may have especially been the case of boys sent to a boarding school in England, and who were later found to be awkward in their affectations by the locals, or of girls sent to study locally with the nuns).

It did not develop however into an organised ideology. In particular, it must be stressed that the tale about Ḥakhām Zambārūṭ and the cawing congregation does not represent a satire of organised religion or of practising people. Quite on the contrary, there is a reassuring assumption that the congregants are quite competent, and quick to correct an error made by the man officiating.

At any rate, the raven calls in the tale do not symbolise an attitude towards religious people or the clergy. In contrast, according to the symbolism of French or Italian anticlericalism, black stood for the clergy,<sup>34</sup> and so did the raven (Doizy and Houdré 2010, s.v. ‘Corbeau’, pp. 104–107). The raven indeed symbolised the clergy, in the visual culture of 19th century French anticlericalism (*ibid.*, p. 104):

Durant tout le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle les anticléricaux au travers de cet animal [le corbeau] visent les membres du clergé, notamment les prêtres, dont la sombre soutane rappelle le plumage du volatile (les prêtres de Mithra qu’on appelait *hierocoraces*, prêtres-corbeaux, portaient déjà des robes noires). [...] Le mouvement anticléricale les associe aux ténèbres, à ce qui s’oppose à la vie. [...] Dans les manifestations anticléricales, il n’est pas rare d’entendre fuser des «croâ, croâ» pour provoquer l’oiseau noir. La caricature peut associer une tête de corneille à un corps de curé, ou, comme dans le *Charivari* (dessin de Draner), coller un rabat noir et blanc au cou du sombre volatile.

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. in Israeli anticlericalism (which not infrequently has been virulently reviling the religious sector of the population), black as standing for the ultra-Orthodox (dressed in black, and therefore referred to as “black ones” in a derogatory manner).

During the entire 19th century, the anticlericals made use of this animal [the raven] in order to target the clergy, and in particular priests, as their dark gown reminds of the plumage of that bird (the priests of Mithra, who used to be called hierocoraces, raven-priests, were already wearing black gowns). [...] The anticlerical movement associates them with darkness, with the opposite of life. [...] During anticlerical demonstrations, not infrequently raven calls are made, as a provocation evocative of the dark bird. In cartoons, one may find the head of a crow [*corneille*] associated with the body of a priest, or then, like in the periodical *Charivari* (in a cartoon by Draner), one finds a black and white priest’s collar on a corvid neck.

An example — given in Doizy and Houdré (2008, p. 66) — is a cartoon by Charles Gilbert-Martin (1839–1905), published in *Le Don Quichotte*, no. 271, of 29 August 1879, and showing Marianne (the symbol of the Republic), dressed in red and wearing her usual Phrygian cap, holding a broom outside the first-floor window of a school, labelled on its facade under that window

ÉCOLE ~~CONGRÉGANISTE~~  
LAIQUE

— indicating that this used to be a school of the friars, and has just become a secular school. Several ravens fly away. Those stand for the clergy. The occasion was a response to Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni patris* about religious education.<sup>35</sup>

### 7. Birds’ Human Talk, vs. Bird Calls Imitated as Human Utterances: The Hebrew *Pereq Shirah* and Its Raven, vs. the Tibetan *Precious Garland of the Birds’ Law*

The symbolism of ravens or crows looms large across human cultures. Even though this plays no role in the tale about the cawing congregation (the crowd that calls like crows: of course, such a pun is only afforded in English),<sup>36</sup> bear in mind the in Near Eastern folklore, the raven or the crow is especially a bird of ill omen (even though in the Hebrew Bible, in *1 Kings*, 16:6, ravens or crows help Elijah, bringing food to him; and even though in *Song of Songs*, 5:11, the woman protagonist describes the hair of her beloved as being as black as a raven). For example, of the joy lost, in the tale ‘*Alā’ ud-Dīn Abū aš-Šamāt* in *The Thousand and One Nights*, it is said: “The crow took you and flew away” (motifs B147.2.2.1 and Z77.6.1.1; see El-Shamy 2006, pp. 35 and 423). Sadok Masliyah (2010, p. 225) points out some Muslim Iraqi lore about the crow, and quotes and translates a folk song of Iraqi children about a crow.

<sup>35</sup> Animalisation in anticlerical cartoons was not confined to the raven or the owl. In Nissan (2008), I analysed a cartoon by Thomas Nast that represented Catholic education in New York as a children sacrifice to monsters swimming in the river, with the bodies of men but wearing bishop mitres that open like crocodile jaws. The cartoonist Thomas Nast, who in New York politics, was especially an obsessive enemy of William Tweed’s Tammany Hall, was both a nasty antisemite (Dewey 2007, p. 30) and a rabid anti-Catholic. Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler — both of them prominent American political cartoonists, and contemporaries — were born as Catholics in Germany, and turned against that religion while in the U.S. (Dewey 2007, pp. 26, 29).

<sup>36</sup> ‘Ravens’ or ‘Crows’ in Hebrew is ‘*orvim*. Because of polysemy, in *Nehemiah*, 5:3, one finds some Jewish people complaining about the dire economical crisis, by saying *anahnu ‘orvim*, which in context does not mean “we are ravens/crows”, but rather means “we mortgage [our real estate, because of the draught and famine]”.

Needless to say, Roman-era rabbinic and later rabbinic lore is sometimes shared with coteritorial cultures (in the Roman era, the eastern Mediterranean or Mesopotamia). A medieval rabbinic homiletical miscellanea based on material from late antiquity, *Yalqut Shim'oni*, at *Genesis* 58, states: "the raven was punished inasmuch as he spits", and Rashi's gloss explained: "semen from his mouth" (the translation is as per Jastrow 1903, p. 1058, s.v. עֹרֵב). Contrast this to Arnott's statement concerning the raven (2007, p.110): "Aristotle (*GA [De generatione animalium]* 766b13–16, cf. Pliny *HN [Historia naturalis]* 10.32) correctly rejected the idea that the beak-kissing of male and female was an act of copulation, to which it is only a bonding prelude."

Moreover, concerning the raven's supposed cruelty to its offspring, stated in Jewish texts as well as in international folklore, cf. Arnott (2007, p.110): "Fledgling Ravens are sometimes expelled from their nests, not by their parents (so Aristotle *HA [Historia animalium]* 563b22, Pliny *HN [Historia naturalis]* 10.31), but by raptors such as Peregrine Falcons." Dov Sadan (1989, p. 424) discussed Hebrew verse by Bialik evocative of folklore about ravens' supposed cruelty to their offspring, and related this to *Leviticus Rabbah*, 19, and to Rashi's commentary to *Job*, 38:41. Sadan remarked that for a cruel father, cruel parents, and a cruel mother (cf. English *unnatural mother*), German has *Rabenvater*, *Rabeneltern*, and *Rabenmutter*. The context in Bialik is about a boy who is sent away to study by his widowed mother; his friends consider her cruel, but her decision is actually for her child's own good.<sup>37</sup>

More relevantly for our present purposes, in a sense the cawing congregants in the tale we have discussed instantiate a reversal of the motif of bird speech,<sup>38</sup> and in particular, of bird calls being understood as an utterance of one or more words in the same language of the speech community in whose midst a tale is told. There are instances of bird calls being understood as an utterance in one's own language, within a spectrum spanning from texts by learned authors,<sup>39</sup> to the common sense of rural people. Add to this, the approximation, by bird watchers,<sup>40</sup> of bird calls as a sequence

<sup>37</sup> Corvid symbology in international folklore is on occasion positive; writing about the crow, κορώνη, *cornix*, Arnott points out (2007, p. 113): "Indeed its fidelity to its partner, according to Aelian (*NA* 3.9), led to the Greeks before his time singing a song called 'The Crow' at weddings to remind the bridal pair of their duty to produce legitimate children." This view is foreign to Jewish tradition, and late antique and medieval Jewish tradition was not favourably impressed with corvids as spouses or parents. The medieval tales of Ben Sira claim that the first female *néšer* (eagle? vulture?) committed adultery "and conceived from an 'orév (corvid), who therefore is called 'orév, as he mixed ('erév) his semen with all birds": עורב שעיירב זרעו עם כל העופות (Yassif 1984, pp. 126, 259). The male raven accused Noah of sending him out of the Ark as Noah desired the female raven (*Sanhedrin*, 108b).

<sup>38</sup> The motif of bird language is B215.1. Cf. motifs B216 (Knowledge of animal language), J1811.0.1 (Owl's hoot interpreted), K1969.5.1 (Person pretends to know the language of animals: birds, insects, etc.), and J816.1 (King brought to sense of duty by feigned conversation of birds), the latter being the central motif of tale type 908A (the King asks "What is the owl saying?", and a wise minister interprets it so as to show the King the ruinous effects of his policies). See in *The Thousand and One Nights*.

<sup>39</sup> Discussing Latin *cras* 'tomorrow', Leo Spitzer pointed out (Spitzer 1944, p. 156, fn. 3): "Spanish *cras* survives in the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* thanks to a pun with the onomatopoeic *cras* (= the 'cawing' of the raven)." Perhaps the Latin word *cras* was used, rather than an obsolete Spanish word *cras*. It must be said however that already in late antiquity, the raven or the crow was to Christians a symbol for such persons who, lusting after this-worldly pleasures, keep putting off their conversion. Such procrastination was likened to the cawing of a raven or crow, onomatopoeically rendered as *Cras, cras* ("Tomorrow, tomorrow").

<sup>40</sup> Different cultures and languages sometimes approximate the calls of given birds quite differently. Take the entry for *Koukouriakos* (i.e., the cock, usually *Alektōr*) in Geoffrey's Arnott's (2007) glossary of ancient to Byzantine Greek bird names: "According to Du Cange's glossary [of 1688], this was a Byzantine word for a male domestic Fowl (*Alektōr*, q.v.), presumably based on its 'Cock-a-doodle-doo' call" (Arnott 2007, p. 119). What children in Israel learn to refer to by *kukuriku*, English-speakers know as *Cock-a-doodle-doo* indeed. Some practical guides for birdwatchers still approximate bird calls

of syllables, or, on occasion, a sequence of words, among bird watchers.<sup>41</sup> It does happen that a jackdaw<sup>42</sup> utters sounds that are interpreted as somewhat imitative of some human utterance.<sup>43</sup> There also is another facet to the matter: on the visual level, Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) drew several studies of human and animal heads, and in one of them,<sup>44</sup> he contrasted three crow heads (drawn in the upper part of his plate: see Fig. 1 below) to three human heads resembling them (drawn in the lower part of his plate: see Fig. 2 below), and from left to right the three pairs of heads were views in front, in profile with an open bill/mouth, and in profile with a closed bill/mouth.



Fig. 1. The top of Le Brun’s plate.

Fig. 2. The bottom of Le Brun’s plate.

as words. Such is the case of the *Collins Field Guide [to] Birds of Britain & Europe* (Peterson et al. 1993, 5th edition).”). Rendition in words of bird-calls is subjective and language- and culture-bound; it is still found in some field guides, yet ornithological papers have turned to objective recordings as diagrams. Recorded vocalisations (songs or calls) of birds are analysed by ornithologists by means of *bioacoustic* techniques, which are not metaphorical other than in the sense that *sonagrams* (i.e., diagrams based on frequencies) are graphic metaphors that stand for sounds. There also exists an approach (not normally pursued by biologists) that adopts ethnomusicology as a metaphor; ethnomusicologist and biologist “Peter Szöke [...] met with ornithomusicology. He began recording bird voices [...] as he had been used to collecting folk songs, comparing and analysing them. [...] [W]hat Szöke has found by slowing them down is that bird songs have the same musical structures as known in the music of man [i.e., in folk music or contemporary music]. The record’s highlights, I would say, are the slowed down songs of Wood Lark and Hermit Thrush, not only sung by the birds themselves but also by the Hungarian opera singer János Tóth without changing the original melodic shape of the bird song” (Auzinger 1988, p. 245, reviewing the review of a record, Szöke 1987, *The Unknown Music of Birds*).

<sup>41</sup> Cocker and Mabey’s (2005) *Birds Britannica*, at the entry for the Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), states on p. 355 that this bird delivers its song “with a bold, loud, bell-like clarity” interpreted as happiness. “In the 1920s Lord Grey noted that one common phrase resembles the words ‘did-he-do-it.’” Cocker and Mabey further remarked (*ibid.*): “The resemblance to human phrases compounds the sense of a bird almost directly communicating with us.” This penchant for approximating bird calls as verbal utterances in English is sometimes also reflected in poetry. The entry for the Wood lark (*Lullula aroborea*) in *Birds Britannica* mentions on p. 308 that *The Woodlark*, a poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins, starts: “*Teevo cheevo cheevio chee: / O* where, what can that be?”, and ends: “With a sweet joy of a sweet joy, / Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy / Of a sweet — a sweet — sweet — joy.” On p. 375, in the entry for the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), *Birds Britannica* states that in John Clare’s poem *The March Nightingale*, it is claimed that a listener cannot distinguish the nightingale’s from the blackcap’s call, rendered as ‘Sweet-jug-jug-jug’.

<sup>42</sup> The jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) is called *ka’ák* (קאָאָק) in Israeli Hebrew.

<sup>43</sup> Cocker and Mabey’s (2005) *Birds Britannica*, p. 410, quotes from an email contribution by John Cooper, who related about a man who had a jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) in a town near Scarborough: “The bloke there had a tame jackdaw and when you knocked on the door it would hop up to your feet and I swear it would say, ‘Door Jack, Jack door’. It caused us great mirth [...]”.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.maitres-des-arts-graphiques.com/-Expo2/-EXB23.html> “Relationship of the Human Figure with that of the Crow”, Plates 23A/23B from *Le Brun’s System on Physiognomy*, by L.-J.-M. Morel d’Arleux, after Charles Le Brun.

Of the raven, Arnott said (2007, p. 110): "The bird's ability to mimic human speech was well known to ancient Romans as to readers of *Barnaby Rudge*. Pliny (*HN* 10.121–3) tells the story of one Raven born in the Temple of Castor and Pollux that learnt to mimic human speech in a cobbler's shop and flew every morning to the Forum to greet Tiberius and members of the imperial family."

As to the crow (Arnott 2007, p. 114): "The all-black Carrion Crow that came from Spain had been taught to mimic the sounds of Latin words (Pliny *HN* 10.124). One Hooded Crow was bought by Octavian for 20,000 sesterces after it had been taught to say to him in Latin 'Hail Caesar, conquering commander' on his return to Rome after his victory at Antium in 31 BC (Macrobius *Satires* 2.4.29), and another allegedly shouted from the roof of the Roman Capitol in Greek 'All will be well' a few months before Domitian's assassination in 96 AD (Suetonius *Domitian* 23.2). The Hooded Crow's normal calls, like the Raven's, were interpreted as weather forecasts." Contrast this corvid emulation of human speech, to the opposite case of humans approximating a raven's call as a human utterance. In Modern Hebrew literature, on occasion one finds the raven's call adapted into *Raq ra'* ("Only evil!").<sup>45</sup> An adaptation that would perhaps come as "naturally" is to *qra'*, for 'tear up!' (cf. "Tear up the evil decreed against us!", in the Jewish New Year's Day and Day of Atonement prayers).

Sadan (1989, p. 159), while discussing Bialik's Hebrew poetry, mentions his line<sup>46</sup>

על גג הנקרע בני-עורבים יקראו  
*al gógkho haníkro bnay órvim yikró'u*  
 On thy torn roof, the offspring of ravens call out

and points out the pair *qr'* (קרע) 'to tear' and *qr'* (קרא) 'to call'. This is clearly imitative of the calls of ravens and crows.

In Nissan (submitted), I discussed a passage from Agnon's *Ad Henna (To This Day)*, set in Germany. The narrator is reading Voltaire's *Candide*, falls asleep, and a talking raven appears. That raven discusses how to spell in Hebrew its raven calls, and why Adama gave it its Hebrew name. This is highly symbolic and befitting what has been called Agnon's magic realism. The passage appears on p. 129 in the 1952 and 1953 edition (the quotation is in my own translation):

Once I came into my room, I sat down and read Voltaire's book on the best of [all possible] worlds.<sup>47</sup> Reading brought about sleep, and sleep brought about a dream. In my dream, I saw myself strolling about in a little valley under Baalbek,<sup>48</sup> and I saw an old raven perched on top of a tree,<sup>49</sup> taking out his head

<sup>45</sup> This is an example of an utterance of ill omen being ascribed to a raven. Within American literature, consider Edgar Allan Poe's 1845 poem *The Raven*. Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader, translated that poem into Hebrew. Poe's raven's call of doom, "Nevermore", was rendered by Jabotinsky into Hebrew as *Ad ein dor*, i.e., literally, "Until there will be no more generations". There is no attempt at imitation of the bird kind's actual calls, neither in Poe, nor in Jabotinsky.

<sup>46</sup> This line by Bialik is clearly based on *Psalms* 147:9 (לבני ערב אשר יקראו).

<sup>47</sup> The reference is to Voltaire's satirising — through the character of ever-optimistic Dr. Pangloss in his 1759 short novel *Candide, ou de l'Optimisme* — of Leibniz's claims concerning this being the best of all possible worlds. Pangloss often uses the phrase "the best of all possible worlds".

<sup>48</sup> Agnon resorts to the Mishnaic name for that Lebanese town, *Ba'al Bekhi* (actually, an adjective: *shum ba'al bekhi*, "garlic from Baalbek", traditionally understood as "garlic that brings about tears", as though it was an onion).

<sup>49</sup> This is fairly realistic, as crows, ravens, and magpies tend to perch on the top of a tree or a roof.

from under his wings, and calling: “‘Arb, ‘arb, ‘arb”,<sup>50</sup> the [letter] ‘ayin open<sup>51</sup> [= with the diacritic mark *pataḥ* for an “a”], the [letter] *resh* with a *schwa* [i.e., the *r* is not followed by any vowel], and the [letter] *beit* with a *dagesh* [thus, causing it to be pronounced as *b* instead of a *v*]. And even though that old one resembled Voltaire, I knew he was not Voltaire. He put forth his beak/nose, and told me: “Did you hear how I call? I call ‘Arb, ‘arb, ‘arb, whereas you, you figured out I call *arp, arp, arp*,<sup>52</sup> therefore I tell you, ‘Arb, ‘arb, ‘arb, the ‘ayin open, the *resh* with a *schwa*, and the *beit* with a *dagesh*, and it was because of those calls that Adam named me ‘oreb. Therefore, they do well, those<sup>53</sup> who pronounce the fricative<sup>54</sup> *beit* at the end of a syllable as though it had a *dagesh* [thus, a *b*, not a *v*]. Incidentally, how come one never sees you either on the Sea of Galilee, nor on the River Jordan, nor [for that matter] on any of the waters of the Land of Israel? Do you find you are so [ritually] clean, that you do not need the waters of the Land of Israel?”<sup>55</sup>

As can be seen, to Iraqi Jews the call of the raven sounded like that bird’s name in their Judaeo-Arabic vernacular, and like the word for ‘tattooing’ in Biblical Hebrew. To Agnon, born in Eastern Europe, the call of the crow was amenable to quite different lexical items, such as the Hebrew name for ‘raven’ / ‘crow’,<sup>56</sup> as well as to

<sup>50</sup> This call of the raven or the crow is written by using the three Hebrew letters ‘ayin, *resh*, and *beit*, whereas the name for ‘raven’ or ‘crow’ is written as a sequence of the letters ‘ayin, *vav*, *resh*, *beit*. Agnon avoids resorting to diacritic marks for vowels, and prefers to describe those diacritic marks in the text.

<sup>51</sup> It can also be understood as “an open eye”.

<sup>52</sup> With the letters *aleph*, *resh*, and *pe*. It could be taken to be the shortened form of the future tense, first person singular, for “I shall release my hold”.

<sup>53</sup> Among the Jewish pioneers of Jewish modern resettlement of the Galilee, there was for a while a trend to pronounce Hebrew differently from how it was pronounced in Jerusalem or Jaffa. This was in order to create a regional variety. They used to abolish the [v] allophone of the Hebrew phoneme /b/, so that its only phonetic value could be [b]. Therefore, they would pronounce the word for ‘flies’ (the plural noun) as *zbubim* instead of *zvuvim* in Israeli Hebrew, or *zvivim* in the old Ashkenazi pronunciation, or *zebubim* in the traditional, liturgical Iraqi pronunciation of Hebrew, or *zevuvim* in the traditional Sephardic pronunciation, or *zevuvimme* or *zevuvimə* in the traditional Italian pronunciation.

<sup>54</sup> The Hebrew letters *beit* and *pe*, corresponding to the phonemes /b/ and /p/, when between two vowels and not doubled, or when at the end of a syllable, respectively yield the allophones [v] and [f] (these are fricative consonants — respectively the voiced labio-dental fricative, and the voiceless labio-dental fricative — as opposed to the phonetic values [b] and [p], which are the voiced and the voiceless bilabial stops). The “Galilean” pronunciation with which Jewish pioneers from Eastern Europe experimented in late-Ottoman Palestine did away with the allophone [v], so that the phoneme /b/ always had the phonetic value [b], whatever its position inside a word. Perhaps they were influenced by Arabic, that only has the phonetic value [b] for its phoneme /b/. Arabic does not possess the phonetic value [v]. The same is also true of the Iraqi Jewish liturgical pronunciation of Hebrew, which does not possess the phonetic value [v], because the phoneme /p/ always results in the phonetic value [p], and because the phoneme /w/ is pronounced as [w], the voiced bilabial semivowel, whereas the Israeli Hebrew pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ is [v].

<sup>55</sup> Hillel Weiss discussed this passage, about the raven in the dream, in an article (Weiss 2002). Nitza Ben-Dov provided a discussion of this passage in a book of hers. In her book about Agnon’s fiction, *Unhappy / Unapproved Loves* (אהבות לא מאושרות), three chapters (starting on p. 11) are about Agnon’s ‘Ad Henna. She discussed the passage quoted above on pp. 96–97. This is within a chapter entitled ‘A Dream about a Home: The Zionist Home’ (חלום של בית, החלום הציוני).

<sup>56</sup> In Scotland, a rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) is called *Craa* (Cocker and Mabey 2005, pp. 411, 415). Thus, the name for the bird resembles its call. This is also the case of a few regional or historical names from Britain for various species of the family *Corvidae*, reflecting particular calls associated with them (Cocker and Mabey 2005). *Cràula* is an Italian regional name for *Corvus corone* — the carrion crow, which in standard Italian is called *cornacchia nera* — and *Corvus frugilegus*, i.e., the rook, which in standard Italian is called *corvo*. The base of the rook’s bill is bone-coloured, whereas the bill of the carrion crow is black, making this bird entirely black. Also in English, rooks and [carrion] crows have

*arp, arp, arp*, which according to the morphology of Biblical Hebrew, is a shortened form of *arpe*, ‘I shall release my hold’, ‘I shall let go’.

The interpretation of bird calls has on occasion even resulted in a literary work, to which spiritual significance has been ascribed. The calls of various bird species were interpreted as Tibetan utterances, appear in a Tibetan sacred text of teaching ascribed to birds, *Bya chos rin-chen ’phreng-ba*, of which there exist translations into English, French, German, and two into Italian.<sup>57</sup> For example, the Wagtail utters: “gTing-ring”, i.e., “Very deep”. The peacock utters: “Kog-go”, i.e., “One is deprived”. The red-beaked *’jol-mo* (either *Leiotrix lutea*, or *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*, both of them from the Himalayas) utters “bCud long” (pronounce: “Čü lon”), i.e., “Seize the essence”. That book purportedly incorporates the teaching of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, who had taken the form of a cuckoo and instructed the birds on the Himalayas in the Buddhist way of living and thinking.

Jewish liturgy includes a rather obscure item, *Pereq Shirah* (*A Chapter of Hymns*), enumerating various created beings, especially animal kinds, along with some verse from Scripture<sup>58</sup> they are claimed to pronounce in praise of the Creator. There is no attempt to imitate the actual sounds those animals make. *Pereq Shirah* is deceptively naïve. It actually is a work of mysticism, extant in a few variants.

In his doctoral dissertation, supervised by Gerschom Scholem, Malachi Beit-Arié (1966) provided a heavily annotated critical edition with learned introductions, showing the complexity of the text. As mentioned, in *Pereq Shira* there is no attempt at emulating actual animal calls. Nevertheless, the wording of the entry for the raven or the crow calls for comment.

The biblical verse whose utterance the three principal versions discussed by Beit-Arié ascribe to the crow is not the same. Nevertheless, in all three principal versions, the verse uttered by the crow comprises an inflected form of the Hebrew verb *qará* ‘to call out’. This is rather similar to how the calls of a raven are often perceived, across cultures. Beit-Arié pointed out (1966, Vol. 2, p. 69, note 82, my trans.): “The verb used in order to describe the call of the raven in rabbinic Hebrew is *qará*. Cf. e.g. in the *Tosefta* at *Shabbat* 6(7):6 and 7(8):13”.

The text of the entry for the crow in those three versions is as follows (this is a detail from a scan):

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often been confused for each other; for example, the idiomatic phrase *as the crow flies* befits rooks, as pointed out by Cocker and Mabey (2005, p. 412). They also remarked (*ibid.*, p. 413):

‘Caw’ is invariably used to describe the calls of both birds, but rook and carrion crow have strikingly different vocalisations. Rook, derived from an Old English word *hroc*, is onomatopoeic in origin, but ‘*krah*’ is a better transliteration of the principal note and is perfectly rendered in the Scottish vernacular name ‘Craa’. It captures something of the drawn-out nasal ‘r’ sound that is so much a part of the rook’s voice. Yet the species also has a wider repertoire — Edmund Sealous claimed to identify 30 different notes — and in concert the deep sonorous calls have a euphonious quality that is hardly ever associated with the carrion crow’s harder tones.

<sup>57</sup> The English translation is by Edward Conze (1955). Eberhard Julius Dietrich Conze was later known as Edward Conze. His translation was based on Tibetan text edited by Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana, published in Calcutta in 1904, and on the French translation by Henriette Meyer (1953). The German translation is by Otto von Taube (1957). Otto Adolf Alexander Freiherr (i.e., baron) von Taube (b. 1879 in Reval, i.e., Tallinn, in the Estonia, d. 1973 in Gauting, near Munich) was a German novelist, poet, and translator (of Calderon de la Barca, Francis of Assisi, William Blake, Stendhal, and Gabriele D’Annunzio), as well as a jurist, art historian, and biographer (of Rasputin, and eventually of himself). The two Italian editions are by Erberto Lo Bue (1998) and by Enrico Dell’Angelo (1989).

<sup>58</sup> It only quite rarely happens that the entry in *Pereq Shirah* for some creature includes no biblical verse at all.

- 69 -

(ג)	(ב)	(א)
עורב מהו אומר: בזמן	עורב מהו אומר: כשרואה	עורב מהו אומר: קול
שרואה את ישראל שאינן	שישראל עוסקין בתורה	קורא <sup>82</sup> במדבר <sup>83</sup> פנו דרך
עוסקין בתורה מהו	אומר: קול קורא <sup>82</sup>	ה' ישרו בערבה מסלה
אומר: קול אומר קרא <sup>82</sup>	במדבר <sup>83</sup> פנו דרך ה'	לאלהינו <sup>(1)</sup> (ישעיה מ, ג).
ואמר מה אקרא כל הבשר	ישרו בערבה מסלה	
חציר וכל חסדו כציץ	לאלהינו (ישעיה מ, ג). <sup>84</sup>	
השדה <sup>(1)</sup> (ישעיה מ, ו). <sup>84</sup>		
(ג) [ל: ד   בזמן...]	(ב) [(ב)ב   עורב] ב:	(א) [(א)   קול...] <sup>(2)</sup> א
קול אומר... [ל: בורא	-(ב) <sup>(4)</sup>   כשרואה] ×:	ה: מי יכין לעורב צידו
ניב שפחים שלום שלום	בזמן ב   שישראל] גב:	כי ילדיו אל על ישועו
לרחוק ולקרוב אמר ה'	ישראל מ: אה ישראל וספ	יחעו לבלי אכל (איוב
ורפאחיו <sup>(5)</sup> (ישעיה נו,	עוסקין] מט (עוסק' ג):	לח, מא) טק <sup>(3)</sup>
יט) ד	עוסקים ופב	

**Version A:** "The crow/raven, what does he say? "A voice calls out (*qorē*): 'In the desert, make way to the Lord, level in the plain a path to our G-d'" [*Isaiah*, 40:3; but there is a variant that quotes *Job*, 38:41].

**Version B:** "The crow/raven, what does he say? When he sees that Israel, they study the Law, he says: "A voice calls out (*qorē*): 'In the desert, make way to the Lord, level in the plain a path to our G-d'" [*Isaiah*, 40:3].

**Version C:** "The crow/raven, what does he say? When he sees that Israel, they do not study the Law, he says: "A voice (*qol*) says: 'Call out! (*Qra!*)'. I said: 'What shall I call out? (*Ma eqra?*)' — 'All the flesh is hay, and all its grace is like the flower of the field'" [*Isaiah*, 40:6; but there is a variants that quotes *Isaiah*, 57:19].<sup>59</sup>

A few more remarks are in order. Concerning "A voice calls out (*qorē*): 'In the desert, [and so forth]'", Beit-Arié has a note (1966, p. 70, note 83) which quotes *Jeremiah* 3:2, "On the highways you sat for them [o wayward nation], like an Arab [sits] in the desert", and mentions that the Seventy rendered not 'araví ('Arab', 'nomad'), but 'raven' / 'crow', as though the text in front of the translators had the word 'orév instead. That note of Beit-Arié does not address the problem of which phoneme did the first consonant, 'ayin, represent: etymologically, for 'araví the phoneme would be the same as expressed by the Arabic letter 'ayn, whereas for 'orev, we would expect the Biblical Hebrew phoneme to have been the same as expressed by the Arabic letter ghayn (ġayn), because the lexical cognate of Hebrew /'oreb/ is the Arabic ġurāb. Did the Seventy not differentiate? But it is precisely from transliterations from Hebrew into Greek from the Graeco-Roman period that we have evidence that in those days, the Hebrew letter 'ayin still retained both its historical phonemes. This raises the possibility of Jeremiah

<sup>59</sup> It is surprising that in a version that refers to the Jews while neglecting the Law, *Isaiah*, 57:19, should be quoted, as it is a verse announcing peace and healing. One would have expected some threatening statement instead. I suspect that *Isaiah*, 57:19, is quoted as a charitable replacement that would make readers think of verses 20–21, which threaten wicked people with dire punishment.

actually resorting to wordplay; he is telling his listeners: I am not talking about nomads (nomadic Arabs in the desert), I am talking to you about our own nation neglecting its religion and (as the verse quite explicitly maintains) meretriciously awaits foreigners (foreign gods) on the highways. This would suggest a bilingual intra-Semitic wordplay: Jeremiah is mentioning an Arab nomad (*‘aravī*) waiting in the desert where he expects caravans to pass by, but is suggesting that the real point is the *ġarīb*, Arabic for ‘foreigner’, as standing for foreign ways and the foreign cultic practices he is decrying. Bilingual wordplays are not unknown in the Hebrew Bible, and in *Jeremiah* in particular.

Beit-Arié’s note (1966, p. 70, note 83) makes a point altogether different. His mention of the Seventy’s “raven in the desert” subserves his remark that this is precisely how the Alexandrine *Physiologus* begins its entry for the raven. (According to Beit-Arié, there is a correlation between *Pereq Shirah* and the *Physiologus*: something in their background that suggests Alexandrine ideas about animal allegories.) Beit-Arié’s note also quotes *Isaiah*, 34:11, which lists the crow among animals living in the desert. I would like to mention that when Arrigoni degli Oddi collected Italy’s regional names for birds, in the entry for the raven he also included, from Malta, the Maltese Arabic name *sulṭān iččwāl*, i.e., literally, ‘king of the deserts’.

Beit-Arié concluded his note (1966, p. 70, note 83) by remarking about the ravens / crows going around *medinot* (inhabited lands / urbanised territory) and *midbarim* (uninhabited lands / deserts / wilderness), according to the Hebrew translation from Arabic of the *Epistle of the Animals* from the encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> from the Arabic-language encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity, the tenth-century association of Muslim erudites in Basra, comprises fifty-one *rasā’il* (‘epistles’). One of these treatises is in zoology. At its end, there is a long appendix: a tale about the judicial litigation between the animals and humankind in front of the king of genies (the demonic nature of the adjudicator makes him into a neutral party). Humans, genies, and animals share a strong belief in their Maker. It a fable, as animals are anthropomorphic and can speak, both among themselves and being understood by human and genies as well. And yet, the parrot has a special place, in that it alone among the birds is recognised by the birds as being the only kind among them whose speech is appreciated by humans.

The seventy humans being sued were shipwrecked on a fabulous island, inhabited by genies and all animal kinds, and then the humans behaved as usual, enslaving the animals. This is why the animals responded by turning to the king’s court. The humans cut a poor image; in his section on this work, Jefim Schirmann (1997, Chapter 12, Section 2, pp. 517–519) even remarked that it is almost a precursor of Jonathan Swift’s castigation of humans when Gulliver eventually ends up on the horses’ island. And yet, the king of the genies finds in the humans’ favour, acquitting them on the grounds that unlike animals (hence, their animals’ blatant inferiority), humans are endowed with an immortal soul, which shall anyway receive retribution in the afterlife for its sins.

This long tale was translated into Hebrew, under the title *Iggeret Ba’alei Ḥayyim* (‘Epistle of the Animals’, **אגרת בעלי חיים**), by the author Kalonymos ben Kalonymos ben Me’ir the Nassí, born in Arles, Provence, in 1286. He was hired, as a translator from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin, by Robert of Anjou, count of Provence and king of Naples, some time after 1322. Kalonymos resided in Naples (at a time when apparently there were no other Jews there), and was in rather close contact with the Jewish community of Rome, whose intellectuals appreciated his learning. By 1328, he was back in Arles. The time and place of his death are unknown. In Italy, he was called *Maestro Calò*, and a Latin translation by him is described in a colophon as “factu manu Calli ebrei”.

When writing *Iggeret Ba’alei Ḥayyim*, which was in 1316, when he was aged thirty, Kalonymos sometimes departed from the original Arabic, especially when replacing quotations from the Hebrew Bible for quotations from the Coran. A German-language edition of the Hebrew and Arabic texts, along with a German translation, was published by Julius Landsberger (1882). Israel Toporovsky (1948/9) published a Hebrew-language edition intended to be popularistic, and yet with endnotes incorporating the gist of Landsberger’s insights. But Toporovsky, even though he omitted the Arabic original, had checked it and the Hebrew text is based on the *editio princeps*: the book was first published in Mantua in the year 5317 *Anno Mundi* (1556/7). Until 1949, it was printed a dozen times in Hebrew, apart from translations into Judaeo-Spanish and into Yiddish.

Let us finally address what is surprisingly found in *Pereq Shirah*, where we would have expected it to treat the clean bird known in Biblical and Modern Hebrew as *qoré*, from the participle of the verb *qará* ‘to call out’, and identified with the genus *Ammoperdrix*, i.e., the partridge (Amar 2004, pp. 239–141; cf. in Dor 1997). Beit-Arié (1966, p. 90, note 119) wondered whether what is found in *Pereq Shirah* is evidence for a tradition that in *Jeremiah*, 17:11 (a verse that also the *Physiologus* quotes in its own entry for the partridge), understands *Qoré dagár ve-ló yalád* (usually understood as meaning “The partridge broods, yet does not give birth”, i.e., its eggs do not hatch) as though the bird name was not *qoré*, but rather *dagár*, so that the sense would rather be: “The ‘brooder(?)’ (some given bird kind) calls out, yet does not give birth”. Beit-Arié pointed out that there is independent evidence for such an understanding from a document from the Cairo Genizah, and that moreover, already Tur-Sinai, in his annotations to Ben-Yehuda’s dictionary, had expressed doubt about whether the biblical *qoré* is a bird-name, apart from its being unclear (based on considerations about lexical cognacy across Semitic languages) the verb *dagár* actually means ‘to brood’.

## 8. A Facilitating Factor for the Iraqi Tale: Dialectal Lexicon and Grammar

We have already come across the Hebrew imperative singular masculine *qra*‘, for ‘tear up!’, that occurs for example in the sentence “Tear up the evil decreed against us!”, in the liturgy of the Jewish New Year’s Day and the Day of Atonement. Also note that the Hebrew verb *qará* denotes ‘to call out’, ‘to read’, and ‘to name’; *qra* is the imperative singular masculine. One wonders whether a raven’s call wasn’t the archetype of calling out, motivating the verb for ‘to call out’ being *qara* in the Semitic languages.

In Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the string *qa*‘ is found inside some forms of the verbs *wáqa*‘, *qá’ad* — respectively, ‘he fell’, ‘he sat’. Renouncing the voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/, the closest one may get to the sound of the Hebrew word for ‘tattoo’, *qa’aqá*‘ (קאקא), or to the wrong form uttered by the prankster in the tale, *qa’qá*‘ (קאקא), is in the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic utterance *Qā, qā!* ‘Read, read!’ (which is not unthinkable inside a synagogue, possibly said to the one making the public reading, which is what the prankster is doing in the tale), or in the noun *qōqa*, which means both ‘wig’ and ‘top of the head’ (the latter being the primary sense).

These considerations call for further elaboration. The phonosymbolism of the consonantal cluster [kr], [qr], or [gr] in relation to shouting, cawing, or croaking occurs across languages. Consider, for ‘shout’, French *cri* and Italian *grido*. The Italian action noun for ‘croaking’ (of frogs or toads, but also of ravens) is *gracidío*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> If one also considers the other liquid, [l], beside [r], in the initial cluster, then we find among French terms for the voices that animals make, *croassement* (of the *corbeau*, the raven), *craillement* or *graillement* (of the *corneille*, the rook, akin to the raven, but smaller), *criaillement* (of the goose or the peacock), *clouquement* and *gloussement* (of chicken), *craquètement* (of the cicada, the stork, or the crane), *crissollement* or *grisolement* (of the *alouette*, the lark), *grésillement* (of the cricket), *gringottement* (of the *moineau*, the sparrow), *grognement* and *grommellement* (of the bear, the pig, and the boar), *glapissement* (of the crane and the fox), *glouglou* (of the turkey, cf. the Italian verb *gloglottare*), *clabaudage* and *clatissement* (of hunting dogs). This list is selected from a list of terms for animal sounds in Bertaud du Chazaud (1996, s.v. *cri*, pp. 216–217). Cf. Latin *grunitus* ‘pig’s grunt’. Also consider the Latin and Italian verb *crepitare* and its English equivalents *to crackle* and *to crepitate*. (Actually the wordsense in Latin is somewhat broader than in Italian.) Cf. Latin *crepare*. Plautus has the Latin verb *crocire*, equivalent to the Italian *gracchiare* and the English *to caw*. In the

Cf. French *grenouille* ‘frog’ and *crapaud* ‘toad’. Modern Hebrew *qarpada* was given the sense ‘toad’ by lexical interference from French, based on an ancient Aramaic term for some small animal. The Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic name for ‘frog’ is *‘aqrūq*. In the Aramaic of the *Babylonian Talmud* (at *Bava Bathra*, 73b, and at *Nedarim*, 41a), it is *aqroqta*, spelled *‘qrwqt’* (אקרוקתא), with the variant *aqurqarta* (*‘qwrqrt’* אקרורקרתא). In a text of medieval homiletics, concerning the Ten Plagues of Egypt, an imitation occurs of the frog’s croaking: *qwqw* (קוקו) presumably to be read *caw, caw*) or *qwqy* (קוקי) perhaps to be read *qwaqi*). This occurs in *Yalqút Shim‘oní*,<sup>62</sup> at *Exodus*, 182.

Now consider that English has both *crowing* (of the cock) and *cawing* (of corvids). That is to say, there may be an initial cluster [kr], but the onomatopoeia “works” also without the [r]. This insight is relevant for the tale of the crowing congregation, as they shout *qa‘aqá‘* (קַעְקַע), upon hearing the prankster misread *qa‘qá‘* (קַעְקַע). He in turn would only win his bet if what they shout can be plausibly be taken to sound like the cawing of the raven. In what the congregants shout, there is no consonantal cluster [qr] or [kr].

As mentioned, in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic the name for the raven or the crow is *bqē‘*. The plural is *bəq‘ān*. In contrast, standard Arabic has *ġrāb* ‘raven’ / ‘crow’, whose plural is *ġurbān*, and which is a cognate of the Hebrew / ‘oreb / for ‘raven’ / ‘crow’. In fact, this is evidence that the ancient Hebrew term was actually /ġoreb/, as the Hebrew letter ‘ayin (ע) corresponded to either the phonemes /‘/ or the phoneme /ġ/. I conclude this subsection by listing the inflected forms of the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic verb for ‘to read’; note however:

- ❑ the /r/ one would expect in standard Arabic being dropped from some of these forms,
- ❑ whereas in other forms, /ġ/ appears —
  - this being the usual treatment of etymologically Arabic /r/ in this dialect,
  - whereas etymologically non-Arabic /r/ is retained (from Hebrew, Aramaic, Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, Hindi, or European languages, even when it is from French and from the French one would usually hear [ʁ], so that adoption as Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic /ġ/ would have been expected), and
  - Arabic /r/ is retained when the term is a loanword from Modern Arabic, e.g. in *ma‘ārif* ‘high schools’, or *báyṭar* ‘veterinarian’.

Also, bear in mind that the Arabic (and dialectal) short *a* vowel is actually the phonetic value [æ] (like the *a* in the English word *Latin*). The forms of the present tense, in the dialect, are formed by resorting to a prefix resulting from the

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*Anthologia Latina*, one finds the verb *graccitare*, applied to the goose, whereas the sense of the Italian *gracidare* also applies to the crow or the raven and to the frog.

The rook was called *graculus* or *gragulus* in Latin. *Gryllus* or *grillus* was the Latin name for the cricket, the verb for making whose sound was *grillare* in the *Anthologia Latina*. Making the sound that the stork makes was expressed, in Latin, by the verb *glottorare* (in Italian it is *gloterare*). Also take notice of the sequence [k...r] in the French name *cocorico* for the crowing of the cock. The cackling of chicken is expressed in Hebrew by the verb *qirqér*, whereas the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic verb *qárqar* is applied to the growling of the stomach.

<sup>62</sup> The *Yalqút Shim‘oní* is a midrashic collection whose compilation is ascribed (in the printed edition from Venice, 1566) to Shim‘on Rosh ha-Darshanim (i.e., chief-homilete) of Frankfurt, but his time is unclear (the 11th century? the 13th century?). Hananel Mack remarks (1989, p. 114, my translation): “Whereas in some medieval midrashic works, their authors’ own sayings are included, there also are midrashic anthologies which, they too, were composed in the Middle Ages, but in which their authors did not include their own sayings. Such is *Yalqút Shim‘oní* [...]” Also see Elbaum (1997).

morphologisation of the verb *qa'd* 'sit', which appears to have been an auxiliary verb. Historically, perhaps, during the transition of the Mesopotamian populace (including its Jews) from Middle Aramaic to an early Iraqi Arabic vernacular after the Arab conquest (sometime during the Ommiad Caliphate based in Damascus), the Arabic verb *qa'd* 'sit' replaced, by phono-semantic matching (with the sense 'here', 'now') the similarly sounding present-forming auxiliary *qa* (𐤒𐤍) as found in the Aramaic of the *Babylonian Talmud*, where it apparently was a form derived from *qa'e* (𐤒𐤍𐤅), itself an abbreviated form of the participle *qa'em* (𐤒𐤍𐤅) for 'standing'.

Past:	Future:	Present:
<i>qēṭū</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>áqqa</i> 'I'll read'	<i>qadáqqa</i>
<i>qēt</i> 'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>táqqa</i> 'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read'	<i>qattáqqa</i>
<i>qētī</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>táqqēn</i> 'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read'	<i>qatáqqēn</i>
<i>qáḡa</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>yáqqa</i> 'he'll read'	<i>qayyáqqa</i>
<i>qáḡat</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>táqqa</i> 'she'll read'	<i>qattáqqa</i>
<i>qēna</i> 'we read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>náqqa</i> 'we'll read'	<i>qannáqqa</i>
<i>qētām</i> 'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>táqqōn</i> 'you'll <sub>pl.</sub> read'	<i>qatáqqōn</i>
<i>qáḡū</i> 'they read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>yáqqōn</i> 'they'll read'	<i>qayáqqōn</i>

The action noun is *qáḡi* or *qáyyi* 'reading'. In practice, it is only *qáyyi* that would take a possessive ending (e.g., *qáyyātak* 'your<sub>sing.</sub> way of reading', which happens to be homophonous with *qáyyātak* 'she made you<sub>sing.</sub> vomit').

With accusative endings for the personal pronouns, the verbal forms listed above become, for example: *qītōnū* 'I read<sub>past</sub> it<sub>m.</sub>'; *qadaqqánū* 'I am reading it<sub>m.</sub>'. With verbal forms can also have dative endings for the personal pronouns: *qadaqqálū* 'I am reading to him', *qītōla* 'I read<sub>past</sub> to her', *yáqqōlām* 'they'll read to them'. One can also combine accusative and dative endings. This is the last generation knowing the dialect, so it is worthwhile to document here the verbal forms with the endings:

Past:	With endings:
<i>qēṭū</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qītōnū</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> '
	<i>qītūhā</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> '
	<i>qītōhām</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> them'
	<i>qītōlī</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> to me' (ethic dative)
	<i>qītōlak</i> 'I read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>sing.m.</sub> '

		<i>qītōlāk</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>sing.f.</sub> '
		<i>qītōlū</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> to/for <sup>63</sup> him'
		<i>qītōlā</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> to/for her'
		* <i>qītōlnā</i>	*'I read <sub>past</sub> to us'
		<i>qītōlkəm</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>qītōləm</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> to them'
		* <i>qītōlyānī</i>	*'I read <sub>past</sub> it to me'
		<i>qītōlyānū</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him'
		<i>qītōlyāhā</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her'
		<i>qītōlyānā</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us'
		<i>qītōlyākəm</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>qītōlyāhəm</i>	'I read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them'
<i>qēt</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qētū</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> '
		<i>qētā</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> '
		<i>qētəm</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> them'
		<i>qētī</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to me'
		<i>qētīlak</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
		<i>qētīlū</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to him'
		<i>qētīlā</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to her'
		<i>qētīlnā</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to us'
		<i>qētīləm</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to them'
		* <i>qētīliyāk</i>	*'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> yo you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
		<i>qētīliyānū</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him'
		<i>qētīliyāhā</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her'
		<i>qētīliyānā</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us'
		<i>qētīliyākəm</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>qētīlyāhəm</i>	'you <sub>m.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them'
<i>qētī</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qētēnū</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> '
		<i>qētīhā</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> '
		<i>qētēhəm</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> them'
		<i>qētēlī</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to me'
		<i>qētēlāk</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
		<i>qētēlū</i>	'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to him'

<sup>63</sup> For example, the prayer for the dead.

	<i>qītēlā</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to her' <i>qītēlnā</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to us' <i>qītēlkəm</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>pl.</sub> ' <i>qītēləm</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to them' <i>qītēlyānī</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to me' <i>qītēlyākī</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ' <i>qītēlyānu</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him' <i>qītēlyāhā</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her' <i>qītēlyānā</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us' <i>qītēlyākəm</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ' <i>qītēlyāhəm</i> 'you <sub>f.sing.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them'
<i>qáġa</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qānū</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> ' <i>qāhā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> ' <i>qāhəm</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> them' <i>qāli</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to me' <i>qālak</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ' <i>qālək</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ' <i>qālu</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to him' <i>qālā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to her' <i>qālnā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to us' <i>qālkəm</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>pl.</sub> ' <i>qāləm</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> to them' <i>qālyānī</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to me' <i>qālyāk</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ' <i>qālyākī</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ' <i>qālyānā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him' <i>qālyāhā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her' <i>qālyānā</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us' <i>qālyākəm</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ' <i>qālyāhəm</i> 'he read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them'
<i>qáġət</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qətū</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> ' <i>qətā</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> ' <i>qətəm</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> them' <i>qətī</i> 'she read <sub>past</sub> to me'

	<i>qətlak</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qətlək</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qətlu</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to him’ <i>qətlā</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to her’ <i>qətlānā</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to us’ <i>qətləkəm</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ <i>qətləm</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> to them’ <i>qətlīyāni</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to me’ <i>qətlīyāk</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qətlək</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qətlīyānu</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him’ <i>qətlīyāhā</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her’ <sup>64</sup> <i>qətlīyānā</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us’ <i>qətlīyākəm</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ <i>qətlīyāhəm</i> ‘she read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them’
<i>qəṣna</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> ’	<i>qīnānū</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> ’ <i>qīnāhā</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> ’ <i>qīnāhəm</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> them’ <i>qīnālak</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qīnālək</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qīnālū</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to/for him’ <i>qīnālā</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to/for her’ <i>qīnālānā</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to us’ (ethic dative) <i>qīnāləkəm</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to you’ <i>qīnāləm</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> to/for them’ <i>qēnālyāk</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qēnālyākī</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ <i>qēnālyānu</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him’ <i>qēnālyāhā</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her’ <i>qēnālyākəm</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ <i>qēnālyāhəm</i> ‘we read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them’
<i>qəṣəm</i> ‘you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> ’	<i>qitāmū</i> ‘you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> ’ <i>qitāmā</i> ‘you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> ’

<sup>64</sup> If it is to herself: *qətlīyāha l-nāfsa*.

	<i>qitāməm</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> them'
	<i>qitāmlī</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to me'
	<i>qitāmlū</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to him'
	<i>qitāmlā</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to her'
	<i>qitāməlnā</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to us'
	<i>qitāmləm</i>	'you <sub>pl.</sub> read <sub>past</sub> to them'
<i>qáġū</i> 'they read <sub>past</sub> '	<i>qōnū</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>m.</sub> '
	<i>qūhā</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it <sub>f.</sub> '
	<i>qōhəm</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> them'
	<i>qōlī</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to me'
	<i>qōlak</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
	<i>qōlak</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
	<i>qōlū</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to/for <sup>65</sup> him'
	<i>qōlā</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to/for her'
	<i>qōlnā</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to us'
	<i>qōlkəm</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>qōləm</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> to them'
	<i>qōlyānī</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to me'
	<i>qōlyāk</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
	<i>qōlyākī</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
	<i>qōlyānū</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to him'
	<i>qōlyāhā</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to her'
	<i>qōlyānā</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to us'
	<i>qōlyākəm</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>qōlyāhəm</i>	'they read <sub>past</sub> it/them to them'

The following table lists suffixed forms of the future tense, for the same verb:

Future:	With suffixes:
<i>áqqa</i> 'I'll read'	<i>aqqānū</i> 'I'll read it <sub>m.</sub> '
	<i>aqqāhā</i> 'I'll read it <sub>f.</sub> '
	<i>aqqāhəm</i> 'I'll read them'
	<i>aqqālī</i> 'I'll read to myself' (ethic dative)

<sup>65</sup> For example, the prayer for the dead.

		<i>aqqālak</i>	'I'll read to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
		<i>aqqālək</i>	'I'll read to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
		<i>aqqālnā</i>	'I'll read to us'
		<i>aqqālkəm</i>	'I'll read to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>aqqāləm</i>	'I'll read to/for them'
		<i>*aqqālyānī</i>	'I'll read it/them to myself'
		<i>aqqālyāk</i>	'I'll read it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
		<i>aqqālyākī</i>	'I'll read it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
		<i>aqqālyānū</i>	'I'll read it/them to him'
		<i>aqqālyāhā</i>	'I'll read it/them to her'
		<i>aqqālyānā</i>	'I'll read it/them to us'
		<i>aqqālyākəm</i>	'I'll read it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>aqqālyāhəm</i>	'I'll read it/them to them'
<i>təqqa</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read'	<i>təqqānū</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it <sub>m.</sub> '
		<i>təqqāhā</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it <sub>f.</sub> '
		<i>təqqāhəm</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read them'
		<i>təqqālī</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to/for me'
		<i>təqqālak</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to yourself <sub>m.</sub> '
		<i>təqqālək</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read yo yourself <sub>f.</sub> '
		<i>təqqālū</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to/for him'
		<i>təqqālā</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to/for her'
		<i>təqqālnā</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to/for us'
		<i>təqqālkəm</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read to yourselves'
		<i>təqqāləm</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read for them'
		<i>təqqālyānī</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to me'
		<i>təqqālyāk</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to yourself'
		<i>təqqālyānū</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to him'
		<i>təqqālyāhā</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to her'
		<i>təqqālyānā</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to us'
		<i>təqqālyākəm</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
		<i>təqqālyāhəm</i>	'you'll <sub>m.sing.</sub> read it/them to them'
<i>təqqēn</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read'	<i>təqqēnū</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it <sub>m.</sub> '
		<i>təqqēhā</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it <sub>f.</sub> '
		<i>təqqēhəm</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read them'

	<i>təqqēlī</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to me'
	<i>təqqēlək</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to yourself'
	<i>təqqēlū</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to him'
	<i>təqqēlā</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to her'
	<i>təqqēlnā</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to us'
	<i>təqqēlkəm</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>təqqēləm</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read to them'
	<i>təqqēlyānī</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to me'
	<i>təqqēlyākī</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to yourself'
	<i>təqqēlyānū</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to him'
	<i>təqqēlyāhā</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to her'
	<i>təqqēlyānā</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to us'
	<i>təqqēlyākəm</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>təqqēlyāhəm</i>	'you'll <sub>f.sing.</sub> read it/them to them'
<i>yəqqa</i> 'he'll read'	<i>yəqqānū</i>	'he'll read it <sub>m.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqāhā</i>	'he'll read it <sub>f.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqāhəm</i>	'he'll read them'
	<i>yəqqālī</i>	'he'll read to/for me'
	<i>yəqqālək</i>	'he'll read to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqālek</i>	'he'll read to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqālū</i>	'he'll read to/for him'
	<i>yəqqālā</i>	'he'll read to/for her'
	<i>yəqqālnā</i>	'he'll read to/for us'
	<i>yəqqāləkəm</i>	'he'll read to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqāləm</i>	'he'll read to/for them'
	<i>yəqqālyānī</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for me'
	<i>yəqqālyākī</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqālyākī</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqālyānū</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for him'
	<i>yəqqālyāhā</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for her'
	<i>yəqqālyānā</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for us'
	<i>yəqqālyākəkəm</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> '
	<i>yəqqālyāhəkəm</i>	'he'll read it/them to/for them'
<i>təqqa</i> 'she'll read'	<i>təqqānū</i>	'she'll read it <sub>m.</sub> '

	<i>təqqāhā</i> <i>təqqāhəm</i> <i>təqqālī</i> <i>təqqālak</i> <i>təqqālək</i> <i>təqqālū</i> <i>təqqālā</i> <i>təqqālnā</i> <i>təqqālkəm</i> <i>təqqāləm</i> <i>təqqālyānī</i> <i>təqqālyāk</i> <i>təqqālyākī</i> <i>təqqālyānū</i> <i>təqqālyāhā</i> <i>təqqālyānā</i> <i>təqqālyākəm</i> <i>təqqālyāhəm</i>	‘she’ll read it <sub>f</sub> .’ ‘she’ll read them’ ‘she’ll read to me’ ‘she’ll read to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read to him’ ‘she’ll read to her’ ‘she’ll read to us’ ‘she’ll read to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read to them’ ‘she’ll read it/them to me’ ‘she’ll read it/them to you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read it/them to you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read it/them to him’ ‘she’ll read it/them to her’ ‘she’ll read it/them to us’ ‘she’ll read it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘she’ll read it/them to them’
<i>nəqqa</i> ‘we’ll read’	<i>nəqqānū</i> <i>nəqqāhā</i> <i>nəqqāhəm</i> <i>*nəqqālī</i> <i>nəqqālak</i> <i>nəqqālək</i> <i>nəqqālū</i> <i>nəqqālā</i> <i>nəqqālnā</i> <i>nəqqālkəm</i> <i>nəqqāləm</i> <i>*nəqqālyānī</i> <i>nəqqālyāk</i> <i>nəqqālyākī</i> <i>nəqqālyānū</i> <i>nəqqālyāhā</i>	‘we’ll read it <sub>m.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read it <sub>f.</sub> ’ <sup>66</sup> ‘we’ll read them’ ‘we’ll read to me’ ‘we’ll read to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read to/for him’ ‘we’ll read to for her’ ‘we’ll read to us’ ‘we’ll read to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read to/for them’ *‘we’ll read it/them to me’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for him’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for her’

<sup>66</sup> But also *nəqqāhā l-hal mkaṭīb* ‘we’ll read it<sub>f</sub>/them, those letters<sub>m.pl.</sub>’.

	<i>nəqqālyānā</i> <i>nəqqālyākəm</i> <i>nəqqālyāhəm</i>	‘we’ll read it/them for us’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘we’ll read it/them to/for them’
<i>təqqōn</i> ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read’	<i>təqqōnū</i> <i>təqqūhā</i> <i>təqqōhəm</i> <i>təqqōlī</i> <i>*təqqōlak</i> <i>*təqqōlak</i> <i>təqqōlū</i> <i>təqqōlā</i> <i>təqqōlnā</i> <i>təqqōlkəm</i> <i>təqqōləm</i> <i>təqqōlyānī</i> <i>təqqōlyākəm</i> <i>təqqōlyāhəm</i>	‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read it <sub>m.</sub> ’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read it <sub>f.</sub> ’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read them’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for me’ *‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ *‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for him’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for her’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for us’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to yourselves’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read to/for them’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read it/them to me’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read it/them to you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘you’ll <sub>pl.</sub> read it/them to them’
<i>yəqqōn</i> ‘they’ll read’	<i>yəqqōnū</i> <i>yəqqūhā</i> <i>yəqqōhəm</i> <i>yəqqōlī</i> <i>yəqqōlak</i> <i>yəqqōlak</i> <i>yəqqōlū</i> <i>yəqqōlā</i> <i>yəqqōlnā</i> <i>yəqqōlkəm</i> <i>yəqqōləm</i>	‘they’ll read it <sub>m.</sub> ’ ‘they’ll read it <sub>f.</sub> ’ ‘they’ll read them’ ‘they’ll read to/for me’ ‘they’ll read to/for you <sub>m.sing.</sub> ’ ‘they’ll read to/for you <sub>f.sing.</sub> ’ ‘they’ll read to/for him’ ‘they’ll read to/for her’ ‘they’ll read to/for us’ ‘they’ll read to/for you <sub>pl.</sub> ’ ‘they’ll read to/for them’

Suffixation in the forms of the present tense is similar to what seen for the future. The imperative is *qā!* (‘read!’, 2nd person m.sing.), *qē!* (‘read!’, 2nd person f. sing.), *qō!* (‘read!’, 2nd person pl.), and with suffixes: *qānū!* (‘read it<sub>m.</sub>, you m.sing.’), *qāhā!* (‘read it<sub>f.</sub>, you m.sing.’), *qāhəm!* (‘read them, you m.sing.’), *qēnū!* (‘read it<sub>m.</sub>, you f.sing.’), *qēhā!* (‘read it<sub>f.</sub>, you f.sing.’), *qēhəm!* (‘read them, you m.sing.’), *qōnū!* (‘read it<sub>m.</sub>, you pl.’), *qūhā!* (‘read it<sub>f.</sub>, you pl.’), *qōhəm!* (‘read them, you pl.’), *qālyānī!* (‘read it/them to me, you m. sing.’), *qālyānū!* (‘read it/them to him, you m. sing.’), *qālyāhā!* (‘read it/them to her, you m. sing.’), *qālyānā!* (‘read it/them to us, you m. sing.’), *qālyāhəm!* (‘read it/them to them, you m. sing.’), *qēlyānī!* (‘read it/them to me, you f. sing.’), *qēlyānū!* (‘read it/them to him, you f. sing.’), *qēlyāhā!* (‘read

it/them to her, you f. sing.’), *qēlyānā!* (‘read it/them to us, you f. sing.’), *qēlyāhām!* (‘read it/them to them, you f. sing.’), *qōlyāni!* (‘read it/them to me, you pl.’), *qōlyānu!* (‘read it/them to him, you pl.’), *qōlyāhā!* (‘read it/them to her, you pl.’), *qōlyānā!* (‘read it to us, you pl.’), *qōlyāhām!* (‘read it to them, you pl.’).

Also consider the optative mode, akin to the imperative: *dannəqqālyākī* ‘let us read it/them to/for you<sub>f.sing.</sub>’, vs. the future *nəqqālyākī* ‘well read it/them to/for you<sub>f.sing.</sub>’.

Contrast *təqqālā* ‘she’ll read to her’ to *təqqālā l-nāfsa* ‘she’ll read to herself’, and contrast *təqqālyāhā* ‘she’ll read it<sub>m./it<sub>f.</sub>/them to her’ to *təqqālyāhā l-nāfsa* ‘she’ll read it<sub>m./it<sub>f.</sub>/them to herself’. Of these four forms, the latter two are longer, and contain an accusative pronominal ending before the dative pronominal ending. This reflects the following phenomenon.</sub></sub>

Just as Mishnaic to Modern Hebrew has pleonastic forms of genitive with a superfluous possessive pronominal ending, also Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic (in line for sure with Arabic rather than with Hebrew) has a pleonastic way to express the direct object, by resorting to a superfluous accusative pronominal ending.

Just as one may say *qītōnū ləl-ktāb* ‘I read<sub>past</sub> to him the book’ (rather than *qētū l-ktāb* that would rather be interpreted as ‘you<sub>m.sing.</sub> read<sub>past</sub> the book’ even though literally albeit not in practice, it could as well mean ‘I read<sub>past</sub> to him the book’), and just as one may say *qītōlū ləl-ktāb* ‘I read<sub>past</sub> to him the book’, the latter can also be expressed pleonastically by *qītōlyānū ləl-ktāb*.

As opposed to *ktāb* ‘book’ being a masculine noun, *majālla* ‘newspaper’ is feminine. The accusative ending which precedes the dative ending remains invaried nevertheless: *qītōlyānū ləl- majālla* ‘I read<sub>past</sub> to him the newspaper’ (literally, ‘I read<sub>past</sub> her<sub>=newspaper</sub> to him, the newspaper<sub>f.</sub>’). Contrast *qītūhā ləl-majālla* ‘I read<sub>past</sub> [her<sub>=newspaper</sub>] the newspaper’ to *qītūhā ləl-Məġilla bəl-Mjālla* ‘I read<sub>past</sub> the Megillah [i.e., the Scroll of Esther] during the festival of Purim’. Also consider:

*Lá tẓəll təqqa qīna!*

‘Stop complaining!’

Literally: ‘Don’t keep reading a dirge!’

Arguably, this phonological, lexical, and morphological situation in the dialect (and in particular, the reduction of the etymological Arabic /r/, dialectal /ġ/, to the phonetic zero in many inflected forms for the verb for ‘to read’), facilitated the selection of a word *without* the consonantal cluster [kr] or [qr] and the like to be assimilated to a raven’s *cawing*, in the folktale about the congregation calling out like ravens. Of course, *qīna* for ‘dirge’ is a Hebraism in the dialectal lexicon, but it is adapted to the morphology of Arabic. The Iraqi liturgical pronunciation of the Hebrew /qina/ is *qinā*. This kind of contrast between adapted loanwords and the same word as per the communal pronunciation of Hebrew is well-known from Yiddish.

An interesting conflation of Arabic and Hebrew can be detected in what is likely etymology of the name of the trickster rabbi character, Ḥakhām Zambartūt. When I was told the folktale, decades ago, the teller wondered whether *Zambartūt* has anything to do with the Hebrew noun he pronounced *semartūt* ‘rag’. Indeed. It would be difficult to find any plausible alternative. Cf. the dialectal *mzámabāġ*, Arabic *muzambar* for ‘ruddy’. Was this character imagined as ruddy-faced, but wearing rags? At any rate, his personal name appears to be a portmanteau of an Arabic word (for the tint of his face) and a Hebrew word (for what he was wearing, or for his social background). It is a comic name.

A sequel article will contrast this story of a prank to a Sephardic story about a rabbi who misreads deliberately from a pentateuchal weekly portion in order to save either himself, or the community from forced conversion: upon invitation by the rabbi, the King is present *incognito*, is amazed at the congregants making sounds while the rabbi (mis)reads, and becomes convinced the Jews are too quarrelsome to accept errors of reading, let alone of doctrine. Provided that one eliminates the cause for the congregation behaving wildly being the rabbi’s misreading, and replaces this cause with a character explicitly calling on them in Hebrew to be disruptive (“Hatsílu et ha-nefashót ha-hén [or: et ha-anashím ha-hém]! Barekhú et ha-rotskhím!”), i.e., “Save the lives of those persons! Belss the killers!”, upon which the congregants raise their prayer shawls), one finds a variant of the motif of the disruptive congregation is also found in the 1973 French film *Les Aventures de Rabbi Jacob* (script by Gérard Oury).

### 9. The Galician *Zogerin* (Woman Leading Women in Prayer) Emulated When Calling Out to the Butcher’s Wife: “Sheindl, Thanks for the Gut!”

The tale we are going to discuss now, for comparison, was kindly supplied by Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginsberg of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) named in honour of Dov Noy, at the University of Haifa. She supplied this representative tale from IFA (the holder of the copyright for it), and it come closest to the Iraqi Jewish tales we discussed last. This was in reply to my own query for tales approximating features of the following item:

A prankster bets he will make a congregation shout like crows. He misreads on purpose from the *parashah* the word *qa’áqa’* (‘tattooing’), and the congregants correct him, by shouting the correct way.

The tale supplied in reply is IFA 17029, related as though it was an anecdote from real life, and concerning a Galician *Zogerin* (i.e., a woman leading women in prayer at the synagogue) emulated when calling to the “butcher woman”, presumably the butcher’s wife: “Sheindl, many thanks for the gut!”

What we render with “butcher woman” was recorded in Hebrew as *katsavit*: the tale was heard in Yiddish by the German-born transcriber from his Polish father, but recorded in Hebrew; perhaps the transcriber somewhat Germanised the Yiddish.

The IFA record of IFA 17029 is undated. The transcription is in Hebrew, by Avraham Keren of Haifa. The teller is Eliahu Pinter. I understand from Dr. Pintel that this is the only tale of Eliahu Pinter recorded at IFA. The tale was registered in the archives in 1989. Pinter was also from Haifa, and “Poland” is scribbled under the teller’s address in Haifa. IFA does not have further information about him.

The title of the tale as written on the form is (in Hebrew) *HaQaryanit* (a term used in Israeli Hebrew for a ‘female newscaster’), but as is made clear by the Yiddish term that follows, that Hebrew term is a rather literal rendition of the Yiddish title *Di zogerin*.<sup>67</sup> A parenthesis after the title states: “(in Yiddish)”.

An initial annotation explains: “The teller was born in Germany, the son of a father whose background was in Poland: in [eastern] Galicia, from around Radomyśl which

<sup>67</sup> In German, the derivational form would be *Die Sagerin*.

is near the city of Lvov” (which incidentally, is now the capital of the Ukraine, but until the First World War was part of the Hapsburgic Empire).<sup>68</sup>

The father used to relate: In the women’s gallery at the synagogue where he used to pray, there used to be a woman who used to be *maqri’ah* [i.e., to have] the women [read] the prayers, especially during the festivals and during the Ten Days of Atonement [from the Jewish New Year’s Day and Yom Kippur]. She used to read from the prayer book, and those women who were unable to read would repeat what she said word by word. They used to call her (in Yiddish) *die Zogerin*.

Once, on New Year’s Day, while she was conducting the service, it occurred to the *Zogerin* that the butcher woman [probably: butcher’s wife] had sent [her] some beast’s gut [for stuffing] and she had forgotten to thank her. So during the prayer she inserted her thanks for the woman-butcher: “Sheindl, a sheinem dank for di kishke...” (“Sheindl, many thanks for the gut”), and all those women repeated after her: “Sheindl, a sheinem dank for di kishke”...

This tale is related as though it was the father’s *memorate*, rather than a *favolate*.<sup>69</sup> It is related by the German-born, Haifa-based Eliahu Pinter as though this anecdote from Galicia was an anecdote relating an event actually experienced by his father, something that he apparently overheard from the women’s gallery.

Psychologically it is not impossible for persons to be unfocussed when doing a task, just setting on to carry out it automatically, and keeping repeating what they hear is one possibility. Far more likely, however, this is a folktale that came to be taken to be an anecdote from real life. In fact, we have pointed out a close parallel within international classification in Sec. 6.3. We mentioned that, with special consideration to Arabic-speaking countries,

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<sup>68</sup> Was there some trace of Germanisation (i.e., approximation of standard German) in the few instances of Yiddish being written down or translated literally? I couldn’t tell for sure. Dr. Pintel suggests (pers. comm., 4 September 2011): “About the Yiddish, here too, I wouldn’t go into too many speculations. The transcriber was from Poland, and we have to way to know if the Yiddish is his or the teller’s, as he did not use a taperecorder, but wrote the tale by hand (maybe after he heard it and not while hearing it).”

<sup>69</sup> Autobiographical accounts are categorised in folklore studies as a ‘memorate’, when they are related by the individual who experienced them in the first person, whereas had the narrator (any tradent other than in the first person) ascribed the narrative to another person (even should it have been an autobiographical account of the latter), then the narrative would count as a ‘favolate’ (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1974). This terminology was current during the 1960s, but afterwards the more general concept ‘personal narrative’ gained currency. Ilana Rozen (1999), the subject of whose book is Jewish personal narratives from Subcarpathian Ruthenia (Carpatho-Russia, the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars), classified them into memorates and favolates, and she discussed these concepts on p. 19, fn. 14, and on p. 30. Stahl (1989, p. 13) distinguished between personal narratives being secular, and memorates pertaining to faith, and sometimes to mystics. Honko (1964) was concerned with memorates in the study of folk beliefs.

Further literature on personal narratives includes, e.g., Langllier (1989), Robinson (1981), and Linde (1986, 1993); cf. Mishler (1995) on typology. Langness and Frank’s (1981) is an anthropological approach to biography. Also see Josselson and Lieblich (1993). Bertaux (1981) is in the social sciences, approached in the perspective of the life story. Cramer (1996) is on the relation between themes in self-narratives and the narrator’s personality, from a therapeutical perspective. Parry’s ‘A universe of stories’ (1991) adopts a psychological and literary approach to story-telling about the Self, re-storying one’s experiences, and story-connecting, i.e., connecting to each other’s stories (e.g., individual stories of spouses, continuing as a couple’s story). The approach to life narratives in Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) is in the framework of narrative enquiry, i.e., “a subset of qualitative research [in the social sciences] in which stories are used to describe human action”.

El-Shamy (2004, p. 1032) lists tale typ[e ...] 1825D\*: "Fire in the Boots, [(Nose Caught in Crack, etc.)]. [Congregation to pray like imam; repeat pain cries]." The latter occurs in a tale from Egypt (*ibid.*, p. 933). Motif J 2417.1.1 "Congregation is to pray like the imam. He is injured: worshippers repeat his cries of pain ("Oh! My nose!", or the like)" defines Tale Type 1825D\* indeed, but the same motif also occurs in Tale Type 1694: "The Company to Sing Like the Leader. [Cries for help mistaken for prayers]." El-Shamy (2004, p. 914) mentions examples from Egypt of Tale Type 1694.

At any rate, the Jewish Baghdadi tale about congregants made to make awkward utterances at the synagogue was about a prankster, whereas in the tale from Galicia the woman conducting the service did not intend to bring about her congregation repeating her thanks to the woman-butcher. Thus the two tales are unlike each other, apart from their sharing the setting (a synagogue) and the outcome (congregants making utterances that make the situation funny).

Moreover, it is quite important to realise that in the tale from Baghdad, the congregants were uttering a word that resembled cawing because they were quite competent men who were trying to correct an error that the man leading the service had made on purpose. In contrast, the women were behaving incompetently. We are told explicitly that some of them were illiterate (or perhaps could read Yiddish in the Hebrew script, but could not make sense of Hebrew at all, and in particular of Hebrew written in the Hebrew script). At any rate, they needed a woman to conduct the service, we are told, because they could not read the prayers by themselves. Interestingly, this is not a reason given for why there is a man conducting the service for male congregants. Actually, even though in medieval Germany there were Jewish women conducting the service in the women's gallery (there is evidence for that from tombstone inscriptions), but this was not necessarily because of the other women being considered to be incompetent congregants.

Arguably, the tale from the Galician women congregants was a tale of Galician male Jews from the category of tales about incompetent congregations. This is a category discussed by Nissan (2011b) by resorting to several Near Eastern and some Ashkenazi variants as well. In the tale 'Die Zogerin', what made the congregants incompetent was not their geographical remoteness in the Americas, or their remoteness from urban ways because of their being rural folk, but because of their being women.

At present in Israel and elsewhere there are no women conducting service for women, other than in religious feminist circles. There was, and is, resistance to service conducted by women, and the fact that in some quite traditional, or even very strict congregations in Eastern Europe, there used to be in the modern period (and perhaps earlier on) women who would lead women in prayer in the women's gallery was justified by some women being unable to follow the prayer without such help.

In fact, even though in the record of IFA 17029 we are first told that some women could not read the prayers, we are then told that all women repeated "Sheindl, a sheinem dank for di kishke..." ("Sheindl, many thanks for the gut"). Note that this is a Yiddish utterance, and the women were not alert to the inappropriateness of their repeating the utterance even though it was in the vernacular. As it was in the vernacular, they are supposed to have been able to make sense of it; it wasn't Hebrew. And as it was in the vernacular, *code-switching* from Hebrew to the vernacular should have alerted them to the utterance being out of character with the rest of the service. Bear in mind however that whereas the men's service was entirely in Hebrew with some textual passages in Aramaic, women in Eastern Europe in the women's gallery were also reading some substitute texts which were considered more accessible for

women, from the book known as *Ts'eyna uR'eyna*, in Judaeo-German (an old stratum of Yiddish). For example, women weeping because of something they read in *Ts'eyna uR'eyna*, whereas that mood was not at one there and then with the service in which the men were engaged, on occasion found its way into the details of literary text.

## PART THREE

### 10. A Character Called “Such a One”: The Iraqi Jewish Version

Westernisation of both material culture and ideology, and in particular, secularisation, preceded the great exodus of the Jews of Iraq in 1950 (even though it apparently precipitated secularisation on a vast scale). In Israel, Iraqi Jewish culture underwent changes, with much loss being nevertheless accompanied by adaptation.

In 1964, a maternal uncle of mine managed to flee Iraq to Iran, and through Europe he reached Israel in 1965, remaining for a while (he was to spend the late 1960s in Canada). In 1965, my mother accompanied this brother of hers on visits to a couple in Tel-Aviv, originally from Baghdad, and who had been living there in the last fifteen years or so. These were relatives (the wife was my maternal grandmother's cousin), they were childless not by choice, and the husband (and to some extent his wife) relished telling jokes. In the early 1950s, for a while my mother and another brother of hers had been dwellers at that couple's home.

On the occasion of the visit in 1965, the husband told in the vernacular the following joke. As we are going to see, it includes a motif by whose virtue it is loosely amenable to an international tale type, but in the given case was given a modern urban context, and a lewd intention. The tale is as follows. A lady's pet dog is called *Máthlu* (“Such a one”, in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic). This dog runs out of the house while the lady is bathing herself. She runs after him outdoors, holding what she mistakenly believes is framed artwork, and is instead the empty frame. She asks people: “Have you see *Máthlu*?”, to which they reply in the affirmative, both with and without a frame.

This joke is loosely related to a tale type we can identify, but whose only resemblance is that a character is called “Such a One”, and that a second character unintelligently goes around asking about “Such a One”, but the persons to whom the second character turns misunderstand, and don't realise that “Such a One” is being used as a personal name. Nevertheless, the variant we are considering is remarkable — precisely because apart from that conspicuous motif, the Baghdadi tale variant is so unlike the international Tale Type 1138 (Uther 2004, Vol. 2, p. 46):

***Gilding the Beard.*** A (young) man who calls himself “Such a one” persuades an ogre (devil, priest) to have his beard gilt. He covers the beard with tar and leaves the ogre stuck to the tar-kettle. He covers the beard with tar and leaves the ogre stuck to the tar-kettle. The ogre wanders around with his kettle and asks everyone, “Have you seen such a one?” [...].

In some variants, a trickster who calls himself “Such a thing” pretends to heal a woman: He covers her with treacle. When she asks her neighbors, “Have you seen such a thing?” they tell her that they never have. [...].

Uther's (*ibid.*) list of variants (for which he merely cites bibliographic entries) includes: Finnish; Estonian; Latvian; Lithuanian; Lappish, Wotian, Lydian; Danish; Basque; Portuguese; German; Swiss; Italian; Bulgarian; Polish; Russian; Byelorussian; Ukrainian; Tatar; Siberian; Georgian; Syrian, Yemenite; Iranian;

Chinese; Mexican; Puerto Rican; Chilean; and Ethiopian. Uther also cites, for literary variants, Marzolph (1992, Vol. 2, No. 1066).

It is not difficult to trace an instance from the literature of antiquity. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus introduces himself to the man-eating, one-eyed giant Polyphemus as "Nobody", and after Odysseus has blinded Polyphemus, the latter tells the other Cyclops that it was "Nobody" who blinded him. This appears to be the earliest known instance of this tale type. See however in Sec. 12 below a tale recorded in Israel (the teller was a Jewish Egyptian woman) which is an instance of Type 1545, 'The Boy with Many Names'. That type, too, is relevant for how Odysseus escapes Polyphemus.

Of Tale Type 1138 "Gilding the Beard [Ogre tricked]", El-Shamy (2004, p. 709) finds only one Arabic occurrence, and it is literary, being identical with Marzolph's (1992) *Arabia Ridens*, no. 1066. This is far removed from the Baghdadi joke, other than because a character wanders about and asks everyone: "Have you seen Such a One", trying to find the character so names but being misunderstood.

In typical versions of the tale, in the sense of versions whose "orbit" is close the tale type, the name "Such a One" deceives an ogre; what is more, the character so named by the ogre is a prankster. Clearly this is not the case of the dog and the dog-owner from the Baghdadi tale, even though the dog-owner makes a fool of herself by asking around whether they saw Such a One.

An anonymous referee remarked:

The third tale is even more loosely connected to a tale type, in this case 1138, leading to far-fetched and quite irrelevant quotations as for the distribution of the tale type that again do not have any bearing on the particular tale under discussion.

Arguably, the quotation of how the international tale type is described is quite useful for better appreciating how eccentric, exorbitant the tale under discussion is. It is only one motif which appears inside both the thematic series which respectively constitute the Baghdadi tale and the international tale type. Nevertheless, that shared motif is quite conspicuous. Arguably, the shared motif originated in tales which belong to Tale Type 1138, whose archetype in turn is Homeric, thus, quite ancient. Then however, at some point in time which can be even more or less recent, the motif of "Such a One" and the dummy character who looks for the character he or she calls "Such a One" left the orbit of the tale type, and as a motif *extra vagans* became available for the thematic series being the Baghdadi tale about the dog Such a One.<sup>70</sup>

## 11. Conjectured Origination, and What Makes This Variant Remarkable

Clearly, the variant told in 1965 in Tel-Aviv, though in the Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic dialect, departs from the traditional way of life and material culture of the respective speaking community in several respects. It is not because the woman has a bathtub at

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<sup>70</sup> I am borrowing the terminology from textual philology: a *lectio extra vagans* is a textual passage which is not part of the known versions of a given textual corpus, and it nevertheless clearly originated there, even though it was not included in the editions of the corpus. What talmudists call in Aramaic a *barayta* is a talmudic passage that appears in the text the way a passage from the *Mishnah* would be quoted there, and yet it is not part of the *Mishnah*, even though it can be ascribed to the historical period and group of rabbis from whom the *Mishnah* originated. In the scholarly literature other than in Hebrew, a *barayta* is called a *lectio extra vagans*.

home, as this had been the case for several generations: Nissan (2010) discussed traditional and modern sanitary appliances at Jewish homes in Baghdad. The woman who is the protagonist of the story keeps a pet dog (these were admitted into the Jewish lifestyle of traditional families in the first half of the twentieth century in Baghdad, whereas keeping a cat appears to have been an older practice); the woman has artwork in a frame hanging from the wall (whereas tapestry and carpets had been the norm up to the mid-twentieth century). As to nude paintings,<sup>71</sup> these are a facet of Western civilisation quite at odds with Jewish orthopraxy and in real life as well, with the traditional lifestyle.

It is quite unlikely that such framed imagery was to be found in Baghdad, other than in the home of persons (of whatever background denomination) who were intent on displaying their Westernisation, and were quite secularised and uninhibited. Hypothetically, displaying such imagery, other than to the like minded, would have carried a social stigma. Therefore, the joke from Baghdad is adapted to an imagined Western or Westernised environment, rather than to a real one. Bear in mind that telling a joke like the one we are considering in this section is not the same as the actual display of a nude painting. Rather, it evokes such a situation verbally, and turning it to a comic effect in what the punch-line implies.

Quite possibly, this Iraqi Jewish variant was derived from an undocumented European variant, which was adopted by some Iraqi Jews with no oicotypisation, other than in the translated name for the dog. It is likely that the joke was heard by the man who told that story in Tel-Aviv, and perhaps he heard it told in Hebrew. If so, it is interesting that the teller in Baghdadi judaeo-Arabic had adapted into colloquial Arabic the name of the character called “Such a One”.

Importantly, the agency of the prankster (as found in the closest international tale type) is done away, as the character called “Such a one” is a dog, and it is unwittingly that this dog brings about the situation described. This unwitting rather than deliberate and cunning agency sets apart this variant from the other variants reported for the same tale type.

It also deserves note that the pet animal can be expected, in this variant set in the “real” world, to be stupid by nature (and this by default, as the story itself provides us with no evidence for this being an intelligent dog instead), whereas his owner is stupid with respect to the norm expected of humans. By contrast, had the story been set in some fabulous storyworld where animals are anthropomorphised and talk and behave as humans do, then the replacement of the human prankster character with an animal would not have affected the same role’s ratiocinative and cunning agency.

There is no indication that the Baghdadi Jewish version developed locally, with a modern bathtub replacing older sanitary appliances, or perhaps a locale at a public bath (with the woman character running out of the public bath). It is far more likely, in my opinion, that the tale was taken “as is” from a source whose locale is Western, because the source itself was Western.

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<sup>71</sup> Bear in mind that when the joke’s interlocutors answer her question, they claim to have seen “such a one”, i.e., what they see inside the empty frame she is holding, by recovering their personal memories of seeing a nude body or a visual representation of the same. The *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, & Cognition* published an article on recovering memories of seeing nudes: ‘Outstanding Memories: The Positive and Negative Effects of Nudes on Memory’ (Schmidt 1994a). The focus of Stephen Schmidt’s research in psychology is the effects of distinctiveness and emotion on human memory. A few of his papers are concerned with humour or with cartoons (Schmidt 1994b, 2002; Schmidts and Williams 2001).

## 12. The Trickster Who Gave False Names: 'Black Cat' (IFA 1430), a Tenuously Judaized Tale from Egypt

The tale we are going to discuss now, for comparison, was kindly supplied by Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginsberg of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) named in honour of Dov Noy, at the University of Haifa. She supplied this representative tale from IFA (the holder of the copyright for it), and it come closest to the Iraqi Jewish tales we discussed last. This was in reply to my own query for tales approximating features of the following item:

A character called 'Such a One' (or that has himself called that way), and another character goes around asking: 'Did you see Such a One?' but is misunderstood.

The tale we are going to discuss now is relevant for the discussion of the third tale first described in the present article; namely, the joke in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic about the dog Such-a-One, heard by my mother in Tel-Aviv in 1965. Tale Type 1138 "Gilding the Beard [Ogre tricked]" features a trickster who dupes an ogre into thinking his name is "Such a One", but also Tale Type 1545, "The Boy with Many Names", is relevant for the trick by which Odysseus escaped Polyphemus by making him believe that his name was "Nobody".

IFA 1430 is a tale entitled "'Black Cat' / Rich and Poor", recorded in Hebrew in 1959 by Ilana Cohen. The teller is her mother, and the tale is from Egypt. The tale as per the record shows some preoccupation with giving the Hebrew text a literarised register, and indeed some verbal form are archaic and belong to Biblical Hebrew. Either the teller, or the recorder apologises in parenthesis after the first mention of faeces. On the form of which I received a scan from IFA, the tale type is indicated as "AT1545 1700".

My own impression of the tale from IFA is that this is an Egyptian tale without any Jewish oicotypisation. Some details are psychologically coarse and materially unrealistic, but socially the historical reality is reflected that up to the modern era, Egypt was a slave-holding society, with a steady flow of Black slaves from what are now the Republic of Sudan and the newly independent South Sudan (the province of Equatoria, when conquered, then lost by Egypt in the late 19th century). Black slaves were also found in other Arab countries, both in North Africa (e.g., in Morocco) and in Western Asia, so the appearance of the institution of slavery, along with the expectation that the protagonist is a prankster who dyes himself Black to be more credibly a slave, are not *per se* sufficient evidence for an Egyptian setting.

The obvious resource where to check is El-Shamy's (2004) *Types of the Folktale in the Arab World*. On p. 856, he lists for Tale Type 1545 ("formerly 1541\*, 1732\*"), "The Boy with Many Names", occurrences from Oman and Algeria. Within the motif-spectrum which El-Shamy enumerates for this tale type, only some of the motifs are relevant for IFA 1430. Namely:

1. K602 "Noman": Escape by assuming an equivocal name, such as *Niyāk*, *Nikhrāwain*, *Nurgusfain*, and so forth.
2. K1327
  - a. Irrelevant part: Seduction by feigned stupidity. Cautious farmer seeks a labourer who knows something about sex. Trickster makes silly explanation of copulation of animals.

- b. Relevant part: When admitted into services, seduces both farmer's wife and daughter.
3. K1349.1 Disguise to enter girl's (man's) room.
4. K1399.2 The [servant's] unusual names. [Used to deceive girl, her mother, and father].
5. W130.1.1 Pleasure from "vanquishing" victim through coercive (illicit) sexual aggression.
6. Cf. Z183: Symbolic names.

Some motifs within the thematic series of Tale Type 1545 involve sexual aggression, but in IFA 1430 this is watered down into two women (a girl and her mother) being beaten in turn. It may be that this avoidance of explicitly mentioning rape is an effect of Judaizing oicotypisation. An alternative (but there is no mutual exclusion) is that this was a tale a mother told her daughter. As recorded, in IFA 1430 there even is an apology for mentioning faeces. Such a context of performance would have prevented that gloat be expressed about rape. Rather, in IFA 1430 the bad guy is given a lesson he eventually accepts as deserved.

The *précis* of IFA 1430 is as follows. A rich man has an only daughter and a poor brother. The rich man feeds his brother dry bread day after day, but being stingy, tries to avoid even that kind of charity. He orders his gatekeeper to order the poor man to take off his clothes and to walk outside naked, and after a while, when the victim is wet and cold, to let him enter the granary and to order him to roll himself in the grain. He is to keep the grain that would become attached to his body. "That would teach him a lesson, so he would no longer come to him to ask for bread".

It may be that there is a tenuous trace of Judaisation in this detail, as it may have reminded Jews (and Egyptian Jews in particular) of the episode in Ch. 5 of *Exodus* about Pharaoh who, after Moses and Aaron's first visit to him, gives order that the Hebrews be no longer given hay to make bricks, but should procure the hay themselves and produce the same amount of bricks as before, so this would teach them a lesson not to be as lazy to ask again for their conditions to be improved. Presence of the detail about worsened conditions for the poor brother in any Muslim parallel would not be enough for excluding that the episode from *Exodus* may have somewhat coloured the perception of the given detail in the tale when told among Jews.

The plot of IFA 1430 which I am summarising here states that the poor brother came on a rainy, stormy day, and was mistreated by the gatekeeper as per the rich brother's orders. "In the end, the poor man went home, holding in his hands a paper bag full of barley [20th-century feature?], and he went with it [Biblical morphology: *vayyélekh 'immó* with the *waw conversivum*] home, depressed and sad." His son insists asking, until his father tells him what happened. The son gets angry, and instructs his father to sell the barley and buy with the proceeds two bottles: one of black ink, and the other one of white ink. He asks his father not to ask him questions. The father complies.

The son uses the black ink to paint himself black, and becomes indistinguishable from a Black man from birth. (He will later use the "white ink" in order to become a white man again. This suggests magic. The son will not merely wash away the black ink. He needs "white ink" to go back to being a white man.)

The record of IFA 1430 states that the son asks his father to take him to the marketplace and to sell him into slavery. Immediately the record contradicts itself, because the next sentence states that so that his uncle would not recognize his father (the poor man), he (i.e., the son) went with a neighbour to the marketplace, instructing him to only sell him to his uncle. This takes place indeed. At the auction, prospective

customers make bid, and when the uncle makes his own offer, the transaction takes place. (It is unclear how could it be foreseen that the uncle would not be deterred by some other bidders being refused.) The uncle asks what the name of the slave is, and "the wise son ('Black Cat') says 'My Face'".

The uncle teaches the slave the way to his home, and send him there (alone! no fear lest the slave, let alone, would escape). The gatekeeper, upon asking, is told by the slave that his name is 'the Black Cat'. "The son *went up* into the house, and the landlady asked him [*vattish'aló*, again with Biblical Hebrew's *waw conversivum*] for his name, and he said [*vayyómer*, with the *waw conversivum*]: 'a Cup of Beer'." The only daughter of the landlord is told by the slave that his name is 'Cramps'. At dinner, the slave is quite diligent, and took the initiative of doing everything without being asked, lest he would be addressed by one of the names he gave, and his trick would be discovered.

At midnight, the slave goes and beats up the girl (his cousin), and when she shouts: "Father, save me, I am being killed by Cramps", her fathers thinks she is suffering from cramps, and tells her that in the morning she would feel better. Then the slave ("the son") beats up the mother, who shouts to her husband that the Cup of Beer is killing her. He thinks she is having a hangover, and tells her she would be better in the morning. "The son" takes all the money and valuables from the house, putting them into a sack he would carry, and moreover he fills the hat of the landowner with "faeces (my apologies for the word)". He then flees. The gatekeeper tries to stop him, and shouts to his master that she should come immediately, as the Black Cat is fleeing. The master insults the gatekeeper, telling him he would not come for a black cat, and that as far as he is concerned, let any cat flee, be it white or red.

"That way the wise son fled from the house of his uncle, bathed himself, poured on himself the bottle full of white ink, and went back to his previous colour". There is a conflict here: he either washes away the black ink, or then paints himself white. There is one more conflict in the next sentence, as IFA 1430 states that he hid what he had looted "in a hidden corner" (probably a recess, as found in Near Eastern houses), and that he related everything that he underwent to his father. We are not told what the father's reaction was, but he apparently did not disapprove.

In the morning, the uncle finds the cabinets open, talks to his wife, and he is finally made to realise his misunderstanding. Also his daughter and the gatekeeper disabuse him of his misconception, and the uncle realises the trickster's trick almost in full, except that he still believes that the slave's name is 'My Face'. The uncle leaves the gatekeeper, and asks the early-rising among the shopkeepers whether they had seen the escaped slave: "Did you see 'My Face'?" They retort that he should go and look at himself, as his face is covered with filth. Everybody he turns to tells him the same. The uncle eventually reaches his brother's house, who advises him to look at himself at the mirror, because his face is filthy. The brother "took pity" of his visitor, washed the latter's face, and asked him (tricking him: no pity involved) what he would pay him, should he find for him 'My Face'. The duped brother promises to hand him over half his riches, and to give his daughter in marriage to the brother's son. The trickster brother gives an explanation, is rewarded as promised, and the duped brother recognises he deserved the lesson he was given, agrees to the marriage, and thereafter he is satisfied of what he keeps, even though he is no longer as rich as before.

Needless to say, this conclusion is psychologically unrealistic. Moreover, as IFA 1430 mentions neither rape nor seduction, the rich brother cannot be motivated by the wish to have a reparation marriage for his daughter. As mentioned, the performance involving the teller being the mother of the woman who recorded the tale may have

excluded any mention of sexual violence to be gloated about, but arguably the latter would not have sat well anyway with a Jewish oicotype.

Moreover, we have noted instances of conflict among details provided adjacently; apparently the teller and/or the recorder did not really try to eliminate contradictions. There is one trace of modernisation: the poor brother carries the barley in a paper bag, familiar to the teller as well as to the recorder from their experience of going shopping. Bear in mind that in traditional Near Eastern societies, it used to be the cases that husbands, or the older men of the house, rather than wives would shop for food. For example, in my mother's family in Baghdad a transition in that respect only came sometime in the 1940s.

### 13. Concluding Remarks

We have discussed three Baghdadi Jewish humorous folktales. We have tried to match them to the international classification of tale types, resorting especially to Uther (2004), and also to the occurrence of tale types in the Arab world, resorting to El-Shamy (2004). We moreover considered three tales from the Israel Folklore Archives<sup>72</sup> — IFA 1430, IFA 3163, and IFA 17029 — which respectively come closest to the three Baghdadi Jewish tales.

We have seen that their coming closest (relatively) does not necessarily entail that they actually are similar. We also saw that the three Baghdadi Jewish tales differ from each other in how easy it is to match them to the international classification. One of them is an easy match, but the other two are much more difficult to pigeonhole.

These data from Baghdad appear to be new to scholarship, and this by itself makes this a valuable contribution. We have discussed degrees and facets of Jewish oicotypisation for the tales. An extended discussion of the teller of the first Baghdadi tale resulted in fairly interesting sociolinguistic insights.

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I thank two anonymous referees for prodding and enabling me to make this into a better paper. I am responsible for any inadequacies that may remain. I owe the tales in

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<sup>72</sup> The comparison to non-Iraqi Jewish tales, in the present article, would not have been possible without the exquisite kindness of Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginsberg of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) named in honour of Dov Noy, at the University of Haifa. She supplied three representative tales from IFA (the holder of the copyright for them), which come closest to one of the three Iraqi Jewish tales we had discussed thus far in this article. More precisely, my own query had been for tales approximating features in one of the following three items:

- 1) A character called 'Such a One' (or that has himself called that way), and another character goes around asking: 'Did you see Such a One?' but is misunderstood.
- 2) A liar is healed of his lying, by being given a therapy he truly avows is intolerable. [The Hasidic tale supplied in reply is 'Three Ailments, One Medication' (IFA 3163): a scoffer seeks the help of a Hasidic rabbi taumaturgist, and gets what he deserves.]
- 3) A prankster bets he will make a congregation shout like ravens. He misreads on purpose from the *parashah* the word *qa'āqa'* ('tattooing'), and the congregants correct him, by shouting the correct way. [The tale supplied in reply is IFA 17029, related as though it was an anecdote from real life, and concerning Galician *Zogerin* (i.e., a woman leading women in prayer at the synagogue) emulated when calling to the "butcher woman", presumably the butcher's wife: "Sheindl, many thanks for the gut!"]

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## Neuroscience of Humor Processing: A Selective Review

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**Abstract.** Humor is a very interesting phenomenon in human cognitive and emotional processing, and it is unique for human beings. Humor is based on a large number of complex biological processes taking place in the brain and peripheral nervous system. This paper describes the main theoretical frameworks of humor research and reviews the recent findings in neural mechanisms of humor processing involved in the cognitive and emotional processing of humor, including studies of humor with patients with localized brain damage as well as studies of normal subjects using neuroimaging techniques and electrophysiological studies.

### 1. Introduction

Humor is one of the most interesting and puzzling aspects of human behavior. It is a universal aspect of human experience, occurring in all human cultures and virtually all human individuals throughout the world (Lefcours and Thomas 1998).

Like all psychological phenomena, humor is based on a large number of complex biological processes taking place in the brain and nervous system (Martin 2006). In the present paper, I will describe neural mechanisms and brain areas involved in the cognitive and emotional processing of humor, including studies of humor with patients with localized brain damage as well as studies of normal subjects using Electroencephalography (EEG), Event-Related Potentials (ERP), as well as FunctionalMagnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI).

Before reaching that stage, I will describe shortly the main theories of humor perception, because many brain studies refer to, contradict with or reinforce these theories. Three branches of humor theory are commonly known as *superiority theories*, *relief/release theories* and *incongruity theories*. It is worth noting that these theories can coexist because they do not contradict each other, emphasizing different aspects of humor processing.

### Relief Theories

Theories of relief came from psycho-dynamical approaches. Sigmund Freud (1928) suggested that laughter can release tension and “psychic energy”. This energy is continuously built up in one’s nervous system, as an aid for suppressing feelings in taboo areas, like sex or death. When these taboo thoughts are entertained, the psychic energy can be released as laughter. Humor is referred to as a substitution mechanism which enables us to convert aggressive impulses to acceptable ones rather than wasting mental energy on suppressing them (Freud 1928).

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### Superiority Theories

Superiority theories argue that humor is a form of expressing our own superiority over other people (Portmann 2000). According to superiority theories, humor is always targeted against one person or group on different grounds (gender, political, ethnic and etc (Martin 2006). As opposed to relief theories, superiority theories are socially oriented as they are concerned with the function humor plays in social relationships (Attardo 1994, pp. 47–50).

### Incongruity Theories

Regardless of the theoretical framework concerning the purpose of humor, most researchers agree that humor is related to either comprehending or producing an incongruity: the simultaneous occurrence of incompatible elements or sudden contradiction of expectations (Martin 2006). Incongruity theories, therefore, focus on the cognitive phenomenon of humor. One of the earliest references to an incongruity theory of humor is found in Aristotle, who claimed that the contrast between expectation and actual outcome is often a source of humor. He also drew a distinction between surprise and incongruity, whereas the latter is presumed to have a resolution that was initially hidden from the audience (Attardo 1994, pp. 47–50)

The *two-stage incongruity-resolution model* is the most widely accepted theory of humor perception (Suls 1972). According to this model, humorous stimuli are processed in two stages: first, the incongruity has to be detected and then, it has to be resolved. Suls contends that the process of detection and reconciliation of the incongruity makes humor comprehension a problem-solving task (Suls 1972).

## 2. Humor and the Brain

Early evidence regarding brain mechanisms of humor processing was derived from lesion studies. Alterations of the sense of humor among brain-injured patients were found in early studies (Luria 1970), but no experiments had been conducted specifically to test effects of specific brain damage on the patient's sense of humor.

In the first of such studies, Gardner and colleagues (1975) found out that patients with brain injuries performed more poorly than did normal controls in distinguishing the funny from the non-funny cartoons. There wasn't, however, any difference between patients with lesions in the left and right hemisphere. Further, several studies showed that patients with right hemisphere damage performed worse compared to patients with left hemisphere lesions on humor tasks (see, e.g., Shammi and Stuss 1999; Wapner, Hamby and Gardner 1981). Brownell and colleagues found that patients with defects in the right hemisphere were able to detect the surprise element of a joke, but were unable to discern which of several surprising endings is funny (Brownell et al. 1983). The findings indicate that patients with right hemisphere damage are sensitive to the incongruity element of humor, but not to its resolution (Brownell et al. 1983)

Extending these initial findings, Shammi and Stuss (1999) indicated that right frontal lobe is necessary for integrating cognitive and affective information, and that humor appreciation involves the interpretation of current information based on past experience. These researchers studied patients with single, focal brain lesions

restricted to the frontal or non-frontal regions. Results showed that damage of the right frontal lobe had the greatest disruptive effect on the ability to distinguish humorous cartoons from non-humorous. Moreover, patients with right frontal lobe damage were impaired in displaying emotional responsiveness to humorous stimuli.

While studies with patients showed clear right lateralization of humor processing, recent neuroimaging studies with intact subjects showed that both hemispheres are involved in humor processing. Thus, Ozawa et al. (2000) used fMRI to measure Blood-Oxygen-Level Dependence (BOLD) signal in subjects while listening to either jokes or non-joke sentences. Sentences that the subjects rated as funny induced activation in Broca’s area (left hemisphere) and the middle frontal gyrus. In another study (Goel and Dolan 2001), subjects were presented with two types of jokes: phonological jokes (puns) and semantic jokes (humor related on context rather than simple language play). Researchers found that different types of humor are processed by separate networks. While semantic jokes activated a bilateral temporal lobe (left posterior middle temporal gyrus, left posterior inferior temporal gyrus, right posterior middle temporal gyrus and the cerebellum), phonological jokes activated the left hemisphere network involving posterior middle temporal and left inferior frontal gyri. Using Positron Emission Tomography (PET), Iwase and colleagues studied subjects’ facial reactions to funny movies (Iwase et al. 2002). Humor-associated laughter/smiling was followed with increased activity in the visual association areas, left anterior temporal cortex, bilateral supplementary motor areas, left putamen and orbitofrontal and medial prefrontal cortices.

Mobbs et al. (2003) demonstrated that humor modulates activity in several subcortical regions including the *nucleus accumbens* — a key component of the reward system. Such finding may explain the pleasurable effect created by humor (Mobbs et al. 2003). These limbic structures have reciprocal connections with frontal lobes, specifically with ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC) (Rolls 1990). In view of the importance of VMPFC in the integration of cognitive and affective information, this region may be quite critical for humor appreciation (Baldwin 2007). Humor-related VMPFC activation was found in several studies with fMRI. In the already mentioned study of Goel and Dolan (2001), cerebral activity in the medial ventral prefrontal cortex positively correlated with the subject’s post-scan ratings of joke funniness and, indicating affective component of humor. Moran, Wig and Adams (2004) also found distinct neural networks for humor comprehension and humor appreciation and specified that humor appreciation is supported by bidirectional connections of the VMPFC and amygdala.

Another niche of humor research is electrophysiological studies. To date there are only a few electrophysiological investigations of humor. The so-called Event-Related Potential (ERP) technique may shed light on temporal processing of humor and validate theoretical models like incongruity-resolution.

New infrequent stimuli raised a positive peak around 300 ms after onset (P300). Incongruent, context-different stimuli caused a long negative peak around 400 ms (N400) and a long positive peak after around 600 ms (P600) (Hillyard and Kutas 1984). Thus, these ERP components may serve as the window to humor processing.

In the first ERP study of humor, Derks and his colleagues reported a peak of activity ~300 ms (P300) after hearing the punch-line of a joke followed by a general depolarization ~100 ms later (N400) (Derks, Gillikin, Batolome-Rull and Bogart 1997). These two waves were suggested by authors to parallel the two-stage model of humor processing. In addition, results showed that mood could influence humor

processing: positive mood, compared with negative one, was accompanied by greater differences in ERPs between funny and not funny jokes.

More recently, Coulson and his colleagues performed several studies using ERP. (Coulson and Kutas 2001; Coulson and Lovett 2004; Coulson and Williams 2005; Coulson and Wu 2005; Coulson and Severens 2007). Coulson (2001) proposed an alternative model of incongruity humor, the frame-shifting model. Coulson and Kutas (2001) assumed that to really 'get' the joke, the listener must go beyond surprise and formulate a new, coherent interpretation (Coulson and Kutas 2001). Frame-shifting is a process of activating a new frame from long-term memory in order to reinterpret information already in working memory (Coulson 2001). Coulson and Kutas (2001) tested the frame-shifting model of humor by comparing the processing of one-line jokes with non-joke sentences, with final words matched on close probability.

Unexpected straight endings elicited smaller N400 responses than joke endings (Coulson and Kutas, 2001). In addition, good joke comprehenders responded to jokes with higher amplitudes of P600, and sustained N400 over left frontal sites. By contrast, with poorer joke comprehenders, the punch-words elicited right frontal N400.

Authors argued that P600 reflects a surprise component of a joke, and the N400 indicates frame-shifting. Both components were elicited within the same time window in different brain regions. Temporal overlap of the joke-related ERP effects contradicts the classic two-stage model that assume some hierarchical time-course of activation.

Coulson and Lovett (2004) investigated laterality of joke comprehension influenced by handedness. Similarly to the previous study, they found out larger N400 and P600 in response to jokes compared to cloze-equated straight endings. N400 of right-handers was larger over anterior left lateral sites and P600 was the largest over right hemisphere centro-parietal electrodes. But frontal asymmetry in N400 was seen only in right-handers and was absent in left-handers. In addition, P600 in left-handers was larger and more broadly distributed than in the right-handers' ERPs. The authors proposed that inter-hemispheric interaction is more efficient in the left-handers, as they are reputed to have relatively larger corpus-closum.

Two studies (Coulson and Williams 2005; Coulson and Wu 2005), tested the so-called Coarse Coding theory. Coarse Coding (Jung-Beeman, 2005) assumes some difference in the breadth of semantic activation. According to the coarse coding hypothesis, the Left Hemisphere (LH) strongly activates a restricted set of related concepts, whereas the Right Hemisphere (RH) weakly activates broader set of concepts. Such broad activations of RH may be very useful for recalling additional schemes and resolving the incongruity of the joke (Jung-Beeman 2005)

Coulson and Williams (2005) examined ERPs to jokes and matched non-joke sentence which were presented to different hemifields. Jokes elicited larger N400s than straight endings only when the punch-line word appeared at the right visual field (RVF, left hemisphere). With left visual field (LVF, right hemisphere) presentation, jokes and non-jokes endings elicited similar N400s. A sustained frontal negativity and late fronto-central positivity to jokes did not differ with visual field of presentation. This finding suggests that RH semantic activation facilitates joke comprehension. At the follow-up study by Coulson and Wu (2005) the same kind of stimuli was used, but they measured the response to the probes that were preceded by either a joke or a non-joke. Jokes were related to the probe while non jokes were not-related. The results showed more N400 for probes after joke endings, but only when

those appeared in the LVF, consistent with the idea that the RH contains more joke-related information than the LH.

In an additional study Coulson and Severns (2007) investigated each hemisphere's ability to appreciate puns. Whereas appreciating a joke requires a switch from one interpretation of the situation to another, appreciating a pun requires the active maintenance of multiple meanings of an ambiguous word or phrase. Coulson and Severns (2007) recorded ERPs to laterally-presented probe words following an auditory presented pun. When the probes immediately followed the pun, facilitation was seen in the rvf/LH for words associated with both of the word's meanings in the pun, but facilitation in the lvf/RH was limited to the most expected meaning. After a delay of 500 ms, activation of both meanings was similar in both hemispheres. Thus, there was no advantage for a RH in multiple meaning processing during pun comprehension.

The work of Coulson and her colleagues suggests that both hemispheres are involved in processing of higher-order language structures with activations of multiple meanings associated with a particular word, like in jokes and puns. ERP studies show difference in the contributions of the two hemispheres to joke and non-joke processing.

### 3. Concluding Remarks

There are three main frameworks of humor: relief, superiority and incongruity theories. Instead of being contradictory, these theories represent different aspects of humor processing. Whereas incongruity theories deal with cognitive and linguistic aspects of humor, the superiority and relief theories emphasize the social and psycho-physiological aspects, respectively. Perhaps an "ideal joke" would integrate the elements of these three main views, but would cramming all those different aspects would necessarily make a joke better?

The aforementioned theories, however, do not differentiate between humor comprehension and humor appreciation. These two sub-processes appear to be operated by anatomically distinct brain pathways. Specifically, humor comprehension might depend critically on frontal brain areas involved in understanding and resolving incongruities, whereas humor appreciation might rely primarily upon engagement of limbic pathways involved in the processing and expression of affect (Goel and Dolan 2001; Moran, Wig and Adams 2004). Studies of individuals' brain lesions provide evidence that the right hemisphere is necessary for the perception of humor and that its frontal areas are particularly critical. Neuroimaging studies support the importance of frontal lobes for integrating information during humor comprehension. Nevertheless, several studies showed strong left activation in response to verbal jokes. Neuroimaging studies showed highly distributed networks involved in humor processing, including medial temporal lobes, frontal lobes, language-related regions, anterior cingulate gyrus and other. Some researchers especially emphasized VMPFC contribution to humor comprehension and appreciation. VMPFC is also connected to limbic systems which are activated in response to jokes. These activations follow to sympathetic activity and may explain the euphoric effect and related physiologic changes during humor perception. Electrophysiological studies using ERP techniques also provide a support to the incongruity-resolution model and extend it. Thus, Coulson and colleagues propose and support the frame-shifting model and show that different joke-related ERP effects overlap in time. In addition, they suggest that both

hemispheres are involved in processing of humor, but the hemispheres differ in their contribution to different aspects of humor processing. The nature of lateralization is still unclear and additional research is needed.

To summarize, we can conclude from this overview that humor is a highly multidisciplinary field of research. In spite of its importance in our life many humor components remain unclear. For broad understanding of nature of humor, its role, and mechanisms, research should integrate diverse scientific disciplines. From the other side research on humor, because of its multidisciplinary facets, can serve as a bridge between different fields of study and consequently contribute to scientific interdisciplinarity, shed light on basic scientific questions and will have implication in psychotherapy, medicine, entertainment and other spheres of life.

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## English Abstracts of the Hebrew Part of the Issue

### Emotional Intelligence and Humor: A Kaleidoscope on the World

**Daniella Keidar\***

When we zoom in the lens on life it might seem as a tragedy, when we zoom it out life might seem as a comedy, said Charlie Chaplin. One of the most effective and efficient tools and means for changing one's perception towards the finding of positive aspects in a given situation and for changing one's own and of others' patterns of emotional and behavioral responses is *Emotional Intelligence* (E.I.), and along with it, *the use of humor*. Emotional Intelligence is the ability of one to consciously convert thoughts and feelings into personal and interpersonal effective actions and behavior. A conscious combination of thoughts and feelings enables one to attain an optimal state in respect of relating toward oneself and one's surrounding (Salovey Mayer 1977). The use of both E.I. and humor is a bridge to a better communication between people; it provides a connection between people and between cultures, it allows one's better communication with the self and with one's surroundings. As a common adage has it: "A smile is the shortest crooked line that connects between people".

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### The Language of Verbal Humor

**Arie Sover\***

The purpose of this study is to examine the underlying mechanism of verbal humor. The research method is based on the study of patterns of various types of verbal humor, as well as examining the cognitive aspects generating those patterns. Verbal humor is an integral part of humor in general. Verbal humor is an outcome of natural language development. In an evolutionary perspective, it is a skill acquired much later than visual humor, which humans are conjectured to have developed prior to their ability to communicate verbally. This phenomenon can be seen in babies who manifest visual humor approximately between the ages of six to eight months, whereas verbal humor is apparently comprehended a few months later. Verbal humor requires sufficient lexical development and employs higher intellectual skills than visual humor. It is imperative to emphasize that verbal humor is composed of various layers that differ from each other. The difference is in the cognitive and intellectual effort needed to interpret the complexity of verbal humor. Understanding and appreciation of verbal humor, and humor per se, rely heavily upon the lexical knowledge, general knowledge, and the cognitive abilities of an individual, along with personality traits and environmental factors.

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## Transgressed Conversational Maxims and Ambivalent Information in Hebrew Comedy Sketches

**Dror Kastel\***

This article probes into the violation of *Conversational Maxims* (Grice 1975) in Hebrew sketches which create humor. The present study analyzes information which alters its meaning in these sketches. Findings show that all *Conversational Maxims* are violated in comedy sketches, and these violations are often intertwined: in Grice's Maxims' violation and in information which changes its meaning, humor is conveyed mainly through an unfulfilled expectation for logical continuation of the information flow. The research clearly shows that when the *maxim of manner* is violated, it gives way to double meaning, gibberish, vague information, and inaccuracy. Consequently, these shatter the expectation for accurate information, and make the audience laugh. Furthermore, when *the maxim of quality* is violated, then ignorance and contradictions appear, and the expectation for logical and honest information, correlating with the audience's pre-existing knowledge, is not fulfilled. When subtraction and addition of information occur — tautology or use of run-on sentences — *the maxim of quantity* is violated. In these scenes the characters that employ exaggerated rhetoric, or ignorant characters who do not understand the words they use, provoke laughter. The same applies when the expectation for new information is not fulfilled. Laughter is also provoked when *the maxim of relation* is violated, and when information changes its meaning, since the expectation for information is broken, due to the contradictions.

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## Humor: A Salvation from Salvations?

**Lydia Amir\***

Both religious and non-religious salvations provide a radical solution to a basic problem in the human condition. The price for these solutions is such that it is better to renounce solving the problem at hand. Humor is proposed as a means to avoid solving the problem that characterizes the human condition. This non-solution has also a positive import. Thus, humor reveals itself, first, as saving from salvations, then, as a salvation in its own right, which is exempt from the price required by other salvations.

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## **Imbided With Humor, Not Wine: An Examination of the Anthology of Poems *Bat Yayin (Daughter of the Wine)* by Bracha Serri**

**Lea Baratz\***

The poetess Bracha Serri was born in Sanaa, Yemen, but has spent most of her life in Jerusalem. This paper presents a unique humor which is carefully woven into a one-of-a-kind feminine “voice”. Serri’s poems aspire to destroy the old, just to resurrect and create it anew. Her poems reflect the cultural world from which she hails and to which she belongs. Serri’s poems are inspired by Biblical passages, Talmudic sources, and Cabbalist themes. She illustrates the religious spirit in the most transparent manner. This colorful mixture of Jewish sources gives her poetry purity and clarity, and she leads the readers into the unique world that she has created. She unveils her very personal and painful experiences, and even though she has no solutions to offer she struggles to find her new identity.

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## **Illustrated Poems for Children in Yiddish and Hebrew, by Shmuel Tsesler Three Presentations**

**About the Bilingual Book *Illustrated Poems for Children in Yiddish and Hebrew*  
Yechiel Szeintuch**

A one-page foreword, explaining the context in which the project unfolded, and who the persons involved are.

**Humor for Children from Argentina  
Adina Bar-El**

Shmuel Tsesler, (Poland, 1904 – Argentina, 1987) was a teacher, as well as a poet in Yiddish. Poems for or about children are collected in the anthology described. His humor is delicate, children could understand it, but is also winks to the adults.

**Humor in the Translation of Shmuel Tsesler’s Poems from Yiddish into Hebrew  
Ruth Zakovitz**

Tsesler’s humor is exemplified and analyzed by Zakovitz, the translator. She explains her choices when translating.