

A Wily Peasant (Marcolf, Bertoldo), a Child Prodigy (Ben Sira), a Centaur (Kitovras), a Wiseman (Sidrach), or the Chaldaean Prince Saturn? Considerations about Marcolf and the Marcolfian Tradition, with Hypotheses about the Genesis of the Character Kitovras

Ephraim Nissan

Department of Computing, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, England, U.K.;
School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, The University of Manchester, England, U.K.

Review essay

Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Solomon and Marcolf*. (Harvard Series in Medieval Latin, 1.) Department of the Classics, Harvard University. Distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2008. xvii+452 pages. ISBN 978-0-674-02841-8, 978-0-674-02842-5.

Abstract. The Marcolfian tradition from central Europe, of which the Medieval Latin version edited by Ziolkowski is an important representative, has typological counterparts which we briefly discuss: the Hebrew *Pseudo-Sirach*, the Old French (non-comic) *Book of Sidrach*, the Russian *Solomon and Kitovras*, the Old English *Solomon and Saturn*, and more.

Keywords: Medieval Latin *Salomon et Marculfus* (*Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*); Irreverent challenger; Questioning and humorous answers; Marcolf; Russian *Solomon and Kitovras*; Old English *Solomon and Saturn*; Old French *Sidrach*; Hebrew *Pseudo-Sirach* (*The Alphabet of Ben Sira*); Italian *Bertoldo* by Giulio Cesare Croce; Arabic tales about Abū Nuwwāṣ; Abdemon of Tyre; Petrus Alphonsi; cult of Mercury; Ælfric Bata's *Colloquies*; Dialogue of Hadrian and Epictetus; Dialogue of Pippin and Alcuin; *Book of Sidrach*; *King Khusro and His Page*; *Quaestiones Naturales* by Adelard of Bath; *Dodi ve-Nekhdi* by Berekhiah ha-Nakdan.

PART ONE: THE CONTEXT

1. Humorous Texts about a King's Wily, Insolent Interlocutor:
A Coarse Boor in the family of *Solomon and Marcolf* Texts,
a Child Prodigy in *Pseudo-Sirach* (*The Alphabet of Ben-Sira*)
2. A Different Kind of Exceptional Character, Laughing, Then Questioned
by a King: Merlin as a Wild Man Having Himself Captured and Questioned,
and the Archangel Gabriel as a Monk Serving an Abbot Thirty Years
3. Non-Comic Counterparts of the Marcolfian Tradition and *Pseudo-Sirach*:
The *Book of Sidrach*, Hadrian and Epictetus, and Pippin and Alcuin
"Wisdom and Learning" Instead of "Wisdom and Spurning"
4. Again a Different Kind of Texts in Question-and-Answer Format:
The *Quaestiones Naturales* by Adelard of Bath, and Berekhiah's *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*
5. Did *King Khusro and His Page* Provide a Model for the Format of *Pseudo-Sirach*?

PART TWO: CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE BOOK UNDER REVIEW

5. Ziolkowski's and Benary's Editions of the
Medieval Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*
6. Strands of the Marcolfian Tradition
7. John Kemble and Jakob Grimm about a Hypothesis Concerning Marcolf's Name
8. The Russian *Solomon and Kitovras*: Which Jewish Background, if Any?
9. Prince Saturn and Abdemon of Tyre as Being King Solomon's Contenders
10. Why Nebuchadnezzar, in *Pseudo-Sirach*? King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba,
and his Demonic Acquaintances
11. Before *Pseudo-Sirach*: Nebuchadnezzar Being Made
a Fool of by Daniel's Three Companions
12. Zoology in *Pseudo-Sirach* and in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*
13. By *Deuteriosis*, Notker Labeo Was Referring to

- the Jewish Oral Law, not to the *Mishnah*
14. Saturn's Statue, Baal-Peor, and Marcolf's Irreverence
 15. A *Sitz im Leben* for the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*?
 16. A Protean Text of Uncertain Geographical Origin
 17. Holy Land Geography in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*
 18. A Bald Head, as Treated by Marcolf and by Abū Nuwwāṣ
 19. The Genealogies of Marcolf and Solomon, and Marcolf's and Bertoldo's Reference to Beans
 20. Does Marcolf Wear his Shoes Crosswise, or Back to Front? The Antipodean Motif
 21. Non-Comic Counterparts: The *Book of Sidrach*, Hadrian and Epictetus, and Pippin and Alcuin
 22. Ben Sira's Hare, Marcolf's Rabbit: An Irreverent Gift to the King
 23. Envoi

PART ONE: THE CONTEXT

1. Humorous Texts about a King's Wily, Insolent Interlocutor: A Coarse Boor in the family of *Solomon and Marcolf* Texts, a Child Prodigy in *Pseudo-Sirach* (*The Alphabet of Ben-Sira*)

A king having to contend with a cunning, possibly insolent interlocutor in a humorous narrative typifies Europe's Marcolfian tradition,¹ and the king is Solomon. A peasant behaves boorishly and insolently in a long exchange with King Solomon, and escapes with impunity. He counters Solomon's wisdom with utterly low-brow, but apt cunningness. Marcolf (or Marolf) appears to have been popular especially in Germany, as a type of the wise fool, but versions exist from various European countries. Ziolkowski's book under review is a critical edition of the Latin version. As for the earliest printed edition, it was of the German version printed in Strasbourg in 1499 under the title *Dis buch seit von kunig salomon vnd siner huß frouwen Salome wie sy der künig fore nam vnd wie sy Morolff künig Salomon brüder wider brocht* in Strasbourg by the printer Matthias Hupfuff.

In a typologically somewhat similar literary work in Hebrew, the king is Nebuchadnezzar. *Pseudo-Sirach* (or *Pseudo Ben Sira*, or *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*) is a peculiar Medieval Hebrew text. It is entertaining, and is often humorous.² The Latin title *Pseudo-Sirach* was coined by M. Steinschneider in the mid 19th century, in order to differentiate the medieval tales of Ben Sira (Sirach) from *Sirach* or *Ben Sira* from the Bible Apocrypha (which is not part of the Hebrew Bible). Yassif, *ibid.*, pp. 4–6, discussed how this work has been named. Yassif himself felt the name *Pseudo-Sirach* detracts from the autonomy of this work. *Pseudo-Sirach* is considered not just a popularistic work, but also a sometimes vulgar one. Even though it was apparently widely read during the Middle Ages, it was met with reprobation.

For sure, the main reason for the latter was (to say it with Yassif in his 1984 book) "narrative materials which amaze any reader of this text, as soon as its first few sentences". Namely, the reason was that the protagonist, the child prodigy Ben Sira, was introduced as one who had been conceived by Jeremiah's maiden daughter accidentally, at the bath, from Jeremiah's own semen. Yassif (who has dated the early medieval tales of Ben Sira to the late ninth or early tenth century, and located its origination within the lands of the Baghdad

¹ This article developed from a 5-page book review I wrote for Ziolkowski's *Solomon and Marcolf*. My review was published in *Fabula*, 53(1/2), 2012, pp. 165–169.

² Eli Yassif (ed.), *The Tales of Ben Sira in the Middle Ages: A Critical Text and Literary Studies*, in Hebrew: סיפורי בן סירא בימי הביניים. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984. Cf. Eli Yassif, "Pseudo Ben Sira and the 'Wisdom Questions' Tradition in the Middle Ages", *Fabula*, 23 (1982), pp. 48–63. An English translation of *Pseudo-Sirach* exists: it was made by Norman Bronznick, and appears as "The Alphabet of Ben Sira" on pp. 167–202 in: David Stern and Mark Mirsky (eds.), *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990. I am currently trying to complete an annotated translation of other versions of *Pseudo-Sirach*.



An early 16th-century woodcut showing the rustic Marcolf facing King Solomon. From a Latin print of the Latin *Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 115, fol. iv) Formerly formerly attributed to Jacobus de Paucis Drapis, Pavia, c. 1505, but currently attributed to Battista (Battista) de Tortis, Venice, after 1500,

Caliphate) has discussed this strange account of Ben Sira's birth convincingly, and relation to Iranian myth (which is important for our present paper) has been cogently argued.

2. A Different Kind of Exceptional Character, Laughing, Then Questioned by a King: Merlin as a Wild Man Having Himself Captured and Questioned, and the Archangel Gabriel as a Monk Serving an Abbot Thirty Years

In contrast to the intensively schooled, erudite child prodigy Ben Sira, the European medieval Marcolf (or in the early modern Italian version, Bertoldo) is a boor, yet an intelligent one. Marcolf is entertaining, not the least reason being that he is wild, and keeps breaching convention.

Interestingly, the West European traditions about the wizard Merlin (a character who lives part of his life as a long-haired wild man in the forest) include the story of Grisandole, in which Merlin comes into the presence of Julius Caesar at the latter's palace, first as a speaking stag, and next as a wild man, who laughs several times, and is then subjected to several questions by Julius Caesar as to the reason he laughed.

As this latter story is little known, we quote the following *précis* of the story of Grisandole from an article of 1907 by Lucy Allen Paton:³

Avenable, the daughter of a banished duke of Alemagne, having been separated from her parents at the time of their banishment, disguises herself as a squire, and under the name of Grisandole, enters the service of Julius Caesar, emperor of Rome.

Merlin knows that the emperor at this time is sorely troubled by an incomprehensible dream, and accordingly he goes to the forest of Romenie to help him. He takes the form of a great stag with a white foot, dashes bellowing into Rome, and followed by a crowd of people he speeds through the city into the palace, and bursts into the presence of Julius Caesar. Kneeling before him he tells him that only the wild man of the woods (*l'homme sauvage*) can reveal to him the meaning of his dream. Then opening the palace gates by magic, he makes his escape, and suddenly vanishes from sight. The emperor offers the hand of his daughter and half of his kingdom as a reward for the capture of the man of the woods or of the stag. In quick response the young knights of the court search the forest, but all return empty-handed. Grisandole alone will not abandon the quest. One day as she kneels in prayer in the woods, the great stag with the white foot appears before her, and bids her come there on the following day with five companions, build a fire, spread food on a table before it, and then withdraw to a distance; she will shortly see the wild man of the woods. No sooner has she obeyed these instructions than the wild man, black, unshaven, and in rags comes to the fire, eats all the food greedily, and stretching himself down before the blaze, goes to sleep. Grisandole and her companions bind him fast on one of their horses, and ride away with him to court.

On the way the wild man breaks into sudden laughter three times: — once, on looking at Grisandole; again, on seeing a crowd of mendicants waiting before an abbey for alms; the third time, on seeing a squire, in a chapel where they stop to attend mass, leave his place three times during the service, strike his master a blow, and then stand abashed, declaring that he has been impelled by an irresistible power. Grisandole asks why he has laughed; but the man of the woods replies only by calling her a deceitful creature, full of guile, and by refusing to give the reason for his laughter except before the emperor. When he is presented to Julius Caesar, he promises to explain his conduct on the following day in the hearing of all the baronage of the land, and he insists that the queen and her twelve ladies in waiting also be present. As they enter the hall he laughs, and when the emperor demands the reason, he relates Caesar's mysterious dream to him, and interprets it as signifying that the queen's twelve ladies are really youths in disguise, with whom she is leading an unlawful life. He further explains that he had laughed on looking at Grisandole, because a woman by her craft had taken him prisoner, when no man could capture him; he had laughed in the abbey, because the poor were clamoring for alms when in the ground beneath their feet great treasure was buried; he had called Grisandole deceitful, because she is a

³ Lucy Allen Paton, "The Story of Grisandole: A Study in the Legend of Merlin", PMLA (Proceedings of the Modern Language Association), 22(2), 1907, pp. 234–276. The quotation is from pp. 234–235.

woman, yet wears the garb of a man; he had laughed in the chapel, not at the blow given by the squire to his master, but because beneath the squire's feet was hidden a mass of treasure, and each blow signified one of the evils of riches. He advises the emperor to restore Grisandole's parents to their land, and to bestow his daughter in marriage on Grisandole's brother. Julius Caesar examines the queen's youths, finds that the wild man's words are true, and commands that the queen and the youths be burned. He bids Grisandole lay aside her disguise, and discovers that she is the most beautiful maiden in the world. He accordingly follows the wild man's advice as far as it goes, and extends it agreeably to himself by marrying Grisandole (Avenable). The wild man refuses to reveal who the great stag is, or his own name, and leaves the hall abruptly, writing an inscription in Hebrew on one of the doorposts as he passes out. One day, somewhat later, a messenger from Greece appears at court, and interprets the Hebrew inscription, which explains that the wild man and the stag are one and the same being, namely Merlin, the counsellor of Arthur. Instantly the letters vanish.

Patton explained in footnotes that "Incomprehensible terms are commonly referred to a Hebrew or Chaldaic source in the romances" and that "Greece is equivalent to fairyland in the romances." Patton identified several occurrences of variants of this tale in European literature.

Only the fact that there is, in this tale, a character who is both wild and wise (here, a wizard disguised as a wild man) and knows better than the king who subjects him to a series of questions, is akin to the Marcolfian tradition. Typologically, a character (a superhuman character) who mysteriously laughs scornfully in several circumstances, and in the end reveals the reasons he laughed each time, characterises a different international tale type.

A very general pattern is captured by the *Kaiser und Abt* type. In 1923, Walter Anderson's monograph *Kaiser und Abt (The Emperor and the Abbot)* examined the global history and distribution of the tale type of a king questioning a subordinate. In English, there is the ballad *The King and the Bishop*.⁴

In an article of 1905, the Romanian-born, London-based folklorist and rabbi Moses Gaster wrote:⁵

I will now give, in as faithful a translation as I can command, a legend which I have found in an old Rumanian manuscript, embedded among miracles of the Virgin Mary and of St. Nicholas. It will prove, I hope, the existence of the missing link between the Oriental tale and the Western Christian counterpart and indicate the way and the possibility how such legends could have become known to the monks in the West. The tale in itself I consider a gem from a purely poetical point of view, and were it not that I bring it forward in this connection I intended publishing it separately as one of the most beautiful tales I have found among the *Exempla* and *Gesta* of old. The tale (in my MS. 71) is called: "How it came to pass that the Archangel Gavriil served an abbot for thirty years", and is as follows: "Once upon a time it came to pass that the Lord sent the Archangel Gabriel to take away the soul of a widow woman, and, going there, he found her near death and two twins were suckling at her breasts. The angel seeing it took pity upon them and returned without having carried out His command, not having taken the soul of the widow. This happening he was asked by the almighty power of God, why he had done so. He replied, 'For the sake of those two children I did not take the soul of their mother'. Then the Lord told him to plunge into the depths of the sea and to bring up a stone from the bottom. When he brought it up the Lord told him, 'Cleave it in twain'. And the Archangel cleft the stone and he found therein two little worms. 'Who feeds these worms inside the stone at the bottom of the sea?' asked the Lord. And Gabriel replied, 'Thine abundant mercies, O Lord!' And the Lord said, 'If mine abundant mercies feed these worms inside the hard rock, how much more would I feed the children of men whom I have saved with my own blood!' Whereupon He sent another angel to take the soul of the

⁴ Cf. Dan Ben-Amos, "The Americanization of 'The King and the Abbot'", *Indiana Folklore*, 2 (1969), pp. 115–121. A subclass of the category was discussed in: E. Nissan, "Considerations about the Pantomime of the Orange and the Unleavened Bread Within a Judaeo-Spanish Folktale", *International Studies in Humour*, 2(1), 2013, pp. 43–86.

⁵ M. Gaster and Jessie I. Weston, "The Legend of Merlin", *Folklore*, 16(4), 1905, pp. 407–426, with a note by Jessie L. Weston on p. 427. The quotation is from pp. 419–421.

widow, and the Archangel he condemned to serve for thirty years as servant to an Abbot and to take care of him, and at the end of the thirty years he was to receive the soul of that Abbot and carry it up to the throne on high. And thus the Archangel became the servant of the Abbot, and during all the time he was very humble and meek and obedient, so that the Abbot marvelled at him and all through those thirty years no one saw him laugh. One day the Abbot said to him, 'My son, go and buy me a pair of shoes which are to last one year'. He then laughed. The Abbot, who did not know that the serving brother was an angel, wondered at it, and he sent another brother with him to watch whether he would laugh again. So the other followed him and they came to a place where a poor man sat who cried, 'Give alms, have pity on me', and the angel laughed again. They met afterwards a carriage. In it sat the bishop and the governor of the town with great pomp and pride and many people following after them. And the angel turned aside and laughed again. In the market place they saw a man stealing an earthenware pot and the angel laughed a fourth time.



REV. DR. M. GASTER
Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews,

The British folklorist Moses Gaster. Detail from the plate "Some Leading London Jews", from a 1889 survey by Lucien Wolf.⁶

After they had finished their purchase they re-turned to the Abbot and the other brother told the Abbot that he had laughed three times more. Then the Abbot asked the angel and said, 'What can this be, what does this mean, my son? For thirty years thou hast been serving me and I have never seen thee laugh, and to-day thou hast laughed no less than four times'. And the angel replied, 'I am the Archangel Gabriel and I was once sent by the Lord to take the soul of a widow whom I found suckling two children at her breast; taking pity on them I spared her, and as punishment for this my doing have I been sent by the Lord over all to serve thee thirty years and to protect thee from all evil, and at the end of the thirty years I am to receive thy soul. Now the thirty years have come to an end and I will then tell thee the reason for my laughing. I laughed first when thou didst order me to buy thee a pair of shoes which were to last for a year, whilst thou hast barely three days

⁶ Lucien Wolf, "The Jews in London", *The Graphic* (London), 16 November 1889. Reproduced in Anne and Roger Cowen, *Victorian Jews Through British Eyes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1986; Curr. edn., London: Vallentine Mitchell for the Littman Library etc., 1998. The plate appears in the latter on p. 100.

more to live. I laughed a second time when I heard the beggar asking for alms whilst he was sitting on a rich treasure without knowing it. I laughed for a third time when I beheld the bishop and the governor riding about with so much pomp and pride, for these were the twins of the widow on whose behalf I had been punished, and for a fourth time did I laugh when I saw clay stealing clay. And this is the reason why I laughed. But do thou now prepare thyself, for the time of our journey has arrived'. The Abbot, hearing these words prepared himself and on the third day he gave up his soul to the Archangel who took it with him on high, where he joined his heavenly band rejoicing. Amen." Thus far this wonderful tale, full of deep faith and moral beauty, with its impressive lesson of divine providence and not wanting in human pathos and poetry.

The character who for mysterious reasons laughs on various occasions is typologically akin to the character who causes amazement in a human being accompanying him because of strange or even supposedly wicked behaviour, and who upon being questioned by his accompanier, answers his questions and they part company.

The original Qur'ānic story of the wondrous, awkwardly and disturbingly behaving 'Abdallāh (traditionally identified with the wondrous character al-Khiḍr)⁷ when he accompanies Mūsa (Moses),⁸ in the Middle Ages was transferred to a Jewish folktale known from a written work from North Africa,⁹ but as Moses is too important a character in Judaism to be taught the way Mūsa is in the Qur'ānic episode, the two characters became Elijah, behaving paradoxically, accompanied by Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who in the *Talmud* is portrayed as meeting Elijah.¹⁰

As we can see, even such versions in which the strange behaviour consists of the character's laughing, this is quite apart from the class of tales comprising such texts as belong in the Marcolfian tradition, or then from *Pseudo-Sirach*, in which the series of questions a king asks a character who overcomes him in cunningness fits in a humorous context.

3. Non-Comic Counterparts of the Marcolfian Tradition and *Pseudo-Sirach*: The *Book of Sidrach*, Hadrian and Epictetus, and Pippin and Alcuin. "Wisdom and Learning" Instead of "Wisdom and Spurning"

As opposed to the comic Marcolfian tradition (and the epigon Bertoldo, a peasant facing King Alboin), we also find non-comic counterparts. "Whereas the colloquies" of Hadrian and Epictetus, or of Pippin and the schoolman Alcuin (pseudepigraphic lists of brief questions and

⁷ Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), the leading thinker of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, rejected the traditional identification of Khidr with the nameless servant of G-d in Sura 18:60–82. Cf. on p. 369 in Patrick Francke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam*. (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 82.) Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000.

Cf. Ephraim Nissan, "Elijah, al-Khidr, St George, and St Nicholas: On Some Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Traditions", in: Alessandro Grossato (ed.), *Le Tre Anella: Al crocevia spirituale tra Ebraismo, Cristianesimo e Islam*, thematic volume of *Quaderni di Studi Indo-Mediterranei*, 6, Alessandria, Piedmont, Italy: Edizioni dell'Orso (2013 [2014]), in press.

⁸ *Qur'ān*, 18:66–80. In international folklore thematics, this is the tale of the angel and the hermit: AT 759 (cf. on p. 596, n. 20, in *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* [Hebrew]. Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute and Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press, 1994. An English translation exists; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Jewish occurrences of the tale of the angel and the hermit were discussed by I. Lévi, "La légende de l'ange et l'ermite dans les écrits juives", *Revue des Études Juives*, 8 (1884), pp. 64–73.

AT refers to the classification in Aarne and Thompson (1928) and subsequent editions: Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, by A. Aarne, translated and enlarged by S. Thompson. (Folklore Fellows Communications, 74) Helsinki, Finland: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia = Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1928. 2nd revision: (FF Communications, vol. 75, no. 184), 1961. Reprints: 1973, 1964, 1981. Another reprint: B. Franklin, New York, 1971. Aarne's German original was *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*.

⁹ *Hibbūr yafē min Hayyeshu'ā* by Nissim of Qayrwān, from the first half of the 11th century.

¹⁰ Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale*, 1994 Hebrew edn., pp. 294–295; 637, n. 25; pp. 595–596, n. 20.

answers) "represent wisdom and learning, *S&M* [i.e., *Solomon and Marcolf*] could be more fairly called wisdom and spurning, as Jan Ziolkowski states on p. 26 in his book under review here, *Solomon and Marcolf*.

As to further non-comic counterparts: specularly to the pagan Saturn facing the monotheist Solomon, we vice versa find a pagan king questioning a wiseman who is a believer, in the *Book of Sidrach*, a medieval French encyclopaedia (unmentioned by Ziolkowski), by an anonymous lay author in the second half of the thirteenth century, and that was popular well into the Renaissance (at least 63 manuscripts containing the French text are known). In *Pseudo Ben Sira*, Nebuchadnezzar, too, is seeking knowledge from Ben Sira, but that cunning child prodigy, like the anonymous author, is often bent on amusing grotesquely, even though some other times the aim appear to be the contrivance of an aetiology *per se*, or the fable value.

In the *Book of Sidrach*, the questions are peculiar, and the answers provided are even more peculiar; in this respect, there is a similarity to *Pseudo-Sirach*. The French encyclopaedia, also known by the title *Livre de la fontaine de toutes les sciences*, is in the form of a dialogue between the Christian scholar Sidrac (a philosopher from Edinburgh) and King Boctus of Bactriana (*Au tens dou roi Boctus, au Levant roi d'une grant province...*); the subjects include religion, ethics, medicine, law, government, and astrology.¹¹

That the name *Sidrach* has to do with Sirach (i.e., Ben Sira) was already suggested, e.g., by Adolfo Bartoli.¹² It is important to realise however that *Sidrach* is a form of *Shadrach*, the Babylonian name that Hananiah was given (*Daniel* 1:7). The name also occurs in the early modern English onomasticon, having been borne by the Lincolnshire-born Independent minister Sidrach Simpson (c. 1600–1655), one of the Five Dissenting Brethren, and one of the leaders of the Independent faction in the Westminster Assembly; Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge in 1650, eventually Oliver Cromwell had him imprisoned for aggressive preaching.

The *editio princeps* of the *Book of Sidrach* was published in 1486 by Antoine Vérard, and was reprinted eleven times between 1486 and 1533. The number of questions answered in the book varies according to the edition. For example, one edition that is especially appreciated by antiquarians is the one published in Paris by Galliot du Pré, in 1531 (*Sidrach. Mil / quatre vingtz / et quatre demandes avec les / solutions et responses a / tous propoz, oeuvre / curieux et moult / recreatif, selon le saige Sidrach*).¹³

4. Again a Different Kind of Texts in Question-and-Answer Format: The *Quaestiones Naturales* by Adelard of Bath, and Berechiah's *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*

The medieval northern French or English Hebrew fabulist Berechiah ha-Nakdan authored, as well as his well-known collection of fables (*Mishle Shu'alim*, literally *Fox Fables*), also the

¹¹ A recent edition is by Ernstpeter Ruhe, *Sydrac le philosophe, Le livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences* (Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 34), Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000. It was reviewed by J.-Ch. Lemaire in *Scriptorium*, 59, 2005(2), bulletin codicologique n° 668.

¹² In the introduction to Adolfo Bartoli's edition of the *Libro di Sidrach: Testo inedito del secolo XIV, Parte prima (Testo)*, Bologna: Presso Gaetano Romagnoli, 1868.

¹³ On that encyclopaedia, see B. Beyer de Ryke, "Les Encyclopédies médiévales, un état de la question", in *Pecia, Ressources en médiévistique*, 1, Saint-Denis, 2002, pp. 9–42. Also see O. Parlangeli, "Appunti per un'edizione del Libro di Sidrac", in *Actes du Xe Congrès international de linguistique et philologie romanes* (Strasbourg 1962), vol. 2, Paris, 1965, pp. 553–562; and Françoise Fery-Hue, "Sidrac et les pierres précieuses", *Revue d'histoire des textes*, 28, 1998, pp. 119–120, 121, 128, 163.

book¹⁴ *Uncle and Nephew* (entitled in Hebrew *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*, i.e., "My uncle" and "My nephew". The word *Nekhdi* is a possessive form of the Hebrew noun *nekhed* 'grandson', but here it means 'nephew', because of the influence of French *neveu* or Latin *nepos* — cf. Italian *nipote* — for both 'grandson' and 'nephew').

The book *Uncle and Nephew* is in question-and-answer format, like a Christian catechism, and is actually a reworking a Christian work in the natural sciences, *the Quaestiones naturales* by Adelard or Athelard of Bath.¹⁵ Some of the questions would seem awkward to a modern person, sometimes not unlike the questions that in *Pseudo-Sirach*, Nebuchadnezzar asks Ben Sira, but here no humour is intended. The questions and answers are deadpan serious, like in the Old French *Book of Sidrach* (where the name of the wiseman Sirach is etymologically related to *Sirach*).

The following is quoted from the beginning of Gollancz's 1920 translation of the Munich codex of *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*,¹⁶ a version much fuller than "the fragmentary or briefer MSS. at Oxford (evidently identical with that at Florence) and Leyden":¹⁷

**This is the Book
called
"Uncle and Nephew."**

I now begin, with the help of God, the Most High, to give heads of chapters of the book called "Uncle and Nephew", being the questions asked by a nephew of his uncle.

Question I. — Why does a man, when he falls into the water, sink like lead, while when dead he floats upon the water? We should expect the opposite.

II. — Why is the earth suspended in mid-air, and how is it maintained?

III. — If the earth were pierced, where would the stone fall which is thrown?

IV. — Why does the earth tremble?

V. — Why is sea-water salt?

VI. — Why do the waters of the sea spread over many places, and yet within a stated hour return to their original place?

VII. — Why does the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) now grow larger in consequence of the mighty waters, for do not all the streams flow into the sea, and yet the sea is not full?

VIII. — Why is there no taste of salt in the streams when they return from the sea?

IX. — Why do streams grow larger instead of smaller?

X. — Why do not the streams that flow to the sea grow less?

XI. — Why does grass spring forth without having been sown?

XII. — Why are products that spring from the soil called herbs, and not those from fire?

XIII. — Why do not plants grow in air, water, or fire, these being of the four elements?

XIV. — Why does a tree grafted on another bring forth fruit according to the graft, and not according to the root, which grows from the earth?

XV. — Why do some animals chew the cud?

XVI. — Why do those animals that chew the cud, when they lie down, crouch on their rear side and hind legs?

XVII. — Why does not the fowl urinate?

The following are further, select questions:¹⁸

¹⁴ Hermann Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nekhdi (Uncle & Nephew): The Work of Berachya Hanakdan, now edited from MSS at Munich and Oxford, with an English translation, introduction etc.* Oxford University Press, 1920. Accessible online at <http://www.seforimonline.org/seforimdb/pdf/273.pdf>

¹⁵ Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*, p. i: "What invests this work with an enhanced interest, is the fact that it is not an original thesis, but it reposes more or less upon the work of that prolific writer, *Adelardus Bathoniensis*, Adelard or Athelard of Bath, to which has been given the name "Quaestiones naturales". Adelard's work was in Latin. Gollancz wondered whether a French version had ever existed, but at present it is known that among the Jews of medieval England, some knew Latin.

¹⁶ Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*, pp. 3–4.

¹⁷ Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*, p. ii.

¹⁸ Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nekhdi*, pp. 4–5.

- XXVIII. — Is breath real or imaginary?
 XXXIII. — Why are not the eyes at the back of the head?
 XXXIX. — Why are the fingers not of equal length?
 XL. — Why does a child not walk at once?
 XLIII. — Why are women, cold by nature, more wishful for their husbands than the men are for them?
 XLVI. — Why are the living afraid of the dead?
 LXII. — Why is the jurisdiction of the moon circumscribed?

The nephew's overt attitude is usually quite respectful, even gushingly so, towards his uncle, but on occasion we come across an exchange such as the following, concerning Question XVI (whose subject is within what is now called *biomechanics*):¹⁹

O my nephew! Though thy question has come upon me like a weapon, I shall not shake my lap (as a coward), but I will parry the stroke. Dost thou not know that all animals that are wrapped in fat on their side and downwards, tend to get fatter; you see it in the case of the ox, whose fat sticks close, and it is, therefore, cold, the liver weighing it down to the side; and in consequence of its weight, the animal lies on the side of the liver, viz. — the hind part.

O Uncle! Is not thy reply at hand, and how canst thou answer thy nephew such a fable? If they lie on this account on their hinder-parts, they ought to rise on their fore-part, which according to thy statement is the lighter; "as they lie, so should they rise".

Uncle: Your [sic] question, O nephew, you hurl at the heart of the simple, even as with a hammer that splinters the rock, and man becomes ensnared and swallows crooked words. The question you ask is hard, but I can extricate you from the difficulty; only pay attention to my words. As for all animals which, having fat of the class of those that chew the cud, when standing up, the cold fat and liver weigh them down, and of a surety they are stronger on that side, because they have an excess of fat about the loins; and if on account of fatigue they lie down more on the hind-quarters, heavy on account of fat therein contained, which rests by reason of heavy toil, they become stronger in that very part, since through having rested, they become warmer after the cold which weighed them down. At one time there are overweighted [sic] on the right, and another on the left side. But when they become warmer, it is easier for them to rise on one side, for being heated, it is the stronger.

5. Did King Khusro and His Page Provide a Model for the Format of *Pseudo-Sirach*?

A possibly relevant literary model for the frame story of *Pseudo-Sirach*, such that a child answers the questions made to him by a king, is *King Khusro and His Page/Boy* (*Husrav ī Kawādān ud Rēdag-ē* or *Husrav ī Kavātān-u-ritak* or *Xusrav ud Redag*),²⁰ a Pahlavi booklet of questions and answers, apparently from the times of the Sasanian king Khusro II (r. 590–628 CE).

The questions are made by a kingly character (called Khusro: Khusro I, r. 531–579 CE) answered by a page, not humorously, but with the seriousness of a catechism. The page shows his preparedness, wisdom, and courage, and re-obtains his hierarchic rank. It is a book about the education of the youth of the Persian aristocracy, indeed, it has been claimed, a "manifesto" of aristocratic education, and it describe lore from material culture and how the young within the nobility spent their life. For example, there is a chapter of questions and answers in gastronomy.²¹

¹⁹ Gollancz, *Dodi ve-Nechdi*, p. 23.

²⁰ Samra Azarnouche (ed.), *Husrav ī Kawādān ud Rēdag-ē / Khosrow fils de Kawad et un page* (Cahiers de Studia Iranica, 49), Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2013; J.M. Unvala (ed.), *Husrav ī Kavātān u ritak / The Pahlavi Text "King Husrav and his Boy"*, published with its Transcription, translation and copious notes, Dissertation, Paris, n.d.

²¹ Moshe Beer, *The Babylonian Amoraim: Aspects of Economic Life*, 2nd edn. (Hebrew), Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1982, on p. 317, made brief use of the chapter on gastronomy while attempting to

Pseudo-Sirach was apparently authored in Caliphal Mesopotamia, and there is no dearth of detectable Persian influences, such as a classification of thirty kinds of fruits (originally from a Zoroastrian text, through the intermediary of a Muslim Arabic conduit), and the awkward circumstances of the birth of the child prodigy Ben Sira, whose mother was accidentally inseminated at a public bath after her prophet father bathed there. The preservation of a prophet's semen in water, so that a maiden would be inseminated one thousand years later, is part of Zoroastrian eschatology.

And yet, *King Khusro and His Page* is a "wisdom and learning" book, whereas *Pseudo-Sirach* is a "wisdom and spurning" book, rather like the Marcolfian tradition.

PART TWO: CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE BOOK UNDER REVIEW

6. Ziolkowski's and Benary's Editions of the Medieval Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*

One strand of non-Jewish literary works which are at least typologically related to the Jewish *Pseudo-Sirach* is the Marcolfian tradition from central Europe. Ziolkowski's book is an eye-opener for English readers on the Medieval Latin sources of the Marcolfian tradition of humour apocryphally woven around King Solomon. The Latin text of which Ziolkowski provides a critical edition in translation is the *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf* (*S&M*).²²

Fifty pages of insightful and readable introduction are followed by about those many of the Latin text with facing English translation. Then, after a detailed and excellent commentary (103–247) and the textual notes (247–283; almost thirty manuscripts are known), there are four appendices: "Alternative Beginning and Ending", "Sources, Analogues, and Testimonia", "A Welsh Solomon and Marcolf", and "Sequence of Questions and Answers".

The Welsh text is not there (a critical edition appeared in 1926–1927); we rather have the first ever translation given, by Diana Luft, Ziolkowski's former student. After the bibliography of primary and secondary sources (291–420), there are an index of Latin words and phrases (spelled as in Classical Latin), an index of scriptural references, an index of tale types, motifs, and proverbs, and a subject index. I only found one typo, on p. 350: "if the identity of the names in [read: is] indeed deliberate". On p. 221, on "Solomon undiminutive bed" (as opposed to Marcolf's *lectulo* in Ch. 9), correct the reference "2.6.1" into 2.6.2.

"Over the decades dozens of extraordinarily talented and disciplined minds have wrestled with the Medieval Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf* (henceforth, *S&M*), its progeny of vernacular translations, and its occasional representations in medieval art" (ix). The Latin text Ziolkowski reproduces is from the 1914 critical edition by Walter Benary (1877–1937), *Salomon et Marculfus* [G.] (Heidelberg: Winter, 1914).

Also Benary's critical apparatus is taken from Benary, but made consistent with Ziolkowski's edition. The "commentary is meant to be approachable for readers who do not read Latin" (103), but also Latin linguistic features are discussed. Folklorists are well served; Thompson's *Motif Index* is often cited.

Ziolkowski moved to the end of his commentary (246) some additional text from the end of MS Würzburg. Benary took the latter as the basis of his text.

reconstruct the material culture of the rabbinical class in Mesopotamia in the period which saw the formation of the Babylonian Talmud.

²² The same year that saw the publication of Ziolkowski's *S&M* also saw the publication of an insightful paper by Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Rival Wisdom in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*", *Speculum*, 83(2), 2008, pp. 331–365.

7. John Kemble and Jakob Grimm about a Hypothesis Concerning Marcolf's Name

A landmark in the modern scholarly study of Old English was the opus of John Mitchell Kemble, who among the other things published an edition of Solomon and Saturn, and in so doing, provided a landmark for the study of the Marcolfian tradition.

John Mitchell Kemble (2 April 1807 – 26 March 1857), English scholar and historian, was the eldest son of Charles Kemble the actor and Maria Theresa Kemble. He is notable for his major contribution to the history of the Anglo-Saxons and philology of the Old English language. [...] The bent of his studies was turned more especially towards the Anglo-Saxon period through the influence of one the brothers Grimm, Jacob Grimm, under whom he studied at Göttingen (1831). His thorough knowledge of the Teutonic languages and his critical faculty were shown in his *Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf* (1833–1837), *Über die Stammtafeln der Westsachsen* (Munich 1836), *Codex diplomaticus aevi Saxonici* (London 1839–1848), and in many contributions to reviews; while his *History of the Saxons in England* (1849; new ed. 1876), though it must now be read with caution, was the first attempt at a thorough examination of the original sources of the early period of English history. He was editor of the *British and Foreign Review* from 1835 to 1844; and from 1840 to his death was examiner of plays. [...] ²³

I would like to mention that in his historical introduction to *The Dialogue of Salomon* [sic] *and Saturnus* (an Old English work somewhat related to the Marcolfian tradition) printed in London for the Ælfric Society in 1848, John M. Kemble commented about a vague, imprecise comment by Jakob Grimm (Anglicised into "James Grimm") relating to the name of Marcolf a name from a rabbinic discussion of forms of idolatry. Kemble, too, was being vague and imprecise, but both Grimm and Kemble were in practice discussing a hypothesis (which Kemble rejected) that the name of Marcolf was derived from *Merqulis*, the name of Mercury.

The cult of *Merqulis* is mentioned in the rabbinic tradition as being one including the (apotropaic) throwing of stones, this being not a hostile act, but a standard form of worship. Earlier in the footnote in which Kemble raised that issue, he had listed names of Hebrew works found in a library catalogue, and featuring Solomon in their title, and wondered whether there was anything inside them related to the Marcolfian tradition.

While discussing *Merqulis*, Kemble misread הילוף *Hilof* for Hebrew הילוף *Hilluf*, but his rendering with Latin *Permutatio* is correct.

speak more strictly, no trace of the names. In a review of Von der Hagen's German Salomon and Marcolf, by James Grimm, in the Heidelb. Jahrb. 1809. Pt. 45. p. 249–253, the Oriental character of the story is argued from a comparison of Salomon's Proverbs, and the remark that in Hebrew Marcolf is a name of scorn. Now here, unless I err greatly, James Grimm has been deceived by a resemblance of names; the word *Markolis* has an application

From a footnote — the bottom of p. 8 — in Kemble's *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus*.²⁴

²³ Quoted from the Wikipedia entry http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Mitchell_Kemble Also see on Kemble, e.g., Marvin C. Dilkey and Heinrich Schneider, "John Mitchell Kemble and the Brothers Grimm", *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 40(4), 1941, pp. 461–473; Raymond A. Wiley (ed.), *John Mitchell Kemble and Jakob Grimm: a correspondence 1832–1852* (unpublished letters of Kemble and translated answers of Grimm), Leiden: Brill, 1971.

²⁴ <https://archive.org/details/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft> A black and white version of the same book is at http://scans.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/2/3/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft_bw.pdf

of the kind, no doubt, but a secondary application only, and one that does not warrant the inference drawn from it. Buxtorf, in his *Lexicon Chaldaicum*, gives an account of this *Markolis* מרקולים which he most absurdly would make out to be *Mercurius*, "commutatis pro more ל et ר." That the word denoted an idol of some sort, though certainly not the God Mercury, is possible, and בית קולים *Beth Kolis* appears to denote a heathen temple. But Rabbi Tam, author of the *Additiones Talmudicæ*, denies the conclusion, "inquiens non esse idoli nomen, et *Markolis* idem esse quod הילוף קולים *Hilof Kolis*, *Permutatio laudis*, i. e. *ignominia*, *Idolum ignominiosum*. Nam מר *commutatio* a מיר unde המיר *permutare*, *mutare*, et קולים idem quod קילום, quod in contrarium sensum a Rabinis tr ductum est לעג *ludificatio*, *illusio*. Idem probat R. Bechaj in Deut. vii. 26." It is asserted that this Markolis was worshiped by the casting of stones, whence the Hebrew proverb, to cast stones at Markolis, that is, to commit idolatry. In *Medrasch* upon Prov. xxvi. 8. we have כל מי שחולק כבור לכסיל כזורק אבן למרקולים, "Quicumque impertitur honorem stulto, similis est projicienti lapidem ad Markolis." A good deal more of the same sort is found in Buxtorf under the word Markolis. I cannot admit the probability of our Marcolf having directly any such origin: in the first place, Marcolf is not the original name of Salomon's competitor; and even if it were, the whole tone of the earlier versions being solemn and serious, and the humorous character having been gradually superinduced, I must reject all immediate dependence upon the Hebrew Markolis. It is in the latest times only that Marcolf is spoken of as a fool. Throughout the earlier humorous versions he is more than a match for Salomon. On this subject, however, I shall have a few more remarks to make when I come to the names *Saturnus* and *Marcolfus*.

Continuation of the same footnote on p. 9 in Kemble's *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus*.

In his preface, which he signed in March 1848 and concluded with:

I shall be only too happy if he laughs over it as I have laughed, or derives from its perusal some of the relief which I sometimes have derived when wearied with inquiries of a more severe and serious character.

— Kemble stated that the preparation of that book took him fifteen years, but that it was an aside to his more important concern with the history of the Reformation:

If a strict application of the Horatian maxim could ensure the excellence of a book, there would be no cause to doubt the success of this one: it has lain by me not nine, but fifteen years, having been first commenced at Cambridge in the year 1833, partly with a desire to distract my mind and obtain some relief from severer studies. But it had at the same time another motive. In the course of a laborious inquiry into the progress of the Reformation in Germany, it was impossible not to become aware of the extraordinary character of the literature generally prevalent in the fifteenth century: the merciless ridicule with which Ulrich von Hutten and his friends had assailed the defenders of the old and now crumbling system, appeared to me to have formed no unimportant element in the strength of the Reforming party, — an opinion which has since been expressed by Ranke in his *History of the Reformation*. The "Literae Obscurorum Virorum", so humorous in

themselves and so full of wit and fun, I had before rather devoured than read, for the sake of the amusement they supplied: they now presented themselves under a totally new aspect, namely, as a weapon which had been wielded with fatal effect against the vast and obscene sect of Obscurants who had overlaid the mind of Europe. My first desire was to republish them in a very good edition of the book being known to me with copious illustrations and additions, which it was hoped might still be supplied by the German libraries. But circumstances prevented me from returning at that time to the Continent, and deprived me of the means of executing the plan upon a scale which alone would have been worthy of it. In the course of my reading however I had found a series of tales, all of which, in my opinion, had some connection with the Reforming movement, and which, if not at first caused by it, had at least been turned to account for its advancement. Among these was the Salomon and Marcolf, the wide dispersion and popularity of which were proved by the frequent editions which immediately, upon the invention of printing, issued from the press.

Kemble went on to claim that there apparently the irreverence of Marcolf, and the early spread of the story of Marcolf in print, was somehow helpful for the spread of the Reformation. Is there anything to this, or was this just wishful thinking on the part of Kemble?



A woodcut from a German print of Marcolphus from the 16th century.²⁵

8. Strands of the Marcolfian Tradition

Sabine Griese surveyed the Marcolfian tradition's strands (mostly strands in German).²⁶ The French dialogues are known as *Marcoul et Salemon* [sic].²⁷ A German *Spielmannsepos*

²⁵ From: Paul Heitz (ed.), *Strassburger Holzschnitte zu Dietrich von Bern. – Herzog Ernst. – Der Hürnen Seyfrid. – Marcolphus. Mit 89 Abbildungen, wovon 42 von Original-Holzstocken gedruckt.* (Drucke und Holzschnitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts, XV.) Strassburg: J.H.Ed. Heitz, 1922.

(minstrel epic), *Salman und Morolf*, "the oldest manuscript of which is dated 1419, has relatively few overlaps with *S&M*" (Ziolkowski, 237). A book by Beecher²⁸ is about the 1492 English translation of the Latin. Beecher favours Teutonic origins. Iris Ridder researched the Swedish reception of Marcolf.²⁹ Incidentally, in his 1534 *Gargantua*, Ch. 33, Rabelais calls Marcolf "Malcon", and Bakhtin referred to *S&M* in that context (Ziolkowski, 15).

Ziolkowski's Appendix Two enables to get a fuller view of the Marcolf tradition also in the vernaculars; e.g., eight Old French manuscripts transmit three redactions from the mid-thirteenth century, known as *Salomon et Marcolf*; Section 25 gives a bibliography (starting with the edition), then comment upon it (350–351). Appendix Two also collects *testimonia*.

Of early literature on Solomon, Ziolkowski avers that even though "the character of much of the early apocrypha can only be guessed" (21), the pseudo-Gelasian decree — actually not by Pope Gelasius in the fifth century, but from "sometime between the first half of the sixth century and the seventh century" (21) — stating which canonical texts are to be admitted, or rejected as apocrypha, includes a *Contradictio Salomonis*, so "we can surmise that dialogues or debates [...] occupied a central position in the unorthodox or at least extracanonical literature that welled up around Solomon" (21). "The propagation of such material can be inferred from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century legends of Solomon and Kitovras (apparently a deformation of the Greek word for centaur)³⁰ that survive in Russian" (21)".

9. The Russian *Solomon and Kitovras*: Which Jewish Background, if Any?

Ziolkowski suggests that the Russian *Solomon and Kitovras*³¹ may have a Jewish background. I would like to suggest that the background was Byzantine, and that depending on which hypothesis, out of the following two, one retains, that may have been a Jewish conduit later than in the Hellenistic period. According to my first hypothesis, it is quite possible there was some Jewish influence, because whereas the body features of a centaur are not relevant for the character of Kitovras, in Jewish midrashic texts there is mention of the centaurs (*Qintorin*) born in the generation of Enosh before the Deluge, but *Qintorin* is written *qntwryn* like the plural noun *qinturin*, i.e., 'scoffing', 'provocation'. Solomon's antagonist is more likely to be characterised as a scoffer, rather than a centaur. Marcolf certainly is a scoffer.

Let us turn to the second hypothesis. In the description of the beasts or zoomorphic demons of the desolation in *Isaiah* 13:21–22, the Hebrew plural noun 'iyyim (now understood as 'jackals', but 'cats' in the pseudo-Jonathan Aramaic translation and thus in Rashi's medieval gloss) was translated into Greek as *onokentauroi* in the Septuagint, meaning

²⁶ Sabine Grise, *Salomon und Markolf: Ein literarischer Komplex in Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999.

²⁷ Mary-Ann Stadtler, "*Salemon et Marcolf*": *Étude critique et étude littéraire*, Thèse 3^e cycle, Université de Paris IV, 1979.

²⁸ Donald Beecher (ed.), *The Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolphus*. Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1995.

²⁹ Iris Ridder, *Der schwedische Markolf*. Tübingen: Francke, 2002.

³⁰ The occurrence of centaurs as early as ancient Mesopotamian art and as late as fiction by John Updike is the subject of Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, "The Centaur: Its History and Meaning in Human Culture", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 27(4), 1994, pp. 57–68.

³¹ For an introduction, see on it André Mazon, "Le centaure de la légende vieux-russe de Salomon et Kitovras". *Revue des études slaves*, 7 (1927), pp. 42–62. The fundamental study on the subject is: Aleksandr Nikolaevich Veselovskii [= Alexander Wesselofsky], *Slavianskii skazaniia o Salomone i Kitovrase i Zapadnyia legendy o Morol'fe i Merline* [The Slavic tale of Solomon and Kitovras and the Western legends of Morolf and Merlin], St. Petersburg: V. Demakov, 1872; cf. in Id., *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collected Works], Vol. 8, Part 1, *Slavianskii skazaniia o Salomone i Kitovrase i Zapadnyia legendy o Morol'fe i Merline*, Petrograd / Leningrad: Izdvo ANSSSR, 1929–1930.

demons in the shape of such centaurs whose body is asinine rather than equine. As in legend, King Solomon is associated with demons whom he dominates, couldn't it be that *ki(n)tovrás* originally was such an *onokentauros*? If this is the case indeed, then there need be no later Jewish influence on *Solomon and Kitovras* than the Septuagint.³² But see more below.



A centaur, identified with Kitovras, in a relief from the Korsun Doors of St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod (the addition of this relief is dated from the 14th century).

Kitovras is imagined as a centaur, in Russian tradition, as well as at a present-day commercial website. The etymology believed by Stacy³³ is not cogent, but his book is about India in Russian literature (it was published in Delhi). I quote from p. 24, which is part of Chapter 2, "Early Russian Literature":

The *Tolkovaja Paleja* ([Old Testament] stories with commentaries) of 1477 as well as later *palei* contain the apocryphal *Povest' o Solomone i Kitovrase*; this tale has been translated from the Greek earlier in the Kievan period, although no such Byzantine work is now extant. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the word *kitovras* may be derived from the Sanskrit *gandharva* and the tale itself — or some part of it — is generally considered to be of ultimately Indian origin. Nor are there any South Slavic versions of the tale, although the Pogodin (Bulgarian) *Nomokanon* of the

³² Other than in Russian, cf. André Mazon, "Le centaure de la légende vieux-russe de Salomon et Kitovras", *Revue des études slaves*, 7 [1927], 42–62; Ja. S. Lur'e, "Une légende inconnue de Salomon et Kitovras dans un manuscrit du XV^e siècle", *ibid.*, 43 [1964], 7–11.

³³ R.H. Stacy, *India in Russian Literature*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.

fourteenth century indicates their presence by warning: "o Solomone tsar ii o Kitovrase basin i koshchuny — Igano; ne byval Kitovras na zemli, no èllinskie filosofy vveli". The story tells of Solomon's need for the Kitovras (is Talmudic legend, Asmadai) in order to find the *shamir* in order, in turn, to secure the stone for building the Temple. Kitovras entered Russian folklore and legend as a creature that could move only in one direction (described in the *Povest'*) and we find him in the *byliny* (e.g., on Vasij Okulevich). The French scholar A. Vaillant recognizes Kitovras under a different name in a Serbian folktale, while the Russian classicist and symbolist poet, Vjacheslav Ivanov (d. 1949), had a poem entitled *Kitovras*; but here Kirovras is a Pan-like creature much like the Kitovras in some verses by Sergej Gorodetskij used by Ivanov as an epigraph.

The online *History of Russian Literature*,³⁴ 11th–17th centuries, in its chapter for the second half of the 15th century,³⁵ explains, in a webpage entitled "Tales of Solomon and Kitovras":

The tales about Kitovras are similar to those about Solomon, but here the king has a rival who is even wiser than he. These tales tell how King Solomon decided to build the temple in Jerusalem and needed the help of a "fleet-footed beast", Kitovras (the legendary centaur, half-man and half-beast). Thinking it would be impossible to persuade him, Solomon's counsellors decide to capture Kitovras by a clever ruse. They fill some wells with wine and honey; Kitovras drinks from them and falls asleep. The counsellors fetter him and take him to the king. The captured Kitovras surprises everyone by his behaviour: he laughs at a man in the market who is choosing himself a pair of boots to last seven years and at a fortune-teller sitting on the ground, and cries at the sight of a wedding; later it transpires that the buyer of the boots had only seven days to live, that the bridegroom was to die shortly as well and that the fortune-teller did not know that there was some treasure buried under the spot where he was sitting. Kitovras tells them how to get the shamir stone needed to polish the slabs for the future temple. The temple is built, but the king doubts Kitovras' wisdom, for it did not save the "fleet-footed beast" from being captured by men. Then Kitovras asks the king to take off his chains and carries Solomon away to the ends of the earth where his wise men and scribes have to seek for him. After that the king is so afraid of Kitovras that he has sixty brave warriors stand guard by his bedside every night.

Apart from this tale about Kitovras, several more have survived. The miscellany of the White Lake Monastery of St Cyril scribe Euphrosyne contains a short but very interesting tale in which the capture of Kitovras is due to the cunning wife, whom the "fleet-footed beast" conceals in his ear. But his wife manages to tell "her young lover" about the wells from which Kitovras usually drinks; and after this they put wine in them. The meeting of Kitovras and Solomon is described differently here. "What is the finest thing in the world?" asks the king. "Freedom", replies Kitovras, breaking everything and leaping free. A third tale about Kitovras, which has survived only in manuscripts of the seventeenth century and later, also includes the theme of female cunning. Here the victim is not Kitovras but Solomon. With the help of a magician Kitovras steals Solomon's wife. Solomon sets off to get her back, but due to his wife's treachery falls into Kitovras' hands. The king is sent to the gallows, but asks permission to play on his horn. In reply to a triple call from Solomon's horn his army appears; the king is freed and executes Kitovras, his wife and the magician.

Clearly, Kitovras laughing is like the wild man (Merlin) who laughs scornfully several times, then explains to Julius Caesar why he laughed (see Sec. 2 above).

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his novel *Cancer Ward*,³⁶ relates the following about a character:

This morning he'd received a letter from the Kadmins. Among other things Nikolai Ivanovich had answered his question about the origin of the expression 'Soft words will break your bones'. It came from a collection of didactic fifteenth-century Russian chronicles, a sort of manuscript book. In it there was a story about Kitovras. (Nikolai Ivanovich always knew about things that were old.) Kitovras lived in a remote desert. He could only walk in a straight line. King Solomon summoned him and by a trick contrived to bind him with a chain. Then they took him away to break stones. But since Kitovras could only walk in a straight line, when they led him through Jerusalem they

³⁴ <http://www.rusliterature.org/>

³⁵ <http://www.rusliterature.org/category/15th-century-2nd-half/>

³⁶ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his novel *Cancer Ward*, The Bodley Head, 1968; London: Vintage, 2003.

had to tear down the houses which happened to be on his way. One of them belonged to a widow. The widow began to weep and implore Kitovras not to break down her poor, pitiful dwelling. Her tears moved him and he gave in. Kitovras began to twist and turn to left and right until — he broke a rib.

The house remained intact, but Kitovras said, 'Soft words will break your bones, hard words will rouse your anger.'³⁷

"A soft tongue breaketh the bone" is from a biblical verse, *Proverbs 25:15*, thus from a book of the Hebrew Bible that (along with *Ecclesiastes*, i.e., *Koheleth*) is traditionally ascribed to King Solomon. Apparently Solzhenitsyn was interested, within the economy of his storytelling, to relate the story of Kitovras, as it would have sufficed to just indicate the biblical source instead.

By *shamir*, according to a Jewish tradition, was something enabling to cut the hardest stones, and since the Middle Ages it was explicitly claimed that this was a kind of mineral. A footnote to the so-called Soncino English translation of tractate *Gittin* of the *Babylonian Talmud*, folio 68, side a, states: "A fabulous worm which could cut through the sharpest stone. [So Maimonides, *Aboth*, v. 6, and Rashi, *Pes.* 54a, though none of the old Talmudic sources states explicitly whether the Shamir was a living creature or a mineral. The *Testament of Solomon*, however, seems to regard it as a stone. V. Ginzberg *Legends*, V, p. 55, n. 105, and VI, p. 299, n. 82, also *Aboth*, (Sonc. ed.) p. 63, n. 6.]"

The motif of the demon who breaks a bone in the attempt not to destroy's a widow's house is also found in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Gittin* 68a–68b, within a story about the archdemon Ashmedai (Asmodaeus) and King Solomon. The following is quoted from the Soncino English translation (their brackets, my braces enclosing annotations based on their notes):

I gat {= got} me Sharim and Sharoth {i.e., 'men-singers and women-singers'}, and the delights of the sons of men, Shidah and Shidoth. {*Ecclesiastes 2:8*} 'Sharim and Sharoth' means diverse kinds of music; 'the delights of the sons of men' are ornamental pools and baths. 'Shidah and Shidoth': Here [in Babylon] they translate as male and female demons. In the West [Palestine] they say [it means] carriages.

R. Johanan said: There were three hundred kinds of demons in Shihin, but what a Shidah is I do not know. {Alternatively interpreted as 'the real mother of the demons I do not know'.}

The Master said: Here they translate 'male and female demons'. For what did Solomon want them? — As indicated in the verse, And the house when it was in building was made of stone made ready at the quarry, [there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building]; {*1 Kings 6:7*} He said to the Rabbis, How shall I manage [without iron tools]? —

They replied, There is the shamir which Moses brought for the stones of the ephod. He asked them, Where is it to be found? —

They replied, Bring a male and a female demon and tie them together; perhaps they know and will tell you. So he brought a male and a female demon and tied them together. They said to him, We do not know, but perhaps Ashmedai the prince of the demons knows. He said to them, Where is he? —

They answered, He is in such-and-such a mountain. He has dug a pit there, which he fills with water and covers with a stone, which he then seals with his seal. Every day he goes up to heaven and studies in the Academy of the sky and then he comes down to earth and studies in the Academy of the earth, and then he goes and examines his seal and opens [the pit] and drinks and then closes it and seals it again and goes away. Solomon thereupon sent thither Benaiah son of Jehoiada, giving him a chain on which was graven the [Divine] Name and a ring on which was graven the Name and fleeces of wool and bottles of wine. Benaiah went and dug a pit lower down the hill and let the water flow into it {from Ashmedai's pit by means of a tunnel connecting the two} and stopped [the hollow] With the fleeces of wool, and he then dug a pit higher up and poured the wine into it {so that it should flow into Ashmedai's pit} and then filled up the pits. He then went and sat on a tree.

When Ashmedai came he examined the seal, then opened the pit and found it full of wine. He said, it is written, Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whosoever erreth thereby is not wise, {*Proverbs 20:1*} and it is also written, Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the

³⁷ From p. 441 in the Vintage edition of 2003.

understanding. {*Hosea* 4:11} I will not drink it. Growing thirsty, however, he could not resist, and he drank till he became drunk, and fell asleep. Benaiahu then came down and threw the chain over him and fastened it.

When he awoke he began to struggle, whereupon he [Benaiahu] said, The Name of thy Master is upon thee, the Name of thy Master is upon thee. As he was bringing him along, he came to a palm tree and rubbed against it and down it came. He came to a house and knocked it down. He came to the hut of a certain widow. She came out {68b:} and besought him, and he bent down so as not to touch it, thereby breaking a bone. He said, That bears out the verse, A soft tongue breaketh the bone {*Proverbs* 25:15} He saw a blind man straying from his way and he put him on the right path. He saw a drunken man losing his way and he put him on his path. He saw a wedding procession making its way merrily and he wept. He heard a man say to a shoemaker, Make me a pair of shoes that will last seven years, and he laughed. He saw a diviner practicing divinations and he laughed. When they reached Jerusalem he was not taken to see Solomon for three days. On the first day he asked, Why does the king not want to see me? They replied, Because he has over-drunken himself. So he took a brick and placed it on top of another. When they reported this to Solomon he said to them, What he meant to tell you was, Give him more to drink.

On the next day he said to them, Why does the king not want to see me? They replied, Because he has over-eaten himself. He thereupon took one brick from off the other and placed it on the ground. When they reported this to Solomon, he said, He meant to tell you to keep food away from me. After three days he went in to see him. He took a reed and measured four cubits and threw it in front of him, saying, See now, when you die you will have no more than four cubits in this world. Now, however, you have subdued the whole world, yet you are not satisfied till you subdue me too. He replied: I want nothing of you. What I want is to build the Temple and I require the Shamir. He said: It is not in my hands, it is in the hands of the Prince of the Sea who gives it only to the woodpecker, {Literally, 'Cock of the prairie'.}³⁸ to whom he trusts it on oath.

What does the bird do with it? — He takes it to a mountain where there is no cultivation and puts it on the edge of the rock which thereupon splits, and he then takes seeds from trees and brings them and throws them into the opening and things grow there. (This is what the *Targum* means by Nagar Tura). {Literally, 'One that saws'³⁹ the rock': the rendering in *Targum Onkelos* of the Hebrew *dukhifat*, generally rendered by hoopoe; *Leviticus* 11:19.} So they found out a woodpecker's nest with young in it, and covered it over with white glass. When the bird came it wanted to get in but could not, so it went and brought the Shamir and placed it on the glass. Benaiahu thereupon gave a shout, and it dropped [the Shamir] and he took it, and the bird went and committed suicide on account of its oath.

Benaiahu said to Ashmedai, Why when you saw that blind man going out of his way did you put him right? He replied: It has been proclaimed of him in heaven that he is a wholly righteous man, and that whoever does him a kindness will be worthy of the future world. And why when you saw the drunken man going out of his way did you put him right? He replied, They have

³⁸ I disagree with the Soncino translation rendering this with 'woodpecker'. This is now understood to be a name for the hoopoe, which indeed in international folklore is a magic bird. Moreover, consider the hoopoe's association with King Solomon in Islam: according to the *Qur'ān* (27:20), the hoopoe is King Solomon's messenger. The standard Greek name for 'hoopoe' was, and still is, *Epops* (Arnott, *infra*, s.v.), but there were other names as well; e.g., *Makesikranos* (Arnott, *infra*, s.v.), because of the bird's crest resembling ancient Greek "war helmets, which were often surmounted by a tuft of horse-hair" (Arnott 2007, p. 135).

Another name for 'hoopoe', *Alektryōn agrios* (Arnott, *infra*, s.v.) — literally, 'Wild Cock' (ἄλεκτρυόν ἄγριος) — is quite relevant to rabbinic bird-names, because it provides confirmation for the scholarly insight that rabbinic Aramaic and Syriac *tarnegol bara* actually means 'hoopoe'. W. Geoffrey Arnott, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London: Routledge, 2007. Cf. in Alderton (*infra*, p. 184), s.v. 'Hoopoe: Eurasian hoopoe *Upupa epops*': "The distinctive appearance of these birds helps to identify them with relative ease, especially as they are most likely to be observed *in open country*. When in flight, the broad shape of the wings is clearly visible and the tall crest is held flat over the back of the head. Hoopoes often raise their crest on landing, however." David Alderton, *The New Encyclopedia of British, European & African Birds*, with illustrations by Peter Barrett, London: Select Editions (Anness Publishing), 2004.

³⁹ *Naggār* denotes a carpenter, but here it is a variant of *naqqar*, 'pecker'. The hoopoe keeps pecking in the field (as opposed to chicken, other crested birds, which peck in the courtyard instead of in the field). Cf. Y.N. Epstein, "Remains of *Dvei Rabbi Yishma'el to Leviticus*" (in Hebrew), in *Sefer Krauss*, Jerusalem, 1937, pp. 30–33; and on p. 32 in David Talshir, *The Nomenclature of the Fauna in the Samaritan Targum* (in Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1981.

proclaimed concerning him in heaven that he is wholly wicked, and I conferred a boon on him in order that he may consume [here] his share [in the future]. {That there may remain no share for him to enjoy in the hereafter.} Why when you saw the wedding procession did you weep? He said: The husband will die within thirty days, and she will have to wait for the brother-in-law who is still a child of thirteen years {before he can release her give her from the obligation of a levirate marriage, and enable her to marry again.}. Why, when you heard a man say to the shoemaker, Make me shoes to last seven years, did you laugh? He replied: That man has not seven days to live, and he wants shoes for seven years! Why when you saw that diviner divining did you laugh? He said: He was sitting on a royal treasure: he should have divined what was beneath him.

Solomon kept him with him until he had built the Temple. One day when he was alone with him, he said, it is written, He hath as it were To'afoth and Re'em, {Numbers 24:8, usually understood to mean 'the strength of a wild ox'.} and we explain that To'afoth means the ministering angels and Re'em means the demons. {So *Targum Onkelos*, the Jewish canonic late antique translation into Aramaic.} What is your superiority over us? {That you should be a standard of comparison for Israel.} He said to him, Take the chain off me and give me your ring, and I will show you. So he took the chain off him and gave him the ring. He then swallowed him {but it could be alternatively understand to mean 'it' (the ring)}, and placing one wing on the earth and one on the sky he hurled him four hundred parasangs.⁴⁰ In reference to that incident Solomon said, What profit is there to a man in all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun. {*Ecclesiastes* 1:3.}

And this was my portion from all my labor. {*Ecclesiastes* 2:10.} What is referred to by 'this'? — Rab and Samuel gave different answers, one saying that it meant his staff and the other that it meant his apron. {It could be alternatively understood to mean 'his platter'.} He used to go round begging, saying wherever he went, I Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem. {*Ecclesiastes* 1:12.} When he came to the Sanhedrin, the Rabbis said: Let us see, a madman does not stick to one thing only. {I.e., if Solomon were mad, he would show it by other things as well.} What is the meaning of this? They asked Benaiah, Does the king send for you? He replied, No. They sent to the queens saying, Does the king visit you? They sent back word, Yes, he does. They then sent to them to say, Examine his leg. {Because a demon's legs are like those of a cock, cf. in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Berakhot* 6a.} They sent back to say, He comes in stockings, and he visits them in the time of their separation and he also calls for Bathsheba his mother. They then sent for Solomon and gave him the chain and the ring on which the Name was engraved. When he went in, Ashmedai on catching sight of him flew away, but he remained in fear of him, therefore is it written, Behold it is the litter of Solomon, threescore mighty met, are about it of the mighty men of Israel. They all handle the sword and are expert in war, every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. {*Song of Songs* 3:7–8.}

Rab and Samuel differed [about Solomon]. One said that Solomon was first a king and then a commoner, and the other that he was first a king and then a commoner and then a king again.

The story of the impostor replacing King Solomon⁴¹ is similar to the story (from Achaemenid Persia) of Smerdis, as related by Herodotus, and the claim that there had been an impostor replacing Smerdis may have been part of Darius' royal propaganda in order to justify his kingship even though he was not of Cyrus' offspring. Quite possibly there was no impostor, and Darius and a few supporters made up the story in order to justify his killing the actual Smerdis, son of Cyrus, and seizing the throne for himself. It is likely that the story about the magus impostor inspired all the stories we have been considering, about an impostor

⁴⁰ In early rabbinic Hebrew, *parsah* as being a measure of length denotes a Persian parasang. A parasang was equal to nearly 6,300 metres, according to what is understood to have been meant by Herodotus, or to 5,940 metres according to Xenophon. In the Ottoman Empire, a *fersah* was a measure of length equal to 5,685 metres. In Modern Hebrew, *parsah* used to stand for a verst (Russian *versta*), a Russian measure of length equal to 3,500 feet (1,067 metres). The native Hebrew noun *parsah* is a different lexeme. It denotes 'hoof'. This is apt, as transport depended upon hoofed animals. By coincidence, in ancient Italic one finds the compound *petur-pursus* as being equivalent to Latin *quadrupedibus*, 'by means of quadrupeds' (where *petur* 'four' = Latin *quattuor*).

⁴¹ Cf. in Ephraim Nissan, "Tale Variants and Analysis in Episodic Formulae: Early Ottoman, Elizabethan, and "Solomonic" Versions". In: Nachum Dershowitz and Ephraim Nissan (eds.), *Language, Culture, Computation: Essays Dedicated to Yaacov Choueka* (3 vols.), Vol. 2: *Computing for Humanities, Law, and Narrative* (LNCS, vol. 8002), Heidelberg: Springer, 2013 [2014] (in press).

replacing a king and being believed to be the real king. The following is quoted from Herodotus, as translated from the Greek by the Rev. William Beloe:⁴²

LXVIII. In the eighth month he was detected in the following manner: Otanes, son of Pharnaspes, was of the first rank of the Persians, both with regard to birth and affluence. This nobleman was the first who suspected that this was not Smerdis, the son of Cyrus; and was induced to suppose who he really was, from his never quitting the citadel, and from his not inviting any of the nobles to his presence. Suspicious of the imposture, he took these measures: — He had a daughter named Phaedyra, who had been married to Cambyses, and whom, with the other wives of the late king, the usurper had taken for himself. Otanes sent a message to her, to know whether she cohabited with Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, or with any other person. She returned for answer, "that she could not tell, as she had never seen Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, nor did she know the person with whom she cohabited." Otanes sent a second time to his daughter: "If," says he, "you do not know the person of Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, inquire of Atossa who it is with whom you and she cohabit, for she must necessarily know her brother."⁴³ To which she thus replied, "I can neither speak to Atossa, nor indeed see any of the women who live with him. Since this person, whoever he is, came to the throne, the women have all been kept separate."

LXIX. This reply more and more justified the suspicions of Otanes; he sent, therefore, a third time to his daughter: "My daughter", he observed, "it becomes you, who are noble born, to

⁴² Translated from the Greek by the Rev. William Beloe. Published London: Jones & Co., new revised edn., 1831. The quotation is from pp. 159–160.

⁴³ In Zoroastrian society, as early as the Achaemenid Empire and as late as the end of the Sasanian Empire which preceded Islamisation and the Caliphate, marriage between siblings was condoned or even encouraged. Institutionalised incestuous unions (*khwēdōdah*) among Persian royalty, as well as Egypt's Pharaonic and then Ptolemaic royalty, could not have been eluded the attention of late antique apologetic literature. Concerning Sassanian Iran, Christian sources referred indeed to incestuous unions among the Zoroastrians. See: Antonio Panaino, "The Zoroastrian Incestuous Unions in Christian Sources and Canonical Laws: Their (Distorted) Aetiology and Some Other Problems", in *Controverses des chrétiens dans l'Iran sassanide* (Studia Iranica, cahier 36 – Chrétiens en terre d'Iran, 2), edited by Christelle Jullien, Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2008; O. Bucci, "Il matrimonio fra consanguinei (*khvētūdās*) nella tradizione giuridica delle genti iraniche", *Apollinaris*, vol. 51, 1978, pp. 291–319; R.N. Frye, "Zoroastrian Incest", in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, eds. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1985, pp. 445–455; E.W. West, "The Meaning of Khvētūk-das", *Pahlavi Texts*, Part II, Oxford University Press, 1882, pp. 389–430, and an opposite view in D.P. Sanjana, "The Alleged Practice of Consanguineous Marriages in Ancient Iran", in *The Collected Works of the Late Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana*, Bombay: British India Press, 1932, pp. 462–499; M^a Olalla Garcia, "*Xwēdōdah*: El matrimonio consanguíneo en la Persia sasánida. Una comparación entre fuentes pahlavíes y grego-latinas", *Iberia: Revista de la Antigüedad*, 4 (2001), pp. 181–198.

In Pharaonic and then Ptolemaic Egypt, kings would marry their sister. Russell Middleton points out (1962, p. 605): "The one fairly certain case of the marriage of a commoner to his sister in the Pharaonic period, however, occurs in the 22nd Dynasty during the reign of Sheshonk III (823–772 B.C.)." Concerning the Roman period however (*ibid.*, p. 606): "Unlike some of the earlier types of evidence which may be subject to differing interpretations, these documents of a technical character have an "indisputable precision." Egyptologists have been aware of this evidence at least since 1883, when Wilcken concluded from his study of some papyri that marriage between brothers and sisters occurred often during the Roman period. Among the marriages recorded in the fragments which he examined, marriages between brother and sister were in an absolute majority. Moreover, most of the marriages were with full sisters, not half sisters." Eventually that custom abated (*ibid.*, p. 607): "There are no examples of brother-sister marriage occurring after 212 A.D., but Diocletian's issuance of an edict in 295 condemning such marriages suggests that they were still occasionally practiced." See: Russell Middleton, "Brother-Sister and Father-Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt", *American Sociological Review*, 27(5), 1962, pp. 603–611; and more recently: Brent D. Shaw, "Explaining Incest: Brother-Sister Marriage in Graeco-Roman Egypt", *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 27(2), 1991, pp. 267–299 [replies and comments by Ray Abrahams, "Explaining Incest in Graeco-Roman Egypt", *Man*, vol. 28(3), 1993, p. 599 (less than half page); and by Raymond Firth, "Contingency of the Incest Taboo", *Man*, 29, 1994, pp. 712–713]. Brent show also co-authored with R.P. Saller the paper "Close-Kin Marriage in Roman Society?", *Man*, 19 (1984), pp. 432–444.

engage in a dangerous enterprize, [sic] when you father commands you. If this Smerdis is not the son of Cyrus, but the man whom I suspect, he ought not, possessing your person, and the sovereignty of Persia, to escape with impunity. Do this, therefore — when next you shall be admitted to his bed, and shall observe that he is asleep, examine whether he has any ears; if he has, you may be secure you are with Smerdis, the son of Cyrus; but if he has not, it can be no other, than Smerdis, one of the magi." To this Phaedyra replied, "That she would obey him, notwithstanding the danger she incurred; being well assured, that if he has no ears, and should discover her in endeavouring to know this, she should instantly be put to death." Cyrus had in his life deprived this Smerdis of his ears for some atrocious crime. [p. 160:] Phaedyra complied in all respects with the injunctions of her father. The wives of the Persians sleep with their husbands by turns. When this lady next slept with the magus, as soon as she saw him in a profound sleep, she tried to touch his ears, and being perfectly satisfied that he had none, as soon as it was day, she communicated the intelligence to her father.

LXX. Otanes instantly revealed the secret to Aspathines and Gobryas, two of the noblest of the Persians, upon whose fidelity he could depend, and who had themselves suspected the imposture. It was agreed that each should disclose the business to the friend in whom he most confided. Otanes therefore chose Intaphernes; Gobryas, Megabyzus; and Aspathines, Hydarnes. The conspirators being thus six in number, Darius, son of Hystaspes, arrives at Susa, from Persia, where his father was governor: when they instantly agreed to make him also an associate.

LXXI. These even men met, and after mutual vows of fidelity consulted together. As soon as Darius was to speak, he thus addressed his confederates: "I was of the opinion that the death of Smerdis, son of Cyrus, and the usurpation of the magus, were circumstances known only to myself; and my immediate purpose in coming here, was to accomplish the usurper's death. But since you are also acquainted with the matter, I think that all delay will be dangerous, and that we should instantly execute our intentions." [...]

A legend related to a late antique superstition from Mesopotamia also had it that Asmodaeus was dangerous to those drinking an even rather than odd number of cups of wine. The following is quoted from the Soncino English translation of the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Pesachim*, 110a (their brackets, my braces enclosing annotations based on their notes):

Our Rabbis taught: He who drinks in pairs, his blood is upon his own head. Said Rab Judah: When is that? If he had not seen the street {i.e., if he does not go out between the drinks}; but if he has seen the street, he is at liberty [to drink a second cup]. R. Ashi said: I saw that R. Hanania b. Bibi used to go out and see the street at each cup. Now we have said [this] {that pairs are harmful} only [if he intends] to set out on a journey [after drinking]; but [if he intends to stay] at home, it is not [harmful]. R. Zera observed: And going to sleep is like setting out on a journey.

R. Papa said: And going to the privy is like setting out on a journey. Now [if [he intends to stay] at home it is not [dangerous]? Yet surely Raba counted the beams, {i.e., at each cup he mentally counted one beam, to ensure not drinking in pairs (as by adding the beam he obtained an odd number)} while when Abaye had drunk one cup, his mother would offer him two cups in her two hands {At each cup he mentally counted one beam, to ensure not drinking in pairs}; again, when R. Nahman b. Isaac had drunk two cups, his attendant would offer him one cup; [if he had drunk] one cup, he would offer him two cups in his two hands? {Though in these cases they were remaining at home.} — An important person is different. {The demons are at greater pains to hurt him; hence he is endangered even when staying at home.}

'Ulla said: Ten cups are not subject to [the danger of] pairs. 'Ulla is consistent with his view, for 'Ulla said, while others maintain, it was taught in a Baraita: The Sages instituted ten cups in a mourner's house. Now if you should think that ten cups are subject to [the danger of] pairs, how could our Rabbis arise and enact a regulation whereby one is led into danger! But eight are subject to 'pairs.' {We skip some text here.}

R. Joseph said: The demon Joseph told me [that] Ashmedai the king of the demons is appointed over all pairs.' {i.e., those who drink in pairs are at his mercy} and a king is not designated a harmful spirit. {It is beneath a king's dignity to cause hurt. Hence there is generally no danger in pairs (though occasionally he may disregard his dignity, as Rashbam explained. The exegete Rabbi Solomon ben Meir (b. ca. 1080 and d. ca. 1160) known as Rashbam acronymsly, was a grandson of the famous commentator Rashi, and the elder brother of another major scholar, Rabbenu Tam.)} Others explain it in the opposite sense: On the contrary,

a king is quick-tempered [and] does whatever he wishes, for a king can break through a wall to make a pathway for himself and none may stay him. {Hence the danger is all the greater.}

R. Papa said, Joseph the demon told me: For two we kill; for four we do not kill, [but] for four we harm [the drinker]. For two [we hurt] whether [they are drunk] unwittingly or deliberately; for four, only if it is deliberate, but not if it is unwitting. And if a man forgot himself and happened to go out {after drinking 'pairs'}, what is his remedy? Let him take his right-hand thumb in his left hand and his left-hand thumb in his right hand and say thus: 'Ye [two thumbs] and I, surely that is three! {Thus breaking the spell of pairs.} But if he hears one saying, 'Ye and I, surely that is four!' let him retort to him, 'Ye and I are surely five!' And if he hears one saying, 'Ye and I are six,' let him retort to him, 'Ye and I are seven. {And so on.} This once happened until a hundred and one, and the demon burst [with mortification].

10. Prince Saturn and Abdemon of Tyre as Being King Solomon's Contenders

In the literature of Latin Christendom, "Solomon was set in opposition to two particular characters" (21): in Old English prose and verse, this is "a Chaldean pagan named Saturn" (21), a prince, who represents heathen wisdom. Saturn poses a question and Solomon "gives an answer — and has the last word. The pattern is reversed later when Solomon comes to be embroiled in dialogues and narratives with a wily peasant called Marcolf" (22). "Marcolf's land" is a land the Chaldean Saturn visited, in an Old English text. *M&S* introduces Marcolf as coming from the East. The medieval Guido de Bazoches claimed that Solomon's opponent in disputation, Abdemon of Tyre (mentioned by Josephus) is commonly called Marcolf. In the 1180s, William of Tyre made Marcolf into Abdemon's son or grandson (22). Unlike other contenders challenging Solomon's wisdom (the Queen of Sheba, Abdemon, Saturn), "the unruly trickster Marcolf steadfastly refuses to operate on the same lofty or at least sententious plane as Solomon seeks to occupy" (23–24). In 1848, Kemble was quoting from Josephus:

HISTORY OF THE LEGEND. 9

book into the West also. Josephus, himself a jew deeply versed in the traditions of his country, is the earliest profane author with whom I am acquainted who notices the story; at the same time he derives his information from still older authorities, namely Dios and Menander of Ephesus. The Saturn or Marcolf of our legend is with him Abdimus the son of Abdæmon of Tyre, and the allusion to him is as follows:—

ἐπὶ τούτου ἦν Ἀβδῆμονος παῖς νεώτερος, ὃς αἰεὶ ἐνίκα τὰ προβλήματα ἃ ἐπέτασσε Σολομῶν ὁ Ἱεροσολύμων βασιλεύς. μνημονεύει δὲ καὶ Δίος, λέγων οὕτως· “Ἀβιβάλου τελευτήσαντος, υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Εἴραμος ἐβασίλευσεν τὸν δὲ τυραννοῦντα Ἱεροσολύμων Σολομῶνα πέμψαι φησὶ πρὸς τὸν Εἴραμον αἰνίγματα, καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν ἀξιουντα· τὸν δὲ, μὴ δυνηθέντα διακρίναι τῷ λύσαντι χρήματα

From p. 9 in Kemble's *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus*.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ <https://archive.org/details/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft> A black and white version of the same book is at http://scans.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/2/3/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft/dialogueofsalomo00kembuoft_bw.pdf

10

SALOMON AND SATURN.

ἀποτίνειν. ὁμολογήσαντα δὲ τὸν Εἴραμον, καὶ μὴ δυναθέντα λύσαι τὰ αἰνίγματα, πολλὰ τῶν χρημάτων εἰς τὸ ἐπιζήμιον ἀναλώσαι. εἶτα δι' Ἀβδήμονα τινα Τύριον ἄνδρα τὰ προτεθέντα λύσαι, καὶ αὐτὸν ἄλλα προβαλεῖν, ἃ μὴ λύσαντα τὸν Σολομῶνα, πολλὰ τῷ Εἰράμῳ προσ-
αποτίσαι χρήματα." καὶ Δίος μὲν οὕτως εἶρηκεν.

Jos. Antiq. viii. 5. (Oxon. fol. 1720. vol. i. p. 353.)

The same transaction, though with a different result, is alluded to in another passage, immediately preceding the quotations from Menander and Dios :—

καὶ σοφίσματα δὲ καὶ λόγους αἰνιγματώδεις διεπέμψατο πρὸς τὸν Σολομῶνα ὁ τῶν Τυρίων βασιλεὺς, παρακαλῶν ὅπως αὐτῷ τούτους σαφηνίσῃ, καὶ τὰς ἀπορίας τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ζητουμένων ἀπαλλάξῃ· τὸν δὲ δεινὸν ὄντα καὶ συνετὸν, οὐδὲν τούτων παρήλθεν· ἀλλὰ πάντα νικήσας τῷ λογισμῷ, καὶ μαθὼν αὐτῶν τὴν διάνοιαν ἐφώτισε.

Again, in his treatise against Appion, lib. i., he repeats this assertion from Menander of Ephesus (vol. ii. 1341) in very much the same words as above, and in p. 1340 from Dios, with the slight but proper variation, εἶτα δὲ, Ἀβδήμονά τινα, etc.

From a footnote — the bottom of p. 10 — in Kemble's *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus*.

I quote from the English translation of Flavius Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* by William Whiston,⁴⁵ as per its modernised now posted online in the framework of the Gutenberg Project. The following is Book VIII, Chapter 5; consider its third section in particular:

CHAPTER 5. How Solomon Built Himself A Royal Palace, Very Costly And Splendid; And How He Solved The Riddles Which Were Sent Him By Hiram.

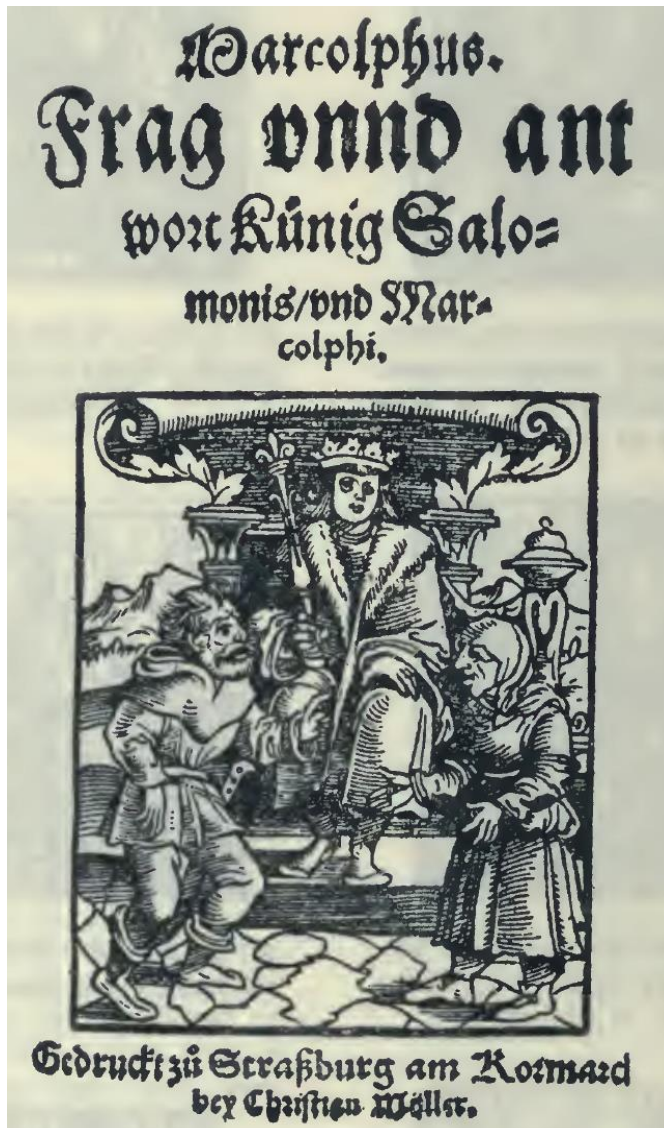
1. After the building of the temple, which, as we have before said, was finished in seven years, the king laid the foundation of his palace, which he did not finish under thirteen years, for he was not equally zealous in the building of this palace as he had been about the temple; for as to that, though it was a great work, and required wonderful and surprising application, yet God, for whom it was made, so far co-operated therewith, that it was finished in the forementioned number of years: but the palace, which was a building much inferior in dignity to the temple, both on account that its materials had not been so long beforehand gotten ready, nor had been so zealously prepared, and on account that this was only a habitation for kings, and not for God, it was longer in

⁴⁵ "William Whiston (9 December 1667 – 22 August 1752) was an English theologian, historian, and mathematician, a leading figure in the popularisation of the ideas of Isaac Newton. He is now probably best known for his translation of the *Antiquities of the Jews* and other works by Josephus, his *A New Theory of the Earth*, and his Arianism." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Whiston

finishing. However, this building was raised so magnificently, as suited the happy state of the Hebrews, and of the king thereof. But it is necessary that I describe the entire structure and disposition of the parts, that so those that light upon this book may thereby make a conjecture, and, as it were, have a prospect of its magnitude.

2. This house was a large and curious building, and was supported by many pillars, which Solomon built to contain a multitude for hearing causes, and taking cognizance of suits. It was sufficiently capacious to contain a great body of men, who would come together to have their causes determined. It was a hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, and thirty high, supported by quadrangular pillars, which were all of cedar; but its roof was according to the Corinthian order, [14] with folding doors, and their adjoining pillars of equal magnitude, each fluted with three cavities; which building as at once firm, and very ornamental. There was also another house so ordered, that its entire breadth was placed in the middle; it was quadrangular, and its breadth was thirty cubits, having a temple over against it, raised upon massy pillars; in which temple there was a large and very glorious room, wherein the king sat in judgment. To this was joined another house that was built for his queen. There were other smaller edifices for diet, and for sleep, after public matters were over; and these were all floored with boards of cedar. Some of these Solomon built with stones of ten cubits, and wainscoted the walls with other stones that were sawed, and were of great value, such as are dug out of the earth for the ornaments of temples, and to make fine prospects in royal palaces, and which make the mines whence they are dug famous. Now the contexture of the curious workmanship of these stones was in three rows, but the fourth row would make one admire its sculptures, whereby were represented trees, and all sorts of plants; with the shades that arose from their branches, and leaves that hung down from them. Those trees and plants covered the stone that was beneath them, and their leaves were wrought so prodigious thin and subtle, that you would think they were in motion; but the other part up to the roof, was plastered over, and, as it were, embroidered with colors and pictures. He, moreover, built other edifices for pleasure; as also very long cloisters, and those situate in an agreeable place of the palace; and among them a most glorious dining room, for feasting and comutations, and full of gold, and such other furniture as so fine a room ought to have for the conveniency of the guests, and where all the vessels were made of gold. Now it is very hard to reckon up the magnitude and the variety of the royal apartments; how many rooms there were of the largest sort, how many of a bigness inferior to those, and how many that were subterraneous and invisible; the curiosity of those that enjoyed the fresh air; and the groves for the most delightful prospect, for the avoiding the heat, and covering of their bodies. And, to say all in brief, Solomon made the whole building entirely of white stone, and cedar wood, and gold, and silver. He also adorned the roofs and walls with stones set in gold, and beautified them thereby in the same manner as he had beautified the temple of God with the like stones. He also made himself a throne of prodigious bigness, of ivory, constructed as a seat of justice, and having six steps to it; on every one of which stood, on each end of the step two lions, two other lions standing above also; but at the sitting place of the throne hands came out and received the king; and when he sat backward, he rested on half a bullock, that looked towards his back; but still all was fastened together with gold.

3. When Solomon had completed all this in twenty years' time, because Hiram king of Tyre had contributed a great deal of gold, and more silver to these buildings, as also cedar wood and pine wood, he also rewarded Hiram with rich presents; corn he sent him also year by year, and wine and oil, which were the principal things that he stood in need of, because he inhabited an island, as we have already said. And besides these, he granted him certain cities of Galilee, twenty in number, that lay not far from Tyre; which, when Hiram went to, and viewed, and did not like the gift, he sent word to Solomon that he did not want such cities as they were; and after that time these cities were called the land of Cabul; which name, if it be interpreted according to the language of the Phoenicians, denotes what does not please. Moreover, the king of Tyre sent sophisms and enigmatical sayings to Solomon, and desired he would solve them, and free them from the ambiguity that was in them. Now so sagacious and understanding was Solomon, that none of these problems were too hard for him; but he conquered them all by his reasonings, and discovered their hidden meaning, and brought it to light. Menander also, one who translated the Tyrian archives out of the dialect of the Phoenicians into the Greek language, makes mention of these two kings, where he says thus: "When Abibalus was dead, his son Hiram received the kingdom from him, who, when he had lived fifty-three years, reigned thirty-four. He raised a bank in the large place, and dedicated the golden pillar which is in Jupiter's temple. He also went and cut down materials of timber out of the mountain called Libanus, for the roof of temples; and when he had pulled down the ancient temples, he both built the temple of Hercules and that of Astarte; and he first set



A woodcut from a German print of Marcolphus from 1555. From Paul Heitz, *Strassburger Holzschnitte zu Dietrich von Bern. – Herzog Ernst. – Der Hürnen Seyfrid. – Marcolphus. Mit 89 Abbildungen, wovon 42 von Original-Holzstocken gedruckt.* (Drucke und Holzschnitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts, XV.) Strassburg: J.H.Ed. Heitz, 1922.

The woodcut illustrations only from the 1555 edition printed in Paul Heitz, book of 1922, are now posted online: <https://archive.org/details/strassburgerholz00heituoft>

up the temple of Hercules in the month Peritius; he also made an expedition against the Euchii, or Titii, who did not pay their tribute, and when he had subdued them to himself he returned. Under this king there was Abdemon, a very youth in age, who always conquered the difficult problems which Solomon, king of Jerusalem, commanded him to explain. Dius also makes mention of him, where he says thus: 'When Abibalus was dead, his son Hiram reigned. He raised the eastern parts of the city higher, and made the city itself larger. He also joined the temple of Jupiter, which before stood by itself, to the city, by raising a bank in the middle between them; and he adorned it with donations of gold. Moreover, he went up to Mount Libanus, and cut down materials of wood for the building of the temples.' He says also, that Solomon, who was then king of Jerusalem, sent riddles to Hiram, and desired to receive the like from him, but that he who could not solve them should pay money to them that did solve them, and that Hiram accepted the conditions; and when he was not able to solve the riddles proposed by Solomon, he paid a great deal of money for his fine; but that he afterward did solve the proposed riddles by means of Abdemon, a man of Tyre; and that Hiram proposed other riddles, which, when Solomon could not solve, he paid back a great deal of money to Hiram." This it is which Dius wrote.

Kemble (p. 10) claimed that in the Hebrew Bible one can find the germ of the Marcolfian tradition, namely, in the Queen of Sheba visiting King Solomon in order to question him, but all the more so, in the character of Hiram the artist (whose ancestry from his mother side was from one of the tribes of Israel), send by Hiram, King of Tyre, to Solomon.

But the commendation given by Hiram of Tyre to Hiram the artist whom he sent to Salomon seems yet more in point, and serves to suggest that Abdimus, the son of Abdæmon,

HISTORY OF THE LEGEND.

11

and Hiram, the son of the woman of the daughters of Dan, are in character very nearly connected. Hiram, in his letter, says (2 Chron. ii. 13), "And now I have sent a cunning man (endued with understanding) of Hiram my father's; the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre: skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, *and to find out every device which shall be put unto him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of David thy father.*"

Now, whatever relation may be supposed to exist between Hiram and Abdimus, it is quite clear that as early as the twelfth century a very close one was recognised between Abdimus and Marcolf; for William of Tyre (*Gesta Dei per Francos*, vol. ii. p. 834) says, "Ex hac nihilominus urbe (viz. Tyre) fuit Abdimus adolescens, Abdæmonis filius, qui Salomonis omnia sophismata, et verba parabolorum ænigmatica, quæ Hiram regi Tyrriorum solvenda mittebat, mirâ solvebat subtilitate, De quo ita legitur in Josepho. Ant. lib. 8, etc. etc.....Et hic fortasse est quem fabulosæ popularium narrationes *Marcolfum* vocant, de quo dicitur, quod Salomonis solvebat ænigmata, et ei respondebat, æquipollenter iterum solvenda proponens." It is important here that William speaks of the story as popular at this period among his countrymen; whether by *populares* we understand Europeans, or Asiatics, a point as yet unsettled. But supposing us to adopt the most unfavourable supposition, viz. that William was an Asiatic, we must not admit that the story was not current in Europe till spread there by the Crusaders. It

Plainly, Kemble was speaking of Europeans being acquainted with Marcolf stories. Kemble (pp. 13–14) proposed that *within* the Marcolfian tradition there was a dichotomy between such narratives in which the disputation was serious, and such were it was just playful or humorous:

3. Rambaut d'Aurenga, a Provençal poet who died in 1173, and was therefore a contemporary of William of Tyre, notices the legend in the following words :—

14

SALOMON AND SATURN.

Cil que m'a vout trist alegre
 sab mais, qui vol sos dits segre,
 que Salamos ni Marcols,
 de faig rics ab ditz entendre ;
 e cai leu d'aut en la pols
 qui s pliu en aitals bretols.

(Cited by M. de Rohegude in his *Essai d'un Glossaire Occitanien*. Thoul, 1819 in voc. *Bretols**)

Now in this passage the words “knows more than Salomon or Marcolf,” seem to imply a serious version of the story, in which a real struggle for the palm of knowledge was maintained; consequently one resembling the Anglo-Saxon versions, and those known to Notker and William of Tyre; and, on the other hand, different from the German, Latin and French forms, which will be noticed hereafter.

11. Why Nebuchadnezzar, in *Pseudo-Sirach*? King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, and his Demonic Acquaintances

In his 1984 Hebrew book on the medieval Hebrew texts on Ben Sira (cf. Eli Yassif, “Pseudo Ben Sira and the ‘Wisdom Questions’ Tradition in the Middle Ages”, *Fabula*, 23 [1982], 48–63), Yassif remarked that Nebuchadnezzar, the king outwitted by the wonder child Ben Sira (claimed to be Jeremiah’s son), according to a late antique tradition was the offspring of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

This ancestry may be a link to Solomon’s disputations. *Pseudo Ben Sira* (unmentioned by Ziolkowski) is irreverent (to Joshua and David), and on occasion reminds of Marcolf’s obsession with farting: Ben Sira’s heals the King’s daughter from her non-stop flatulence, then angers the King by refusing to marry her.

Sarit Shalev-Eyni,⁴⁶ a Hebrew University art historian, has shown the importance of taking into consideration *Pseudo Sirach* (she calls it *Pseudo Ben Sira*) when discussing

⁴⁶ Sarit Shalev-Eyni, “Solomon, his Demons and Jongleurs: The Meeting of Islamic, Judaic and Christian Culture”, *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, 18(2), London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 145–160.

traditions concerning demons in King Solomon's entourage, traditions rooted in Hellenistic Jewish lore (as early as the *Hygromanteia* and the *Testament of Solomon*,⁴⁷ and in a brief reference⁴⁸ in Josephus' *Antiquities*), as well as the importance, in the same context, of *Salomon et Marculfus*:⁴⁹

Although some early apologetic sources written in Greek attacked Solomon for his surrender to the demons,⁵⁰ the Church Fathers and theologians tended not only to ignore his inglorious end,⁵¹ but also to suppress his relations with demonic beings. The magic Shamir⁵² mentioned in the Talmud⁵³ is known in Latin and German sources from the twelfth century on,⁵⁴ but the critical undertone concerning Solomon's sins and his tragic end found an outlet [p. 156:] in profane parodies rather than in Church doctrine. One such parody is the late twelfth-century German epic version known as "Salman und Morolf", telling of Salman, a weak and helpless king married to a treacherous gentile wife (Salme), who runs away with her lovers. Morolf, Salman's brother, is his adviser and messenger, who goes on a long journey in order to retrieve the recalcitrant queen. He is represented as a contemporary Spielman, mocking the weak king and manipulating him and all his surroundings through sophisticated tricks and the changing forms which he incessantly adopts. Another parodic version is the thirteenth-century Latin "Salomon et Marculfus", translated in the same period into German under the title: "Salomon und Markolf". Here the dialogue between Solomon and the demons of the Queen of Sheba becomes a dialogue between the king and Markolf who gives a mocking parody of Solomon's proverbs.⁵⁵

Whereas Markolf stands for the low and profane in contrast to the high and holy (represented by King Solomon), something that Shalev-Eyni points out also in medieval marginal manuscript illumination concerning Markolf — whose "proportions are distorted. His head is big while his body is short, his nose is thick and crooked and his donkey-like lips are large"⁵⁶ — the contraposition is the reverse in Ben Sira standing in front of Nebuchadnezzar.

"According to the medieval *Pseudo Ben Sira* the result of the dangerous intercourse between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon was the same Nebuchadnezzar who would later destroy his father's temple and exile his father's people" (Shalev-Einy, 153–154). This may be a reason indeed for Jeremiah's contemporary, King Nebuchadnezzar, appearing in a royal disputation whereas so many other texts have the wise King Solomon instead. Nebuchadnezzar's mind is no match for the child Ben Sira.

Arguably, Daniel's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar played a role. Also consider the following section, concerning Daniel's companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

⁴⁷ Dennis C. Duling, "Testament of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction", in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York: Doubleday, 1983, pp. 942–944.

⁴⁸ Shalev-Eyni (p. 149, fn. 18) cites Dennis C. Duling, "The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.42–49", *Harvard Theological Review*, 78(1/2) 1985, pp. 1–25.

⁴⁹ Shalev-Eyni, *ibid.*, pp. 155–156.

⁵⁰ Shalev-Eyni's fn. 64 cites in this regard Chester Chareton McCown, "The Christian Tradition as to the Magical Wisdom of Solomon", in *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 2 (1922), pp. 1–24, at 14–15.

⁵¹ There is a rabbinic tradition (related in the Palestinian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin*, 10:2, end) about a group of Sages from the mishnaic/talmudic era deciding that King Solomon had been a sinner, and therefore should be expelled from Paradise; at which, a heavenly voice (*bat qól*) interferes: it retorts that this is not for them to decide. Cf. *Tanḥuma*, at *Metsora*, 1.

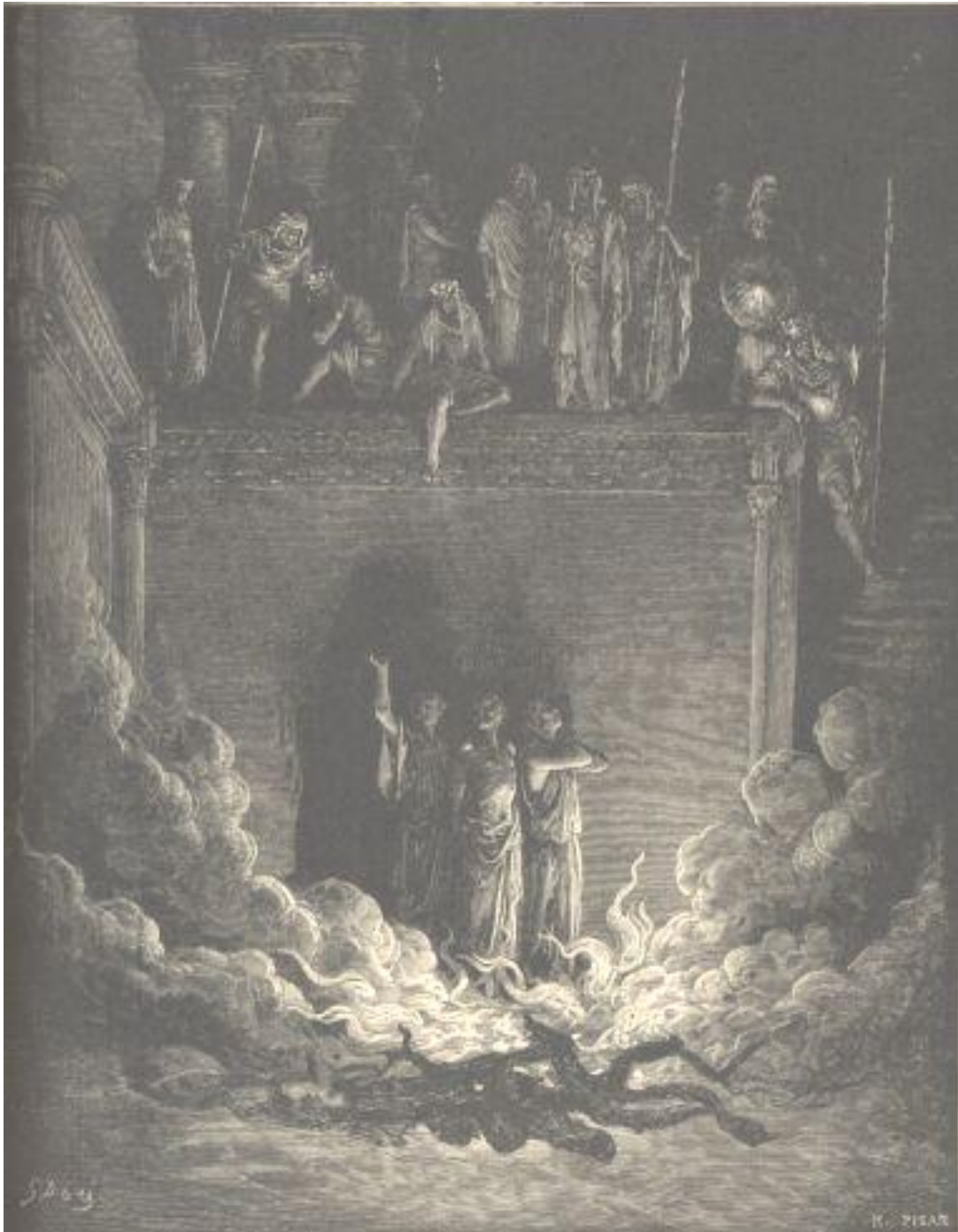
⁵² A worm capable of breaking stone. In Italian folklore, that is a feature of the dragonfly, and motivated at least one dialectal name for it; see Remo Bracchi, 'Nuove etimologie dialettali (zoonimi, qualità fisiche e anatomia umana) per il LEI', in *Quaderni di Semantica*, 28(1) (2007), pp. 137–168, discussed on pp. 145–146.

⁵³ Rabbinical tradition has it that resorting to the Shamir enabled King Solomon to build the Temple of Jerusalem (cf. *1 Kings* 6:7) without using iron tools, as there is a pentateuchal prohibition (*Deuteronomy* 27:5) on using iron in making the altar. See Shalev-Eyni, *ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵⁴ Concerning this, Shalev-Eyni (p. 155, fn. 66) cites Martin Przybilski, 'Salomos Wunderwurm: Stufen der Adaptation eines talmudischen Motivs in lateinischen und deutschen Texten des Mittelalters', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 123 (2004), pp. 19–39.

⁵⁵ Readers may wish to refer to the bibliography in Shalev-Eyni's footnotes on her p. 156.

⁵⁶ Shalev-Eyni, *ibid.*, p. 157.



The three companions in the fiery furnace, by Gustave Doré.

12. Before *Pseudo-Sirach*: Nebuchadnezzar Being Made a Fool of by Daniel's Three Companions

Chapter 3 of the *Book of Daniel* relates that Nebuchadnezzar ordered to throw into a furnace three of Daniel's companions who had refused to conform to idolatry, and that they were saved miraculously.⁵⁷ The moment when Nebuchadnezzar reacted angrily at their refusal, is

⁵⁷ The story of the three youths in the furnace, from Ch. 3 of *Daniel*, also had wide currency in Christian traditions. A medieval wall painting (with a detail) from a Nubian church, now on display at the Khartoum Museum, depicts the story of the three youths thrown into the furnace, with an angel.

reimagined in a homily by shaping the event both by reference to how his name, *Nebuchadnezzar*, could be segmented,⁵⁸ and arguably also by reference to another episode (when he lost his human reason and started to behave like an animal, only to be restored to reason and to his throne seven years afterwards).

In a passage in *Leviticus Rabbah* 33:6, the question is asked: why does the verse which relates the three's refusal, mention Nebuchadnezzar as "King Nebuchadnezzar", whereas either "the King" or "Nebuchadnezzar" would have sufficed? The answer given is that the three companions (the ones who were to survive the fiery fire) had told him — so the homily maintains — that for matters like taxation, he is the King and they would comply with his order, but when it comes to matters of worship, he is Nebuchadnezzar, and when it comes to an order for them to become renegades to their faith, they would not comply any more than they would do, if faced with a dog ("you and a dog are equal"): he could as well «bark (*nebaḥ*) like a dog, be blown up (*nepaḥ*) [distended] like a pitcher (*kad*), and chirp (*neṣar*) like a cricket.

He [Nebuchadnezzar] immediately barked like a dog, was blown up like a pitcher, and chirped like a cricket». Which is how angry or almost apoplectic you could imagine a despotic king to become, on being challenged in the quite impertinent way described (this way, the *omen* implied by the *nomen* became actualized once the person had been told how the name is to be interpreted).

Then, in the rest of the homily,⁵⁹ a verse from *Ecclesiastes* is cited in support of one having to obey a king, but not to such an extent that one would spite one's Creator. Arguably

⁵⁸ Apart from early rabbinic culture, also in Hellenistic Greek culture — among the Alexandrian scholars — there used to be a tradition of etymological wordplay. Philip Hardie (*infra*) reviews a book by James J. O'Hara, who relates this tradition to wordplay in Virgil, thus, in a Latin author from Augustan Rome. Review of J.J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1996), in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 6(2), 1999, pp. 284–286.

⁵⁹ The passage is in Aramaic, which is close enough to Hebrew for the verbs for 'to bark' and 'to blow up' to occur with respectively identical lexical roots in both languages. As to the Aramaic verb *netsar* for 'to chirp', 'to chirp', as applied to the cricket (Tannaitic Hebrew *tsartsúr*, Modern Hebrew *tsratsár*), in Tannaitic Hebrew it occurs once, and then as denoting making sounds as associated with another animal kind, pigs: the participle *notsr[in]* in that sense occurs in the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* — but then not in all versions: it does occur in the Lauterbach edition — within a sentence addressing a character used to eat pork: "Pigs are grunting from between your teeth" [i.e., it is known you eat them]; see s.v. *nSr*₂ in M. Moreshet, *A Lexicon of the New Verbs in Tannaitic Hebrew*, in Hebrew, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1980.

On the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, see M. Kadushin, *A Conceptual Approach to the Mekilta*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1981 [1969] (including Vol. 1 of Lauterbach's edition and translation); J.Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael: A Critical Edition on the Basis of Manuscripts and Early Editions with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes* (3 vols., The Schiff Library of Jewish Classics), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933–1935 (subsequently reprinted in facsimile); S. Horovitz and I.A. Rabin, *Mekhilta d'Rabbi Ismael* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem: Bamberger & Vahrman, 5720 = 1960; J. Neusner, *Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael: An Introduction to Judaism's First Scriptural Encyclopaedia* (Brown Judaic Studies, 152), Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988; Id., *Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael: An Analytical Translation* (2 vols., Brown Judaic studies, 148, 154), Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988; Id., *The Canonical History of Ideas. The Place of the So-Called Tannaitic Midrashim: Mekhilta Attributed to R. Ishmael, Sifra, Sifre to Numbers, and Sifre to Deuteronomy* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 4), Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

Moreshet's *Lexicon* cites Saul Liebermann, who before interpreting *נוצר* as being an abbreviation for the plural participle *נוצרים* (the identification of this verb being plausible on etymological grounds), had initially expressed the opinion that an emendation was required, so that one would read there the participle of the verb for "to bray" (as applied to asses), which is written *נוער* (thus differing by just one letter, which is shaped similarly).

There are tacit matches involved, too, in the homily about Nebuchadnezzar. The initial part of the personal name *Nevukhadnétsar* matches the Hebrew phrase *nafúah ke-khád* "blown-up / distended / pot-bellied like a pitcher", as well as the mixed Hebrew and Aramaic phrase (but you could make it fully Aramaic) *navóaḥ ke-ḥad [kalba]*, i.e., "to bark like [Aramaic:] 'one dog'". In fact, *ḥad kalba* is how the text of the homily is wording its equating Nebuchadnezzar to a dog. Incidentally, rabbinic texts, especially in homiletics, tended to acronymise *Nebuchad-Nezzar* into *N. N.* — *נ"נ* — which by chance in European cultures is the acronym for *Nullius Nominis*, 'nameless', 'of no name' (or, according to the usual interpretation in Italian, *non noto*, 'not known'), which is a bureaucratic indication of unknown paternity.

the reference to the King making sounds like an animal is an allusion to his period of madness: a story which is also impertinently embellished, in a different homily.

13. Zoology in *Pseudo-Sirach* and in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*

Zoological aetiologies are prominent in *Pseudo-Sirach*. Elsewhere I have discussed its aetiological tales about why the ox has a hairless upper lip, and tried to show the cultural complexity of the humorous explanation that *Pseudo-Sirach* proposes.⁶⁰

Ziolkowski discusses zoology in relation to *M&S* and the Western *testimonia* for the name or character of Marcolf (349–350), and, having consulted with an ornithologist, concerning how Marcolf could possibly prove his claim that there are as many white as black feathers on a magpie (80–83). Of the tale of the trained cat standing on its rear legs and holding a candle, then tossing it down to run after a mouse (*M&S*, Ch. 8), Ziolkowski surveys (217–218) occurrences.⁶¹ Ziolkowski accepts the view that Solomon's cat holding a candle arose from interpreting visual art showing Solomon's throne flanked by upright lions. Ziolkowski also mentions animalier candlesticks (i.e., candleholders in the forms of animals) from medieval art as not motivating, but rather conditioning responses to that story (218–219). There exist Jewish occurrences in folktales, of the trained cat story.

Ziolkowski's Section 24 (349–350) elaborates about Albertus Magnus's statement that the bird *garrulus* is called both *Heester* and *Markolf*. Ziolkowski offers Schönbrunn-Kölb's etiology relating this to the literary Marcolf, then proposes an alternative.

14. By *Deuterosis*, Notker Labeo Was Referring to the Jewish Oral Law, not to the *Mishnah*

Translating Notker Labeo's *testimonium*, Ziolkowski (318) renders "deuterosis" with "the secondary law [Mishnah], in which there are thousands of fables". The error is not Notker's, but in Ziolkowski's bracketed addition. The Oral Law was codified in the *Mishnah*, but Notker means all early rabbinic traditions, and "fables" are in *aggadic* material (lore, e.g. homiletic expansions), not in the *Mishnah*, which is only legal or ritual.

"Fables" in the rabbinic tradition were a prominent target in medieval Christian anti-Jewish apologetics, and especially at the Barcelona disputation of 1263.⁶² There exists an

⁶⁰ E. Nissan, "Joshua in *Pseudo-Sirach*", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 20(3), 2011, pp. 163–218

⁶¹ Cf. the following studies (cited by Ziolkowski): Emanuel Cosquin, "Le conte du chat et de la chandelle dans l'Europe du Moyen âge et en Orient", *Romania*, 40 (1911), pp. 371–430 and 481–531 (reprinted in *Études folkloriques: Recherches sur les migrations des contes populaires et leur point de départ*, Paris: Chapron, 1922, pp. 401–495); and Willy L. Braekman and Peter S. Macaulay, "The Story of the Cat and the candle in Middle English Literature", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 70 (1969), pp. 690–702.

⁶² Concerning the Barcelona disputation, in which Nachmanides featured prominently and that probably compromised his ability to go on living under the Crown of Aragon, see the articles by R. Chazan, "The Barcelona "Disputation" of 1263: Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response", in *Speculum*, 52 (1977), pp. 824–842; Id., "The Barcelona Disputation of 1263: Goals, Tactics and Achievements", in B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992, pp. 77–91 (Vorträge gehalten anlässlich des 25. Wolfenbütteler Symposions von 11.–15. Juni 1989 in der Herzog August Bibliothek; Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studies, 4); M.A. Cohen, "Reflections on the Text and Context of the Disputation of Barcelona", in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 35 (1964), pp. 157–192; C. Roth, "The Disputation of Barcelona (1263)", in *Harvard Theological Review*, 49 (1950), pp. 117–144; a chapter by Franco Parente, "La disputa di Barcellona e il *Talmud* come prova delle verità del cristianesimo; il *Capistrum Iudaeorum* e il *Pugio Fidei* di Ramón Martí. Benedetto XIII, la disputa di Tortosa e la condanna del *Talmud* come libro eretico. La Costituzione *Etsi doctoris gentium*", being Sec. 6 in his "La Chiesa e il *Talmud*: L'atteggiamento della Chiesa e del mondo cristiano nei confronti del *Talmud* e degli altri scritti rabbinici, con particolare riguardo all'Italia tra XV e XVI secolo", in C. Vivanti (ed.), *Gli ebrei in Italia*, Vol. 1 (Storia d'Italia: Annali 11, Einaudi, Torino

epistle to the apostate who about to challenge the rabbis, Pablo Christiani, by the Provençal rabbi Jacob ben Elijah (Jacob de Lattes, Jacob ben Elijah ben Isaac of Carcassonne). This rabbi was apparently a relative of the apostate. His epistle is a document of great interest for the history of folklore research, because of its theorising the social function of marvelous tales for the masses.⁶³

15. Saturn's Statue, Baal-Peor, and Marcolf's Irreverence

Ziolkowski comments interestingly on an anti-Jewish tract by Petrus Alphonsi, when it ascribes a cult of stones to Lot's progeny and to Arabia, combining Mercurius (or Mercuritius) with Saturn (321), an equivalence "which could correspond to the interchangeability between Marcolf and [as in Old English] Saturn as interlocutors of Solomon" (322). Ziolkowski wonders whether Saturn's statue showing its backside, the cult of Baal-Peor (involving defecation), and the coarse Marcolf baring his rears may be related (323). In fact, in Ch. 19 of *S&M*, "Marcolf bares his backside before the king himself" (24), who then sentences him to death.

Elsewhere, anal trumpeting is one of the motifs: Ziolkowski explains its lexicon and history (178–179). "In medieval poetry it appears most famously and compactly in Dante", at *Inferno* 21.139 (the culprits being the devils accompanying Dante and Virgil. I recall our sixth-grade teacher in Milan quoting that verse to the startled class.) "Marcolf is crudely visceral" (24). In the dialogue of one-liners in Part 1, Marcolf often retorts scatologically (54–73). Ugliness is a prominent theme in *M&S* (106–114, 192). "Beyond being bound up with evil, the grotesque deformity of Marcolf and his wife has stark social connotations" (106).⁶⁴

16. A *Sitz im Leben* for the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*?

Ziolkowski quotes a scatological exchange between a teacher and a boy quarrelling, from Ælfric Bata's (ca. 955–1020) *Colloquies*. Ziolkowski mentions "the glee that [his Harvard students] have taken in both the subversive earthiness of Marcolf and the authoritative schoolishness of Solomon" (x).

1996, pp. 521–643. Also see the books: C.B. Chavel, *The Disputation at Barcelona*, New York: Shilo, 1983; and R. Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. Also see Yitzhak Baer, "On the Disputations of R. Yehiel of Paris and R. Moses ben Nahman", in *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/1), pp. 172–187 (in Hebrew). More generally, cfr. S. Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy from the Earliest Times to 1789*, ed. and rev. William Horbury, Tübingen: Mohr & Siebeck, 1995.

Feliu's is a translation into Catalan of the Hebrew and Latin texts of that disputation. E. Feliu (trans.), *Disputa de Barcelona en 1263 entre Messer Mossé de Girona i Fr. Pa. Christiá* [The disputation of Barcelona in 1263 between Sir Moses of Girona, i.e., Nachmanides, and Friar Pablo Christiani], translated into Catalan from Hebrew and Latin; introd. by J. Riera i Sans (*Estudis i assaigs*, 2), Barcelona: Columna, 1985, pp. XIV, 95.

⁶³ See J. Mann, "Une source de l'Histoire juive au XXX^e siècle: La lettre polémique de Jacob b. Élie à Pablo Christiani", in *Revue des Études Juives*, 82, (1926), pp. 363–377, and see E. Nissan, "On the Report of Isaac de Lattes Concerning the Death of the Apostate in Taormina", in press in the proceedings of a conference in Siracusa for the 20th anniversary of the discovery of the local medieval mikvah (ed. Luciana Pepi and Alessandro Musco), to be published by Officina di Studi Medievali in Palermo.

⁶⁴ Cf. J.M. Ziolkowski, "Avatars of Ugliness in Medieval literature", *Modern Language Review*, 79 (1984), 1–20; Sabine Griese, "Valde turpissimus et deformis sed eloquentissimus: Markolfs Auftreten und seine Gegner", in *Komik und Sakralität: Aspekte einer ästhetischen Paradoxie in Mittelalter und frühe Neuzeit*, ed. Anja Grebe and Nikolaus Staubach (Frankfurt/M: Lang, 2005), 141–153. The trickster with a grotesque body is the subject of Klaus-Peter Koepping, "Absurdity and Hidden Truth: Cunning Intelligence and Grotesque Body Images as Manifestations of the Trickster", *History of Religions*, 24 (1985), pp. 191–214, which Ziolkowski cites.

"If the precepts of medieval mnemonics have any truth to them, such vivid coarseness could have helped hold the attention and penetrate the memory of students who were engaging with *S&M* in Latin as a school exercise — or as a school-approved relief from regular assignments" (24). Perhaps Ziolkowski is right on that count. The permissibility or toleration of such textual practices is culture-bound, and whereas for example it would go against the grain of rabbinic thought, which abhors *t□um'at ha-ra'ayon* (impurity of thought), the need for relief from boring textual material to be studied is arguably conspicuously well-received in the manner that the *Babylonian Talmud* was edited, with frequent digressions from the main legal discussion into non-legal directions, often with anecdotes or even playfulness.

Both rhythmic and quantitative verse is to be found in the prose of *S&M* (11). Rather than *S&M* being a single work by a single author, "it could be not only that the two main parts were composed at separate junctures but in fact that each of them was the product of accretion [...] over a long period of time" (11).

17. A Protean Text of Uncertain Geographical Origin

"For a few centuries *S&M* is likely to have led a protean existence" (12). "Flanders was and has remained one favorite candidate for the source of *S&M*; [...] northern or northeastern France or the Anglo-Norman sphere another; and Germany a third" (11). "The vocabulary of the text bristles with words and constructions that, although belonging to the koine of medieval Latin, could point to an author whose native language was Romance, perhaps French, and possibly even specifically northeastern French" (11).

Ziolkowski discusses (211) the name *Fusada* or (in MS Kraków) *Fudassa* of Marcolf's wayward sister, in relation to Latin and Romance vocabulary. Note that *Fusada* could be interpreted in Hebrew as (in phonemic transcription) /pussada/ 'she went bad', which is quite relevant but certainly fortuitous. I have discussed elsewhere such misleading coincidences.⁶⁵

S&M's "text as it stands is generally agreed to bear the impress of culture in the late twelfth or very early thirteenth century, although that stamp may itself have been superimposed upon elements that arose in far earlier times" (6).

The earliest extant Latin MS that can be dated is from 1410 (6). The heyday of *S&M* was in the fifteenth century (13); "the form of the text preserved in the Latin was copied in manuscripts, printed, and translated far more often in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Germany than in France" (11). "Over the course of the sixteenth and into the early seventeenth century *S&M* suffered a steep decline in popularity" (14). "Why its stock plunged while that of *Till Eulenspiegel* soared, is an enigma to be unraveled cautiously" (14).

18. Holy Land Geography in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*

Ziolkowski misidentifies "the forest of Carmel and the cedars of Lebanon" with the town of Carmel in the hills of Judas ("Juda", 244–245), but whereas it makes sense for the itinerary in the final chapter of *M&S* (when Marcolf finds no tree of his liking on which to be hanged, and is liberated), the forest of Carmel in 2 *Kings* 19:23 (not "4 Kings"!) is on the seaside mountain ending in the Haifa promontory: having gone southeast to Jericho and "Arabia" (i.e., Transjordan), Marcolf is then led to the northwest.

⁶⁵ E. Nissan, "Asia at Both Ends: An Introduction to Etymology, with a Response to Chapter 9". Chapter Ten in: Ghil'ad Zuckermann (ed.), *Burning Issues in Afro-Asiatic Linguistics*. Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 202–387, 2012.

As for "Cades et Barne" vs. Vulgate "Cadesbarne", Ziolkowski states: "more briefly as Cades. There is no biblical toponym Barne" (245). But the original Hebrew is a compound: Qādēš Barnēa'. Have any Vulgate MSS two words?

19. A Bald Head, as Treated by Marcolf and by Abū Nuwḡāṣ

Commenting on *M&S*'s Ch. 10, Ziolkowski wonders (87) about flies that descend on a bald head thinking it is some stone smeared with something sweet, and asks: "Were stones ever intentionally smeared with honey or the like?" I suggest this may be part of food offerings made in the countryside to (once totemic) wild animals (this is reflected in some European children songs). Quite differently, Jews smeared the Hebrew abecedary with honey and had the little boy lick it, on his first day of schooling.

While discussing his *Atlas Linguarum Europae*, Alinei⁶⁶ mentions offerings to wild animals. Martin, bishop of Braga in the sixth century, inveighed against peasants making offerings to beasts and insects. European nursery rhymes mention cheese and bread offerings to weasels or other animals, and to Alinei⁶⁷ *contra* Schuchardt and Spitzer, this explains why in Spain and Provence one finds the name *paniquesa* (literally, 'bread and cheese') for the weasel (and, Rohlf discovered, for other animal kinds as well).

Alinei⁶⁸ pointed out that

the 'weasel' — which only sporadically, and outside the ALE net [of the the *Atlas Linguarum Europae*], shows Christian names — has quite a few magico-religious pre-Christian or pre-Muslim names, such as 'fairy' in English dialects, 'Diana' in Sardinia, 'witch' in France, 'domestic genius' in Russia, 'guardian spirit of the earth' in Karelia. Motivations such as Spanish, Occitan and Italian 'bread and cheese' and Occitan 'bread and milk' have been well explained by Romance scholars as relics of pre-Christian rituals (see further). Many other motivations of this type appear outside the ALE (e.g. German 'wild woman', a member of the magic *wilde Leute*).

Elsewhere Alinei⁶⁹ showed that kinship names for the weasel are extremely frequent in the whole of southern Europe.

Marcolf spits on a bald head in Ziolkowski's Ch. 10: "I didn't befoul it; I fertilized it" (87). Cf. the Arabic story about Abū Nuwḡāṣ who bet with the King he would excrete only one small unit of measure of faeces on the bald head of a courtier (his foe), then justified a much larger amount with "The scales broke down (were torn)".

20. The Genealogies of Marcolf and Solomon, and Marcolf's and Bertoldo's Reference to Beans

The dialogue in Part 1 of *M&S* begins with Solomon's genealogy, then Marcolf's (this one, with names quite unbiblical), but in some MSS these are missing, and a poem appears instead that states the stark opposition of the two antagonists (6). May I add that in the Bolognese

⁶⁶ Mario Alinei, "L'Atlas Linguarum Europae" (in Italian), in *Bollettino dell'Atlante Linguistico Europeo*, 3rd series, 19 (1995), pp. 155–190.

⁶⁷ Alinei, *ibid.*, p. 180.

⁶⁸ In Section 2 of Mario Alinei, "Magico-Religious Motivations in European Dialects: A Contribution to Archaeolinguistics", *Dialectologia et Geolinguistica*, 5 (1997), pp. 3–30 (1997). A pre-publication draft of that paper can be downloaded from http://www.continuitas.org/texts/alinei_magico-religious.pdf

⁶⁹ M. Alinei, "Belette" (in French), *Atlas Linguarum Europae*, 1(2). Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1986, pp. 145–224.

Giulio Cesare Croce's⁷⁰ 1606 Italian *Bertoldo*,⁷¹ King Alboin asks the peasant who are his "ascendants and descendants". Bertoldo replies: "Beans, that as they boil in fire go up and down in the pot".

Re: Chi sono gli ascendenti e discendenti tuoi?

Bertoldo: I fagiuoli, i quali bollendo nel fuoco vanno ascendendo e descendendo su e giù per la pignatta.

This has a precedent in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*:⁷²

The brief narrative link that connects proverb contest to riddling contest sustains the familiar Marcolfian imagery of spare and humble domestic life. Marcolf sits at home by his hearth, tending a pot of beans, when Solomon rides up on horseback and pokes his head into the doorway to ask who is within. Marcolf answers by posing the first riddle: "Hic intus est homo et dimidius homo et caput equi; et quanto plus ascendunt, tanto plus descendunt" ([...] "Here within is a man and half a man and the head of a horse: and however much they ascend, they descend by the same amount"). On his own turf Marcolf becomes the wisdom figure, and Solomon must ask what he means: "Quid hoc est quod dicis?" [...]. The identity of the whole man, the half man, and the horse head are easily explained by the peasant occupant, the king, and his horse—the last two are half in and half out—but Solomon must then ask who they are who ascend and descend, to which Marcolf replies that they are his beans boiling in the pot. Solomon's class-inflected posture on horseback makes him faintly ridiculous in this homely indoor setting, and part of the wry humor is that in such an alien setting (and alien discursive world) Solomon can be mystified by something as plebeian as a pot of beans.

What would have the reception of the reference to beans been, in early modern Italy, with the original audience of *Bertoldo*? Consider, in the early modern Italian context, the Tuscan proverb "Fiorentin mangia fagioli, e' volevan li Spagnuoli", as though the Florentines' propensity for beans and their presumed hopes for Spanish hegemony were related.⁷³ At any rate, it was befitting for Giulio Cesare Croce's own times to refer to beans (in the novel sense the term had taken on, after the discovery of the Americas), even though his text has beans because the Marcolfian tradition does.

The literary Alboin has nothing about him of the Longobardic king Alboin. Unlike Marcolf, who goes away after his release, Bertoldo having escaped hanging is readmitted to court by Alboin, and eventually dies because the wine is too refined, that is to say, he is unused to such delicacies, so much so that they harm him. In recent generations, Italian schoolchildren have long known about Alboin not because of refined drinks he offered, but rather because he forced his wife to drink from the skull of her father (she took revenge).

21. Does Marcolf Wear his Shoes Crosswise, or Back to Front? The Antipodean Motif

Ziolkowski discusses (239) whether Marcolf in Ch. 19 wears his shoes crosswise or back to front. Note that if the latter — "consistent with the adverb *widersyns* in the German version" (239) and as in the picture printed by Marx (Marcus) Ayer (Ziolkowski, 46) — this is a

⁷⁰ See on him: Olindo Guerrini, *La vita e le opere di Giulio Cesare Croce*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1879; Reprint, Bologna: Forni, 1969. An Italian version of *S&M* was printed in Venice by Giambattista Sessa in 1502. Quinto Marini edited it: *Il dialogo di Salomone e Marcolfo*, Minima 14, Rome, 1991; it parallels Benary's Latin text.

⁷¹ The sources of Giulio Cesare Croce's *Bertoldo* were discussed by Gina Cortese Pagani, "Il *Bertoldo* di Giulio Cesare Croce e le sue fonti", *Studi Medievali*, 3 (1911), pp. 533–602. Cf. Quinto Marini, Marini, Quinto. 1983–1984. "Il Dialogo di Salomone e Marcolfo, fonte del Bertoldo". *Sandalion*, 6–7 (1983–1984), pp. 249–285; Id., "Bertoldo e Marcolfo". *Studi di Filologia e Letteratura*, 6 (1984), pp. 95–119.

⁷² The quotation is from p. 356 in: Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Rival Wisdom in the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*", *Speculum*, 83(2), 2008, pp. 331–365.

⁷³ No. 1200, p. 91 in Fortunato Bellonzi, *Proverbi Toscani*, Milan: Martello, 1968.

variant of lore about the Antipodes. It was Megasthenes who had reported about "the people whose heels are in front while the instep and toes are turned backwards".⁷⁴ The motif of a man with backward feet or head was discussed by myself elsewhere.⁷⁵

Of Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum Historia* of 1642, Wittkower wrote (189): "His 'Homo pedibus adversis' is nothing but the Antipode of the marvel treatises and the woodcut is an almost exact copy of the Schedel Lycosthenes figure (Pl. 47a-c)" (i.e., Hartmann Schedel *Lib[er] C[h]ronicarum*, Nuremberg, 1493).



An Antipode from Schedel, *Liber C[h]ronicarum*, 1493.

A man with his feet turned backwards was depicted in an Oxford manuscript (Bodl. 614, f. 50r). In the last tale in Vol. 4 of Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim* (Leipzig 1853–1878), Solomon has to adjudicate a controversy that opposes several one-headed sons to an only two-headed son born from a normal woman and a two-headed Cainite Antipodean who had been brought to King Solomon⁷⁶ by the king of the demons, Asmodaues. I quote from a different paper of mine:⁷⁷

[E]ven though the idea of the Earth being shaped as a globe is found in Greek antiquity, note that medieval folklore could accept the existence of Antipodeans, yet apparently assume that Earth was flat, and that they lived, as though, on the reverse of a coin. Let us consider such an example from Jewish medieval folklore. Medieval Jewish myth identifies people from a parallel world as either being demonic, or, in the tale published by Jellinek, the Antipodes. In this folkloric tale, we can see that ancient notions about the Antipodes were trivialised. The tale itself is medieval, and belongs to

⁷⁴ See R. Wittkower, "Marvels of the East", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 [1942], 159–197, at 162, with early modern iconography.

⁷⁵ Namely, in fn. 99 in Nissan, "Going West vs. Going East: Ancient Greek, Roman, Carthaginian, Mauretanian, and Celtic Conceptions About or Involvement with the Ocean, What Early Rabbinic Texts Say About the Ocean and the Formation of the Mediterranean, and Beliefs About Reaching the Antipodes", *MHNH* [μηνη]: revista internacional de investigación sobre magia y astrología antiguas, (Málaga), 10 (2010 [2011]), pp. 279–310.

⁷⁶ Cf. Part V in E. Nissan, *ibid.* in *MHNH*.

⁷⁷ From Sec. 18 in Nissan, *ibid.* in *MHNH*.

the genre of the *Aggadic Midrash*, itself already established in late antiquity, and expanding biblical narratives, typically with reference to some biblical textual *loci*. In the tale considered instead, what is of biblical derivation is merely the characters of King Solomon and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a prominent soldier in his service.

The tale appears in Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrash*.⁷⁸ It is the last one (Vol. 4, pp. 533–534) among the 'Tales about King Solomon'. In this tale, the Antipodeans are not called by that name, but they are from the other side of the (flat?) earth. On their side of the earth they carry out agricultural work like people in our own world, and they see both the sun and the moon, but they see the sun rise in the west and set down in the east. They pray the Creator. They claim to be descended from Cain. What is more, they have two heads.⁷⁹ They can mate with one-headed humans, and produce offspring that resemble either parent.

King Solomon has to adjudicate a controversy that opposes several one-headed sons to only two-headed son born from a normal woman and a two-headed Antipodean who had been brought to King Solomon by the king of the demons, Asmodaeus (that several tales portray as being in Solomon's service, until he eventually rebels). Being unable to return to his own world, the two-headed Antipodean had married on this side of the earth. The two-headed son wants to inherit the double, by claiming that having two heads, he should count as two sons. Eventually, King Solomon tests the two-headed son by scalding one of the two faces with hot water. Both heads complain, and this proves that they are just one person.⁸⁰

The beginning of that tale relates that Asmodaeus had brought out of the Earth the two-headed, four-eyed man, after promising Solomon he would show him something he had never seen. At the sight, Solomon is troubled, and asks the heroic Benaiah the son of Jehoiada: "What do you say? Are there under us human beings?". Benaiah replies that he doesn't know, but he heard from Achithophel (David's adviser) that they do exist indeed. Solomon offers to show him such a person, and Benaiah wonders: "How can you show it, from the depth of Earth, that is 500 years of travel?". This shows how classical geographical conceptions had become depleted in folklore.

22. Ben Sira's Hare, Marcolf's Rabbit: An Irreverent Gift to the King

It is tantalising the child prodigy Ben Sira send King Nebuchadnezzar a hare with a letter written on "her" scalp, in his first communication to the King, whereas according to a Christian West European tradition, Marcolf carries a rabbit as a gift to King Solomon. Their

⁷⁸ A. Jellinek (ed.), *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner midraschim*, Vols. 1–6. Leipzig 1853–1878, repr. Jerusalem 1938, 1967.

⁷⁹ Two-headed human beings who happen to be male and Jewish occur in a hypothetical talmudic discussion concerning ritual duties. "The *Gemara* [discussion] in [the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate] *Menahot* 37a [...] asks whether a two-headed individual must wear one or two pairs of *tefillin* [phylacteries] (see [the medieval commentary] *Tosafot* there). While *Menahot* 37a does not resolve the issue of whether conjoined twins are considered as one or two individuals, R. Hayyim Eleazar Shapiro, applying the principle of *safek de-Oraita l-humra* [i.e., stringency when in doubt, if an injunction is biblical], writes that each of the conjoined twins must put on *tefillin*. The *Shita Mekubetset to Menahot* 37a quotes a ruling by King Solomon that dicephalous conjoined twins (i.e., having two heads) who respond to pain independently are considered two separate persons with respect to inheritance and the laws of *tefillin*. [p. 17, n. 35: *Hiddushei Aggadot Maharsha* by Hayyim Lifshitz on *Psalms* 139:16, and Maharsha on *Sanhedrin* (38a).] R. Moshe Feinstein also ruled that Siamese twin girls that had separate brains and nervous systems were separate human beings." — p. 6 in: John L. Loike and Moshe D. Tendler, "Ma Adam Va-teda-ehu: Halakhic Criteria for Defining Human Beings", *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, 37(2), New York: The Rabbinical Council of America, 2003, pp. 1–19.

⁸⁰ That test is still crucial, in our real world in our own times, for conjoined twins. Prof. Rabbi J. David Bleich, from the Cardozo Law School in New York, discussed the status of conjoined twins in Jewish law as well as in U.S. law and in the law of England of Wales, on pp. 283–328 in *Jewish Bioethics* (edited by Fred Rosner and J. David Bleich, Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House Inc., augmented edition 1998, 1999, 2000; previous editions: New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1979, 1983), and in Bleich's article 'Survey of Recent Halakhic Periodical Literature: The Case of the British Conjoined Twins', *Tradition*, 34(4), 2000, pp. 61–78. On p. 63 in the latter paper, Bleich remarked concerning a given pair: "the twins have separate nervous systems as evidenced by the fact that they apparently react independently to pain stimuli. As indicated in our earlier treatment of the topic, that phenomenon is the crucial indicator of whether the twins constitute a single organism or two separate persons."

overt reasons are different, however. Let us consider this matter. I am quoting from my own translation of *Pseudo-Sirach*, from an episode preceding the birth of Ben Sira:

[...] As Jeremiah saw that much, he began to reproach them. They came and confronted him and beat him. They told him: "Why did you reproach us? You are not going to move from here, unless you shall do like us." He told them: "I beg you, let me go, and I shall give you my oath that I shall never relate this thing". They told him: "And yet, Zedekiah who had seen Nebuchadnezzar eating a live hare swore to him that he would not tell, but when he left his presence, he discarded his oath. You, too, are going to do the same. [...]"

The episode referred to by Jeremiah's wicked interlocutors, concerning King Zedekiah seeing King Nebuchadnezzar eating a live hare and not keeping his promise to keep the secret, is important for *Pseudo-Sirach*, because the very first communication from the child Ben Sira (aged seven) and Nebuchadnezzar is going to be by means of a text written (to the recipient's amazement) on the scalp of a live hare which Nebuchadnezzar's emissaries bring to their king. As we are going to see in a note, there may be a Marcolfian connection, insofar as Marcolf is depicted while riding, naked, a ram while carrying a hare as a present for King Solomon.

Eating flesh from a live animal is, according to Judaism, a transgression upon one of the seven precepts that Noahids (all humankind) must abide by. The following English retelling of the tradition about Nebuchadnezzar eating a live hare is quoted here from Vol. 4, pp. 291–293, in a classic digest of rabbinic lore about biblical characters, namely, Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* (1909–1938):⁸¹

Nebuchadnezzar, who invested Zedekiah with the royal office, demanded that he swear fealty to him. Zedekiah was about to swear by his own soul, but the Babylonian king, not satisfied, brought a scroll of the law, and made his Jewish vassal take the oath upon that. Nevertheless he did not keep faith with Nebuchadnezzar for long. Nor was this his only treachery toward his suzerain. He had once surprised Nebuchadnezzar in the act of cutting a piece from a living hare and eating it, as is the habit of barbarians. Nebuchadnezzar was painfully embarrassed, and he begged the Jewish king to promise under oath not to mention what he had seen. Though Nebuchadnezzar treated him with [p. 292:] great friendliness, even making him sovereign lord over five vassal kings, he did not justify the trust reposed in him. To flatter Zedekiah, the five kings once said: "If all were as it should be, thou wouldst occupy the throne of Nebuchadnezzar." Zedekiah could not refrain from exclaiming: "O yes, Nebuchadnezzar, whom I once saw eating a live hare!" The five kings at once repaired to Nebuchadnezzar, and reported what Zedekiah had said. Thereupon the king of Babylonia marched to Daphne, near Antioch, with the purpose of chastising Zedekiah. At Daphne he found the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, who had hastened thither to receive him. Nebuchadnezzar met the Sanhedrin courteously, ordered his attendants to bring state chairs for all the members, and requested them to read the Torah to him and explain it. When they reached the passage in the Book of Numbers dealing with the remission of vows, the king put the question: "If a man desires to be released from a vow, what steps must he take?" The Sanhedrin replied: "He must repair to a scholar, and he will absolve him from his vow." Whereupon Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed: "I verily believe it was you who released Zedekiah from the vow he took concerning me." And he ordered the members of the Sanhedrin to leave their state chairs and sit on the ground. They were forced to admit, that they had not acted in accordance with the law, for Zedekiah's vow affected another beside himself, and without the acquiescence of the other party, namely, Nebuchadnezzar, the Sanhedrin had no authority to annul the vow. Zedekiah was duly punished for the grievous crime of [p. 293] perjury.

⁸¹ This is Louis Ginzberg's (1910–1954) multi-volume *Legends of the Jews*, transl. from the German manuscript by Henrietta Szold. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909–1938. Vol. 1: *Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob*. Vol. 2: *Bible Times and Characters from Joseph to the Exodus*. Vol. 3: *Bible Times and Characters from the Exodus to the Death of Moses*. Vol. 4: *Bible Times and Characters from Joshua to the Esther*. Vol. 5: *Notes to Vols. 1 and 2. From the Creation to Exodus*. Vol. 6: *Notes to Vols. 3 and 4. From Moses in Wilderness to Esther*. Vol. 7: *Index* by Boaz Cohen. One-volume edn.: *Legends of the Jews*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956. Hebrew edn. in 6 vols.: *Aggadot ha-Yehudim*, Ramat-Gan, Israel: Massada, 1966–1975.



A naked character (Marcolf?), riding a ram, carries a hare on the palm of his hand, while being on his way to meet a crowned character (King Solomon?).

The early rabbinic homiletic tradition about Nebuchadnezzar becoming angry at the King of Judah because the latter had not kept his oath not to divulge that he had seen Nebuchadnezzar eat a hare alive, may, just may be related to some lore about Sages taking care not to offend one of the Hellenistic kings of Egypt. In fact, the early rabbinic tradition possesses another item of lore about embarrassment concerning the connection between a foreign king and a hare: it is a tradition concerning the Greek biblical translation of the Seventy. That translation allegedly replaced ‘the swift-footed’ for ‘the hare’ when the text about dietary law specifically enumerates the hare among unclean animals, because the Hellenistic king of Egypt who commissioned the translation was from the Lagid dynasty (descended from Ptolemy Lagos, where *lagos* ‘hare’), but the rabbinic tradition modified this into the simpler statement that the name of the king’s wife was Hare.

Once the child prodigy Ben Sira becomes famous, some advisers of Nebuchadnezzar ask the latter to convoke Ben Sira, so they could hold a contest with him. Their intention is to have the child killed upon his failing to answer a question of theirs (The opposite is going to happen.) The following is quoted from my own translation:

[...] It got to the point that Nebuchadnezzar heard about his great wisdom. It was when [some rivals or enemies] told each other, concerning the wisdom of Ben Sira: “Woe to us! This wisdom of Ben Sira will do away with us! Let us go and inform about him, and the King will send for him. We shall ask him something difficult, and if he would not know it, we shall kill him”. Then they went and saw the King. [...] He [Nebuchadnezzar] told them {his soldiers}: “You idiots! There never was on earth any king who would be spoken to as the G-d of the Hebrews spoke unto me, as he promised: ‘Even the beast of the field I gave him, so it would serve him’ [Jeremiah 27:6]. You, tell him that verse once you shall be in his presence”. Right away, they told him [Ben Sira] verbally as well as in writing, as it was written there that much. Once Ben Sira had read the letter, he said: “He has not sent for me, but rather for my hare”. Right away, he took the hare, and wrote on her head: “Here you are, some beast of the field so it would serve you. Which is what my G-d promised to you”. They went

back and brought this to Nebuchadnezzar, and her head was hairless,⁸² like a bald man who has no hair. And it was as white⁸³ as parchment, and there was written there: "Even the beast of the field I gave him, so it would serve him" [*Jeremiah* 27:6]. Immediately,⁸⁴ he [Nebuchadnezzar] was amazed, and told his wisemen: "How come the hair of the hare is shaved like parchment? How can a person make parchment out of skin with flesh under it?" They did not know what to reply. Immediately, he sent for him another military unit, more numerous and distinguished than the ones who had preceded them.⁸⁵ And he sent to him in writing: "Should you not come for my sake, come for the sake of the hare you sent me". Immediately, he [Ben Sira] went with them to Nebuchadnezzar. [...]

An alleged occurrence of Marcolf mockingly bringing a hare to King Solomon, an episode apparently blended with the folkloric motif of one who raises to the challenge of bringing is gift that is no gift, is mentioned by Lilian M. C. Randall, "Exempla as a Source of Gothic Marginal Illumination".⁸⁶

Among the limited number of Romance subjects which appear in thirteenth century exempla is [... a] legend of exceptional interest [that] relates the conditions imposed by a king on his bride-to-be. She must come to him neither driving, walking, nor riding, neither out of the road nor in the road, neither clothed nor naked, and bringing a gift that was no gift. The earliest extant representation of the tale is found in a marginal illustration of the Ormesby Psalter in the section dating from the last decade of the thirteenth century (Bodleian Library, Douce MS 366; Fig. 14). Despite the fact that the figure approaching the king is apparently a male, other details of the scene indicate that the illustration is based on the above legend. The figure, with one foot touching the ground, is astride a ram; he is nude save for a cape and one shoe; in his arms he bears a hare which is a gift and yet no gift since the animal would run away as soon as it was put down before the king. On the basis of an initial to Psalm 52 in the Douai Psalter, which depicts Marcolf, the typical mediaeval fool, in a net on two crutches and wearing torn shoes before Solomon, it has been suggested that the king in the Ormesby Psalter marginal scene represents Solomon, while the figure on the ram may be identified with Marcolf [according to S.C. Cockerell, *Two East Anglian Psalters at the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 1926, p. 18]. In view of the opening words of Psalm 52, which appear immediately above the marginal illustration — "Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est deus" [i.e., the fool's confident unbelief] — the scene may very possibly have a dual connotation based both on the legend and on the religious text.

Before one jumps to the conclusion that Marcolf's rabbit and Ben Sira's rabbit are related in the sense that Marcolf's rabbit is derived from Ben Sira's hare, or that they both derive from some other source, I must call for caution. I am going to illustrate this, by using a counterexample, of yet another irreverent of a rabbit with a ruler, "given" to him against the wishes of the authorities or conventional expectations. It is important to realise that occurrence of a motif in different contexts is no firm proof of causal relation or even correlation. The following drives in this point.

In the evening of 22 January 2014, right after I prepared a letter about this hare motif to be emailed to Jan Ziolkowski on the next morning, BBC Radio 4 reported that a tiny sculpted rabbit was going to be removed, by order of the South African government that had commissioned a nine-metre (30ft) bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, standing outside the government's headquarters known as the Union Buildings in Pretoria. It was unveiled on

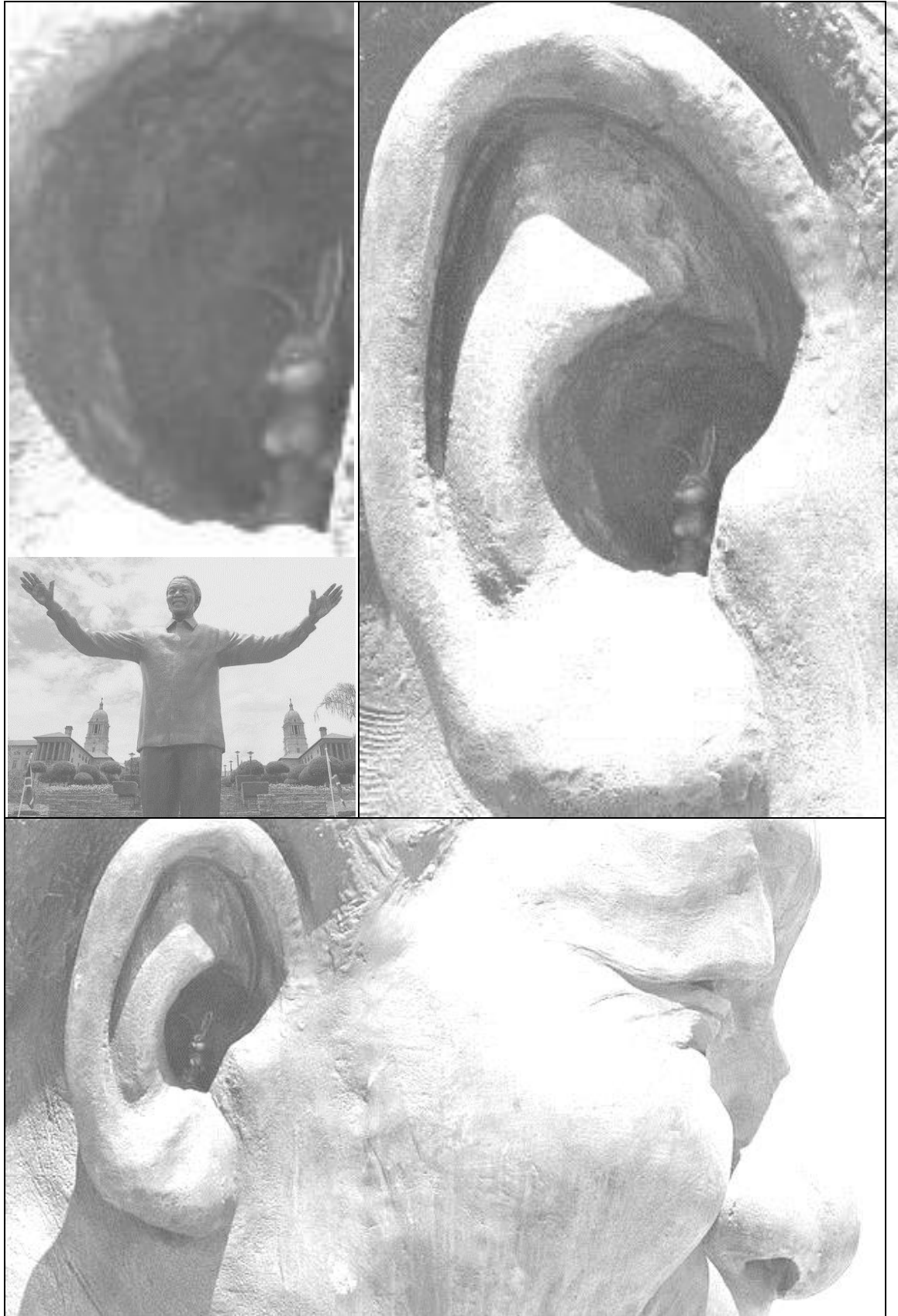
⁸² It may (just may) be that a head turned bald in connection with Nebuchadnezzar (which in *Pseudo-Sirach* is the head of a hare) was inspired by the prophecy (*Ezekiel* 29:18) against Egypt, to the effect that Nebuchadnezzar was going to be rewarded with the conquest of Egypt, for his not managing to conquer Tyre notwithstanding a long siege, when the hardships for the besiegers were such that "every head became *muqrah* ('turned bald'), and every shoulder is *marut* here, 'strained', but usually applied to hair, in the sense 'plucked', or to a head, in the sense 'turned bald'.

⁸³ Here, the range of "white" includes yellowish, as the comparison is to parchment.

⁸⁴ All these repetitions of the word I translate with "immediately" or "right away" give the narration a flavour we now all know from Hanna-Barbera animated films. They are full of action. *Pseudo-Sirach* text sometimes lingers on conversation, but the adverb seeks to give the impression of sustained action.

⁸⁵ This recycles *Numbers* 22:15, when Balak, King of Moab, sends Balaam a second team of envoys.

⁸⁶ *The Art Bulletin*, 39(2), 1957, pp. 97–107, on p. 106.



The rabbit placed by sculptors in the right ear of Nelson Mandela's statue.

South Africa's Day of Reconciliation, on 16 December, a day after Mr Mandela was buried. The rabbit was placed inside the right ear of the sculpture, by the two sculptors, Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse van Vuuren; they claimed that the rabbit was a trademark (made after they were denied permission to engrave their signatures on the trousers of the statue, but the government denied they ever asked); a double sense was intended, they claimed: in Afrikaans, *haas* means both 'rabbit' and 'haste'; as they had to complete the sculpture in haste, the rabbit represented the pressure of finishing the sculpture on time. A report in the issue of *Time* magazine of the week ending on (and dated) 3 February 2014 concluded by another pun: "Talk about a *hare-raising* incident! (Sorry, we couldn't resist)."

This in turn illustrates re-motivation, something we also saw with the rationale of the hare of *Pseudo-Sirach* (the reason Ben Sira gives in his first message to Nebuchadnezzar is different from what makes the hare in particular relevant and especially offensive for Nebuchadnezzar, namely, the incident with Zedekiah involving the hare, and which is indeed mentioned in what the wicked men at the public bath tell Jeremiah when they reject his reassurances of not telling around what he saw them doing).

Understandably, the rabbit uncovered peering from inside the ears of Mandela's statue was considered to be disrespectful, and the sculptors apologised because of the uproar the discovery of the rabbit caused (it had been noticed at neither the moulding, nor the unveiling of the statue). In a sense, one could conceive of this as yet another occurrence of the construct by which a leporid (here, a rabbit instead of a hare) is inconveniently and disrespectfully "given" by some maverick to a generally respected ruler, even though in the case at hand, it was a past ruler in effigy (the rabbit, too, was in effigy). Clearly this episode owes nothing to the Marcolfian tradition or *Pseudo-Sirach*. Likewise, one should be cautious before jumping to the conclusion that Marcolf's hare, whose rationale is that it is the gift that is not a gift, is related to the hare that Ben Sira sends Nebuchadnezzar out of different reasons (allegedly to show condescension to his claim of mastery over beasts, not only humans, as well as arguably in order to remind him of his having been shamed by Zedekiah by means of a hare).⁸⁷

23. Envoi

This review essay has taken us several places. We have discussed Jan Ziolkowski's annotated translation of the Latin *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*, and we considered several other literary works from the Middle Ages, some fairly closely related, others with more remote relevance to the Marcolfian tradition. Marcolf is a wily peasant, like his Italian counterpart, Besrtoldo, at the court of King Alboin instead of King Solomon. The characters of the child prodigy Ben Sira answering Nebuchadnezzar's questions and playing pranks against him, and of the centaur from Russian tales, Kitavros (himself in some relation to the character of the archdemon Asmodaeus from talmudic legend), appear to be especially tantalising.

We considered, in Part One, a taxonomy of genres: we saw that we have on one side, what Ziolkowski calls works of "wisdom and learning", and on the other side, works of "wisdom and spurning". The Marcolfian tradition typifies the genre of "wisdom and spurning". The child prodigy Ben Sira does not spurn wisdom (he is erudite), but he does spurn Nebuchadnezzar, and when Nebuchadnezzar seeks revenge, the King only manages to harm himself or his family. *Pseudo-Sirach* (the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*) provided entertainment to pre-modern Hebrew readers, rather similarly to what Marcolfian texts did for Christian Central, Western, and Northern Europe.

⁸⁷ The example of Mandela's statue is closely related to the subject of "Intentions and Effects of Portraying the Ruler", being Sec. 3.6 (pp. 547–555) in my paper "Nested Beliefs, Goals, Duties, and Agents Reasoning About Their Own or Each Other's Body in the TIMUR Model: A Formalism for the Narrative of Tamerlane and the Three Painters", *Journal of Intelligent and Robotic Systems*, 52(3-4), 2008, pp. 515–582 + 340–341.