

A Taxonomic Survey of Types of a Pious Fool Throughout Cultures

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Abstract. The previous article in this journal issue, Linda and Hershey Friedman's "The Pious Fool: A Hermetic Jewish Humor Trope", has discussed both Jewish jokes about "pious fools" being exceedingly devout persons, and the discussion in early rabbinic texts of Jewish law, of such inappropriate behaviours on the part of some hypothetical undesirable *chasid shoteh* motivated by exceeding devotion but who get their priorities glaringly wrong (e.g., the one who keeps banging his head on the wall as he does not want to look at women, or the one who is wearing phylacteries and therefore would not jump into the river to save a drowning child). In this other article, a survey is provided of senses of "pious fool", as occurring both within Jewish cultures, and throughout world cultures, especially in relation to humour.

Keywords: Religion; Judaism; Catholicism; Buddhism; Jewish humour; Sicilian clerical humour; congregation fooled by a trickster; antecedent of the "Yom Kippur in Tammuz" tale; the pseudo-messiah Sabbatai Şevi's 1658 celebration of all three pilgrimage festivals in one week; the Wise Men of Chelm trope; the *Schildbürgerbuch*; Marcolf and the Marcolfian tradition; charivari; devout simpleton into winning champion; the "I don't know" tale; pious fools in Yiddish literary texts; Isaac Leib Perez; Isaac Bashevis Singer; Giuseppe Pitrè's 1885 Edition of the 18th-Century *Avvenimenti Faceti*; wakward sermon; notables fed cat excreta believed to be manna; owl mistaken for a soul in Purgatory; Haskalah humour; the anti-Hassidic Joseph Perl; the anti-religious Abraham Goldfaden; Goldfaden's disablist character of Kuni-Leml; mockery by the Esotericist George Gurdjieff; the sacred fool (across cultures); the Fool's Mass (medieval Feast of Fools); etymology of *clown*; etymology of *buffoon*; Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina's 1864 novel *Il re dei re*; (pseudo-)pious abstention from saving a life; foolish boaster: Akkadian *aluzinnu* and Greek ἀλαζών.

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1. Introduction

The conventional role of the clown, in various human societies, is not crisply delimited from persons who ostentatiously display foolishness. What is more, sometimes clowning is (or was) performed in ritual or at any rate religious contexts (just as at present it may take place at hospitals). In this article, a non-exhaustive overview of the intersection of the fools and the devout is offered (from various perspectives: that of the history of religion, and that of humour), and the table of contents provided above can be used as a preliminary guide, owing to the titles of the sections having been made descriptive even at the expenses of concision.

In particular, this paper considers figures of foolishness that are nevertheless considered devout, from various denominational traditions; moreover, portrayals of the devout as though they were foolish, from anti-religious propaganda, are exemplified in Sections 5 and 6. But then, in Sec. 5 we also come across an example of a self-representation on the part of *Il Fischietto*, an anticlerical but pro-government (and, apparently therefore, long-lived) satirical in Turin in the years before and after Italy's unification, as a fool's character: a comic character who in 1861 sits on the shoulders of the prime minister (Camillo Benso di Cavour) it admires and chides, but who in 1848 watches, with a facial expression of horrid gloat, the archbishop of Turin (with a halo surrounding his head) in the cell in which he was imprisoned.

2. The Fool Because Inadequate (e.g., Unlearned or Cognitively Not Up to It) Who Is Naïve Yet Pious, or the Congregation Fooled by a Trickster — with an Aetiology for the Genesis of the Tale of "Yom Kippur in Tammuz", Based on Sabbatai Şevi's 1658 Celebration of All Three Pilgrimage Festivals in One Week in Order to Achieve Atonement

There exist, in international folklore, tale types such that some member of the clergy, or an assistant, fool the congregation. The protagonist is a trickster, whereas the congregation is nevertheless not as debased by the humour in the tale as to make the congregants into a numskull town. And yet, sometimes such tales come close to this, if socially, the spread of the tale was among such people who considered themselves to be culturally (if not necessarily socio-economically) superior to such human settlements that were the setting of the tale. Suffice it for me to refer to the discussion in Nissan (2011, 2015). The abstract of Nissan (2015) is as follows:

International folklore knows variants and subtypes of Tale Type AT 1831 *C [IFA],¹ "Ignorance of Holidays". This article focuses on the Middle Eastern Jewish versions of this humorous trickster tale: there are not many of them (arguably because of demographic exiguity), but these versions deserve to be known. We contextualise the localised versions, by placing the material in a social and cultural context. For example, we can see that Iraqi Jews told such stories by reference to experiences in southern Asia, where many of them emigrated. By contrast, Kurdish Jews used the story to depict themselves as patient victims of some unscrupulous fund-raiser: they would rather

¹ Of the Israel Folklore Archives in Haifa.

acquiesce in his demands out of piety. We also argue that the stereotype about outlying communities, as reflected in the tales about emigrants, is akin to Old Country Jewish prejudice about Jewishness in America, well-known from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We also consider Ashkenazi variants of the tale (from the Israel Folklore Archive, or in Agnon), and an Afghan variant.

Aharon Maman (1999, p. 173) discussed examples of Arabic and Hebrew loanwords in a Judaeo-Berber Passover *Haggadah*. Maman's paper also has a section on the Hebrew element in the crypto-language of traders. The following is my translation from pp. 177–178:

The crypto-language not only borrowed Hebrew words, but also reworked them, sometimes warping them, apparently to disguise their sense even *vis-à-vis* unaware Jews. The well-known song

שתוק שתוק יא חכם מאתבזיש בדבר וכו' האדו חמורים בני בקר
[fn. 141: "Shut up, shut up, o wise man!
Don't shame me about this (etc.),
these [people] are donkeys and cattle"]

which is entirely based on that crypto-language, refers according to its content to a whole community of Jewish ignoramuses, and is uttered by a shrewd Jew from outside the community, addressing another Jew who is likewise cunning but an insider, in front of the members of the community.

Maman described this in a North African context. According to a Baghdadi version (Nissan 2015, Sec. 3), a Jewish man (apparently a speaker of Judaeo-Arabic) reaches a Jewish congregation in South America which, to his amazement, is celebrating Kippur out of season.² He turns to one who appears to be the rabbi or anyway the one conducting service at that congregation, and expresses his surprise by cunningly singing (in the Baghdadi pronunciation of Hebrew):

'Od lo samá'ti — Kippúr be-θammúz!
"I have never heard [something like that:
Yom Kippur in [the month of] Tammuz!"

To which the man who is conducting the Yom Kippur service retorts, also singing (and again, in the Baghdadi pronunciation, which of course is the narrator's own):

Šeθóq šeθóq, kullám ḥamorím, ḥaší šellí, ḥaší šelláχ.
"Shut up, Shut up! They're all asses! Half is mine, half is yours!"

In this context, we should apparently understand something like: "OK, you've got it. I'll give you one half of what they offer". Or, then, this refers to the fee the cantor has received for celebrating. What supposedly makes such a situation possible is that the congregants are ignorant, even though they are (at least for the day) pious.

I would like to signal a possible factor in the formation of this narrative about Yom Kippur in Tammuz, and which had eluded my notice in Nissan (2015). This may have to do with an episode in the career of the false Messiah from Smyrna, Sabbatai Ševi. In a popularisation text, Pini Dunner (2015) explained the given episode as follows:

He drifted on to Athens, then Peloponnese, then Patras, and finally in 1658, he was back in Constantinople (Istanbul), where he remained for several months. By now his outlandish behavior had escalated even further. In one notorious incident, he purchased a large dead fish, and publicly dressed it up in baby clothes and put it in a crib, announcing to startled onlookers

² "Politics is the art of making it sound as if Santa Claus comes in November" is a statement by Russell Newbold, quoted from *The Saturday Evening Post* on p. 107 in the British edition of *Reader's Digest* of August 1996.

that fish represented liberation and salvation and that this particular fish was the childlike Jewish nation in need of salvation. Shortly after this bizarre episode, Shabbetai Tzvi implemented a 'three festival week'. During the course of seven days he celebrated every major Jewish festival — Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot — with all the associated laws, customs, and prayers. He claimed he was atoning for all the sins committed by any Jew throughout history who had ever sinned during any of these festivals, or had not observed them properly.

At the conclusion of this strange week Shabbetai Tzvi innovated a blessing over sin — 'mattir issurim' — a corruption of the daily blessing 'mattir assurim'. 'Mattir assurim' describes G-d as, 'He who liberates the imprisoned.' 'Mattir issurim' describes G-d as 'He who permits the forbidden'. At this stage he was in full manic mode, announcing to the group of bewildered spectators that a new era had begun, with new laws and commandments, and by doing what he was about to do, he would effect the final mystical perfection of God's³ physical creation. He then took a piece of pork, uttered the 'mattir issurim' benediction, and proceeded to eat it.

The local community went into complete shock. Local rabbis, infuriated, and compelled to react, arranged for him to be publicly flogged and then had him excommunicated. No one was permitted to speak to him, feed him, or house him. Shunned by every Jew in the city, Shabbetai Tzvi returned to his birthplace, Izmir, where he kept a very low profile for about three years. [...]

When Sabbatai Şevi celebrated all three Jewish pilgrimage festivals in just one week, and furthermore, overtly preached an antinomian course of action, he was discredited with part of the Jewish public. Hence, it makes sense that this may have given rise to the theme of the conman who misleads a gullible congregation into celebrating a major Jewish holiday other than at its proper calendrical place.

Scholem (2016 [1973], p. 162) explains, by reference to the *Vision of Rabbi Abraham*, a Sabbatian source, in a passage that relates past events as though they were part of a prophecy for the future (Scholem's own brackets, my added braces):

A supplement to the *Apocalypse of R. Abraham* prophesies a violent antinomian outbreak for the year 1658. The prophecy obviously refers to past events, in spite of the future tense adopted by its author. It predicts that "In the year 1658 he [the messiah] will celebrate the three festivals of pilgrimage in one week, so as to atone for all the sins ever committed by Israel during festival times. Then God will give him a new law and new commandments to repair all the worlds. In the year 1658 he shall bless 'Him who permits that which is forbidden'". This is one of the most important testimonies, coming as it does from Sabbatai's immediate entourage — probably from Nathan {of Gaza}. Since Sabbatai was in Constantinople in the year 1658, the strange act of celebrating the three pilgrim festivals all in one week must have occurred there. This was strong stuff indeed and far more provocative than the incident with the fish, which could, if necessary, be dismissed as a puerile and harmless folly. This time resolute punitive action was required of the rabbinic court. The provocation displayed some of the most characteristic features of Sabbatai's strange behavior pattern, for throughout his career he exhibited a predilection for shifting dates, changing fixed timers, and moving Sabbaths and holy days to other days. The celebration of the festivals in one week was merely the first installment in a long series of similar ceremonies reported by the most diverse sources. Half a year before his death, he again celebrated the feast of Tabernacles and Pentecost in one week, in his place of exile, Dulcigno.⁴

Arguably, it was precisely because Sabbatai Şevi's followers had been claiming that the purpose of celebrating all three festivals of pilgrimage in one week was in order to achieve atonement for the faithful, that the Jewish folkloric story about the conman who celebrated Yom Kippur in the month of Tammuz (nearly three months too early) came into being, while determining the festival celebrated by the conman as though it was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

³ Rather than the spelling "G-d". The inconsistency in the original webpage.

⁴ At which time, Sabbatai Şevi had already converted to Islam to escape execution at the orders of the Sultan.

Let us turn, now, to a different Jewish folkloric narrative. Part Two of Nissan (2011) comprises Sections 6 to 9 in that long article, and discusses a Baghdadi Jewish tale (one which approximates type 1828* of the international tale type classification of folktales) about a prank carried out by a maverick of a rabbi, Hākhām Zambartūt,⁵ and causing a congregation to behave awkwardly (thus, one of international folklore classification's *Predigtschwänke*, cf. Types 1828* and 1826), which in this case, is their cawing like a raven in order to correct a misreading from *Leviticus* 19:28.

Section 9 in Nissan (2011) is "The Galician *Zogerin* (Woman Leading Women in Prayer) Emulated When Calling Out to the Butcher's Wife: "Sheindl, Thanks for the Gut!", and discusses a variant — IFA 17029 from the Israel Folklore Archives in Haifa (the tale, recorded in Hebrew, was heard in Yiddish by the German-born transcriber from his father, who was from eastern Galicia, from around Radomyśl which is near the city of Lvov) — in which the protagonist unintentionally (instead of deliberately) causes the congregation to behave awkwardly. They do because they sheepishly emulate everything she does.

The father used to relate: In the women's gallery at the synagogue where he used to pray,⁶ there used to be a woman who used to be *maqri'ah* [i.e., to have] the women [read] the prayers,

⁵ That individual is typically claimed to have actually existed. My late uncle, Edward Yamen, concluded a short article of his about this character — "Rabbi Zimbartoot", on p. 34 in *The Scribe*, no. 75 (London, 2002) — by remarking:

Regarding the name "Zimbartoot" it does not seem "his real one" and behind how he got it, there was a story which is as follows: While he was a Yeshiva student in Baghdad reciting a passage in the Talmud amongst his teacher and companions he mispronounced a word which went his way in the passage. The word was 'SEMARTOOT' or if you like, 'SMARTOOT' which literally means a worthless piece of cloth. It seemed that his bad pronunciation made it change into "Zimbartoot" instead.

From that moment onwards, his companions started to use it as a nickname which replaced his personal one until now. "What is in a nickname" is always funnier than "What is in a name"! Was the mispronunciation, kind of a joke? The reader's guess is as good as mine.

Also note that an American Jewish cycle of jokes about a "rabbi trickster" (a rabbi who is a trickster) was discussed by Ed Cray (1964). Part of his examples, however, are just about some witty rabbi. Commenting on one joke, Cray states: "The trickster functions in a dual role. At one and the same time he is both wise and foolish" (*ibid.*, p. 338). On yet another joke, on a rabbi and a priest, Cray comments: "Four versions of this vary only in detail; in all of them, the story questions the folly of store-bought absolution through the interpretation of the 'innocent' rabbi. The rabbi's naïveté or foolishness is the obverse side of the trickster's" (*ibid.*, p. 341).

My uncle Edward took a different view. He was responding to a narrative about Hākhām Zambartūt uttering something improper, and tried to harmonise that claimed behaviour with socio-cultural realities from times past. He wrote:

[...] Regarding the statement, attributed to him, which was equally known to me, as mentioned in your issue 74, page 63, if perused [by] a reader of the present, he would hardly believe that an offensive statement of the kind could be uttered by a Rabbi at any time and at any place. Surely the time was different, tolerance prevailed all over and a strong will to live in peace, regardless of religion was dominant.

Besides all that, the person under reference was [considered] so special and amiable by all, Muslims and Jews, being a goodhearted man and well-known of having a witty skill in cracking jokes of all kinds up to a degree that he was given the liberty to cross the bounds of good taste as a "privilege", enticing him to speak his eloquence freely and without any inhibition whatsoever, which was called at that time "AMAN WA RAI" which means more or less: "absolute freedom of speech"! So, things went like that with him, undisputed, as it seemed.

Before concluding, I want to clarify that in his era people felt more strongly the warmth of a friendship in the willingness to share enthusiasms and knowledge and lived in that adoration.

⁶ So this tale is related as though it was the father's *memorate*, rather than a *favolate*. Psychologically it is not impossible for persons to be unfocussed when doing a task, just setting on to carry out it automatically, and

especially during the festivals and during the Ten Days of Atonement [from the Jewish New Year's Day and Yom Kippur]. She used to read from the prayer book, and those women who were unable to read would repeat what she said word by word. They used to call her (in Yiddish) *die Zogerin*.

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

In contrast, Hākhām Zambartūt announces to some friends that he would cause the congregation to caw like ravens. He manages to do that by mispronouncing the Biblical Hebrew word *qa'āqā'* for 'tattoo' (which a Jew must not make or have made). The men in the congregation are aware that he should have uttered *qa'āqā'*, not *qa'qā'* the way he did (they all pronounce the letters *quf* and '*ayin* gutturally). Thus, their very skill causes them to call out the correct word, so that he would repeat the reading from the Torah scroll correctly, and while so doing, they behave in the awkward manner that Hākhām Zambartūt intended. He mispronounced the word on purpose. Immediately, the congregants shouted to correct him: *Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'!* Bear in mind that both /q/ and /' / are pronounced back in the throat (respectively, the voiceless uvular stop, and the voiced pharyngeal fricative), and that in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the name for both 'raven' and 'crow' is *bqē'*. The call of corvids is described as follows, in the dialect: "*Qā'! Qā'!*" *yisáwwī* (i.e., "It does: 'Caw! Caw!'").

The character of a trickster clergyman is also known, for example, from Western Christianity: this is the case of the Italian Pievano Arlotto. Clearly, the story about the prankster who makes the congregants crow is a "farce about a preacher", a *Predigtschwank*. We are not as well placed to match the second tale to some given tale type. The closest we come to is Tale Type 1828* from Uther (2004, Vol. 2, p. 433):

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

Uther (*ibid.*) refers to items from the scholarly literature concerning several versions, including Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Danish, Spanish, Dutch, Frisian, German, Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Ukrainian, African American, Cuban, and South African.

A layman addressing the congregation is a social possibility in Judaism as well as in Islam. Where Christian folktales have a clergyman, Muslim variants may have a layman such as Mullah Nasreddin and Nasreddin Hodja (see e.g. Marzolph 1995). Such is the case of Tale Type 1826 (Uther 2004, Vol. 2, p. 431), which is unlike the tale from Baghdad we related:

keeping repeating what they hear is one possibility. It may be, however, that this is a folktale that came to be taken to be an anecdote from real life.

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

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

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

3. The Yiddish Modern Folk Tradition of the Wise Men of Chelm, and the *Schildbürgerbuch*, Identified as a Source by Ruth von Bernuth, with Remarks on the Marcolfian and Charivari Traditions

In the Yiddish modern folk tradition of the wise men of Chelm, where the latter is an equivalent of numskull towns from other European traditions, the populace is foolish, but otherwise conforming to the perceived image of traditional, devout Jewish community in Eastern Europe. Therefore, the synagogue has there the expected place it would have in the Jewish communities of old in that part of the world (or for that matter, elsewhere as well).

And yet, in the folk tradition of the wise men of Chelm, one can find a trace of a non-Jewish source, the early modern German *Schildbürgerbuch*. Ruth von Bernuth has devoted an erudite book to the subject (von Bernuth 2016). In what remains of the *Schildbürgerbuch* in the Yiddish tradition of the wise men of Chelm, some detail does not sit well with the characterisation of the latter as being devout Jews.

In the medieval and early modern European tradition of the boorish smart peasant Marcolf faced with King Solomon (extant in Latin, German, and so on), at one point Marcolf is condemned to death by Solomon (yet escapes, as given the option of choosing a tree on which to be hanged, he is satisfied with none). That death penalty is the consequence of Marcolf showing utter disrespect to King Solomon, by causing the King to enter a room and be faced with Marcolf's bare bottom.

A character showing his bare behind in a king's presence is also known from a literary source other than the Marcolf tradition, but whereas Marcolf did it on purpose, that other character did it unwittingly. On p. 89 in her book, von Bernuth (2016) reproduced two woodcuts. Both of them show, to the right, several men riding hobbyhorses (of the latter, almost just the long sticks protruding behind between their legs are visible) and with whips in their right hands, whereas to the left the back of a man sitting with a bare backside can be seen in the distance. The two woodcuts look very similar. The captions von Bernuth gave the first woodcut is as follows: "Greeting the emperor, woodcut from the German Filzhut edition of the *Schildbürgerbuch*, British Library".

That book first appeared in 1598 with great success, and its expected audience being non-Jewish German: the Emperor of Utopia is about to visit the town, whose elected mayor is a swineheard, and he and his staff, uncertain whether it would be more correct to receive the sovereign on foot or on horseback, adopt a compromise, going out to meet the Emperor astride hobbyhorses (von Bernuth 2016, p. 63).

A modernised *Schildbürgerbuch*, with updated vocabulary, signed by "Pomponius Filzhut", appeared in the late 17th century. Von Bernuth writes (2016, p. 74):

As for the name Filzhut, it is not an arbitrary choice but an allusion to the emperor's arrival in Schildburg, which must be one of the *Schildbürgerbuch*'s more memorable moments. The city fathers have gone out in procession on hobbyhorses and awaited him patiently, but finally the mayor feels compelled to relieve himself. No sooner has he prepared to do so that the imperial party arrives. With no time to adjust his clothing, he makes do by holding up his pants with one hand and doffing his felt hat [*Filzhut*] with the other, until the emperor extends a hand and he is obliged to shake it, a predicament that he resolves by placing his *Filzhut* between his teeth.

The second woodcut on p. 89 in Ruth von Bernuth's book (2016) is from a Yiddish version. Her caption is as follows:

Greeting the emperor, woodcut from the Yiddish *Schildburger bukh* edition of 1727, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle (Saale). The woodcut shows the Schildburgers mounted on hobbyhorses to receive the emperor, while the mayor relieves himself on the dunghill. The Yiddish edition reproduces the mayor's bare behind but suppresses the feces on display in the German original.

That is a textbook example of what in folklorists call an *oikotypisation*: representing excrement was expected to be too jarring for the Jewish oikotype or oicotype or oecotype — a concept originally introduced by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1948) — i.e., the specific cultural environment, in this case, for a Jewish public to accept in the woodcut. So the Yiddish edition "suppresses the feces".

As for Marcolf as well as the medieval European representational tradition of the *charivari* (a carnival procession playing loud instruments), one comes across traces in some medieval Jewish manuscript. Sarit Shalev-Einy (2008) suggests that in the initial word panel of *Song of Songs* from the *Tripartite Mahzor* (see below), this "representation of a cacophonous group in front of Solomon implies a possibly critical attitude towards the king" (*ibid.*, p. 197). She suggests a similar irreverent attitude towards King Solomon in Christian humorous literature from the West in the same period. Shalev-Einy writes (*ibid.*, p. 197):

These parodies, known in many versions, present Solomon as a weak king manipulated by a grotesque jeering figure. One such treatise is the thirteenth century Latin *Solomon et Marcolfus*, translated at the same period into German under the title: *Salomon und Markolf*.⁷ This was written as a dialogue, in which Markolf, like the creatures in our panel, is depicted as a grotesque individual with donkey-like lips and spiky hair, who makes a mocking parody of each of Solomon's proverbs. In another epic version written in Germany under the title *Salman und Morolf*, Morolf, like the acrobat in the *Mahzor* illumination, is presented as a contemporary Spielmann, mocking the weak king and manipulating him and all his entourage by means of sophisticated tricks. The *Mahzor* illuminator probably knew these parodies but created a new narrative, combining the two different aspects of Solomon. The protesting procession mocking Solomon is marching towards the king, but the king as he appears on the right is not the weak person of the profane literature but an eternal divine king. In this new narrative the illuminator combined the religious and profane aspects into one artistic realm.

The article under consideration, by Sarit Shalev-Einy (2008), is about humorous illumination (influenced by Christian secular art) in 14th-century Jewish manuscripts from Europe, a section is entitled "The Song of Songs and the Street Carnival: Meeting of High and Low

⁷ Griese (1999). Cf. the critical edition by Hartmann (1934).

Cultures" (*ibid.*, pp. 194–199). In that section, she is concerned with the initial word panel of the biblical book *Song of Songs*, from a manuscript known as the *Tripartite Mahzor* (now in Budapest, but originating from the Lake Constance region, ca. 1322). A *mahzor* is a prayer book for the festivals, all year round (the etymology of the term suggests the cyclical nature of the calendar, and therefore of how the book is to be used). *Song of Songs* was included in that *mahzor* catering to the Ashkenazi Jewish rite, because of that rite's custom of reading *Song of Songs* during the Saturday of Passover. **See Fig. 1.**

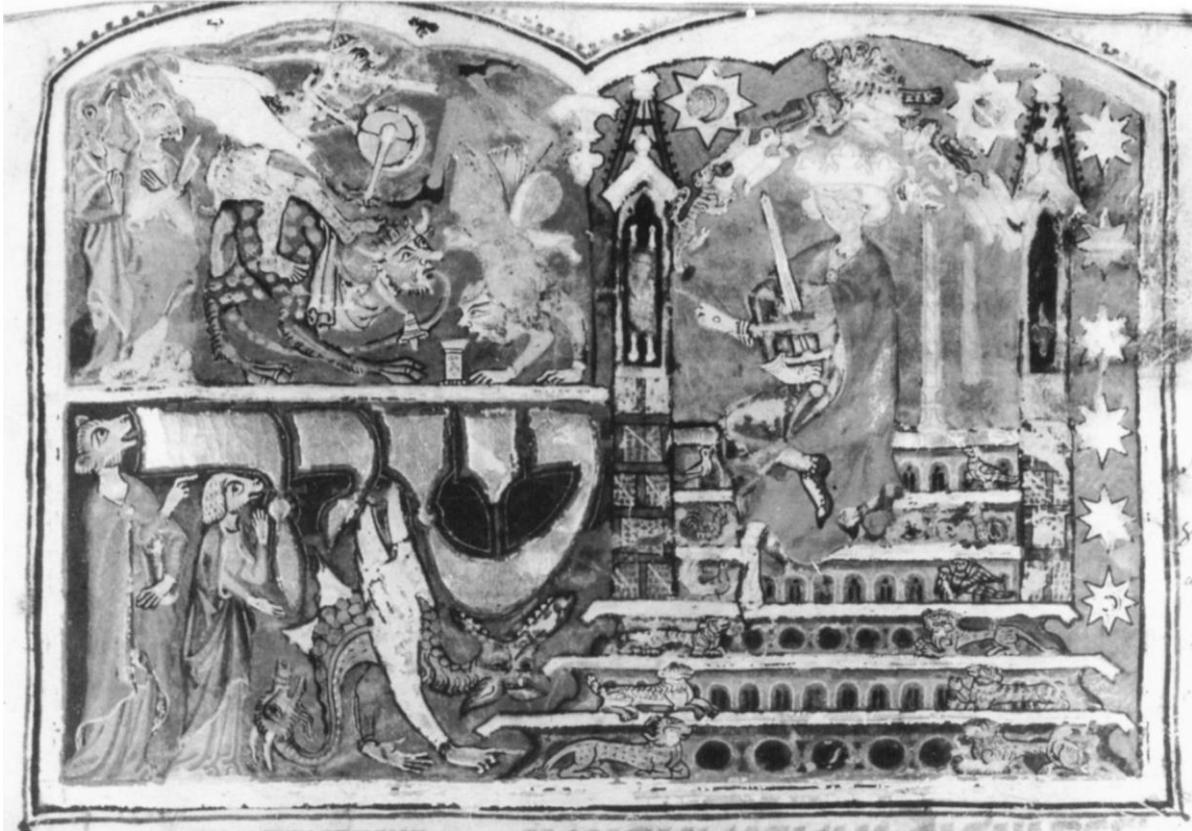


Figure 1. Solomon (right) on his throne (with pairs of animals on the sides of each step, as part of its magical mechanism), and (left) zoomorphic, part-human characters (demons? or animals whose language he understands?) in his presence. *Tripartite Mahzor*, the Lake Constance region, ca. 1322. The Hebrew word (bottom left), שִׁיר *šir*, means 'song'. In fact, this is the initial word panel of the biblical book *Song of Songs*. Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann Collection, Ms. A384, f. 183v.

On the right side of that panel, the crowned character sitting on a throne is easily recognised as King Solomon (traditionally considered the author of *Song of Songs*), because of the throne being so depicted as to correspond to the rabbinic tradition about Solomon's wondrous mechanical throne, with animals on the sides of each step. When he climbed, those animals supposedly lifted his foot. That tradition is grounded in three verses about Solomon's throne in *1 Kings* 10:18–20. What is more, in the manuscript illumination Solomon and his throne are shown in what appears to be heaven, as they are surrounded by large stars, and the sun and the moon are above Solomon's head (the moon is shown as a crescent inside a star contour).

King Solomon supposedly ruled over the demons, and in fact, in the word panel, one can see a scaly, part-serpent, part-human winged character, with a goat-head at the tip of his tail, prostrating himself under the throne. That is perhaps Ashmedai, the king of the demons. At

any rate, he is certainly a demon. Shalev-Einy describes that character as "a double headed winged dragon" (Shalev-Einy 2008, p. 194).

Traditionally Solomon is claimed to have been able to hold a conversation with animals. Behind the prostrating demon, one can see in the initial word panel two standing human-like characters with animal heads, dressed like women (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Detail of Figure 1. Animal-headed characters standing behind the prostrating demon.

If these are not also demons, then they are representatives of the animal kinds, who like the demons, recognise Solomon's kingship. Shalev-Einy explains (2008, p. 194):

In contrast to this holy and celestial context, a completely different atmosphere prevails on the left side of the panel. While the right side is static, dynamic events take place on the left, exposing a different side of Solomon's personality. Among the procession marching towards the king in two lines arranged one above the other is a double headed winged dragon, depicted in the lower part. Above, a horned devil-like hybrid playing a drum and flute rides upon another creature with a bell tied around its neck. The mounted player is naked and hairy, his grotesque face is adorned with goat's horns and a short tail is attached to his backside. The other hybrid has two small ears, horns, and devil-like hair that sticks up. In front of them is an acrobat standing on his hands.

Shalev-Einy points out the likely inspiration from carnival scenes in Christian miniatures. In particular: "In the French Roman de Fauvel of 1316,⁸ a satirical allegory referring to a period of political and civil unrest in the first decades of the fourteenth century, a carnival procession playing loud instruments, known as the charivari, is depicted" (Shalev-Einy 2008, p. 195). See **Fig. 3** (parts **a** and **b**).



Figure 3a. A charivari scene, detail of Fig. 3b.

⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. français 146, fol. 36v.

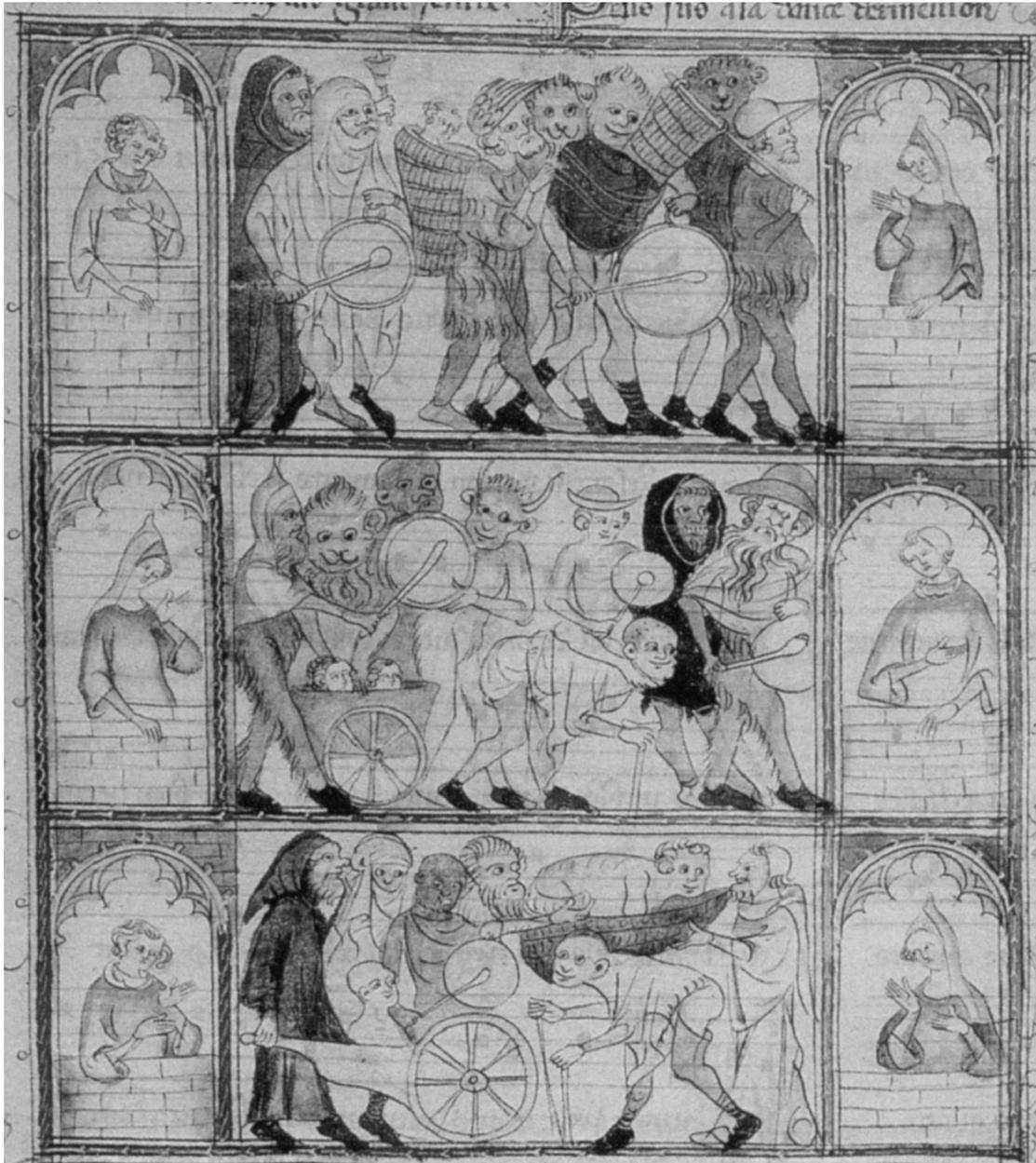


Figure 3b. A charivari scene from folio 36v of the *Roman de Fauvel*, Paris, 1316.
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. français 146.

4. The Devout Simpleton Who, Made into the Champion of his Vulnerable People, Saves Them by Succeeding in a Test or Defeating his Opponent in a Disputation

The *Kaiser und Abt* or *The King and the Bishop* international tale type (Anderson 1923) is widespread in world cultures, and within Jewish cultures, where variants occur since the Middle Ages to modern times, it is recorded as early as narratives of encounters with Alexander the Great as found in the Talmudic literature. A powerful royal character is to decide about the merits of claims made by the representative of a given population (claims tested by a questioner who may be the King, or a disputant who represent opposite and hostile claims).

Jewish versions of the *Kaiser und Abt* tale type abound, and ones from Eastern Europe Jewish communities were considered by Haim Schwarzbaum (1968, see p. 488 [index]). Schwarzbaum traced the tale to the Jewish-Egyptian community in the ninth century C.E. In an article entitled "The Americanization of 'The King and the Abbot'", Dan Ben-Amos (1969) pointed out that Talmudic stories about Gebiha ben Pesisa meeting Alexander the Great were earlier versions. In 2012, in a useful and instructive report of two pages, an anonymous referee pointed out concerning a paper of mine a difficulty if one was "to argue that the Gebiha ben Pesisa stories are models for disputation narratives that are prevalent in Jewish folklore and traditions of many countries. Such a proposition can be argued only if this tale was available in Jewish tradition only. But since it is known in many European and Near Eastern countries, it would have been necessary to eliminate any possibility of non-Jewish influence upon Jewish tradition. This cannot be done, and wisely, the author does not even attempt to do. A hint of foreign influence can be found in the motif of disguise that is prevalent in later Jewish tales, but is absent[t] in the Gebiha ben Pesisa tales".

The Gebiha (or Gviha) ben Pesisa narrative was discussed e.g. by Ory Amitay (2006),⁹ who argues that in this rabbinic myth, the mythical Alexander stands for the historical Pompey, who brought to an end the power of the Hasmonaic dynasty; in the tale, the clever character of Gebiha repeatedly admits he is an ignoramus (at any rate, a lay person, not a rabbi), but historically Gebiha ben Pesisa appears (or at any rate Amitay believes so)¹⁰ to have been a grandson of Jonathan, one of the Maccabean brothers (who themselves lived several generations after Alexander the Great).

There are such Jewish versions of the *Kaiser und Abt* tale type in which the Jewish disputant is of a socially low condition, and may present himself as an ignoramus, and yet he turns out to be clever. There are times when he is successful notwithstanding his not being clever, his not quite understanding the situation as it evolves, and his not even understanding why in the end he has succeeded.

In one such Sephardic tale, discussed in Nissan (2013a), the Jewish representative being riddled by the Pope is a butcher posturing as though he is a rabbi, but reasoning as the ignorant butcher he actually is. At the time when the Pope was also an absolute ruler, he summons the chief rabbi, informing him he would ask him three questions. If he can answer, it will be well for the Jews, otherwise their situation will be very bad. The rabbi is afraid, does not feel up to the task, and knows that impressions are very important: his wisdom will be to no avail, should he be seen as a small, frightened man. The rabbi would rather have a butcher who is large and imposing go instead, by posturing as if he was the rabbi. They dress him up nicely, as a rabbi, and he goes.¹¹

⁹ "The story of Gviha Ben-Psisa and Alexander the Great is a rabbinic myth. The mythical Alexander represents the historical Pompey. Gviha, on the other hand, is a fully historical figure (a grandson of Jonathan Maqabi and great-grandfather of Josephus). The myth emerged out of the realities and anxieties created by the rise of Hasmonean imperialism under Hyrkanos I and his sons, and by its collapse at the hands of Pompey. It defends the Jewish rights over *Eretz Israel* by establishing the Torah as a source of legitimacy in international law. The myth also reflects Jewish ambivalence towards Pompey: at once a defiler and a preserver of the Temple" (Amitay 2006, abstract).

¹⁰ By contrast, in her *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, Tal Ilan (2002, p. 36) has claimed that this character is not historical: "It is clearly fictitious".

¹¹ A lower-class impersonator (yet a shrewd one) of the examinee also appears in the 14th-century story by Franco Sacchetti about Milan's ruler Bernabò Visconti, the fearful abbot, and the shrewd miller. See **Diagram 1** (in Nissan 2013 it was Fig. 4). The butcher in the Jewish tale is a fool, whereas the miller in Sacchetti's story is smart. Cf. *L'Abbate senza pensieri*, being tale XCVII in Vol. 2 of Giuseppe Pitrè's collected Sicilian folktales: a king's or a pope's questions an abbot, whose servant or a cook answers. See XCVII *L'Abbate senza pensieri* in both Pitrè's Addenda, "Aggiunte del Raccoglitore", and Vittorio Imbriani's appendix on parallels, at the end of Pitrè's Vol. 4. Pitrè signals a story on Dante and King Robert of Naples, being Tale 10 in Giovanni Sercambi's *Novelle*. Imbriani signals *l'istoria del beato Griffarrosto*, being the eighth and last canto in *Orlandino* by Teofilo Folengo ("Limerno Pitocco").

The Pope's questions were silent. First, the Pope held out an orange. The butcher thinks up, looks in his pockets, and takes out and shows the Pope a piece of unleavened bread, which he had because it was Passover. The Pope looks very satisfied with the answer. He turns to his second question. The Pope tells him: "Here!", pointing his finger downwards. The Jew spreads his hands to the sides, and says: "Like this!", and the Pope is both surprised and pleased. Then the Pope announces his third question. The Pope points a finger at the Jew. In response, the Jew points two fingers at the Pope. The Pope, very pleased, embraces the Jew and kisses him, and announces that the Jews are very wise, and will be treated well. The butcher and the Jews who accompanied him leave the room. The members of the clergy who remain with the Pope did not understand, so they ask the Pope for an explanation. He explains that he showed the Jew an orange, representing the Earth, which is round. The Jew's answer was that the Earth is flat, as all Christendom believes. The second question was whether Christianity is here, in Rome, and the Jew answered that it is spread throughout the world. The third question was about the Deity. The Jew denied that it is one, and answered that they are two, the Father and the Son.¹²

Meanwhile, the folktale continues, after his meeting with the Pope, the butcher is satisfied, and so are the Jews, who embrace and kiss him. They, too, ask for an explanation. He tells them: "He was so afraid of me, you'll see why. He asked, 'Would you care for an orange?'" (in a patronising manner), so he replied it's Passover, and he would rather eat unleavened bread. Then, the butcher relates, the Pope told him he would keep them in Rome, so he replied that quite on the contrary, they would spread throughout the world. In the end, the butcher explains, the Pope told him: "I will take out your eye!", and he, the butcher, replied: "You'll take out my eye? I'll take out two of yours!" Therefore: "He was so afraid that he lets us go."

Tamar Alexander (2008, Ch. 11) related a storyteller's performance of that tale, and discussed it. Nissan (2013a) provides further discussion, and identifies both Jewish and international parallels (e.g. in a medieval tale by Franco Sacchetti). Nissan (2013a) proposed that this particular version originated sometime during the 18th century (or even the 17th). The meaning of the symbols changed, sometime between the late 18th century and the 19th century.

This reflected changing geopolitical, communal, and linguistic conditions. In particular, in the Judaeo-Spanish speaking diaspora, which was networked between Amsterdam, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire, the character of the Pope exhibiting an orange to the representative of the Jews may have been understood as a charge of siding with the Protestants, and in particular with the House of Orange¹³ ruling the Netherlands, against the Catholic countries.

The Israel Folktale Archives in Haifa have ten tales of the tale-type IFA versions of AT 924A "Discussion between Priest and Jew Carried on by Symbols", but in none of these does an orange appear.¹⁴

¹² Judaism frowns upon what Hebrew medieval terminology calls *shittuf*, i.e., 'partnership', as a departure from pure monotheism.

¹³ Named after the southern French town of Orange, whose ancient Latin name *Aurasio* is etymologised from a pre-Latin root *ar* in the sense 'altitude'. No relation to the etymology of *orange* for the fruit.

¹⁴ Ed Cray (1964, p. 342) relates a variant in which, in a fancy medieval setting, it is the rabbi who replies to the Pope in a Pantomime. The Pope is convinced the rabbi's sign accepted the Pope's dogmas, whereas from what the rabbi later explains, he assumed they were exchanging rude gestures. As for the Pope pulling out a bottle of wine, and the rabbi a box of matzos, the Pope assumes they were partaking of the Eucharist, whereas the rabbi assumes they were having their lunch.

In the Orange and matzo tale: *In Sacchetti's tale:*

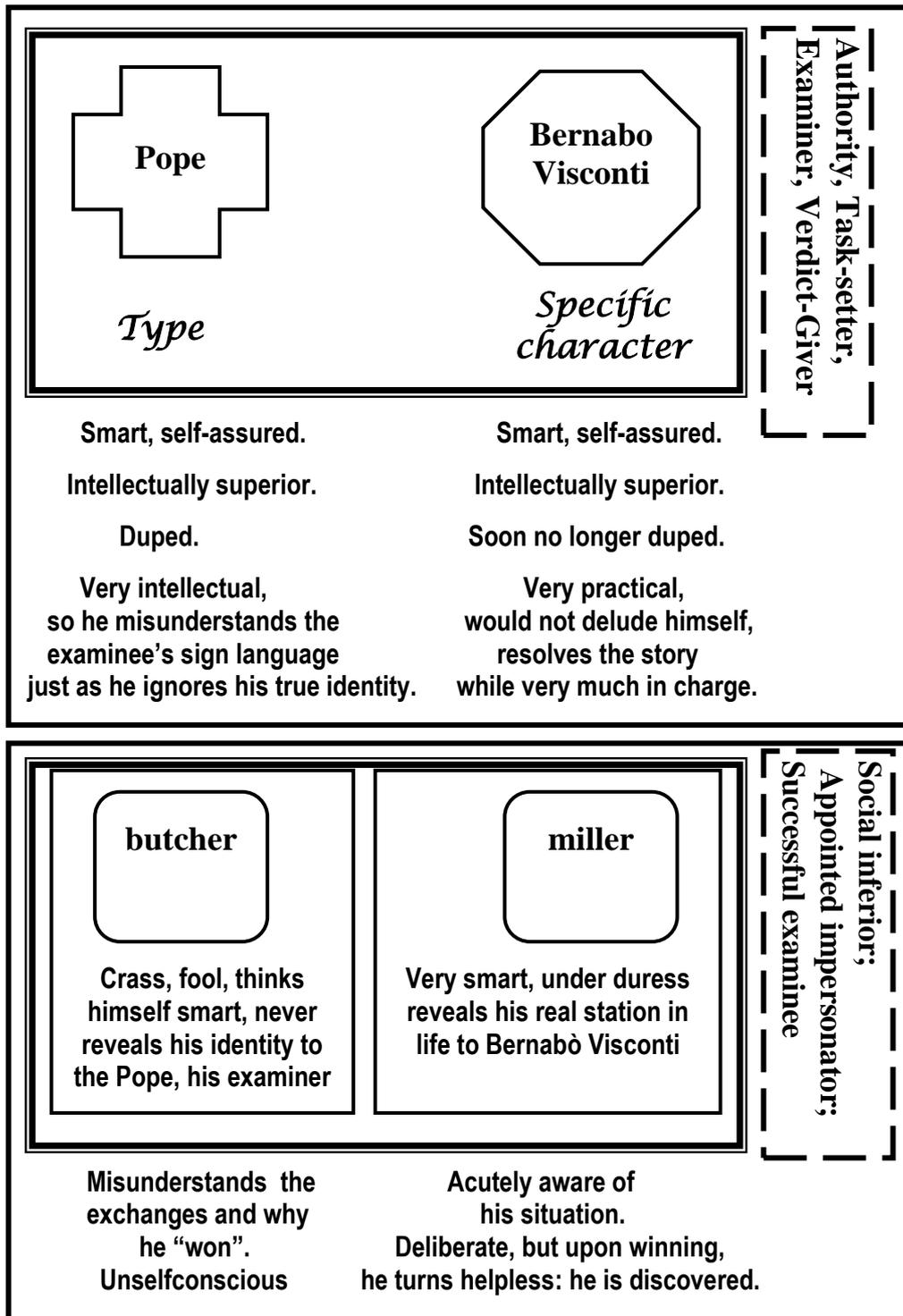


Diagram 1. A comparative diagram considering features of the disputants in the Sephardi tale of the orange and the matzo bread, as opposed to Franco Sacchetti's story about Milan's ruler Bernabò Visconti, the fearful abbot, and the shrewd miller who impersonates the abbot.

5. The "I Don't Know" Tale, and a Representation in Episodic Formulae

Some tales revolve upon the distinction between an object-level and a metalinguistic utterance. One such example includes, within the international classification of folktales, Tale Type 853, "The Hero catches the Princess with her Own Words", which includes motif H507.1, "Princess offered to man who can defeat her in repartee". Lies the princess is told cause her to say "That is a lie", and this tricks her into defeat. See El-Shamy (2004, p. 474), and *ibid.*, p. 1236, s.v. "Lies", where only one example from the Arab world (from Qatar) is mentioned.

In Jewish disputation tales, pitting an unlearned Jewish disputant against a skilled non-Jewish opponent and nevertheless won by the Jew,¹⁵ one class of versions have a cleric boast he knows everything about Jewish doctrine. He even asks to be beheaded¹⁶ as soon as he would say "I don't know". The Jewish disputant asks his opponent what the Hebrew sentence

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

¹⁶ Historically, during the Renaissance, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Mirandola near Modena, 1463 – Florence, 1494), a humanist (and Christian kabbalist: see Wirszubski 1989) endowed with a prodigious memory, asked to be beheaded, should he make an error while declaiming in public by heart, in reverse, a long text. In Italian popular culture, Pico della Mirandola is the paragon of infallible memory. One can also see how highly recognizable Pico della Mirandola is in Italian popular culture, from the name, *Pico de Paperis* (befitting a humanoid duck of the Renaissance) which one of the ducks in the entourage of Scrooge McDuck (who himself is Paperon de' Paperoni in Italy) was given in Italian. That Disney character is a very pedantic scholar with an incomparably broad scope of erudition. He is called *Ludwig Von Drake* in English (presumably because of the popular perception of the many men of culture with a Central European background who had come to the United States).

Fabrizio Lelli, who has discussed Pico della Mirandola's thought extensively in his research, explains: "Born to the noble family of the Counts of Mirandola and Concordia near Modena, Pico lived on the edge of two distinct cultural periods, the former rooted in medieval scholasticism, the latter characterized by the humanistic revival of classical thought. Pico's strong curiosity led him to study thoroughly both medieval and classical traditions in the most renowned cultural centers of his age. His multifaceted interests in all kinds of knowledge, his peculiar life, as well as his precocious death constituted the basis for the rapid flourishing of his fame and for the spreading of his legendary biography also beyond Italian borders" (Lelli 2006, p. 949). There was a public event that Pico wanted to occur, but never did. "1486 was a significant year for Pico: he returned from Paris to Florence, subsequently moving to Arezzo (where he caused a scandal due to his abducting a lady who had family ties with the Medicis), Perugia and Rome. In Perugia Pico began his thorough study of Oriental languages and Jewish kabbalistic doctrines [→ Jewish Influences], which were used in his commentary on a platonic love poem by his friend Girolamo Benivieni (*Commento sopra una canzone d'amore di Girolamo Benivieni*), where for the first time his views of philosophical and religious concordance were asserted. Simultaneously, Pico composed his *Conclusiones nongentae* (Nine-hundred Conclusions, or Theses), meant to be publicly discussed in Rome in 1487 and dealing with all fields of philosophic and religious knowledge which the author wanted to join in an all-comprehensive system. As an Introduction to the hoped-for scholarly conference on the *Theses*, Pico wrote an oration, later entitled *De hominis dignitate* (On the Dignity of Man): an outstanding manifesto of the Renaissance conception of the role played by man within Creation. The harsh reaction of the Roman Church against Pico's *Theses* — as a result of which the public discussion never took place — led him to write an *Apologia* in 1487, in which he tried to defend his position. After a brief detention in Paris, at the Pope's request, Pico settled in Florence" (Lelli 2006, p. 950). "In spite of [the Jewish averroist philosopher Elijah] Del Medigo's criticism against Kabbalah, Pico probably realized he had found in this Jewish lore one of the major links between rational and religious systems of thought. In 1486, while composing his famous *Nine Hundred Conclusions*, he resorted for the first time to a wide range of Jewish kabbalistic works, which had been translated on his request by the Jewish convert Flavius Mithridates (ca. 1450–1489). As we have seen, Pico wanted to submit and discuss all his *Conclusions* (which he had printed at the end of 1486) during a conference to be held in Rome early in 1487. A committee appointed by Pope Innocent VIII stopped Pico's plans, declaring that six of the theses were suspect and condemning seven others. Most of the condemned *Conclusions* deal with Kabbalah. Pico immediately wrote his *Apology* in order to declare his innocence, but the result of this further attempt was that the Pope eventually denounced all the theses" (Lelli 2006, p. 951).

Ení yodéa' means, and the cleric translates correctly "I don't know", and is immediately executed. As recorded in Judaeo-Spanish (the informant was "Y.Z., 1991") and published in Italian by Matilde Cohen Sarano (1993, under the title "Il concorso", pp. 112–113) the Christian disputant is a cardinal, whereas the Jewish contender is an unlearned sexton who volunteers claiming that he has no family, so nobody would feel his loss if, as likely, he would be executed. The cardinal feels cardinal, and proposes that the Jew should be let to ask a question first. The sexton asks him what *Ení yodéa'* means, and as soon as the cardinal answers "I don't know", the King says: "He does not know!" and has him beheaded. Later on, the sexton is celebrated, and the other Jews ask the sexton how it ever occurred to him to ask that question. The sexton replies that in recent days, it occurred to him to see a little boy at school ask the rabbi what *Ení yodéa'* means, and the rabbi had replied "I don't know"; therefore, if even the rabbi did not have that knowledge, all the more so the gentile at the disputation would certainly not know. This is an instance of a tale in which the unlearned Jewish contender wins the disputation, but he is too ignorant to understand what actually went on.

Let us represent the structure of the plot in the *Ení yodéa'* story, by resorting to a mathematical formalism of representation, *episodic formulae*, I introduced myself in some of my artificial intelligence publications (Nissan 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2009 [2010], 2014; Nissan et al. 2004).

Both the king and, as it eventually turns out, the sexton mistake a metalinguistic statement for the object-level statement, and therefore apply the indexicality of the first person singular to the utterer, and believe that (respectively) the cardinal or the rabbi did not know the answer.

In episodic formulae, let us use the following symbols:

- S** the sexton
- G** the Gentile disputant
- K** the King

The Gentile disputant G stating (metalinguistically: this is symbolised by the double quotes in the formula) a given expression $\varphi(\mathcal{S})$ in which there is an indexical reference \mathcal{S} to the first person singular is an event that did occur, and was a concomitant cause for the King's auditory perception of that much, and in turn this perception occurred and was a concomitant cause for the King believing that π_1 — namely: that the Gentile disputant had actually said what he said, i.e., $\varphi(G)$, at the object-level (rather than metalinguistically, " $\varphi(G)$ "), and that the first personal singular \mathcal{S} actually referred to the Gentile disputant G himself, and that this entailed that the statement $\varphi(G)$ was accurate. That is to say, the King believed that the Gentile disputant was claiming accurately that he did not know the answer.

The episodic formulae are as follows:



$$\pi_1 \equiv \left(\mu_G \varphi(G) \right) \wedge \left[\left(\mu_G \varphi(G) \right) \Rightarrow \varphi(G) \right]$$

6. Examples of Pious Fools from Yiddish Literary Texts by Isaac Leib Perez and Isaac Bashevis Singer

One of the short stories by Isaac Leib Peretz, "Bonce the Taciturn", tells the grim life of a lower-class Jew who accepted his fate without protesting. He was so little noticed, that after his burial the wind carried away the little wooden sign from his grave, and when the gravedigger's wife found it⁶, she used it in order to roast potatoes. Bonce is not stupid. The only stupid thing he does, o how tragically, is at the very end of the story, while his soul is in Paradise. While alive, he once saved the life of a rich man. The horses drawing his coach became restive, but Bonce was able to seize control. The man saved by Bonce rewarded him by hiring him, having him wed the boss's mistress (whose grown son eventually threw him out of his own house), and eventually firing him. Then the rich man's coach ran over Bonce, who was mortally wounded. In the afterlife, Bonce's arrival made a great impression. The welcome he gets so overwhelms him, he is mightily intimidated. His merits are such that he is asked to express a wish, any wish, with the promise it would be granted. But instead of asking for the Jewish people and for the entire world to be redeemed, Bonce asks for a roll with fresh butter every morning.¹⁷ The Devil laughs, whereas the angels and the saints are astonished and disappointed. Bonce has no imagination, his horizons had always been so narrow, that he misses the opportunity to bring about a cosmic revolution that was within his reach — but he never understood that much.

"The Fools' Paradise", one of the short stories by Isaac Bashevis Singer, from his 1966 book *Zlate the Goat and Other Stories*, is about Atzel ("Lazy"), the only child of rich parents. He becomes convinced he has died. Why? He apparently listened to too much talk about Paradise for his own good. Dr. Yoetz ("Adviser") finds a way to heal Atzel. He reproaches the family for keeping a corpse at home. Atzel is so glad he was proven right, that he jumps out of his bed and dances. He now wants to eat, but the doctor tells him he must wait, for that,

¹⁷ A somewhat similar ending is found in a short story, *Ben Adam and the Angel* by Art Hoppe, which first appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 1 February 1970, and then was published on pp. 185–186 in condensed form in *Reader's Digest* (U.S. edition) of August 1971. It begins by introducing a middle-aged man ("Once upon a time there was a man named Ben Adam who, like most members of The Older Generation, had little hair and overwhelming guilt feelings"), and his hippy son Irwin, who "had lots of hairs" and is used to berate his father's generation to his father's ears. "'I guess we're about the worst generation that ever lived', Ben Adam would say, nodding guiltily. 'I'm sorry, Irwin.' And Irwin would shrug and go off with his friends to smoke pot". One night, an angel appears at the foot of Ben Adam's bed, and announced to him that he has come to grant him one wish. Ben Adam is nonplussed: "'Me?' asked Ben Adam with surprise. 'Why me?' 'You have been selected by the Heavenly Computer as typical of your generation', said the Angel. 'And your generation is to be rewarded for its magnificence'". Ben Adam is baffled, and enumerates the charges of which his generation is guilty, but the angel retorts that this is the first generation that admitted it was racist and attempt e remedy, built up an army in order to bring freedom to all the world, polluted the environment because it had constructed the most affluent society ever, brought about a population explosion because it cured diseases, lives in terror of the hydrogen bomb indeed, yet had unlocked the secrets of the atom in its search for wisdom. The angel asks Ben Adam again, to express a wish: "And therefore, Ben Adam, by the authority vested in me, I grant you one wish. What shall it be?" Ben Adam does not ask for something that would benefit all humankind. "'I wish', sighed Ben Adam, the heavenly chosen representative of The Older Generation, 'that you'd have a little talk with Irwin'".

to be in Paradise. During his funeral service, Atzel is asleep inside an open bier. He is placed inside a room, which he is made to believe is his place in Paradise. He is served food by servants wearing wings on their shoulders. Eventually, Atzel gets bored. He would like to meet his relatives, but is told that they still have many years to live. Atzel despairs. On the eighth day, a servant informs him that there has been an error, that he, Atzel, is not dead, and that he must leave Paradise. Atzel, blindfolded, is taken away. Once he is allowed to see again, he finds himself at home, in a room with his family. He soon marries, and has become an industrious human being, no longer a lazy one.

7. Sicilian Tales or Bizarre Sermons from Giuseppe Pitrè's Edition of the 18th-Century *Avvenimenti Faceti*

7.1. Preamble

Giuseppe Pitrè was born on 21 December 1841 in Palermo, and died there on 1 April 1916. He was a medical doctor, and became famous as a man of letters. As a philologist, he concerned himself with variation among Sicilian dialects. He also was concerned with folkloric texts, and is indeed known as Sicily's greatest folklorist ever. He also authored short stories and fables. He is also credited with providing inspiration to two well-known authors of fiction, Luigi Capuana and Giovanni Verga (Italy's greatest writer in the school of Verismo, i.e., naturalism).

The following tales as well as bizarre sermons are quoted from Pitrè (1885, §19 [on pp. 32–33]), based on *Avvenimenti Faceti*, being MS Biblioteca Nazionale di Palermo XI. A. 20, a collection of facetious local anecdotes written by an anonymous Sicilian author, probably a cleric, an itinerant preacher, in the first half of the 18th century. Pitrè published the book in the original Italian with insertions in a dialect from the province of Messina.

7.2. The Distract Preacher Brandishing the Detached Arm of a Murder Victim and Using It to Impart a Blessing

The story we are going to consider (Pitrè 1885, §19 [on pp. 32–33]) is about distraction (cf. the "distract professor" type). It is gory, too. And yet, the audience is claimed to have laughed at the awkward scene, notwithstanding the tragic circumstances. We are not told about her being buried.

A man gives a sermon while detaching the victim's torn arm, and then even utters in Latin a blessing as though the body part in his hand was a clerical implement; once the sermon is over, he is aware again that the detached arm is part of the corpse, so he throws it away on the corpse, presumably for the audience to bury, but he does not remain there to see her buried.

Also, note that the distract preacher, as well as the itinerant preacher who was the narrator of this anecdote, assume that the woman found murdered was a consenting sinner, and does not appear to have entertained the possibility that the woman was abducted and murdered. I quote the anecdote in Italian (with the Sicilian and Latin reported speech it includes), and then provide my own translation:

19. Benedizione data col braccio svelto dal corpo d'una femina uccisa.

Il sig.^r Ignazio Lo Presti sentendo che fuori la terra di S. Marco nella campagna s'era ritrovato il cadavere d'una femina assassinata, accorse cogl'altri a vedere l'assassinio, e appunto trovarono quella sgraziata tutta ferite, una della quale era stata sì grave tra la spalla e braccio che stavan questi due membra congiunte per un pezzetto di pelle rimasta sana. Allora il sig.^r Ignazio va per

maneggiare quel braccio e appena toccatolo si svelse subito dalla spalla, perchè eran tre giorni che quell'infelice era stata ammazzata, e perciò incominciando ad infracidirsi, quella pelle distaccossi dal suo busto; in avere già libero nelle sue mani il sig.^r Ignazio quel braccio, alzatolo in aria cominciò a dire ai circostanti: *Viditi, figlioli, quantu semu misedahidi! Cui c'avia a didi a chista chi ntra du megghiu di di sò capddicci avia a distadi comu li bestij ammazzata ndra la campagna? Mpadamu a spisi d'austrudu ad addrizzari li fatti nostridi.* [From Pitre's fn. 35: «Vedete, figliuoli, quanto siamo miserabili! Chi dovea dire a costei che nel (*ntra du*, tra lo) meglio de' (*di di*, de li) suoi capricci dovesse restare, come le bestie, ammazzata nella campagna? Impariamo a spese d'altri ad addrizzare i fatti nostri».] Avrebbe voluto più proseguire a perorare; mà perchè non *habebat usum* a ragionare di Dio, gli finì la polvere a poter colpire i cuori, e ritornandosi [33] quel braccio di quella uccisa peccatrice nelle mani, alzò come se fosse una reliquia di S. Agata o di S. Agnese, e poi dicendo: *Benedicat vos Omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.* Fatt' il segno della Croce con quel avanzo opprobrioso di quell'infame cadavere, gittato addosso a quel corpo assassinato, e partissene movendo a risa quei circostanti, i quali tanto più si diedero a cacchinare, quanto più il sig.^r Ignazio pareva loro compunto, tanto ridicolosa era la specie che n'aveano.

Tanto a me i conoscenti del detto lo Presti.

[19. A Blessing Given by Means of an Arm Torn Off the Corpse of a Murdered Woman

Upon learning that in the countryside of San Marco [a place in the province of Messina, in northeastern Sicily, where according to Pitre's introduction the anonymous author appears to have stayed longer], the body of a murdered woman had been found, Mr. Ignazio Lo Presti hastened with others to see the scene of the crime. They found the hapless victim full of wounds, one of them so severe, between a shoulder and the arm, that those two body parts were only joined by an intact piece of skin. Then Mr. Ignazio went and handled that arm. As soon as he touched it, it was torn off the shoulder, because that hapless woman had been murdered three days earlier, and was therefore already decomposing, and the skin was detached from the body. As Mr. Ignazio already had that detached arm in his hands, he raised it high and began saying to the people present: "You see, sons, how miserable we are! Up to whom it was, to tell her that at the apex of her whim, she would remain, like beasts, killed in the countryside? The us learn, at others' expense, to straighten our own behaviour". He would preach further, but us he was not used to discuss matters divine, he just ran short of gunpowder by which to hit the hearts. So he turned [p. 33:] that arm of that murdered sinful woman in his hands, then brandished and raised it as though it was some relic of St. Agatha or St. Agnes, and then he uttered: "Be ye blessed by God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost". He made the sign of the cross by means of that horrid remain of that infamous corpse, threw it on top of that murdered body, and departed, while those present were moved to laughter: the laughed all the more, as Mr. Ignazio seemed to them more solemn, so ridiculous was the impression he made on them.

That much I learned from the acquaintances of the aforementioned Lo Presti.]

In his introduction, Pitre pointed out how these anecdotes may reflect things that actually happened, or then may have been folktales instead (e.g., tales about stupid people or a numskull town), and then made specific so they would appear to be anecdotes:

In vero, questi fatti poterono bene avvenire qua e là, e ripetersi con circostanze simili o analoghe, o non avvennero mai, e furono spiritose invenzioni di begliumori quando per mettere in burla gli abitanti d'un paese in voce di sciocchi e grossi di cervello, quando per deridere una classe di gente, quando per depreziare il prodotto d'un suolo. Veri o inventati, unici o no, propri o d'altrui, questi fatti piacquero, si raccontarono, e passando di bocca in bocca, di paese in paese, per la innata tendenza del popolo a personificare, a localizzar tutto, si individualizzarono sempre più, acquistando colori e circostanze locali.

[In fact, such events may have taken place indeed here and there, and may have occurred again in similar or analogous circumstances, or then they never took place, and just were humorous inventions by some wits, sometimes in order to deride the inhabitants of some town rumoured to be stupid or coarse, some other time in order to deride a class of people, and yet again in order to belittle the produce of some territory. Whether they were true or invented, unique or otherwise, one's own or somebody else's, these events were liked, and were related, and as they were traded from mouth to mouth, from town to town, owing to the inborn penchant of people to personify, to

situate everything in some given place, they were made more and more specific, and acquired local colour and circumstances.]

7.3. Awkward Sermons

Some of the entries in *Avvenimenti Faceti*, or in Pitrè's appendix of parallels, are distorted prayers, or then bizarre sermons. The very last entry (no. 62) is a long bizarre sermon, celebrating St. Anthony but by choosing as a theme Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, with Latin glosses quoting from other places in the Hebrew Bible, but with interpolated digressions about the wrecks of chairs borrowed from the Dominicans for the ceremony, and so forth. At the very end of his appendix about variants, Pitrè noted: "N. 62. Ed anche questa spiritosa predica ho udità più volte a pezzi e a bocconi in Sicilia, specialmente da persone di chiesa" ("N. 62. This funny sermon, too, I have heard several times, in fragmentary form, in Sicily, especially from members of the clergy"). That is to say, that was humour current within the clergy, about how *not* to give a sermon.

Concerning another, shorter but even more bizarre sermon, on pp. 115–116, Pitrè remarked: "Ogni comune la racconta a modo suo mettendo in bocca a un prete d'un comune vicino la predica" ("Every town tells it its own way, and ascribes the sermon to a priest from a town nearby"). For example, in Palermo they used to relate about a priest, Padre Arceri, who addressed in the local dialect a group of women in a little church in the countryside, while he was holding a basket full of good oranges, but one orange gone bad in the middle. He told the congregation that "Accussi siti vuàtri" ("You people are that way"), and are a bad influence on each other. "Ma vuàtri cci pinsati all'arma?" (But you people, do you think about your soul?), "cci pinsati a lu Signuri?" ("Do you think about the Lord?"), "cci pinsati a lu Paraddisu?" ("Do you think about Paradise?"), "Lu vostru pinseri è a li cosi di stu munnu" ("Your thoughts are about the things of this world"). "E a chi pinsati? La za Cicca pensa a li gaddini ca su' senza lu gaddu" ("And who do you think about? Cicca [Frances] is thinking about the kitten without the cat"), "la za Peppa pensa a lu sceccu, ch'avi a manciari" ("Peppa [Josephine] is thinking about the donkey, who has to eat"), "la za Vanna pensa a lu porcu, ca cci (*al quale*) havi a 'mpastari" ("Vanna [Joan] is thinking about the pig, who needs its feed to be prepared"), "la za Sara Sara pensa a lu mulu..." ("Sarah is thinking about the mule...") "Ora livativillu di 'n testa, figghi mei; e canciati vita" ("Now get that off your head, sons, and change lifestyle"), because your first thought must be for God. The bizarre thing in this sermon is that the preacher then says "The first cat is...; the first donkey is...; the first pig is...; the first mule is..." (where I omitted the name for the Deity, the preacher was naming explicitly). The point is that without noticing, the preacher was being blasphemous. The sermon is not over. The preacher next says: "E accussi vi nni jiti drittu tiratu 'n Paraddisu" ("That way you'll go right to Heaven"). "Ah! lu Paraddisu! la gran cosa ch'è lu Paraddisu! La sapiti la minestra di risu cu li porri? Vi piaci ah! Lu viju, marioli, ca vi piaci!... Ora accussi è lu Santu Paraddisu: è comu lu risu cu li porri!..." ("Ah! Paradise! The great thing it is, Paradise! You know the soup of rice with leeks? You like it, don't you! I can see that, you rascals, you like it... Now; the Holy Paradise is like that: it is like rice with leeks!...").

Concerning the history of imagining Paradise, associating it with tasty food was at some times frowned upon, within the Church. In Nissan (2016 [2017]), I reviewed Alessandro Scafi's edited volume *The Cosmography of Paradise: The Other Word from Ancient Mesopotamia to Medieval Europe*. I quote from that review of mine:

Danuta Shanzer is the author of "Food and the senses, and One Very Special Taste of Paradise", which is concerned with the five senses and Late Antique Christian visions of the afterlife. Taste, being considered lowly, was problematic (the sense of smell was considered more

appropriate); "tasting paradise" was considered as a momentary visionary action of the living¹⁸ rather than an activity of the blessed dead, as it emerges in martyrs' passions" (5). In *Psalms* 68:17, there is this rhetorical question: "Why do you *r-ṣ-d* (lurch? Or: leap as though dancing?), *har'im gabnūnīm* (hunched mountains)?"¹⁹ To speakers of Modern Hebrew, the mountains in *Psalms* 68:16–17 being described as [gavnu'nim] is (perhaps deceptively) unproblematic: the mountains have peaks, more typically rounded ones in the Land of Israel and especially around Jerusalem, so the mountains are taken to be described as being hump-backed. And yet, in the Septuagint, the apposition to "mountains", in that verse from *Psalms*, was surprisingly rendered with *τετροπόμενον* 'turned into cheese', as though the mountains were made of cheese (cf. Hebrew /gbina/ 'cheese'). Jerome used the adjective *coagulatus*. Shanzer (178), who claims that "[T]he meaning of the Hebrew word [...] is unknown", explains (178–179):

The lines were rarely discussed and cause an exegetic bifurcation. The first Westerner to mention them before Augustine was Hilary of Poitiers, one of the witnesses for the Old Latin Bible text that read *montes coagulatos* (accusative). He had a pejorative interpretation: the mountains were diabolical powers because cheese was corrupted milk. ¶ For Augustine, however, the *mons* was a happy place with paradisiacal connotations. He would later elucidate it as Christ, for he fed the young on milk and appeared on a mountain. His positive paradisiacal exegesis here might seem in the first instance to be motivated by a clear pun between 'Cassiciacum' and 'incaseatus'. To achieve this Augustine used an Old Latin Bible text of limited attestation that had the reading 'caseatus' for Hilary's 'coagulatus'. *Incassatus* seems to be Augustine's *unicum*. Verecundus lent Augustine his estate at Cassiciacum for a period of philosophical *otium*, and the Lord is asked to grant Verecundus rest in return in (or through) Christ the Cheese-Mountain. ¶ Augustine's exegesis looks much less odd, however, in an Eastern context, where the Septuagint was the definitive text. Here, when exegetes had to make sense of the 'coagulated' or 'cheesy' mountain in v. 16, the Christological solution was current. Gregory of Nyssa provides the first identification of Christ with the coagulated mountain. For Athanasius, however, the coagulated mountain was the Church, full of milk, which is identified as simple speech. According to him the Psalmist challenged those who suspected that churches of the heretics were full of milk. Asterius of Emesa read the question as addressed by Christ to those who identified him with Moses or Elijah. ¶ It is Dydimus the Blind's exegesis, however, that is most relevant. He saw Jesus as the mountain of God, for he was the 'fat', 'cheesy', or 'coagulated' mountain that gave milk (in the Pauline sense, viz. doctrine) to some to drink and solid food (viz. cheese) to others: [...]

I suspect that the reason the Septuagint translated *gabnūnīm* by opting for association with 'cheese' was because in v. 16, the Bashan is mentioned. The Bashan (Biblical Hebrew <bšn> *Bāšān*, which

¹⁸ One Hasidic master, Rabbi Shlomo (= Rebbe Shleyme, Solomon) of Karlin, der Karliner Rebbe (= Shlomo Halevi Gottlieb), was born in Karlin, across the river from Pjnsk, in 1740 or 1738, and was killed in Ludmir in 1792 during the town's looting by Cossacks. He was said to have lived 52 years like his namesake, King Solomon. It is related that when drinking tea or coffee, he would hold a piece of sugar in his hand. Asked by his son why he had taken it at all, as it would not end up in his mouth, the father instructed his son tasting that piece of sugar the father had held in his hand. The son put it in his mouth, and found it had no taste: his father had absorbed its sweetness through his hand, as mystically he had made his organs interchangeable. Arguably, in the telos of the tale, that is a manner of retaining the sense of taste, while sublimating it by removing it from the mouth. That anecdote about sugar was told by Martin Buber, *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (1949). Of course, we are talking about hagiography; it begs the question of whether a piece of sugar may retain its molecular composition, yet lose its sweet taste.

¹⁹ The more difficult *crux interpretum* of the two in that verse is the verbal form, which the Vulgate translated with the Latin verb *susplicere*, whereas in the Pseudo-Jonathan Jewish Aramaic translation, the verb was rendered with an Aramaic verb (from root *ṭ-f-z*) for 'to leap' (and indeed, the Onqelos translation of the pentateuchal list of unclean quadrupeds, renders the name for the hyrax with *ṭafzā*). The traditional interpretation is that the other mountains envy the Temple Mount. (A more common trope, in Judaism, is mountains envying Mount Sinai having been chosen for Revelation.) In a fairly recent Jewish translation into Italian, the verb used is *impennarsi*, for 'to rear', 'to prance' (like a horse), and metaphorically 'to bristle', 'to fire up' (in anger).

was called in Hellenistic and Roman times *Batanea*, though with a reduced area) was, and is, a mountainous region in present-day southern Syria (including or excluding the Hauran/Jebel Druze), and its being cattle-raising country, must have inspired the metaphor in *Amos* 4:1, "cows of Bashan who are on the mountain [i.e., hill country] of Samaria", which is how the prophet Amos was castigating elite women in the capital (and its surrounding) in the northern Kingdom of Israel in his own days. Bear in mind that Amos was a cowherd: when a hostile official urged him to move to the Kingdom of Judah, where he could supposedly expect to earn his living as a prophet (whereas in the North his services were neither required, nor appreciated), Amos retorted that he was neither a (professional) prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but rather a cowherd and a sycamore fruit picker (*Amos* 7:14). Therefore, Amos' reference to cows of the Bashan, yet ones found in or around Samaria, came from a person who had professional knowledge in cattle-raising. I suspect that cheese was produced in the Bashan region and exported from there in Hellenistic times, so interpreting Hebrew *gabnūnīm* by relation to Hebrew *gēbīnā* 'cheese' may have seemed to the translators who produced the Septuagint to be appropriate. But I do not think this is what the Psalmist intended.

7.4. The Notables Fed Miraculous Manna (as Promised) on Pentecost

The anecdote I quote next from *Avvenimenti Faceti* (Pitrè 1885, §34 [on pp. 57–59]), is set in Èrice, a town in the mountain overlooking the port-city of Tràpani, in westernmost Sicily. Èrice used to be called Monte di Trapani or Monte di San Giuliano, before resuming (the Italianised form) of the ancient Greek city that used to be on that same site. The tale is about a preacher who announces a miracle is about to take place, and about the credulous congregants who believe him. The humour is of the kind whose butt is the wrong kind of belief and respective believers. Nevertheless, the tale shares features with tales about numskull towns, especially considering the stark contrast between the announced miracle and what supposedly happens in reality.

34. La manna del Monte di Trapani.

L'arciprete che hà governato le anime della città detta Monte di S. Giuliano, con altro nome monte di Trapani, che fu l'anticha Erice. Questo, più semplice che scaltro, si era invogliato a fare scendere la manna del Cielo, come scese un tempo nel deserto, a sostegno e delizia degl'Isdraeliti; diede l'impulso maggiore ai suoi desiderij la vicinanza delle feste di Pentecoste. Onde cominciò a predicare al suo populo che si preparasse con orazioni e mortificazioni nella novena dello Spirito Santo, per ricevere da esso sì segnalato dono; altro non inculcava in quei nove giorni [a] quella gente, che allora era d'altra pasta più semplice che non è la presente; appunto di giorno in giorno aspettavano il celeste favore. Era corsa già tutta la novena, senza ricever la grazia bramata. «Non dubitate, la inanimava l'Arciprete, che i doni quanto sono più grandi, tanto tardono a venire; forse domattina gioverà a noi ciò che anelanti spettiamo». Non era ancora nella Domenica spuntato il sole, che il sagrestano si porta alla chiesa per apparecchiare gli altari; mà che! sù l'altare maggiore ritrova come una ciambella di materia liquida e bruna, e stimandola un gran misterio corre [58] dal'Arciprete a dargliene la bona nova. Subito la credette ciò che non era; si portò in chiesa per osservarla, e decise esser di già piovuta in quella notte la manna il quale ragunato insieme col suo magistrato, montò sull'altare il Pastore di quel gregge per pascerlo prima colla divina parola, poi colla manna piovutali. Mostrò in primo luogo il favore distinto dal Cielo in mandar loro quel beneficio così grande. In secondo luogo la preparazione che ricercavasi in quelli che dovean riceverlo, e chi mai si sentisse lesa la coscienza di qualche colpa la detestasse con dolore e con fermezza di mai più commetterla, altrimenti quel prezioso cibo invece di fargli gustare quel sapore che si desiderava, sarebbe divenuto insipido e disgustoso; «venghino dunque ad assaggiarla i sig.^{ri} del magistrato!» e quelli con una straordinaria umiliazione si appressarono all'altare, ove l'Arciprete con un cocchiarino di argento in mano ne prendea una piccola porzione dal altare, e mentre il riponea nella bocca del Capitano gli diceva che sciogliesse coll'interno del suo cuore quel sapore che più gli aggradisse. Tanto fece il Capitano, mà in entrar quella manna nella sua bocca, al sapore, all'odore parevagli escremento di gatto, mà nulla disse, stimando ciò pervenire dalla sua rea coscienza; tanto avvenne ai giurati, altrettanto alle primarie persone, alcune delle quali si vomitarono; fecero migliore indagine, e ritrovarono che il gatto che si allevava nella chiesa per

guardarla dai sorci, costume [59] che pur tutta via si mantiene, avea piovuto alli Montesi la sua manna preziosa.

[34. The Manna at Monte di Trapani

[This is a tale about] the archpriest who used to minister to the souls of the city called Monte di S. Giuliano or Monte di Trapani, on the site of the ancient Erice. He was rather a simpleton than smart, and it occurred to him to wish to bring down manna from Heaven, the way it once upon a time descended to support and delight the children of Israel. His desire was all the more motivated by the approaching festival of the Pentecost. Therefore, he started to preach to his people that they should prepare themselves with prayers and mortification during the novena of the Holy Ghost, in order for them to receive such a distinguished gift. During those nine days, he was preaching nothing else to those people, who at the time were of a simpler disposition than they are at present, so they waited, day after day, for that heavenly favour. The whole novena had passed by, and they had not received as yet that grace they had been longing for. "Have no doubt", the archpriest exhorted them, "Gifts are all the bigger, the longer it takes for them to come. Perhaps tomorrow morning we shall have the benefit for which we are longingly waiting". The sun of that Pentecost Sunday was not up yet, but the sexton had already gone to church in order to set the altars. Lo and behold! On the main altar, he found something that resembled a bagel of fluid, brown matter. He deemed that it was a big mystery, so he run [p. 58:] to the archpriest and gave him the news. He believed this right away. He went to church to observe it, and decided that during the night, the manna had descended. Together with the notables, the shepherd of that flock mounted on the altar, in order to feed it first the divine word, and then the manna that had come down. Firstly, he showed them the distinguished favour of Heaven of sending them such a great benefit. Secondly, those who were to receive it must be prepared. Anybody who felt his conscience marred by some guilt, let him detest that guilt with pain, and let him resolve to never again incur in it, as otherwise, that precious food, instead of letting them taste whatever taste they wished, would have become insipid and disgusting. "Come then, Sirs, and taste, o Elders!" They, exceedingly humble, approached the altar, where the archpriest, holding in his hand a little silver spoon, took a small portion from the altar, and while he placed it in the mouth of the Captain [i.e., the Mayor], he told him to choose, in his heart, the taste he liked best. The Captain complied, but as that manna entered his mouth, based on the taste and smell it seemed to him to be cat excrement, and yet he said nothing, as he deemed that this was the effect of his bad conscience. The same happened to the town's sworn magistrates, and to the notables, some of whom retched. They inquired better, and found that the cat kept inside the church in order to give chase to mice, a custom [p. 59:] that still persists, had brought down for the townsfolk his precious manna.]

7.5. The Owl Mistaken for a Soul in Purgatory and Requesting More and More Masses

This other story instead is about an individual (not an entire congregation) who apparently was not cognitively substandard in normal circumstances, but who inside a church in the dark interpreted the calls of an owl according to received notions about souls in Purgatory needed masses to be said to help them cut the duration of their penalty shorter. In Section 59, "Barbaggianne [sic] in Trapani" (Pitrè 1885, pp. 85–86) — the owl species *Tyto alba* (known in English as the White Owl, the Barn Owl, or the Screech Owl) is known in Italian by the names *barbagianni* (literally 'Uncle John') and *chiù* (after its call) — the following narrative is found:

Non saprei in quale chiesa in Trapani c'era abitazione di barbaggiani nel tetto; e come cotali animali dormono il giorno e vegliano la notte, faceano del rumore una notte. Uno nulla di ciò sapendo, trovandosi nella chiesa in tempo di notte, apprese che quel rumore fosse cagionato da qualche anima di qualche defonto [sic] seppellito [sic] in quella chiesa, che si faceva sentire, domandando in quella maniera suffragj; e benchè si fosse atterrito da quel strepito, nulla di meno fattosi animo interrogò il barbaggianne supposto: *Anima penante, cui siti?* E qui non rispondea il barbaggianne. *Ave bisogno di suffragj?* Ne tampoco a questa. *Quante messe volete celebrate, forse tre?* I barbaggiani sogliono mandare questa voce: *chivi chiù*; ed allora sciolse la voce [p. 86:] quella bestiola: *chiù*. Sentendo quello *chiù*, apprese che volesse più di tre messe, e rispose: «Cinque vi bastano?» Il barbaggianne proseguiva *chiù*. Dieci son buone? *Chiù*, si avanzò a maggior numero, e sempre udiva *chiù*, si diede in busca di messe raccontando il bisogno che aveva quel anima, e però dovea impegnarsi ogni fedele in libertà di quel penosissimo carcere; tanto girò sino che s'abbatte in uno che era consapevole dell'abitazione de barbaggiani, e gli disse: «O

barbaggiannone, che ti sei lasciato uccellare de' barbaggianni», e gli decifrò non esser stata quella voce di anima penante; mà di un barbaggianni par suo.

[At a church in Tràpani I am unable to identify, barn owls dwelt in the roof. As such animals sleep in daytime and are awake by night, one night they made noise. Somebody who knew nothing about that [i.e., about there being barn owls in the roof], finding himself at that church by night, thought that the noise was caused by the soul of somebody deceased and buried at that church, and that by making noise, it was asking for mass being said for that soul. He was terrified because of that clamour. He nevertheless found in himself courage enough to question what he thought that barn owl was: "O soul in torment, who are you?" The barn owl did not reply. "Do you need mass to be said for your soul?" There was no reply to this either. "How many masses you want to be said, perhaps three of them?" Barn owls have this call: *kivi kiyú*. That little animal finally called out: *Kiyú* [which in Sicilian is also the word for 'more']. Upon hearing that *kiyú*, the man thought that the soul in torment wanted more than three masses, so he replied: "Would five be enough?" The barn owl repeated: *Kiyú*. "Would ten do?" *Kiyú*. He named a larger number, but kept hearing *Kiyú*. He therefore set to procure masses, by relating the need that soul had for them. Each and every faithful would have to be involved in the attempt to secure the release of that soul from torment. He went around and eventually found somebody who was aware that there were barn owls, and that one told him: "You *barbaggiannone* ('big fool', literally: 'big barn owl'), you let yourself be bugged (literally 'birded' ['bird' being intended as denoting 'membrum virile'] in the sense 'made o fool of') by barn owls!", and he went on to explain that it had not been the voice of a soul in torment, but that of a *barbaggianni*, quite like himself.]

This tale²⁰ revolves around an instance of a pattern by which a bird name in a language *L* being supposedly based on the call of that bird conventionally interpreted as an utterance in that same language *L*. In this given instance, this is conveyed in a funny story (also claimed to be an anecdote, spuriously so) about misunderstanding of something that sounds like a dialectal Italian word (in Sicilian), *chiú*, for 'more'. This particular tale, and the following remarks about birds and bird calls, are something I already presented in Nissan (2016, Sec. 2.2.8).

Some other times, a bird call is interpreted as being an utterance in some given human language, but without relating this to the name of the bird. Discussing Latin *cras* 'tomorrow', Leo Spitzer pointed out (Spitzer 1944, p. 156, fn. 3): "Spanish *cras* survives in the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* thanks to a pun with the onomatopoeic *cras* (= the 'cawing' of the raven)." Perhaps the Latin word *cras* was used, rather than an obsolete Spanish word *cras*. It must be said however that already in late antiquity, the raven or the crow was to Christians a symbol for such persons who, lusting after this-worldly pleasures, keep putting off their conversion. Such procrastination was likened to the cawing of a raven or a crow, onomatopoeically rendered as *Cras, cras* ("Tomorrow, tomorrow").

Another example of that phenomenon is the Modern Greek name for a turtle dove, *dhekahtóra*, from *dekahtó* for 'eighteen'. The cooing of a turtle dove is likened to the Greek word *dekahtó*. Cf. "*Yā ákhti*" ("O sister of mine") in a Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic children's rhyme: "*Yā ákhti* (O sister of mine), *wēn ánti* (Where are you?), *Bāl Hállá* (in the city of Hilla [on the pilgrimage route to Ezekiel's Tomb]), *Æsh tákəl?* (What is she eating?) *Bājállá* (Broadbeans [this is the Muslim Baghdadi word for 'broadbean', the Jewish word

²⁰ On p.117, Pitrè related a variant in which the protagonist is not in Church. Rather, he is a peasant from Chiramonte, as long-eared as his donkey, who mounted on his donkey is going home while carrying grapes he had harvested from his vineyard: "Un villano di Chiramonte, ma di quelli che hanno le orecchie lunghe, se ne tornava al paese, a cavalcioni dell'asinello, in mezzo a due corbe di uva fresca, spiccata allora allora dalla sua vigna". His name is *Vito*, because (the tale claims) everybody in Chiramonte is called *Vito*. This Vito realises that the sound he hears is the call of an owl. "Il povero Vito avea, egli è vero, le orecchie lunghe, ma avea un cuore di papa: e si rattristò del lamento del gufo, e pensò che piangeva forse per fame" (Poor Vito had, it is true, long ears, but he had the heart of a pope: and he was saddened by the lament of the owl, thinking it was crying because hungry"). Vito thinks the owl would not be satisfied with the grapes he is offering it, as the bird keeps asking for more. So in the end Vito tells the owl: "Va al diavolo! io ho moglie e figliuole, e non posso darla tutta a te" ("Go to hell! I have a wife and daughters, I cannot give you all those grapes").

being *bæqǎlli*, the etymon being Latin *bacellum* 'pod'), *Æsh tǎshghæb?* (What is she drinking?), *Māy 'Állā[h]* (Water from God)".

8. The Pious Portrayed as Foolish as Being One of the Modes of the Thematic Genre of Anti-Religious Attacks

In the 19th century in some countries and social sectors, it became safe to overtly attack the clergy and their flock; for example, in France and in Italy, where sometimes a struggle against clerical demands and the state's covetousness for the clergy's real estate motivated governments to carry out an anticlerical policy, and some circles were considerably more radical (e.g., Verucci 1981). Moreover, anti-religious circles amongst the millions of Jews of Eastern Europe in the 19th century and early 20th century eventually felt able to come into the open, and eventually felt able to be aggressive, and also to resort to humour while doing so (this became state policy as for how to manage Jews in the Soviet Union).

Generally speaking, anti-religious literature comes in several sub-genres, and some of these resort to ridicule. For example, anti-religious cartoons are the subject of the articles in Gardes and Doizy (2008). In 19th-century Italy (especially in the pro-government, yet ferociously anticlerical weekly *Il Fischietto* of Turin, when it was the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia, and then when it was the background of the new administrative elite of the unified Kingdom of Italy).²¹ In Italy, the conflict between the House of Savoy ruling Piedmont

²¹ T.W.C. Blanning (1996, p. 5) remarks about social developments during the 19th century in Europe, the clergy having been the main losers:

Of the traditional élites, it was the first estate — the clergy — who suffered most, both relatively and absolutely. Their secular counterparts among the aristocracy proved much better able to adapt to changing conditions. Not only did they retain their grip on the commanding heights of government and society, many of them exploited the opportunities proffered by the industrial era to become rich beyond the dreams of their most avaricious ancestors. As Pilbeam [(1996)] remarks, the aristocratic elite did not perish, it diversified. But the great victors were of course the middle classes, not so much the entrepreneurs among them (despite some spectacular individual success stories) as the landowners, professional men, and state employees. It was they who combined quantity with quality to put their cultural stamp on the period. If most people got richer during the course of the century, the gap between rich and poor widened.

In her book chapter "From Orders to Classes: European Society in the Nineteenth Century", Pamela Pilbeam (1996, p. 101), while discussing the French Revolution, noted that "[t]he noisy and belligerent emigration of opponents of the Revolution quickly transformed liberal definitions of citizenship into intolerant exclusions based on rough-and-ready class-type distinctions", with the persecution of the aristocracy, and there also was a time when the Revolution was "anti-bourgeois. Ultimately, however, it was the traditional professional, official, and landowning bourgeoisie who gained most" (*ibid.*). Such social conflicts "reverberated in conquered territories" during "[t]he Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, 1792–1814/5", in territories conquered by the French armies. "As in France, the purchase of land and office by members of the old Third Estate, as well as gradual economic change, contributed to social stratification. In much of western Europe, professional, official, and landowning and entrepreneurial bourgeois groups advanced their claims during the Revolutionary years, aided by French territorial ambitions" (*ibid.*). Then Pilbeam (*ibid.*) turns to the status of the clergy and of the Church assets, including in Italy until the 1860s:

In France the Church was dismantled as the first order by the sale of its land. For a time in the 1790s it was denied the right to celebrate ceremonies [and] to register births, marriages, and deaths. Its role in administering hospitals and schools was halted, although in the latter area only temporarily. In Spain, Portugal, and Italy (until the 1860s) the Catholic Church remained a major landowner as well as a powerful political, social, and spiritual force, although leading noble families were decreasingly interested in bishoprics for younger sons. In protestant and Orthodox countries the Church owned no land, but senior clergy were drawn from leading families and exercised a strong moral influence. In Britain the bishops of the Established Church of England were automatically members of the House of Lords.

(officially, the Kingdom of Sardinia) and the high clergy began in the 1840, with the growth in Piedmont of liberalism, resulting in a constitution being promulgated in 1848. In the late 1840s and during the 1850s, liberal governments were in power there, and in 1859 began unifying Italy. The jurist and senior judge Giuseppe Siccardi (1802–1857), the “ministro guardasigilli” in the government led by Massimo d’Azeglio from 1849 to 1851, introduced the bills known as the Siccardi Laws, which abolished the clergy’s privileges in Piedmont, and forbade for any body corporate (*ente morale*), including ones of the Church, the acquisition of the ownership of real estate without governmental authorisation. The House of Representatives approved the Siccardi Laws immediately, by a large majority. Among those who voted in favour, there was the lawyer, playwright and author of short stories Pietro De Rossi di Santarosa, born in 1805, and who had been a government minister four brief times previously. What makes his case important is he died of tuberculosis in Turin on 5 August 1850, and even though he was a moderate and a devout Catholic, because of how he had voted the sacrament of the Extreme Unction was refused to him when he was about to die, and the parish priest, Pattavino, refused his body a religious funeral. This caused a public outcry, which prompted the Archbishop of Turin, Luigi Fransoni, to let last rites for Pietro De Rossi di Santarosa take place.

In August 1850, the Archbishop was arrested nevertheless, because Pietro De Rossi di Santarosa had been denied the last sacrament and absolution. Fransoni was imprisoned at the Fortress of Fenestrelle, and later during the same year he was exiled in perpetuity from the domains of the House of Savoy and went to Lyon, where he was to die in 1862, without resigning his post as archbishop, which therefore remained vacant as long as he was alive (Griseri 1966). The Turin satirical weekly ridiculed the archbishop while he was in prison, in cartoons representing him in the same style of devotional images of martyrs. See such a cartoon in **Fig. 4**, and a detail in **Fig. 5**; a personification of the satirical magazine, a character holding a key and often made to look like a comical lad or adult man (**Fig. 6**), a secular version of a wise fool (see below in the section about the sacred fool from religious traditions), but in **Figs. 5 and 6** as a sinister mature man (**Fig. 7**), is watching with gloat from outside the cell’s window the imprisoned archbishop, whose head is surrounded by a halo.

Within what has been termed (by analogy with the history of unified Germany under Bismarck’s rule) a *Kulturkampf*,²² themes from sacred history as contained in the Bible, as well as devotional motifs (including visual ones), were sometimes used in texts as well as visual propaganda emanating from anticlerical circles (see Strukelj 2008). This should not come as a surprise, because the intended audience could be expected to be fluent with the body of cultural knowledge to which intertextual references were being made.

In such anti-religious texts, or cartoons, or plays for the stage, that attack the clergy or religion, sometimes the devout are presented as being gullible and irrational; some other times they are presented as being dangerously cunning or powerful. Or then, they are harmful because of the power they detain, and yet they are laughably and contemptibly foolish. Some such attacks expect a sympathetic audience, so it is like preaching to the converted. Or then, the attacks are intended to undermine belief among believers, or their confidence in their ability to withstand their attackers.

²² A volume edited by Rudolf Lill and Francesco Traniello (1992) is entitled *Il “Kulturkampf” in Italia e nei paesi di lingua tedesca*, and is concerned with the 19th-century Kulturkampf in both Italy and Germany. In 1993, a German translation was published in Germany, under the title *Der Kulturkampf in Italien und in den deutschsprachigen Ländern*.



Figure 4. A sarcastic cartoon published by *Il Fischietto* on 8 May 1850. It is captioned "Un Martire dell'Ordine" ("A Martyr of Order"). Drawn with a halo like a saint is Monsignor Luigi Franzoni, Archbishop of Turin, in his prison cell. A little devil is in the cell, to the left. Holding the window bars and watching gleefully is the character personifying *Il Fischietto* (note the knot on his forehead). The Archbishop's left foot threads upon "LEGGI CIVILI" (the laws promulgated by the civil authorities rather than the Church). Franzoni holds in his left hand a book placed on his left knee, "EVANG. SEC. FRANZ", i.e., "Franz's Gospel". There is a double onomastic pun: the surname *Franzoni* is distorted into *Franz*, making him into a namesake of Franz Josef, Emperor of the hated Austria.



Figure 5. Detail of the former. A personification of *Il Fischietto* (identified as such by means of the knot on his forehead, his hat, and the key he carries) stares with utmost glee at the imprisoned yet impassive “martyr”, Monsignor Franzoni, or rather Franz[oni], who is wearing his medals. The reigning Savoy had him a Mauritian Knight (“Cavaliere di Gran Croce decorato di Gran Cordone dell’Ordine dei Santi Maurizio e Lazzaro”). He was also made a Cavaliere dell’Ordine Supremo della Santissima Annunziata. The book is identified as “Franz’s Gospel”, alongside an image showing part of a human face: nostrils and the tip of a nose above a mouth that holds between its teeth a bound sack labelled “15000”, apparently the Archbishop’s income.



Figure 6. The first panel of the *Cavoureide*, a multi-panel cartoon celebrating Piedmont's foremost liberal politician, Camillo Benso, Count Cavour. The cartoonist, Francesco Redenti, born Cesare Vienna in the Duchy of Modena in 1819, converted away from Judaism in his youth, and took on a name honouring St. Francis Xavier and, in surname, testifying to his spiritual salvation. Apparently he just did away with a Jewish identity that was a burden to him, in the Duchy of Modena, where Jews were denied civil rights. He turned into a ferocious anticlerical, into the cartoonist of Milan's 1848 revolution, and at a more mature stage, into Piedmont's and Italy's most visible cartoonist. "La Cavoureide" was part of the *Strenna del Fischietto*, 1861, i.e., the "gift", the special issue of *Il Fischietto* for the new year 1861 (which was actually to see Cavour's death). In the first image, we are faced with a globe-shaped Cavour: arguably, both because he was fat and short, and because a show is being advertised, as though, with the shape of the globe, which affords enough room for both the title of the "epic" to be given, and for the credits: "Fotografie di Redenti", as though the images were photographs, instead of cartoons. In this introductory panel, Cavour is carrying on his back a comic character (the standard personification of the magazine *Il Fischietto*), who in turn displays above his head a ribbon with the wording "metamorfosi di un uomo di Stato" ("a statesman's metamorphosis").



Figure 7. The personification of *Il Fischietto* at its most sinister.

9. "Haskalah Humour", from the anti-Hasidic Joseph Perl to the Anti-Religious Abraham Goldfaden, his Disablist Character of Kuni-Leml in the Comedy *The Two Kuni-Lemls*, and Its Better Crafted, Psychologically Perceptive Antecedent from Renaissance Italy, Antonio Manetti's *The Fat Woodworker*

Let us pay some attention to "Haskalah humour", i.e., humour that originally, in Eastern Europe, was directed by "Enlighteners" against a particular form of widely practised Judaism (namely, Hasidism, which is both mystical and taumaturgic), yet did not present themselves as being against the Jewish religion *per se*. For example, take Joseph Perl (1773–1839), "among the most intriguing and disturbing figures of the Jewish Enlightenment" (Wisse 2013, p. 71):²³ it is now known to specialist that Perl was formally observant, and that he went to the

²³ Disturbing, because in his literary text Perl wished nothing less than death for the Hasidim, and also because the informer at work in the fiction was none else than Perl, who incited against that group the authorities (who in turn were not eager to comply with his wishes). Perl's attitude towards the state was that the Austrian police state would be hopefully amenable to imposing upon the Jews coercive measures to Perl's own liking. Petrovsky-Shtern (2014) has pointed out that the ideas tsarist censors had about works circulating in press were in part derived from literature identified by Perl.

In the end of *The Revealer of Secrets* (Meir 2004), of which an English translation by Dov Taylor exists (Perl 1997), Joseph Perl, to whom the spread of Hasidism was like cancer, had his Hasidic characters die, after they cowered in fear of an informer. And Perl himself was an informer indeed: "he bombarded officials with memoranda hostile to Hasidism, hoping the authorities would suppress the movement" (Meir in YIVO, 2008). "A complex and twisting plot unfolds, and the main issue involves attempts by Hasidism to gain possession of 'the book' — none other than Perl's German book! — that negatively influenced the attitude of the authorities toward the movement." (Meir, *ibid.*). To say it with the end of the English summary of Rubinstein's paper on Perl (1974, p. XVII): "Perl kept inundating the authorities with hate material and unbridled accusations against Hasidim and their spiritual leaders, and proposed far-reaching measures with respect to Jewish education. But

extent of having a servant or a sexton to lash him on the eve of New Year's Day in order to have his sins atoned for, yet apparently did not suspect that some of his activities were eminently sinful.

That suggests that Perl's satire was like satire used in the strife between different religious denominations. For example, in the early modern period, at the time of the Wars of Religion, Reform theatre in France would stage the supposed intestinal distress of the Roman Catholic Church (Persels 2003), and this in relation to Protestant disbelief in the dogma of transubstantiation in wafer used in the sacrament of the Host. But those staging such plays actually were keen to practise religion in the Protestant way, rather than to attack all religion.

Eventually however, "Maskilic humour" turned unquestionably anti-religious. After discussing Perl, Wisse turns to "the Maskilic [i.e., Haskalah's] comedy of Abraham Goldfaden (1840–1908), affectionately known as the father of the modern Yiddish theater" (Wisse 2013, p. 73): "Goldfaden was unlikely to overestimate the benevolence of the czarist government, which imposed an official ban on Yiddish productions in 1883, that forced him to light out for London and later New York" (Wisse 2013, p. 73).

"One of Goldfaden's best creations was Kuni-Leml, in the comedy *The Two Kuni-Lemls*" (Wisse 2013, p. 73), in my own opinion a hateful disablismend-off of "Kuni-Leml, a twenty-year-old Hasid blind in one eye, lame in one foot, and a stutterer" (Wisse 2013, p. 74). He is even deprived of his identity by a devious secular rival in courtship. The victim is convinced that his rival is Kuni Leml.

It would be wrong to claim that aversion to poking fun at disabilities is a very recent development, like the word *disablism*. Decent people have always existed. Moreover, "aversion" does not mean there is never an exception, but I am personally taken aback by the sheer malevolence of Goldfaden in concocting the "two Kuni Lemls" while addressing the audience of a theatre expected to appreciate anything he may concoct (in the case at hand, with disabled people a collateral damage) against their ideological foes (who would, for example, object to their going to the theatre house at all, let alone on a Friday evening after the start of the Sabbath).

I must say that this worthy creation of Goldfaden is considerably more odious and far less clever than the Florentine novella from the Renaissance,²⁴ *La novella del Grasso legnaiuolo*²⁵

he kept this activity secret. It appears that his contacts with the authorities went far beyond [t]he ideology of the Haskalah, and it may be said that, in historical perspective, their main significance is biographical." Which is like saying: don't let Perl's misdeeds tarnish the Haskalah movement in its entirety.

It may be that I in particular react with a knee-jerk to informers of the Restoration-era Austrian police, because having been raised in Milan, Italy, from primary school I was conditioned to consider that regime very negatively. But it is a fact that under the lead of Johann Anton Pergen (1725–1814), the Habsburgic empire became a police state; see Bernard (1991) about Pergen. Perl tried to use that police state for his own purposes. Austria only turned to liberal democracy after the loss of Lombardy in 1859 and of Veneto in 1867, having lost respectively a war against Piedmont and France, and a war against Prussia and Italy. These are known in Italy as her Second and Third Wars of Independence.

²⁴ The full Italian text of the *Novella del grasso legnaiuolo* with no commentary is accessible online at: http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/dynaweb/bibit/autori/sa/anonimo/novella_del_grasso_legnaiuolo/@Generic_BookTextView/59

²⁵ Michael Dirda, reviewing in the *Washington Post* of 25 March 2007 an English translation of *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*, by Valentin Groebner (2007), began his book review with this paragraph:

Valentin Groebner, who teaches history at the University of Lucerne in Switzerland, opens *Who Are You?* with a story. During the early Renaissance, a group of well-to-do Florentines — including the sculptor and architect Brunelleschi — decided to play a prank on a fat woodworker named Manetto. They arranged for everybody he met to act as if he were someone else. Friends, brothers, government officials, the local priest — everyone treats the woodworker as Matteo. A judge tells the thoroughly confused woodworker that these cases, though unusual, do crop up with some regularity. It might be a kind of amnesia. And why, for heaven's sake, is he fighting the

(Procaccioli 1990), of which an English translation exists, *The Fat Woodworker* (Martone and Martone 2005). As James H. McGregor stated in a review of the latter in *Speculum*, 80(1), p. 171, it is "the most famous and most brilliant of the *novelle sciolte* — longish *novelle* that were not part of collections — the story, called *Il grasso legnaiuolo*. Written by Antonio Manetti in the mid-fifteenth century, it commemorates a cunning practical joke engineered by the architect and builder Filippo Brunelleschi" (1377–1446). The putative author is the Florentine humanist, mathematician, and senior elected official Antonio di Tuccio Manetti (1423–1497). He admired Brunelleschi, and authored a biography of him. The novella relates an orchestrated, terrifying prank played on a fat woodworker by "Ser Brunellesco". The woodworker is arrested and then, while in prison, is convinced by an erudite man, indeed a famous judge, also imprisoned for his own debts (an accomplice in the plot? or then he was not in on the joke) that he switched bodies and identities with a debtor, as such cases are possible. Aaron D. McClelland (writing under the penname *Sevrin de Savage*), in his own retelling, has Matteo question the Judge: "Now tell me. If I who was the Fat One have changed into Matteo, what has become of him?" "He has changed into the Fat One", the Judge answered, "This is a reciprocal case. It is like a pair of shoes".²⁶ The victim, Manetto, once he understood what had happened and how he was now viewed by the Florentines, was quite embarrassed — remaining was no longer socially viable — so he took up a job in Hungary (leaving his mother behind), in the service of the Emperor, Sigismund of Luxemburg (1368–1437, King of Hungary from 1387).

I once related this story in the debate following a seminar given here in London by a cognitive scientist, and I remember the compassionate displeasure on his face once I told the audience that the victim, who was living in Renaissance Florence, "took up a job in Hungary". Then one or two rows behind me in the amphitheatre, an academic psychologist (terribly disfigured by fire) commented that the victim fell in for the prank because it was "a figure of authority", the physician (here I had got it wrong: it was a judge), who convinced him. Infer from this story and this anecdote what I think of Goldfaden and his amused crass audience. In my opinion, that Renaissance Italian novella is a work of genius, in comparison to the given unlovable comedy by Goldfaden. At any rate, Goldfaden was a pioneer of modern Yiddish comedy, and if anything, *The Two Kuni-Lemls* shows the way Yiddish comedy had still to go, for it to be respectably sophisticated in our present-day perception.

For our present purposes, let us point out that it was essential for the reception of *The Two Kuni-Lemls* by Goldfaden's audience that they would be game. In fact, he expected that if they came to the theatre, they would be willing to participate with *gusto* in the fiction that religious people are foolish in the utmost and moreover physically ugly, for example because of disability. For sure, neither Goldfaden, nor his audience (which we may conclude, was somewhat coarse) had ever heard about political correctness. But both Goldfaden and his audience knew that in real life, Jewish religious circles were rather powerful within the

truth, especially since Matteo is fairly well off, and Manetto isn't? Slowly but surely, Manetto accepts that he is Matteo and begins to answer to that name.

²⁶ http://www3.telus.net/Quattrocento_Florence/woodworker.html McClelland concluded his retelling by offering this hypothesis, which assumes that the novella relates actual events:

But the nature of the tale of the Fat Woodworker must be viewed as more than a cruel prank. In 1409, Brunelleschi was in the midst of his studies of perspective. He used cutouts of buildings and mirrors to demonstrate how the eye could be tricked into believing a false perspective, and with the Fat Woodworker he proved that the mind could be tricked into believing a false reality.

McClelland had begun the text on the given webpage by making this statement: "In 1409, during one of his frequent return visits to Florence, Filippo Brunelleschi organized a prank on a witless woodworker named Manetto that illustrated his understanding and fascination of human perspective".

Jewish demographical sector, and that they also were resourceful, and that their leadership could sometimes find a common language with the state authorities. After all, this is why Goldfaden eventually resolved to emigrate.

10. The Case of the Esotericist George Gurdjieff Mocking the Pious, Even his Own Devotees

The esotericist George Gurdjieff attracted a following of devotees in pre-Bolshevist Russia, then in Europe and the United States, up to his death in 1949, and his institutionalised tradition is still in existence. He was, and still is, controversial, with some considering him a charlatan. It did not help that he sometimes mocked, or even plainly mistreated, those followers of his who chose to live with him, including for example the owner/editor of *New Age* magazine, who abandoned his career in Britain as a publisher in order to join Gurdjieff's circle in France. In James Moore's words (2006, p. 446):

Relatively unproductive are Gurdjieff's transitional spells in Constantinople (July 1920–July 1921) and Germany (August 1921–July 1922). The latter, however, is enlivened by Gurdjieff's extravagant prospectus for his Institute and by two brief spring visits to London, where he quarrels irretrievably with Ouspensky, but from whom he captures the allegiance of 'Alfred Richard' (James Alfred) Orage (1873–1934), the mystically predisposed editor of the critical weekly *New Age*.²⁷

Let us consider how Gurdjieff related to the devout of mainstream religion, before we turn to consider how he expressed himself concerning his own devotees. In his book *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (whose two *dramatis personae* are on board of a spaceship, and in which Gurdjieff presented his doctrine: Gurdjieff followers were instructed to read that book three times),

Gurdjieff expresses his reverence for the founders of the mainstream religions of East and West and his contempt (by and large) for what successive generations of believers have made of those religious teachings. His discussions of "orthodoxhydroaki" and "heterodoxhydroaki" — orthodox fools and heterodox fools, from the Russian word *durak* (fool) — position him as a critic of religious distortion and, in turn, as a target for criticism from some within those traditions. Gurdjieff has been interpreted by some, Ouspensky among others, to have had a total disregard for the value of mainstream religion, philanthropic work and the value of doing right or wrong in general.²⁸

Gurdjieff apparently was a good cook, and at his apartment at 6 Rue des Colonels-Renard in Paris, he held suppers for his followers, "with elaborate toasts to 'idiots' in vodka and

²⁷ Not to be confused with the New Age movement of the second half of the 20th century: "The term itself originally arose in theosophical literature and in UFO cults [→ UFO Traditions] after World War II in connection with the millennialist belief that the world stands at the brink of a major evolutionary transformation of consciousness, often identified in early New Age literature as the Aquarian Age. Many of those sympathetically involved in the first years of the New Age movement principally saw the various techniques of healing, divination etc. as tools in this transformation. This sense of the term New Age was in the later 1970s and in the 1980s largely superseded by a new and expanded meaning. It no longer refers to a specific movement that expects the coming of a new age, but refers to a wide array of ideas and practices, largely united by historical links, a shared discourse and an *air de famille*. The two uses of the term have been characterized (Hanegraaff 1996, 94–103) as the New Age *sensu stricto* and *sensu lato*" (Hammer 2006, p. 855, brackets in the original).

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff

cognac".²⁹ Apparently by "idiots" he meant his followers. Moreover, a book that is itself questionable claims (Livingstone 2013, p. 195):

Gurdjieff explained, "The way of the development of hidden possibilities is a way against nature and against God". His deceptive and tyrannical ways led to his reputation as a "rascal guru". He said of his own followers, "They are sheep fit only for the shearing". He was widely referred to as a black magician, and one French critic labeled him "a false prophet, a pretentious ignoramus".

Let us consider Gurdjieff in further detail. The esotericist G.I. Gurdjieff, as he was commonly known [George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff] (1866–1949)³⁰ — see **Figures 8 and 9** — was born "Georgii Ivanovich Gurdzhiv" (as Judy Saltzman transcribed the Russian form, Георгий Иванович Гурджи́ев), in a city now in Armenia, the son of a Caucasus Greek (G.I. Gurdjieff's Greek and Armenian forms of his name are³¹ Γεώργιος Γεωργιάδης and Գեորգի Գյուրջիւ, all three forms being iterative names),³² "of a Greek father and Armenian mother in Alexandropol³³ in the Cappadocian Greek quarter on the Russian side of the Russian-Finnish [*recte*: Russian-Turkish] border. The date of his birth is disputed to be as much as eleven years later, due perhaps to a mistake on his passport. Gurdjieff himself maintained that he was born in 1866, a date that is corroborated by a number of sources" (Saltzman 2005, p. 3710). Contrast the foregoing to this other account: "The eldest son of a Cappadocian Greek father and an illiterate Armenian mother,³⁴ he was born in the Greek quarter of Alexandropol, a Russian garrison town bordering Ottoman Turkey. In practically Old Testament conditions, Ioannas Giorgiades, a well-to-do grazier on the Shiraki Steppe, imposed on his son a character-forming, even Spartan, regime; and, as an amateur *ashokh* or bardic poet, imbued him with an inextinguishable interest in an oral tradition at once living and archaic (not least the Epic of Gilgamesh). Cattle plague (1873) impoverished the family, and the Russo-Turkish war (1877) drew them hopefully to the captured Turkish citadel town of Kars" (Moore 2006, p. 445).³⁵

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff

³⁰ There are conflicting versions of his date of birth: 31 March 1866, or 14 January 1872, or 28 November 1877 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff). "The exact year of his birth remains unknown; conjectures range from 1866 to 1877. Some authors (such as James Moore) argue for 1866. Both Olga de Hartmann, the woman Gurdjieff called 'the first friend of my inner life', and Louise Goepfert March, Gurdjieff's secretary in the early 1930s, believed that Gurdjieff was born in 1872. A passport gave a birthdate of November 28, 1877, but he once stated that he was born at the stroke of midnight at the beginning of New Year's Day (Julian calendar). Although the dates of his birth vary, the year of 1872 is inscribed in a plate on the gravemarker in the cemetery of Avon, Seine-et-Marne, where his body was buried" (*ibid.*).

³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff "The name Gurdjieff represents a Russified form of the Pontic Greek surname 'Georgiades' (Greek: Γεωργιάδης)" (*ibid.*).

³² Iterative names are the subject of Nissan (2013b, 2013c).

³³ Alexandropol in the Russian Empire, a city in present-day Armenia, now called now *Gyumri*.

³⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff states that George Gurdjieff "was born to a Caucasus Greek father, Ἰωάννης Γεωργιάδης (Yiannis Georgiades), and an Armenian mother, Evdokia (according to biographer Paul Beekman Taylor)".

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff explains: "Gurdjieff spent his childhood in Kars, which, from 1878 to 1918, was the administrative capital of the Russian-ruled Transcaucasus province of Kars Oblast, a border region recently captured from the Ottoman Empire. It contained extensive grassy plateau-steppe and high mountains, and was inhabited by a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional population that had a history of respect for travelling mystics and holy men, and for religious syncretism and conversion. Both the city of Kars and the surrounding territory were home to an extremely diverse population: although part of the Armenian Plateau, Kars Oblast was home to Armenians, Russians, Caucasus Greeks, Georgians, Turks, Kurds and smaller numbers of Christian communities from eastern and central Europe such as Caucasus Germans, Estonians and Russian sectarian communities like the Molokans and Doukhobors. Gurdjieff makes particular mention of the Yazidi community. Growing up in a multi-ethnic society, Gurdjieff became fluent in Armenian, Pontic Greek, Russian and Turkish, speaking the last in a mixture of elegant Osmanlı and some dialect. He later acquired 'a working



Figure 8. George Gurdjieff.

George Gurdjieff's family intended for him to become either an Orthodox clergyman, or a medical doctor, Judy Satzman claims (2005, p. 3710). "However, even as a teenager he was convinced of the existence of perennial wisdom and secret knowledge that held the answers to life's ultimate questions.³⁶ For this reason, Gurdjieff left the academic world and engaged in a quest that took him to Central Asia, including upper Tibet, and the Middle East. Some of the significant events of this journey are recorded in *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (begun in 1927 and revised over the years; first published in 1963), which British director Peter Brook made into a movie in 1979" (Saltzman 2005, pp. 3710–3711).

Having mentioned Gurdjieff's parents' stay in Kars, Moore offers a caveat (2006, pp. 445–446):

At this early juncture balanced encyclopaedism is balked by Gurdjieff's cavalier burning of his personal papers in spring 1930 and by a curious absence of collateral evidence. For the ensuing thirty-three years we are, *pro tem*, chasteningly reliant on Gurdjieff's four autobiographico-didactic texts which — although innocent of consistency, Aristotelian logic, and chronological discipline — have the ring of a poetic truth. From these alone derives our notion of Gurdjieff's private tutoring by "Dean Borsh"; his unprogressed vocations as a doctor and a priest; his wonder at a succession of paranormal phenomena; and his burgeoning existential question as to the cosmic function of the biosphere and of humanity. Gurdjieff's auto-mythopoesis equally furnishes us the twenty-six adult years (1885–1911) of his long quest for, and synthesis of, valid esoteric sources. None of Gurdjieff's fifteen companions, the "Seekers of Truth", have resolved into recognisable historical entities. His apologists' attempts to differentiate and substantiate five successive expeditions — to Egypt, Crete, and the Holy Land; to Abyssinia and the Sudan; to Persia and Transoxiana; to Siberia; and finally to Afghanistan, the Pamirs, and India — display ingenuity but are necessarily compromised by self-indexicality, i.e. reliance on the correlation of purely internal evidence. Soberingly, Gurdjieff's putative decade in Central Asia (1897–1907), including his pivotal initiatic experience in the "Sarmoung Monastery",³⁷ finds no support in the

facility with several European languages'. Early influences on him included his father, a carpenter and amateur *ashik* or bardic poet, and the priest of the town's Russian church, Dean Borsh, a family friend".

³⁶ "The young Gurdjieff avidly read Russian-language scientific literature. Influenced by these writings, and having witnessed a number of phenomena that he could not explain, he formed the conviction that there existed a hidden truth not to be found in science or in mainstream religion" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._I._Gurdjieff).

³⁷ "In early adulthood, according to his own account Gurdjieff's curiosity led him to travel to Central Asia, Egypt, Iran, India, Tibet and Rome before he returned to Russia for a few years in 1912. He was always unforthcoming about the source of his teachings. The only account of his wanderings appears in his book

meticulous journals of contemporary explorers (Sven Hedin, Sir Aurel Stein, Albert Le Coq, Paul Pelliot, and Count Kozui Otani).

Interestingly, both the Russian-born American pulp fiction writer Achmed Abdullah (see about him below), and Gurdjieff claim to have visited Tibet. In both cases, it is a suspicious claim. As we are going to see later in this section, an even more startling claim was to come from a third party. As for Gurdjieff ever visiting the region, Moore concedes (2006, p. 446): "Yet, given the vastness of the territory, Gurdjieff's verve, and his predilection for aliases and disguise, these important caveats fall well short of conclusively invalidating his spiritual Odyssey: absence of proof is not proof of absence. Wholesale scepticism as to Gurdjieff's Central Asian venture confronts its own difficulties in accommodating his relevant linguistic command, his well-attested knowledge of the region's musical modalities and tribal carpets, and his arguably unique grasp of its dance — folk and liturgical". Importantly, he eventually traded in carpets. During his alleged travels, he supported himself with odd jobs, including some admittedly fraudulent activity: selling painted birds as though they were canaries. But there has been speculation he may have been involved, in Asia, in the Great Game of European powers.³⁸

From in 1912, Gurdjieff resided in Moscow. "With Gurdjieff's arrival in Metropolitan Russia (ca. New Year 1912), biography finally rests on defensible ground. Significant among Gurdjieff's earliest associates in Moscow is his cousin the monumental sculptor Sergei Dmitrievich Mercourov (1881–1952)" (Moore 2006, p. 446).³⁹ A circle of students in both Moscow and St. Petersburg gathered around Gurdjieff.⁴⁰ "To avoid the difficulties of life

Meetings with Remarkable Men. Most commentators leave his background unexplained, and it is not generally considered to be a reliable or straightforward autobiography. Each chapter is named after an individual 'remarkable man'; many are putatively members of a society of 'seekers of truth'. ¶ After Gurdjieff's death, J. G. Bennett researched his sources extensively and suggested that these characters were symbolic of the three types of people to whom Gurdjieff referred: No. 1 centred in their physical body; No. 2 centred in their emotions and No. 3 centred in their minds. He asserts that he has encounters with dervishes, fakirs and descendants of the extinct Essenes, whose teaching had been, he claimed, conserved at a monastery in Sarmoung. The book also has an overarching quest narrative involving a map of 'pre-sand Egypt' and culminating in an encounter with the 'Sarmoung Brotherhood'" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff).

³⁸ "Gurdjieff wrote that he supported himself during his travels with odd jobs and trading schemes (one of which he described as dyeing hedgerow birds yellow and selling them as canaries). On his reappearance, as far as the historical record is concerned, the ragged wanderer had transformed into a well-heeled businessman. His only autobiographical writing concerning this period is *Herald of Coming Good*. [He eventually dosowned that book of his.] In it, he mentions acting as hypnotherapist specialising in the cure of addictions and using people as guinea pigs for his methods. It is also speculated that during his travels, he was engaged in a certain amount of political activity, as part of The Great Game" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff).

James Moore (2006, p. 447) mentions "the private publication (March 1933) of Gurdjieff's imprudent tract *Herald of Coming Good* (hastily repudiated and suppressed)".

³⁹ "From 1913 to 1949, the chronology appears to be based on material that can be confirmed by primary documents, independent witnesses, cross-references and reasonable inference. On New Year's Day in 1912, Gurdjieff arrived in Moscow and attracted his first students, including his cousin, the sculptor Sergey Merkurov, and the eccentric Rachmilievitch. In the same year, he married the Polish Julia Ostrowska in Saint Petersburg" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff).

⁴⁰ "In 1914, Gurdjieff advertised his ballet, *The Struggle of the Magicians*, and he supervised his pupils' writing of the sketch *Glimpses of Truth*. In 1915, Gurdjieff accepted P[eter] D. Ouspensky as a pupil, and in 1916, he accepted the composer Thomas de Hartmann and his wife, Olga, as students. Then, he had about 30 pupils. Ouspensky already had a reputation as a writer on mystical subjects and had conducted his own, ultimately disappointing, search for wisdom in the East. The Fourth Way 'system' [developed by Gurdjieff and] taught during this period was complex and metaphysical, partly expressed in scientific terminology" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff). "In March 1918, Ouspensky [(1878–1947)] separated from Gurdjieff, settling in England and teaching the Fourth Way in his own right. The two men were to have a very ambivalent relationship for decades to come" (*ibid.*).

during the Bolshevik Revolution, Gurdjieff led his followers to the Caucasus⁴¹ and stayed in Tbilisi, Georgia" (Saltzman 2005, p. 3711), where he continued to attract pupils.⁴²



Figure 9. A photograph of George Gurdjieff taken between 1925 and 1935, from an identification document.

⁴¹ "In the midst of revolutionary upheaval in Russia, Gurdjieff left Petrograd [which is how St. Petersburg was renamed during the First World War] in 1917 to return to his family home in Alexandropol. During the Bolshevik Revolution, he set up temporary study communities in Essentuki in the Caucasus, then in Tuapse, Maikop, Sochi and Poti, all on the Black Sea coast of southern Russia, where he worked intensively with many of his Russian pupils. Gurdjieff said, 'Begin in Russia, End in Russia'" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff). In the summer of 1918, "Gurdjieff's eldest sister and her family reached him in Essentuki as refugees, informing him that Turks had shot his father in Alexandropol on 15 May. As Essentuki became more and more threatened by civil war, Gurdjieff fabricated a newspaper story announcing his forthcoming 'scientific expedition' to 'Mount Induc'. Posing as a scientist, Gurdjieff left Essentuki with fourteen companions (excluding Gurdjieff's family and Ouspensky). They travelled by train to Maikop, where hostilities delayed them for three weeks. In spring 1919, Gurdjieff met the artist Alexandre de Salzmann and his wife Jeanne and accepted them as pupils. Assisted by Jeanne de Salzmann, Gurdjieff gave the first public demonstration of his Sacred Dances (Movements at the Tbilisi Opera House, 22 June)" (*ibid.*).

⁴² "Mere days before Tsar Nicolas II is deposed (February 1917) Gurdjieff presciently goes south, soon followed by his cadre whom he shepherds through the ensuing Russian Civil War. In Essentuki he contrives two seminal 'workshops' of intense psycho-somatic experimentation, which witness *inter alia* his inception of life-long work on Sacred Gymnastics (later termed "Movements" or Sacred Dance). Finally, in August-September 1918, he audaciously extricates his nucleus (excepting an increasingly disaffected [Piotr Demianovich] Ouspensky) on foot over the Caucasus mountains, crossing Red and White lines five times. ¶ The year 1919 in Menshevik Georgia is quadruply notable: for the accession (Easter) of Jeanne de Salzmann (1899–1990) a gifted young French-Swiss eurhythmics pupil of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, and of her husband Alexandre Gustav de Salzmann (1874–1934) an associate of Rilke and Kandinsky; for the inaugural public demonstration of Gurdjieff's Sacred Dance in Tbilisi Opera House (22 June); for the notional founding of Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man (September); and thereafter for Gurdjieff's work (co-opting de Hartmann) on the scenario and music of *The Struggle of the Magicians*" (Moore 2006, p. 446). Concerning the music resulting from the collaboration between Thomas de Hartmann (1885–1956) and Gurdjieff, Johanna Petsche has authored a book (2015) entitled *Gurdjieff and Music: The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music and Its Esoteric Significance*.

In 1919, Gurdjieff and his closest pupils moved to Tbilisi. There, Gurdjieff's wife Julia Ostrowska, the Stjoernvals, the Hartmanns, and the de Salzmans [sic] gathered the fundamentals of his teaching. Gurdjieff concentrated on his still unstaged ballet, *The Struggle of the Magicians*. Thomas de Hartmann (who had made his debut years ago, before Czar Nicholas II of Russia) worked on the music for the ballet, and Olga Ivanovna Hinzenberg (who years later wed the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright) practiced the ballet dances. In 1919, Gurdjieff established his first Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.

In late May 1920, when political conditions in Georgia changed and the old order was crumbling, his party travelled to Batumi on the Black Sea coast and then took ship to Istanbul. Gurdjieff rented an apartment on Koumbaradji Street in Péra and later at 13 Abdullatif Yemeneci Sokak near the Galata Tower. The apartment is near the kha'neqa'h (monastery) of the Mevlevi Order (a Sufi Order following the teachings of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi), where Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Thomas de Hartmann witnessed the *sema* ceremony of the Whirling Dervishes. In Istanbul, Gurdjieff also met his future pupil Capt. John G. Bennett, then head of British Military Intelligence in Constantinople, [...] ⁴³

Gurdjieff went on a lecturing tour around western Europe, including in Berlin and London (he did not succeed in an effort to be let to live in Britain), before settling in France. "In July 1922, on a restricted Nansen Passport for Russian refugees, Gurdjieff relocates in France (where he will remain domiciled for twenty-seven years until his death)" (Moore 2006, p. 446). During a long initial period, he and his pupils were based south of Paris, at the Prieuré des Basses Loges in Avon, near the Château de Fontainebleau.

While in France, Gurdjieff "attracted international pupils,⁴⁴ including the dying author Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) from New Zealand.⁴⁵ In 1924 he toured with a group of dancer-disciples that performed *Sacred Dances* in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia. While in the United States he attracted other prominent students" (Saltzman 2005, p. 3711). Gurdjieff's "his personal behaviour towards pupils could be ferocious", e.g. towards his British pupil 'Alfred Richard' (James Alfred) Orage (1873–1934), who had been influential in Britain, and had — as I mentioned at the beginning of this section — abandoned his publishing career (and his periodical, *New Age*) in order to join Gurdjieff.⁴⁶

⁴³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff During his life, John G. Bennett (1897–1974) also was a technologist and an industrial research director. Apart from English, he was fluent in French, Turkish and Russian. Bennett described his first encounter with Gurdjieff, and among the other things, he described his physical appearance, as well as his command of Turkish: "A Greek from the Caucasus, he spoke Turkish with an accent of unexpected purity, the accent that one associates with those born and bred in the narrow circle of the Imperial Court. His appearance was striking enough even in Turkey, where one saw many unusual types. His head was shaven, immense black moustache, eyes which at one moment seemed very pale and at another almost black. Below average height, he gave nevertheless an impression of great physical strength" (quoted *ibid.*).

⁴⁴ An intake of pupils with a "preponderant British element" (Moore 2006, p. 447), which included e.g. "Alfred Richard Orage (1873–1934) was an influential British editor best known for the magazine *New Age*" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff). "He began attending Ouspensky's London talks in 1921 then met Gurdjieff when the latter first visited London early in 1922. Shortly thereafter, Orage sold *New Age* and relocated to Gurdjieff's institute at the Prieuré and in 1924 was appointed by Gurdjieff to lead the institute's branch in New York. After Gurdjieff's nearly fatal automobile accident in July 1924 and because of his prolonged recuperation during 1924 and intense writing period for several years, Orage continued in New York until 1931. During this period, Orage was responsible for editing the English typescript of *Beelzebub's Tales* (1931) and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (1963) as Gurdjieff's assistant. This period is described in some detail by Paul Beekman Taylor in his *Gurdjieff and Orage: Brothers in Elysium* (2001)" (*ibid.*).

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Richard_Orage

⁴⁵ "During this period, Gurdjieff acquired notoriety as 'the man who killed Katherine Mansfield' after Katherine Mansfield died there of tuberculosis under his care on 9 January 1923. However, James Moore and Ouspensky convincingly show that Mansfield knew she would soon die and that Gurdjieff made her last days happy and fulfilling" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff).

⁴⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff

Gurdjieff was in New York from November 1925 to the spring of 1926, when he succeeded in raising over \$100,000. He was to make six or seven trips to the US, where he alienated a number of people with his brash and impudent demands for money. Some have interpreted that in terms of his following the *Malamatiyya* technique of the Sufis, he was deliberately attracting disapproval.⁴⁷ ¶ Despite his fund-raising efforts in America, the Prieuré operation ran into debt and was shut down in 1932. Gurdjieff constituted a new teaching group in Paris. Known as The Rope, it was composed of only women, many of them writers, and several lesbians. Members included Kathryn Hulme, Jane Heap, Margaret Anderson and Enrico Caruso's widow, Dorothy. Gurdjieff became acquainted with Gertrude Stein through Rope members, but she was never a follower.

Gurdjieff irrevocably abandoned writing in May 1934 (Moore 2006, p. 447). "Gurdjieff remained in Paris during the Nazi occupation.⁴⁸ His followers helped hide Jewish members of their group. He continued to teach, and died in 1949 in Neuilly, France" (Saltzman 2005, p. 3711).⁴⁹ "Gurdjieff's work was carried on by his pupil [since his stay in Tbilisi],⁵⁰ Jeanne

⁴⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff

⁴⁸ "Although the flat at 6 Rue des Colonels-Renard was very small for the purpose, he continued to teach groups of pupils throughout World War II. Visitors recalled the pantry, stocked with an extraordinary collection of eastern delicacies, which served as his inner sanctum, and the suppers he held with elaborate toasts to 'idiots' in vodka and cognac. Having cut a physically impressive figure for many years, he was now distinctly paunchy. His teaching was now far removed from the original 'system', being based on proverbs, jokes and personal interaction, although pupils were required to read, three times if possible, copies of his magnum opus *Beelzebub's Tales*. ¶ His personal business enterprises (he had intermittently been a dealer in oriental rugs and carpets for much of his life, among other activities) enabled him to offer charitable relief to neighbours who had been affected by the difficult circumstances of the war, and it also brought him to the attention of the authorities, leading to a night in the cells" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff).

⁴⁹ "Aged 83, Gurdjieff dies at the American Hospital at Neuilly (29th), and is buried (November 3) at Fontainebleau-Avon according to the rite of the Russian Orthodox Church" (Moore 2006, p. 448).

⁵⁰ Jeanne de Saltzman joined Gurdjieff's circle as a pupil along with her husband, the artist Alexandre de Salzmann (1874–1934), who then collaborated (as Judy Saltzman relates) as a composer with Gurdjieff (but the latter's main joint composer, Moore explains, was Thomas de Hartmann, a prolific collaboration that between July 1925 and May 1927 yielded 170 piano compositions; then in June 1929 Gurdjieff expelled in practice Thomas de Hartmann from his group). Alexandre de Salzmann was eventually influential on René Daumal (1908–1944), one of the founding members of the French poets' group *Le Grand Jeu*, or the Simplists, which was eclipsed by Surrealism.

"In Paris, in 1927, Daumal, Vailland and Gilbert-Lecomte grouped around the painter Joseph Sima (1891–1971), an artist of Czech origin fascinated by the spiritual quest. Sima in his work was concerned with abolishing matter-spirit dualism and recovering a vision of the original unity. The Simplists were enthusiastic about such endeavours, which echoed their own aspirations and went far beyond traditional aesthetics, being presented as an authentic means of knowledge, a 'clairvoyance' in Rimbaud's sense of the term; art should be a metaphysical experience, free of any hedonistic connotations" (Faivre 2006, pp. 438–439). "The inner quest of the protagonists of *Le Grand Jeu* may be compared with a mystical endeavour to attain an immediate omniscience, whose secret, lost since times immemorial, must urgently be rediscovered so that Man can attain the perfect realization of his condition. The prenatal universe, the return to origins, and the condition of childhood are as many recurrent themes in the texts of Daumal and Gilbert-Lecomte" (*ibid.*, p. 439).

"When the members of *Le Grand Jeu* dispersed (end of 1932) and the review ceased to appear, the two main protagonists of this dazzling odyssey took different paths and their destinies definitively separated. Gilbert-Lecomte, a modern archetype of the *poete maudit* (cursed poet), did not succeed, despite repeated efforts, to tear himself away from the deadly demands of the 'black goddess' (opium). In a fatal, suicidal impulse, consumed more than ever by the desire for self-annihilation and dissolution, he pursued his asymptotic quest for the Absolute as far as the final destruction, which tragically came wearing the hideous mask of tetanus (1943). As for René Daumal, he freed himself from the grip of drugs. After his encounter with Alexandre de Salzmann (1874–1933), a disciple of Gurdjieff whose powerful influence he experienced, he progressively gave up poetry to devote himself to a deep study of Sanskrit and the translation of Indian sacred texts. At the same time, he made ceaseless efforts at realizing his desire for integral transformation, practicing a strict asceticism to accede to the heights of spiritual simplicity (*Le Contre-Ciel*, 1936; *Le Mont analogue*, posthumous, 1950); he died prematurely of tuberculosis in 1944" (*ibid.*, pp. 440–441).

Moore explains (2006, p. 447): "In summer 1936 — now aged 70, and deprived, not least by his own will, of virtually all his closest companions — Gurdjieff acquires a modest Paris apartment at 6 rue des Colonels-Renard. Here in 1938 transpires his first personal contact with René Daumal (1908–1944), poet and former

[Allemand] de Salzman (1889–1990), who organized the Gurdjieff Foundation in 1953 in New York" (*ibid.*).

"Gurdjieff remains a mysterious and controversial figure even into the twenty-first century. He has been called everything from a charlatan⁵¹ to a master of wisdom" (Saltzman 2005, p. 3711). Anthony Storr, on p. 44 of his book *Feet of Clay*, expressed this very negative opinion about Gurdjieff: "As we have seen, Gurdjieff was, by his own admission, an accomplished confidence trickster who had no hesitation in deceiving other people and extracting money from them when he needed to do so" (quoted in Taylor 2004, p. 14, fn. 20). Paul Beekman Taylor wrote as follows (2004, p. 14, his unbracketed ellipsis dots, my bracketed ellipsis dots):

Finally, there is the difficult task of categorising Gurdjieff the man. This has divided writers; some portraying him as a redeemer, others as a charlatan. In terms of the latter, Gurdjieff was certainly not averse to practical jokes, fabricating facts, mythologising details of his biography and teaching, or behaving opportunistically. In his second book *Meetings With Remarkable Men* he proudly describes himself as a young man carrying out tricks on unsuspecting people and [artaking in different disguises: "I had already become an old hand in the art of playing a role". In his later writings he claimed to have lived, for twenty years from 1912, "an artificial life", which can be interpreted as a life of role-playing. Gurdjieff and his pupils explain this technique as a tool aiding his own detachment; outwardly Gurdjieff played a role and inwardly he 'self-remembered' and became free from role. The stance taken here on Gurdjieff, based on a comprehensive study of his life, writings, and the eyewitness accounts of his pupils, is that most if not all of Gurdjieff's tricks and obfuscations were pedagogical tools. His teachings hinge on the precept that people need to be quite seriously shaken up or made uncomfortable if they have any hope of transforming spiritually. Pupil Fritz Peters sums Gurdjieff up by stating that "as a teacher, I would say that, however conscious he may have been, his sense of dedication to the dissemination of his method must necessarily be considered compulsive... he absolutely had to be a teacher".

Of Gurdjieff the man, all accounts indicate that he was charismatic, unpredictable, and highly intelligent, with the capacity to attract and maintain a large body of pupils that included talented artists and intellectuals. He also possessed an eclectic range of skills; he choreographed dances, composed music with de Hartmann, ran businesses, wrote prolifically, cooked sumptuous meals, and demonstrated practical skills such as carpentry and construction.

"The central idea in Gurdjieff's thought is that human consciousness can be awakened to a much greater degree than most people experience" (*ibid.*). Judy Saltzman also explained (Saltzman 2005, p. 3711, her brackets, except brackets containing ellipsis dots):

His monumental work, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (1949),⁵² is an allegory of a being in a spaceship who observes the "hell" of life on earth and the misery of the "three-brained beings" who inhabit the planet. Humans are composed of ordinary waking consciousness, which is fictitious; the subconscious, which is closer to reality; and the state of transformation or higher consciousness, which religions might call "spirit" (*pneuma*, *buddhi*, or *ātman*). Beings who live only by the perceptions of waking consciousness are disrespectfully called "slugs" by Beelzebub's grandson, a truth seeker. [...] In spite of his emphasis on experience, Gurdjieff's

member of *Le Grand Jeu* a prior student of Work ideas first under Alexandre de Salzman then Jeanne de Salzman. With World War II looming, Gurdjieff makes a brief penultimate trip to New York (spring 1939) but resists promptings to settle securely in New Jersey, and returns (May) to France; similarly he declines to vacate Colonels-Renard when the Germans invest Paris (June 1940)".

⁵¹ To say it with https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff — "Opinions on Gurdjieff's writings and activities are divided. Sympathizers regard him as a charismatic master who brought new knowledge into Western culture, a psychology and cosmology that enable insights beyond those provided by established science. On the other hand, some critics assert he was a charlatan with a large ego and a constant need for self-glorification"

⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff explains that in the mid-1920s, Gurdjieff wrote that book "in a mixture of Armenian and Russian", making it "deliberately convoluted and obscure, forcing the reader to 'work' to find its meaning. He also composed it according to his own principles, writing in noisy cafes to force a greater effort of concentration".

contribution was concerned with cosmology, metaphysics, and evolution. For example, Beelzebub teaches his grandson that all beings were "Rays of Creation" from the "Common Father Endlessness Himself" (one of the many names for the Absolute [God]). According to Gurdjieff, Charles Darwin (1809–1882) had explained little about human evolution because he did not account for the human inner nature as divine emanations. Human beings on the "minor planet earth" have lost touch with their origins and reasons for existence due to mindlessly following conventional religions and political leaders. Humans are actually governed by cosmic laws, which are a part of their psychic makeup. Tragically, humans are caught up in materialism, external success, and the unattainable goal of happiness. They are hopelessly lost unless they can return to the Real I.

In the *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism* (Hanegraaff et al. 2006), there are entries for both Gurdjieff⁵³ (Moore 2006) and "Gurdjieff Tradition" (Needleman 2006). See in depth treatment of both subjects in Moore (1991), Webb (1980), Needleman and Baker (1996). Needleman remarked (2006, p. 453):

The half century that has passed since Gurdjieff's death has witnessed dramatic developments with respect to the reception of his ideas — as well as a proliferation of interpretations and applications. Louis Pauwels' derogatory *Monsieur Gurdjieff*, published in 1954, was for a time the only book about Gurdjieff, other than Ouspensky's. Although late in his life Pauwels repudiated his earlier views and spoke of the great value of Gurdjieff's teaching, the negative tone of *Monsieur Gurdjieff* strongly influenced public opinion in France and elsewhere. Starting in the early 1960s, however, numerous accounts and testimonies by pupils who were close to Gurdjieff began to present a far more comprehensive view of the ideas, as well as a positive description of Gurdjieff the teacher. [...] The broader cultural influence of the Gurdjieff teaching has also become clearer. In the field of psychology, the practice of group therapy (e.g. Skynner and Slavson) owes much to the Gurdjieff idea about the necessity of group work; and the very phrases "self-observation" and "work on oneself" have not only entered into many psychological and psychotherapeutic disciplines, but have even entered into the vernacular of the English language. [...] In the arts, the insights of Gurdjieff have been acknowledged by leading figures such as Frank Lloyd Wright (architect),⁵⁴ Thomas de Hartmann (composer), Peter Brook (theater), Lincoln Kirstein (dance) and in many other venues including literature, philosophy and the study of religion. Often, his ideas are applied without acknowledgement, and a study of this aspect of the reception of his teaching needs to be undertaken to show the surprising extent to which his ideas and terminology, in widely varying interpretations and alterations, have become a significant cultural and philosophical influence in contemporary arts, letters and various forms of therapeutic praxis, including such unexpected areas as corporate management training.

Apart from Louis Pauwels' book (1954), also Rom Landau, who instead never was a pupil of Gurdjieff, but met him, wrote about him unflatteringly. Among the things Landau wrote, was a claim (which he made, upon the authority of Achmed Abdullah) to the effect that George Gurdjieff and the Buriat Buddhist cleric Agvan Dorjiev were one and the same person.

Pauwels claimed that Karl Haushofer, the father of geopolitics whose protegee [*recte*: protégé] was Deputy Reich Führer Rudolf Hess, was one of the real "seekers after truth" described by

⁵³ "Greco-Armenian holistic philosopher, thaumaturge, and teacher of Sacred Dances (whose ancillary personae as musicologist, therapist, hypnotist, raconteur, explorer, polyglot, and entrepreneur exercise the taxonomic mind). Gurdjieff's work comprises one ballet, some 250 Sacred Dances, 200 piano pieces composed in collaboration with his pupil Thomas Alexandrovitch de Hartmann (1886–1956), and four books, the *magnum opus* being *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*. For more than 35 years he privately taught, by example and oral precept, a previously unknown doctrine styled 'The Work', attracting — and often quixotically repulsing — groups of gifted disciples: Russian, English, American, and French. His system integrated a semantic critique, a social critique, an epistemology, a mythopoeic cosmogony and cosmology, a phenomenology of consciousness, and a practical *Existenzphilosophie*" (Moore 2006, p. 445).

⁵⁴ Frank Lloyd Wright was stepfather of Svetlana Hinzenberg, Gurdjieff's daughter, born in 1917 to Olga (Olgivanna) Ivanovna Hinzenberg (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff). Gurdjieff's notoriety included his allegedly seducing his female students, and fathering many children from different women.

Gurdjieff. According to Rom Landau, a journalist in the 1930s, Achmed Abdullah told him at the beginning of the 20th century that Gurdjieff was a Russian secret agent in Tibet who went by the name of "Hambro Akuan Dorzhieff" (i.e. Agvan Dorjiev), a tutor to the [13th] Dalai Lama [(Lachman 2003, pp. 32–33)]. However, the actual Dorzhieff went to live in the Buddhist temple erected in St. Petersburg and after the revolution was imprisoned by Stalin. James Webb conjectured that Gurdjieff might have been Dorzhieff's assistant Ushe Narzunoff (i.e. Ovshe Norzunov) [(Lachman 2004, p. 124)].⁵⁵

In a questionable book,⁵⁶ *Black Terror White Soldiers*, David Livingstone wrote (2013, pp. 195–196):

By the 1890s, Dorzhieff had begun to spread the story that Russia was the mythical land of Shambhala to the north; that the Tsar might be the one to save Buddhism and that the White Tsar was an emanation of White Tara, raising hopes that he would support Tibet and its religion. By 1903, both Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, and Francis Younghusband became convinced that Russia and Tibet had signed secret treaties threatening the British interests in India and suspected that Dorzhieff was working for the Russian government. The fear of Russia drawing Tibet into the Great Game to control the routes across Asia was therefore a reason for the British invasion of Tibet during 1903–4. According to legend, Dorzhieff then fled to Mongolia with the Dalai Lama.

According to Rom Landau, a "spiritual journalist" of the 1930s, George Gurdjieff, a charismatic hypnotist, carpet trader and spy, who worked as a Russian secret agent in Tibet during the early part of the twentieth century, went by the name "Hambro Akuan Dorzhieff" (the Lama Agvan Dorjiev). Though James Webb, the author of *The Harmonious Circle*, suggests that Gurdjieff was an agent for the Russian government as Ushe Narzunoff, an associate of Dorzhieff. Nevertheless, the legend that Gurdjieff and Dorzhieff were the same person was widely believed by Gurdjieff's disciples.

Gurdjieff (1866–1949) was born to a Greek father and Armenian mother in Alexandropol (now Gyumri, Armenia), then part of the Russian Empire. Gurdjieff's teaching claimed that human beings were helplessly caught in a "waking sleep" unable to fully perceive reality, but that it is possible for them to transcend to a higher state of consciousness and achieve their full human potential. He developed a method for doing so called "The Work" or "the Method". Because his

⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G_I_Gurdjieff

⁵⁶ The twisted, troubling nature of that book can be already assessed from his abstract, which among the other things, after maintaining that the influence of Kabbalah and the idea of spiritual progress influenced secret societies and the Western idea of the evolution of society, claims: "Therefore, the infamous Illuminati gave its name to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which claimed that human progress must abandon 'superstition', meaning Christianity, in favor of 'reason'. Thus the Illuminati succeeded in bringing about the French and American revolutions, which instituted the separation of Church and State, and from that point forward, the Western values of Humanism, seen to include secularism, human rights, democracy and capitalism, have been celebrated as the culmination of centuries of human intellectual evolution. This is the basis of the propaganda which has been used to foster a Clash of Civilizations, where the Islamic world is presented as stubbornly adhering to the anachronistic idea of 'theocracy'. Where once the spread of Christianity and civilizing the world were used as pretexts for colonization, today a new White Man's Burden makes use of human rights and democracy to justify imperial aggression. However, because, after centuries of decline, the Islamic world is incapable of mobilizing a defense, the Western powers, as part of their age-old strategy of Divide and Conquer, have fostered the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, to both serve as agent-provocateurs and to malign the image of Islam. These sects, known to scholars as Revivalists, opposed the traditions of classical Islamic scholarship in order to create the opportunity to rewrite the laws of the religion to better serve their sponsors. Thus were created the Wahhabi and Salafi sects of Islam, from which were derived the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been in the service of the West ever since. But, the story of the development of these Islamic sects involves the bizarre doctrines and hidden networks of occult secret societies, being based on a Rosicrucian myth of Egyptian Freemasonry, which see the Muslim radicals as inheritors of an ancient mystery tradition of the Middle East which was passed on to the Knights Templar during the Crusades, thus forming the foundation of the legends of the Holy Grail. These beliefs would not only form the cause for the association of Western intelligence agencies with Islamic fundamentalists, but would fundamentally shape much of twentieth century history". The book throws in a chapter on the UFO phenomenon as well. However, as the book often proceeds by vignettes about particular historical characters of episodes, it is sometimes of some use, in that it brings together claims from cited literature, as can be seen from the quotation about Gurdjieff (I have omitted the exponents referring to citations in the endnotes).

method for awaking one's consciousness was different from that of the fakir, monk or yogi, his discipline is also called the "Fourth Way".

Gurdjieff explained, "The way of the development of hidden possibilities is a way against nature and against God". His deceptive and tyrannical ways led to his reputation as a "rascal guru". He said of his own followers, "They are sheep fit only for the shearing". He was widely referred to as a black magician, and one French critic labeled him "a false prophet, a pretentious ignoramus". Rasputin was so fearful of Gurdjieff that he was quoted to have said: "I had been especially careful not to look at Gurdjieff and not to allow him to look into my eyes..." He was criticized by many of his former students as being slovenly, gluttonous and was notorious for seducing his female students and fathered [sic] several illegitimate children. Louis Pauwels, a former pupil, referred to Gurdjieff as "scandalous". P. D. Ouspensky, his leading student, finally broke with Gurdjieff, claiming that he was "a very extraordinary man", but that it was "dangerous to be near him". J. G. Bennett warned that Gurdjieff "if far more of an enigma than you can imagine. I am certain that he is deeply good, and that he is working for the good of mankind. But his methods are often incomprehensible".

There has often been the suggestion that Gurdjieff and Joseph Dzhughashvili, later known as Stalin, met as young students while attending the same seminary in Tiflis in the Caucasus. Gurdjieff's family records contain information that Stalin lived in his family's house for a while. There are also suggestions that Stalin belonged to an occult "eastern brotherhood", which consisted of Gurdjieff and his followers.

Consider again Agvan Dordjiev. He was a subject of the Russian Empire who was also a Lamaist authority, had been a tutor of Thubten Gyatso, Tibet's then Dalai Lama, and this made the former influential in Tibet (Sarkisyanz 1958, pp. 628–629):

In Tibet at that time the Buryat Lama Agvan Dordji (Dordjiev) gained a decisive influence on the Dalai Lama, whom he had tutored in Lamaist theology. A rumor spread in Tibet that Shambhala, the mythical land traditionally imagined to be somewhere far in the northwest or north of Tibet, was to be identified with the Russian Empire, whose ruler was thought to be devoted to the Lamaism of his Buriat and Kalmuck subjects. Those who doubted this were allegedly said to be enemies of Buddhism. Dordjiev is reported to have presented Russian Tsardom as champion of the Buddhist universalist ideal of Empire. A Japanese Buddhist monk then traveling in Tibet wrote that it was believed in Tibet "that the Czar will sooner or later subdue the whole world and found a gigantic Buddhist empire". As he emphasized, such an idea arose out of the messianic expectations associated with the mythical Northern Shambhala.

The Buryat cleric and politician Agvan Dorzhiev had a complex political biography, and it is not likely that his allegiance was principally to Russia, and that it was not counterbalanced by what he believed to be feasibly best for the Lamaist peoples, the Mongolians (including the Buryats) as well as the Tibetans. It is likely that his friendship with Thubten Gyatso, the 13th Dalai Lama was sincere. The British considered Agvan Dorzhiev to be a threat, and to be primarily a Russian agent.

Agvan Dorzhiev (1854–1938), a Khori-Buryat Mongol, and a Russian subject, was born in the village of Khara-Shibir, not far from Ulan Ude, to the east of Lake Baikal. He left home in 1873 at 19 to study at the Gelugpa monastery, Drepung, near Lhasa, the largest monastery in Tibet. Having successfully completed the traditional course of religious studies, he began the academic Buddhist degree of Geshey Lharampa (the highest level of 'Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy'). He continued his studies to become Tsanid-Hambo, or "Master of Buddhist Philosophy". He became a tutor and "debating partner" of the teenage Dalai Lama, who became very friendly with him and later used him as an envoy to Russia and other countries.

C.G.E. Mannerheim met Thubten Gyatso in Utaishan during the course of his expedition from Turkestan to Peking. Mannerheim wrote his diary and notes in Swedish to conceal the fact that his ethnographic and scientific party was also an elaborate intelligence gathering mission for the Russian army. The 13th Dalai Lama gave a blessing of white silk for the Russian Tsar and in

return received Mannerheim's precious seven-shot officer's pistol with a full explanation of its use, as a gift.⁵⁷

The current (14th) Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is quoted by Laird (2006, p. 221)⁵⁸ as stating that obviously, "The 13th Dalai Lama had a keen desire to establish relations with Russia, and I also think he was a little skeptical toward England at first. Then there was Dorjiev. To the English he was a spy, but in reality he was a good scholar and a sincere Buddhist monk who had great devotion to the 13th Dalai Lama". Agvan Dorjiev made an important contribution to Buryat culture, by inventing a script for writing the Buryat language.⁵⁹

Britain's invasion of Tibet, which began in December 1903 and lasted until September 1904, changed the geopolitical situation. The expedition, consisting of 3,000 soldiers complemented by 7,000 support troops (sherpas, porters and camp followers), was led by James R.L. Macdonald and Francis Younghusband. The British cabinet deliberated, in 1904, to destroy landmarks as well as the city walls of Lhasa, the Tibetan capital and holy city. It was something the Vice Roy and government of India considered unattractive, at least if future relations were not to be enshrined in a treaty. The plan of destruction was not implemented, partly because of disobedience, and a very favourable treaty, one exceeding the rosier expectations, was extracted at gunpoint from the Tibetans (Gilmour 2003 [1994], pp. 288–290). The plan had been considered not because Tibet had behaved outrageously (in fact it had not),⁶⁰ but because the troops could do it, and (British) had per force be right.

Apparently, a belief in British ruling circles that Russia may get control of Tibet played a role in Britain undertaking the expedition to Tibet (**Figure 10**).

The causes of the conflict are obscure; historian Charles Allen considered the official reasons for the invasion 'almost entirely bogus'. It seems to have been provoked primarily by rumours circulating amongst the Calcutta-based British administration that the Chinese government, (which nominally ruled Tibet), was intending to give the province to the Russians, thus providing Russia with a direct route to British India, breaking the chain of quasi-autonomous buffer-states which separated India from the Russian Empire to the north. These rumours were supported by the Russian exploration of Tibet; Russian explorer Gombojab Tsybikov⁶¹ was the first photographer of Lhasa, residing there during 1900–1901 with the aid of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's Russian courtier Agvan Dorjiev.⁶² The Dalai Lama declined to have dealings with the British government in India, and sent Dorjiev as emissary to the court of Czar Nicholas II with an appeal for Russian protection in 1900. Dorjiev was warmly received at the Peterhof, and a year later at the Czar's palace in Yalta.

These events reinforced Curzon's belief that the Dalai Lama intended to place Tibet firmly within a sphere of Russian influence and end its neutrality. In 1903, Lord Curzon⁶³ sent a request to the governments of China and Tibet for negotiations, to be held at Khampa Dzong, a tiny Tibetan village north of Sikkim to establish trade agreements. The Chinese were willing, and

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thubten_Gyatso,_13th_Dalai_Lama

⁵⁸ Quoted in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thubten_Gyatso,_13th_Dalai_Lama

⁵⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiev explains: "Dorzhev created a script for writing the Buryat language, which he called the Vagindra script after the Sanskrit version of his name".

⁶⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_expedition_to_Tibet relates: "The Tibetans were aware of the expedition; to avoid bloodshed, the Tibetan general at Yadong pledged that if the British made no attack upon the Tibetans, he would not attack the British. Colonel Younghusband replied, on 6 December 1903, that 'we are not at war with Tibet and that, unless we are ourselves attacked, we shall not attack the Tibetans'. When no Tibetan or Chinese officials met the British at Khapma Dzong, Younghusband advanced with some 1,150 soldiers, porters, labourers, and thousands of pack animals, to Tuna, 50 miles beyond the border. After waiting more months there, hoping in vain to be met by negotiators, the expedition received orders (in 1904) to continue toward Lhasa. § The Tibet government, guided by the Dalai Lama, alarmed by a large acquisitive foreign power dispatching a military mission to its capital, began marshalling its armed forces".

⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gombojab_Tsybikov

⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiev

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Curzon

ordered the thirteenth Dalai Lama to attend. However, the Dalai Lama refused, and also refused to provide transport to enable the amban, You Tai, to attend. Curzon concluded that China had no power or authority to compel the Tibetan government, and gained approval from London to send the Tibet Frontier Commission, a military expedition led by Colonel Francis Younghusband,⁶⁴ to Khampa Dzong. However, it is not known whether the Balfour government was fully aware of the difficulty of the operation, or of the Tibetan intention to resist it.⁶⁵



Figure 10. British and Tibetan officers negotiating, during the 1904 British expedition to Tibet. This scene⁶⁶ of a meeting between British officers with Tibetans was published in the newspaper *Petit journal* on 14 February 1904.

Which brings us to the First World War, and then to the 1920s, in the context of the Buryat Mongols (Russian subjects) and of the newly independent Outer Mongolia, which unlike Inner Mongolia, had managed to free herself of China's rule. Emanuel Sarkisyanz wrote (1958, pp. 629–630):

Already at the beginning of the First World War the invocation of the Armies of Shambhala and its ruler Rigdan Dagbo by Buryat Mongol Lamas was used to explain the mobilization of Buryats for aiding Russia's war effort.

Similarly, in the early period of Communist Mongolia, messianic notions of Lamaist thought played a considerable political role, for example, the notion about the future return of Amursena. This last ruler of the Western Mongols, the Dzungars, had led their desperate struggle against Manchu domination in the years 1757–1757, possibly in the name of a holy war of Lamaism. In his expected rebirth he was to avenge the Dzungar Mongols, exterminated by the Manchu Emperor Chien Lung. Since Amursena had died as a refugee in Russia, his messianic advent was also expected to come from Russia. A Soviet report claims that the expectation of Amursena's new incarnation was associated in the western part of what became Outer Mongolia with ideas about radical improvements of social conditions. It asserts that these expectations prepared the

⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Younghusband

⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_expedition_to_Tibet

⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meeting_with_tibetans.jpg

ground for the revolutionary outbreak of 1912. This is confirmed by the memoirs of Imperial Russia's last consul in Urga (Ulan Bator), Peter Korostovetz. He reports that the Mongol Communist leader, Has Bator, was thought to be a reincarnation of Amursena and gave himself out as such. Amursena is still glorified in Communist Mongolia.

Of at least equal importance in the early period of Mongol communism were the messianic and millennial expectations connected with Kesar's rebirth and Northern Shambhala. The Roerich Expedition⁶⁷ reported the following observations made in Outer Mongolia in 1926 and 1927: "In our days a vast oral literature, which sometimes takes the form of prophecies, songs, or legends comes into being and numerous bards sing the ballad of the future war of Shambhala, which will mark the downfall of evil. For in the course of history, it has not only inspired religious movements but even moved armies, whose war cry was the name of Shambhala". It also reported that the Mongol soldiers of Sukhe Bator, who after 1920 established a semi-Soviet regime in Outer Mongolia, and was called by Owen Lattimore a Mongol counterpart of Lenin, composed battle songs about Shambhala that were sung in the Mongol Revolution: "The song begins with the words 'Jang Shambal-in dayin' or 'The War of Northern Shambhala' and calls upon the warriors of Mongolia to rise for the Holy War of liberating the country from oppressing enemies. 'Let us all die in this war and be reborn as warriors of Shambal-in Khan' goes the song" [quoted from p. 157 in abridged form from the 1931 book by George Roerich].

Even in Tibet, after the Communist revolution in Russia, Alexandra David-Neel [(1925, p. 160, cf. 1953, pp. 22–23)] observed an identification of Shambhala with Russia and a belief that Kesar's warrior-companions had already been reborn, mainly in Russian territory.

Eventually, Stalinism turned against the use of Lamaist messianic ideas ostentated to be in the service of Communism. "As late as 1935–1936 the messianic advent of Shambhala's armies was a subject of public supplications conducted by Buryat Lamas with the endorsement of Ierbanov, Secretary General of the Buryat Mongol Communist Party" (Sarkisyanz 1958, p. 632). Ierbanov "was 'liquidated' in the course of Stalin's purges — not least because of such 'Trotzkyite crimes', a fate shared by another prominent personality of early Soviet Buryatia: Agvan Dordji. In 1951 a leading Soviet periodical strongly attacked those elements in Buryat Mongolia who put hopes in the idea of Kesar. Within the Soviet Union Lamaism has been largely eliminated since Stalin's rise to power" (*ibid.*, pp. 632–633).

Let us say something more about Agvan Lobsan Dorzhiev (1854–1938), born in the Russian Empire, but who in 1873 began fifteen years of study at the Gomang College at the largest monastery in Tibet. "He was a study partner and close associate of the 13th Dalai Lama, a minister of his government, and his diplomatic link with the Russian Empire. Among Tibetans he earned a legendary status, while raising the British Empire's significant anxiety of Russian presence in Tibet at the final stage of the Great Game. He is also remembered for building the Buddhist temple of St. Petersburg⁶⁸ in 1909 and signing the Tibet-Mongolia Treaty in 1913".⁶⁹ For the young 13th Dalai Lama, it may have been even vital to have in

⁶⁷ The year 1999 saw the publication, in Moscow, of a book by the then 36-year-old Oleg Shishkin, entitled *Bitva za Gimalai: NKVD — magiia i shpionazh*, stressing in the subtitle (which is also used as the title of the book), the combination of magic with espionage in the service of the Soviet Union.

⁶⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datsan_Gunzechoinei explains: "In 1909, Agvan Dorzhiev got permission from the Tsar to build a large and substantial Buddhist *datsan* or temple in Saint Petersburg which he hoped would become the residence of the first Buddhist ruler of Russia. However, the Russian Orthodox Church campaigned strongly against construction of this "pagan" temple across the country, which considerably delayed its construction. However, the first service was held on 21 February 1913, [...] On 14 July 2004, the 150th birthday of Agvan Dorjiev was celebrated at the Buddhist temple in Saint Petersburg, a memory plate was unveiled, and a talk given by the American Buddhist scholar, Robert Thurman".

⁶⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiyev By the way, note that historically (even before Communism) it was not always the case that Mongol politicians supported the Dalai Lama. Among the Khalkha Mongols (who are and have been the majority of the Mongols), there is a small "banner" group that resides in China in Qinghai [an area formerly known as Kokonur, comprising the sources of the Yellow River, the Yangtze, and the Mekong, and located mostly in the Tibetan Plateau, indeed to the northeast of Tibet, it is a large, ethnically mixed region] (which is not part of Inner Mongolia). [Now the Han Chinese are a little over half the population of Qinghai, the Tibetans being one fifth, and others, including Mongols, constituting the rest.] It [the group of Qinghai Khalkha

Dorzhiev an ally: "He became one of the 13th Dalai Lama's teachers, a 'debating partner', and a spiritual adviser, and retained this role until at least the late 1910s. He was probably also instrumental in saving the young Dalai Lama's life from the intrigues at the court in Lhasa, and over the years they developed a very close and lasting relationship".

Russia cultivated Dorzhiev/Dorjiev (**Figures 11 [parts a and b] and 12**), rewarding him for services given: "In 1896, the Tsar, Nikolai II, gave Agvan Dorzhiev a monogrammed watch for the services he had rendered to Badmayev's Russian agents in Lhasa". This led to more prominent roles for Dorzhiev, promoting Russia among Tibetans, but possibly he sincerely believed that an alliance with Russia was in Tibet's and Mongolia's best interests *vis-à-vis* both Britain and China.

In early 1898 Dorzhiev went to Saint Petersburg "to collect subscriptions for his monastic college" and became friendly with Prince Esper Ukhtomsky, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Tsar and orientalist. Dorzhiev was presented to the Tsar. Dorzhiev then went on to Paris and possibly London before returning to Lhasa.

By the 1890s Dorzhiev had begun to spread the story that Russia was the mythical land of Shambhala to the north; that its Czar might be the one to save Buddhism and that the White Tsar was an emanation of White Tara, raising hopes that he would support Tibet and its religion. Dorzhiev had suggested to the Tibetans that Russia seemed to be embracing Buddhist ideas since their recent advances into Mongolia and might prove a useful balance to British intrigues. In the spring of 1900 Dorzhiev returned to Russia with six other representatives from Thubten Gyatso (born 12 February 1876; died 17 December 1933), the 13th Dalai Lama of Tibet. They travelled through India and met the Tsar at the Livadia Palace in Crimea. "When they returned they brought to Lhasa a supply of Russian arms and ammunition as well — paradoxically enough — as a magnificent set of Russian Episcopal robes as a personal present for the Dalai Lama".

In 1901, Thubten Chökyi Nyima, the Ninth Panchen Lama (1883–1937), was visited by Agvan Dorzhiev. Although Dorzhiev only stayed for two days at Tashilhunpo, he received some secret teachings from the Panchen Lama, as well as readings of the *Prayer of Shambhala*, written by Lobsang Palden Yeshe, the Sixth (or Third) Panchen Lama, concerning the Buddhist kingdom of Shambhala, which were of great importance to Dorzhiev's developing understanding of the Kalachakra ('Wheel of Time') tantric teachings. Choekyi Nyima also gave Dorzhiev gifts including some golden statues.⁷⁰

This is a clear indication that the Panchen Lama was considerably interested in what Dorzhiev had been stating about Shambhala, and sought to endow Dorzhiev with esoteric teaching that would enable him to further develop his doctrine concerning Shambhala.

Mongols] apparently originated in the second quarter of the 17th century. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalkha> explains, concerning Tsogtu Khong Taiji, an ally of Ligdan Khan (1604–1634), a monarch of the Northern Yuan dynasty: "Poet, supporter of Ligdan Khan, and opponent of the Dalai Lama's 'Yellow Hat' order, Tsogtu Khong Taiji moved to Qinghai with his subjects sometime after 1624. Ligdan Khan and Tsogtu Khong Taiji were supposed to meet in Qinghai and eventually build a Mongol base that is independent of the Manchu rule which was geographically far from the Manchu emperor's reach. Moreover, it was clear to the two Mongol Khans that Tibetan Dalai Lama's influence in Mongol affairs was increasing. So the two decided to end the influence of Dalai Lama and the 'Yellow Hat' order by supporting the 'Red Hat' order. However, [the] majority of Ligdan Khan's subjects and soldiers died because of smallpox on the way to Qinghai. After Ligdan's death, Tsogtu Taiji began attacking dGe-lugs-pa monasteries. When Tsogtu sent 10,000 men under his son Arslang against the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, Arslang switched sides and supported the Dalai Lama. The dGe-lugs-pa hierarch, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–82), summoned the Oirat Gūshi Khan Toro-Baiku, whose 50,000 men in early 1637 crushed Tsogtu's 30,000 at Ulaan-Khoshuu; Tsogtu Taiji was killed".

⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiev (which is also the source of the previous quotations).



Figure 11a. Agvan Dorzhiev coming out of the Great Palace in Petershof after his audience with the Tsar Nicholas II, on 23 June 1901 (Andrey Terentiev Collection).⁷¹

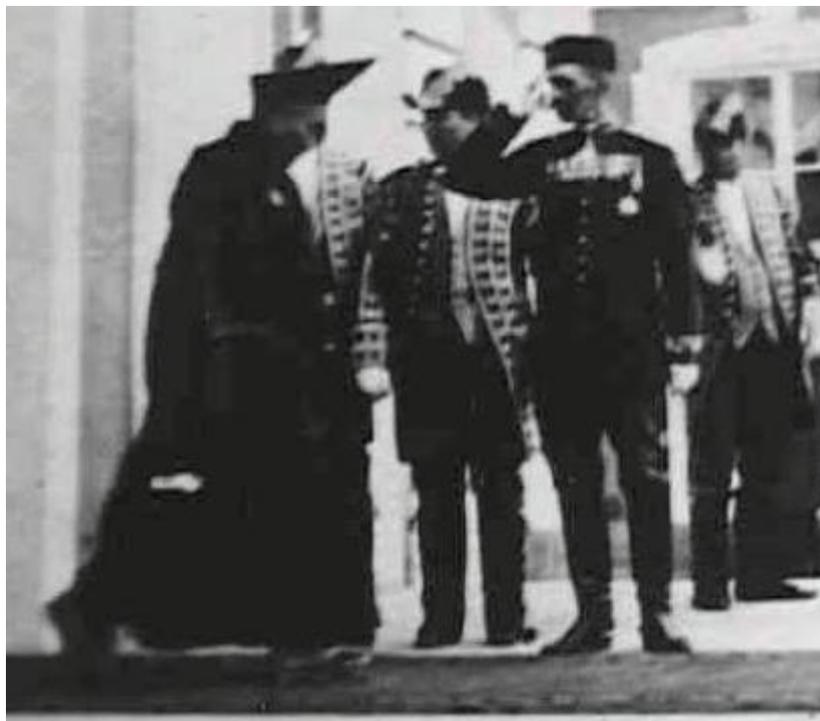


Figure 11b. Detail of the former.

⁷¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dorzhiev-san-petersburgo.jpg>



Figure 12. Agvan Dorzhiev.

During the British invasion of Tibet, itself partly motivated by concerns over Dorzhiev's influence in Tibet, "there were rumours that Dorzhiev was in charge of the arsenal at Lhasa and directing military operations from the Gyantse Dzong (fort). British troops captured several Russian-made Berdan rifles at Nagartse Dzong and breechloaders at Chumik Shenko, which heightened their suspicions of Russian involvement. These were never substantiated and there is no evidence that Dorzhiev was ever a Tsarist spy, although he had previously acted as a roving ambassador for the Dalai Lama in Russia, trying to gain support in the upper levels of Russian society".⁷²

There was a precedent in Buryat culture for appropriating, in a sense, Russia's Tsars, through identification with a supernatural being from their own religion. This was a rationalisation of the Buryats' subjugation by Russia in 1609 (until then, the Buryats were paying tribute to the Khalkha Mongols). "The territory and people were formally annexed to the Russian state by treaties in 1689 and 1727, when the territories on both the sides of Lake Baikal were separated from Mongolia. Consolidation of modern Buryat tribes and groups took place under the conditions of the Russian state".⁷³ What had eventually enabled the

⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiyev

⁷³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buryats>

Buryats to come to terms willingly with Russian domination was by considering this a personal allegiance to the imperial house, and through a Buddhist ideal of Empire:

Since the days of Catherine the Great (1729–1796), the Romanov rulers had been considered by Russian lamaists as the incarnation of White Tara, a female bodhisattva typically associated with Buddhist tantric practice and considered an emanation of Chenresig (the bodhisattva who embodies the compassion of all Buddhas), and the protectress of the Tibetan people. 1913 saw the great celebrations for the 300th anniversary of the House of Romanov. Dorzhiev made speeches thanking the Tsar for his essential support for the Buddhist community in Saint Petersburg. A lama named Ulyanov published a book that same year attempting to prove that the Romanovs were directly descended from Sucandra, a legendary king of Shambhala.

The Japanese monk Ekai Kawaguchi travelled in Tibet from July 4, 1900, to June 15, 1902. He reported in his *Three Years in Tibet* that Dorzhiev "circulated a pamphlet in which he argued that the Russian Tsar was about to fulfil the old Buddhist messianic myth of Shambhala by founding a great Buddhist empire". Alas, no second source for this story is known.⁷⁴

In 1909 Dorzhiev obtained the Tsar's permission to build a large Buddhist temple in Saint Petersburg. That temple was plundered after the Russian revolution, and Dorzhiev's papers were destroyed. He was arrested and sentenced to death, but then reprieved. He tried to adapt to the new situation, and even argued for the incorporation of the Western Mongol tribes, and territories until then under Russian domination, to independent Outer Mongolia (a satellite of the Soviet Union):

As a means of making peace with the dramatically changed politics, Dorzhiev was quick to propose the conversion of monasteries into collective farms. In 1926 the Buddhist monasteries in Buryatia were 'nationalised' "responsibility for the management of the monasteries" was transferred to collectives of laypeople and the clergy was deprived of its power. This led to much hostility, but the monasteries remained active, and the position of the reformist forces was again strengthened.

Dorzhiev tried advocating for Oirat Mongol areas like Tarbagatai, Ili, and Altai to get added to the Outer Mongolian state by the Soviets. Out of concern that China would be provoked, this proposed addition of the Oirat Dzungaria to the new Outer Mongolian state was rejected by the Soviets.

In August 1927, he led and managed a conference of Tibetan doctors in Atsagat. Proposals were made for a central institute to supervise production and standardisation of Tibetan herbal remedies.

Dorzhiev managed to co-exist with the Communists during the 1920s but was again arrested by the NKVD during Joseph Stalin's Great Purge on 13 November 1937 and charged with treason, preparation for an armed uprising, and spying for the Mongolians and Japanese. He died in police custody, though apparently of cardiac arrest, after being transferred from his cell to the prison hospital on 29 January 1938, aged 85.⁷⁵

The construction of the Buddhist temple of St Petersburg (Datsan Gunzechoinei)⁷⁶ was completed in 1915, "when Tsar Nicholas II confirmed the arrival of a staff of nine lamas: three from Transbaikalia, four from Astrakhan Province, and two from Stavropol Province",⁷⁷ but the first service was already held on 21 February 1913. The centennial of that temple was celebrated in August 2014. Raymond Lam wrote (2014):

"There's actually much more activity outside this temple", says Dr. Andrey Terentyev, editor of the Buddhism of Russia website (Russian only). "These days, Datsan Gunzechoinei is mainly a

⁷⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiyev

⁷⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agvan_Dorjiyev

⁷⁶ "Datsan Gunzechoinei is a magnificent hybrid of Tibetan, Mongolian, Buryat, and Russian architecture (where else do you see a Vajrayana temple with a granite facade and columns, exterior glazed tiles, and a modernist, stained-glass plafond?), surrounded by quiet woodland" (Lam 2014).

⁷⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datsan_Gunzechoinei

Buryat ethnic Buddhist center. There are several Buddhist groups in Saint Petersburg; some of them were active underground even in the 1970s. This year, Buddhists also celebrated the 250th anniversary of the title 'Pandito Khambo Lama', which is bestowed on the head of the Buryat Buddhists", he tells me. Whoever held — and holds — this title is a figure that exerts a decisive and prominent role in Buddhism's relationship with Russia's rulers.

Buddhism was officially recognised in Russia in the year 1741 (Lam 2014):

For both Buddhists and the Romanov imperial dynasty, 1741 was a crucial year. Empress Elizabeth Petrovna (r. 1741–62) declared Vajrayana an accepted religious creed right in her first regnal year, marking the official recognition of Buddhism in Russia (Bernstein 2006, 27). The legitimation of rulers by Buddhists was no better exemplified than by the partnership between Catherine the Great (r. 1762–96) and a conclave of Buryat lamas, who apparently declared her an incarnation of White Tara in 1766 (Snellgrove 1987, 151). The title of Pandito Khambo Lama, the figure Dr. Terentyev mentioned to me, had been granted to the Buryats two years earlier.

Anya Bernstein, discussing the post-Soviet Buryats, provides a context for steps taken by Catherine the Great towards Buddhists in Russian-held territories, within a policy that still persists in the Russian Federation (Bernstein 2012, p. 467):

In addition to a complex and uneasy engagement with Tibetan Buddhists across Asia (and now the world), Buryats have a relationship with the Russian state that is fraught with contradictions. Despite Buryats' long-standing transnational orientations, the Russian government's regular strategy since imperial times was to restrain Buryat Buddhists from contact with their foreign coreligionists. In 1764, Empress Catherine the Great granted an arguably independent (which many today interpret as "autocephalous") status to Buddhism,⁷⁸ a non-Russian religion in the sensitive borderlands, for which she reportedly had been proclaimed the first Russian reincarnation of the Buddhist goddess White Tara. By cutting Buryats' ties with their coreligionists in Mongolia and Tibet, this move seemingly ensured the successful incorporation of Buryats into the empire.

Subsequently, Buryats have been subjected to the various policies of the Russian imperial, later Soviet, and now postsocialist Russian federal government. For all the changes, the center's reluctance to see its Buddhist subjects cross borders has remained and continues. In 2000, Vladimir Putin's National Security Strategy identified foreign religious organizations as an explicit threat to stability. At the Ivolginskii monastery in 2009, his successor Medvedev stated that no help "from abroad" was needed to permit Russia's Buddhist peoples to rebuild monasteries destroyed during Soviet times [...]

Decades ago, I came across a statement (in the entry about the Buryats in the *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*, an endeavour of the 1950s involving experts some of whom had a good understanding of Russia because of biographical reasons) to the effect that the Tsarist regime had encouraged the further entrenchment of Buddhism among those subjected populations where it already was present, because of the assumption that conversion to Buddhism would be a stepping stone, a middle house, towards conversion to Orthodox Christianity, upon the assumption that the latter (Russia's state religion) is superior, whereas Buddhism is superior to shamanism, and the trajectory of successive conversions would be one of gradual rise. That hope and expectation was frustrated, as even members of those ethnic groups who had already become Christian converted to Buddhism. Raymond Lam (2014) rather puts it another way:

The Russian autocrat [Empress Elizabeth] might have believed herself the benevolent assimilator of her empire's Buddhists. But Buryat scholar Nikolai Tsyrempilov has a different perspective on

⁷⁸ Consider how the Sasanian Empire was highly suspicious of the Christians of Persian-held territories, as they were religiously akin to the Eastern Roman Empire, Persia's foe. Nevertheless, the status of Christians who were Sasanian subjects relatively improved, once they identified themselves as Nestorians, thus a denomination disliked by the Roman Emperor in Constantinople.

the matter: Buddhism was not subsumed into *pax rossiya*, but rather *pax buddhica*, or the Buddha himself, claimed the empress's body (Tsyrempilov 2009, 105–30). The Tsarist monk-diplomat Avgan Dorzhiev (1854–1938) was famous for his bond with Nicholas II, who supported the construction of Datsan Gunzechoinei despite a wave of anti-Buddhist protests against the temple. This tradition of "claiming" the Russian ruler's body continues today, long after the tsars: Anya Bernstein of Michigan University reminds us that it was not so long ago, in August 2009, that the current Pandito Khambo Lama declared Dmitry Medvedev an embodiment of White Tara. This was done during the former president's official visit to the Ivolginskii monastery in eastern Siberia, incorporating Mr. Medvedev into the world of Buryat symbolism (Bernstein 2012, 261).

Anya Bernstein of the University of Michigan began a very instructive paper of hers as follows (2012, p. 261):

In August 2009, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev was declared by Buryat Buddhists to be an embodiment of the Buddhist goddess White Tara. Pandito Khambo Lama, the leader of Buryat Buddhists, made the declaration during the president's official visit to the Ivolginskii monastery in eastern Siberia. The news caused a storm of controversy among metropolitan Russian intellectuals: from the left, decrying such unseemly alliances between church and state, and from the right, over the choice of the church in question, proclaiming that a "Russian Orthodox president" cannot also be a Buddhist goddess. In Buryatia, however, where a long tradition exists of binding Russian emperors to the most popular female deity in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, the announcement was received as a logical continuation of local practice. Although some considered such a "nomination" an obsequious and politically opportunist gesture or, conversely, an ultimate recognition of Russian sovereignty over Buryats (a Mongolian people who number some 450,000 across Russia), other local leaders viewed this as a reverse "incorporation" — not of Buryatia into Russia, but of Russia into the larger Buddhist cosmos through laying claim to the president's body.

She explained: "Here I wish to demonstrate that the case of 'president as goddess' is only one recent instance of a long-running Buryat ritual traffic in bodies, which can both conform to and diplomatically challenge Russian logics of political rule" (Bernstein 2012, p. 262). In fact (*ibid.*):

During moments of rapid social transformation, such as the Russian Revolution, the Cold War, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, certain bodies became key sites through which Buryats have negotiated their relationship with the Russian state and the larger Eurasian world. During my field research in Siberia and India, I encountered a variety of such metonymic bodies — the dead bodies of famous monks, the temporary bodies of reincarnated lamas, the celibate bodies of Buddhist monastics, the dismembered bodies of lay disciples offered to the spirits, and finally, the Russian leader's body, which has historically been a key site for uniting competing universes of meaning and creating flexible political alliances.

In *Gurdjieff's America: Mediating the Miraculous*, Paul Beekman Taylor states (2004, p. 269) that a book by Gurdjieff's former pupil, "Louis Pauwels, *Gurdjieff* (Douglas, Isle of Man: Times Press, 1984), p. 61, quotes a letter to Rom Landau from Achmed Abdullah, who identified Gurdjieff as a 'Russian Buriat by race and a Buddhist by religion'".

The identity of American writer Achmed Abdullah (1991–1945) prior to his coming to the United States (which was in the 1910s) is rather unclear, as what is known is what he related about himself, which is unverified, and there is good reason to think that it was at the very least embellished. In the United States, he became visible as an author of pulp stories (these including stories of crime, mystery, fantasy, and adventure, which appeared in magazines, serialised or otherwise), as well as because of screenplays he authored. The latter included some successful films, hence his Academy Award nominations in 1927 (for a drama set in Siam/Thailand, *Chang: A Drama of the Wilderness*),⁷⁹ and 1935 (for collaborating on the

⁷⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chang_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chang_(film))

screenplay of the film *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*).⁸⁰ He also wrote the screenplay of, e.g., the 1924 film *The Thief of Bagdad*.⁸¹

As was frequent among new immigrants to the US in 1910–20s, Achmed Abdullah claimed descent from the Russian imperial family. He famously stated he was born Alexander Nicholayevitch Romanoff in 1881 in Yalta, Russia, to Grand Duke Nicholas Romanoff, a (non-existent) cousin of Czar Nicholas Romanoff and Princess Nourmahal Durani, a daughter of an Amir of Afghanistan. After his mother's attempts to poison her husband due to his multiple affairs, they divorced, leaving their son and two other children to their maternal grandparents. At the age of 12, he was sent to Eton and then to Oxford University to be educated (there are no records about him in either school). He claimed that although he was born Russian Orthodox, he was raised as a Muslim by his uncle who adopted him.⁸²

So, according to him, he was not just Russian, but a Romanoff. Not just a Muslim, but one who had earned "a doctorate from the College of El-Azar, Cairo in Koranic Studies"⁸³ — no less than Al-Azhar, the most prestigious higher education institution in Sunni Islam.⁸⁴ And not just British-educated, but an Etonian, and next with a rather prestigious and adventurous military career, including in espionage for Britain (including against the Ottoman Empire), and including participation in Britain's invasion of Tibet:

Upon his graduation, he said he joined the British Army and rose to rank of acting colonel during his 17-year military career. He claimed to have served in Afghanistan, Tibet in 1903-04 with the Younghusband Expedition. He was also deployed in Africa, China, and also with the British-Indian army in India. In addition, he was also a colonel in a cavalry regiment for one year in the Turkish army as a British spy. He claimed to have mostly spent the time in the military as a spy because of his wide knowledge of Oriental and Middle Eastern customs and religions. It is said that he traveled widely in Russia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and China and spoke many languages and dialects. He claimed he was made a British citizen by an Act of Parliament and convicted by the Germans during the First World War for being a spy.⁸⁵

Let us consider the journalist and prolific non-fiction author Rom Landau. "Romauld Landau (1899–1974) was born in Poland [of Polish-German parents], but later became a British citizen whilst serving as a volunteer in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He was a sculptor, author, educator, Foreign Service officer, and a specialist on Arab and Islamic culture. His particular area of interest was Morocco. He was also an art critic and book reviewer for several newspapers and periodicals, including *The Spectator*"⁸⁶ (which is a weekly expressing Tory views). "During the late 1920s and early 1930s Landau established a minor reputation in Europe as a writer. His themes were art history, Polish biography (notably, Ignacy Jan Paderewski and Józef Klemens Piłsudski), and comparative religion. Landau's best known book from these years was *God is My Adventure* (1935)". The biographies *Pilsudski: Hero of Poland* and *1934 Paderewski* appeared in 1929 and 1934, in that order. In 1936, Rom Landau already published an autobiography. In 1942, he published *The Fools Progress: Aspects of British Civilization in Action*. In 1946, He published a book whose title could be expected to entice readers: *Sex, Life and Faith, a Modern Philosophy of Sex*. These are but a few of his books. From 1950, his many books were almost only about

⁸⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lives_of_a_Bengal_Lancer_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lives_of_a_Bengal_Lancer_(film))

⁸¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thief_of_Bagdad_\(1924_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thief_of_Bagdad_(1924_film))

⁸² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achmed_Abdullah

⁸³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achmed_Abdullah

⁸⁴ Even so, yet understandably, he gets an entry in the *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History* (Curtis 2010, p. 198). Cf. Ashley (1996).

⁸⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achmed_Abdullah

⁸⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rom_Landau It is also the source of the next quotation.

Morocco or the Arab World.⁸⁷ "In 1937 he visited King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah I of Jordan, and other secular and religious leaders of the Middle East. Landau subsequently published a book, *Arm the Apostles* (1938), about his trip in which he advocates arming the Arabs so that they might aid the British and French in the coming war with Nazi Germany".⁸⁸ In 1941–1945, Rom Landau was a member of the Arab Committee of the Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office. In 1956–1968, Rom Landau was a professor of Islamic Studies at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. Upon retiring, he lived the rest of his life in Marrakesh.

In his earlier career Landau wrote *God is My Adventure* (1935), a best-selling book in which he recounted his various contacts with leading figures and unusual persons of philosophical, religious, and mystical fame, such as Hermann Graf Keyserling, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Frank Buchman, Rudolf Steiner, G I Gurdjieff, P D Ouspensky, Meher Baba, and others.⁸⁹

James Webb relates an encounter that Landau had with Gurdjieff in the latter's New York hotel room in the early thirties while Landau was writing "God is my Adventure". "The interview went badly. Landau was discomposed by having unwanted cigarettes pressed upon him, and Gurdjieff did not intend to answer his questions. Even worse, the journalist appeared to be falling under some 'hypnotic influence' ..." [(on p. 421 in Webb's 1987 Boston edition of Webb 1980).] According to Whitall Perry, "Explaining that he himself is not at all telepathic, given to mediumship, or subject to hypnotism, Landau says ... In a few seconds he felt his body from the waist down penetrated with a growing weakness enough to render him incapable of leaving his chair had he tried. Only by mustering all his concentration in talk with the young attendant did he finally manage to extricate himself ... Upon departing he was presented by Gurdjieff with a copy of his *Herald of Coming Good*; it was bound in imitation suède, but of a grain so abrasive it made the teeth grind at the very touch. Landau realized that this was all part of an effect deliberately calculated by the author — whose book reads, moreover, as though conceived in clouds of Armagnac (the opening sentence alone, by Landau's count, contains not less than two hundred and eighty-four words)" [(Perry 1975, p. 2)]. Referring to the event, the Gurdjieffian, James Moore, describes Landau as "The lightweight sculptor and writer ... greedy for copy, primed with sensational hearsay stories ..." [(Moore 1991, pp. 253–254).] Before meeting Gurdjieff, Landau recounts, "One of his pupils said to me one day: 'I imagine that Rasputin must have been like Gurdjieff: mysterious, domineering, attractive and frightening at the same time; full of overabundant vitality and of strange knowledge, inaccessible to other men'. His hypnotic powers were never disputed, yet all his external methods constituted but an insignificant part of his far wider knowledge" [(Landau 1935, p. 240)].

Or rather, pupils justified to themselves their investing their lives in their master, by ascribing to him "far wider knowledge" than they could observe. "I imagine that Rasputin *must have been like* Gurdjieff"? Maybe. But we have seen that allegedly, Rasputin *did not like* Gurdjieff, and was even afraid of his supposedly hypnotic gaze.

11. A Foolish Boaster: Akkadian *aluzinnu* and Greek ἀλαζών

In an article, "A Fool by Any Other Name", published in a journal in the classics, Drew Griffith and Robert Marks (2011) elaborated about two apparently related terms, Akkadian *aluzinnu* and Greek ἀλαζών. Both seem to denote a foolish boaster, and already Stephanie

⁸⁷ *Invitation to Morocco* (1950), *The Beauty of Morocco* (1951), *The Sultan of Morocco* (1951), *Moroccan Journal* (1952), *Portrait of Tangier* (1952), *Among the Americans* (1953), *France and the Arabs* (1953), *The Arabesque: the Abstract Art of Islam* (1955), *The Moroccan Drama 1900–1955* (1956), the biography *King Mohammed V* (1957), *Arab Contribution to Civilization* (1957), *Islam and the Arabs* (1958), *The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi* (1959), the biography *Hassan II: King of Morocco* (1962), *The Arab Heritage of Western Civilization* (1962), *History of Morocco in the Twentieth Century* (1963), *Morocco* (1967), and *Kasbas of Southern Morocco* (1969).

⁸⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rom_Landau

⁸⁹ The source of this quotation block is https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rom_Landau

West (1994, p. 2, note 8) proposed that the Greek term is a loanword from Akkadian. "For classicists the ἀλαζών in the first instance is the stock 'bad-guy' of Old Comedy", such as Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, or then the Athenian interlopers in *Birds* (Griffith and Marks 2011, p. 23). "What, then, is an *aluzinnu*? The Akkadian word must itself be a loan, for there is no native [lexical root] $\sqrt{'}lz$ whence it could have come; meanwhile the verb *lezēnu*, 'to ridicule, slander' is a denominative — i.e., derived — form" (*ibid.*, p. 26). I wonder: may there be any relation to the Hebrew lexical root $\sqrt{'}lz$ associated with merry persons (sometimes negatively connotated), and merriment?

Griffith and Marks write (2011, p. 28):

[...] Anne Draffkorn Kilmer (1991: 12–13) has noted that the *aluzinnu*'s boasts (on which see below) resemble line 16 of the "Games Text" (HS 1893 old No. "87" = old Ist. Ni 341), *e-le-i mi-lu-la ša ba-tu-la-a-ti*, "I can do the play of girls," and calls them a kind of comic "banter".

However one translates *aluzinnu*, the figure mattered in the culture. Foster (1974: 85) remarks:

In a stratified society jokes will cluster around types of people who violate ethics or mores or who have an exaggerated sense of their own importance: the man who takes advantage of his position to make misery for others, who commits a gaff [sic.] or oversteps the bounds of public decency or expected modesty, or who makes a fool of himself by a slip of the tongue or logic. In Mesopotamia cowardice, conceit, ambition, bad manners, deficient education, and inordinate desire provided the background for humorous remarks.

The *aluzinnu* shines in such a setting.

Two possible illustrations of him at work survive, both from Anatolia. The first comes from the orthostats of a building in modern Alaca Höyük, Turkey, which some scholars call a temple of Tetešhapi, but which Volkert Haas (1994: 591) considers still to be unidentified. These show *inter alia* one man holding an object to his mouth and two smaller figures climbing a ladder [...]. John Garstang (1929: 136–137) saw the first as a trumpeter and the second two as masons dressing this very wall-face in the final stage of construction. Trawling through the Boğazköy texts, however, Ahmet Ünal (1994: 213–226) [with whom some disagree] found evidence instead that the relief shows a ^{LÚ}GÍR, "dagger-man" or "sword-swallower" and two dwarfish ^{LÚ.GIŠ}KUN, "ladder-men" or "acrobats", the latter of whom may be equated with the ^{LÚ}ALAN.ZÚ₉, whom another, fragmentary, text describes performing *lazzi* on a ladder (or staircase, ^{GIŠ}KUN).

Concerning the craft of the *aluzinnu*, Griffith and Marks state (2011, p. 29):

Though *aluzinnu* has a complex lexical history, it is clear what sort of person it describes. While a certain humour stems from insulting a third party (e.g., Sjöberg 1972), *aluzinnu*-jokes are more sophisticated, in that he willingly or inadvertently exposes *himself* to ridicule. To him is devoted a whole Late Period Akkadian text (editors hazard no precise date), which survives in several copies, all badly damaged (Ebeling 1931: 9–19). What leaps out is his boastfulness: [...] Foster (2005: 939) gives this version (cf. Römer 1975–1978: 56):

The lion can terrify,
I can let out air too!
The lion can swish his tail,
I can wag my tail too!

Again, the *aluzinnu*, impersonating a woman, says: [...] (Foster: "there's none like me among women"). Beyond boastful, the *aluzinnu* is staggeringly incompetent. [...]

The *aluzinnu* tries to be a (comic) cook, or then an exorcist/physician/*āšipu* (Griffith and Marks 2011, pp. 29–30). In fact, as the latter (*ibid.*, p. 30),

Note again how the *aluzinnu* boasts: nothing, he says, is beyond him. See too how exuberantly he runs off the rails: with what incompetence he performs the inherently suspect art of the *āšipu*! Either he so mis-conjures as to burn down the house he was to purify with his censer (Gelb *et al.* 1964: 392), or he actually *plans* to torch it to rid it of its demon (Foster 1974: 77, note 19); either way, his help is worse than any hindrance.

12. The Sacred Fool, Socially Out of the Norm Yet Accepted, in Some World Cultures

We have already mentioned (in Sec. 2) Mullah Nasruddin stories from Islamic cultures, while dealing with a tale about the Baghdadi Jewish maverick rabbi, Hākhām Zambartūt. In an encyclopaedia entry about humour in Islam, Sabra Webber explained (2005, p. 4214, her ellipsis dots):

The following Nasruddin account, one of thousands, could be used as the opener to a speech to raise charitable donations or in a conversation with a family member who is borrowing or lending money. Like most of the hodja and mullah stories, it addresses topics of communal tension, such as haves and have-nots, money, and judgmental individuals. The story's seeming senselessness amuses and intrigues the listener or reader long enough that some underlying recurrent cultural and communal quandaries can be confronted:

The Mullah went to see a rich man. "Give me some money." "Why?" "I want to buy . . . an elephant." "If you have no money, you can't afford to keep an elephant." "I came here," said Nasruddin, "to get money, not advice". (Shah [1968], p.13)

Why the impulse in the Abrahamic traditions toward humorous human tricksters like Till Eulenspiegel, Pedro de Urdemalas, and Juha? A trickster in human form, it seems, has a different cultural role than trickster as animal or as god (or as animal-supernatural being). These legendary, lower-class tricksters, rogues, and fools are not so other as magical or supernatural tricksters: their behaviors, however foolish, quirky, or outrageous, can be identified by listeners or readers with their own curtailed impulses or moments of whimsy but writ large and run out to their logical (illogical) conclusions.

In many trickster escapades involving encounters with the religious establishment, tricksters violate the most basic rules of Islam. Thus, their reverently irreverent behavior is reminiscent of that of socially vulnerable antinomian *Şūfī*s, dervishes and holy fools and their real-life uses of humor and taboo breaking. By definition these trickster-like religious figures, like the storied tricksters, violate social norms and embrace unconventional and liminal behavior including disregard of Islamic ritual practices and contravention of religious law (Karamustafa [1994], pp. 17–18).⁹⁰ Poverty, of course, accentuates perceptions of deviance and sometimes antinomians even gave up great wealth to embark on their antinomian way.

Note the reference to antinomian *Şūfī*s and dervishes as fools. In turn, Richard Gardner claims (2005, p. 4202): "Within Islam, *Şūfī* traditions have also at times granted a special place to humor. Throughout at least part of the history of Sufism, *Şūfī* communities have existed outside of or in tension with more orthodox orientations, and *Şūfī* figures have rejected some of the local strictures of daily behavior as well as questioned the adequacy of orthodox formulations either to communicate or to express union with the divine. All of these factors have led *Şūfī*s to be sometimes regarded as fools".

Richard Gardner also pointed out (2005, p. 4202):

Within Asian religious traditions a range of religious specialists and movements might be viewed as embracing foolishness and humor. Throughout the region a variety of Indian gurus, wandering ascetics, Daoist sages, and Buddhist monks are well known for their use of humor and embrace of

⁹⁰ Karamustafa's book (1994) on antinomian Dervish groups focuses on the Qalandars and Haydaris.

folly. The Chan or Zen school of Buddhism has frequently been singled out for special attention here. In addition to pointing to the wide use of humorous tales and teaching methods in Zen, some have even defined the basic Zen orientation as humorous or comic. This celebration of the comic orientation of Zen, however, is much more prominent in the West than in Asia, suggesting that Western images of Zen as particularly humorous perhaps represent in part a fantasy concerning what is sensed to be missing in the West.

Within Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan, creative figures included the monk Daigu (Great Fool), i.e., — Steven Heine explains (2005) — “Ryōkan (1758–1831), a Sōtō monk affectionately called the Great Fool (Daigu) for the childlike innocence expressed in deceptively simple poems that celebrated the Zen values of poverty and nonattachment. Like other early modern Zen leaders who paid obeisance to Chan and early medieval Zen heroes and icons, Ryōkan expressed his gratitude for Dōgen in some of his poetry” (*ibid.*, p. 9949). Dōgen was a Zen monastic leader — the founder⁹¹ of the Sōtō school within Zen — who authored “several texts beginning in 1237” (*ibid.*, p. 9945). Richard Gardner and Scott Davis remarked (2005, p. 4207, their brackets):

Throughout East Asia, Chan/Zen teachers or figures, be they historical or legendary, often exhibited the behavior of clowns or fools. In China, the “foolish” figures Hanshan and Shide are well-known both in paintings and tales about them. In Japan, Zen figures such as Ikkyū, Ryōkan (whose name means “great fool”), and Hakuin were known not only for their foolishness but also as self-consciously embracing the role of fool. The Japanese Zen master Harada Sogaku (1871–1961) even elevated the Buddha himself to the status of fool. “My admonition, then: Be a Great Fool! You know, don’t you, that there was a master [Ryōkan] who called himself just that? Now, a petty fool is nothing but a worldling, but a Great Fool is a Buddha. Śākyamuni and Amitābha are themselves Great Fools, are they not?” (Hyers, 1989, p. 43). The foolishness of Zen figures was directed not only at upsetting the common-sense assumptions of the day but also the rigidity of Buddhist and Zen teachings themselves.

Richard Gardner and Scott Davis (2005, p. 4207) made the following claim, concerning perceived Daoist (i.e., Taoist) influences on Buddhism and then Zen, in respect of humour:

[...] Not a few scholars have argued that Daoism contributed much to the Chinese transformation of Buddhism, especially to the use and appreciation of humor in the Chan or Zen schools.

The *Zhuangzi*, of course, is a *locus classicus* for many hilarious images of human limitation that suggest the uselessness of usefulness, the usefulness of uselessness, the irrationality that undermines the very notion of rationality, and in general the possibility of liberation from all such categories. The famous tale of Zhuang Zhou dreaming he was a butterfly (and then on waking not knowing whether he had dreamed of being a butterfly or whether the butterfly was now dreaming of being him) is an amusing and humorous account of a basic human conundrum. The text also makes fun of a variety of human proclivities, such as the desire to better oneself: “A youth of Shouling in the state of Yan studied the proper way of walking in Handan, the capital of Zhao. He failed to learn the distinguished gait of Handan. Moreover he unlearned his original way of walking. So he came crawling back home on all fours” (Harbsmeier, 1989, p. 303).

⁹¹ “Whereas numerous prominent Japanese and Chinese monks were involved in the establishment of the Rinzaï school, the development of the Sōtō school was primarily based on the efforts of Dōgen, who traveled to China from 1223 to 1227 with one of Eisai’s disciples, Myōzen (1184–1225). After an itinerant phase during which he traveled around several of the Five Mountains Chan temples in search of an authentic teacher, in the summer retreat of 1225 Dōgen gained enlightenment under the tutelage of Caodong ([but in Japanese, the name is] Sōtō) school master Ju-ching through the experience of ‘casting off body-mind’ (*shinjin datsuraku*). On returning to Japan, Dōgen stayed for a few years at Kenninji before opening Kōshōji, which was the first Zen temple in Japan to have a Chan style monks’ hall for *zazen* training, where Dōgen began delivering sermons and indoctrinating disciples in Chinese discipline. He preached a message of the universality of enlightenment for all those who practice ‘just sitting’ (*shikan taza*), including women and laypersons. At the peak of his career in the summer of 1243, Dōgen departed from his temple in Kyoto with a small, dedicated band of disciples and moved to Echizen province, where he established Eiheiiji temple” (Heine 2005, p. 9945).

Paul of Tarsus referred to the devout of the new religion being amenable to "fools", perceived to be behaving as such, but doing so for the sake of their religion. As Richard Gardner remarks (2005, p. 4202):

Humor has also served to define basic orientations of and within various religions. Saint Paul's presentation of Christians as being "fools for Christ's sake" (*1 Corinthians* 4:10) indicates a recognition that Christian belief and behaviour were perceived as folly, if not madness, when viewed from other religious and nonreligious perspectives of the time. At least some Christians in early Christianity willingly embraced the role of the fool. Although this embrace of folly was not inevitably humorous in itself, it was grounded in a willingness to accept mockery and ridicule for embracing what seemed like folly to much worldly and religious wisdom. Jesus himself, indeed, had been subjected to mockery and ridicule. The embrace of folly and acceptance of ridicule and mockery, however, was accompanied by the expectation of reversal: the foolish would be shown to be wise and the wise foolish.

Once Christianity established itself, became a religion of empire, and came to wield considerable political power, Christians were no longer as widely regarded as fools and perhaps less inclined to welcome the designation of fool. Within both Eastern and Western Christianity, though, some continued to embrace the role of fools for Christ's sake. However, many Christians seemed to regard these fools as merely ordinary fools rather than holy fools. There are a number of celebrated holy fools to be found in both Catholic and Orthodox traditions, with the Orthodox traditions more clearly recognizing and celebrating holy fools. Though the list is extensive, prominent examples from the Catholic and Orthodox traditions include Theophilus and Maria of Antioch and Saint Symeon of Emesa in the sixth century, Saint Andrew the Fool of Constantinople in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Saint Isaac Zatvornik of Kiev and Saint Basil the Innocent in the eleventh century, and Saint Francis of Assisi in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Among the range of behaviors embraced by such fools were nakedness, self-humiliation in a variety of forms, association with sinners, radical poverty, an itinerant existence, and engaging in joking and parody. Such figures, it should be noted, frequently set their folly in opposition not simply to worldly wisdom but also to the wisdom of the church.

Concerning holy fools in the traditions of Christian Orthodox countries, consider the books *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond* (Ivanov 2006), *The Holy Fool in Byzantium and Russia* (Lunde 1995), *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture* (Thompson 1987), *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives* (Hunt and Kobets 2011), *An Ethnographic Perspective on the Presence of the Holy Fool in Late Imperial Russia* (Huang 2015), *The Synthesis of Holy Fool and Artist in Post-Revolutionary Russian Literature* (Bennett 2000), and (though indirectly) cf. *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels & the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Murav 1992), and *Ivan the Fool: Russian Folk Belief, a Cultural History* (Sinyavsky 2007).⁹² Also see, by Eva Binder (2016), "The Holy Fool in European Cinema" in *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*; and see Alina Birzache's *The Holy Fool in European Cinema* (2016), cf. her *Holy Foolishness: An Investigation of the Holy Fool as a Critical Figure in European Cinema*.

Also note that the character of Jopseph from the New Testament was represented in 14th-century drama as a comic character, and conspicuously a Jew. (The Jews had been expelled from England in 1290.) Martin Walsh (1986) has discussed that character from English drama by reference to the concept of the holy fool. Having cited Walsh (1986), Sylvia Tomasch (2013, p. 82, note 13) remarked about the Joseph character being made to wear, in various scenes in a multi-panel painted image, a kind of hat (the *pileus cornutus*) which Jews were forced to wear: "We should note that Joseph also wears the *pileus cornutus* in subsequent scenes (e.g., the Nativity). Other figures (e.g., Pharisees, torturers) are presented as grotesque, sometimes wearing peaked caps suggestive of the Jewish hat, but none is as explicitly marked as 'a Jew' as Joseph".

⁹² Andrei Sinyavsky achieved fame in the West as a Soviet dissident. He was born in 1925, and died in 1997. Sinyavsky (2007) is a book in English; it was translated by Joanne Turnbull and Nikolai Formozov.

13. The Fool's Mass, the Feast of Fools, and Modern Literary or Stage Reflexes

Stage performances for the pastoral promotion of Catholicism (or understanding of aspects thereof) among the faithful, by a troupe that doubles as a religious community,⁹³ are the subject of the following quoted paragraph (Driver and Deverell 2005, p. 2476):

One such troupe, Dzieci (Polish for "children"), founded by Grotowski⁹⁴ disciple Matt Mitler in 1999, is "dedicated to a search for the 'sacred' through the medium of theater". Carrying this idea to pastoral lengths, Dzieci regularly visits patients in hospitals, where moments of nonverbal interaction result in therapy for the patient, learning for the performer, and transcendent awareness for both. In the course of developing a theater project inspired by Aldous Huxley's *Devils of Loudun*, the Dzieci troupe stumbled upon the idea of creating a Fool's Mass, which has become its signature piece, performed repeatedly in various church settings. The performers wear vestments not of priests but of medieval bedlam idiots who are called upon by circumstance to celebrate a Mass even though they do not know how. Moving easily between the sublime and the ridiculous, drawing its audience through laughter toward participation and contemplation, the work resists being categorized as either theater or religion, becoming both at once in an event experienced by many as transformative. As they stand beside these grotesque characters in prayer, worshippers begin to participate in the liturgy with new understanding.

Concerning the medieval Feast of Fools, see e.g. *Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* by Max Harris (2011), or *Fêtes des fous et carnivals* by Jacques Heers (1983), or then Yann Dahhawi's sketchy discussion in his paper (2015) "Païenne, parodique ou liturgique? La fête des fous dans le discours historiographique (XVII^e–XX^e siècle)". Quasimodo first appears in Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* precisely in the context of a Feast of Fools.

Maria Julia Goldwasser explains (2005, p. 1441):

The most notable carnivalization of late medieval European society was to be found in the Feast of Fools, also called the Feast of Innocents. Although it took place in churches between Christmas and Epiphany, this festival was both an extreme satire of the mannerisms and mores of the court and the high church and a radical mockery of ecclesiastical structure and religious doctrine. The low church and the lower orders played an important part in it, while the high church and the nobility were its principal targets.

For the festival, a King of the Fools or a Boy Bishop, chosen from among the local choir boys, was elected to act out a parody of episcopal functions, including the distribution of blessings to the crowd from a balcony. A comic version of the holy mass was enacted, in which obscene parodies such as "The Liturgy of the Drunkards", "The Liturgy of the Gamblers", and "The Will of the Ass" were substituted for the canticles and prayers. Masked and painted, wearing the garb of the high church or dressed up as women, the revelers danced freely in the cathedrals and banqueted on the altars. The burning of old shoes and excrement replaced incense. Meanwhile, riotous processions of other revelers, wearing goat and horse masks, paraded dancing and singing through the streets.

Dances in churches are not totally unheard of in the history of Christianity; so-called shrine dances, for example, were frequent in the first centuries of its development. However, with the consolidation and institutionalization of the church, these dances were gradually abolished. In any case, the Feast of Fools had an entirely different sense. Its most striking characteristic was that of grotesque buffoonery, and in it the carnivalesque inversion was carried to its ultimate extreme. Focusing on the ecclesiastical hierarchy and religious ethics, the Feast of Fools pointed out the critical relations of medieval society and demonstrated that such a society was capable of self-criticism.

⁹³ "[T]he intensity of such work [in religious theatre] necessitates the formation of quasi- or actual religious communities of performers who often abandon the role of entertainer in favor of both improving technical skills and finding an absolute immediacy of the performing gesture in a quest for a transcendent awareness" (Driver and Deverell 2005, p. 2476).

⁹⁴ Jerzy Grotowski was the founder of the Polish Laboratory Theater.

The Feast of Fools met with sustained resistance, yet it had apologists as well (Goldwasser 2005, p. 1441):

For almost a millennium, the Roman Catholic church attempted, with perceptible difficulty, to control or ban the Feast of Fools. One of the first recorded proscriptions dates from the seventh century in Toledo, Spain. That this had little success can be measured by the numerous subsequent proscriptive edicts up to the sixteenth century, like that of Dijon, France, in 1552. The Feast of Fools died out only with the advent of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Until then, just as it had come under severe attack, it had also produced its enthusiastic apologists, such as those who wrote the circular of the Theology School of Paris in 1444. This circular maintained that just as fermenting barrels of wine sometimes need ventilation to prevent them from exploding, the wine of human madness must have an outlet at least once a year in order to transform itself into the good wine of pious devotion.

The Feast of Fools continued for a long time in France. It was still a solidly institutionalized event in Nice in the seventeenth century, when various secular laws were passed to regulate the structuring of the profane "Abbeys of the Fools" and to formalize the powers of the "Abbots of the Fools". At the same time, ecclesiastical decrees attempted to prevent the previously uncontrolled participation of the low church in the carnivalesque festivities and dances and bind them to their liturgical duties on the relevant days.

Bear in mind the following considerations made by Don Handelman (2005, p. 1838), on clowns and their affinity with fools:

The etymology of the word *clown* in the English language suggests the logic of composition for such figures. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term appeared in English usage in the second half of the sixteenth century: it originally meant "clod", "clot", or "lump". *Clod* and *clot* were long synonymous. *Clod* connotes the coagulation of liquids and a lumpish adhesion of materials. *Clot* connotes a semisolid lump formed by congelation and coagulation. Put together, *clown*, *clod*, and *clot* connote an entity that is unfinished or incomplete in its internal organization: one that hangs together in a loose and clumsy way. The clown is lumpish in its imperfect — but congealing and adhering — fusion of attributes. It also has a sense of frozen motion, of congealed liquidity, that connotes processuality and dynamism rather than structure and stasis. In the European tradition, the clown had affinities to festival fools, folk fools, and holy fools, all of whom had the tendency to melt the solidity of the world. The word *fool*, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, derives from the Latin *foliis*, which literally means "bellows" but is also used in the sense of "windbag". The term *buffoon*, with connotations similar to those of *fool*, is cognate with the Italian *buffare*, "to puff". In the derivation of *fool* there is a sense of lightness and motion, and so of processuality. Given the likely affinity between the clown and the fool, there is in the clown a figure that is integrated in a clumsy fashion and that adheres to itself with an incipient sense of internal movement.

In particular, Handelman (2005, p. 1838) — who was too insistent to my taste on associations suggested by the etymology of the English noun *clown* — claimed the following, concerning ritual clowns, and these as ritual fools in ceremonies:

[...] The ritual clown is an eminently paradoxical figure: It is neither wise nor foolish, yet it is both without being wholly one or the other. As a paradoxical being, the figure evokes inconsistencies of meaning and referential ambiguities in ritual contexts that otherwise have an appearance of solidity and stability. The clown is a construct with a sense of incompleteness, yet whole (a lump), that is in a condition of transformation (congelation) but that is somehow out of place in context (a clod).

Externally, the ritual clown appears as an ill-formed unity. Pueblo Indian clowns of the American Southwest are lumpish in form or painted in stripes of contrasting colors. Other clowns often are particolored or piecemeal beings that hang together loosely. Internally, the ritual clown manifests qualities of multiplicity and fluidity: it is fluctuating and unstable. This interior organization can be summated as a condition of self-transformation: the figure is continually in motion within itself, and so it remains permanently unfinished. It is a powerful figurative rendition

of processuality. This makes it a powerful solvent of contexts and structures within which it is located. These attributes are crucial to the roles it performs within ritual and ceremonial occasions.

Clowns seem to have especial affinities to the boundaries of ritualistic occasions. In European folk rites and dramas that were associated with seasonal transitions, especially those from winter to spring, and so with notions of the regeneration of natural and social orders, folk fools at times played the role of master of ceremony. These characters tended to be killed and revived in these events, and so they bridged and mediated cosmic transitions. Among the Tewa, Hopi, and Zuni Pueblo Indians of the American Southwest, ritual clowns were indisputable masters of the boundary. More generally, where such clown figures are common in ceremonials, they either control the overall organization of sequencing of events or they appear during the interludes between phases of rites. In either instance, they are located in transitional zones that connote the sequential movement or transformation of ritual from one context to another. Given that these figures encompass a notion of boundary within the composition of their being — one through which they endlessly oscillate — their affinity to the external boundaries of ritual events, and to those within ritual, should be clear. They are ambulatory manifestations of boundariness, for their composition resonates with, and so is keyed to, borders of ritual in terms of its spatial and sequential ordering.

Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina (1815–1890) was an anticlerical radical politician, journalist (appreciated in France as a war correspondent), and novelist. On 7 May 1875, while speaking at Italy's House of Representatives, he referred to Jews in a manner (as though it was Jews who controlled the pro-government daily press) that scandalised the acting Speaker of the House moderating the debate, who rebuked him, and other members, who murmured uncomfortably (see p. 3030 of the *Atti Parlamentari*, accessible at <http://storia.camera.it/>). His novels include *Il re dei re* (The King of Kings), of 1864, set in the 11th century; Book Four, "Il Concilio di Roma", begins by expatiating about Emperor Henry IV (the one who eventually had to humiliate himself at Canossa), then turns to the character of Baccelardo (Bachelor), in Zurich on St. Martin's Day, as the carnivalesque, reprehended⁹⁵ Feast of Fools, Fête des Fous, "Festa dei Becchi" is being celebrated, headed by a "Papa dei Becchi" (or "re dei becchi"), a mock-pope just for the day. Petruccelli della Gattina developed a long description of that celebration, in which he could give free rein to his fantasy. The following passage (given here in the original Italian, and then in my translation) features Jews:

Allora gli araldi, o *vocatores*, come chiamavansi, si volsero prima ai gentili e dissero:

O gentili, per cui fatto
S'è il negozio del riscatto:

poi ai Giudei:

O giude', per cui sciupato
Ha il Signor parole e fiato,
Come attestano i rabini,
I notari e gli scabini!
Storpi, dritti, grassi e secchi
Cantiam gloria al re del becchi.

A questa intima, i giudei pieni di malumore fanno un atto d'impazienza, e gittandosi un lembo della gialla tunica addosso, si sdraiano per terra presso al fuoco, si grattano il posteriore e le barbe, e sclamano:

Ma insomma qui facciam sempre da gioco!
Vi abbiam mandato un Dio, e ancora è poco?

[Then the heralds, or *vocatores*, as they were called, turned at first to the Gentiles and said:

⁹⁵ The Council of Basle condemned the Feast of Fools as being "turpem etiam abusum", "also/indeed vile abuse", "a turpitude of an abuse indeed".

O Gentiles, for whose sake
The Salvation He did make:

Then to the Jews:

O Jews, for whom did just for waste
The Lord employ His words and breath,
By rabbis this has stated been,
By many a notary or echevin!
Cripples, straight, or fat, or lean,
Sing the praise of this day's king!

Having been ordered that much, the Jews, despondently, display their impatience, and having thrown the hem of the yellow tunic on their bodies, the lie down on the ground near the fire, scratch their backside and their beards, and exclaim:

Let us get it over, we are always a plaything!
We sent you a god, is that too little a thing?]

14. Concluding Remarks, and on the "Pious Abstention from Saving a Life" Trope in Current News and in the History of Royals

The latter passage is an example of how the apparently unrelated (medieval Jews, and the Feast of Fools as a medieval Catholic practice) sometimes meet, even just in a novel from 1864 set in the 11th century. But in the later part of Sec. 3, we have seen how medieval Christian visual representations of the *charivari* (an irreverent carnival procession playing loud instruments: see **Fig. 3** at the end of our Sec. 3) were argued by Sarit Shalev-Einy (2008) to have influenced the initial word panel of *Song of Songs* from the *Tripartite Maḥzor*, a Jewish prayer book for the festivals, copies and illustrated in the Lake Constance region, ca. 1322.

In this survey article, we have considered various forms of the intersection between the figure of the fool, and context of devotion. We have considered both such types and examples that originate in devout circles, and such that originate from anti-religious discourse. What stands out is how diverse the resulting taxonomy is.

This overview supplements Linda and Hershey Friedman's "The Pious Fool: A Hermetic Jewish Humor Trope", the article that immediately precedes this one in this journal issue. They discussed Jewish jokes revolving upon a particular category of "pious fool", namely, a type of person characterised within the discussion in early rabbinic texts of Jewish law: that type was characterised through the display of such inappropriate behaviours on the part of some hypothetical undesirable *chasid shoteh* (literally, "pious fool") motivated by exceeding devotion but with wrong priorities, for example, the one who keeps banging his head on the wall because he does not want to look at women, or the one who is wearing phylacteries and therefore would not jump into the river in order to save a drowning child.

As Hershey Friedman kindly pointed out to me, linking at an article of 5 April 2018 in the *New York Times* (by Motoko Rich), that kind of attitude is alive and kicking: "By the way, the "pious fool" is alive and well all over the world — see this article from the NY Times: Women Barred From Sumo Ring, Even to Save a Man's Life"⁹⁶ (from an email of 9 April 2018). **Figures 13 and 14** are frames from that video.

Motoko Rich began her article by remarking: "Sumo wrestling, one of Japan's oldest and most hallowed sports, has all kinds of inviolable rituals". Such as the following: "The wrestlers must wear their hair in carefully coifed topknots. Before every match, they scatter

⁹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/05/world/asia/women-sumo-ring-japan.html>

grains of purifying salt”. And, which is crucial for the news she was giving: “And women are never, ever, allowed in the ring. Even when a man’s life is at stake”. As for the news:

Sumo’s discriminatory practices came under new scrutiny after a referee shooed women out of a ring at an exhibition match in Kyoto on Wednesday when they rushed to offer lifesaving measures to a politician who had collapsed while delivering a speech.

The news dominated television talk shows and social media on Thursday, with a [video of the episode](#)⁹⁷ — in which a referee could repeatedly be heard over a loudspeaker yelling, “Women, come out of the ring” — attracting more than 800,000 views on YouTube and a fusillade of criticism.



Figure 13. The first frame of the video from the sumo ring.



Figure 14. Another frame of the video from the sumo ring: women have intervened.

⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35aIqDTYOD8>

The situation of letting a person die because lifesaving access is avoided because of some status-related rule is, of course, not at all funny. In medieval France, a king was let to burn unassisted, even though he was surrounded by a crowd, because those persons were mindful of the rule which forbade touching the King on pain of death. In Thailand (then Siam), a queen was let to drown in the 19th century, because nobody would touch her, again because touching a royal was forbidden on pain of death. One source I found identifies that queen of Siam as Queen Luksami Tave, wife of King Rama V, but see below), along with her daughter, were left to drown in the river Chao Phraya. King Rama V had a stupa built in 1881, in order to commemorate her.

In a long article of mine that appeared in *Journal of Intelligent and Robotic Systems* (Nissan 2008c), Section 3.6 (pp. 346–355) is entitled "Intentions and Effects of Portraying the Ruler", including socio-cultural facets of the body of a ruler or senior politician. The article itself is entitled "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".⁹⁸

In Section 3 in that article, I analysed in eight tableaux situations of portraiture of rulers (royal or otherwise), sometimes in undesirable circumstances, mostly from between the 1930s and the present, in relation to how they would prefer their status to be represented. The eight examples included: (1) a newspaper editor in Naples being sacked after publishing a photograph of Benito Mussolini with the taller, younger, photogenic Italo Balbo (another Fascist leader) by his side; (2) the 2007 scandal at the BBC after it reported that, and even broadcasted a video sequence showing, the Queen leaving the room in anger when a highly paid American photographer usually shooting celebrities wanted her to rather take off her regalia, whereas photographs with regalia have a precise ceremonial function, e.g. at the swearing of new citizens; (3) in the mid-1980s, Israel's president Haim Herzog and prime minister Shimon Peres were televised while at the Maimuna (an end-of-Passover communal celebration of the Israeli Moroccan Jewish community, whose members prevalently dislike the Labour Party intensely because of past discrimination): they sat down, each on a chair, side by side, facing the viewers, and, like at the barber's, they were each covered with a white sheet; then a little old man smeared their faces with butter and honey, and they (courting an electorate that was the tip of the balance) smiled their widest smile while he was singing and blessing them while dancing around their chairs; (4) during a visit to a Sikh temple in northwestern India, Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, appeared in a photograph whose upper border was at about the height of the knees of bystanders, while he, wearing a turban, was prostrating himself to the ground, very close to a bare foot of a man, whose big toe nail appeared to be afflicted by a fungus; (5) it is telling that a photograph of Hitler leaving a church was not destroyed, even though it looked as though a cross was emerging from the crown of his head: it was presumably unintended, but it endowed him (usefully so) with a Christological symbol, familiar from the iconography of the deer of St. Hubert; (6) an Italian senior politician, Giulio Andreotti, famously a hunchback, was once seen on television while surrounded by a crowd; the hand of an unseen man touched his hunch (superstition has it that this brings about good luck), and Andreotti feigned nothing; *consider in contrast the death of*

⁹⁸ In that article, I introduced a mathematical model capturing the narrative, event, and reasoning concerning the folktale about Tamerlane and the three painters, only the third of whom was able to save his life while coping with the inconvenient fact that Tamerlane had visible, ungainly physical disabilities. The first painter painted Tamerlane with no blemish, and was executed as a liar. The second one represented Tamerlane with his disabilities, and was executed for lèse majesté. The third painter satisfied Tamerlane by painting him as he was taking aim with his bow: in order to shoot the arrow from his bow, he was kneeling, so one would not notice that one leg was shorter; on shooting an arrow, an archer would hunch his back, so one would not notice that Tamerlane was a hunchback; to aim, Tamerlane shut an eye, so one could not notice his squint. See in **Fig. 15**, a reconstruction of Tamerlane's actual appearance, based on his skeletal remains.

a Thai queen (the mother of two future kings) in 1880, when the boat in which she was capsized yet nobody would save her, because touching a royal was forbidden on pain of death; (7) the sculptor Oscar Nemon made a bust of Winston Churchill, who insisted that, while spending time posing, he in turn would portray Nemon in clay; (8) in 1791, King Louis XVI of France was intercepted in Varennes during his attempted flight abroad because somebody recognised his face from a coin; in late-18th-century Japan, where the royal image was not made visible, prints about world events, including the American Revolution, were much imported, and one print showed how in New York in 1776, a statue of King George III was desecrated in public.



Figure 15. Portrait head of Timur (Tamerlane), as reconstructed from the skull by Mikhail Gerasimov.

Grant Olson provides a discussion (Olson 1992) of Thai volumes published and distributed for cremation ceremonies. This is a textual genre specific to Thailand, yet one that has evolved in the direction of including also essays, and at one point in his article, Olson is puzzled by the thematic mix of essays in a particular volume: "In one volume (and I have yet

to completely understand the logic of this one), the deceased had passed away due to a heart attack [...], but the cremation volume includes three essays: 'Cancer can be cured', 'The dangers of electricity', and 'How to grow sour tamarind'."

I would like to offer the hypothesis that cremation volumes came to fill the function that a *serto nuziale* filled in Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Whereas traditionally, such traditional "wedding offerings" included verse, by the nineteenth century wealthy families celebrating a wedding would often fund the publication of a volume that included essays.

Actually, much scholarship is buried in such now almost inaccessible books, and indexing at Italy's national and regional libraries is the only way to learn about the existence of given essays, that had it not been for the liberality of those who funded publication, would not have appeared in press at all. Olson's article is relevant here, because he remarks about Thailand's drowned queen, whose funeral apparently initiated the publication of cremation volumes:⁹⁹

Sanguan states with confidence that the first cremation volume was printed in 1880 and quotes extensively from its preface (Sanguan 1960, 464–67); he goes on to say that 10,000 copies were published for wide distribution and that the book was one of the first that included Buddhist chants written in Thai characters instead of the Khom script. The volume was an edited set of Buddhist verses (*phrasut*) and chants [...], given out at the funeral of Somdet Phranangchao Sunanthakumarirat Phraboromaratchathewi and her daughter Somdet Phrachaolukthoe Chaofa Kannaphonphetcharat, 1880. Somdet Phranangchao Sunanthakumarirat was the daughter of King Mongkut and was the third wife of King Chulalongkorn. She and her daughter died tragically when their boat overturned in the Chao Phraya River while they were traveling from Bangkok to Bang Pain. Because they were royalty, no one dared touch them and they drowned. For this reason, Somdet Phranangchao Sunanthakumarirat is often referred to as the Phranang Rua Lom (the 'capsized queen') for short. Later, King Chulalongkorn was to lift the prohibition on touching royalty.

Grant Olson kindly clarified for me, at the timer when I was writing Nissan (2008c), the identity of the "capsized queen", by checking the information and conveying it informally, in an email dated 31 August 2007, from which I quote below (the dots appear in his email):

We have looked around at the library a bit and here is what we have found. The four famous wives of King Chulalongkorn as far as we know and have found are (Library of Congress romanization):

1. The Queen herself — Saowapha Phongsi (also known as Phra Siphatcharin . . . Mother of Kings Rama VI and VII). She is the youngest of these four — half-sisters.
2. Princess Consort Sawang Watthana (her title was upgraded much later and known as Phra Si Sawarinthira Borommaratchathewi). She is the grandmother [of] Rama VIII and IX.
3. Princess Consort Sunantha Kamarirat. She was drowned with her first daughter — Princess Kannaphonphetcharat — and she was pregnant with the second child.
4. Princess Consort Sukhumanmarasi

We could not link Queen Laksami Tave with Princess Sunantha at all. Laksami Tave might have been another consort. The one we know of has a similar name — Princess Consort of King Rama VI — Laksami Lavan. A bright woman-poet, [she] was murdered much later at her villa — when she was quite old. She could have been the queen if she would have had a son.

The social anthropologist Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941) is the author of the classic *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890–1915). In *The Golden Bough*, Ch. 21, "Tabooed Things", includes a Sec. 2, "Iron Tabooed". That section in particular, like the rest of the book, is accessible on the Web.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Still, Olson acknowledged in his paper, "[w]hile it is difficult to document, it is widely believed that there were cremation volumes created even before 1880".

¹⁰⁰ It is posted at <http://www.headmap.org/texts/thegoldenbough/45.htm>

Frazer stated: "In the first place we may observe that the awful sanctity of kings naturally leads to a prohibition to touch their sacred persons. Thus it was unlawful to lay hands on the person of a Spartan king: no one might touch the body of the king or queen of Tahiti: it is forbidden to touch the person of the king of Siam under pain of death; and no one may touch the king of Cambodia, for any purpose whatever, without his express command". It happened that "the king was thrown from his carriage and lay insensible on the ground, but not one of his suite dared to touch him; a European coming to the spot carried the injured monarch to his palace. Formerly no one might touch the king of Corea; and if he deigned to touch a subject, the spot touched became sacred, and the person thus honoured had to wear a visible mark (generally a cord of red silk) for the rest of his life.¹⁰¹ Above all, no iron might touch the king's body". Not even a surgeon could use a lancet, even to save the king's life. "It is said that one king suffered terribly from an abscess in the lip, till his physician called in a jester, whose pranks made the king laugh heartily, and so the abscess burst".

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¹⁰¹ Once during a job interview of all times, an American-born scholar remarked to me that his sister lived in England, and that once a member of the royal family visited the small town where she resided. That royal happened to be tipsy once he arrived there. He kissed a lady in the crowd, and later that woman said that never again in her life was she going to wash her face.

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¹⁰⁴ The chapters included in Sheila M. Delany's edited volume *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings* are as follows: Christine M. Rose, "The Jewish Mother-in-Law; Synagoga and the 'Man of Law's Tale'" (pp. 3–23); William Chester Jordan, "The Pardoner's 'Holy Jew'" (pp. 25–42); Sheila M. Delany, "Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims" (pp. 43–57); Jerome Mandel, "'Jewes Werk' in 'Sir Thopas'" (pp. 59–68); Sylvia Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew" (pp. 69–85); Mary Dove, "Chaucer and the Translation of the Jewish Scriptures" (pp. 89–107); Timothy S. Jones, "Reading Biblical Outlaws: The 'Rise of David' Story in the Fourteenth Century" (pp. 109–132); Nancy L. Turner, "Robert Holcot on the Jews" (pp. 133–144); Denise L. Despres, "The Protean Jew in the Vernon Manuscript" (pp. 145–164); Elisa Marie Narin van Court, "'The Siege of Jerusalem' and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England" (pp. 165–184); Anthony Paul Bale, "'House Devil, Town Saint': Anti-Semitism and Hagiography in Medieval Suffolk" (pp. 185–210); Colin F. Richmond, "Englishness and Medieval Anglo-Jewry" (pp. 213–227); Gillian Steinberg, "Teaching Chaucer to the 'Cursed Folk of Herod'" (pp. 229–236); and Judith S. Neaman, "Positively Medieval: Teaching as a Missionary Activity" (pp. 237–245).

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