

## Considerations about the Pantomime of the Orange and the Unleavened Bread Within a Judaeo-Spanish Folktale

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**Abstract.** *The Pope's Three Questions*, a variant of Heda Jason's prolific Jewish tale type 922 \*C, *King Set Tasks to Jew*, has been analysed by Tamar Alexander. The storyteller is of Judaeo-Spanish speaking Turkish family background. We first consider the archetypes, such as the Roman-age tale of Gebiha ben Pesisa (who has to persuade Alexander the Great), considering its background in view of Ory Amitay's interpretation. Another archetype is an early rabbinic story about a donkey-driver as a successful debater in matters of religion. There are parallels in international folklore (e.g. in a medieval tale by Franco Sacchetti). The Israel Folktale Archives 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. We consider what appears to me to be an evolving meaning of the symbols (the orange and the unleavened bread) from the pantomime in *The Pope's Three Questions*. Arguably, it is possible to reconstruct a path of development of this version of the given, widely attested Jewish tale type. It is possible, I argue, 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. This article argues that meanings that were intelligible to early modern Judaeo-Spanish listeners, and relating to the Wars of Religion and the championing of the opposite camps by Rome (symbolised by the sacrament of the host) vs. the Dutch House of Orange, were modified to suit a change also in the typical knowledge held by Levantine Judaeo-Spanish speakers, who were no longer familiar with earlier concerns which to their Amsterdamite brethren had been rather obvious. Also the signifier for 'orange' in their vernacular was by then only suggesting Portugal (and indeed sonnets in Rome exploited the pun), and no longer the Netherlands. Therefore, the Jewish disputant in the folktale was made, by new generations of storytellers, to respond no longer to the charge of the Jews siding with the Protestant Netherlands, but to the charge of being the malicious and essential moving spirit of modernity, a perception of modernity's and of a supposed Jewish threat claimed by intransigent Catholic quarters and which escalated with shrill tones during the 19th century, and only abated in the few years leading to the First World War.

**Keywords:** Folktales; Communication by signs; Symbols; Sephardic culture; Jewish studies; Jewish Tale Type 922 \*C; Tale Type AT 924A; Interfaith relations; Disputation tales; Eastern Mediterranean; Netherlands (Early Modern); House of Orange; Rome (Pre-1870); Portugal; Rounded Earth; Flat Earth; Food; Citruses (names for); Matzo bread; Passover; Ignoramus wins a context; Comedy of Errors; Misunderstanding; Social classes; Butcher; Romanesco poetry (sonnets, Cesare Pascarella, Giuseppe Gioachino Belli), Puns.

## Contents of This Article

Abstract

1. Introduction

### PART ONE: THE TALE, ITS TYPOLOGICAL CONTEXT, AND A HISTORICAL CONJECTURE

2. The Sephardic Tale and Performance Transcribed and Discussed by Tamar Alexander

3. The Tale Type, and Its Archetypes

3.1. Disputation Tales

3.1.1. Heda Jason's Tale Type 922 \*C

3.1.2. A Brief Examination of the Gebiha ben Pesisa Tale, and of the Emperor's Daughter Answering the Emperor's Argument in Rabban Gamaliel's Stead

3.1.3. Responding in Lieu of Rabbi Jonathan: The Clever Donkey-Driver

3.2. Discussions or Interfaith Disputations Carried on by Symbols (Tale Types 924, 924A):

Five Versions from the Israel Folklore Archives

3.2.1. An Abundance of Jewish Variants

3.2.2. Wisdom of the Poor Man: A Social Inferior (Not a Cognitive Inferior) Saves the Day

3.2.3. Coachmen as Disputants: They Dispute Successfully, But Being Coarse, Misunderstand Their Success

3.2.4. A Delinquent, or a Transgressor? A Version from Iraqi Kurdistan

3.2.5. Another Kind of Social Inferior: A Man Nicknamed "the Idiot"

3.2.6. A Few Considerations about the Five IFA Versions Examined

3.2.7. Entries from Soroudi's Classification of Jewish tale from the Iranic Area

3.3. An Example of Christian Versions of the Tale: Franco Sacchetti's Story about Milan's Ruler Bernabò Visconti, the Fearful Abbot, and the Shrewd Miller

3.4. A Few Comparative Diagrams

4. Considerations about Tamar Alexander's Sephardic Variant of Tale Type 922 \*C

4.1. Considerations about the Characters' Respective Strategies

4.2. Siding with the Catholic Camp — the *Azymites*

4.3. The House of Orange, Dutch Carrots, Orange Carrots

4.4. Amsterdam, a Hub of the Sephardic Social Network

4.5. The Terminological Factor in the Waning Transparency of the Symbolism

4.6. Political Changes as a Factor in the Waning Transparency of the Symbolism

4.7. Why Did the Pope Character Believe That the Jew Admitted Christian Beliefs?

### PART TWO: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

5. What Is the Orange About? Two Roman Punning Poetic Texts

5.1. Earth is Like an Orange: A Parallel from Pascarella

5.2. The Pun in Belli's Sonnet *Er Portogallo*

6. The Rounded Earth: An Improper Symbol

for Modernity's Attack on the Traditional order

6.1. What the Orange in the Pantomime Came to Stand For

6.2. A Belated Myth: Identification of the Belief in a Round Earth with Modernity

6.3. Ancient Greek Conceptions of the Earth Shape, and Byzantine Cosmas Locating the Antediluvian Inhabited World in... America

6.4. Some Orthodox Views of the Round Earth, from Judaism and from Catholicism

7. An Ignoramus Wins, Because his Gesture Is Misunderstood

7.1. Body Language and Pantomime as Being Conducive to a Comedy of Errors

7.2. Juḥa's Gesture Is Misunderstood by a Corrupt Judge

7.3. Comments about the Relocated Juḥa Tale

8. Conclusions

## 1. Introduction

In 1965 in *Fabula*, Heda Jason defined some types of Jewish-Oriental oral tales.<sup>1</sup> One of these, 922 \*C, was the tale type<sup>2</sup> "King Sets Task to Jew", of which in this paper I am going to analyse a particular, tantalising variant, in order to offer a new interpretation of how it developed. The relevant subtype of type 922 \*C is rather akin to types AT 924 A and AT 924 B. The particular tale with which we are concerned here is relevant to types AT 924 "Discussion by Sign Language", and AT 924A "Discussion between Priest and Jew Carried on by Symbols", whereas the Jewish oikotype<sup>3</sup> is in relation indeed to AT 922\*C "Jew(s) Requested to Answer Questions or to Perform Tasks", but in the Judaeo-Spanish context of the given tale, there are factors involved which I am going to discuss in this study.<sup>4</sup>

The present article is two-pronged. On the one hand, it discusses the archetype of this folk type. On the other hand, we discuss cultural factors affecting what could have been the evolution of the symbols in a tantalising version that is known from an Aegean Judaeo-Spanish background. It was first analysed by Tamar Alexander, and masterfully so. But this tale variant is so interesting, that it certainly deserves the present, complementary perspective.

Whereas her analysis of the particular tale with which we are concerned is synchronic, our present discussion is both diachronic and interdisciplinary. This pays off, as we can see how storytellers over several generations within the Sephardic diaspora adopted adaptation tactics suiting their time and audience.

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<sup>1</sup> Heda Jason, 'Types of Jewish-Oriental Oral Tales', *Fabula*, 7(2/3) (1965), pp. 115–224. Concerning the subject of my present study, see *ibid.*, pp. 182–183. As this journal is interdisciplinary, this explanatory note will hopefully be useful for such readers who are not conversant with folklore studies. Antti Aarne (1867–1925) established a system for indexing tale-plot, which was translated from the German and enlarged by Stith Thompson. See: Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. 1928. *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, by A. Aarne, translated and enlarged by S. Thompson (Folklore Fellows Communications, 74), Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia = Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1928. 2nd revision: (FF Communications, v. 75, no. 184), 1961. Reprints: 1973, 1964, 1981. Another reprint: B. Franklin, New York, 1971. Aarne's German original was *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*. Also see: Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography. Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson; Part I: Animal Tales, Tales of Magic, Religious Tales, and Realistic Tales, with an Introduction; Part II: Tales of the Stupid Ogre, Anecdotes and Jokes, and Formula Tales; Part III: Appendices* (FF Communications [edited for the Folklore Fellows], 284–286), Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia = Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004.

Apart from tale types, an elementary unit, the motif, was indexed in Stith Thompson's (1955–1958) *Motif Index of Folk-Literature* (6 vols., Bloomington: Indiana University Press; CD-ROM edition, 1993). Two articles, respectively by Dundes (1962, repr. 1975) and Jones (1979), became the foundation of the structural narratological study of folktales. See: S.S. Jones, 'The Pitfalls of Snow White Scholarship', *Journal of American Folklore*, 90, pp. 69–73. Alan Dundes, 'From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of folklore', in: Alan Dundes (ed.), *Analytic Essays in Folklore*. (Studies in Folklore, 2.) The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton, 1975, pp. 61–72; originally: "From etic to emic units in the structural study of folktales", in *Journal of American Folklore*, 75, 1962, pp. 95–105.

<sup>2</sup> Jason came back to type 922 \*C, on p. 622 in H. Jason, *Folktales of the Jews of Iraq: Tale-Types and Genres with a Contribution on the Folktale in Written Sources* by Yitzchak Avishur (Studies in the History and Culture of Iraqi Jewry, 5), Or Yehuda, Israel: Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Research Institute of Iraqi Jewry, 1988 (mostly in English, with a Hebrew section).

<sup>3</sup> In actual instances of international folk types, it is often the case that *oicotypisation* reshapes the tale: in the given locale and given generation when a version of the tale was told (and as reported about one or two generations later on), there was a cultural environment (*oicotype*) whose circumstances suggested a given customisation of some *motifeme* (an abstraction of a motif) into a given actual motif. *Oikotype* or *oicotype* or *oecotype* is a concept originally introduced by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow; see his 'Geography and Folk Tale Oicotypes', in his *Selected Papers in Folklore*, Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1948, pp. 44–59.

<sup>4</sup> Jason came back to type 922 \*C, on p. 622 in H. Jason, *Folktales of the Jews of Iraq: Tale-Types and Genres with a Contribution on the Folktale in Written Sources* by Yitzchak Avishur (Studies in the History and Culture of Iraqi Jewry, 5), Or Yehuda, Israel: Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Research Institute of Iraqi Jewry, 1988 (mostly in English, with a Hebrew section).

## PART ONE: THE TALE, ITS TYPOLOGICAL CONTEXT, AND A HISTORICAL CONJECTURE

### 2. The Sephardic Tale and Performance Transcribed and Discussed by Tamar Alexander

Tamar Alexander<sup>5</sup> relates and analyses the narrative and the performance (from 1996) of *The Pope's Three Questions*, a story told in either Judaeo-Spanish or Hebrew by Miriam Raymond-Sarano, "born in Milan in 1945 to Turkish émigrés", and residing in Ramat-Gan, Israel. 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 terribly alarmed. He does not feel up to the task, and also 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.

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.<sup>6</sup> The butcher and the Jews who accompanied him leave the room. The members of the clergy who remain with the Pope did not understand anything, 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.<sup>7</sup>

[Of course, a rabbi (unless he is converting away from Judaism) would not depart from strict monotheism. But consider the following, theologically innocuous (but socially, not so innocuous) homiletical instance from late antiquity. In the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Pessachim* 22b, it is related that Simeon 'Amsoni used to interpret homiletically in the

<sup>5</sup> In ch. 11 of Tamar Alexander-Frizer, *The Heart is a Mirror: The Sephardic Folktale*, Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2008. Translated by Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum from Hebrew. Originally *Ma'aseh ahuv va-chetsi* [*The Beloved Friend-and-a-Half*], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to realise that what is involved, is creative symbolism, not merely conventional gestural language, for which see Peter Burke, 'The language of gesture in early modern Italy', in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, edited by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, pp. 71–83.

Note the difference *vis-à-vis* nonverbal communication as research in psychology: J.K. Burgoon, D.B. Buller and W.G. Woodall, *Nonverbal Communication*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996; A. Mehrabian, *Silent Messages*, Wadsworth, California: Belmont, 1971; A.W. Siegman and S. Feldstein (eds.), *Multi-Channel Integrations of Non-Verbal Behavior*, Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum, 1985.

In gesture studies, also see e.g. Jürgen Streeck, *Gesturecraft: The Manufacture of Meaning* (Gesture Studies, 2), Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2009; Alan Cienki and Cornelia Müller (eds.), *Metaphor and Gesture* (Gesture Studies, 3), Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2008; Gale Stam and Mika Ishino (eds.), *Integrating Gestures: The Interdisciplinary Nature of Gesture* (Gesture Studies, 4), Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Judaism frowns upon what Hebrew medieval terminology calls *shittuf*, i.e., 'participation', as a departure from pure monotheism.

Pentateuch all occurrences of *et* (the Hebrew accusative particle when the direct object is determined), as though they also suggest *ēṭ* in the sense 'with', but that he stopped when it comes to "*et* the L-rd thy G-d thou shalt fear". But then rabbi Aqiva interpreted it homiletically, as including also the rabbis (to whom one owes deferent obedience).]<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, the folktale continues, 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."

While analysing the performance, Tamar Alexander — displaying a photograph of the storyteller, who holds an orange raised in her hand, and speaks authoritatively with closed eyes — explains:<sup>9</sup> "I showed him an orange", says the Pope to the priests in his recapitulation of the event. From the Pope's point of view, the orange is not a fruit but a symbol of the shape of the world. The narrator's left hand is on her knee; her right hand is raised, holding the orange aloft, confident and authoritative."

But when the butcher tells the Jews about how the Pope offered him an orange, the storyteller's eyes are half-closed, her "right hand is low, and the orange seems about to fall. The gesture expresses the butcher's aversion to the Pope's offer. The butcher relates to the orange literally. He construes the Pope's gesture as an invitation to eat the fruit. Humour arises from the gap between the symbolic and realistic uses of the fruit. The facial expression makes the character's umbrage clear."<sup>10</sup>

Tamar Alexander also points out that in the Pope's own reconstruction for the priests' benefit, the unleavened bread "is held confidently, horizontally, symbolizing the flat form of the world. Here too the character relates to the food as symbol."<sup>11</sup> But when the butcher is reconstructing the event for the Jews' benefit, the unleavened bread "is held aloft in the right hand, vertically, to drive home" that it's just food, "not as a symbol. The butcher again relates to the object as itself and not as symbolic of anything else."<sup>12</sup> Her analysis is masterly, her book enjoyable, and a recommended reading. In this article, I am going to offer a complementary perspective on this particular tale. Quite possibly, it is feasible to reconstruct a path of development of this version of the given, widely attested Jewish tale type.

It is possible, I argue, 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.

<sup>8</sup> 'Amsoni or 'Imsoni perhaps means that this Simeon was from Amaseia, in Pontus (a port city on the northern coast of Anatolia on the Black Sea, Amaseia was the birthplace of the Greek geographer Strabo; it was previously known as Amisos, and emerged as a royal city of the Pontic kingdom. This city is modern Samsun). This interpretation of the epithet is found s.v. 'Imsoni on p. 1090 in Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols., New York & London, printed Leipzig: Trübner & Co., and London: Luzac, 1886–1903); New York: Chores (2 vols. in 1, 1926, later reprinted, Jerusalem: Choresv); London: E. Shapiro [i.e., Shapiro, Vallentine] (1926); New York: Title Publ. (1943); New York: Pardes Publ. (1950, 2 vols.); and with a new title, *Hebrew–Aramaic–English Dictionary...* (2 vols., 1969). Also (with the standard title), New York: Judaica Press, 1971 (2 vols. in 1); New York: Jastrow Publishers, 1903, repr. 1967 (2 vols. in 1); Brooklyn: Shalom (2 vols., 1967); Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publ., 2005 (in 1 vol. of 1736 pp.).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander, *The Heart is a Mirror* (fn. 5 above), p. 511.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 512.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 513.

### 3. The Tale Type, and Its Archetypes

#### 3.1. Disputation Tales

##### 3.1.1. Heda Jason's Tale Type 922 \*C

The tale described and discussed by Tamar Alexander belongs to a prolific Jewish tale type, 922 \*C, "King Set Tasks to Jew". Heda Jason's description is given in the following;<sup>13</sup> the subtype relevant for the variant we are discussing in this study is ICa+II:

- I. Jews (Jewish rabbi) are requested (by king) to answer questions or to perform tasks on pain of death.
- IA. The questions (and their answers): (a) What preceded G-d? (Nothing); (b) What side does G-d face? (All sides, like a candle); (c) Who is richer than a king? (The man whose large body will need more space in the grave). Usually the questions are those of AT 922.
- IB. The tasks (and their performance): (a) To show Moses our Teacher or Elijah the Prophet (Jew disguises as Moses or Elijah and is ready to kill and revive the chief vizier. Vizier gives up); (b) to bring a man laughing and crying at the same time;<sup>14</sup> (c) to tell a tall tale.
- IC. Religious dispute: (a) Discussion between Jews and priest (king) is carried on by symbols (cf. AT 924 A, AT 924 B); (b) Jew and non-Jew compete in wisdom, non-Jew is tricked into saying "I do not know" (translating verbally the respective Hebrew phrase); (c) Jews and non-Jews (Christians, Karaites,<sup>15</sup> Sun[n]is, Shiites) discuss whose religion is older. (Jew claims that opponents stole Moses's shoes<sup>16</sup> while he was on Mount Sinai; opponents answer that they were not there at all (cf. AT 929 \*B).
- II. Jews proclaim (three)<sup>17</sup> days of prayer, fast, etc. A stranger (simpleton, drunkard, or child) volunteers to represent the Jews and replaces the rabbi. He succeeds in overcoming the opponent.

<sup>13</sup> type 922 \*C, on p. 622 in H. Jason, *Folktales of the Jews of Iraq* (supra, fn. 2). Jason, *ibid.*, p. 88, also has tale type \*1871 (introduced in Jason, 'Types of Jewish-Oriental Oral Tales', supra, fn. 1), and lists 18 versions of it from the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA). Tale type \*1871 is titled "Dispute about religions", and is described as follows: "Religious dispute (contest) between Jew and non-Jew (Muslim, Christian), which faith, dogma, etc., is the better. Jew wins by cleverly proving his point."

<sup>14</sup> The same person laughing and crying at the same time, as opposed to the situation of tale type 1828\* (p. 433 in Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*, Vol. 2, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004): a clergyman makes a bet (or wants to show his bishop) that his half his congregation will laugh, and half will weep. The congregants in front of him weep because of his moving sermon, but the ones behind him can see something unseemly (he wears no trousers under his gown, or he has fastened an animal's tail to his trousers), and therefore they laugh. The character of a trickster clergyman is Ḥakhām Zambartūt, to Baghdadi Jews. He once bet with friends of his, that on the next Saturday, the congregation would be crowing like crows. He kept his word. That Saturday, he read in public the pentateuchal weekly portion, which was Qedoshim, and when he got to *Leviticus* 19:28, which proscribes having oneself tattooed, he read the word for 'tattoo', *qa'aqá'*, as though it was *qa'qá'*. Immediately, the congregants shouted to correct him: *Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'!* Bear in mind that both /q/ and /' / are pronounced as pharyngeal, and that in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the name for 'crow' is *bqē'*.

<sup>15</sup> Karaites do not belong to the Rabbanite mainstream of Judaism, but they are Jewish. Their denomination came into being in the early Middle Ages.

<sup>16</sup> Or the shoes of the Jews (Hebrews) when they were receiving the Decalogue at Mount Sinai. The opponents in the disputation claim this is a lie, as their faith community did not exist as yet.

<sup>17</sup> According to the account in the Bible, Queen Esther decreed three days of fast before she would endanger herself and visit the King her husband, even though it's already a month he hadn't invited her, and whoever comes to him uninvited is liable for the death penalty, unless graced by the King.

Many variants of type 922 \*C, "King Set Tasks to Jew", are found at the Israel Folktale Archives in Haifa. They variously combine elements from Jason's schema for the tale type considered.<sup>18</sup> The motif of somebody untrained who volunteers to provide answers instead of a rabbi is found in the talmudic literature, when a Roman emperor asks a rabbi a question, and the "daughter" (apparently the emperor's own daughter, not the rabbi's daughter) asks her father to let her reply herself. What she then tells the Emperor is a successful argument. We devote to this a discussion.

But the archetype of the tale of a disputation in which a king is the judge, and the trickster refers to himself as an ignoramus, and nevertheless asks the rabbis for permission to be the one who would argue for the case of the Jews, is the talmudic tale of Gebiha ben Pesisa. It belongs to the *Kaiser und Abt* or *The King and the Bishop* international tale type.

### 3.1.2. A Brief Examination of the Gebiha ben Pesisa Tale, and of the Emperor's Daughter Answering the Emperor's Argument in Rabban Gamaliel's Stead

In a separate article, I discuss the archetypes, in early rabbinic literature, of what eventually became the medieval and later Jewish tale type of interfaith religious disputations.<sup>19</sup> Bear in mind that disputations in front of the King were sometimes imposed, in medieval times, upon the Jews, who greatly feared them, because of the danger of expressing their views candidly against the doxa of the state religion; sometimes intimidation and the climate in which a disputation took place resulted in a snowball effect of conversions — as during the show-disputation in Tortosa in Aragon in 1412–1413.

In the tale to which we devoted the present study, the Jewish disputant being riddled by the Pope is a butcher posturing as though he is a rabbi, but reasoning as the ignorant butcher he actually is. The Jewish disputant being inferior and yet successful typifies one class of Jewish tales of religious disputation. Arguably there are two archetypes for this. The champion of the Jewish cause in the disputation not being is not best qualified character that the Jewish community could provide is apparently even neither Jewish nor a male, in a passage comprising several tales in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Sanhedrin*, 39a.

The Roman Emperor argues that taking out from Adam one of his ribs by stealth (while Adam was asleep: see *Genesis* 2:21) makes a thief out of the G-d of the Jews. Rabban Gamaliel, to whom the Emperor is speaking, is supposed to provide an answer to that claim, but then the "daughter", arguably the Emperor's own daughter, rather than the rabbi's intervenes, and her counterargument wins the case for the Jewish side. This woman tells the rabbi: "Leave him to me and I will answer him". She asks the Emperor to give her an officer, and when he asks her why, she claims: "Thieves visited us last night and robbed us of a silver pitcher, leaving a golden one in its place". "Would that such visited us every day!", the Emperor exclaims. "Ah!" she retorted, "was it not to Adam's gain that he was deprived of a rib and a handmaid (a wife) presented to him in its stead to serve him?"

The Emperor does not concede victory, and tries to clarify his original argument: "This is what I mean: He should have taken it from him openly". The woman asks for a piece of raw meat, apparently puts it under her armpit, and then presents it to the Emperor for him to eat, but he says that he is disgusted. She retorts that had Eve been created with Adam watching, he, too, would have been disgusted.

<sup>18</sup> In H. Jason, *ibid.*, Jason listed there 15 versions from the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), namely: 1. IFA 505: Ica (+AT 924 A); 2. IFA 641: Iba; 3. IFA 661: Iab; 4. IFA 1991: Iab; 5. IFA 2460; 6. IFA 3127; 7. IFA 3156: IA; 8. IFA 8294: IC; 9. IFA 4062: IC; 10. IFA 4431 (=IFA 6475): Icb; 11. IFA 5015: IB, IC; 12. IFA 5996; 13. IFA 7413, task: AT 924 A; 14. IFA 7590: I Ba, II; 15. IFA 11629.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Dan Ben-Amos, 'The Americanization of "The King and the Abbot"', *Indiana Folklore*, 2 (1969), pp. 115–121 and cited literature; cf. E. Nissan, 'On Advances in Research into the Early Rabbinic Tale of Gebiha ben Pesisa, and the Archetypes of the Jewish Folktale on Interfaith Religious Disputations', forthcoming.

This is a tale in which the daughter (presumably the Emperor's daughter, rather than the rabbi's daughter) takes it upon herself to retort to the Emperor. One would expect her to be not as well qualified to provide an answer, and yet her argument is successful and to the point. She was not Jewish, and yet she was cultivated enough to know some rudiments of the *Genesis* story (the way her own father did).

She felt that the reputation of all women at stake, and it is out of this consideration, rather than out of an urge to run to the defence of Jewish tenets, that she took for herself the role of the respondent, which had been intended for the visiting prominent rabbi.

The other, even more compelling archetype of the Jewish tale type 922 \*C dates back from the Roman period, but the story is set during the conquest on the part of Alexander the Great.<sup>20</sup> The earliest version of this tale occurs in the entry for the 25th of the month of Sivan in the Oxford MS of *Megillat Ta'anit*, a text about the calendar dating from the third or fourth century CE in Roman Palestine. The protagonist is described there as being a sentinel at the Temple of Jerusalem. The version of this tale as found in *Genesis Rabbah* 61.7 is relatively close. And then there is the version in the *Babylonian Talmud*, at *Sanhedrin*, 91a. According to the latter, when another ethnoreligious group complains against the Jews, Gebiha ben Pesisa tells the rabbis: "Authorise me to go and plead against them before Alexander of Macedon: should they defeat me, then say, 'You have defeated but an ignorant man of us'; whilst if I defeat them, then say to them thus: 'The Law of Moses has defeated you'." They authorise him, and he goes and pleads the Jewish case successfully.

Ory Amitay has interpreted this tale,<sup>21</sup> and 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. Whereas in the tale, the clever character of Gebiha repeatedly admits he is an ignoramus (at any rate, a lay person, not a rabbi), historically Gebiha ben Pesisa appears (or at any rate Amitay believes so)<sup>22</sup> to have been a grandson of Jonathan, one of the Maccabean brothers (who themselves lived several generations after Alexander the Great).

Josephus referred to a character whom Amitay identifies, on onomastic grounds, Gebiha ben Pesisa as his great-grandfather. Thus, he had some political standing, because of his dynastic background. The rabbinic tale (of course) puts the rabbinic class on top, and makes Gebiha's political gesture depend upon their authorisation.

### 3.1.3. Responding in Lieu of Rabbi Jonathan: The Clever Donkey-Driver

In *Genesis Rabbah*, 32:10, it is related that Rabbi Jonathan (tentatively identified by Urbach with the Rabbi Jonathan<sup>23</sup> in whose name Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani used to make statements)<sup>24</sup> was travelling towards Jerusalem in order to pray there. He was riding a donkey led by a Jewish donkey-driver. When they reached a particular plane-tree (*platanos*), they were seen by a Samaritan, who asked the rabbi where he was going. The rabbi replied: "To pray in Jerusalem".

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Jonathan Goldstein, 'Alexander the Great', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 59 (1993), pp. 59–109; Richard Stoneman, 'Jewish Traditions on Alexander the Great', *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, 6 (1994), pp. 37–53. Cf. the commentaries on tales 34 and 35 in Dan Ben-Amos (ed.), *Folktales of the Jews*, Vol. 3: *Tales from Arab Lands*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Ory Amitay, 'The Story of Gviha Ben-Psisa and Alexander the Great', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 16.1 (2006), pp. 61–74.

<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Tal Ilan has claimed that this character is not historical: "It is clearly fictitious", on p. 36 in her *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 91), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Rabbi Jonathan ben Eleazar, from the early third century CE. He was a major homilete.

<sup>24</sup> Urbach, *ibid.*, Sec. 16.9, fn. 52.



The Samaritan retorted: "Wouldn't it be better for you to pray on this blessed mountain,<sup>25</sup> instead of at that dump?"<sup>26</sup> Rabbi Jonathan asked him: "Why is it blessed?", and the Samaritan told him: "Because it was not flooded during the Flood". On the spot, Rabbi Jonathan had nothing to say, but his donkey-driver told him: "Rabbi, give me the permission to give him a reply". The rabbi agreed. The donkey-driver told the Samaritan: "If it is one of the high mountains, it is written: 'and all the high mountains were covered'.<sup>27</sup> And if it is one of the lower ones, Scripture did not bother with it". The anecdote further relates:

Immediately, Rabbi Jonathan dismounted from the donkey, and had him [the donkey-driver] ride for three miles, and said about him three verses: "There shall be no sterile man or sterile woman, and among your beasts",<sup>28</sup> even among the beast-drivers among you.<sup>29</sup> "Thy temple [on the side of your forehead] is like a piece of pomegranate".<sup>30</sup> Even the *reiqanin* ('ones empty', ones devoid of learning) among you are full of replies like a pomegranate. It is written: "No instrument made against thee shall succeed".

### 3.2. Discussions or Interfaith Disputations Carried on by Symbols (Tale Types 924, 924A): Five Versions from the Israel Folklore Archives

#### 3.2.1. An Abundance of Jewish Variants

Such tales about interfaith disputations in which the exchanges between the Jewish and Gentile disputants are carried on by means of symbols are particular cases of both disputation tales in general, and tales about discussion by sign language or by a pantomime. Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginsberg of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) named in honour of Dov Noy, at the University of Haifa, has kindly pointed out to me the following:

This tale can be classified according to various types:

AT 924 Discussion by Sign Language,

AT 924A Discussion between Priest and Jew Carried on by Symbols

And the oicotype: AT 922\*C Jew(s) Requested to Answer Questions or to Perform Tasks (For details see Heda Jason, "Types of Jewish-Oriental Oral Tales", *Fabula* 7, 2/3, p. 182-183. See also for further additions on this oicotype: Sarah S. Soroudi, *The Folktale of Jews from Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan, Tale-Types and Genres*, Verlag [für Orientkunde in Dortmund,]<sup>31</sup> 2008, p. 148-149.)

We have over one hundred tales of these types, not with the Pope but with a king or a local leader.

The signs and their significations are not constant.

<sup>25</sup> I.e., Mount Gerizzim (near Shekhem, i.e., Nablus). This mountain is holy for the Samaritans, their shrine used to be there, and where the Passover sacrifice is still celebrated there at present.

<sup>26</sup> I.e., at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, that was still laid waste. Actually under Byzantine rule it was a dump, and there used to be a Christian custom (stopped by the Muslim authorities) to dump garbage there, even from villages in the region. In the Aramaic text, the word that Urbach renders with the Hebrew *ashpah*, i.e., 'dump', 'dunghill', 'ruin', is *qiqqalta*, that has those acceptations indeed, but which etymologically is related to being damaged, ruined. *Ha'ir haqqedoshah*, "the Holy City", i.e., Jerusalem, has been polemically distorted by the Samaritan tradition into *ha'ir hakketushah*, "the Crushed City", and this has on occasion been uttered polemically in discussions with Jews also during the 20th century.

<sup>27</sup> *Genesis* 7:19. Mount Gerizzim is about 900 metres above sea level.

<sup>28</sup> *Deuteronomy* 7:14. The spelling is *bhmtk* (*bēhemtékhā*, 'thy beast'), vs. *bhmin* (*behamín*, 'those driving beasts').

<sup>29</sup> I.e., even the donkey-driver was intellectually proficient enough to win a religious disputation.

<sup>30</sup> *Song of Songs* 6:7.

<sup>31</sup> Sarah Sorour Soroudi's posthumous book *The Folktale of Jews from Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan: Tale-Types and Genres* appeared as Vol. 23 in the series *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des islamischen Orients*. The book was foreworded by Amnon Netzer in 2007, but he, too, did not live to see it published. Soroudi's book was edited by Heda Jason, and comprises contributions by Heda Jason, Ulrich Marzolph, Saul Shaked, and Benzion D. Yehoshua.

I then asked Dr. Pintel, more specifically, about IFA versions of AT 924A "Discussion between Priest and Jew Carried on by Symbols". She replied: "We have 10 tales of this type. In none of them there is an orange. The signs are: fingers, salt, white cheese, wheat and rooster, red wine. Attached are the essences of 5 tales of this type."

### 3.2.2. Wisdom of the Poor Man: A Social Inferior (Not a Cognitive Inferior) Saves the Day

Of the five IFA versions I was kindly sent by Idit Pintel, IFA 8895 is entitled **חכמת העני** ("Wisdom of the Poor Man"). The ethnic background of the teller is Turkey. The tale was told by Sarah Gid'on, and it was recorded by David Gid'on. I translate from Hebrew the gist of this story:

A king who hates the Jews requires them to solve three questions [riddles]. Should they fail to provide an answer for these, they will be expelled from the country. A poor Jew who happened to have come to town answers them successfully. Between the King and the Jew, an exchange by allusions takes place. The King displays three fingers; the poor man displays one. The King spreads seeds; the poor man sends out a cock to collect them. The King shows black coal; the Jew shows white cheese.

We are not told whether the poor man actually understood why he won the contest. It may be that this is an earlier version, such that the Jewish contestant is a social inferior indeed, but not one who is cognitively inferior, and he wins the contest because of his wisdom. Or then, this version of the tale may be an impoverished variant in which the complication of the misunderstanding on the part of the Jewish disputant was forgotten at some stage in the transmission.

Unlike the butcher or coachman in other versions, the Jewish disputant being poor does make him a social inferior but does not come with the expectation that he would be coarse. In *Ecclesiastes* 9:14–15, the situation is described disconsolately, of a small and yet walled town which is besieged by a powerful king, but "a wise poor man was found there, and he was the one who saved the town by means of his wisdom, and nobody remembered that poor man". This may have provided inspiration for the choice of the Jewish disputant in the version from Turkey we are considering; at any rate, it almost certainly inspired the title the variant was given at the Israel Folktale Archives: **חכמת העני** ("Wisdom of the Poor Man").

"Be careful with the children of the poor, because from them learning will come forth" is an early rabbinic dictum (Babylonian Talmud, *Nedarim* 81a) which recognises a social reality: the poor, offered an opportunity, may be a reservoir for educating future rabbis. The linguist Tristano Bolelli, from the Scuola Normale of Pisa (Italy's most prestigious university), once responded polemically, in his column in Turin's newspaper *La Stampa*, to the proposal in Parliament that Latin classes would no longer be offered in secondary education; he disproved the notion that Latin is for the rich, by pointing out that some of Italy's first-rate classicists were born into very poor families.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2.3. Coachmen as Disputants: They Dispute Successfully, But Being Coarse, Misunderstand Their Success

The ethnic background of the teller of IFA 9757 is Poland. This version was told by Zehava Zilberberg Grinberg to Malka Cohen, who wrote it down. The title is "A Jewish Coachman Saves a Town from a Fearsome Decree" (**עגלון יהודי מציל עיירה מגזירה קשה**).

<sup>32</sup> Tristano Bolelli, *L'italiano e gli italiani: Cento stravaganze linguistiche*. Vicenza, Italy: Neri Pozza Editore, 1993.

The gist of the story is as follows (my translation):

[Some] Jews have to dispute with a priest in sign language, otherwise they would be expelled. A foreign coachman is willing to be the disputant. The priest shows three fingers; the Jew one finger. The priest shows a hand whose fingers are kept apart from each other; the Jew shows his fist. The priest shows red wine; the Jew, white cheese. The priest concedes victory to the Jew. The priest explains: the three fingers are the Holy Trinity, the single finger [stands for] one G-d. The hand with its fingers kept apart [stands for] the Jews dispersed among the nations; the fist [means that] G-d will gather them into one place. The red wine [means that] the Jews are sinners (red symbolises sin); the white cheese [means that] the conscience of the Jews is as white as cheese. The Jew explains: the priest has made a threat with three fingers; the Jew will overpower him with just one finger. The priest will slap him; the Jew will punch him back with his fist. The priest took out wine in order to offer peace; the Jew took out white cheese for the pacification meal.

Clearly, IFA 9857 — as well as IFA 9906, for which see below — have much to do with the version collected by Tamar Alexander, about the butcher who wins without even realising correctly why he passed the test. The symbols, however, are different. My present study will try to clarify why (in historical context) in the Judaeo-Spanish oikotype, an orange and unleavened bread were used.

IFA 9906 was related by a teller, Esther Liuybovitz, whose background is in Russia. It was recorded by Shlomo Laba. The title is "The Coachman and a Bishop Dispute by Signs" (בעל העגלה והגמון בויכוח סימנים). A *balagula* (בעל העגלה) is the stereotypical coarse social inferior, in eastern Ashkenazi Jewish cultures. The précis of this version is as follows (my translation from Hebrew):

A bishop invites a Jew for a disputation by signs. The one who shows up is a coachman. The signs: A. The Gentile shows three fingers; the Jew, only one. B. The Gentile, the palm of his hand; the Jew, a fist. C. The Gentile spreads barley; the Jew collects them. D. The Gentile, a bottle of wine; the Jew, a piece of white cheese. The bishop concedes victory and explains: A. The Holy Trinity [vs] one G-d. B. The [Jewish] people is disunited and dispersed [vs] the people is one, and unified against its haters. C. G-d dispersed you among the nations [vs] G-d will gather us. D. Sins as red as blood [vs] the sins will become as white as snow [cf. *Isaiah* 1:18]. The explanation of the coachman [is]: A. A threat to gouge out his eyes, [so he] threatened him with a finger. B. A hand, in order to slap, [so he] showed him a fist. C. [The other one] was scared, and spread barley, [so the coachman] collected it for his horse. D. [The other one] wanted to make piece with a bottle of wine, and he [the coachman] added also cheese for the pacification meal.

There were low expectations of a *balagula*, a coachman, in Eastern European Jewish Culture indeed, and this finds expression in the two tales considered in the present subsection.

### 3.2.4. A Delinquent, or a Transgressor? A Version from Iraqi Kurdistan

IFA 11510 was told by Ya'akov Badu (whose background is from Iraqi Kurdistan), and was recorded by Jacqueline Allon. The title of this version is "A Delinquent/Transgressor Helps the Jews to Bring about the Repealing of a Decree to Exterminate Them [improperly termed *Shmad*, Forced Conversion]" (פושע עוזר ליהודים בביטול גזרת שמד). (The error in the title is because by lexical interference from Israeli Hebrew *hashmadá*, 'extermination', and the traditional term *shmad* for 'forced conversion', i.e. 'destruction of Jewishness', was used because it exists but was apparently misunderstood). I translate the précis:

A king wants to kill the Jews. The Jews fast for three days. A transgressor/delinquent (*poshéa'*) does not fast. A Jew explains for him why it is necessary to fast. The delinquent decided to go to the King. The King assigns to him three questions, to which he will have to provide an answer by the next day: How will the Messiah manage to gather the Jews from their Diaspora into one place? Where is the middle of the world? How much is the King worth? The delinquent replies wisely

and cunningly. 1. Just as a cock eats wheat that is spread all over the place. 2. The middle of the world is at this place; if the King does not believe this, let him measure the entire world. 3. The King is worth half what a Christian golden cross is worth. The King repeals the decree.

What stands out in IFA 11510 is that even though this version is from Iraqi Kurdistan, the second and third questions are similar to ones asked in Christian versions from Western Europe (e.g., Franco Sacchetti medieval story, from Tuscany, Italy, for which see below). And indeed, that the King cares to consider valid the last reply suggests that he is Christian. Nevertheless, the last reply is simplified with respect to the corresponding question in Christian versions, namely, that the ruler is worth a little less than the thirty coins for which the Christian Saviour was sold. That was an item of knowledge usually not available to Jews (all the more so, to ones living in traditional communities in Iraqi Kurdistan), so the worth of a golden cross considered for its market value is a simpler replacement that fits the bill.

### 3.2.5. Another Kind of Social Inferior: A Man Nicknamed "the Idiot"

IFA 13382 was told by Dani Cohen (whose background is in Morocco) and recorded by Ayelet Ettinger. Its title is "The Three Questions (The Jewish Idiot and the Priest)", שלש השאלות (היהודי האידיוט והכומר).

The précis of IFA 13382 is as follows (my translation from Hebrew):

A Jew who is nicknamed "the idiot" is willing to go and answer the question of the Jew-hating priest who convinced the King that the Jews are undesirable. The Jews are sitting at the synagogue, fasting, because a decree of expulsion is hanging their heads, but when they hear the "the idiot" is willing to go and endanger himself they are amazed, and eventually they allow him to go. The Jew runs towards the palace, the soldiers let him come in, initially the priest laughs upon seeing him, but eventually takes the challenge. The Jew is led into the King's presence, the priest signs V with two fingers, and the idiot makes a sign with one finger. The priest is amazed, and tells the King that he had asked the Jew whether there are two gods and he had replied: "One". The second question: the priest shows him five fingers, and the Jew shows a fist. The face of the priest becomes discoloured: he had asked the Jew why the Jews are dispersed, and he has answered me [sic] that they are liable to coalesce! As third question, the priest showed the Jew a bottle of wine. The Jew in turn showed him white cheese. The priest was a loss, as he had asked: why did the Jews shed innocent blood and had killed the Messiah, and he answered me [sic] "If your sins were scarlet,<sup>33</sup> they will whiten like snow" [cf. *Isaiah* 1:18]. The Jewish idiot leaves the place [the palace] with great riches, money and diamonds carried by donkeys, and goes on his way. Meanwhile, the rumour spreads: the Jew has answered the questions and saved the community from expulsion! When the Jews hold a feat in honour of that "idiot", the Rabbi asks him how he managed to answer three so difficult questions. The Jew replies that he does not know at all what is difficult about that: The Gentile told me he would gouge my eyes with two fingers; I replied to him that out take them [the eyes of the opponent] out with just one finger! With one hand he wanted to slap me, and I showed him I would punch him with my fist! When the Gentile saw this, he wanted to pacify me and offered me wine, so I wanted to make peace with him and gave him cheese. They laughed, and saw that even an idiot is sometimes able to help the Jewish people.

<sup>33</sup> In *Isaiah* 1:18, the word for 'scarlet' is in the plural, *shaním*, but the usual word is in the singular, *shaní*. In Europe, scarlet dye used to be produced by using the European kermes oak coccid *Kermococcus vermilis*, but Zohar Amar has identified with certainty the species relevant for the Bible, Josephus (concerning use at the Temple of Jerusalem), and early rabbinic literature (which specifies that the dye was produced on the mountains and brought to Jerusalem), as another kermes oak coccid, *Kermes echinatus*. See in Amar's book (*infra*), especially on pp. 71 and 58, and in Figs. 20 and 21 in the plates following p. 48. In contrast, the species *K. biblicus* does not fill the bill, as its dye is light brown (Fig. 20 in the plates). Zohar Amar, *Tracking the Scarlet Dye of the Holy Land* (in Hebrew), published by the author (a professor at the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel), 2007. In English, see: Z. Amar, H. Gottlieb, L. Varshavsky and D. Iluz, 'The Scarlet Dye of the Holy Land', *BioScience*, 55 (2005), pp. 780–783.

Version IFA 13382 is more “traditional” than the somewhat similar tale collected by Tamar Alexander, in that the arbiter is the King, and he is not one of the disputants. In the choice of the questions, Version IFA 13382 is not as clever as the tale about the butcher answering the Pope’s questions, because it is entirely unsurprising that a Jew would insist on strict monotheism, but his rejection of duality (the Father and the Son) cannot be expected to assuage the priest from IFA 13382. Perhaps the formulation of the questions in the latter is a trivialisation because of a misunderstanding of the workings of an earlier tale. Nevertheless, the explanation, concerning the first reply in IFA 13382, that the idiot would manage to use even just one finger in order to gouge both eyes of his opponent is a rationalisation which manages to patch out one facet of the clumsy reversal of a question and an answer.

An interesting feature of the tale from Morocco is that it participates of both categories: two-disputants-and-an-arbiter tales (as the priest and the Jew carry out their disputation in front of the King), and two-disputants-only tales: this is because the King in this version from Morocco is passive, and does whatever the priest wants him to do.

It is the priest, in this variant, who concedes defeat (instead of the King declaring him defeated), and the priest actually concedes defeat for each question at a time, by explaining to the King (and to us listeners) how the Jew performed.

It is as though the disputation was not by *adversary arguments* (as in political discussions intended to persuade the audience, or in lawyers’ claims intended to convince the judge or a jury, but not intended to persuade one’s adversary), but by

□ persuasion arguments,<sup>34</sup> or even

<sup>34</sup> In a disputation with adversary arguments, the players do not actually expect to convince each other, and their persuasion goals target observers. Litigants in the courtroom try to persuade not each other, but the adjudicator. Persuasion arguments, instead, have the aim of persuading one’s interlocutor, too. In artificial intelligence, a *Persuasion Machine* was described by M.A. Gilbert, F. Grasso, L. Groarke, L.C. Gurr, and J.-M. Gerlofs, “‘The Persuasion Machine’: Argumentation and Computational Linguistics”, Ch. 5 in C. Reed and T. Norman (eds.), *Argumentation Machines: New Frontiers in Argument and Computation*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003, pp. 121–174.

Persuasive political argument is modelled in K. Atkinson, K., T. Bench-Capon and P. McBurney, ‘Persuasive Political Argument’, in: F. Grasso, C. Reed and R. Kibble (eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Workshop on Computational Models of Natural Argument (CMNA 2005)*, at *IJCAI 2005 [the 19th International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence]*, Edinburgh, Scotland, 2005.

ABDUL/ILANA was a software tool from the early 1980s, developed by computational linguists. It was an AI program simulating the generation of adversary arguments on an international conflict; see M. Flowers, R. McGuire and L. Birnbaum, ‘Adversary Arguments and the Logic of Personal Attacks’, Ch. 10 in: W. Lehnert and M. Ringle (eds.), *Strategies for Natural Language Processing*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1982, pp. 275–294.

Moreover, litigants may *prevaricate*, in order to avoid an undesirable outcome. Dunne’s (2003) ‘Prevarication in Dispute Protocols’ resorted to Dung’s *argumentation frameworks*. See: P.E. Dunne, ‘Prevarication in Dispute Protocols’, in: G. Sartor (ed.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Law (ICAIL 2003)*, Edinburgh, Scotland, 24–28 June 2003, New York: ACM Press, pp. 12–21. P.M. Dung, ‘On the Acceptability of Arguments and Its Fundamental Role in Non-Monotonic Reasoning, Logic Programming and n-Person Games’, *Artificial Intelligence*, 77(2) (1995), pp. 321–357.

In Dung’s argumentation frameworks, an argument is admissible with respect to a set of arguments S if all of its attackers are attacked by some argument in S, and no argument in S attacks an argument in S — in order to “present various settings in which the use of ‘legitimate delay’ can be rigorously modeled, formulate some natural decision questions respecting the existence and utility of ‘prevaricatory tactics’, and, finally, illustrate within a greatly simplified schema, how carefully-chosen devices may greatly increase the length of an apparently ‘straightforward’ dispute” (Dunne, *supra*, p. 12). Lengthening the dispute avoiding it reaching a conclusion is a kind of tactics in noncooperative argumentation. Dunne was concerned “one aspect of legal argument that appears to have been largely neglected in existing work concerning agent discourse protocols — particularly so in the arenas of persuasion and dispute resolution — the use of legitimate procedural devices to defer ‘undesirable’ conclusions being finalised and the deployment of such techniques in seeking to have a decision over-ruled. Motivating our study is the contention that individual agents within an ‘agent society’ could (be programmed to) act in a ‘non-cooperative’ manner: thus, contesting policies/decisions accepted by other agents in the ‘society’ in order to improve some national ‘individual’ utility” (Dunne, *ibid.*, p. 12).

□ truth-seeking argument.<sup>35</sup>

Arguably, the version from Morocco was conditioned by an expectation that a priest has no temporal power (which a pope in Rome, or a prince-bishop in some bishoprics in Europe, would have instead). The King is the one who formally holds power, and in the variant from Morocco he is only needed so that the priest may exercise temporal power through him.

### 3.2.6. A Few Considerations about the Five IFA Versions Examined

In IFA 8895, "Wisdom of the Poor Man", from Turkey, the Jewish disputant is a poor man, thus, socially inferior, but he turns out to be wise. We are not told whether he misunderstood why he won the context, which is instead the case of some other social inferiors: the butcher (in the Judaeo-Spanish tale collected by Tamar Alexander), the coachmen (in IFA 9757 from Poland, and in IFA 9906 from Russia: as mentioned earlier, a *balagula*, 'coachman' is the stereotypical coarse social inferior, in eastern Ashkenazi cultures), the delinquent/transgressor (in IFA 11510 from Iraqi Kurdistan), and the idiot (in IFA 13382 from Morocco).

In none of the five IFA versions examined does the Jewish disputant come into the presence of his adversary under an assumed identity, whereas the butcher who answers the Pope's questions is believed by the Pope to be the city's [chief] rabbi. Elsewhere I have developed a full-fledged representation in formulae for narratives, and have initially applied it especially to such narratives which involve assumed identities, or even (in a play by Marivaux) usurped identities.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> A philosopher, Ghita Holmström-Hintikka (2001), who has applied to legal investigation, and in particular to *expert witnesses* giving testimony and being interrogated in court, the Interrogative Model for Truth-seeking that had been developed by Jaakko Hintikka for use in the philosophy of science. G. Holmström-Hintikka, 'Expert Witnesses in the Model of Interrogation', in: A.A. Martino and E. Nissan (eds.), *Software, Formal Models, and Artificial Intelligence for Legal Evidence*, special issue of *Computing and Informatics*, 20(6) (2001), pp. 555–579. Cf. a previous paper of hers about expert witnesses: Ead., 'Expert Witnesses in Legal Argumentation', *Argumentation*, 9(3) (1995), pp. 489–502.

<sup>36</sup> See: E. Nissan, 'Identification and Doing Without It, I: A Situational Classification of Misapplied Personal Identity, With a Formalism for a Case of Multiple Usurped Identity in Marivaux', *Cybernetics and Systems*, 34(4/5) (2003), pp. 317–358 (with a formalism for aspects in the play *L'Île des esclaves*); Id., 'Identification and Doing Without It, II: Visual Evidence for Pinpointing Identity. How Alexander Was Found Out: Purposeful Action, Enlisting Support, Assumed Identity, and Recognition. A Goal-Driven Formal Analysis', *ibid.*, 34(4/5), (2003), pp. 359–380 (it formalises Alexander the Great's meeting, in disguise, with Queen Candace, from a Middle English romance); Id., 'Identification and Doing Without It, III: Authoritative Opinions, Purposeful Action, Relabelled Goods, and Forensic Examinations. The Case of the Stuffed Birds: Its Narrative Dynamics Set in Formulae', *ibid.*, 34(6/7) (2003), pp. 467–500 (it formalises the narrative of the controversy concerning the bird collection of Col. Richard Meinertzhagen); Id., 'Identification and Doing Without It, IV: A Formal Mathematical Analysis for the Feveroles Case, of Mixup of Kinds and Ensuing Litigation; and a Formalism for the "Cardiff Giant" Double Hoax', *ibid.*, 34(6/7) (2003), pp. 501–530 (the Cardiff Giant case involved Barnum, of circus fame). The same kind of formalism is applied to the personal identities in Pirandello's play *Henry IV*, in: E. Nissan, 'A Formalism for Misapprehended Identities: Taking a Leaf Out of Pirandello', in: Oliviero Stock, Carlo Strapparava and Anton Nijholt (eds.), *Proceedings of the Twentieth Twente Workshop on Language Technology*, Trento, Italy, April 15–16, 2002, pp. 113–123 (this was at the second international workshop in computational humour; the first one, also published as Twente proceedings, had been in 1996). Also see: E. Nissan, 'An AI Formalism for Competing Claims of Identification: Capturing the "Smemorato di Collegno" Amnesia Case', *Computing and Informatics*, 20(6) (2001), pp. 625–656. The formulae in these articles adopt (*inter alia*) an explicit representation of characters' goals. A different, graphical representation was adopted in my COLUMBUS model, which (in analysing the first page of Gerson Rosenzweig's talmudic-like pastiche *Tractate America*, from 1892, a masterpiece of Hebrew writing in the U.S.) makes the hierarchy of characters' or narrational goals and plans explicit: E. Nissan, 'The COLUMBUS Model' (parts I and II), *International Journal of Computing Anticipatory Systems*, 12 (2002), pp. 105–120 and 121–136. For the latter two-part paper, the following can be considered as being sort of a discursive introduction: Id., 'Anticipatory Narrative Construal', *International Journal of Computing Anticipatory Systems*, 8 (2001), pp. 241–256.

### 3.2.7. Entries from Soroudi's Classification of Jewish tale from the Iranic Area

In her book about folktales of the Jews of Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan, the late Sarah Soroudi<sup>37</sup> lists the international tale-type 922, *The Shepherd Substituting for the Priests Answers the King's Questions*. This is quite relevant for the tale-type we are discussing. Soroudi listed four IFA versions from Persia,<sup>38</sup> three IFA versions from Bukhara,<sup>39</sup> and three IFA versions from Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> Instead tale type \*1871 is on a dispute about religions.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, Soroudi<sup>42</sup> enumerates particular questions from the disputation under tale-type 922 \*C *King Sets Tasks to Jew*.<sup>43</sup> "Usually the questions are those of AATh 922." A few of the questions are in theology. One question refers to the ruler himself: "Who is richer than a king? (The man whose body will need more space in the grave)". Another question, uncovered by Soroudi herself, is: "Green hair: Why humans do not have green hair? (Would it be green, asses would feed on it)."

Some other times, the king, rather than asking questions, required the rabbi or the Jews to perform some task, such as showing some holy character.<sup>44</sup> Or then, there are different classes of versions of religious dispute. In one of those clusters: "Discussion between Jews and priest (king) is carried out by gestures (see AaTh 924 A, AaTh 924 B)."<sup>45</sup>

Based on two Jewish variants from Iran, Soroudi defined the following tale-type:<sup>46</sup>

921 \*R (Soroudi) *The Name of Abraham's Mother*

- I. At a chance meeting in the street, the ruler asks a poor Jew (under pain of punishment) (1) what was the name of Abraham's mother or (2) the name of another character from Jewish scripture.
- II. The Jew (a) promptly answers: "Amthlai *bat* (= daughter of) Karnebo" (Bab[ylonian] Talmud, [in tractate] Baba Batra 91 A) or (2) a name invented on the spot. (b) The ruler is surprised.
- III. The Jew (a) asks back: "And what is the name of my mother?" (b) The ruler, of course, does not know and rewards the Jew.  
1–2. Pers: IFA 252 (a); IFA 18,240 (a).

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Different approaches to formal representation (of mixup narratives from norms in the *Mishnah*, a rabbinic legal code from ca. 200 C.E.) are given in: E. Nissan and Jixin Ma, 'Identification and Doing Without It, V: A Formal Mathematical Analysis for a Case of Mixup of Individuals, and of Recovery from Failure to Attain Identification', *Cybernetics and Systems*, 34(6/7) (2003), pp. 531–550; and using a different formalism: E. Nissan, 'SEPPHORIS: An Augmented Hypergraph-Grammar Representation for Events, Stipulations, and Legal Prescriptions', *Law, Computers, and Artificial Intelligence*, 4(1) (1995), pp. 33–77; Id., 'Intermingled Paschal Lambs and Hypergraph Grammars' (Hebrew), in: םאָרֶט = *Studies in Rabbinic Logic*, 3 (1995), pp. 132–150.

<sup>37</sup> On p. 147 in: Sarah Sorour Soroudi, *The Folktale of Jews from Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan: Tale-Types and Genres*. ed. Heda Jason (Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des islamischen Orients, 23), Dortmund: Verlag für Orientkunde, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> IFA 5866, IFA 5876, IFA 9045, and IFA 15208.

<sup>39</sup> IFA 7826, IFA 11920, and IFA 12408.

<sup>40</sup> IFA 3155, IFA 5945, and IFA 8281.

<sup>41</sup> Soroudi, *cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>42</sup> Soroudi, *cit.*, pp. 148–149. In another class of variants: "Jew and Gentile compete in wisdom: Gentile is tricked into saying 'I do not know' (translating verbally the respective Hebrew phrase)." In yet another class of variants: "Jews and non-Jews (Christians, Karaites; or Sunis [*sic*] vs. Shiites) discuss whose religion is older. Jew claims that opponents stole Moses' shoes while he was on Mt. Sinai; opponents answer that they were not there at all".

<sup>43</sup> Of tale-type 922 \*C, Soroudi, p. 149, listed ten IFA versions from Persia (5086, 8897, 10685, 11123, 12496, 12498, 12782, 14190, 14192, and 17508), one version from Bukhara (IFA 9298, in which the King demands an extraordinarily large tribute from the Jews, and somebody volunteers to save them); and four IFA version from Afghanistan (2688, 3155, 8295, and 9421).

<sup>44</sup> "Jew disguised as Moses or Elijah; as evidence of his identity Jew is ready to kill and revive the chief vizier. Vizier gives up" (Soroudi, p. 148).

<sup>45</sup> Soroudi, *ibid.*, pp. 148–149.

<sup>46</sup> Soroudi, *ibid.*, pp. 146–147.

*Karnebo* can be analysed in Hebrew as *kar* 'lamb (of)' and *Nebo* [ne'vo], i.e., Mt. Nebo, where Moses died. Nebo however also exists as the name of a Mesopotamian deity, and if the latter belonged in the intention when making up the name *Karnebo*, then this dovetails with the legend about Abraham's father being a manufacturer and vendor of idols, which his son destroyed blaming the largest among them. When his father found that explanation unbelievable, the son retorted to his father that the latter had just admitted that idols are powerless.

The passage from tractate *Baba Bathra* of the Babylonian Talmud, folio 91, side 1, is as follows, in the Soncino English translation<sup>47</sup> (the brackets are the translator's); it ascribes the same name to the mother Abraham ("Karnebo the daughter of Amathlai", *kar* 'lamb' being a clean animal), and to the mother ("Karnebo the daughter of 'Orabti") of the wicked Haman from the Book of Esther ('*Orabti*, f., 'raven', an unclean animal):

R. Hanan b. Raba further stated in the name of Rab: [The name of] the mother of Abraham [was] Amathlai the daughter of Karnebo; [the name of] the mother of Haman was Amathlai, the daughter of 'Orabti; and your mnemonic [may be], 'unclean [to] unclean, clean [to] clean'. The mother of David was named Nizbeth the daughter of Adael. The mother of Samson [was named] Zlelponith, and his sister, Nashyan. In what [respect] do [these names] matter? — In respect of a reply to the heretics.

The idea is that knowing those names may be useful, in case some heretics point out gaps in the biblical account of sacred history, thus claiming ignorance on the part of the Jews. In general, Jews (like other faiths concerning their respective sacred scriptures) have an oral tradition supplementing the written text. Note that *Şlelponit*, the name claimed for Samson's mother (who is unnamed in the Bible, even though her role in the narrative about the antecedents of Samson's birth are equal, or even more important, than that of her husband, and even though the Jewish tradition concedes that she was more intelligent than her husband, who is named instead as Manoaḥ<sup>48</sup>) is an adaptation (with a feminine suffix) of *Haşlelponi*, the name of the sister of men named in *1 Chronicles* 4:3. My own understanding of the etymology of that woman's name is that it literally means 'the reflected image of my face', as said by a mother of her baby girl.

The Talmudic text continues as follows:

<sup>47</sup> Isidore Epstein (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud, translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices*. London: The Soncino Press, 1935–1948. 35 volume edition: *Seder Nezikin* (8 vols., 1st edn, 1935, repr. 1952, 1956); *Seder Nashim* (8 vols., 1st edn. 1937, repr. 1956); *Seder Mo'ed* (8 vols., 1st edn., 1938; repr. 1956); *Seder Tohoroth* (2 vols., 1st edn. 1948, repr. 1960); *Seder Zera'im* (2 vols., 1st edn., 1948, repr. 1959); *Seder Kodashim* (6 vols., 1st edn. 1948, repr. 1960); *Index Volume* (1952). 18 volume edition: *Seder Nezikin* (4 vols., 1961); *Seder Nashim* (4 vols., 1961); *Seder Mo'ed* (4 vols., 1961); *Seder Tohoroth* (1 vol., 1961); *Seder Zera'im* (1 vol., 1961); *Seder Kodashim* (3 vols., 1961); *Index Volume* (1961). Online version, *Reformatted Soncino Talmud (RST)*, Raanana, Israel: Reuven Brauner, <http://halakhah.com/indexrst.html>

<sup>48</sup> Basically, the identification of Samson's mother with the biblical woman bearing the name *Hatslelponi* fits in a context intended to posit and emphasise Judahite tribal connection of Samson, even though Scripture explicitly affiliates him with the tribe of Dan. Tradition claimed that both his mother, and his father's mother were from the tribe of Judah. Concerning *Hatslelponi*, Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 91), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002, does not mention that name, as it wasn't in use during the period she covered. Yet, Ilan, p. 9, §1.1.2.2, remarks: "Many women mentioned in the Hebrew Bible are themselves not named. As a result a complex literature developed, beginning with the Second Temple period, in which various names were invented for these women. Obviously these names do not feature in this corpus, because the characters they purport to name date from an earlier period. However, a similar phenomenon is also visible with relation to the New Testament. Several nameless women mentioned therein receive names in Christian apocryphal compositions." Ilan, p. 9, fn. 12, cites a paper of her own about the phenomenon in Jewish literature: T. Ilan, 'Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Tradition', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 3 (1993), pp. 3–67.



R. Hanan b. Raba further stated in the name of Rab: Abraham our father was imprisoned for ten years. Three in Kutha, and seven in Kardu. But R. Dimi of Nehardea taught [in the reverse [order]]. R. Hisda said: The small side of Kutha is Ur of the Chaldees.  
 R. Hanan b. Raba further said in the name of Rab: On the day when Abraham our father passed away from the world all the great ones of the nations of the world, stood in a line and said: Woe to the world that has lost {91b:} its leader and woe to the ship that has lost its pilot.

Ur of the Chaldees is Abraham's birthplace. Kardu is Cordiene, i.e., Kurdistan. There were two towns called Kutha on a canal of the river Euphrates. The one who supposedly imprisoned Abraham — before trying to put him to death in a fiery furnace, which he survived — was King Nimrod, according to a Jewish legend about Abraham's youth.

### 3.3. An Example of Christian Versions of the Tale: Franco Sacchetti's Story about Milan's Ruler Bernabò Visconti, the Fearful Abbot, and the Shrewd Miller

Typologically, one finds something similar in tales told by Christians. This is unsurprising, in international folklore. A literary version is found in *Il Trecentonovelle* (*Three Hundred Tales*) by the Florentine short story writer, poet and politician Franco Sacchetti (b. perhaps in Ragusa [the modern Dubrovnik], Dalmatia, ca. 1332–1334, d. San Miniato, Tuscany, 1400).

Sacchetti "writes as if he were talking casually to friends. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars have puzzled over whether the frank and humorous style, with its popular proverbs and colloquialisms, was the result of artful or unselfconscious naturalness."<sup>49</sup> "Roughly one quarter of the tales concern tricks and jokes, either physical or verbal; other exemplify the risks of dealing with powerful men, the worldliness of the clergy, the tendency of small events to get out of hand, and the importance of recognizing good advice."<sup>50</sup>

Some of Sacchetti's tales are about Bernabò Visconti (1323–1385), who ruled over Milan and had been cruel but rather wise. Sacchetti is not judgemental, concerning his morality. For example, in one tale (Novella LXXIV) he relates about how Bernabò Visconti mistreated a very short diplomat with a yellowish complexion who had been sent to him, while being outwardly correct in what he told him.

In the abstract prefacing that tale, the text actually states that Visconti had treated that man "as he deserved", because of his physical handicaps: "Messer Beltrando da Imola manda un notaio per ambasciadore a messer Bernabò, il quale, veggendolo piccolo e giallo, il tratta come merita." ["Sir Bertram Alidosi of Ímola sends a norary as ambassador to Sir Bernabò, who, upon seeing him quite short and yellow, treats him as he deserve."]<sup>51</sup>

Sacchetti moralises, in that story, suggesting that when one sends out diplomats, they should be so chosen that their looks impress favourably. Alidosi hears "dal giallo ambasciadoruzzo come era stato trattato" ["hears from that yellow despicable amassadorling how he had been trated"] (the depreciative *ambasciadoruzzo* is a striking neologism), and realises that the reason for that was the looks of his emissary, "who rather resembled an oriole

<sup>49</sup> Quoted from p. 1649 in Janet Levarie Smarr, 'Franco Sacchetti (ca. 1332/1334–1400)', in: Gaetana Marrone (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies* (2 vols.), New York: Routledge, 2007, Vol. 1, pp. 1649–1650.

<sup>50</sup> Smarr, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> This is not just a medieval attitude (provided that the summary is not from the early modern period instead, as the *Trecentonovelle* survived in a manuscript from the early modern period indeed). I recall that as a teenager in the early 1970s at Jewish day school in Milan, my class was shown a documentary about Fascist newsreel during the Second World War.

A Nazi newsreel had been dubbed in Italian, by a Fascist in a bold tone. A city in Poland had been conquered by the Germans. They had brought and pushed britally in front of the camera two oldish men, with huge noses. These were introduced as being Jewish, even though it is quite possible that they were not. (After all, in an Italian small town there is an annual contest for the biggest nose in Italy.) Then the two men were pushed away, and the male dubbing voice said sneering: "Saranno trattati come si meritano!" ["They'll be treated as they deserve!"]

(*rigògolo*, a yellow bird) than a person" ("il quale pareva uno rigogolo piú tosto che persona"). This is followed by the last paragraph of that tale, in which Sacchetti offers advice about how to choose ambassadors. After all, he was a politician himself.



Fig. 1. Bernabò Visconti (1323–1385).

The fourth *novella* from Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle* is given below, in Italian along with my own translation.

#### NOVELLA IV

*Messer Bernabò signore di Melano comanda a uno abate, che lo chiarisca di quattro cose impossibili; di che uno mugnajo, vestitosi de' panni dello abate, per lui le chiarisce in forma che rimane abate, e l'abate rimane mugnajo.*

[Sir Bernabò, Lord of Milan, gives order to an abbot to enlighten him concerning four impossible things; a miller, dressed like the abbot, elucidates them in such a manner that he remain abbot, whereas the abbot remains a miller.]

Messer Bernabò signor di Melano, essendo trafitto da un mugnajo con belle ragioni, gli fece dono di grandissimo beneficio. Questo signore ne' suoi tempi fu ridottato da più che altro signore; e comechè fusse crudele, pure nelle sue crudeltà avea gran parte di justizia.

[Sir Bernabò, Lord of Milan, having been defeated by a miller with apt arguments, made a gift to him of a huge benefit. This lord, at his times, was feared by other rulers. Albeit cruel, nevertheless in his act of cruelty there was much justice.]

Fra molti de' casi che gli avvennono, fu questo, che uno ricco abate, avendo commesso alcuna cosa di negligenza di non aver ben notricato due cani alani, che erano divenuti stizzosi, ed erano del detto signore, li disse che pagasse fiorini quattro. Di che l'abate cominciò a domandare misericordia.

[Among the many things that happened to him, there was the following. A rich abbot had been negligent, not having fed well two Great Danes, which made them irritable. They belonged to that lord. He told him to pay four florins. At that, the abbot began to ask for clemency.]

E 'l detto signore, veggendoli addomandare misericordia, gli disse: Se tu mi fai chiaro di quattro cose, io ti perdonerò in tutto; e le cose son queste: che io voglio che tu mi dica: quanto ha di qui al cielo: quant'acqua è in mare: quello che si fa in inferno; e quello che la mia persona vale.

[That lord, seeing him asking for clemency, told him: If you clarify to me four things, I shall forgive you everything; and those things are as follows. I want you to tell me: How far is the sky from here? How much water is there in the sea? What are they doing in Hell? And what is my person worth?]

Lo abate, ciò udendo, cominciò a sospirare, e parveli essere a peggior partito che prima; ma pur, per cessar furore e avvanzar tempo, disse, che li piacesse darli termine a rispondere a sì alte cose. E 'l signor gli diede termine tutto il dì seguente; e come vago d'udire il fine di tanto fatto, gli fece dare sicurtà del tornare.

[As the abbot heard that, he started to sigh. It seemed to him that his condition had been made worse. Nevertheless, in order to assuage the anger and in order to buy time, he asked him to please give him a deadline by which he would provide an answer to such elevated things. The lord gave him a deadline by the end of the next day, and as though he was eager to hear how this would end, he had him give him a guarantee that he would come back.]

L'abate, pensoso, con gran malenconia tornò alla badia, soffiando come un cavallo quando aombra; e giunto là, scontrò un suo mugnaio, il quale, veggendolo così afflitto, disse: Signor mio, che avete voi che voi soffiate così forte?

[The abbot, pensive, returned to the abbey with great melancholy, blowing like a horse getting skittish. Once he was there, he met a miller of his, who upon seeing him so dispirited, said: Milord, what do you have, that you blow so strongly?]

Rispose l'abate: Io ho ben di che, chè 'l signore è per darmi la mala ventura, se io non lo fo chiaro di quattro cose, che Salamone nè Aristotile non lo potrebbe fare. Il mugnaio dice: E che cose son queste? L'abate gli lo disse. Allora il mugnajo, pensando, dice all'abate: Io vi caverò di questa fatica, se voi volete. Dice l'abate: Dio il volesse.

[The abbot replied: It is for good reason, as the lord intends to mistreat me, if I do not clarify four things, which is something that neither Solomon, nor Aristotle could do. The miller says: What are these things? The abbot told him. Then the miller thinks it over, and tells the abbot: I'll spare you this chore, if you want. The abbot says: Please G-d.]

Dice il mugnajo: Io credo che 'l vorrà Dio e' santi. L'abate, che non sapea dove si fosse, disse: Se tu il fai, togli da me ciò che tu vuoi, chè niuna cosa mi domanderai, che possibil mi sia, che io non ti dia. Disse il mugnajo: Io lascerò questo nella vostra descrizione.

[The miller says: I think that it will please G-d and the saints. The abbot, who did not know what to do, said: If you do this, you can have from me whatever you wish, and there is nothing that you could ask me for, which I would not give you. The miller said: I'll leave this to your discretion.]

O che modo terrai? disse l'abate. Allora rispose il mugnajo: Io mi voglio vestir la tonica e la cappa vostra, e raderommi la barba, e domattina ben per tempo anderò dinanzi a lui, dicendo, che io sia l'abate; e le quattro cose terminerò in forma, ch'io credo farlo contento. All'abate parve mill'anni di sostituire il mugnajo in suo luogo; e così fu fatto.

[How will you behave? The abbot said. Then the miller replied: I want to put on your cassock and cloak, and I shall shave my beard, and tomorrow early in the morning I will go to him, saying I am the abbot; and the four things, I'll put in such form, that I think I would satisfy him. The abbot was quite glad to send the miller in his stead, and this was done indeed.]

Fatto il mugnajo abate, la mattina di buon'ora si mise in cammino e giunto alla porta, là dove entro il signor dimorava, picchiò, dicendo che tale abate voleva rispondere al signore sopra certe cose, che gli avea imposte.

[Once the miller was made an abbot, early in the morning he started off. Once he reached the door, beyond which the lord dwelt, he knocked, saying that the abbot So-and-So wanted to give the lord a reply concerning certain things, that he had given to him as an assignment.]

Lo signore, volentoroso d'udir quello che lo abate dovea dire, e maravigliandosi come s'è presto tornasse, lo fece a sé chiamare: e giunto dinanzi da lui un poco al barlume, facendo reverenza, occupando spesso il viso con la mano, per non esser conosciuto, fu domandato dal signore, se avea recato risposta delle quattro cose, che l'avea addomandato.

[The lord, as he was eager to hear what the abbot had to say, and amazed at how early he had come back, had him called into his presence. Once he came before him, in rather dim light, he curtsied, and he often covered his face with his hand so that he would not be recognised. The lord asked him whether he had brought a reply to the four things he had asked him.]

Rispose: Signor sì. Voi mi domandaste: quanto ha di qui al cielo. Veduto appunto ogni cosa, egli è di qui lassù trentasei milioni, e ottocento cinquantaquattro mila, e settantadue miglia, e mezzo, e ventidue passi.

[He replied: Yes, Sir. You asked me: How far is the sky from here? Having checked everything, it is far from here thirty-six millions, eight hundred fifty-four thousand, seventy-two miles and a half, and twenty-two steps.]

Dice il signore: Tu l'hai veduto molto appunto; come provi tu questo? Rispose: Fatelo misurare, e se non è così, impiccatemi per la gola.

[The lord says: You have seen very much indeed; how do you prove it? He replied: Have it measured, and if it is not so, have me hanged.]

Secondamente domandaste: quant'acqua è in mare. Questo m'è stato molto forte a vedere, perchè è cosa che non sta ferma, e sempre ve n'entra; ma pure io ho veduto, che nel mare sono venticinque mila e novecento ottantadue di milioni di cogna, e sette barili, e dodici boccali, e due bicchieri.

[Secondly, you asked: How much water is there in the sea? This I found very difficult to ascertain, because it is something that does not stand still, so there always is something else that comes in. Nevertheless I ascertained that in the sea there are twenty-five billion, nine hundred eighty-two million *cogna*,<sup>52</sup> and seven barrels, and twelve jugs, and two glassfuls.]

Disse il signore: Come 'l sai? Rispose: Io l'ho veduto il meglio che ho saputo: se non lo credete, fate trovar de' barili, e misurisi; se non trovate essere così, fatemi squartare.

[The lord said: How do you know it? He replied: I have ascertained as well as I could; if you don't believe it, procure some barrels, and let it be measured; should you find that it is not the way I said, have me quartered.]

Il terzo mi domandaste quello che si faceva in inferno. In inferno si taglia, squarta, arraffia, e impicca, nè più nè meno come fate qui voi. Che ragione rendi tu di questo? Rispose: Io favellai già con uno che vi era stato, e da costui ebbe Dante fiorentino ciò che scrisse delle cose dello 'ferno; ma egli è morto; se voi non lo credeste, mandatelo a vedere.

[The third thing you asked me is what they do in Hell. In Hell, they cut, quarter, snatch [chunks of flesh], and hang, neither more nor less than you do here. [The lord asked:] How do you explain it? He replied: Time ago, I had a chat with one who had been there. It was from him that Dante of Florence learned what he wrote about the matters of hell. But he is dead. If you don't believe it, send somebody to see him.]

#### What follows is the hallmark of Christian versions of this tale:

Quarto mi domandate, quello che la vostra persona vale; ed io dico, ch'ella vale ventinove danari. Quando Messer Bernabò udì questo, tutto furioso si volge a costui, dicendo: Mo ti nasca il vermocan; son io così dappoco ch'io non vaglia più d'una pignatta?

[The fourth thing that you asked me, if who much worth your person is. I say, you are worth twenty-nine *denarii*. Once Sir Bernabò heard this, full of anger he turned to him, saying: May you fall ill with "dog worms" (*vermocane*), am I worth so little that I am no more worth than a pot?]

<sup>52</sup> One *cogno* (from Latin *congius*) was about ten barrels.

Rispose costui, e non senza gran paura: Signor mio, udite la ragione. Voi sapete, che 'l nostro Signore Jesù Cristo fu venduto trenta danari; fo ragione che valetè un danaro meno di lui.

[Quite afraid, he replied: Milord, please listen why. You know that the Lord Jesus Christ was sold for thirty *denarii*; I reckon that you are worth one *denarius* less than him.]

Unlike in the Judaeo-Spanish tale of the butcher disguised as the chief rabbi of Rome, the ruler of Milan realises that the replies he heard cannot have come from the abbot. That implies that Bernabò Visconti had low expectations of that particular abbot.

Udendo questo il signore, immaginò troppo bene che costui non fosse l'abate, e guardandolo ben fiso, avvisando lui esser troppo maggiore uomo di scienza che l'abate non era, disse: Tu non se' l'abate.

[Upon hearing this, the lord figured out that evidently this was not the abbot, and staring at him attentively, having realised that this man surpassed too much the abbot as a man of science, he said: You are not the abbot.]

La paura che 'l mugnajo ebbe, ciascuno il pensi; inginocchiandosi con le mani giunte, addomandò misericordia, dicendo al signore, come egli era mulinaro dell'abate, e come e perché camuffato dinanzi dalla sua signoria era condotto, e in che forma avea preso l'abito, e questo più per darli piacere, che per malizia.

[You can imagine how afraid the miller was. He kneeled down with joined hands, and asked for clemency, telling the lord that he was a millar of the abbot, and the circumstances of his coming in disguise into the presence of his lordship, and how it came upon to pass that he had put on clerical garb. He did this to please him, rather than out of malice.]

Messer Bernabò, udendo costui, disse: Mo via, poich'ello t'ha fatto abate, e se' da più di lui, in fè di Dio ed io ti voglio confirmare, e voglio che da qui innanzi tu sia l'abate, ed ello sia il mulinaro, e che tu abbia tutta la rendita del monasterio ed ello abbia quella del mulino. E così fece ottenere tutto il tempo che visse, che lo abate fu mugnajo, e 'l mugnajo fu abate.

[Upon hearing this, Sir Bernabò said: Fine. As he made you an abbot, and you are worth more than him, I swear that I want to confirm you at that rank, and I want that henceforth you shall be the abbot, and he shall be the miller, and that you shall receive all the rent of the monastery, whereas he shall receive the rent of the mill. He saw to it that such would be the situation as long as he lived: that the abbot was a miller, and the miller was an abbot.]

At this point, Sacchetti offers a general reflection:

Molto è scura cosa, e gran pericolo, d'assicurarsi dinanzi a' signori, come fe questo mugnajo, e avere quello ardire ebbe lui. Ma de' signori interviene come del mare, dove va l'uomo con grandi pericoli, e ne gran pericoli li gran guadagni. Ed è gran vantaggio quando il mare si truova in bonaccia, e così ancora il signore; ma l'uno e l'altro è gran cosa di potersi fidare, che fortuna tosto non vegna.

[It is a dire thing, full of danger, of staying safe in the presence of rulers — which is what this miller did — and having the courage he had. But with rulers, it is like with the sea: man goes there at great risk, and it is from great risks, that one derives great gains. It is a great advantage when the sea is calm, and likewise, the ruler. In both cases, you cannot really be trusting that out of a sudden fate would not strike.]

The rest of the Fourth Novella is fascinating, for a folklorist: Sacchetti is aware that there also exists a different version of this tale, and that

Alcuni hanno già detto, essere venuta questa, o simil novella a... papa, il quale, per colpa commessa da un suo abate, li disse, che li specificasse le quattro cose dette di sopra, e una più, cioè: qual fosse la maggior ventura che elli mai avesse avuto.

[Some have already said that this, or a similar tale, had happened with a pope, who — because of some misconduct on the part of some abbot of his — told him to specify the four things mentioned earlier, with the addition of another one, namely: What was the greatest event that had ever happened to him.]

Di che l'abate, avendo rispetto della risposta, tornò alla badia, e ragunati li monaci, e' conversi, infino al cuoco e l'ortolano, raccontò loro quello di che avea a rispondere al detto papa; e che a ciò gli dessono e consiglio e ajuto.

[Then the abbot, concerned about what to reply, returned to the abbey, and having gathered the monks, and the lay brothers, and even the cook and the vegetables gardener (*ortolano*), related to them what he had to provide a reply for to that pope, so that they would advise him and help him.]

Egolino, non sapendo alcuna cosa che si dire, stavano come smemorati: di che l'ortolano, veggendo che ciascheduno stava muto, disse: Messer l'abate, perocchè costoro non dicono alcuna cosa, ed io voglio esser colui e che dica e che faccia, tantochè io credo trarvi di questa fatica; ma datemi li vostri panni, sì che io vada come abate, e di questi monaci mi seguino; e così fu fatto.

[They did not know what to say, so they stood absentmindedly. Upon that the gardener, seeing that everybody was silent, said: Milord, as they say nothing, I volunteer to say and do, as indeed I think I'll manage to spare you this chore. But let me have your garb, so that I'd go as an abbot, and let these monks follow me. This was carried out.]

E giunto al papa, disse, dell'altezza del cielo esser trenta voci. Dell'acqua del mare disse: Fate turare le bocche de' fiumi, che vi mettono entro, e poi si misuri. Quello che valea la sua persona, disse: Danari ventotto; ché la faceva due danari meno di Cristo, ché era suo vicario. Della maggior ventura ch'egli avesse mai, disse: Come d'ortolano era diventato abate; e così lo confermò. Come che si fosse, o intervenne all'uno e all'altro, o all'uno solo, e l'abate diventò o mugnajo o ortolano.

[Once he had come into the presence of the Pope, he said that the height of the sky was thirty voices.<sup>53</sup> Of the water of the sea, he said: Have the mouths of the tributary rivers sealed off, and then measure it. Concerning the worth of his person, he said: Twenty-eighth *denarii*; as he made it two *denarii* less than Christ, as he was deputising for him. As for the greatest even that had ever happened to him, he related how from the [monastery's] vegetable gardener, he had become abbot. As such he [the Pope] confirmed him. At any rate, it either happened to the one and to the other, or to only one of them, and the abbot became either a miller, or a vegetables gardener.]

Unlike the miller, the gardener of the monastery is apparently not afraid to reveal his real station in life. Unlike the miller, the gardener is not doing so under duress. His is malice: he is self-assured, and he is seizing his opportunity. Nevertheless, the last question gives him ample opportunity for behaving that way, and he is being truthful.

### 3.4. A Few Comparative Diagrams

Let us draw a few comparisons between our main tale, and Sacchetti's two versions. We avoid here the complications of also including in the comparison the five IFA versions whose respective précis we provided. Our goal in this subsection is just to point out some similarities and differences between the two tales which Sacchetti related in Tale 4 of his *Trecentonovelle*, and the tale a storyteller's performance of which was discussed by tamar Alexander, and which is the main object of our own discussion in the present study.

For example, the two versions (the Jewish one, and Sacchetti's second one) which have the Pope as a character actually have a type fill that role, whereas in Sacchetti's first version, we have a specific character of a ruler: Bernabò Visconti, who also appears in some other tales from the *Trecentonovelle*.

<sup>53</sup> Apparently, one voice is as far as somebody's voice could be heard.

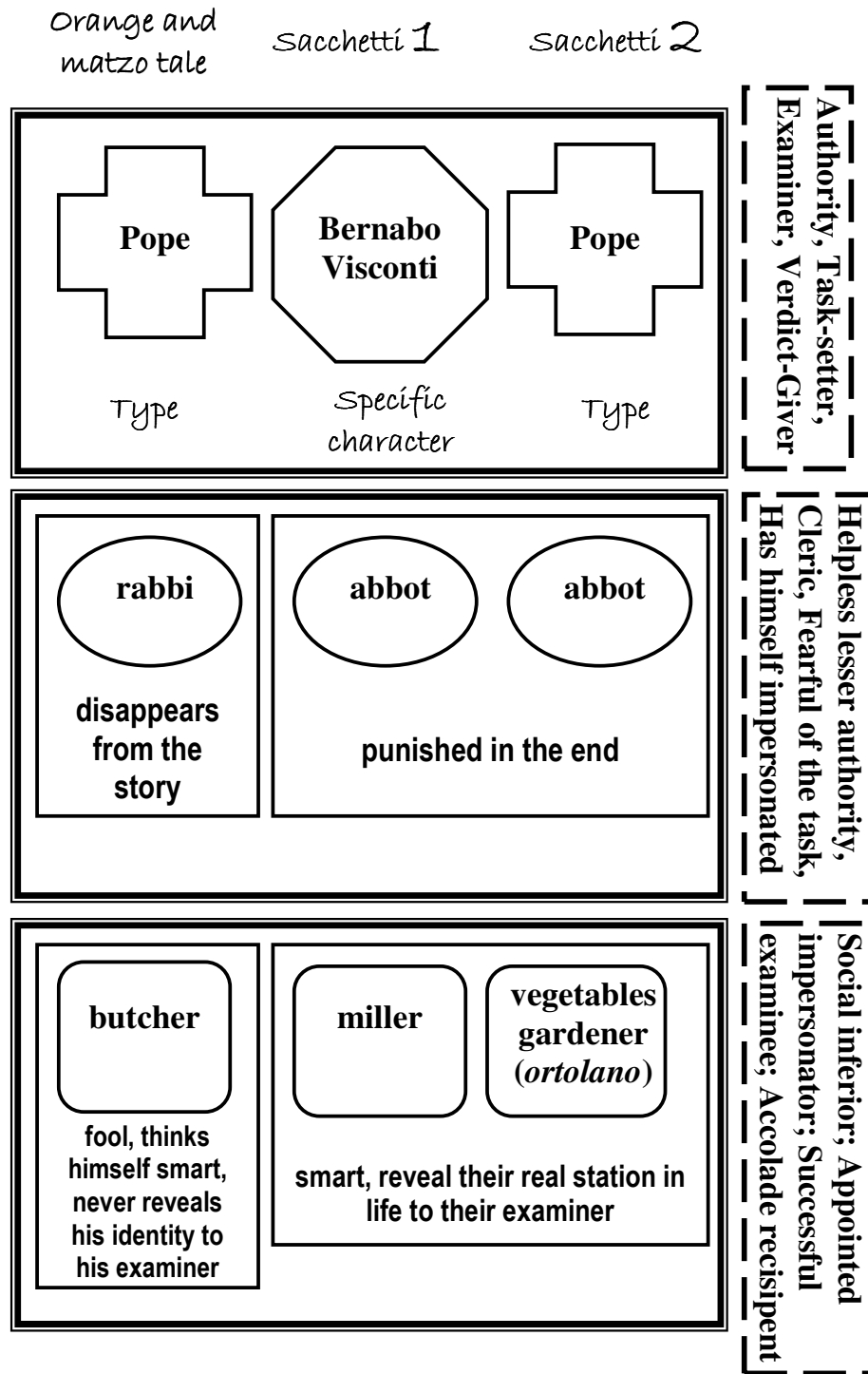


Fig. 2. A comparative diagram of the three social tiers in three tales.

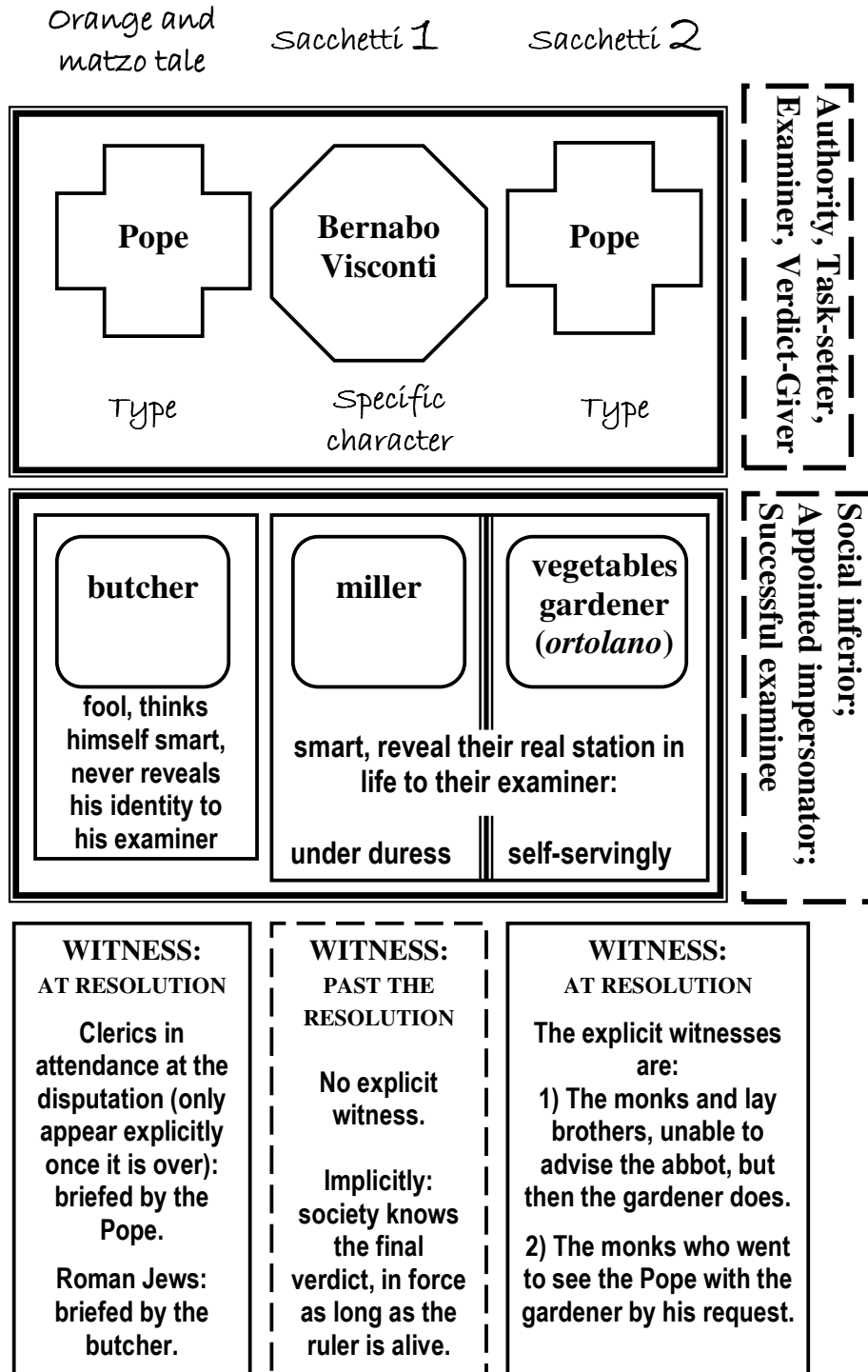


Fig. 3. A comparative diagram of the disputants and audience.

The inability of the monks and lay brothers to find answers to what is puzzling their boss (the abbot in Sacchetti's second version), until the gardener intervenes, somewhat reminds of Pharaoh's courtiers, unable to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, until Joseph (a foreigner) is summoned from jail.



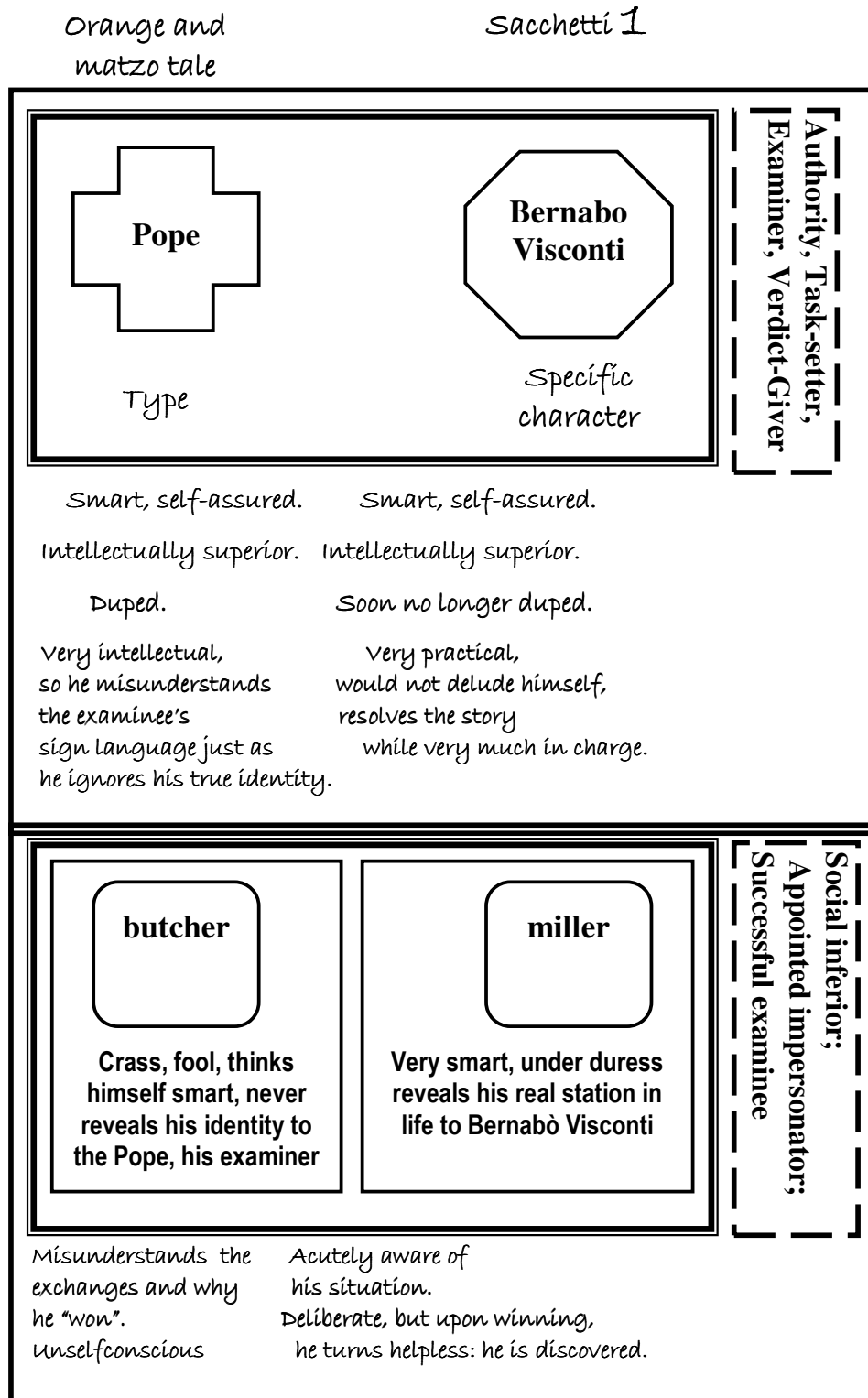


Fig. 4. A comparative diagram considering features of the disputants.

The butcher is shown to have misunderstood the situation even as he has achieved his community's preservation goal. This situation is shared with the ending of some other Jewish versions of this tale, from the Israel Folktale Archives, as seen earlier. Moreover, this situation is shared with the ending of yet another tale from the class of Jewish tales about interfaith disputation, in which the Jewish disputant is an ignoramus (thus, a paradoxical champion): the Jews receive an injunction from the King for them to send him a disputant to represent them; they have been challenged by a very learned member of the clergy, who knows Hebrew. (The disputation however is to take place in the vernacular, in front of the King.) Each disputant has to ask a question. The one who fails to give the correct answer is to be beheaded immediately. The challenger feels so confident, that he invites the Jewish disputant (who is an ignoramus who volunteered) to ask him his question first. The Jew asks: "What does *Einí yodéa* mean?" The challenger translates from Hebrew correctly: "I don't know". He is immediately beheaded. The winner is later congratulated by co-religionists, who asks him how he came up with such a clever question. The ignoramus replies that he had overheard the rabbi being asked the same question, and that the rabbi had answered "I don't know". He then says: "If even the rabbi didn't know, how could a non-Jew know?" Here the workings of the humour depend on metalanguage (uttering metalinguistically a statement in the first person about not knowing) being mistaken for object-level knowledge (thus, with the inference that the utterer does not know the answer).

#### 4. Considerations about Tamar Alexander's Sephardic Variant of Tale Type 922 \*C

##### 4.1. Considerations about the Characters' Respective Strategies

Let us focus on the variant described by Tamar Alexander. The following considerations are called for, concerning the behaviour of the characters of the story. The Pope character proceeds in the realm of ideas while riddling (but of temporal power while summoning). His empirical method is *confirmationist* rather than *falsificationist*, if we are to resort to the terminology of the philosophies behind both scientific inquiry and interrogation for home enforcement purposes. The Pope character expects his interlocutor to be a rabbi who will try and reply intellectually, as best as he can, as the stakes for his community are high. But the format of the riddle enables the confirmationist interpretation to be merely a delusion. This is the fallacy in which the Pope character incurs in the folktale variant we are considering.

The rabbi, instead, appreciates that given the power gap, sometimes the social relations established during the communication prevail over the content. But his bet is too risky: he did not know beforehand that the format was going to be a pantomime. Had it been an intellectual discussion, the boorish butcher could not succeed. The butcher understands concreteness, and in this he is conditioned by his social class, poor schooling, and even his own perception of his body (tall and strong).

The success of the butcher at the disputation belongs in the realm of such folktales whose protagonist is somewhere between the trickster and the fool, and where the outcome is success for that protagonist mainly because of good luck. Nevertheless, it is not sheer luck: the protagonist makes his own contribution to the outcome. But what he believes he is doing and accomplishing is different from what the audience knows (or eventually comes to know) about what the actual situation is.

If we are to adopt the terminology of *systems & control*, an area of mathematics that finds application in engineering as well as in other domains, and is concerned with dynamic systems, we can put it as follows. The butcher can provide an *estimate of the state of the*

system, based on the *space of observability*,<sup>54</sup> and he also can take action, that will have some effect inside the *space of reachability*. But he reaches further than he can see.

When the butcher understands that his august interlocutor threatens to take out one of his eyes, and he makes the counterthreat of gouging both eyes in return, the butcher is applying to the quite delicate encounter with authority a pattern of behaviour befitting a row in the street between members of the lower classes. In a special sense, this is amenable, then, to the class of folktales about the fool who applies an item of common sense in an inappropriate situation. But as the Pope character expects that his interlocutor is the chief rabbi, and that he is trying hard to solve his riddles on the same intellectual level, the Pope character never realises what the butcher is revealing about his real identity. This is so, because they are enacting a pantomime. What each of them was thinking is only revealed, in turn, when they recapitulate their exchanges in their respective entourages.

Already these are ingredients in what makes the story under discussion so funny. But there are several levels of understanding. The audience is first treated to a riddle: the pantomime of the Pope and the man he believes to be the rabbi, and is instead the butcher. Then the audience is treated to the Pope's explanation to his entourage. And finally, the audience is treated to the explanation the butcher is providing to the Jews outside. These must be ecstatic, but they must wonder at how on earth it could have worked. For sure the butcher (counter)threatening the Pope in the end, the way he presents the matter, could not have made the Pope even affectionate towards him? The audience of the storyteller is gradually given exposure to an array of perspectives. In the end, they are wiser than all of the *dramatis personae*.

#### 4.2. Siding with the Catholic Camp — the *Azymites*

In the jargon of the polemic between Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox church concerning how to perform the Eucharistic rite, the Orthodox used to refer to the Catholics as *azymites*, i.e., those who use unleavened bread.<sup>55</sup> As to early Protestant polemic against Catholicism, some were not above poking uproarious fun at what happens to the host (as to

<sup>54</sup> If we are to consider the cognition and behavioural abilities of the given character, along with the surroundings and the characters with whom he interacts, to be amenable to representation as a dynamic system.

<sup>55</sup> *Azymites* is a derogatory word traditionally used for 'Catholics' by the Orthodox Church, because the bread used for Catholic Eucharistic rite is unleavened, whereas a Catholic derogatory word for the Orthodox is *fermentarii*, precisely because in the Orthodox Eucharistic rite the bread is leavened. Also consider that the denomination of the Barsanufians used to sprinkle semolina on the Eucharistic bread before consumption.

The following quotation is from p. 5388 in the entry for 'Leaven' (by James E. Latham, unmodified from the 1st edition of 1987), in: Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition*, Detroit, Michigan: Macmillan Reference USA (Thomson Gale), 2005, Vol. 8, pp. 5388–5389.

The bread used for the Eucharist was leavened in the Eastern church and unleavened in the Western rite. These geographical variations caused no difficulty until the Middle Ages, when the discrepancy gradually became a point of contention. It reached a climax in 1054 in the Azyme Controversy preceding the Great Schism that divided the Eastern and Western churches. Mohlan Smith, tracing the controversy in his book *And Taking Bread* [M.H. Smith, *And Taking Bread: Cerularius and the Azyme Controversy of 1054*, Paris, 1978] suggests that Eastern and Western liturgical traditions involving different types of eucharistic bread are based on an apparent disagreement in the scriptures about the date of the last supper. The synoptic gospels seem to indicate that the last supper took place on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. A reading of *John*, on the other hand, suggests that Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation. If this interpretation of *John* is accepted, the last supper would not have been a Passover meal, and leavened bread would have been used. The Eastern church's liturgical use of leavened bread also has theological overtones: It accentuates the break between the Old and New Covenants. Western rituals, on the other hand, emphasize the continuity of Hebrew and Christian traditions.

any other food) inside the digestive system. Consider however that the Eucharist was taken over, as a sacrament, as a sacred meal, rather than as a wafer:

Alongside baptism, then, the only act seen as sacramental in the vast majority of Protestantism is the sacred meal. [...] They have almost unanimously — the Salvation Army and the Quakers being the nearly sole exceptions — taken over the Catholic sacrament of this meal and put their stamp on it. [...] Lutheranism, as an expression of a conservative Reformation, came closest to keeping the sacramental worldview with its implications for the bread and wine *as* body and blood of Christ. But even Lutheranism rebelled against *ex opere operato* concepts and did not want to see a change in the visible elements, a transubstantiation, of any sort. This could lead to what Lutherans saw to be superstitious or magical reverence. Most other Protestants sided with the Reformed tradition. They did not see the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion as an occasion for seeing God in Christ as present or for regarding Christ as sacramentally experienced in assemblies. Instead they located the Lord's Supper in a system of grace as a human response, to which people brought their faith and their intentions in response to a command of God. Whatever their doctrinal attitude toward the rite, these Protestants took the meal seriously.<sup>56</sup>

In the pantomime we are discussing in this article, to the Pope who had shown the Jew an orange (conveying the message, as I see it: "You are siding with the House of Orange, aren't you? You folks have relations in Amsterdam, don't you?"), the Jew retorting by showing the Pope some unleavened bread must have meant: "We are on your side, not the Protestants'". Without going as far as the Jew endorsing the Eucharistic dogma, the Jew's response was reassuring about the Roman Jews' allegiances.

Alessandro Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* (third edn., 1840), the foremost novel of the Italian literary canon, is set in the 1620s century. The accessory character of the Nun of Monza ("la Monaca di Monza"), one of the baddies of the novel, is introduced by relating how this aristocrat let herself be seduced by a certain Egidio. A novice from the convent who had seen them together was murdered, and her corpse made to disappear. Nuns used to say, Manzoni relates, that she must have gone to the Paesi Bassi (i.e., Netherlands, the Low Countries), but it could also be deciphered as 'netherworld'. Being heretical was diabolic, and would surely land one so inclined in Hell. In a sense, Netherlands and netherworld were interchangeable.

### 4.3. The House of Orange, Dutch Carrots, Orange Carrots

The territory of Orange in Provence was the "principauté d'Orange", which by the decree of 25 June 1793 became part of the France's department of Vaucluse, along with the former Papal States (i.e., Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin), the county of Sault, the Provençal lands north of the river Durance, and a few municipalities (communes) of Dauphiné. The toponym from Provence is associated with the name of a famous Protestant dynasty. "We are not Orangists [supporters of the Protestants], are we? We side with those who believe in the Eucharist!". This is the original sense that probably was ascribed to the symbols in the pantomime, when it came into being, if its origins are early modern, say, from anytime in the 18th century.<sup>57</sup> It is important to understand that the cause of the House of Orange was intimately connected with the cause of Dutch independence from Spain, as well as with the Protestant cause against the Imperial (Catholic) cause. It has been claimed that the "modern"

<sup>56</sup> This quotation is from p. 7455 in: Martin E. Marty, 'Protestantism', in: Lindsay Jones (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition*, Detroit, Michigan: Macmillan Reference USA (Thomson Gale), 2005, Vol. 11, pp. 7446–7459 (this entry was taken over from the 1987 edition, and only the bibliography was revised for the second edition).

<sup>57</sup> I avoid getting into the extremely contentious subject of Orange marches and Orangemen in the context of the British Isles, but suffice it to mention this to show how the very name of the Orange dynasty still resonates in the context of fierce controversies.

carrot only arrived in Europe in the early Middle Ages, sometime in the last three centuries of the first millennium C.E., apparently in relation to the Arab conquest, but also to the revival of horticulture under Charlemagne. In the first two centuries of the second millennium, mentions of different varieties of carrots are documented (from both Muslim Spain, and Christian Europe), and these were described by colour: red and yellow, orange either not being mentioned as such, or actually not being at the time the colour of which cultivated carrots were found.

An orange carrot root is found as early as a large and detailed picture found on folio 312 in a Byzantine manuscript from the early sixth century, the Codex Vindobonensis of the *Herbal* of Dioscorides. The picture shows, at the bottom, also secondary roots (i.e., forks other than the main one), but these are known to develop if the plant finds some obstacle in the ground. Orange carrots became popular in the Netherlands in the 17th century, and the colour itself being popular may have been a factor in the popularity of orange carrots: the colour was associated with the ruling House of Orange (itself so named after a town in southern France), and the struggle for Dutch independence from Spain.

The story that orange carrots were bred for the very purpose of honouring William of Orange is likely to be apocryphal however. That growers tried to modify the yellow colour of a mutant into orange, because that was the national colour in the Netherlands, may be true instead (or then it, too, is just a romantic tale), but orange carrots are known to have occurred earlier on. An advantage of the orange carrot was that unlike with the purple carrot (that turns brown while cooked), the orange carrot does not leech its colour into cookware.

Cultivars (i.e., cultivated varieties) of carrots are divided in "eastern carrots" (purple or yellow),<sup>58</sup> and "western carrots": these are orange, originally from the Netherlands.<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.4. Amsterdam, a Hub of the Sephardic Social Network

The Jews of Spain and Sicily were expelled in 1492, and those of Portugal (including refugees from Spain) were forcibly converted a few years later. The Netherlands breaking free from Spanish rule provided a haven, initially only in Amsterdam, for Jews of the Judaeo-Iberian (i.e., Sephardic) diaspora (including some people who had been outwardly Christians, and reverted to Judaism in Amsterdam). Up to a point, there were shared interests between the Dutch cause, and the Sephardic cause.<sup>60</sup> And in a sense, the Dutch cause and the cause of those Sephardis to whom Amsterdam was important, was closer than the solidarity for the Protestant cause on the part of some Protestant sovereigns.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> "Eastern carrots" are purple or yellow, often with branched roots, and dated to the tenth century C.E. or earlier, allegedly from Central Asia, apparently being domesticated at that time in what is now Afghanistan, or at any rate in Central Asia, but these carrots were also eaten in what is now Pakistan; Muslim expansion into Spain allegedly brought such carrots to Europe.

<sup>59</sup> I have discussed this in E. Nissan, 'Etymothesis, Fallacy, and Ontologies: An Illustration from Phytonymy', in: Nachum Dershowitz and Ephraim Nissan (eds.), *Language, Culture, Computation: Essays in Honour of Yaacov Choueka*, Vol. 2: *Tools for Text and Language, and the Cultural Dimension*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, in press.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Benjamin Schmidt, 'The Hope of the Netherlands: Menasseh ben Israel and the Dutch Idea of America'. Ch. 4 of Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001, pp. 86–106.

<sup>61</sup> The "solidarity of rulers against social upheaval" explains their priorities, and in particular, their usually not putting the cause of Protestantism first. "Kings had a sense of international solidarity. Elizabeth {i of England} hated executing Mary Queen of Scots, though she would have welcomed her assassination. Both Elizabeth and James [I of England, her successor, who to the Scots was their own James VI] disliked giving help to Dutch rebels, however Protestant, against their lawful sovereigns, however Catholic." Quoted from p. 115 in Christopher Hill, 'The English Revolution and the Brotherhood of Man', ch. 4 in his *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century*, London: Pimlico, 2001, pp. 112–138 (book first published by Martin Secker & Warburg, 1958).

The symbolism of 'orange' as standing for the House of Orange and the Dutch cause is unlikely to have eluded the knowledge of at least the merchants in the Judaeo-Spanish social network, be they in Europe (Amsterdam,<sup>62</sup> London, Hamburg and Altona, and those towns in Italy<sup>63</sup> and France<sup>64</sup> were they were to be found),<sup>65</sup> the American colonies,<sup>66</sup> or the Near East, especially Constantinople and Salonika.

The connection between the western and eastern Sephardis was considerably attenuated by the late 18th century, even though merchant families in Leghorn could still trade with relatives or allies in, say, Syria or Tunis, while also having access to friends with contacts in London or Amsterdam. The early modern Jewish community in London was initially Sephardic with a later German influx, and had originally largely been a community transplanted from the Netherlands.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.5. The Terminological Factor in the Waning Transparency of the Symbolism

One of that factors that would have contributed to the demise of the association of 'orange' with the Protestant Netherlands through the House of Orange must have been the names for 'orange' (the fruit) in the relevant languages. In Portuguese, 'orange' (the fruit) is denoted by *laranja*.<sup>68</sup> The standard Spanish name for 'orange' (the fruit) is *naranja*, whereas *naranja*

<sup>62</sup> E.g., Gérard Nahon, 'Amsterdam metropoli occidentale dei Sefarditi nel XVII secolo' (trans. Eddy Lévy), *Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, January–April 1983, pp. 151–183. The relations between the Jews of Amsterdam and those of Constantinople is the subject of: Gérard Nahon, 'Les relations entre Amsterdam et Constantinople au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après le *Copiadore de cartas* de la nation juive portugaise d'Amsterdam', in: Joseph Michman and Tirtsah Levie (eds.), *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands, November 28 – December 3, 1982*. Tel Aviv – Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1984, pp. 157–184.

<sup>63</sup> E.g., Rome and Venice, and later on, Leghorn, too. Or then, the Portuguese Jews in Ferrara.

<sup>64</sup> E.g., Gérard Nahon, *Les "Nations" juives portugaises du sud-ouest de la France, 1684–1791*, Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1981.

<sup>65</sup> E.g., see Jonathan I. Israel, *Empires and Entrepôts: The Dutch, the Spanish Monarchy, and the Jews, 1585–1713*, London & Roncvert, West Virginia: Hambledon Press, 1990; Id., *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750*, London & Portland, Oregon: Littman Library of Jewish civilization, 1998; Id., *Diasporas Within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews, and the World Maritime Empires (1540–1740)*, Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2002; Gérard Nahon, *Métropoles et périphéries séfarades d'Occident*, Paris: Cerf, 1993; Henry Méchoulain, *Amsterdam au temps de Spinoza*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990; Id. (ed.), *Les Juifs d'Espagne: Histoire d'une diaspora, 1492–1992*, Paris: Liana Levi, 1992; Daniel M. Swetschinski, 'Kinship and Commerce: The Foundations of Portuguese Jewish Life in Seventeenth-Century Holland', *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 15 (1981), pp. 52–74, Herbert Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Williamsport, Pennsylvania: Bayard Press, 1937.

<sup>66</sup> And also the Portuguese Jews in India. For Brazil, see e.g. Arnold Wiznitzer, *Jews in Colonial Brazil*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. For the Caribbean, see e.g. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'Between Amsterdam and New Amsterdam: The Place of Curaçao and the Caribbean in Early Modern Jewish History', *American Jewish History*, 72 (1982), pp. 172–192; Isaac S. Emmanuel and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, Cincinnati, Ohio: American Jewish Archives, 1970. Jews in early modern America are the subject of Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>68</sup> Note that in present-day Portuguese slang, *laranja* also means 'simpleton'. As to the fruit, in particular the 'sweet orange' (*Citrus sinensis*) is called *laranja-da-china* (after China), as opposed to the 'sour orange' (= 'orange of Seville', *Citrus aurantium*), known in Portuguese by the names *laranja-amarga*, or *laranja-azêda*, or *laranja-da-terra*. The 'navel orange', originally developed in Brazil and much grown in California, is known in Portuguese as *laranja-da-baia* or *laranja-de-umbigo*, the latter after its "navel", like in Iraqi Arabic *partuqāl abū-ṣṣurra*. Israeli Hebrew has the name *tappuz-Washington* for that same cultivar. For the Portuguese terminology, more can be found on p. 381 in James L. Taylor, *A Portuguese–English Dictionary, Revised* (revised and augmented by him with Priscilla Clark Martin), Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1970 (3rd edn.).

denotes ‘orange tree’.<sup>69</sup> The etymology is Arabic in both languages.<sup>70</sup> Italian *arancia*, French *orange*, and English *orange* lost the initial consonant that the Iberian forms had taken from Arabic, and this loss resulted from that initial consonant being taken to be the Romance determinative article *la* or the indeterminative article *una*. In Italian, that phenomenon is known as *discrezione dell’articolo*, as opposed to concretion or agglutination of the definite article.<sup>71</sup>

By contrast to terms akin to *orange*, in Aegean Judaeo-Spanish, the term is *portukal* in the singular, and *portukales* in the plural (<Portugal). Cf. *portogallo* ‘orange’ in Rome’s Italian dialect (vs. *arancia* in standard Italian), demotic Greek πορτοκάλλι,<sup>72</sup> Turkish *portakal*

<sup>69</sup> Also in the masculine, note the diminutive *Naranjito*, a proper name. Naranjito was the mascotte of the 1982 football World Cup (Mundial) in Spain. Shaped as an orange, a local product, this puppet was dressed like Spain’s national team, and held a ball in his left hand.

<sup>70</sup> Arabic now keeps the name *nārunġī* (of Persian origin) for ‘tangerine’ (the fruit, also of the citrus). Such semantic shifts are also found for loanwords denoting some citrus in other languages as well. The Portuguese name is behind the name for ‘orange’ in Kiyombe, the Bantu language of the Bayombe in the Mayombe, on the right (southern) bank of the river Congo, somewhat near the Atlantic coast, but not at the river mouth itself. Portuguese *laranja* was adapted in Kiyombe as *lalanza* or *lalanzi* (pl. *zi-*) ‘orange acide’; *nlalanza*, *nlalanzi* ‘arbre qui donne des oranges acides’. But from the Portuguese *limão* ‘lemon’, Kiyombe has *dimawu* or *diwamu* (pl. *ma-*) ‘orange’; *makamu* (pl.) ‘oranges’, ‘orangeade’. By contrast, a compound denotes ‘lemon’: “*diwamu di mbeza* ‘citron’ (lit. *diwamu* servant à soigner les plaies); *diwamu di nzaza* ‘citron, *diwamu* amer’; *diwamu di nzalanzi* (vient du pg. limão + laranja, limão da laranja!) ‘orange acide’; *diwamu di mandelini* ‘mandarine’... *diwamu*, *dimawu* (pl. *mamawu* ou *mawamu*) ‘les agrumes’.” Quoted from p. 497 in André-Édouard Yengo-Ki-Ngimbi [= Abbé Yengo], ‘L’influence du portugais et du français sur le kiyombe, langue kongo du Mayombe (Bas-Zaïre)’, in [Dieter Kremer (ed.),] *Actes du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Linguistique et de Philologie Romanes*. Université de Trèves (Trier), 1986. 7 vols. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992, Vol. 1: *Romania submersa – Romania nova*, pp. 476–510.

<sup>71</sup> For example, consider the azerole, a small fruit now only seldom found on the market. French has for that fruit the name French *azerole* [ʔazəˈro:l] ‘azerole’ (whence the English *azerole* in the same sense), *azerolier* ‘azerole-tree’. The Italian names for the tree are *azzeruòlo* [ʔadzeˈrwo:lo] or *lazzeruòlo* or *azzaruòlo* or *azaròlo* or *mélo lazzeruòlo*, whereas the fruit is called *lazzeruòla* or *lazzeruòla* or *méla lazzeruòla*. (The Italian forms are given in Devoto and Oli’s dictionary (*infra*), s.vv. *lazzeruòlo*, *azzeruòlo*, *lazzeruòla*; cf. *Cratego*.) The form with an initial [l] originated by mistaking the Italian definite article *l’* for the initial consonant of the noun. The concretion, or agglutination, of the definite article is found also in Romance languages and dialects other than Italo-Romance. For example, in French, ‘the ivy’ is *le lierre*, which developed from an older form *l’ierre* (from Latin *hedera*). Rohlfs (*infra*, §341, pp. 477–478) lists many examples from Italian dialects, and moreover points out that in Neapolitan, Egypt is called *Naggitto*, by concretion with the preposition *in* for ‘in’. Also the opposite phenomenon — the discretion, or deglutination, of the definite article — occurs rather frequently throughout the history of Italian and its dialects, with the initial part of a noun being taken to be an adjective or a preposition (*ibid.*, §342, pp. 478–480). See Giacomo Devoto and Gian Carlo Oli, *Vocabolario illustrato della lingua italiana*, Milan: Selezione dal Reader’s Digest, 1967, 1st edn.; Gerhardt Rohlfs, 1966. *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti*, vol. 1: *Fonetica* (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 148), Turin: Einaudi, 1966.

For the standard French *orange*, the French creole of Haiti has *zoranj*, a central variant, or *zorany*, a peripheral variant. Central lexical variants in Haitian creole are from the Port-au-Prince area, whereas peripheral variants are from the north, the south, and the island of Gonave. The *y* in *zorany* is consonantal: “lorsque *y* se trouve entre deux voyelles nasales ou à la fin d’un mot après voyelle nasale, il se prononce avec un son intermédiaire entre le *y* de *yaourt* et le *gn* de *campagne*” (Valdman, *infra*, p. 585, fn. 3). I reckon that the initial *z* of *zoranj* is retained from the French plural article in *les oranges*. Article incorporation also occurs in Haitian creole *lay* (central variant) or *laj* (peripheral) for ‘garlic’ (French *ail*), clearly from *l’ail*. The French partitive *du* in *du riz* (‘some rice’) is retained in the Haitian creole name for ‘rice’: *duri* (urban) or *diri* (rural). The Haitian creole terms for ‘orange’, ‘garlic’ and ‘rice’ appear on p. 586 in lists exemplifying creole varieties in Albert Valdman, ‘Conflits de normes dans la standardisation du créole haïtien’, in *Actes du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Linguistique et de Philologie Romanes*, 1986. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992, Vol. 1, pp. 476–510.

<sup>72</sup> In standard modern Greek, the demotic term for ‘orange’ is Greek πορτοκάλλι (also for ‘orange tree’), whereas the term for ‘orange juice’ is πορτοκαλάδα. By contrast, the classicist literary language (Kathareusa) has χρυσόμηλον for ‘orange’ (and χρυσόμηλέα for ‘orange tree’) — literally ‘golden apple’, like the more formal among the Israeli Hebrew terms for ‘orange’, namely, the compound *tappúach-zaháv*. Cf. in sec. 2.3 in E. Nissan, ‘Risks of Ingestion: On Eating Tomatoes in Agnon, and on the Water of Shittim’, *Revue européenne des études hébraïques* (REEH), 14 (2009 [2011]), pp. 46–79.

'orange', and *purtuqāl* in vernacular Arabic (e.g., from Iraq). Modern standard German has for 'orange' (we are still meaning the fruit) both *Orange* and *Apfelsine*,<sup>73</sup> but for 'orangery' *Orangengarten*, for 'orange juice' *Orangenesswasser*, but for 'orange tree' *Apfelsinenbaum*. In modern standard Dutch, the name for 'orange' is *sinaasappel*.<sup>74</sup>

Even so, in 17th- and 18th-century Amsterdam it is unlikely that Portuguese-speaking Jews would be unaware of the fruity connection of the name for their House of Orange sovereigns. But both the dynasty, and the onomastic relation to the fruit are likely to have eluded such Aegean Judaeo-Spanish Jews for whom the names for 'orange' both in their own vernacular, and in Turkish and Greek, would have rather suggested a connection to Portugal.

#### 4.6. Political Changes as a Factor in the Waning Transparency of the Symbolism

Reference to the Eucharist and to Protestant polemic against Catholic rites must have become opaque as the Sephardic connection to Amsterdam receded in time for the eastern Sephardis, or even lower-class Italian Sephardis. So did (other than for Dutch and English Jews) the symbolism of 'orange' for the Protestant cause. The similitude for the round Earth took over, and become (inappropriately) a reference to that kind of modernity that from the French Revolution on, the Catholic Church became extremely anxious about, blaming it upon the abstract Jew (and the Devil). That was a phase in the history of attitudes that was quite relevant to the status of Jews in Italy in the 19th century. They were integrated into the unified Italian kingdom, but this happened because the Catholic Church was boycotting that kingdom's institutions, the polity ruled by the House of Savoy being considered a "Jewish state".<sup>75</sup>

The dynasty of Piedmont, allying itself with the liberals, had conquered up most of Italy, including most of the papal States, and even Latium and ten years later, once in 1870 Napoleon III (the protector of papal sovereignty in Rome) had fallen, Italy conquered up Rome as well. And then Rome's Jews, too, were emancipated. Already in 1868, the Church had instituted non-participation in the Italian parliamentary elections on the part of devout Catholics, both as candidates and as voters. This prohibition was made explicit in 1886. This policy went under the name *non expedit* (Latin for "it is improper"), after a response the Apostolic Penitentiary gave on 10 September 1874 to the query whether taking part in the elections was permissible. It was in the early 20th century, that the Catholic Church came to terms with modernity, as well as (gradually so) with the Italian state. Pius X accession to the papacy took place in 1903, and from 1904 exceptions started to be informally made to the *non expedit*. In 1905, the encyclical *Il fermo proposito* permitted that there would be "cattolici deputati, non deputati cattolici" ("Catholics who are members of Parliaments, not members of parliament who are Catholic"). In 1919, it was explicitly permitted to support the clerical Partito Popolare. It was in the late 1920s, that a Concordat signed by Mussolini instituted the Vatican as a sovereign state, and normalised the relations between Italy and the Catholic Church.

Philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) berated clerical historians from the 19th century ("storiografia di parte cattolica"), who "instead of history, was telling fables about ogres to scare the children" ("invece di storia, se ne stava a contare fole di orchi da spaurire i bambini"), because "as it is well known, it considered the whole dynamics of modern history as just a horrible perversion" ("essa, com'è risaputo, tutto il moto della storia moderna

<sup>73</sup> The Russian name for 'orange', апельсин (*apiel'sin*), is a loanword from German.

<sup>74</sup> Dutch has both *sinaasappellimonade* and *sinaasappelsap* for 'orange juice'.

<sup>75</sup> See E. Nissan, 'Un mistero risolto? Riflessioni in margine a *Il serpente biblico* di Valerio Marchi', in *Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 74.1-2, Rome, 2008 [2010], pp. 95–124.



considerava nient'altro che orribile perversione").<sup>76</sup> It had been keen on propagating conspiracy theories. The conception of the Jews had become abstract, and their alleged role in modern history was quite demonising.

During the 20th century, the Catholic Church weaned itself of this kind of attitudes towards modernity, as well as towards the Jews. Anthony Carroll, a Jesuit and university lecturer in London, while writing in a journal of the Dominicans acknowledged:<sup>77</sup>

The pre-Vatican II rejection of modernity by the Catholic Church makes it hardly surprising that the dominant sociological accounts of modernity have been shaped within Protestant metanarratives. As one of the most important sociological influences for shaping our imagination about modernity, Weber's account<sup>78</sup> represents a paradigmatic Protestant metanarrative that has dominated social scientific analyses of modernity, and so illustrates the significance of confessional specificity on theories of modernity.

Consider however that in the 19th century, the Catholic Church had been demonising the Jews much more than it did in the early modern period.<sup>79</sup> For example, it had come to endorse and promote the blood libel,<sup>80</sup> contrary to its previous institutional policies. The role ascribed

<sup>76</sup> On pp. 34–35 in B. Croce, *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono*, a cura di G. Galasso, nuova ediz., Milano: Adelphi, 1991.

<sup>77</sup> On p. 169 in Anthony J. Carroll SJ, 'Church and Culture: Protestant and Catholic Modernities', *New Blackfriars*, 90(1026), March 2009, pp. 163–177. As he values modernity, Carroll attempts a recovery of the role of the Catholic Contra-Reform clergy in the origins of modernity. Citing Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 224–226, and Part I ('The Work of Reform') in Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), Carroll claims (*ibid.*, p. 176): "In the codification of the encounter of the individual with the Lord, the Spiritual Exercises effectively created the institution known as a retreat. This novelty of the retreat had far reaching consequences in the areas of decision-making, social disciplining and styles of ministry, and all could be fruitful areas to pursue. Louis Dupré in his study of the origins of modernity considers the Spiritual Exercises to be a particularly modern synthesis of freedom and grace, much more effective than the medieval theology of the time and one that contains an ontotheological synthesis of nature and grace which is untypical of the Reformation understanding of grace. Whilst being prior to the legitimation of a Catholic modernity provided by GS [i.e., Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*], these pathways of modernity have existed historically and have clearly played a significant role in the formation of modernity."

<sup>78</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and "Spirit" of Capitalism*. Carroll authored *Protestant Modernity. Weber, Secularisation, and Protestantism*, Scranton and London, University of Scranton Press, 2007. A Jewish response to Weber concerning capitalism and modernity was attempted by Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

<sup>79</sup> See e.g. Annalisa Di Fant, *Stampa cattolica italiana e antisemitismo alla fine dell'Ottocento*, in *Les racines chrétiennes de l'antisémitisme politique (fin XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, edited by C. Brice and G. Miccoli. École française de Rome, Roma 2003, pp. 121–136.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. E. Nissan, '«Questo rito selvaggio»: contesto moderno e sfondo antico di un mito infamante antiebraico', postfazione essay in Valerio Marchi, «L'orribile calunnia». *Polemiche goriziane sull'omicidio rituale ebraico (1896, 1913)*, Udine, Italy: Kappa Vu, in press; Tommaso Caliò, *La leggenda dell'ebreo assassino. Percorsi di un racconto antiebraico dal medioevo ad oggi*, Roma: Viella, 2007. On the blood libel, see e.g. Alan Dundes (ed.), *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991; S. Buttaroni (ed.), *Ritualmord Legenden in der europaischen Geschichte*, Vienna: Boehlau, 2003; Yisrael Yuval, "They Tell Lies: You Ate the Man": Jewish Reactions to Ritual Murder Accusations', in *Religious Violence Between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives*, edited by Anna Sapir Abulafia, New York & Gordonsville, Virginia: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, pp. 86–106; R.P.-C. Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988; Id., *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (with New York: Yeshiva University Library); new edn., 1996; H.W. Smith, 'Konitz, 1900: Ritual Murder and Antisemitic Violence', in *Exclusionary Violence*, ed. C. Hoffmann, W. Bergmann, and H.W. Smith, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002, pp. 93–122; A. Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlár* (East European Monographs, 68), Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; distrib. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980; Edith Stern, *The Glorious Victory of Truth': The Tiszaeszlár Blood Libel Trial, 1882–3: A Historical–Legal–Medical Research* (English), Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1998.

to the Jews as though they were the promoters of modernity in opposition to the Church became a relevant theme for Jews to cope with. The old geopolitical role of the House of Orange (a dynasty that became tamer and tamer) was eclipsed. It was the current brand of charges that Jews had to cope with.

It is important to realise that also Sephardic Jews in the Near East were sorely aware of there being a problem in the relations between Catholics and Jews, because the friars had an important role in incitement. This found expression in the 1840s Damascus blood libel,<sup>81</sup> as well as in the late 19th century attitudes of the Maronite press in Lebanon, inspired by the French clerical camp, for example during the Dreyfus Affair.

#### 4.7. Why Did the Pope Character Believe That the Jew Admitted Christian Beliefs?

As seen, in the folktale as reported and analysed by Tamar Alexander 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. It becomes apparent later that the Pope character that the Jew has admitted Christian beliefs (if not Trinity, at any rate belief in the Son).

Whereas this adds to the entertainment value of the story as told by the storyteller, it is nevertheless very important to realise that this is not a disputation in which the Jew is trying to convince his Christian interlocutors of the validity of Jewish beliefs. What is more, the ascription of crypto-Christian tenets to Jewish documents and their authors was not an unknown cultural practice among Christians, and as that apologetic claim was voiced sometimes, awareness of such a mindset may have percolated into an early version of the folktale we are considering.

Moreover, there exist Jewish folktales in which a clergyman is ascribed crypto-Jewish leanings, and this is notably the case of the prominent Jewish folktale about there having been a Jewish Pope who was a German rabbi's son, and who once enthroned, made a decree whose aim was that it would compel the Jews of his father's city, and his father among them, to come and see him. Shortly afterwards, this legendary pope supposedly fled, in order to live as a Jew.

During the Middle Ages and the early modern period, one Catholic claim against the Jews was that they are aware that Christianity is true, and yet would not bring themselves to admit it. In the Renaissance, some humanists believed that such an admission was hidden in the symbology of the Kabbalah. This enabled the development, during the Renaissance, of a Christian Kabbalah, pioneered by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) as well as Johannes Reischlin. Pico della Mirandola is mentioned in Hebrew texts from that period as "Mirandolano". In later Christian esotericism, Christian Kabbalah was a domain of interest for Karl von Eckartshausen (1752–1803), even as he was a Catholic and a friend of the Jesuits.<sup>82</sup>

Pico della Mirandola is now popularly remembered in Italy for his prodigious memory (having gambled quite literally his head he would make no error in declaiming a long text in

<sup>81</sup> See J. Fraenkel, *The Damascus Affair: "Ritual Murder", Politics, and the Jews in 1840*, Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997; Charlotte Klien, 'Damascus to Kiev: *Civiltà Cattolica* on Ritual Murder', in *The Blood Libel Legend*, ed. Alan Dundes. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991; and Ch. 3, 'In terra di missione. Damasco 1840', in Tommaso Caliò, *La leggenda dell'ebreo assassino*, Rome: Viella, 2007.

The Damascus blood accusation, and how the great powers reacted to it, was related to the political and military situation in the region, a situation described (without any mention of the blood accusation) by Letitia W. Utford, *The Pasha: How Mehemet Ali Defied the West, 1839–1841*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2007.

<sup>82</sup> See *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff with Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek e Jean-Pierre Brach, Leiden: Brill, 2006.

reverse order). It is telling that in Italy (the main centre in Europe where Walt Disney stories are authored), the character known in English as *Ludwig Von Drake*, and *Primus von Quack* in German (Scrooge McDuck's relative, he is a very pedantic scholar with an incomparably broad scope of erudition), is known in Italian as *Pico de Paperis*. Being an encyclopedic erudite, a man of the Renaissance if you wish, though rather sterile, his bearing the name *Pico* is befitting, and easily understood by the Italian public.<sup>83</sup>

## PART TWO: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

### 5. What Is the Orange About? Two Roman Punning Poetic Texts

#### 5.1. Earth is Like an Orange: A Parallel from Pascarella

Cesare Pascarella's *La scoperta de l'America* is a comic, yet deeply compassionate epic<sup>84</sup> of 1893 (published in 1894), a monologue addressed by the narrator, a storyteller at a Roman tavern, to interlocutors who very sporadically interfere, structured as fifty sonnets in the Roman (*romanesco*) dialect of Italian.<sup>85</sup> (Pascarella often read this work in public). It is a work that among the other things reflects about being Italian. Pascarella also wrote a much longer work, left unfinished, on Italian history,<sup>86</sup> and it, too, is an epic made up of sonnets; 267 of these are extant, out of the planned sequence of 350.

In the epic *La scoperta de l'America*, fabled America enables Pascarella to indulge in humorous national self-gratulation (yet, in sonnet 47, he mocks the claims of various nations to claim Columbus as their own), as well as to make considerations about life, either in general, or in his own Rome; "the world is nasty" (46): *er monno è brutto*. "Had he [Columbus] had the maritime instruments / That one can find nowadays, / He would have discovered twenty [Americas]!"<sup>87</sup> (a pun: *inventata* 'discovers', vs. *ventina* 'twenty').

Pascarella humorously has the narrator display incompetence in the form of crass inexactitudes, simplifications, and conflation: for example, the King of Portugal, having delegated decision-making, would not give Columbus ships, which he then obtains from the Queen his wife (sonnets 10–12) — not the Queen of Castile. Columbus threatens to go

<sup>83</sup> See more in 'The Name Type *Samson* in the Translated Onomastics of Walt Disney Characters', and 'Other Names for Disney's Ducks in Translation', being Sections 7 and 8 in: Ephraim Nissan, 'Categories of Modern Occurrences of the Personal Name Type *Samson*', in press in Oliviu Felecan (ed.), (ed.), *Onomastics in Contemporary Public Space (ICONN2). Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming" = Conferința Internațională de Onomastică „Numele și numirea”, Ediția a II-a: Onomastica în spațiul public actual*, Baia Mare, Romania, May 2013.

<sup>84</sup> C. Pascarella, *La Scoperta de l'America* [in *romanesco*, with an Italian translation and notes]. Roma virtuale > la lingua e la poesia > Cesare Pascarella. Posted on the Web at: [http://mp\\_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p2i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p2i.htm) (sonnets 1–5), [roma-p3i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p3i.htm) (sonnets 6–10), [roma-p4i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p4i.htm) (sonnets 11–15), [roma-p5i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p5i.htm) (sonnets 16–20), [roma-p6i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p6i.htm) (sonnets 21–25), [roma-p7i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p7i.htm) (sonnets 26–30), [roma-p8i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p8i.htm) (sonnets 31–35), [roma-p9i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p9i.htm) (sonnets 36–40), [romap10i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/romap10i.htm) (sonnets 41–46), [romap11i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/romap11i.htm) (sonnets 46–50), with an introduction at [roma-p2i.htm](http://mp_pollett.tripod.com/roma-p2i.htm) (biography of Pascarella).

<sup>85</sup> On Pascarella, see e.g. Andrea Bosello, 'Cesare Pascarella (1858–1940)', in *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, edited by Gaetana Marrone with Paolo Puppa and Luca Somigli. New York and Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2007, Vol. 2, pp. 1357–1358. See my review of the two volumes in *Italienisch: Zeitschrift für italienische Sprache und Literatur*. Also concerning Pascarella, see: Hermann W. Haller, 'Columbus and Pascarella: America Rediscovered', in *Discoveries: A Special Issue for the Columbian Quincentennial = Italica*, 69.3 (1992), pp. 359–377 (American Association of Teachers of Italian); Sara Antonelli, 'La riscoperta dell'America: Carpentier e Pascarella', *Il Veltro*, 44 (2000), pp. 25–35; E. Nissan, 'On Pascarella's *Discovery of America*, or, On Being Gullible' (submitted).

<sup>86</sup> C. Pascarella, *Storia nostra*. Rome: Accademia dei Lincei, 1961.

<sup>87</sup> At the end of sonnet 50.

elsewhere; she asks him about the size of the vessels, and he states that more or less, they should be like the ones that carry marsala to Rome's riverine port at Ripa Grande. Then she grants his wish on the spot.

Such telescoping enables a convenient focus. Columbus impresses the King (sonnet 4) with the argument (sonnet 3) that the world is like a *portogallo* (orange): there is as much skin (land) as there is juice (sea). Still, in the gist the narrator is both adequate and cogent, in pointing out human factors involved, both social and emotional. Pascarella skilfully controlled the parameter of competence (of both the characters, and the narrator), in order to obtain an array of effects.

The King of Portugal had asked Columbus (in the last line of sonnet 2): "Ma st'America cè? Ne sète certo?" ("But this America does exist? Are you sure?"). Sonnet 3 follows:<sup>88</sup>

— Ah! fece lui, me faccio maravija<sup>89</sup>  
 Ch'un omo come lei pò dubitallo!  
 Allora lei vor dì che lei mi pija  
 Per uno che viè qui per imbrogiallo!

["Ah!"], Columbus retorted: I am amazed  
 That a man like you could doubt it!  
 So you are implying that you take me  
 For one who's come here to swindle you!]

Nonsignora, maestà. Lei si consija  
 Co' qualunque sia ar caso de spiegallo,  
 E lei vedrà ch'er monno arissomija,  
 Come lei me l'insegna, a un portogallo.

["No, Ma'am, Your Majesty (f.). Just take advice  
 From anybody able to explain it to you,  
 And you'll see that the world resembles,  
 As you teach me yourself, a Portugal/orange."]

E basta avecce un filo de capoccia  
 Pe capì che, dovunque parte taja,  
 Lei trova tanto sugo e tanta coccia.

["It just takes a bit of brain  
 To understand that wherever you cut,  
 You'll find as much juice as peel."]

E er monno che cos'è? Lo stesso affare.  
 Lei vadi indove vò, che non si sbaja,  
 Lei trova tanta terra e tanto mare.

["And the world, what is it? It's the same.  
 Just go where you want, you can't go wrong,  
 You'll find as much land as sea."]

<sup>88</sup> It can be read, with a facing Italian translation, at <http://roma.andreapollett.com/S8/roma-p2i.htm>

<sup>89</sup> Pronounced *maravíyya*, vs standard Italian *meraviglia* for 'wonder'.

Here is the first quatrain of sonnet 5:

Je capacita sto ragionamento?  
 — Sicuro, fece er re, me piace assai  
 E, vede, je dirò che st'argomento  
 Ancora nu' l'avevo inteso mai.

["Are you convinced by this reasoning?"  
 "Yes, sure", said the King, "I like it a lot,  
 And see, I'll tell you, this argument —  
 I had never heard it before."]

Whereas Pascarella intended the world-as-an-orange model for humour, so that the tone of his epic would be unmistakably defined, Giuseppe Garibaldi instead had used an orange similitude to poignantly convey exploitation of those duped: referring to the treatment of his own 1860 fighters in united Italy, he once said that people had been treated as oranges: once the juice was squeezed out of them, they had been thrown away.

## 5.2. The Pun in Belli's Sonnet *Er Portogallo*

It wasn't Pascarella who had introduced into poetry in the Roman dialect the pun about *portogallo* 'orange' and *Portogallo* 'Portugal'. Already Giuseppe Gioachino Belli, the foremost author in that dialect, had done so in his own sonnet *Er Portogallo*, dated 27 November 1832. The text follows; it is a dialogue between a daughter and her mother, and the latter reproaches the former her ignorant, for all of her own ignorance:

«Cuanno ho pportato er cuccomo ar caffè,  
 mamma, llà un omo stava a ddí accusí:  
 er Re der portogallo vò mmorí  
 per un cristo c'ha ddato in grabbiolè.

["When I took the coffee-pot<sup>90</sup> to the cafe,  
 Mum, there was there a man who was saying:  
 'The King of Portugal was angry to death  
 Because he fell off his coach'."]

This was a current episode about the King of Portugal, Dom Miguel of Bragança (in Italy, he is referred to as "don Miguel di Braganza"). He reigned in 1828–1834. The House of Bragança had been reinstated to the throne in 1820, and Dom Miguel's rule was dictatorial. But in 1833, the constitutional regime was inaugurated in Portugal. The girl had gone to the cafe with a coffee-pot to fetch some coffee to bring home, and overheard somebody commenting on the news in the newspaper. The sonnet continues as follows:

Che vvò ddí,<sup>91</sup> Mmamma? dite, eh? cche vvò ddí?  
 Li portogalli puro cianno er Re?  
 Ma allora cuelli che mmagnamo cquì,  
 indove l'hanno? dite, eh, Mamma? eh?»

<sup>90</sup> Romanesco *cúccomo*; cf. Italian *cúccuma*, Latin *cūcūma*, Arabic and Hebrew *qumqum*.

<sup>91</sup> The actual pronunciation at present is *Ke vor dí?* The sense is "What do you mean?", lit. "What does it want to say?"

["What does it mean, Mum? Tell me, what does it mean?  
Do the oranges (*portogalli*), too, have a king?  
If so, the ones we are eating here,  
Where do they have it? Tell me, Mum, wouldn't you?"]

«Scema, ppiú ccreschi, e ppiú sei scema ppiú:  
er portogallo è un regno che sta llà,  
dove sce regna er Re che ddichi tu.

["You stupid! The more you grow up,  
the more stupid you become.  
Portugal is a kingdom that is there,  
Where the king reigns you were talking about."]

Ebbé,<sup>92</sup> sto regno tiè sto nome cquà,  
perché in cuelli terreni de llaggiú  
de portogalli sce ne sò a ccrepà».

["Well, that kingdom has this name,  
Because in those lands over there,  
There are a looot of oranges<sup>93</sup> (*portogalli*)."]

In his quite extensive corpus (2279 sonnets) of the *Sonetti romaneschi*, Belli set the tone for Roman poetry: it is in sonnets, and it is mainly comic, a sanguine description of social life. And it indulges in punning.<sup>94</sup> The impact of Belli, whether direct or indirect, is also felt in how members of the public in Rome approach literary comic expression in the local dialect. For example, a selection of letters sent to broadcaster Mike Bongiorno,<sup>95</sup> the *compère* of television and radio quiz contests, was published in book form,<sup>96</sup> and a select few appeared along with an interview he gave a weekly.<sup>97</sup>

One of these was a letter from Rome, dated 18 December 1970. The sender (Gianantonio R.) described himself as a former officer of the Carabinieri, currently an employee at a big commercial firm, and besides, he wrote, "suono sonetti" (i.e., "I author sonnets"). He enclosed a sonnet by himself in the *romanesco* dialect, cruelly lampooning Mike Bongiorno, and explained in the letter: "Ovviamente non si deve offendere se lo tratto un po' male nella poesia: è solamente questione di metrica e di rima." ("Obviously you should not take offence at my somewhat mistreating you in the poem: it's just a matter of metre and rhyme.") The title was 'Giovedì TV' ('Thursday on the telly').

<sup>92</sup> The actual pronunciation is *Embé*. The Italian term is *ebbene*. *Embé* is used either for an initial 'Well,...', or for 'So what?'.  

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<sup>93</sup> More colourfully: you'd burst open and die, so many oranges there are [if you eat them]. The Italian verb *crepare* means 'to crack', 'to split asunder', but is also a vulgar term for 'to die' (like British English *to snuff out* or *to pop off*, and American English *to croak*).

<sup>94</sup> Punning is pervasive in the the poems by the Roman painter and poet Maurizio De Lullo (born in 1941). See M. De Lullo (paintings, poems), *La Roma di De Lullo tra versi e colore*, introduced by Paolo Levi (Giorgio Mondadori & Associati Editori, distrib. Messaggerie Italiane in Milan, 1991

<sup>95</sup> Mike Bongiorno, living in Milan, is himself not felt to have any Roman identity. He was born in the United States as Michele Bongiorno, to mother from Turin and a father whose own father was from Sicily. It was in Milan's San Vittore prison that the future broadcaster was (along with journalist Indro Montanelli), after he was arrested by the Germans. He was conducting a clandestine life, in fear because of his American nationality. He was eventually exchanged for another prisoner, and sent to the United States.

<sup>96</sup> Ludovico Pellegrini (ed.), *Caro Mike*. Milan: Massimo, 1972. It was a bestseller.

<sup>97</sup> 'Caro Mike, se il mare fosse inchiostro...', pp. 80–81, an inset in 'Il fenomeno Mike', an interview given by Mike Bongiorno to Piero de Garzarolli. *Panorama*, 22 June 1972, pp. 78–81, 83–84.

After a hyperbolic description of the TV presenter's ugliness and rote talk, then with faint praise for his female assistant, quite significantly that sonnet ended by punning, which is in line with tradition:

E ditemi perché, quanno è saputo  
ch'er Bongiorno se vede de matina,  
qui dovemo cibasselo a la sera?!?

[“And tell me why, whereas it is well known  
That (as per the proverb) the nice day [*Bongiorno*]  
is seen [i.e., you can tell how it's going to be]  
from the morning,  
Here we have to swallow it down in the evening?!”].

## 6. The Rounded Earth: An Improper Symbol for Modernity's Attack on the Traditional Order

### 6.1. What the Orange in the Pantomime Came to Stand For

The trial of Galileo by the Roman Inquisition is a well-known trope in the vulgate perception of the conflict between early modernity and Catholic dogma.<sup>98</sup> But it was about the Copernican system, not about whether the Earth is a globe. The orange in the pantomime to which we are devoting the present study conveys (as per its later receptions) the down-to-earth notion that the challenge to dogma and tradition is the claim that the Earth is round like an orange.

By the 19th and 20th centuries, the Pope showing the Jew an orange was taken by storytellers and their audiences to convey, as I see it, the charge: “You Jews support modernity's attack on the traditional order” (you inspired the liberals, you promoted revolutions, you seek emancipation through your alliance with secularism).

This was a loud and pointed charge against the Jews on the part of the clerical camp in the 19th century. By comparison, Galileo's view of the solar system as being a challenge to the doxa of the church was a minor matter for Jews when it came to their relations with the Catholic Church. But as the storytellers and their audiences were after entertainment after all, minor matters are “safer”, and indeed, as we can see in the pantomime under consideration, it is precisely trifles that make the outcome elating and sublime.

### 6.2. A Belated Myth: Identification of the Belief in a Round Earth with Modernity

It is a commonplace that the discovery of America by Europeans resulted from a quest for a shorter route to India. It is not as well known that even as America was discovered, cartographer Oronce Finé could mistake Mexico for China because he also mistook Florida for Korea, apparently because of the latter two's rather similar contour.<sup>99</sup> The belief in a flat earth

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<sup>98</sup> Also the Spanish Inquisition was concerned with censoring scientific literature. See Tomás José Pardo, *Ciencia y censura: La Inquisición española y los libros científicos en los siglos XVI y XVII*, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1991.

<sup>99</sup> Arthur Robinson — in Fig. 8 on p. 35 in his article ‘It was the mapmakers who really discovered America’, in *Cartographica*, 29.2 (1992), pp. 31–36 — redraws Oronce Finé's map of 1531. It “showed Asia and North America as one enormous continent”. What is particularly striking about it, is that for the east coast and much of the west coast of the Americas, a correct coastline is given. South America is called ‘America’, Florida is ‘Florida’, and the islands of the Caribbean are in a more or less correct relation to the mainland. However, Mexico is misidentified as ‘Cathay’ (China), and North America is labelled ‘Asia’. From where California should be,

wasn't universal in earlier periods, and some of the ancients, as well as some medieval encyclopaedists, were willing to believe that the Earth is a sphere, rather than a disc. Tattersall states:<sup>100</sup>

Until comparatively recently it was widely held that people in the Middle Ages believed the earth to be flat. A passage from Gervase of Tilbury gave rise to further confusion, so that it was possible for P.C.F. Daunou, writing in 1824, to declare roundly that up to the death of Philippe-Auguste most people in France believed in a square world. It does indeed seem that among the early Church Fathers the beliefs of the Ancients in a spherical world — and their proof of the fact — had been widely ignored, although the question has been 'acrimoniously discussed'. Moreover, the sixth-century Byzantine Cosmas Indicopleustes had taken a literal interpretation of the Scriptures to extremes in asserting that the earth was flat, and formed part of a universe shaped something like a domes travelling-trunk. [fn. 4: Cosmas's *Christian Topography*<sup>101</sup> apparently became an important source of geographical beliefs among early medieval Slavs. It was not, however, known in the West] However, the Venerable Bede was, by the eighth century, categorical in stating his view that the earth was a sphere. It is now generally accepted that this was the opinion of the majority of writers and thinkers during the Crusade period.

This is not exact. Cosmas' flat Earth is not quite flat and horizontal. The Nile flowing slowly northwards, and the Tigris and Euphrates flowing quickly southwards, suggested to him that the Earth was rather more like a ramp.

Mais l'œcumène de Cosmas ne se présente pas comme un plan horizontal. Elle est comparable à une piste de ski. Comme l'indiquent les légendes qui accompagnent le dessin de la terre, les régions nordique et occidentale sont élevées, abruptes comme un mur; à contraire les régions méridionales et orientales sont basses, situées au même niveau de l'Océan.<sup>102</sup>

At any rate, the very idea of that India could be reached through the Atlantic was much older than either 1492, or even the Crusade period, or then the Venerable Bede. Moreover, holding that India could be reached by sailing into the Ocean from the Pillars of Hercules didn't necessarily require sailing west until touching land in Asia. An important idea was that in principle, Africa could be circumnavigated, so that one could then continue and reach India.

Duane Roller is right to distinguish<sup>103</sup> between Greek ideas about mathematical symmetry applying to the world, and the antipodes as such in geography. Moreover, symmetry could be other than Antipodean: Roller points out that Cicero (*Republic* 6.20–22) referred to people directly opposite to Rome with respect to the Equator. And even though the idea of the Earth being shaped as a globe is found in Greek antiquity, note that medieval folklore could accept the existence of Antipodes, yet apparently assume that Earth was flat, and that they lived, as

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northwards, there is no coastline, but an uninterrupted landmass continuing westwards. South of it there are islands that presumably are those of South East Asia. With present-day standard perceptions of the terrestrial globe, one is tempted to integrate the (mis)identification: Finé's Florida resembles our present-day cartographic idea of Florida, but it could be Korea, once you assume the continent is Asia. The Caribbean happens to be where you would expect to find, in Asia, the Yellow Sea. In relation to this, what would be the East China Sea, in turn, is off the shores of what appears to be Venezuela, when seen in the context of the landmass shaped like South America and labelled 'America'. The rest of South America takes the place of Indo-China and the Peninsula of Malacca.

<sup>100</sup> The quotation is from Jill Tattersall, 'Sphere of Disc? Allusions to the Shape of the Earth in Some Twelfth-Century and Thirteenth-Century Vernacular French Works', *The Modern Language Review*, 76.1 (1981), pp. 32–46.

<sup>101</sup> Apparently written in Alexandria in the mid sixth century.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted from p. 84 in Kunio Kitamura, 'Cosmas Indicopleustes et la figure de la terre', in *Moïse géographe: Recherches sur les représentations juives et chrétiennes de l'espace*, edited by Alain Desreumaux and Francis Schmidt, Paris: Vrin, 1988, pp. 79–98.

<sup>103</sup> On p. 51, fn. 47 in Duane W. Roller, *Through the Pillars of Herakles: Greco-Roman Exploration of the Atlantic*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.



though, on the reverse of a coin. Such an example from Jewish medieval folklore is found in Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrash*. It is the last one<sup>104</sup> among the 'Tales about King Solomon'.

In a Christian milieu, "[o]ne of the most heated discussions of the Middle Ages was that about the existence of the Antipodes. St. Augustine [*De civitate Dei* XVI, ch. 9] had rejected the idea and almost ridiculed the notion that there are men who walk with their feet opposite ours, i.e. on the other side of the globe, and from the 8th century onwards the belief in them was banned as heretical",<sup>105</sup> as their being cut off from the rest made both propagation from Noah's sons, and Christian salvation impossible for such unreachable people.

### 6.3. Ancient Greek Conceptions of the Earth Shape, and Byzantine Cosmas Locating the Antediluvian Inhabited World in... America

The explicit statement that the Earth is sphere-shaped is found in fragment F44 of Eratosthenes' *Geography* (ed. Roller), preserved in text by Geminus.<sup>106</sup> The "spheroid shape of the earth" is also ascribed by Strabo to Eratosthenes where he reports that Eratosthenes remarked that were it not for the size of the Ocean, one could sail from Iberia to India along the same parallel. This is preserved in fragments F33 of Book 2 of Eratosthenes' *Geography*,<sup>107</sup> preserved in Strabo's *Geography* 1.4.6.

Strabo, *ibid.*, criticising Eratosthenes, raised (in Roller's words) "the question whether there may be a continent intervening between the Pillars and India".<sup>108</sup> especially on the parallel of Athens, which is highly inhabitable, one could expect to find one or more further "worlds", between the Pillars and India. Bear in mind that in the early Byzantine period, Cosmas Indicopleustes, for whom the Earth was not spherical, a continent existed beyond the sea east of Asia.

To Cosmas, that was the land where the human generations between Adam and the Deluge had lived. Outside the Garden of Eden, that land was rather inhospitable. During the Deluge, Noah's Ark was carried over to the known lands, as everybody disembarked on Mt. Ararat indeed. Thus, in a sense, in both Strabo and Cosmas we can recognise "America before America".

Eratosthenes's *chlamys*-shape world (a *chlamys* was a brooch-fastened outer garment) was in contrast to Posidonius' sling-shaped world. What they meant was the inhabited part of the Earth, the *oikoumenē*, and north of the Equator. Zimmermann claims: "The relation between *oikoumenē* and globe is identical with the one between the *chlamys* and the body of its wearer".<sup>109</sup> The spread-out *chlamys* was imagined to be wrapped around the relevant part of the globe, and such an interpretation can also be given to that part of the globe as covered by the sling's band (a lozenge-shaped middle section): "Did he [Posidonius] think about an *oikoumenē* 'wrapping' the globe like a sling its projectile"?, asks Zimmermann.<sup>110</sup> "Yet, the works of both authors being lost, the three-dimensionality neither of Posidonius' nor of

<sup>104</sup> It is found on pp. 533–534 in Vol. 4 of A. Jellinek (ed.), *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim*, Vols. 1–6. Leipzig 1853–1878, repr. Jerusalem 1938, 1967.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted from p. 182 in Rudolf Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (London, 1942), pp. 159–197.

<sup>106</sup> The English translation of F44 is on p. 67, and Roller's commentary to F44 is on p. 159, in *Eratosthenes' Geography*, fragments collected and translated, with commentary and additional material, by Duane W. Roller. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010. My review of that book is in press in the journal *Imago Mundi*.

<sup>107</sup> On p. 61 in Roller's book, with Roller's commentary to F33 on pp. 148–151.

<sup>108</sup> Roller, p. 149.

<sup>109</sup> On p. 66 in Klaus Zimmermann, 'Eratosthenes' *Chlamys*-Shaped World: A Misunderstood Metaphor', in *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives*, ed. Daniel Ogden (New Perspectives series) London: Classical Press of Wales 2002, pp. 23–40.

<sup>110</sup> Zimmermann, p. 35. Also the next quotation is from the same page.

Eratosthenes' metaphor can be definitively proven. It has to remain an hypothesis which derives its attractiveness essentially from the fact that other conceivable explanations do not satisfy at all".

#### 6.4. Some Orthodox Views of the Round Earth, from Judaism and from Catholicism

That Eratosthenes had conceived of the Earth as a globe is reflected in a painting by Bernardo Strozzi,<sup>111</sup> in which the white-bearded Eratosthenes teaches from a book a young pupil who holds a globe. The idea that the Earth is shaped like a globe, of obvious Greek derivation, is mentioned (*she-ha-'olám 'asúy ke-khaddúr*, "that the world is made like a ball"), in the Talmud Yerushalmi, tractate 'Avodah Zarah, 42, 2. Ibn Gabirol, a major medieval Hebrew poet from Málaga, stated the belief that the Earth is a globe in a cosmological hymn, *Keter Malkhut (The Crown of Kingship)*, traditionally read during the night of the Day of Atonement: *Mí yemallél gevurotéikha ba-'asotekhá kaddúr ha-áreš neḥeláq li-shnáyim, ḥešyó yabbashá ve-ḥešyó máyim?* "Who shall tell Thy feats, as thee didst the globe of the Earth divided in two, half of it dry land, and half of it water?". The compound *kaddúr ha-áreš* is standard in Modern Hebrew for 'Earth', and literally means 'the globe of the Earth'.

Medieval Jewish biblical exegetes who believed the Earth to be round (a *kaddur*, i.e., a sphere) include Bachye (at *Genesis* 1 and *Numbers* 7), Abraham Ibn Ezra (at *Genesis* 2), David Qimchi (at *Genesis* 1), Nachmanides (at *Genesis* 1 and *Numbers* 7), Gershonides (at *Proverbs* 8), and Sforno (at *Genesis* 35). Actually, Obadiah Sforno lived in Italy during the Renaissance (c. 1470 – c. 1550). Sforno explains that the biblical promise of *ha'aretz* (which in Italian would be *la terra*: either the land, or the Earth) means not the entire *kaddur-ha'aretz* (the entire globe), but *Eretz-Yisra'el* (the Land of Israel) alone.

The *Zohar*, a Jewish, Aramaic-language mystical work traditionally ascribed to Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai (of the times of the emperor Hadrian), but attributed by scholarship to Moses de León (1250–1305), states that the earth revolves like a ball; that when it is day on one half, it is night on the other half; and that people live on the other half (under the Equator?). Isaac ben Solomon Abi Sahula or Ibn Sahula (b. Guadalajara, 1244), writing in 1281, referred to the Antipodes when he stated that the part of the globe "beneath us" is inhabited by people; he also claimed that when it is day on this side of the globe, it is night on the other side.

Dante Alighieri, too, held the belief that Jerusalem is on top of the Earth (the globe!). To Dante, Hell is entered from a valley near Jerusalem; the bottom of Hell is at the centre of the globe, and from there a tunnel leads to the antipodes of Jerusalem, namely, to the mountain of Purgatory. Dante Alighieri was medieval, he was no Galileo. He cannot be suspected of having brought about modernity. Readers of Dante from all periods can be assumed to have understood his conception of Hell reaching down to the centre of the Earth, this being a globe, and then a tunnel joining the centre of the earth to the beach on an island in the Ocean, beneath the mountain of Purgatory. Bear in mind that Boccaccio for a while was made to comment on Dante's *Comedy* in church in Florence, and that reportedly members of the popular classes in the Middle Ages could be heard declaiming from Dante's *Comedy* by heart. Holding that the Earth is a globe was not against Catholic dogma.

The Earth being a globe entered the idiomatics of some ultra-Orthodox Jews in their discourse, by referring to prevailing spiritual conditions in America, being quite at a remove from the ideals of Jewish life according to ultra-Orthodoxy. The headquarters of Lubavitcher Hasidim is in Brooklyn, since the early 1940s. That denomination was previously based in Russia. The glossary of Lubavitch Hasidism's terminology, at the end of Heilman and

<sup>111</sup> The painting is *Eratosthenes Teaching in Alexandria*, c. 1635, now at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. It appears as the jacket illustration of Roller's edition of Eratosthenes' *Geography*.

Friedman,<sup>112</sup> includes the following entries: "*chatzi kadur tachton*: Lubavitcher hasidic conception of the other side of the globe, the spiritually lowest hemisphere, the exile of America"<sup>113</sup> (literally: "lower hemisphere"); "*khutse she'eyn khutse mimenu*: spiritually the lowest point on earth"<sup>114</sup> (literally: "such outside that nothing is more outside than it"); "*takhtn she'eyn takhtn mimenu*: lowest spiritual realm"<sup>115</sup> (literally: "such 'lower', than nothing is lower than it"). Cf. "*galut be'tokh galut*: living in the lowest level of exile, said of those who are nearly completely assimilated and secularized; living among the barely observant"<sup>116</sup> (literally: "exile inside exile").

This geographical conception makes sense if one considers that both to Jewish tradition, and to Dante himself, Jerusalem is the highest point on earth, i.e., the top of the sphere. Just as to Dante, the island of Purgatory in the Ocean is at the antipodes of Jerusalem, so that the mountain top is the point on Earth is the most distant place from Jerusalem, so are the Americas, in the Lubavitch metaphorical idiomatics.

The western hemisphere is conceived of as being "the lower hemisphere", apparently because of the Rabbinic traditional dictum *Eretz Yisra'el gvoha mikkol ha'aratzot*, "The Land of Israel is the highest of all countries", taken to be the explanation for why going there is "to go up" (*'alah*), whereas leaving the country is "to go down" (*yarad*). Arguably most people who are aware of it, are so because it occurs in a pentateuchal gloss by Rashi (at *Exodus* 33:1), thus, in a highly accessed traditional Jewish source, read also by those with little schooling in rabbinic sources. Rashi's gloss reads as follows:

*"Lekh, 'aleh mizze"* [Go, go up from here]: The Land of Israel is higher than all countries; therefore it was said "Go up!". Another interpretation: as He told him [Moses] when in anger, "Go, go down!" [*Exodus*, 32:7], when of a good disposition He told him, "Go, go up!".

But its earliest source<sup>117</sup> is in *Sifrei Devarim* 37, s.v. *Harei hu*, and states:

And so it says (*Jeremiah* 5:1): "My Friend had a vineyard in Qeren Ben Shemen [i.e., Horn Son of Oil]". Just as this [i.e., a] bull, nothing in him is higher than his horns, likewise the Land of Israel is higher than all countries. Or [should we rather say]: just as this bull, there is nothing more a refuse than his horns, likewise the Land of Israel is the refuse of the other countries? We learn to say: "in Qeren ben Shemen", the Land of Israel is fat (*shmenah*), which teaches thee that whoever is higher than his fellow, is more excellent than his fellow. The Land of Israel, as it is higher than all, is more excellent than all, as it says: "We shall definitely go up and inherit it" (*Numbers*, 13:30), "They went up and explored the land" (*Numbers*, 13:21), "They went up in the Negev [i.e., the dry southern region]" (*Numbers*, 13:22), "They went up from Egypt" (*Genesis*, 45:25). The Temple, which is higher than all, is more excellent than all, as it says (*Deuteronomy*, 17:8): "And thou shalt rise and go up to the place", and it says (*Isaiah*, 2:3): "And many peoples will go and say: 'Let us go, and go up to the mountain of the House of the Lord'", and it says (*Isaiah*, 31:5): "As there is a day, when the watches shall call" and so forth.

After the four scriptural quotations (*Numbers* 13:30, 13:21, 13:21, and *Genesis* 45:21) in which going to the Land of Israel is expressed by means of the verb for 'to go up', the homiletic text continues with a discussion of the Temple being even higher.

<sup>112</sup> Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, Menachem, *The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>117</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Avi (Abraham Ofir) Shemesh for locating the earliest source for me.

## 7. An Ignoramus Wins, Because his Gesture Is Misunderstood

### 7.1. Body Language and Pantomime as Being Conducive to a Comedy of Errors

In variants of the Jewish folktale about disputations between Jews and Gentiles, the communication tends to be mainly verbal, but in the version dealt with by Tamar Alexander, the Pope is riddling the Jew by using pantomime. Whereas this is intended to make things difficult for the examinee, the examiner is oblivious that it also hinders his own ability to properly and unambiguously assess the answers provided by his Jewish interlocutor.

This ambiguity is pivotal to the workings of this tale. It is a comedy of errors, and it is the pantomime medium that makes the communication liable to such errors of interpretation. Of course, the double whammy for the examiner is that not only he misunderstood that the examinee was flunking his exam, but that (as listeners eventually learn) the butcher claims victory by boasting of his own counter-intimidation strategy having "worked" to perfection.

That the Jewish contender is an ignoramus was an element of the Jewish tale type that had been in since the Gebiha ben Pesisa story, because of how Gebiha was belittling himself when asking for the rabbis' permission to handle the matter himself with Alexander the Great. Whereas Gebiha is merely showing deference, later Jewish variants that make the Jewish disputant actually lowly, sometimes also make him into an ignoramus who does not even realise why he succeeds. The butcher answering the Pope's pantomime successfully is a case in point.

Concerning misunderstood hand gestures, also consider the joke about the miser who, responding to a beggar holding out his hat to him, thanks him and magnanimously tells him to keep the hat for himself, as he would surely find it more useful himself. Also consider the joke about the nurse at a maternity ward, who tells a doctor that the husband of a woman giving birth swooned and fell to the ground when she signed to him to wait five more minutes. She held out her hand with five straight fingers. The man believed his wife had given birth to quintuplets, but the nurse does not realise that. By contrast, the miser only feigns he misunderstands what the beggar means. Whereas in the exchanges between the Pope and the butcher, in the tale we are discussing in this paper, gestures are a riddle, in the joke about the miser the beggar is resorting to a standard gesture, which everybody can be expected to interpret as begging. The miser resorts to a tactic of interpreting it as a gesture of offer.<sup>118</sup>

### 7.2. Juḥa's Gesture Is Misunderstood by a Corrupt Judge

Of course, there are plenty of stories about conversations that are a comedy of error, and playwrights and other writers often resort to such situations when seeking a comic effect. A subclass of comedy of errors comprises such situations that it is silent gesture that is misunderstood. In a Juḥa (=Joḥa) tale<sup>119</sup> collected by Tamar Alexander herself,<sup>120</sup> At the

<sup>118</sup> The joke about the miser appeared under the rubric "Risate a denti stretti" (and purports to describe the regular behaviour of any Scotsman), on p. 10 in *La Settimana Enigmistica*, Milan, year 52, no. 2665, 23 April 1983 ("Quando vede un mendicante tendergli il cappello, uno scozzese gli dice sempre con magnanimità: — Grazie, buon uomo, ma voi ne avete certo più bisogno di me: tenetevelo!"). Jokes about the Scots still have *droit de cité* in that widespread crosswords and trivia magazine. The joke about the nurse unwittingly signing quintuplets to a father at the maternity ward was condensed into a one-panel gag cartoon, on p. 42, top right, in that same Italian weekly magazine, year 79, no. 4104, 20 November 2010.

<sup>119</sup> The Arabic form of this character's name is *Jūḥā* and is a paroxytone. The Judaeo-Spanish form is *Joḥa*, i.e., *Džohá* (with the last syllable stressed). This character is often a fool or a simpleton, but sometimes is a trickster. For example, one of the tales that T. Alexander relates (*infra*, next note) is about him being instructed to woo a prospective bride and to cast eyes at her, which he does quite literally, by buying cow eyes and throwing them at her. This is tale type 1685, p. 371 in Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*, Vol. 2, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004.

market, Juḥa sees a tray that was full of bagels, but now only contains the sesame seeds that fell off them. Juḥa is convinced that what he sees in the tray is on offer. He insists with the vendor, who had previously told him he had nothing to offer, and the vendor tells Juḥa that these are "camel seeds". Juḥa is promised that if he is to sow the sesame seeds he is being offered, camels would grow out of them.

He pays a hefty price and buys the seeds, sows them in an empty field, sleeps there, and in the morning finds a caravan of camels standing in the same field. He is convinced that these camels belong to him. He binds all the camels in order to take them away. One of the camel-drivers wakes up, and tries to stop him. The camel-drivers struggle with Juḥa, trying to get their camels back. Juḥa provides an explanation, which convinces them that he is crazy. They suggest that they should go to the judge, and Juḥa agrees.

The judge is sitting and smoking his nargileh with his legs divaricated, which is unseemly because he is wearing a *sharwāl* (loose-fitting trousers). Juḥa gestures to the judge to bring his legs closer to each other (so that the judge would avoid shame for himself, as the contour of his private parts was visible under the soft cloth).<sup>121</sup> The judge misunderstands the gesture, and believes that Juḥa is promising him a bribe, which he is keen to accept. Therefore, the judge smiles to Juḥa, and eventually finds in favour of Juḥa. The camel-drivers are amazed and dispirited, but the judge chases them away.

Then the judge turns to Juḥa and requests the bribe. Juḥa is surprised, and explains what he actually meant. The judge is angry with Juḥa, calls him a fraud (he defrauded the judge of what he promised), and chases him away. But Juḥa keeps the camels. His mother, on seeing him with the camels, tells him he stole them, but he explains that he sowed them and they grew up.

In this tale, Juḥa is an ignoramus, and in the end is the winner, because his communication by gesturing is misunderstood. "Juḥa has won because of a constellation of random circumstances and the misunderstanding of nonverbal allusions because of a gap of ratiocinative and ethical conceptions (the judge distorts the judgement in order to get a bribe).

The pleasure of the listener depends upon the listener's identification with the weak Juḥa, who finds himself rewarded owing to naïve responses to random circumstances".<sup>122</sup> But arguably whether one finds the story amusing or the situation morally disturbing (as the camel-drivers suffered a huge loss as a camel costs more than other beasts), depends on whether one is willing to be game, and distinguishes between the storyworld and real life.

<sup>120</sup> Her informants were Rivka Peretz and Rivka Cohen-Ariel. See on pp. 66 and 77 in T. Alexander, "Ha-dmut ve-ha-'ir: sippurim humoristiyim yehudiyim-sefaradiyyim" (Hebrew, "The Character and the Town: Humorous Sephardic Jewish Tales"), *Pe'amim*, 7 (1981), pp. 64–82. The full tale appears in Hebrew in Appendix A on pp. 77–78 in the same paper, as told by Rivka Peretz (from Greece) and written down in Hebrew by Yoel Peretz. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) number is 12,724. An enhanced treatment, in English, appears on pp. 431–453 in Tamar Alexander-Frizer, *The Heart is a Mirror: The Sephardic Folktale*, Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2008. Translated by Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum from Hebrew. Originally *Ma'aseh ahuv va-chetsi* [*The Beloved Friend-and-a-Half*], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999.

<sup>121</sup> The Hebrew text of the transcription just says: "One could see in him (lit.: to him) everything". Neither such loose-fitting Oriental trousers, nor Western trousers for the best part of the 19th century, had the opening in front that trousers now have. Portraits from Western countries from that period (or earlier) show more of the contour of the groin than would be acceptable at present. A statue of a duke from the Renaissance standing under a covered passage in Darmstadt has his *membrum virile* quite protruding under his shorts, perhaps reflecting a medical condition (especially if it was bandaged). Or then, the Duke was sculpted that way in order to boastfully convey his exceeding virility.

<sup>122</sup> Alexander, *ibid.*, p. 66 (my translation).

### 7.3. Comments about the Relocated Juḥa Tale

The bulk of this tale (but excluding the episode of the misunderstood gesture and the corrupt judge) is a variant of tale type 1319, "Pumpkin Sold as a Donkey's Egg".<sup>123</sup> A numskull finds or buys some fruit he doesn't know, and mistakes it for the egg of a donkey or mare or camel (and the like). The fruit falls down and scares a hidden hare (or rabbit, or fox, or mouse). The fool, thinking the fugitive is a young animal hatched from the "egg", pursues it or tries to attract it. This type being combined with a motif about a misunderstood gesture, and the theme of a corrupt judge, is not among the usual combinations<sup>124</sup> that Uther indicates for type 1319. But in the present variant, type 1319 is combined with type 1200: in a field, fools sow salt (or cooked grain, or needles, and so on), and expect it to grow.<sup>125</sup>

The tale about Juḥa's gesture being misunderstood by a corrupt judge as reported and analysed by Tamar Alexander makes reference to a particular market (its Arabic name is given) in "the Old City" (of Jerusalem? the particular Hebrew phrase usually refers to that one), and the camel-drivers are described as Bedouin. Arguably the informant made an adaptation to her new locale: a market such as the one she was referring to is found in Jerusalem. But given her background in what used to be Rumelia, i.e., the European part of the Ottoman empire, arguably the folktale referring to a market in the old city, in a Balkan context used to be applied to the old city, historically Turkish in character, of the cities of the Balkans.

Those places retained their Turkish or Turkified populace as well as their traditional Islamic ways and built environment until the Muslim exodus from Rumelia (the Ottoman Balkans) in the aftermath of the birth of the national states in the peninsula, in the 19th century. The latest such exodus to Turkey was from Salonika, shortly before the First World War. The fire of 1917, as well as the influx of Ionian refugees, and governmental policies of reconstruction and employment (such as the mass dismissal in 1922–1923 of thousands, actually all Jewish workers in the port), did away with the Jewish-majority character of Salonika, as well as with its Turkish built environment, years before the Holocaust also destroyed the Jewish population of Salonika, a city that had been known as "the Jewish republic".<sup>126</sup>

## 8. Conclusions

This article marshals relevant information from across several disciplines, in order to build a complex argument. The purpose is to get a better appreciation of a tantalising tale variant, *The Pope's Three Questions*, that Tamar Alexander has described and analysed, as performed by a teller from a Judaeo-Spanish speaking Turkish family background. The tale type is Heda Jason's 922 \*C, *King Set Tasks to Jew*, which is well attested throughout Jewish

<sup>123</sup> Uther, Vol. 2, p. 121. Actually titled there "Pumpkin Sold as an Donkey's Egg". This typo is technology-induced: apparently all occurrences of "ass" were replaced in the file with "donkey", but the article "an" remained nevertheless (whereas on p. 123, type 1319P\*, the typo "asa foetiela" instead of "asa foetida" can be of course ascribed to miscopying from handwritten notes).

<sup>124</sup> Uther, type 1319, explains: "This type is often combined with one or more other types, esp. of 1241, 1250, 1281, and 1288." None of these is relevant here.

<sup>125</sup> Uther, Vol. 2, p. 72.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish History*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008; Steven B. Bowman, *The Agony of Greek Jews, 1940–1945*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009; *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808–1945* (Publications of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 148 and 167), Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University), vol. 1, by Minna Rozen, 2005; vol. 2, ed. M. Rozen, 2002.

communities. We have considered the archetype of the tale type itself, the Roman-age *Gebiha ben Pesisa and Alexander the Great*, offering a fresh perspective about its background.

Concerning *The Pope's Three Questions*, we argued that the symbols the Pope uses in his pantomime while riddling the Jew — and that are presently interpreted by the teller as standing for the round Earth (in turn standing for the challenge of modernity to the traditional order) as opposed to the flat Earth (standing for traditional doxa) — were quite relevant symbols with different meanings in the early modern period. Namely, the Jew showing the Pope unleavened bread is interpreted by the Pope as reassurance that the Jews side with the Catholic camp (which retains the sacrament of Eucharist, the holy host), as opposed to the Protestant camp, represented by the Netherlands's House of Orange.

As Amsterdam was a hub in the Sephardic social network, such an interpretation was significant for Sephardis in the early modern period, as late as sometime in the 18th century. But eventually, in the late 18th century or early on during the 19th, the old interpretation of the symbols was neither historically relevant, nor linguistically transparent any more for the Sephardis, all the more so for the Sephardic communities around the Aegean. Arguably, it was then that the current meanings of the symbols emerged, in the given tale variant.

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