

**ANIMALS CALLING OUT TO HEAVEN:
IN SUPPORT OF THE HYPOTHESIS OF AN ALEXANDRINE EGYPTIAN CONNECTION
TO THE ANIMALS PRAISING HEAVEN IN *PEREQ SHIRAH* (A CHAPTER OF *HYMNS*).
SOME EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT'S GREEK MAGICAL POPYRI**

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ABSTRACT

The present study draws attention to some evidence from Egypt's Greek Magical Papyri, concerning animals giving praise to some deity. In his very important dissertation of 1966, Malachi Beit-Arié suggested that the Hebrew text *Pereq Shirah* (*A Chapter of Hymns*), in which animal kinds are listed and each utters some verse from Scripture in praise of Heaven, may have been inspired by Alexandrine ideas that are also in the background of the *Physiologus*. The Egyptian texts in Greek which I point out appear to make this hypothesis more congenial indeed.

KEY WORDS: GREEK MAGICAL POPYRI, ANIMALS, *PEREQ SHIRAH* (A CHAPTER OF *HYMNS*), PRAISE TO HEAVENS, HEBREW LITERATURE.

ANIMALES QUE ALABAN A LOS CIELOS:

EN FAVOR DE LA HIPÓTESIS DE UN NEXO EGIPTO-ALEJANDRINO DE LA ALABANZA A LOS CIELOS EN *PEREQ SHIRAH* (UN CAPÍTULO DE LOS HIMNOS). ALGUNOS TESTIMONIOS DE LOS PAPIROS MÁGICOS GRIEGOS DE EGIPTO

RESUMEN

El presente estudio presta atención a algunos testimonios procedentes de los Papiros Mágicos Griegos de Egipto en relación con animales que alaban a una determinada deidad. Malachi Beit-Arié, en su importantísima Tesis Doctoral de 1966, sugirió que el texto hebreo *Pereq Shirah* (*Un Capítulo de los Himnos*), en el que hay una lista de tipos de animales y cada uno se sirve de algunos versos de la Escritura para alabar a los Cielos, debe haberse inspirado en ideas alejandrinas subyacentes en el *Physiologus*. Los textos egipcios en griego que propongo parecen hacer en realidad más convincente esta hipótesis.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PAPIROS MÁGICOS GRIEGOS, ANIMALES, *PEREQ SHIRAH* (UN CAPÍTULO DE *HIMNOS*), ALABANZA A LOS CIELOS. LITERATURA HEBREA.

1. *Wisdom and Mock-Wisdom Literary Genres from the Middle Ages*

Wisdom literature from the Middle Ages is a genre, in which usually a scholar is questioned by a king, and provides answers. The Old French *Book of Sidrach* was one famous such example. Frederick II Hohenstaufen, a sovereign based in southern Italy, promoted learning and was himself the author of a treatise on falconry. He was born in

Iesi, in the Abruzzi, in 1194, became King of Sicily in 1196, King of Germany in 1212, and Emperor in 1220. He was eventually excommunicated (in part, because he did not believe in the immortality of the soul). He died in 1250 in Lucera, Apulia. Frederick II was a questioner, and tended to privilege direct experience as a source of credible knowledge. He hosted at his court scholars conversant with Latin, or Arabic, or Hebrew texts.

There have been speculations current in the literature concerning Frederick II as a model of the sovereign who questions scholars, concerning the possible influence upon his *modus operandi* of the genre of the wisdom literature consisting of a dialogue between a king and a scholar, especially the Old French *Book of Sidrach*. Benedetto mentions¹ the suggestion made by Kantorowicz² that Frederick II was inspired to question scholars by the model of the *Book of Sidrach*. Perhaps, but it was not the only instance of a medieval text consisting of a dialogue between a scholar and a king.

The later genre also included the fictional dialogues of Hadrian and Epictetus, and of Pippin and Alcuin, and had its counterpart in a comic genre with a disrespectful interlocutor of the king: it is the Marcolfian tradition, in which the clever boor Marcolf is faced with King Solomon, and, in Giulio Cesare Croce's 1606 *Bertoldo*, Marcolf's epigon Bertoldo, a peasant facing King Alboin, whereas Hebrew medieval literature sees the child prodigy Ben Sira interact with King Nebuchadnezzar and play pranks on him, making him angry but eventually very satisfied with his answers. "Whereas the colloquies" of Hadrian and Epictetus, or of Pippin and the schoolman Alcuin (pseudepigraphic lists of brief questions and answers) "represent wisdom and learning, *S&M* could be more fairly called wisdom and spurning"³. *S&M* stands for the *Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi*.

It must be said that in texts purporting to represent a scholar's interactions with Frederick II, on occasion the scholar would reproach the King sharply and at length for some ill-posed question. One comes across this in 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn Sab'īn's *Sicilian Questions*⁴, which purports to be based on questioning by Frederick II, but

¹ On p. 41, at the end of fn. 64, in: MARIENZA BENEDETTO, *Un enciclopedista ebreo alla corte di Federico II: Filosofia e astrologia nel Midraš ha-ḥokmah di Yehudah ha-Cohen* (Biblioteca filosofica di Quaestio, 12), Bari: Edizioni di Pagina, 2010.

² On p. 313 in: E. KANTOROWICZ, *Federico II Imperatore*, Milan: Garzanti, 2000, 5th edn.

³ On p. 26 in: JAN M. ZIOLKOWSKI, *Solomon and Marcolf* (Harvard Series in Medieval Latin, 1), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Department of the Classics, Harvard University, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2008. Also see: EPHRAIM NISSAN, "A Wily Peasant (Marcolf, Bertoldo), a Child Prodigy (Ben Sira) a Centaur (Kitovras), a Wiseman (Sidrach), or the Chaldaean Prince Saturn? Considerations about Marcolf and the Marcolfian Tradition, with Hypotheses about the Genesis of the Character Kitovras", *International Studies in Humour*, 3 (2014) 108–150.

⁴ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn Sab'īn, *Le questioni siciliane. Federico II e l'universo filosofico*, ed. P. Sallino,

Akasoy⁵ doubts its authenticity, proposing that it is an artificial collation exploiting Frederick's fame as a questioner and promoter of scholarship. At any rate, Ibn Sab'īn on occasion criticises acerbically the questioner's ill-posed questions⁶. The difference with respect to the comic wisdom genre is that when reproaching Frederick II, the scholar was being a teacher, not a scoffer. And being a teacher gave one the authority to scold a pupil (or a debating peer), even when the pupil or debater was a king.

The French encyclopaedia, the *Book of Sidrach*, also known by the title *Livre de la fontaine de toutes les sciences*, is in the form of a dialogue between the Christian scholar Sidrac (a philosopher from Edinburgh) and King Boctus of Bactriana (*Au tens dou roi Boctus, au Levant roi d'une grant province...*); the subjects include religion, ethics, medicine, law, government, and astrology⁷. That the name *Sidrach* has to do with Sirach (i.e., Ben Sira) was already suggested, e.g., by Adolfo Bartoli⁸. It is important to realise however that *Sidrach* is a form of *Shadrach*, the Babylonian name that Hananiah was given (*Daniel* 1:7). The *editio princeps* of the *Book of Sidrach* was published in 1486 by Antoine Vérard, and was reprinted eleven times between 1486 and 1533. The number of questions answered in the book varies according to the edition. For example, one edition that is especially appreciated by antiquarians is the one published in Paris by Galliot du Pré, in 1531 (*Sidrach. Mil / quatre vingtz / et quatre demandes avec les / solutions et responses a / tous propoz, oeuvre / curieux et moult / recreatif, selon le saige Sidrach*)⁹.

Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2002.

- ⁵ ANNA AYŞE AKASOY, "Ibn Sab'īn *Sicilian Questions*: The Text, Its Sources, and Their Historical Context", *Al-Qantara*, 24 (2008) 115–146; EAD., "Reading the Prologue of Ibn Sab'īn's *Sicilian Questions*", *Schede Medievali* (Palermo), 45 (2007) 15–24, especially on pp. 15–17 in the latter; cf. BENEDETTO, p. 25.
- ⁶ IBN SAB'ĪN, *Le questioni siciliane*, p. 135 (cf. BENEDETTO, p. 27, fn. 36), p. 140 (cf. BENEDETTO, p. 28, fn. 37), pp. 163–164 (cf. BENEDETTO, p. 28, fn. 38).
- ⁷ A recent edition is by ERNSTPETER RUHE, *Sydrac le philosophe, Le livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000 (*Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter*, 34). It was reviewed by J.-Ch. LEMAIRE in *Scriptorium*, 59 (2005), bulletin codicologique n° 668.
- ⁸ In the introduction to ADOLFO BARTOLI'S edition of the *Libro di Sidrach: Testo inedito del secolo XIV, Parte prima (Testo)*, Bologna: presso Gaetano Romagnoli, 1868.
- ⁹ On that encyclopaedia, see B. BEYER DE RYKE, "Les Encyclopédies médiévales, un état de la question", in *Pecia, Ressources en médiévistique*, 1, Saint-Denis, 2002, pp. 9–42. Also see O. PARLANGELI, "Appunti per un'edizione del Libro di Sidrac", in *Actes du X^e Congrès international de linguistique et philologie romanes* (Strasbourg 1962), vol. 2, Paris, 1965, pp. 553–562; and FRANÇOISE FÉRY-HUE, "Sidrac et les pierres précieuses", *Revue d'histoire des textes*, 28 (1998), pp. 119–120, 121, 128, 163.

2. *The Life of Ben Sira: A Comic Take on the Wisdom Genre*

Apart from strictly speaking the Marcolfian tradition, we can arguably speak of a Marcolfian genre. Its defining feature is that the plot had a famous king of old faced with an interlocutor, in what should be a debate about wisdom, but the interlocutor is irreverent: towards high-brow wisdom *and* the King (which is the case of Marcolf *vis-à-vis* King Solomon), or then focusing on the King as being the butt — which is what the child prodigy Ben Sira does to Nebuchadnezzar.

According to an early medieval text in Hebrew, probably from Caliphal Mesopotamia (sometime between the eighth and tenth centuries, according to Eli Yassif)¹⁰, Ben Sira — who bears the name of the eponymous author of the ancient book of wisdom, outside the Jewish biblical canon¹¹ but mentioned in the talmudic literature — was supposedly born to the prophet Jeremiah's daughter after she was accidentally inseminated at a public bath with her own father's semen¹². Hence the child's exceptional qualities, but also his socially marginal position owing to the circumstances of his birth — which in the case of Marcolf instead, is because of Marcolf's social class. Unlike

¹⁰ ELI YASSIF (ed.), *The Tales of Ben Sira in the Middle Ages: A Critical Text and Literary Studies* [in Hebrew], Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984.

¹¹ It was only from 1896, when a leaf brought to England from Egypt by Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson was identified by Solomon Schechter as a fragment from the Hebrew text of *Ben Sira*, that fragments of some length of the Hebrew text of *Ben Sira* became known to scholarship. This gives an idea of the book of *Ben Sira* not only being extrabiblical for Judaism, but also having become extraneous to Jewish culture, whereas still in the Middle Ages, some Jews would read it.

¹² The story about the child Ben Sira's birth has parallels in the Zoroastrian myth of the birth of a redeemer through a maiden who, while bathing, is to be inseminated by the one-thousand-year old semen of Zoroaster. According to Zoroastrian beliefs, Lake Hamun (called 'Kansaoya' in ancient myth) is the keeper of the Prophet Zoroaster's seed. The name Saošyānt of the Zoroastrian Messiah is explained as follows by ANTONIO PANAINO: "Literally 'who will make prosperous (the existence)', future participle of the verb *sū* 'to prosper' (intransitive), but assuming also the eschatologic role of future and final 'saviour' (see now the fresh discussion by HINTZE, 1995). Cf. also MESSINA, 1930 and in particular 1933." The quotation is from p. 217, fn. 52, in: ANTONIO PANAINO, "Trends and Problems concerning the Mutual Relations between Iranian Pre-Islamic and Jewish Cultures", in: ANTONIO PANAINO and ANDREA PIRAS (eds.), *Schools of Oriental Studies and the Development of Modern Historiography: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project — Held in Ravenna, Italy, October 17–21, 2001* (MELAMMU Symposia IV, International Association for Intercultural Studies of the MELAMMU Project), Milano: Mimesis, on behalf of the Università di Bologna & ISIAO [Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente], 2004, pp. 209–236. Panaino was citing: H. HINTZE, "The Rise of the Saviour in the Avesta", in *Iran und Turfan. Beiträge Berliner Wissenschaftler, Werner Sundermann zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet*, Wiesbaden, 1995, pp. 77–97; G. MESSINA, *Der Ursprung der Magier und die zarathuſtrische Religion*. Roma, 1930; and G. MESSINA, *I Magi a Betlemme e una predizione di Zoroastro*, Roma, 1933.

the boorish, uneducated Marcolf, the child Ben Sira has received a full education by the time he is faced with Nebuchadnezzar, which is when he is aged seven, according to Version A of *Pseudo-Sirach*, but aged twenty according to the similar, almost only differently worded Version B. Version B became widespread in Italy and Islamic Mediterranean countries, whereas Version A used to be widespread in Central Europe.

Once in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, Ben Sira plays an atrocious prank on the King, and by so doing answers the question that the King's advisors required Ben Sira to answer. Ben Sira defeats the King's advisors who are absolutely terrified, and once the King asks him what their fate is to be, Ben Sira condemns them to death. Nebuchadnezzar, and in this he is true to his terrible fame (whereas in much of the plot he is a tolerant and tolerable chap instead), is so impressed with the death sentence that Ben Sira has passed upon his advisers, that he wants to enthrone him: Nebuchadnezzar offers to kill Zedekiah, and enthrone Ben Sira in Jerusalem in his stead. Ben Sira refuses. Why? Because he is only seven, the boy replies.

Nebuchadnezzar subjects Ben Sira to a series of questions. The first one is about how Ben Sira managed to make the scalp of the live hare into parchment, when Ben Sira sent him a letter written on the hare's scalp. Ben Sira gives the recipe of a preparation which King Solomon had used for the depilation of the legs of the Queen of Sheba, who (notwithstanding nearly four centuries separating them) was Nebuchadnezzar's mother. That claim is a complex intertextual reference to disparate lore from rabbinic tradition, but in the economy of the plot, it is yet another opportunity for Ben Sira to embarrass Nebuchadnezzar, as in order to answer the King's question, he is telling him how making of Nebuchadnezzar's own mother a plaything had been one of Solomon's sexual exploits.

In due course, Nebuchadnezzar is so enchanted with Ben Sira's answers, that he wants him to marry his daughter. Ben Sira refuses, and insolently so. Nebuchadnezzar is so angry, that he decides to cause Ben Sira to die, and he is unsuccessful at that because for some reason, he does not do it directly. When a multitude of advisors fails to come up with a suitable plan, Nebuchadnezzar has no qualms and has them all executed, but he nevertheless avoids doing the same to Ben Sira. According to a logic which Eli Yassif has reconstructed in his Hebrew critical edition, apparently the idea (somewhat botched as worked into the text of *Pseudo-Sirach*) was that Ben Sira would have to take part in several banquets, and always be served a particular food. There would be a constant turnover of the participants at the banquets, so they would not be harmed by that food, whereas Ben Sira would be harmed by its cumulated consumption. Ben Sira manages to thwart the plan of the gullible Nebuchadnezzar, because Ben Sira insists that he is to prepare the food himself, and while doing so, he plays tricks. After Ben Sira heals the King as well as his daughter (who suffers

from unstoppable farting), Nebuchadnezzar continues to ask questions, which Ben Sira answers to the King's satisfaction.

3. *A Question about Animals from the Life of Ben Sira*

Let us consider the eleventh question Nebuchadnezzar asks Ben Sira. The following is a translation of the relevant Hebrew text from Version A.

[11] *Yod Aleph*. Moreover, he [Nebuchadnezzar] asked him [Ben Sira]: “Why were mosquitoes created, as they only live one day?” As it is stated in [the *Babylonian Talmud* in] tractate *Hullin*, in the chapter “These are Unfit Animals”, in the context of a difficulty being raised, as it says [in Aramaic]: “No *baqqa* [Aramaic for ‘mosquito’] lives a complete day”¹³. This is a *yattúš* [Hebrew for ‘mosquito’] which is [up to] one day old. “And there is no *baqta*”, this is a fly which is [up to] one year old. He [Ben Sira] told him [Nebuchadnezzar]: “Your Majesty, all the mosquitoes in the world were only created for the sake of one particular mosquito, by whose means the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will in the future take revenge upon Titus, the wicked one”¹⁴. Nebuchadnezzar told him: “That one was created for Titus [— I am willing to concede that much.]¹⁵. Why the other ones?” He [Ben Sira] told him [Nebuchadnezzar]: “In order to feed the offspring of the raven, as it is said: ‘Who shall prepare for the raven its food?’ [(*Job* 38:41)]. And it says: ‘For the offspring of the raven, which call out’ [(*Psalms* 147:9)]”. He [Nebuchadnezzar] told him [Ben Sira]: “Are their parents cruel, so they do not bring food to them as the other birds do? In your own Scripture it is written¹⁶: ‘And the ravens used to bring bread to him [to Elijah (*1 Kings* 17:6)]” He [Ben Sira] told him: “I shall provide an answer. When the chicks of the raven get out of

¹³ The reference is to the *Babylonian Talmud*, *Hullin*, 58b. See **Appendix A** of this study.

¹⁴ A talmudic legend relates that after Titus destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem, as he was on board of a ship carrying him back to Italy, there was a storm, and Titus addressed the G-d of the Jews, by claiming that his power is only limited, as though, to the sea. The storm subsided. Once Titus disembarked, a mosquito entered his ear, and kept buzzing, until Titus' death. An autopsy was carried out on his brain, and a mosquito as large as a bird was found (a tumour)? See the list of sources on p. 60 in Vol. 5 of: LOUIS GINZBERG, *Legends of the Jews*, transl. from the German manuscript by Henrietta Szold. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909–1938.

¹⁵ Take note of the humour in that the Nebuchadnezzar character in *Pseudo-Sirach* is told about the bad end that the Roman-age destroyer of the Temple of Jerusalem will come to, and he, Nebuchadnezzar is even willing to concede that much, and yet Nebuchadnezzar has not destroyed yet the first, i.e., Solomon's, Temple of Jerusalem. If he is willing to concede that somebody who destroys the Temple, will eventually get his comeuppance, how come he will nevertheless destroy the Temple?

¹⁶ It is remarkable that the Nebuchadnezzar character is able to quote from Scripture.

the egg, they are as white as snow, and they stay so three days long. As soon as their parents see that they are white, they abandon them, and they [the chicks] call out, and the Holy One, Blessed Be He, gives order to the mosquitoes/gnats to exit their [the chicks'] faeces, and enter their mouths. Had there been no mosquitoes/gnats, they [the raven's chicks] would have died. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, did not create anything needlessly". He [Nebuchadnezzar] told him [Ben Sira]: "Well done!"

4. *An Obscure Liturgical Text — The Animals Give Praise to Heaven by Quoting from Scripture, in Perek Shirah — and Another Text, Denying Animals the Quality of Befitting Praise-Givers*

The raven's chicks call out for help. But we also come across animals that call out in order to give praise to the Creator, here and there in rabbinic homiletics.

Jewish liturgy includes a rather obscure item, *Pereq Shirah* (*A Chapter of Hymns*), enumerating various created beings, especially animal kinds, along with some verse from Scripture they are claimed to pronounce in praise of the Creator. In *Pereq Shirah*, there is no attempt to imitate the actual sounds those animals make. It only quite rarely happens that the entry in *Pereq Shirah* for some creature includes no biblical verse at all. Incidentally, consider that there exists a parallel in Islamic folklore: the motif of the praying animal¹⁷.

Pereq Shirah is deceptively naïve. It actually is a work of mysticism, extant in a few variants. In his doctoral dissertation, supervised by Gerschom Scholem, Malachi Beit-Arié provided a heavily annotated critical edition with learned introductions, showing the complexity of the text¹⁸. In *Pereq Shirah* there is no attempt at emulating actual animal calls. See examples and their discussions in **Appendix B** and **Appendix C**.

The idea that the gnats or the mosquitos are ordered to enter the mouths of the chicks of crows has the following analogue, concerning the *Sitz im Leben* of frogs in the world. A frog boasts with David that "she" sings more than he does. This occurs in rabbinic homiletics in more than one place — Malachi Beit-Arié points out¹⁹ that

¹⁷ In his bulky, dense *A Motif Index of The Thousand and One Nights*, HASAN EL-SHAMY lists (*ibid.*, p. 37) Motif B251.4.2, "What animal (bird) says when it prays". That motif occurs in the tale of the Hermit and the pigeons. See: H.M. EL-SHAMY, *A Motif Index of The Thousand and One Nights*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

¹⁸ M. BEIT-ARIÉ, *Perek Shira: Introductions and Critical Edition* (Hebrew, 2 vols.), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1966.

¹⁹ BEIT-ARIÉ, p. 26.

the frog singing the praise of the Creator is a motif in international folklore²⁰ — but in *Pereq Shirah* there is an addition²¹: “Not only that. I also perform a *mitsvá* (good deed). And what is the *mitsvá* I perform? There is a kind of birds whose living (*par-nasató*) is only from the water, and when it is hungry, he takes me and eats me. This is the *mitsvá* I perform, to implement what is said: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread, and if he is thirsty’ etc. [*(Proverbs 25:21)*]”.

Interestingly, there is a passage in *Pesiqta Rabbati* (in the *Ish Shalom* edition, this is paragraph 20 in the pericope *Giving of the Law = Mattan Torah*) that regardless of authorial intentions, “responds” negatively as though, and at any rate negates, the notion that beasts rather than humans are fit for giving praise to Heaven. It is an allegory:

ולמה ניתנה תורה בסיון ולא בשאר ירחים, למה הדבר דומה למלך שעשה חופה לבתו ואמר אדם אחד מגדולי המלך נאה לה לבת המלך להרכיבה על הפיל כשהיא יושבת באפריון ולסלסלה בכל גדולי מלכות, ענה (אחד) [אחר] ואמר פיל גבוה [ואין לה] [לו] הדר [ויש לה] [ואין לו] יופי ונאה להרכיבה על הסוס ולהראות יופיה בכל גדולי המלכות, ענה אדם אחד פיל גבוה וסוס נאה ואין להם פה לדבר וידיים לספוק ורגלים לרקוד [ולהרכיב] [ונאה להרכיבה] על כתיפים להראות את יופיה, כך הקדוש ברוך הוא לא נתן התורה לא בניסן ולא באייר מפני שמזל ניסן טלה ומזל אייר שור אין נאה להם לקלס ולשבח לכך נתן הקדוש ברוך הוא התורה בסיון מפני שמזל סיון תאומים ותאומים אדם הוא ואדם יש לו פה לדבר וידיים לספוק ורגלים לרקוד

Why was the Law (the *Torah*) given in [the month] of Sivan [the Pentecost is in early Sivan], rather than in any other month? [Reply:] What does this thing resemble? A king, who made a [wedding] canopy [here, for: a wedding feast in connection to the wedding and its canopy] for his daughter. And a person (*adam*), of the King’s great [dignitaries, grandees], said: “It would befit the princess to have her ride an elephant, while she would sit in a howdah (*appiryon* [usually for ‘palanquin, litter of parade’, typically for brides]), and to carry her higher (*lēsalsēlah*) than any of [or: among] the great (grandees) of the kingdom”. One (*ehad* [but to be read *aher*, ‘somebody else’]) retorted by saying: “An elephant is tall and has neither elegance nor beauty, and it would be proper [instead] to have her ride a

²⁰ STITH THOMPSON, *Motif Index of Folk-Literature*, 6 vols., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958, CD ROM edition, 1993, motif B214.17.

²¹ BEIT-ARIÉ, pp. 24–25.

horse, and to show her beauty among all the great of the kingdom". A person retorted: "An elephant is tall, and a horse is handsome, but they have neither a mouth that could speak, nor hands for clapping and legs for dancing, and it would be proper [instead] to carry her above [human] shoulders, [in order] to show her beauty". Likewise the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Law in neither [the month of] Nissan [i.e. the month of Passover: March–April], nor Iyyar [April–May], because the [zodiac] sign of Nissan is a lamb [actually Aries], and the sign of Iyyar is a bull (Taurus): it does not behove *them* to laud (*lěqalles* [literally: 'to say καλός'] and praise. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Law in Sivan, because the sign of Sivan is twins (Gemini), and twins are human, and a human has a mouth for speaking, and hands for clapping, and legs for dancing.

5. Some Evidence from Graeco-Roman Egypt

In his dissertation, Malachi Beit-Arié proposed that *Pereq Shirah* is a mystical text, whose inspiration may have come from Alexandria, this being in correlation to the *Physiologus*²², the allegorical bestiary whose roots were likewise in Alexandria,

²² See, e.g., MAX WELLMANN, *Der Physiologus* (Philologus, Supplementband XXII, Heft I), Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930. Ascribing to an animal kind some behaviour, and then deriving a lesson for the moral behaviour of humans, is in the tradition of the European moral bestiaries from the Middle Ages, themselves deriving from the *Physiologus*. This Greek collection of moralistic accounts of animals was translated into Latin (*Physiologus Latinus*) towards the end of the fourth century CE. There is a significant body of scholarly literature about the *Physiologus* (see, e.g., SCOTT 2002, PEIL 1996, KORDECKI 1996, BRUNNER-TRAUT 1984, HOMMEL 1877, MAURER 1967, WIENER 1921: the entries in that order are given below).

Nevertheless, sporadic, very brief examples occur in the biblical book of *Proverbs* (whose reader is invited to learn from the ant), as well as in early rabbinic homiletics, where it is stated that had religion not been revealed, prescribing moral behaviour, humans could have still learned various good qualities from animal kinds, e.g., modesty from the cat (as it buries its excreta).

A. SCOTT, "Zoological Marvel and Exegetical Method in Origen and the *Physiologus*", in: C.A. BOBERTZ and D. BRAKKE (eds.), *Reading in Christian Communities*. Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, vol. 14. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2002, pp. 80–89.

D. PEIL, "On the Question of a *Physiologus* Tradition in Emblematic Art and Writing", in: N.C. FLORES (ed.), *Animals in the Middle Ages*. Garland, New York, 1996, 2000.

L. KORDECKI, "Making Animals Mean: Species Hermeneutics in the *Physiologus* of Theobaldus", in: N.C. FLORES (ed.), *Animals in the Middle Ages*. Garland, New York, 1996, 2000.

E. BRUNNER-TRAUT, «Der ägyptische Ursprung des 45. Kapitels des *Physiologus* und seine Datierung», in: H. ALTENMÜLLER and D. WILDUNG (eds.), *Festschrift Wolfgang Helck zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*. Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Vol. 11. Buske, Hamburg, 1984.

F. HOMMEL, *Physiologus: Die aethiopische Uebersetzung des Physiologus. Nach je einer Londoner, Pariser und Wiener Handschrift hrsg. verdeutscht und mit einer historischen Einleitung versehen*. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1877.

F. MAURER (ed.), *Der altdeutsche Physiologus: Die Millstätter Reimfassung und die Wiener Prosa*. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, Vol. 67. Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1967.

L. WIENER, *Contributions Toward a History of Arabico-Gothic Culture. Vol. 4, Physiologus Studies*. Innes, Philadelphia, 1921.

and which is the background of the medieval bestiaries of Western Christendom²³.

Consider the following invocation, from a magical text from Greek papyri from Egypt; it was clearly devised in all seriousness (and the impact of how animals were conceived in Egyptian religion are felt), even though to a modern reader other than a specialist in Greek magical literature it is likely to seem uproarious:

I call on you, lord, in ‘birdglyphic’: ARAI; in hieroglyphic: LAILAM; in Hebraic: ANOCH BIATHIARBATH BERBIR ECHILATOUR BOUPHROUMTROM; in Egyptian: ALDABAEIM; in ‘baboonic’: ABRASAX; in “falconic”: CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI TIPH TIPH TIPH; in hieratic: MENE-PHOIPHOTH CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA. Then clap 3 times, go “pop, pop, pop” for a long time; hiss at some length²⁴.

What is claimed to be “Hebraic” is actually not such. What was translated as *bird-glyphic* is ὀρνεογλυφιστί in Greek, patterned after ἱερογλυφιστί. A footnote (ascribed to Jan Bergman of the University of Uppsala) explains: “*Chi chi* is the cry appropriate for the morning sun; *tiph tiph*, for the evening sun.” Another footnote on the same page explains: “This invocation and that following (138–53) are essentially identical, both being variations of an old Egyptian hymn in which the rising sun is greeted by the sacred animals, each kind making its appropriate noises. In both invocations [...] the sun god has been made the creator and sustainer of the world, and the songs of the animals are preceded by and partly fused with the songs of the angels, many of whom are Jewish.”

²³ Concerning the bestiaries, see, e.g., CHRISTOPHER LUCKEN, “Les hiéroglyphes de Dieu. La *démonstration* des *Bestiaires* au regard de la *senefiance* des animaux selon l’exégèse de saint Augustin”, *Compar(a)ison*, 1994/I, pp. 33–70 ; IDEM, “Le théâtre des animaux : le miroir des hommes et le livre de Dieu”, in *Animaux d’art et d’histoire. Bestiaire des collections genevoises*, Genève, Musée d’art et d’histoire, 2000, pp. 47–55. Medieval fabulists also deserve attention. Concerning the fables of Marie de France, see, e.g., CHRISTOPHER LUCKEN, “*Par essample*: les fables de Marie de France”, in: J-M. BOIVIN, J. CERQUIGLINI-TOULET and L. HARF-LANCNER (eds.), *Les Fables avant La Fontaine*, Geneva: Droz, 2011, pp. 213–234. The fables of Marie de France are important in the background of the Hebrew fables of the 13th-century (English? French?) fabulist Rabbi Berechiah ha-Nakdan. See, e.g., MARC MICHAEL EPSTEIN, “The Elephant and the Law: The Medieval Jewish Minority Adapts a Christian Motif”, *The Art Bulletin*, 76 (1994) 465–478; IDEM, “The Ways of Truth Are Curtailed and Hidden’: A Medieval Hebrew Fable as a Vehicle for Covert Polemic”, *Prooftexts*, 14 (1994) 205–231; IDEM, *Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature*, University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. Cf. EPHRAIM NISSAN, “Imagined Elephants in the History of European Ideas: Varejka’s Pataphysical Way to the Subject”, *International Studies in Humour*, 2 (2013) 100–177.

²⁴ This quotation is from p. 174 in: HANS DIETER BETZ (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986. The passage is part of PGM XIII. 1–343 (translated by Morton Smith, and which is Part A, being an initiation ritual and magical handbook, of *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2 vols., edited by K. PREISENDANZ et al., Stuttgart: Teubner, 2nd edn., 1973–1974).

6. *A Few Considerations*

Arguably this sheds some further light on *Pereq Shirah* (*A Chapter of Hymns*), a deceptively naïve text which is part of normative Jewish devotional literature (though peripheral and unknown to most): enumerating various created beings, especially animal kinds, along with some verse from Scripture they are claimed to pronounce in praise of the Creator. As mentioned earlier, and contrary to the Greek text from Egypt we considered, in *Pereq Shirah*, there is no attempt to imitate the actual sounds those animals make. *Pereq Shirah* is only deceptively naïve. It actually is a work of mysticism, extant in a few variants. In his doctoral dissertation, fundamental for a scholarly understanding of *Pereq Shirah*, Malachi Beit-Arié provided a heavily annotated critical edition, and suspected a connection to Alexandria.

I reckon that the old Egyptian pagan hymn for the rising sun, and the Greek invocation inspired by it, arguably provide some confirmation Beit-Arié's insight²⁵ that the Hebrew text has to do with Alexandrian culture, and may have been in some relation to the source of inspiration of the *Physiologus*.

7. *Some More Excerpts from the Greek Magical Papyri*

The passage quoted earlier, from *PGM XIII*. 82–89²⁶, has a parallel comprised in *PGM XIII*. 145–165 is as follows²⁷:

{...} The first angel cries in 'birdglyphic' ARAI — which is ["Woe to my enemy" — and you have set him in charge of the punishments. Helios hymns you in hieroglyphic, LAILAM, and in Hebrew by his own name, ANOK BI-

²⁵ In email correspondence with Malachi Beit-Arié from 8 May 2014, I found him sympathetic to my hypothesis. "Thank you very much indeed for letting me know. I only regret not been able to include your text and comments in my recent publication, *Quntras Shira Hadasha: Addenda to Perek Shira: Introductions and Critical Edition. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1966*, Electronic Publication by the National Library of Israel [in Hebrew]." In 2013 indeed, Beit-Arié supplemented his dissertation with an e-book of 77 pages in Hebrew, *Quntras Shira Hadasha*, which is posted at the website of the National Library in Jerusalem, and can be downloaded from this address: http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NLI&docId=NNL_ALEPH003513355 In his email from 8 May 2014, Beit-Arié explained that he only included a selection of addenda in concise form (out of hundreds pages of additions) after the National Library in Jerusalem had supplied a .pdf version "of the old dissertation which has never been published, nor did I published any article on PSh." (as indeed he is famous as a codicologist). See: *Perek Shira: Introductions and Critical Edition. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1966* [in Hebrew], 2 vols. Pdf version 2013 by the National Library of Israel, posted at the latter's website at <http://aleph.nli.org.il/F/VD1G7CNETIV8QX4NPNFM4SGRKAEPP17XU7YP2RN3J5R3GYD45-25568?func=short-jump&jump=000021>

²⁶ On p. 174 in the 1986 edition of Betz's *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

²⁷ On p. 176, their brackets, my braces.

ATHIARBAR BERBIR SCHILATOUR BOUPHROUMTRÖM (36 letters); he says, ‘I precede you, lord, I who rise on the boat of the sun, the disk (?), thanks to you.’ Your magical name in Egyptian is ALDABIAEIM (9 letters, see below). Now he who appears on the boat rising together with you is a clever baboon; he greets you in his own language, saying ‘You are the number of [the days of] the year, ABRASAX.’ The falcon on the other end [of the boat] greets you in his own language and cries out to receive food: CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI TIP TIP TIP TIP TIP TIP TIP. He of the nine forms greets you in hieratic, saying: MENEPHŌIPHŌTH. (He means, ‘I go before you, lord’). . . .

So saying, he clapped 3 times, and the god laughed 7 times: “CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA.” When the god laughed, 7 gods were born (who encompass the cosmos — see above — for these are those who appeared before [the world was formed]).

ABRASAX or ABRAXAS “is recognized as a solar god and is pictured on amulets as a snake-footed creature (the so-called *anguipede*), armored, and with the head of a cock”²⁸. Numerical glosses such as “36 letters” — a note explains²⁹ — “reflect a special interest of the compiler”; apart from “their convenience for numerological speculation, they helped copyists check their transcriptions of magical names. Not that copyists always took advantage of the convenience.”

The following³⁰ explains the list of angel names (some of them Jewish divine names) that precedes the beginning of our quotation, and which after the third name contains the gloss “these are the angels who first appeared”: “This gloss interrupts a list of the first seven angels, probably thought to be the first creatures within the cosmos, certainly the foremost subjects of the cosmocrator, Helios. We should next have a list of their utterances, but it is broken off after the first and replaced by those of the Egyptian gods who accompany the sun god’s boat at sunrise, and among whom Helios (here the sun disk) is a minor deity by relation to the god on the boat”.

Another version appears in Betz’s book³¹, where a passage, from *PGM XIII*. 455–470, states the following (in which again, pseudo-Hebrew occurs):

The first angel cries to you in birdglyphic, ‘ARAI’ (which is, ‘Woe to my enemy’,) and you have set him in charge of the punishments. Helios hymns you thus in hieroglyphic, LAILAM, and in Hebrew by his own name, ANAG BIATHIARBAR BERBĪ SCHILATOUR BOUPHROUMTRÖM, saying, ‘I

²⁸ BETZ, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, p. 331, s.v. in the Glossary.

²⁹ BETZ, note 37 on p. 176.

³⁰ The quotation is from note 34 on p. 176 in Betz’s book.

³¹ BETZ, p. 184.

precede you, lord, I who rise on the boat of the sun, the disk (?), thanks to you. Your magical name in Egyptian is ALDABAEIM.” (This means the boat, on which he comes up, rising on the world.) “He who appears on the boat rising together with you is a clever baboon; he greets you in his own language, saying, ‘You are the number of [the days of] the year, ABRASAX.’ The falcon on the other end [of the boat] greets you in his own language and cries out, to receive food, CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI TI TI TI TI TI TI TI TI. He of the nine forms greets you in hieratic, ‘MENEPHŌIPHŌTH’”, (meaning that “I go before you, lord”). . . .

Elsewhere (*PGM XIII*. 594–562), too³², we come across:

I call on you, lord, in birdglyphic, ARAI; hieroglyphic, LAILAM; Hebraic, ANAG, BIATHIARBAR BERBI SCHILATOUR BOURPHOUNTÖRM; Egyptian, ALDABAEIM; baboonic, ABRASAX; falconic, CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI CHI [CHI] ti ti ti ti ti ti ti; hieratic, MENEPHŌIPHŌTH CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA CHA.

Also consider the following (from *PGM IV*. 930–1114)³³: “Enter, appear to me, lord, because I call upon you as the three baboons call upon you, who speak your holy name in a symbolic fashion, A EE ĒĒĒ IIII OOOOO YYYYYY ÖÖÖÖÖÖ (speak as a baboon)”³⁴.

8. *The Phoenixes Giving Praise in 2 Enoch*

The idea of the Phoenix appears to be of Egyptian origin. It is unsurprising that in lore concerning the Phoenix, and Christianised, it, too, gives praise to Heaven. In *2 Enoch*,³⁵ the Sun (this is an idea found also in the rabbinic corpus of late antiquity)

³² BETZ, p. 187.

³³ BETZ, p. 59.

³⁴ Note 140 on p. 59 in Betz’s book explains (with the first part being ascribed to R.K.R., i.e., ROBERT K. RITNER of the University of Chicago): “Baboons were thought to praise the sun when they chattered at it. For a representation, see A. PIANKOFF, *Mythological Papyri* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), vol. I, 39, fig. 22 and pl. I. See also BONNER, *RÄRG* 7–8, s.v. ‘Affē’. [R.K.R.] On the magicians imitation of the ‘language’ of animals, see HOPFNER, *OZ* I, sections 778–80. Understanding this language of animals belongs to the traditional phenomenology of the ‘divine man’ and magician. See, e.g., Porphyry, *De abst.* 3. 3, and on the whole topic H. GÜNTERT, *Von der Sprache der Götter und Geister* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1921); Betz, *Lukian* 28–38.” That is to say, H.D. BETZ, *Lukian von Samnsata und das Neue Testament* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 76), Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961. RÄRG stands for: HANS BONNET, *Reallexicon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1952.

³⁵ *2 Enoch*, only preserved in manuscripts in Old Slavonic, states the following in its longer recension,

spends the night under the earth³⁶: “the sun (turns his chariot around) and goes back under the earth on wheels, without the great light which is his great radiance and ornament. [And he remains] for seven great hours in night. And the chariot spends half its time under the earth. And when he comes to the eastern approaches, in the 8th hour of the night, (the angels, the 4 hundred angels, bring back the crown, and crown him). And his brightness and the shining of his crown are seen before sunrise. And the sun blazes out more than fire does.” The phoenixes greet the coming of the Sun³⁷: “And then the solar elements, called phoenixes and khalkedras, burst into song. That is why every bird flaps its wings, rejoicing at the giver of light. And they burst into song at the LORD’s command”, with their hymn of praise for the Sun following³⁸.

9. *From Later Periods: Tibetan and Islamic Text about Mystical Talking Birds*

The interpretation of bird calls has on occasion even resulted in a literary work, to which spiritual significance has been ascribed. The calls of various bird species interpreted as Tibetan utterances, appear in a Tibetan sacred text of teachings ascribed to birds, *Bya chos rin-chen 'phreng-ba*, of which there exist translations into English, French, German, and two into Italian³⁹. For example, the Wagtail ut-

in Ch. 12 (my braces. The text given here is Andersen’s translation, taken from Vol. 1, p. 122, in: J.H. CHARLESWORTH, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, New York: Doubleday, 1985 [1983]. The chapter is: F.I. ANDERSEN, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch”, vol. 1, pp. 91–221):

And [I looked and saw] flying spirits, the solar elements, called phoenixes and khalke-dras, strange and wonderful. For their form was that of a lion, their tail that of a . . . , and their head that of a crocodile. Their appearance was multicolored, like a rainbow. Their size was 900 measures. Their wings were those of angels, but they have 12 wings each. {Thus, the double of the biblical Seraphs.} They accompany and run with the sun, carrying heat and dew, (and) whatever is commanded [them] from God. Thus he goes through a cycle, and he goes down and he rises up across the sky and beneath the earth with the light of his rays. And he was there, on the track, unceasingly.

³⁶ Ch. 14, p. 126 in ANDERSEN.

³⁷ Ch. 15, p. 126 in ANDERSEN.

³⁸ Commenting about a statement in Ch. 19 of *2 Enoch*, “And in the midst of them are 7 phoenixes and 7 cherubim and 7 six-winged beings, having but one voice and singing in unison”, Anderson points out (in a note on p. 134): “This is the only place in all literature where the phoenix is not *sui generis*. The spelling varies, *finiki*(R), *finizi* (P), but *funiku* (A).”

³⁹ The English translation is by EDWARD CONZE, *The Buddha’s Law Among the Birds*, Translation & commentary by EDWARD CONZE; with a preface by J. BACOT, and 12 illustrations, Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1955; repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974, 1975, 1986. Eberhard Julius Dietrich Conze was later known as Edward Conze. His translation was based on Tibetan text edited by SATIS CHANDRA VIDYABHUSHANA, published in Calcutta in 1904, and on the French translation by HENRIETTE MEYER, *Précieuse guirlande de la loi des oiseaux* (Collection Documents Spirituels,

ters: “gTing-ring”, i.e., “Very deep”. The peacock utters: “Kog-go”, i.e., “One is deprived”. The red-beaked *'jol-mo* (either *Leiotrix lutea*, or *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*, both of them from the Himalayas) utters “bCud long” (pronounce: “Čü lon”), i.e., “Seize the essence”. That book purportedly incorporates the teaching of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, who had taken the form of a cuckoo and instructed the birds on the Himalayas in the Buddhist way of living and thinking.

Iranic Islamic culture produced the mystical work *Mantiq al-ṭayr* (Persian: *The Conference of the Birds*)⁴⁰. The mythical Mount Qāf, a mountain chain on the coasts of the Ocean, is associated with flying birds in a fairly well-known 12th-century mystical work in Persian (but with an Arabic title), an allegorical tale in rhyming couplets by Farīd al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Attār of Nishapur. Discussing a miniature painting from Herat, Afghanistan, which appears in the 1487 manuscript of the *Mantiq al-ṭayr* (*The Conference of the Birds*)⁴¹ in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Chad Kia explains⁴²:

The *Mantiq al-ṭayr* is an allegory describing the difficulties faced by a group of birds in their journey to the Qaf Mountain in search of their rightful king, the mythical bird Simurgh. This allegory is mostly a dialogue about the “trip”, its various stages, and whether it should be undertaken at all. The

7), Paris: Les Éditions des Cahiers du Sud, 1953. The German translation is by Otto von Taube, *Tibetisches Vogelbuch oder Der kostbare Kranz des Vogelgesetzes*, Zurich: Verlag der Aeche, 1957. Otto Adolf Alexander Freiherr (i.e., baron) von Taube (b. 1879 in Reval, i.e., Tallinn, in Estonia, d. 1973 in Gauting, near Munich) was a German novelist, poet, and translator (of Calderon de la Barca, Francis of Assisi, William Blake, Stendhal, and Gabriele D’Annunzio), as well as a jurist, art historian, and biographer (of Rasputin, and eventually of himself). The two Italian editions are by Erberto Lo Bue and by Enrico Dell’Angelo: E. LO BUE (ed., trans.), *La preziosa ghirlanda degli insegnamenti degli uccelli*, Milan: Adelphi, 1998; and E. DELL’ANGELO (ed., trans.), *La preziosa ghirlanda degli insegnamenti degli uccelli*, Arcidosso (in the province of Grosseto, Tuscany): Shang Shung, 1989.

⁴⁰ See the following three editions:

F. M. ‘ATTĀR [‘ATTĀR-I NISHABURI], *The Conference of the Birds*, trans. A. DARBANDI and D. DAVIS, Penguin, London (1984).

F. M. ‘ATTĀR [‘ATTĀR-I NISHABURI], *The Speech of the Birds: Concerning Migration to the Real, The Mantiqu ‘l-Tair*, trans. P.W. AVERY, The Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, England (1998).

F. M. ‘ATTĀR [‘ATTĀR-I NISHABURI], *Mantiq al-ṭayr* (Persian: *The Conference of the Birds*), ed. S. GUHARIN, Intisharat-i ‘Ilmi va Farhangi, Teheran (2003).

⁴¹ Cf. two papers by JAMES WINSTON MORRIS on *The Conference of the Birds*, namely: “The Basic Structure of ‘Attār’s ‘Conference of the Birds’: An Introduction”, *Sufi: A Journal of Sufism*, 7 (1990) 10–14; and “Reading ‘Attār’s ‘Conference of the Birds’”, in: W.T. DE BARY and I. BLOOM (eds.), *Approaches to the Asian Classics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 77–85.

⁴² On p. 91 in CHAD KIA, “Is the Bearded Man Drowning? Picturing the Figurative in a Late-Fifteenth-Century Painting from Herat”, *Muqarnas* (Leiden: Brill), 23 (2006) 85–105.

actual journey itself is relayed only briefly, near the climactic end of the story. The birds' journey as a framing story allows 'Attar to accommodate numerous possible questions or concerns that a Sufi seeker might have about an analogous journey toward truth and unity with God. The birds' discussion unfolds in various didactic tales (*hikāyāt*) and parables addressing thinly veiled questions about the path to becoming a Sufi.

The Hoopoe, who in the Qur'an (27:20) is King Solomon's messenger, here serves as the closest thing to a protagonist, the most assiduous seeker, who rallies and leads the other birds. Metaphorically, the Hoopoe may be seen as the Sufi master who guides the other seekers. [...].

APPENDIX A: The Mosquito in *Hullin*, 58b, and in *Séfer Pe'á*

While quoting from a translation of the *Life of Ben Sira*, we came across this quotation inside that text: "No *baqqa* [Aramaic for 'mosquito'] lives a complete day". The reference is to the *Babylonian Talmud*, *Hullin*, 58b. I am quoting from the Soncino English translation:

Rab said: No gnat lives a complete day, and no fly lives a complete year. R. Papa said to Abaye. But there is a popular story, 'For seven years the she-gnat quarreled with the he-gnat. Said she to him, "I was once watching a resident of Maḥoza bathing in the sea, and when he came out and wrapped himself in a sheet you came and settled down on him and sucked his blood, but you did not tell me of it"'. — He replied: If as you suggest [that it is to be taken literally], behold that other popular saying. 'A weight of sixty minas of iron is suspended on the gnat's proboscis'. Is this possible? How much does the whole [gnat] weigh? Obviously it speaks of their minas, so in the previous saying it speaks of their years.

The continuity of a few zoonyms in Jewish languages from Mesopotamia can also be seen from the fish called *bunnī* in Arabic (a barbel of the species *Barbus sharpeyi*, also known as *Barbus bynni*), but *bin(n)ita* in the *Babylonian Talmud*. Continuity can also be seen from *baqa* (arguably we should rather read it *baqqa*) from the *Babylonian Talmud*, an insect that draws blood, and which must be the mosquito, as in Arabic *baqq* denotes 'mosquitoes'; cf. Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic singulative singular *bəqqāyī* 'a mosquito'. Colette Sirat has discussed⁴³ the Hebrew-language *Séfer Pe'á* (*Peah*) by Moses ben Samuel ben Judah Ibn Tibbon, authored in southern France between 1244 and 1274, and explaining allegorically

⁴³ COLETTE SIRAT, "Les déraison des Aggadot du Talmud et leur explication rationnelle: Le Sefer P'ea et la Rhétorique d'Aristote", *Bulletin de Philosophie médiévale*, 47 (2005) 69–86, now posted at <http://www.colette-sirat.com/fr/biblio/article160.html>

or as other rhetorical devices such talmudic lore that defies realistic understanding. She is concerned with the talmudic *baqa* on pp. 80–81, in her translation into French of the *Séfer Pe'á*. The relevant passage follows Moses Ibn Tibbon's introduction of examples of numerical hyperbole. It quotes from tractate *Hullin*, 58b, Raba's statement that no *baqqa* lives as long as one day, and no fly lives as long as one year. Rav Pappa objected with the saying that for seven years, the female *baqqa* separated from its male, as she reproached him for drawing blood from a man who had come out of the water after swimming, and not informing her (so that she, too, could partake of the meal. Of course, we at present know that only female mosquitoes feed upon blood). Sirat's text is given below (her brackets and exponents referring to her own notes; my translation follows the French, with my own additions in double brackets):

Ces expressions indiquent le maximum d'un compte; elles sont très courantes dans les religions et existent dans la nature. Un autre passage du Talmud confirme encore qu'il y a dans la *Aggada* des propos et des comptes allégoriques et exagérés; dans le chapitre 'elu trefot³⁴ (Talm. Bab. *Hulin*, 58b) «Rabba dit: il n'existe pas de mouche vieille d'un an. Rav Pappa objecte: un dicton populaire [raconte] que durant sept ans, la moucheronne se tint éloignée du moucheron disant: tu as vu un habitant de Mahoz³⁵ qui nageait dans l'eau, il en sortit et s'enveloppa dans des draps; tu t'attaquas à lui et lui tiras du sang sans me le dire! [Abbaye] répondit [à Rav Pappa] si tu es d'avis [qu'il faut prendre ce dicton au sens littéral] que dis-tu de cet autre dicton populaire: le moucheron porte dans sa trompe soixante *manehs*³⁶ de fer. Combien pèse un moucheron tout entier? Le *maneh* (du moucheron) est (à sa proportion) comme le sont ses années». Ainsi, les Rabbins disent qu'en parlant de soixante *manehs* et puisque le poids du *maneh* est de deux livres, il s'agit d'une allégorie. L'auteur du *Arukh* a expliqué: «[l'insecte] *Baq* se trouve dans les lits³⁷ [dans les bateaux et dans tous les lieux et certains les considèrent comme de petites mouches]» et ce que les rabbins ont voulu dire, c'est que le poids de sa piqûre est aussi lourde à l'homme que soixante *manehs* de fer. De même quand il est dit *sept ans* il s'agit de sept minutes ou de sept secondes, voulant indiquer ainsi un temps aussi grand pour l'insecte que sept ans pour l'homme.

[These expressions indicate the maximum of a count; they are very frequent in religions, and exist in nature. Another passage from the Talmud also confirms that there are, in the *Aggadah*, allegorical and exaggerated statements and counts; in the chapter 'elu trefot³⁴ (*Babylonian Talmud*, *Hullin*, 58b), "Rabba says: there exists no fly that is one-year old. Rav Pappa objects: a folk saying [relates] that during seven

years, the she-fly kept her distances from the he-fly, saying: you saw an inhabitant of Maḥoz³⁵ who was swimming in the water, then came out and enveloped himself in sheets; you attacked him and drew blood, without telling me! [Abbaye] retorted [to Rav Pappa]: if you are of the opinion [that this saying has to be understood literally] what about this other folk saying: the fly carries in his trunk sixty *manehs*³⁶ of iron. What is the weight of an entire fly? The *maneh* (of the fly) is (commensurately to him) like his years”. That way, the Rabbis say that when talking of sixty *manehs*, and as the weight of a *maneh* is of two pounds [[*librae*]], what we have here is an allegory (actually a hyperbole). The author of the [[glossary]] ‘*Arukh* [[i.e., Nathan ben Yechiel of Rome, b. 1031, d. 1106]] explained: “[the insect] *Baq* is found in beds³⁷ [in boats and everywhere, and some consider them like little flies]” and what the rabbis meant, is that the weight of its sting is as heavy for man as sixty *manehs* of iron. Likewise, when it says *seven years*, this is seven minutes or seven seconds, meaning in that manner as long a time for the insect, as seven years for man].

34 Ce passage traite des dattes: ces fruits sont impropres à la consommation si l’on y trouve des insectes. Insectes vivants ou insectes morts? Dattes fraîchement cueillies ou dattes de l’année précédente? De là cette discussion sur la durée de la vie de l’insecte appelé *baq* (en araméen et en arabe *baqa*) qui peut être un moucheron ou encore une puce.

[34 This passage is about dates: these fruits are unfit for consumption if one finds insects inside them. Live or dead insects? Freshly picked dates, or dates of yester-year? Whence this discussion about the length of the life of the insect called *baq* (in Aramaic and Arabic, *baqa*), which may be a fly or a louse.]

35 *Mahoz*, un port, dont les habitants sont réputés pour être gras et bien nourris.

[35 *Mahoz*, a port, whose inhabitants have the reputation of being fat and well fed.]

36 *Maneh*, un poids correspondant à celui de 100 pièces d’argent ou encore à 2 litres.

[36 *Maneh*, a weight corresponding to that of 100 silver coins, or of 2 *librae*.]

37 *Arukh ha-Shalem* 1, ed. A KOHUT, 157, s.v. *baq*.

[37 ‘*Arukh ha-Shalem* = Vol. 1, p. 157, s.v. *baq*, in Alexander Kohut’s *Aruch completum*.] ⁴⁴

⁴⁴ ALEXANDER KOHUT (= HANOKH YEHUDAH KOHUT, 1878–1892), in his *Aruch completum: sive, Lexicon, vocabula et res, quae in libris Targumicis, Talmudicis et Midraschicis continentur* (in Hebrew, ‘*Arukh ha-shalem*) by NATHAN BEN YECHIEL [1031–1106], with *Mussaf He’Arukh* by Benjamin Mussafia [1606–1675]. Vienna, 1926 (repr.). Reprinted with S. KRAUSS’s supplement, *Tosfot he’Arukh ha-shalem*. Vienna, 1937; New York: Pardes, 1955.

APPENDIX B: The Raven in *Pereq Shirah*

The wording of the entry for the raven or the crow ('*orév*) in *Pereq Shirah* calls for comment. The biblical verse whose utterance the three principal versions discussed by Beit-Arié ascribe to the crow is not the same. Nevertheless, in all three principal versions, the verse uttered by the crow comprises an inflected form of the Hebrew verb *qará* 'to call out'. This is rather similar to how the calls of a raven are often perceived, across cultures. Beit-Arié pointed out⁴⁵: "The verb used in order to describe the call of the raven in rabbinic Hebrew is *qará*. Cf. e.g. in the *Tosefta* at *Shabbat* 6(7):6 and 7(8):13". The text of the entry for the crow in those three versions is as follows (this is a detail from a scan):

- 69 -

(ג)	(ב)	(א)
עורב מהו אומר: בזמן	עורב מהו אומר: כשרואה	עורב מהו אומר: קול
שרואה את ישראל שאינן	שישראל עוסקין בתורה	קורא ⁸² במדבר ⁸³ פנו דרך
עוסקין בתורה מהו	אומר: קול קורא ⁸²	ה' ישרו בערבה מסלה
אומר: קול אומר קרא ⁸²	במדבר ⁸³ פנו דרך ה'	לאלהינו (1) (ישעיה מ, ג).
ואמר מה אקרא כל הבשר	ישרו בערבה מסלה	
חציר וכל חסדו כציץ	לאלהינו (ישעיה מ, ג). ⁸⁴	
השדה (1) (ישעיה מ, ו). ³⁴		
... בזמן... ד ל: ד בזמן... קול אומר... ל: בורא ניב שפתים שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב אמר ה' ורפאתיו (5) (ישעיה נו, יט) ד	(ב) [(ב) ב] עורב ב: - (ב) (4) כשרואה × בזמן ב שישראל גב: ישראל מ: אה ישראל וספ עוסקין מט (עוסק' ג): עוסקים ופב	(א) [(א) א] קול... א (2) ה: מי יכין לעורב צידו כי ילדיו אל על ישועו יחעו לבלי אכל (איוב לח, מא) טק (3)

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

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

Version C: "The crow/raven, what does he say? When he sees that Israel,

⁴⁵ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, Vol. 2, p. 69, note 82, my trans.

they do not study the Law, he says: “A voice (*qol*) says: ‘Call out! (*Qra!*)’ . I said: ‘What shall I call out? (*Ma eqra?*)’ — ‘All the flesh is hay, and all its grace is like the flower of the field’” [*Isaiah*, 40:6; but there is a variant that quotes *Isaiah*, 57:19]⁴⁶.

A few more remarks are in order. Concerning “A voice calls out (*qoré*): ‘In the desert, [and so forth]’”, Beit-Arié has a note⁴⁷ which quotes *Jeremiah* 3:2, “On the highways you sat for them [o wayward nation], like an Arab [sits] in the desert”, and mentions that the Seventy rendered not ‘*araví* (‘Arab’, ‘nomad’), but ‘raven’ / ‘crow’, as though the text in front of the translators had the word ‘*orév* instead. That note of Beit-Arié does not address the problem of which phoneme did the first consonant, ‘*ayin*, represent: etymologically, for ‘*araví* the phoneme would be the same as expressed by the Arabic letter ‘*ayn*, whereas for ‘*orev*, we would expect the Biblical Hebrew phoneme to have been the same as expressed by the Arabic letter *ghayn* (*ḡayn*), because the lexical cognate of Hebrew /‘oreb/ is the Arabic *ḡurāb*. Did the Seventy not differentiate? But it is precisely from transliterations from Hebrew into Greek from the Graeco-Roman period that we have evidence that in those days, the Hebrew letter ‘*ayin* still retained both its historical phonemes. This raises the possibility of Jeremiah actually resorting to wordplay; he is telling his listeners: I am not talking about nomads (nomadic Arabs in the desert), I am talking to you about our own nation neglecting its religion and (as the verse quite explicitly maintains) that meretriciously awaits foreigners (foreign gods) on the highways. This would suggest a bilingual intra-Semitic wordplay: Jeremiah is mentioning an Arab nomad (‘*araví*) waiting in the desert where he expects caravans to pass by, but is perhaps suggesting that the real point is the *ḡarīb*, Arabic for ‘foreigner’, as standing for foreign ways and the foreign cultic practices he is decrying. Bilingual wordplays are not unknown in the Hebrew Bible, and in *Jeremiah* in particular.

Beit-Arié’s note⁴⁸ makes a point altogether different. His mention of the Seventy’s “raven in the desert” subserves his remark that this is precisely how the Alexandrine *Physiologus* begins its entry for the raven. (According to Beit-Arié, there is a correlation between *Pereq Shirah* and the *Physiologus*: something in their background that suggests Alexandrine ideas about animal allegories.) Beit-Arié’s note also quotes *Isaiah*, 34:11, which lists the crow among animals living in the desert.

⁴⁶ It is surprising that in a version that refers to the Jews while neglecting the Law, *Isaiah* 57:19 should be quoted, as it is a verse announcing peace and healing. One would have expected some threatening statement instead. I suspect that *Isaiah* 57:19 is quoted as a charitable replacement that would make readers think of verses 20–21, which threaten wicked people with dire punishment.

⁴⁷ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 70, note 83.

⁴⁸ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 70, note 83.

I would like to mention that when Arrigoni degli Oddi collected Italy's regional names for birds⁴⁹, in the entry for the raven he also included, from Malta, the Maltese Arabic name *sultān iččwāl*, i.e., literally, 'king of the deserts'.

Beit-Arié concluded his note⁵⁰ by remarking about the ravens / crows going around *medinot* (inhabited lands / urbanised territory) and *midbarim* (uninhabited lands / deserts / wilderness), according to the Hebrew translation from Arabic of the *Epistle of the Animals*⁵¹ from the encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity⁵². That translation into Hebrew was made, under the title *Iggeret Ba'alei Hayyim* ('Epistle of the Animals', אגרת בעלי חיים), by Kalonymos ben Kalonymos ben Me'ir the Nassí, born in Arles, Provence, in 1286. He was hired, as a translator from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin, by Robert of Anjou, count of Provence and king of Naples, some time after 1322. Kalonymos resided in Naples (at a time when apparently there were no other Jews there), and was in rather close contact with the Jewish community of Rome, whose intellectuals appreciated his learning. By 1328, he was back in Arles. The time and place of his death are unknown. In Italy, he was called *Maestro Calò*, and a Latin translation by him is described in a colophon as "factu manu Calli ebrei".

⁴⁹ E. ARRIGONI DEGLI ODDI, *Ornitologia italiana* (2 vols.), Milan: Hoepli, 1929.

⁵⁰ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 70, note 83.

⁵¹ LEN GOODMAN translated this long tale into English: *The Case of the Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn: A Tenth-Century Ecological Fable of the Pure Brethren of Basra*, 4th edition, Los Angeles, CA: Gee Tee Bee, 1978.

⁵² The Arabic-language encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity, the tenth-century association of Muslim erudites in Basra, comprises fifty-one *rasā'il* ('epistles'). One of these treatises is in zoology. At its end, there is a long appendix: a tale about the judicial litigation between the animals and humankind in front of the king of genies (the demonic nature of the adjudicator makes him into a neutral party). Humans, genies, and animals share a strong belief in their Maker. It is a fable: animals are anthropomorphic and can speak, both among themselves and being understood by human and genies as well. The parrot has a special place, in that it alone among the birds is recognised by the birds as being the only kind among them whose speech is appreciated by humans.

The seventy humans being sued were shipwrecked on a fabulous island, inhabited by genies and all animal kinds, and then the humans behaved as usual, enslaving the animals. This is why the animals responded by turning to the king's court. The humans cut a poor image; in his section on this work, Jefim Schirmann (*infra*, Chapter 12, Section 2, pp. 517–519) even remarked that it is almost a precursor of Jonathan Swift's castigation of humans when Gulliver eventually ends up on the horses' island. And yet, the king of the genies finds in the humans' favour, acquitting them on the grounds that unlike animals (hence, the animals' blatant inferiority), humans are endowed with an immortal soul, which shall anyway receive retribution in the afterlife for its sins. See: JEFIM SCHIRMANN, *Toledot ha-shira ha-ivrit bi-Sfarad ha-Notsrit u-vi-drom Tsarfat* (Hebrew: *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France*), edited, supplemented and annotated by EZRA FLEISCHER, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, and Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1997.

When writing *Iggeret Ba'alei Hayyim*, which was in 1316, when he was aged thirty, Kalonymos sometimes departed from the original Arabic, especially when replacing quotations from the Hebrew Bible for quotations from the Qur'ān. A German-language edition of the Hebrew and Arabic texts, along with a German translation, was published by Julius Landsberger⁵³ in 1882. Israel Toporovsky published a Hebrew-language edition⁵⁴ intended to be popularistic, and yet with endnotes incorporating the gist of Landsberger's insights. But Toporovsky, even though he omitted the Arabic original, had checked it and the Hebrew text is based on the *editio princeps*: the book was first published in Mantua in the year 5317 Anno Mundi (1556/7). Until 1949, Kalonymos ben Kalonymos' translation of the *Epistle of the Animals* was printed a dozen times in Hebrew, apart from translations into Judaeo-Spanish and into Yiddish.

Let us finally address what is surprisingly found in *Pereq Shirah*, where we would have expected it to treat the clean bird known in Biblical and Modern Hebrew as *qoré*, from the participle of the verb *qará* 'to call out', and identified with the genus *Ammoperdix*, i.e., the partridge⁵⁵. Beit-Arié⁵⁶ wondered whether what is found in *Pereq Shirah* is evidence for a tradition that in *Jeremiah*, 17:11 (a verse that also the *Physiologus* quotes in its own entry for the partridge), understands *Qoré dagár ve-ló yalád* (usually understood as meaning "The partridge broods, yet does not give birth", i.e., its eggs do not hatch) as though the bird name was not *qoré*, but rather *dagár*; so that the sense would rather be: "The 'brooder(?)' (some given bird kind) calls out, yet does not give birth". Beit-Arié pointed out that there is independent evidence for such an understanding from a document from the Cairo Genizah, and that moreover, already Tur-Sinai, in his annotations to Ben-Yehuda's dictionary, had expressed doubt about whether the biblical *qoré* is a bird-name, apart from its being

⁵³ J. LANDSBERGER (ed., trans.), *Iggeret Baale Chajjim: Abhandlung über die Thiere von Kalonymos ben Kalonymos oder Rechtsstreit zwischen Mensch und Thier von dem Gerichtshofe des Königs der Genien ein arabisches Märchen nach Vergleichung des arabischen Originals aus dem Hebräischen ins Deutsche übertragen und mit Textescorrecturen wiew mit sachlichen Erläuterungen versehen von Dr. Julius Landsberger*, Darmstadt: G. Jonghaussche Hofbuchhandlung Verlag, 1882.

⁵⁴ I. TOPOROVSKY (ed.), *Iggeret Ba'alei Hayyim (Epistle of the Animals)* by Kalonymos ben Kalonymos (in Hebrew, in the Sifriyyat Mekorot series, vol. 12, postfaced by A.M. HABERMAN), Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kuk, 1948/9 (5709).

⁵⁵ AMAR 2004, pp. 239–141; cf. in DOR 1997. See: ZOHAR AMAR, *Masóret ha'óf* (Hebrew: *The Tradition of Fowl in Jewish Halacha*), published privately, 2004 (it is collection of previously published, revised articles in Hebrew). Prof. Zohar Amar is affiliated with the Department of Archaeology and Land of Israel Studies of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. And see: MENACHEM DOR, *Ha-hay bi-yemei ha-Miqra., ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud* (Hebrew: *Fauna at the Times of the Bible, of the Mishnah, and of the Talmud*), Tel-Aviv: Grafor–Daftal Books, 1997.

⁵⁶ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 90, note 119.

unclear (based on considerations about lexical cognacy across Semitic languages) the verb *dagár* actually means ‘to brood’.

APPENDIX C: The *ywšfy* or *dywšfy* from *Pereq Shirah*

Consider, from *Pereq Shirah* (a text read as prayer by influence of Safed mysticism), the mysterious יוצפי *ywšfy* or דיוצפי *dywšfy* discussed by Beit-Arié.⁵⁷ Beit-Arié related the term cogently to דאציפי *d’šyfy*, a name for a bird enumerated among kinds of pigeons in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Hullin* 62a. In *Pereq Shirah*, that creature is made to proclaim a verse of consolation (*Isaiah* 40:1), just as in *Pereq Shirah* the various creatures are made to declaim some verse from Scripture. Beit-Arié shows⁵⁸, based on the variants in manuscripts, that copyists’ perceptions of the identity of this creature appears to have wavered between the gazelle (צפי distorted into צפי) and the goose (אווז = אוז = אָוּז *avvaz*), the latter by conflation with the preceding entry, which is about the goose indeed. Beit-Arié⁵⁹ has these (alternative) equivalences:

‘ צ ב י ’ = צ פ י = י ו צ פ י = א ו ז

because the creature which precedes was the goose (אווז). Some creatures earlier, one finds⁶⁰ a creature called אָוּז *’wz* (as though it was *ózen* ‘ear’), perhaps a form of the term *avvaz* (*avvazan*?). But in Beit-Arié⁶¹, the sequence is: bird (*šippór* generically, or perhaps the sparrow or the swallow in particular?), goose (*avváz*), יוצפי *ywšfy* (perhaps the wild goose), and stork. For bird (*šippór*) and goose (*avváz*), Beit-Arié⁶² has this text, along with the variants apparate:

צפור¹⁰⁸ מה היא אומרת: גם צפור מצאה בית ודרור קן לה אשר שחה אפרחיה
את מזבחותיה ה' צבאות מלכי ואלהי.¹⁰⁹ (ההלים פד, ד).
אווז¹¹⁰ מהו אומר: בסחו בה' עדי עד כי ביה צור עולמים (ישעיה כו, ד).

צפור [×: -ק(1) : ציפור דרור ב | אווז] א(2) ה(3) ט(9) עבד: אווז הבר(4)
ק: צפי(5) ו(6) פ(צ): צבי(7) ט: צפור שדה(8) ג

⁵⁷ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, pp. 84–85.

⁵⁸ In his 1966 dissertation, p. 86, fn. 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86, fn. 5.

⁶⁰ Beit-Arié 1966, pp. 67–68, and *ibid.*, p. 68, fn. 81.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84 ff.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 84 ff.

The stork (הסידה *ḥāsīdā*) is the creature which immediately follows the יוצפי in *Pereq Shirah*⁶³. Two different versions of *Pereq Shirah* have the stork say *Isaiah* 60:2, or, alternatively, *Isaiah* 61:9. It is either the reassurance given to Jerusalem that her sin is atoned for, as she suffered double the respective penance:

(א) (ג)
 חסידה^{112א} מה היא אומרת: דברו אל
 לב ירושלים וקראו אליה כי מלאה
 צבאה כי נרצה עונה כי לקחה מיד
 ה' כפלים בכל חטאתיה (ישעיה מ,ב).

or (concerning the latter-day universal recognition of Divine Presence in reinstated Israel):

(ב)
 חסידה^{112א} מה היא אומרת: ונודע בגוים
 זרעם וצאצאיהם בתוך העמים כל ראייהם
 יכירום כי הם זרע ברך ה' (1) (ישעיה
 סא,ט).

As for <wzn> און — Beit-Arié discusses⁶⁴ the possibilities: it may be a distorted form of the singular or the plural of the name for ‘goose’, or then one may consider an Arabic plural form for ‘geese’ (*avváz*, for which there exists a Sephardi pronunciation *ováz*), or then again, it may be that the problematic word is a late form of the name of a particular kind of bird of prey, Biblical Hebrew עֲזִיָּיָה *‘ozniyyá* (= Tannaic Hebrew עוז *‘oz*)⁶⁵. There are various considerations in support of this equivalence.

⁶³ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 86.

⁶⁴ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 68, fn. 81.

⁶⁵ In the *Mishnah*, tractate *Kelim* 17:14. DOR (*infra*, p. 96) showed that Biblical Hebrew עֲזִיָּיָה *‘ozniyyá* denotes the lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*), which in Israeli Hebrew is called הַנֶּגֶב עֲזִיָּיָה *‘ozniyyát-hannégev*, literally “*‘ozniyyá* of the Negev”, i.e., of Israel’s southern desertic region. The species *Aegyptius monachus*, the black vulture, is called עֲזִיָּיָה שְׁחֹרָה *‘ozniyyá shkhorá* (literally ‘black *‘ozniyyá*) in Israeli Hebrew (Dor, *infra*, p. 96). See M. DOR, *Ha-ḥay bi-yemei ha-Miqra, ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud* (Hebrew: *Fauna at the Times of the Bible, of the Mishnah, and of the Talmud*), Tel-Aviv: Grafor–Daftal Books, 1997.

At any rate, at the times of MS כ from the Cairo Genizah, the understanding appears to have been that the occurrence of און in *Pereq Shirah* has to do with 'goose', or rather, Beit-Arié claims, with 'duck', and this based on an Arabic gloss. Misidentification as 'goose' has also happened with the bird of prey עֶזְנִיָּה 'ozniyyá, and for this Beit-Arié cited the medieval glossary 'Arukh from Rome, as well as a Samaritan tradition. See in Fig. 1 the relevant Hebrew discussion from Beit-Arié's dissertation⁶⁶.

81 אמ און זה גלגולו של אווז או אוזין, ברבוי (השווה ההערוה לנוסח. לאווז בערבית צורת ריבוי מיוחדת בעלת נו"ן בסופה אוזון) יתכן, כי לפנינו גלגול מאוחר יותר או צורה זכר של העוף המקראי עזניה (ויק' יא, יג; דב' יד, יב), הזוהה כנראה לעוף עוז בלשון חכמים (כלים יז, יד; זיהוי זה כבר אצל רב האי גאון, ראה קאהוט, ערוך השלם, ו, ע' 181; קרוי תוספות ערוך השלם, ע' 309). החילוף ע/א מצוי כבר בהרגומים, המתרגמים במקרא: עוזיא, עוזא אך גם אזא (ראה Levy, Chal. Wörterbuch ערך אזא I, ע' 17; השווה גרסא הרגום ירושלמי במהד' גינזבורגר, ברלין, חרנ"ח; הערוך, ערך אז). הניקוד הבבלי מורה על מלעליוה המלה, ובסברנית עשויה היתה להיות *אֵן הקרוב לעֶזְנִיָּה! פרופ' א"ש רוזנטל העמידני על ניקודה הבבלי של התיבה עזניה בספרא כ"י רומי - העזניה - לומר - עֶזְנִיָּה, צורה קרובה ביותר לאווז בניקוד הבבלי שבכ. הזיהוי הזואולוגי ראה בודנהיימר, ב, ע' 345; קיהלר, ערך עזניה, ע' 695; Driver, PEQ 87 (1955), p. 10. אמ כן וזא כן, הצורה 'אוזן' הובנה כבר סמוך לכתיבת כ"י כ מן הגניזה כאוז, או, גיחך דיוק כברווז, על-פי הגלוסה הערבית (לעיל). גם עזניה זוהתה כאווז, עיין הערוך וכן במלון התלת לשוני עברית-ערבית-שומרנית המליץ, מהד' בן-חיים, עברית וארמית נוסח שומרון, ב, ירושלים, תשי"ז, ע' 553ב.

חן דעתך אף לקריאת הספרדים אוֹזו "משקל שאין לו אח" (מלון ב"י, ע' 93).

Fig. 1. Relevant Hebrew discussion from Beit-Arié's dissertation (1966, p. 68, fn. 81).

Let us further probe into the actual etymology of the bird name from *Pereq Shirah*, <dywšfy> דיוצפי or <ywšfy> יוצפי *Pereq Shirah*,⁶⁷ and the actual etymology of the arguably related bird name <d'syfy> דאציפי, a name for a bird enumerated among kinds of pigeons in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Hullin* 62a. There does not seem to be an obvious etymological relation — unless dialectally,

⁶⁶ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, p. 68, fn. 81.

⁶⁷ BEIT-ARIÉ 1966, pp. 84–85.

in Roman-age Greek from the Near East, bird name semantics developed in a manner undocumented and therefore unavailable to scholarship at present — to Greek δασύπους, which was apparently applied to hirundine birds. In his ornithological lexicon, the classicist Geoffrey Arnott⁶⁸, s.v. *Dasyπους*, explained that this name (which literally means ‘shaggy foot’) “is generally an alternative name for the Lagōs (Brown Hare, *Lepus capensis*), but once in Greek comedy (Diphilus fr[agment] 1.2) it appears as the name of a Chelidōn (q.v.: Hirundine [any member of the swallow family])”. Arnott remarked⁶⁹ that “the name Lagōs (q.v.) itself is additionally applied to two similar, shaggy-footed Hirundines (House Martin, *Delichon urbica*; Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*) which seem not to have been distinguished from each other in antiquity”. Arnott inferred from this “that *Dasyπους* was an alternative name for these two birds”⁷⁰. Perhaps in Syria and neighbouring countries, in Roman-age Greek δασύπους was used in order to denote a variety of pigeons with richly feathered legs, so that “shaggy-footed” was a suitable epithet?

In my opinion, it would appear to be the case that the forms evolved as follows: Greek δασύπους in whatever inflected form > metanalysis of the second element of the Greek compound as though it was a derivational morpheme > דאסיפי <d’syfy>, presumably in an Aramaic plural form *dāšifē* (in Roman times, Greek [p] would have become Northwest Semitic [f] or perhaps [φ]) > by attraction of the initial part to *dyo-* as in Greek theophoric compounds > דיוסיפי <dywšfy> > fall of the initial consonant (perhaps also to avoid the initial *dyo-* but perhaps especially to better fit a Semitic word-form) > יוצפי <ywšfy>.

An important facet of the matter is to evaluate the plausibility that any wild species or domestic breed of pigeons had richly feathered legs, with feathers reaching down to the feet, so that these could be likened to hare feet. Encouragingly, there exist subfamilies of *Columbidae* with richly feathered legs. Fruit doves have short legs, mostly covered with feathers, but these genera are geographically not relevant; tree doves, whose main genus is *Columba*, have legs feathered above. Ground doves (not all of them living on the ground), of which the turtledove is one, have long bare legs. To corroborate the δασύπους > דאסיפי <d’syfy> hypothesis, we need to be able to plausibly think of some pigeon breed which would have stood out because its legs were more feathered, and with feathers reaching lower down, than other columbid birds available in the region. Domestic and semidomestic pigeon breeds have been highly diversified in modern times (like dog breeds), modern breeds number in the

⁶⁸ W. GEOFFREY ARNOTT, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London: Routledge, 2007, p. 36.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

hundreds, and it is difficult to conjecture what the breed variation spectrum was in ancient times, even though we know that pigeon-breeding and columbaria to accommodate large numbers of pigeons were widespread in the Graeco-Roman Near East. At any rate, there having been a Greek tradition of naming birds by likening some feature of theirs to hare features may have greatly facilitated applying the device, and thus a name such as δασύπους, to some pigeon breed.

Arnott⁷¹ identifies the references to the *Lagōs* bird in both Greek and Latin, as found in Antoninus Liberalis, Artemidorus, and Isidore of Seville, with the House Martin (*Delichon urbica*) in the case of Artemidorus (who mentioned that bird along with the *Chelidōn*, the Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, as living in or near doors), and with the Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) in the case of Isidore, who described (in Latin) the *lagos* bird as nesting in stagnant water or on surrounding rocks, and as flying on the open sea. “Both birds, unlike the Barn Swallow, have thickly feathered legs and feet (which presumably were assumed to be a point of similarity with the Hare, hence the name *Lagōs*), and resemble each other totally in shape and size, and partly in colour (dark above, white below); it seems likely that they were not distinguished from each other in antiquity”⁷².

Arnott⁷³ has an entry for a bird(?) which Horace (*Satires* 2.2.20–22) called the “foreign *lagoīs*”, enumerated along with delicacies for the table. Arnott explained (*ibid.*): “According to the ancient commentators, Horace *lagoīs* was a ‘bird coloured like a hare’ (so pseudo-Acro), and ‘either a bird said to taste like a hare or a sort of fish not found in the seas round Italy’. Arnott, a classicist and also a birdwatcher, suggested (*ibid.*, Arnott’s square brackets, our braces): “If its identification as a bird is correct, it could have been a game bird such as Hazel Grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*), found today in the Alps and east of the Adriatic), {superfluous “}” sign: a typo in Arnott’s book}, or the [Rock] Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*), found in the Alps and Pyrenees; both have richly feathered legs and the latter’s summer plumage roughly resembles a hare’s.”

And indeed, cf. the semantic motivation of the scientific name *Lagopus*, literally ‘hare-footed’. Arnott has an entry⁷⁴ for the bird name *lagopus* as only known from Pliny in Latin (*Historia naturalis* 10.133–134). Arnott remarks⁷⁵ that according to Pliny, “it’s a very tasty bird that takes its name (= ‘Hare-foot’) from having feet tufted

⁷¹ ARNOTT, *Birds*, p. 129, s.v. *Lagōs*.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁷³ ARNOTT, *Birds*, p. 127.

⁷⁴ ARNOTT, *Birds*, pp. 128–129.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

like a Hare's; he goes on to note that the bird is basically white in colour, the size of a Feral Pigeon (31–34 cm), and difficult to rear away from the Alps, because it can't be domesticated and its body quickly loses flesh." Arnott also pointed out that Pliny "alleges that the same name is given to another bird which differs from the Quail (16–18 cm) only in size and is good to eat when seasoned with saffron." Arnott cogently argued that these must be the winter and summer appearances of the Rock Ptarmigan. The latter's scientific name is *Lagopus mutus*.

As for the Horatian exegete who suggested that the meat of the *lagois* bird tasted like hare meat, cf. the rabbinic statement that the brain of the *shibbuta* fish tastes like pork. In the *Babylonian Talmud*, *Hullin* 109b curiously juxtaposes "pig" and "šibbūtā-brain"; as rendered by Marcus Jastrow in his dictionary⁷⁶, s.v. <šbwṭ>: "the swine is forbidden, and as a compensation for it the brain of the *sh[ibbūtā]* serves". It doesn't actually claim that they taste the same, but such is the usual understanding. And in her newspaper report 'Kosher 'Pork of the Sea' (never mind that this is not a marine fish), Siegel-Itzkovich stated⁷⁷: "The Babylonian Talmud, which contains numerous discussions about the fish, specifically notes that some of its organs taste like pork (although how the sages were able to make the comparison is not clear)." Cf. in *Leviticus Rabbah*, 22:7, a homiletic interpretation of the fettered ones being released (*mattir 'āsūrīm*) in Psalms 146:7. It deliberately misreads the word <'swrym> as though it was 'issūrīm ('prohibitions'): "what I forbade you, I allowed you [differently], I forbade you the tallow of the domestic beast, but allowed it to you in the wild beasts; I forbade you the ischiatic nerve [even] in the wild beast, but allowed it to you in fowl; I forbade you fowl [other than by the prescribed manner of] slaughter, but allowed it to you in fish [as they do not require any particular manner of slaughter]. R.

⁷⁶ M. JASTROW, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols., New York & London, printed in Leipzig by Teubner & Co., and in London by Luzac, 1886–1903). Often reprinted by various publishers; New York: Choreb, (2 vols. in 1, 1926, later reprinted in Jerusalem by Chorev); 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, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 2005 (in 1 vol. of 1736 pp.).

Vol. 1: <http://www.etana.org/sites/default/files/coretexts/14906.pdf>

Vol. 2: <http://www.etana.org/sites/default/files/coretexts/14499.pdf>

Moreover, one can find Jastrow's *Dictionary* arranged for alphabetical access online at Tyndale House at: <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/jastrow/>

⁷⁷ J. SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH, "Kosher 'Pork of the Sea'", *The Jerusalem Post*, online edn., 18 August 2005 (revised 19 August). Cf. ARI ZIVOTOFKY and ZOHAR AMAR, "Identifying the ancient shibuta fish", *Environmental Biology of Fishes*, 75 (2006), pp. 361–363; and ZOHAR AMAR and ARI ZIVOTOFKY, "Towards an Identification of the *shabut* Fish", *Ha-Ma'ayan*, 45(3), 2005, pp. 41–46 (Hebrew).

Abba and R. Jonathan in the name of R. Levi said: more than I forbade you, I allowed to you. [...]”, such as in the case of: התרתי לך דג ששמו שבוטא — רבש הזיר <bśr ḥzyr httry lk dg ššmw šbwt’> “pork (lit. the meat of pig) [is forbidden to you, but] I allowed you the fish whose name is *šibbūā*”.

For various reasons, notwithstanding their sharing of the sequence *i/y...s...f...*, it would not be cogent to relate the bird name יוצפי from *Pereq Shirah* to the Greek bird name *ἰξοφάγος*, namely, to the birds which Aristotle in his *Historia Animalium* 617a18 called *ἰξοβόρος* (literally, ‘devourer of mistletoe’), whereas Athenaeus 2.65a called it *ἰξοφάγος* (literally, ‘eater of mistletoe’), even though Athenaeus was citing Aristotle: was he citing from memory, or was he using a copy in which a copyist has miscopied *ἰξοφάγος* instead of *ἰξοβόρος*? These, Arnott remarked⁷⁸, denote “Greece’s largest Thrush, so called because they allegedly eat nothing other than mistletoe (ixos in Greek) and pine resin. This is the Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)⁷⁹, Europe’s largest Thrush, of whose diet mistletoe is still an important part.” The Israeli Hebrew name of the Mistle Thrush is קִיכְלִי גָדוֹל *kikhli gadól* (literally ‘great thrush’). Incidentally, note that this species is rare in Israel. The only species of the genus *Turdus* that are not rare in Israel⁸⁰ are the blackbird (*T. merula*, שְׁחָרִיר *shahrír*; which is widespread), and the song thrush (קִיכְלִי רוֹנֵן *kikhli ronén*, *T. philomelos*).

⁷⁸ ARNOTT, *Birds*, p. 79, s.v. *Ixoboros, Ixophagos, Ixophoros*.

⁷⁹ In *Sylva Sylvarum* (1635), it was claimed: “We finde no Super-plant that is a Formed Plant but the Missel-Bird that feedeth upon a seed which many times she cannot digest and so expelleth it whole with her excrement: which falling upon a bough of a Tree that hath some Rift putteth forth the Missletoe. But this is a fable [...]”. This was quoted in a blog by Jeb McLeish (in Edinburgh) from Graham W. Murdoch, *The Mistletoe and the Missle-Thrush*, *New York Times*, 22 December 1901, now posted at that newspaper’s website: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0914FC3E5B11738DDDAB0A94DA415B818CF1D3>

⁸⁰ See on pp. 307 and 332 in M. DOR, *Leksiqon zo’ologi: ba’alei-ḥulyot* (Hebrew: *Zoological Lexicon: Vertebrata*), Tel-Aviv: Dvir, Tel-Aviv, 1st edn., 1965.