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The Model Translator in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*: A Study of the Arabic and Castilian Texts

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by

Clare O'Brien

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Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Jeffrey Sacks, Chairperson
Dr. Benjamin Liu
Dr. Johannes Endres

The Dissertation of Clare O'Brien is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Model Translator in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*: A Study of the Arabic and Castilian Translator-Authors

by

Clare O'Brien

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
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Dr. Jeffrey Sacks, Chairperson

My dissertation explores the role of the translator-as-author in the work, *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. The material history of the *Kalīlah* offers a new perspective on translation; while the text we have today originates in Arabic, the different Arabic manuscript versions come from the translation of a Pahlavi text, which itself is a heavily edited translation of multiple mutable Sanskrit texts. This history prompts the question, *how do we talk about translation without an original work and author?* I examine the works of three translators – Barzawayh in Pahlavi, Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Arabic, and Alfonso X in Castilian, whose interventions become part of the *Kalīlah*'s narrative itself. Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s names are retained in most versions of the *Kalīlah,* which establishes a tradition of authorship that is passed on through translation. I examine how the introductory chapters of Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa' – as instructions for the reader, both reinforce the didactic philosophy of the "original" *Kalīlah* as well as establish the translators'

interpretations of the work. While Alfonso X has written only a colophon at the end, his epithet El Sabio, "The Learned" king guides us to read his *Kalīlah* through his sagacity. I specifically focus on how Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Alfonso X contributed to their respective language traditions through their *Kalīlah* translations, importing the interpreted wisdom of the translators who came before them; Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Alfonso X are therefore recognized alongside Barzawayh as the authors, or translator-authors, of the work. Further, especially because the original Persian, Arabic, and Castilian manuscripts are lost, the names of these translators become almost apocryphal. More than historical markers of the text, these three translators have become hermeneutical models of reading. The *Kalīlah* is a text both in translation and of translation, where translation as the transfer of knowledge is the foundation of the narrative. This understanding does not prioritize an original work or its author in translation, but rather indicates a pluralistic lineage of authorship in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*.

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Introduction

Research Frame

My interest in *Kalīlah and Dimnah* stems from my experiences with language. I grew up listening to my mother speak German on the phone to our relatives, and I was enamored by the sounds and the cadence of a conversation that was so different from English. This language was the door to another world that I had not yet unlocked, and I later lamented that because I had learned German at school and not at home, I missed the boat of native or "true" proficiency. However, my time as an undergraduate at UCR introduced me to professors such as Dr. Jeff Sacks, Dr. Perry Link, and Dr. Hendrik Maier who are experts in languages outside of their mother tongues. Their accomplishments inspired me to pursue the graduate program in Arabic literature, and I have since been lucky to learn from others like them, such as Dr. Benjamin Liu, Dr. Johannes Endres, and Dr. Ben King. I have heard some say that if one is not a native speaker of a language, he should not bother professionally pursuing that field. However, I have found that this hierarchy of native speaker versus learner – at least among those I have worked with, is not as common as the dogged pursuit of knowledge in and through different languages.

Fig. 1: Image from "The Lion and the Jackal" chapter in manuscript R2536, page 261. Photo taken from © https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/manuscripts/illustrations

In *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, there is similarly no such linguistic hierarchy. It is a text that comes from no native speaker. This work has not one but many authors, each of them a translator who inhabits multiple language worlds. The text that we know as the *Kalīlah* is actually a translation itself, a heavily edited and redacted rendition of the original Indian *Panchatantra* source. It has been translated and copied over centuries, first appearing in Pahlavi (Middle Persian) from Sanskrit and then traveling throughout the world's languages from a new source – the Arabic translation. Consequently, it is the Arabic translator Ibn al-Muqaffa' who is considered the sort of "father" author of this text, even though there were translators and authors who came before him. *Kalīlah and Dimnah* has moved by way of the translator, and those such as Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and King Alfonso X of 13th-century Castile have made their mark on the

Kalīlah through their textual interventions. *Kalīlah and Dimnah* has been recomposed and renewed with each translation, such that it constitutes a textual tradition in and of itself. The translators throughout history have largely not been burdened with adherence to any singular version; rather, the translators have worked within their own language traditions in a way that constitutes a lineage of authorial voices in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*.

Rather than qualifying the "correctness" of these translations against an original, the *Kalīlah* allows us the possibility of considering a translation as a work in its own right. Another "father," Johann Winckelmann of modern art history, writes about the mutilated Belvedere Torso in his attempt to analyze its "ideal aspect[s]" (Winckelmann xiii). While the sculpture's head and limbs have been eroded by time, Winckelmann's attention is drawn to what remains:

> I am led to the limits of his labors, and to the monuments and columns where his foot rested, by the sight of thighs and by inexhaustible force (and of a length appropriate for one of the gods) which have carried the hero through hundreds of lands and peoples into immortality (Winckelmann xvi).

Fig. 2: The Belvedere Torso at the Vatican Museum. Taken from © https://www.museivaticani.va/

His view is undisturbed by the ghost of the original Torso, because he sees the present object as a work itself. It is another realization of the original sculpture, whose essential artwork-ness[1] is present in the current statue. Winckelmann's gaze is drawn to the limbs that remain; he sees a work of art, not despite of what is absent but rather because of what is present. Actually, as a result of the mutilation, a new interpretation of the statue is possible. Winckelmann notes, "if it seems incomprehensible to locate a thinking power in

[1] I read "essence" in the Heideggerian sense, as Martin Heidegger explores how a work of art sets itself to work in the truth of being (Heidegger 16). As an endeavor that includes both "truth" and "beauty," art does not aim to reproduce a particular and "true" being, but rather the essence of that being (Heidegger 16). This essence is the kernel of the work's "truth," in that it conveys something real – palpable, apprehensible, consistent, familiar, even, but through a principle of beauty which can both detach us from the "reality" of the work as well as enhance the "truth" of the reality it includes. It is like a tongue twister. A man named Peter did not necessarily pick a peck of pickled peppers, but the artful arrangement of the sound [p] brings our attention to its truth, or its [p]-ness, and therefore conveys the essence of the sound in an "unreal" format.

some part of the body besides the [missing] head, […] it seems to me that the back […is] occupied with a cheerful memory of its astonishing deeds" (Winckelmann xvi). Such imagination is possible because of "the hand of a creative master" (Winckelmann xvi), which can transpose meaning. While the head "should" hold the memories of the sculpted subject, the artist has so masterfully crafted the body that it, too, remembers its feats. It is this corporeal memory which is palpable to Winckelmann, and it is what conveys the "immortality" of the work's form, which has "taken the place of its mortal parts" (Winckelmann xvii). Thus, the mutilated statue stands as a work of art itself.

This notion is also found in Walter Benjamin's "Task of the Translator." There is some aspect of the mutilated statue or of the translated work which persists from the original, suggesting that an original work is only the first manifestation of this immortal idea. Benjamin asks, "is a translation meant for readers who do not understand the original?" (Benjamin 253). Winckelmann, of course, can compare the Torso to his own body to know what is lost. For a reader who does not know the language of an original text, however, does he know what he is missing, if he is missing anything at all? Benjamin supposes that translation is for such a reader, for "it seems the only conceivable reason for saying 'the same thing' over again" (Benjamin 253). This "same thing" persists in both an original and translation, like the "spirit" of the Torso statue (Winckelmann xvi). While Benjamin's perspective does uphold the significance of an original work next to a translation, just as Winckelmann restores the statue by imagining the missing limbs (Winckelmann xvi), Benjamin acknowledges that a translation is drawing out a "specific significance" (Benjamin 254). A translation with such

significance is more than simply a "transmission of subject matter"; such a translation expands the life, and therefore meaning, of the original work (Benjamin 255). In both Benjamin and Winckelmann's writings, "what's left" reflects the spirit of, but need not stand in the shadow of, the original. We can appreciate the new forms of the work and their fathers for how they further realize a significance found in the original.

Miguel de Cervantes speaks of textual fatherhood in his prologue to *Don Quixote*. He opens the story's prologue with the plea, "I would like this book, the child of my understanding, to be the most beautiful, the most brilliant [...] that anyone could imagine (*sin juramento me podrás creer que quisiera que este libro, como hijo del entendimiento, fuera el más hermoso, el más gallardo [...] que pudiera imaginarse* [Cervantes])"; however, Cervantes readily admits,

> though I seem to be the father, I am the stepfather of Don Quixote, and I do not wish to go along with the common custom and implore you, almost with tears in my eyes, as others do, dearest reader, to forgive or ignore the faults you may find in his my child, for you are neither his kin nor his friend [...] which exempts and excuses you from all respect and obligation, and you can say anything you desire about the history without fear (Grossman 3-4).
>
> *Pero yo, que, aunque parezco padre, soy padrastro de Don Quijote, no quiero irme con la corriente del uso, ni suplicarte, casi con las lágrimas en los ojos, como otros hacen, lector carísimo, que perdones o disimules las faltas que en este mi hijo vieres; y ni eres su pariente ni su amigo [...] Todo lo cual te esenta y hace libre de todo respecto y obligación; y así, puedes decir de la historia todo aquello*

> *que te pareciere, sin temor que te calunien por el mal ni te premien por el bien que dijeres della* (Cervantes).

The fatherhood that Cervantes describes is one defined by shameless pride for the child, regardless of – and probably despite of, its faults. As this is written as a "history of Don Quixote (*la historia de don Quijote* [Cervantes])" rescued from the "archives of La Mancha (*archivos en la Mancha* [Cervantes])" (Grossman 4-5), there is an expectation of fidelity to the historical "truth." Other textual fathers of "inane books of chivalry (*los libros vanos de caballerías* [Cervantes])" (Grossman 9) exaggerate their children's good deeds, which are not found in the archives. Therefore, as the "stepfather" of Don Quixote, Cervantes sidesteps the audience's criticism by acknowledging his potential errors in interpreting the history of Don Quixote. With this in mind – that the text may very well be incomplete or inaccurate in some areas, Cervantes asks us to read his text as it is and not as it "should" be. As the stepfather, he abdicates some responsibility as the author of the text. He is not the progenitor but the transmitter of Don Quixote's story. This notion of stepfatherhood, which distances the author from the originality of the work, can be compared to the translators' interventions within *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. They are not completely responsible for their textual offspring, but their interpretations have nonetheless contributed to the *Kalīlah*. As translators, they are in the position of the stepfather and are taking over for a father that no one quite remembers. The Indian source of the *Kalīlah* is constantly referenced in the translations, but any Indian authors who could be recognized are never named. We recognize that the *Kalīlah* translators are not the fathers of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, and so we may relieve them of the burden of fidelity.

As the stepfathers, these translators are nonetheless responsible for the work in their own ways.

Research Goals

Kalīlah and Dimnah has no original to be considered in the discussions on its translation. The *Kalīlah* invites us to think of translation as an act of authorship, rather than a process subordinate to or inferior to what is original and therefore most "true." My dissertation explores the individual contributions of three *Kalīlah* translators: Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Alfonso X. I focus especially on the latter two for the ways in which their notable *Kalīlah* translations imported new linguistic and literary styles into their respective language traditions. Further, because the original manuscripts of Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Alfonso X have been lost or even contested in their veracity, I look at their textual, rather than strictly historical, contributions to the multi-lingual work that is *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. The *Kalīlah* translator does not only mark a moment in time; he becomes a textual figure, reinforced by his historical context and by the fictionalized style of the narrative. We may therefore read the translations of Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Alfonso X hermeneutically. Each of them bestows a different meaning on the text, as a result of their cultural environments and individual histories. As a result, we do not read *Kalīlah and Dimnah* searching for the most "correct" or "true" text; we rather read it pluralistically, in different versions and in different languages, becoming familiar with the individual writing of each translator.

Background and Context

Kalīlah and Dimnah is a text of animal fables, framed by a dialogue between a sage, Bidpai, and a king, Debshalim. It is a work whose source comes from India but has been retold over many centuries and languages. The *Kalīlah* is a "mirror-for-princes," attempting to teach the narrative king, as well as the reader king, wise governance through its fabular lessons. One section of the book revolves around two jackals named Kalīlah and Dimnah, and the chapters that follow are composed of other animal stories. This is the "original" Indian story, which is then framed by the translators' introductions of the Persian Barzawayh and Arabic Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Barzawayh is the first translator, and he has two chapters: the one that immediately precedes the beginning of the *Kalīlah* story, which is an autobiographical narration of a path towards enlightenment. Barzawayh also has a second chapter, perhaps added later,[2] which begins the entire work with a third-person perspective on his journey to India and his translation of the *Kalīlah*. Between these two chapters is Ibn al-Muqaffa''s introduction, which teaches the reader how to understand this didactic text. These introductions are maintained in most translations and so become part of the story itself.

The *Kalīlah* defines translation as an act of authorship. While the *Kalīlah*'s narrative purports that the book so entitled[3] comes from "India's philosophers (فلاسفة

[2] It is debated whether Barzawayh's chapter of his journey to India was part of the original Middle Persian text or whether Ibn al-Muqaffa' added it himself (see Khaleghi-Motlagh and Blecua).

[3] The narrative says of the book that King Anūsharwān has heard about: "this work was *The Book of Kalīlah and Dimnah*" (وهو كتاب كليلة ودمنة) (Fishbein 4-5).

الهند)," (Fishbein 4-5), the translation's material history does not lead us to a single source text. The Arabic version, which is the source of all surviving translations, is from a Middle Persian text which was already a redaction and edit of multiple mutable Indian sources such as the *Panchatantra* and the *Mahābhārata* (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 4). From Middle Persian, the *Kalīlah* was translated into Syriac (around the end of the 6th century) and Arabic (c. 133/750) (Gruendler, "Interim Report" 243). From Arabic the text made its way to the languages of the *translatio studii*, and it was translated into Castilian in the 13th century. Now, *Kalīlah and Dimnah* exists in over 40 languages worldwide (Gruendler, "Interim Report" 243) in over 200 different versions (Blecua and Lacarra 9). The original texts in Middle Persian and from Ibn al-Muqaffa' have been lost, and so the editions that survive today are more akin to commentaries and creative reconstructions, rather than faithful transcriptions, of what these original sources might have said.

We may therefore understand the *Kalīlah* as a book of translation, in translation. In addition to the many versions of the *Kalīlah* in different languages, there is not just one Arabic version. Even the Arabic manuscripts whose copyists are anonymous and appear to be the text of Ibn al-Muqaffa' significantly differ, and this means that there is no single, authoritative version of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* (Fishbein xviii). Beatrice Gruendler's research project – the most extensive research of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* ever done,[4] has found that almost every one of the c. 100 surviving Arabic manuscripts are

[4] Gruendler's project was done over ten years with a team of scholars analyzing the codicological, linguistic, literary, and cultural aspects of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. They mainly worked with Arabic

different from the others (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 4). They vary so considerably in organization, story content, and language that for one manuscript to closely resemble another is the exception, not the rule. Gruendler's research acknowledges the variances, both in Arabic and in other languages, to be recompositions – so much so, that she and her research team call the Arabic copyists "copyist-redactors" (Gruendler, "Interim Report" 244) or "copyist co-authors" (Khafallah) to underline their interventions within the text. In these copies and translations, the *Kalīlah* has also been given different titles. In Arabic, it is sometimes called *Kitāb al-hind* (*The Book of India*; كتاب الهند). The late 15th-century Persian *Anvār-i suhaylī* (*Anwār Suhailī*) and 16th-century Ottoman *Humāyūn-nāme* (*The History of Humāyūn*) translations have also taken on new names and are actually considered classical works in their own right (Gruendler, "Interim Report" 243). The 16th-century Italian author Anton Francesco Doni further translated the *Kalīlah* as *La Filosofia Morale del Doni,* a title which the 16th-century English translator Sir Thomas North retained in his version, entitled *The Moral Philosophy of Doni, popularly known as the Fables of Bidpai*. Many versions of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* in English are also known as *The Fables of Bidpai*. Regardless of their respective titles, all of these texts are understood to be translations, or rather translation-compositions, of the same *Kalīlah*. I am particularly interested in examining the compositions of the three translators Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Alfonso X.

manuscript sources, though the team also worked with Persian and Turkish manuscripts and modern print editions (https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/kalila-wa-dimna/index.html).

Barzawayh, also known as Borzoi or Borzūya, was a Persian physician in the time of King Khosrow I (also known by his epithet Anūsharwān, the same king in the *Kalīlah* narrative) (r. 531-579 CE). Not much is known about Barzawayh today, but scholars agree that he was indeed a physician who traveled to India to answer his own questions about medicine and religion (Khaleghi-Motlagh). An apocryphal Pahlavi story[5] narrates that Barzawayh had read of a plant on a mountain in India which could revive the dead. Barzawayh traveled to India in search of this plant, and an ascetic there told him that "plant" actually meant "word," "mountain" was "learning," and "dead" represented the ignorant. The ascetic then told Barzawayh that the "plant" he sought was actually a book called the *Kalīlah,* which Barzawayh was eager to see. The Indian king gave Barzawayh permission to read this book but not to take it. Determined to bring the *Kalīlah* back to Persia, Barzawayh memorized what he read every day, wrote it down, and then brought this transcription back to his own land to be translated into Pahlavi (Khaleghi-Motlagh). It is unclear how much of the translation process in this account is historical versus fictionalized; still, this story – in various versions, ended up in the Arabic *Kalīlah*. Barzawayh is therefore considered the first translator of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*.

This fictionalization can also be read in Ibn al-Muqaffa''s introductory chapter. Historically, Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 139/757) was of Persian heritage who wrote in Arabic as a secretary in the Baghdad Abbasid court. He was a translator during the Graeco-Arabic movement, a period in the 8th-10th centuries of mass translation during the Abbasid's rule. Texts of Sassanian history, Zoroastrian cosmology, Greek science, and Indian

[5] As translated by Khaleghi-Motlagh.

stories were translated into Arabic, which is how Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ came to translate *Kalīlah and Dimnah* (Gutas). The Abbasids at this time were a burgeoning empire in the face of Greek, Persian, Syriac, and other long-standing traditions; and so, through translation, the Abbasids' Arabic could inherit the antique wisdom, and therefore legitimacy, of these other empires. At the heart of this inheritance is the translator, who decodes the knowledge of old and transforms it for a new readership. The translator then becomes the teacher of the text; just as the Arabic philosopher al-Kindī (d. 259/873) interprets Aristotle through his translations and commentaries, so does Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ instruct his audience in the wisdom of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. The text purports itself to be a work for philosophers (Fishbein 4-5), and so one who is able to translate and explain[6] such a work is considered a philosopher himself. Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ therefore represent the philosophership of Bidpai, and in their interpretation and translation they join him as philosophers of the text. Because Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s original texts have been long lost to history, with the oldest complete Arabic manuscript dated 500 years after Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s lifetime (Gruendler, "Interim Report" 243), their interventions become almost apocryphal. Their names are maintained in most translations in such a way that they join Bidpai as sage-storytellers within and of the narrative. More than a historical mark, the translator becomes a textual figure who guides the reader in the transfer of knowledge from one cultural tradition to another.

[6] As detailed in the next section, Barzawayh's chapter of his journey to India demonstrates that a translator's work is "interpretation" (*tafsīr*; تفسير).

Alfonso X is another translator figurehead in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Alfonso El Sabio ("The Learned") was the king of Castile-León from 1252-1284. His kingdom came to include a large number of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish peoples, and because of this Alfonso is known as the "ruler of the three religions" (Burns 3). Not only did he reign over these communities, but he was also an avid reader of their texts, and through translation he spearheaded a "renaissance" which turned Castilian into a written and codified language – the foundation of today's Spanish (Burns 6). It was through this movement that Alfonso X as the *Infante* (prince), translated *Kalīlah and Dimnah* (as *Calila e Dimna*). Like Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the Abbasids before him, Alfonso X was importing an old tradition of wisdom into Castilian to help transform it from an oral and local language to a vehicle of knowledge. As the translators before him, Alfonso X stands at the crossroads of culture. His *Calila* mirrors the inheritance of monarchial power; just like Alfonso X takes over his father's kingdom and expands upon it, so does the Castilian *Calila* join a lineage of knowledge that has been passed from Sanskrit to Persian to Arabic. As a king, however, he is not the sage that Bidpai, Barzawayh, and even Ibn al-Muqaffa' are; Alfonso X is instead the king to whom the sage speaks. He is the model king of the narrative who listens to Bidpai's stories and applies their lessons, and he is therefore the model reader.

Current State of Research

Much of the scholarship on *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is concerted around the material history and transmission of the text, while also recognizing that this history is so convoluted it is impossible to completely record it. Many modern "authoritative"

translations and Arabic transcriptions have been attempted, which are both praised for their archival work and are met with critique. Silvestre de Sacy is cited for his extant manuscript research, which he compiled into a modern French version of the *Kalīlah* (Riedel). However, Syriac translator I.G.N. Keith-Falconer says that de Sacy's labor "is notoriously defective" and that W. Knatchbull's English translation from de Sacy's Arabic "is far from literal or correct" (Keith-Falconer vii). A contemporary scholar, Thomas Ballantine Irving, says that Knatchbull's translation is "good, although it suffers the faults of the edition upon which it was based" (Irving xi). Other important names in *Kalīlah* compilation, translation, and research include Louis Cheikho, Theodor Benfey, and James Henry Breasted. Beatrice Gruendler's project is perhaps the most extensive and cohesive research project on *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, complete with manuscript scans, manuscript transcriptions and translations, and article analyses that dive into the codicological aspects and transmission of the text. Notably, research on the *Kalīlah* is often not a literary analysis but rather a historical tracing of different manuscripts, editions, and translations. As a result, there is mostly a historical sense of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* and not a literary one.

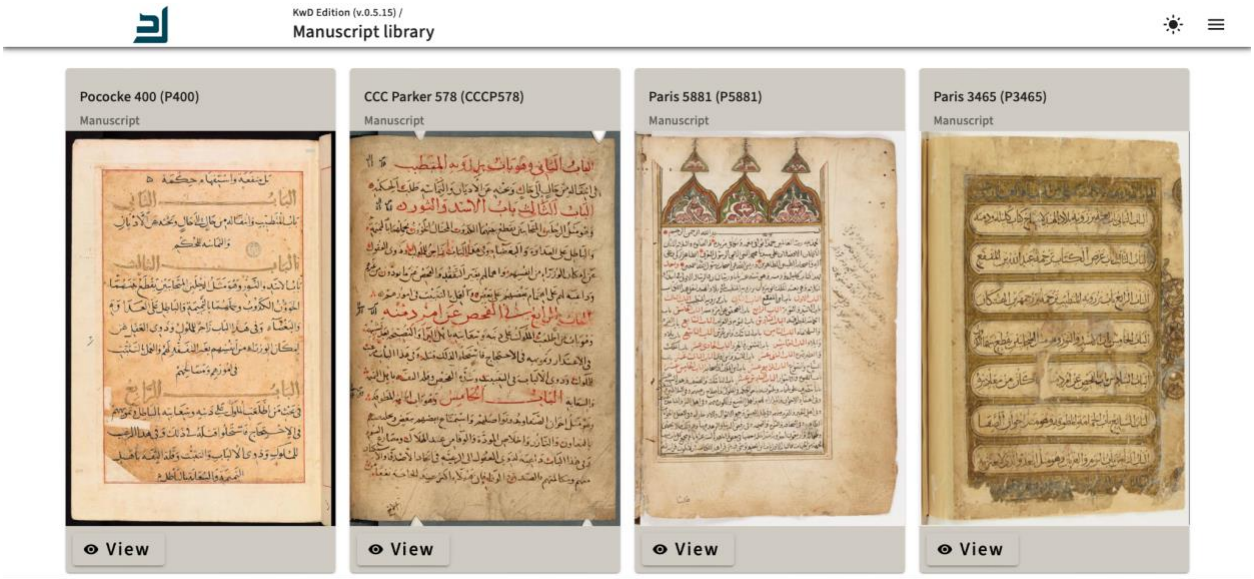


Fig. 3: Partial view of four manuscripts of the c. 100 manuscripts Gruendler's *Kalīlah* project has amassed and analyzed. Screenshot taken from © https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/manuscripts

James Breasted described the *Kalīlah* as "'an ancient text which, next to the Bible, has become the most widely distributed and translated book in the entire history of literature'" (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 3). For a text that has been in circulation for so long, it is no small task to "untangle the torturous textual history" (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 3), and because the text exists in multiplicity, there is no original or critical edition which has been produced (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 3). Considering the *Kalīlah* has existed in many world languages for centuries, it is also interesting to note that of the literature scholars I have spoken to about this project, only the Arabists and Romance medievalists are familiar with this text. While there are a number of English translations which begin in the 16th century and continue to present day, the *Kalīlah*, or *Fables of Bidpai*, has not reached the same acclaim in English as the *Odyssey* or *War and Peace*, for example. Perhaps the complex

history and lack of an "original" makes this text difficult to accept in literary canons. Or perhaps it is the problem of a "double chronology" in the Arabic tradition – the Gregorian and the Hijri calendars, which makes it difficult to translate the significance of an 8th/4th-century Arabic text like *Kalīlah and Dimnah* into a European sense of time (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 7). When I introduce *Kalīlah and Dimnah* to someone, I usually say, "it's the Arabic version of *Aesop's Fables*." It isn't, but this description attemptes to translate the idea of the text to someone more familiar with the Greek work. In this conversation, though, the Arabic-ness of the text does not transfer. The innovation of Ibn al-Muqaffa' remains unknown, and the unique thematic aspect of translation is hidden. The Golden Age of classical Arabic poetry and literature ends before the medieval and pre-modern greats come alive in Europe, so that it is difficult to find a point of comparison between these two geographical literatures (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 6-20). Who can the English reader look to within his own tradition to understand Ibn al-Muqaffa'? How can we compare the classical Arabic text to works accepted into English literature canons (even if these works are not originally English)?

My research therefore intervenes within this gap. The scholars previously mentioned have built the archival research known on *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, and so I will not repeat what has already been accomplished. I am rather interested in discussing the *Kalīlah* from a literary perspective. Indeed, translation is foundational to the material history of the text, but what of the literary role of translation within the narrative? Most existing research glosses over the translators' introductions as if they are comparable to contemporary translated literature, but that is not the case. The *Kalīlah*'s translation

history is noteworthy, because its translators have become part of the narrative. Translation does not only move the text the story itself. The translator becomes author, and his authorship then becomes part of the work's mythos. The *Kalīlah* is a story of knowledge transfer, invoking the authority of ancient civilizations. This knowledge is considered the greatest treasure any kingdom could hold, and this treasure is not passed on through the filial line of a monarch but through translation. The *Kalīlah* is a meta-narrative, including ever-changing ideas of authority, authorship, and cultural assimilation of a text. I therefore aim to explore these topics from a literary perspective, and to include the narrative of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* in English discourse and study.

Defining Translation and Authorship

What is a translation-composition, and therefore what is a translator-author? The verb "translate" has represented both a specific and local transfer of meaning in different traditions, as well as a more universal process of meaning transfer. For example, Socrates uses the criteria of being "Hellenized" (from word *hellênizein* [ἕλληνίζειν]) to mean that one "speaks Greek," as a determiner for whether a slave boy can understand the concept of the square root:

> '*Hellên men esti kai hellênizei?* [˝Ελλην μέν ἐστι καὶ ἑλληνίζει;]' (He is Greek and speaks our language?).
>
> Answer: 'Yes, he is "born to the household" (oiko- genês [οἰκογενής])' (Rendall 1139-1140).

If the slave boy were not "Hellenized," meaning if he could not understand Socrates's Greek, the boy would need to translate – or "Hellenize" – himself from his own language.

In this case, the idea of translation is one way, and it is the Greek way. Another example of translation as a local process is found in the German word *dolmetschen*, which means "to translate" in the sense of "to render into German" (Rendall 1148-1149). Martin Luther used this word, clarified further by the word *verdeutschen* ("to make German"), within the context of translating the Latin Bible into German to be understood by the common people (Rendall 1149). These verbs *hellênizein* and *dolmetschen* both "specify the method and purpose of translation" (Rendall 1149). Translation, in these Greek and German instances, is not a universal mode of exchange but rather a tool in a certain linguistic context. This is different from Friedrich Schleiermacher's more modern notion of translation, *übersetzen*, which may be understood as "the displacement of the reader in relation to his native language by virtue of the translation (*übersetzen*) such that they become foreign to each another" (Rendall 1139). In this case, translation as *übersetzen* reacquaints the reader with his own language through the "Foreign"[7] (Biguenet and Schulte 58) text. The audience can sense that they are reading something from another tradition that has been rendered readable in their native tongue. *Übersetzen* therefore implies a readership connected through language, made possible through linguistic exchange.

The translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* into Arabic, Castilian, and many other languages is a localizing process. As seen in both the narrative and in the material history, the *Kalīlah* is largely recomposed in order to speak to a particular audience or to

[7] The "Foreign" is Wilhem von Humboldt's notion of the *Fremde* in translation. The reader experiences the *Fremde* when confronted with some element from outside of his native language, written in his native language.

reflect the reading of the translator. In this process, the translator's recomposition is recognized as his, just as an author is acknowledged as the creator of his work. Barzawayh earns acclaim for the book in the Persian tradition, Ibn al-Muqaffa' is considered *the* translator-author in Arabic and in all subsequent translations, and Alfonso X is credited in Spanish for the Castilian *Kalīlah.* Therefore, *Kalīlah and Dimnah* as a translation-composition is defined through its tradition of translation. It is a text that has been passed from translator to translator and rewritten in Arabic and other languages. As each translator recomposes the text, he becomes a translator-author.

This authorship is established in the two translators' introductions, Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa'. The first chapter, "How Anūsharwān Sent Barzawayh to India to Transcribe *Kalīlah and Dimnah*" (Fishbein 2-21) details how Barzawayh retrieved the text. The Persian king Anūsharwān had heard of a book in India that he could learn from to make his own kingdom more prosperous. He sends Barzawayh to translate and retrieve the book, and the narrative tells us that Barzawayh "went to work interpreting and copying the [Sanskrit books of the *Kalīlah* (وقع برزويه في تفسير الكتب)" into a (singular) "book" (فرغ من ذلك الكتاب)" (Fishbein 4-5). The Arabic word used to describe Barzawayh's "translation" is *tafsīr* (تفسير), which actually refers to interpreting as opposed the more literal Arabic word for translation, *tarjama* (ترجم). The first translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is then established as a process not of a word-for-word or even sense-for-sense transfer, but rather of explanation and teaching. The translator does not act as a scribe, but rather a scholar to his readership. The following chapter of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s introduction similarly demonstrates the interpretive task of the translator. He urges his

audience to read the *Kalīlah* with the understanding that the animal fables are not only entertaining but have lessons to teach. He does this by providing his own examples, like "the person who finds something and rushes to get it all at once, without stopping to understand it bit by bit, is likely to suffer the fate of the man who… (طمحت عيناه إلى جمعه ولم يأخذ منه ما صفا الأول فلأول فهو خليق ألا يصيب منه إلا كما أصاب الرجل)" (Fishbein 22-25). At the end of his chapter, Ibn al-Muqaffa' also clarifies that because the Persians had provided no such instructions for reading, Ibn al-Muqaffa' added his chapter to "serve as a foundation for understanding the book for all who decide to read it and gain knowledge from it (لم يذكروا فيه ما ذكرنا من هذا فرأينا إذا فسرناه وأخرجناه من الفارسية إلى العربية أن نلحق فيه بابا من العربي يكون له أساس فيه أمر هذا الكتاب لمن أراد قرأته واقتباس العلم منه)" (Fishbein 34-35). Like Barzawayh's translation, Ibn al-Muqaffa''s does not attempt to preserve the source text in its entirety; the translator rather adds or edits what is necessary for the new reader to learn the wisdom of the book. Translation of the *Kalīlah* therefore *requires* recomposition, as the content must be presented in a way that the reader can receive it.

This is how we may come to say that each translation of the *Kalīlah* is indeed a translation and not an adaptation. Because, what is also retained in all of the translations is the foreign Indian source. While the translators may add to, redact from, and edit their respective source texts in the process of translation-composition, the translators maintain that they are writing from a Sanskrit tradition of wisdom. Translation is therefore a defining motif in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, especially as this book exists *only as* a translation. Like individual authors write within a genre, so do the *Kalīlah* translators compose within the transmission tradition of the *Kalīlah*. There are features which define the text, that the

translators must maintain in order to stay within the tradition; these features include that the mirror-for-princes theme, the frame tale structure, the overarching dialogue between a sage and a king, the (mostly) animal fables, and the Indian source. Other than that, however, the translators rewrite the text using their own cultural markers, such as Ibn al-Muqaffa''s addition of Quranic allusions and Alfonso X's incorporation of Biblical themes.

The proof of authorship is in the name(s) attributed to *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. It is not that the *Kalīlah* has no author, as if it is anonymous, but rather that it has a number of authors who become authors through storytelling. The *Kalīlah*'s authorship can be compared to that of *Aesop's Fables*; while *Aesop's Fables* are attributed to the supposedly historical person Aesop, it is understood that Aesop is not the literal author of the stories we read today (Clayton). He rather serves as a textual figure, or a master storyteller who becomes part of a work and a part of literature when his fables are written down.[8] The predominant name attributed to the *Kalīlah* is that of the Arabic translator Ibn al-Muqaffa', who functions both as Aesop and as Babrius or Phaedrus. Ibn al-Muqaffa' is the one who brought this written work to the rest of the world. His text is the source of all surviving versions, and so he is recognized as the model translator-author. Even though Barzawayh comes before him chronologically, it is Ibn al-Muqaffa''s account which survived and which is most cited. He is therefore like the Zeus of the *Kalīlah*'s authorial pantheon; Zeus was not the first god of gods, but he is the lasting one. Still, Barzawayh is

[8] Babrius and Phaedrus of the first century CE were the first to compile the oral stories attributed to Aesop in poetic verse and prose, respectively. For more about the composition of *Aesop's Fables*, read the Loeb Classical Library's *Babrius and Phaedrus*.

a significant link in the *Kalīlah*'s chain of transmission. He is the first to have brought the text from India and to translate it, and so his journey – whether historical or fictionalized, models the task of the translator. It is an arduous process in which the translator must struggle before he can achieve his objective. Alfonso X is similarly an important figure in the *Kalīlah*. Like Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa', he is the first to bring the text to his language and cultural tradition. He is therefore known for the unique intervention he makes as a translator, and in this intervention Alfonso X assumes the role of the translator-author. These three men are the "Aesops" of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Their names are guideposts in the narrative reading of this work, and they are therefore credited with its authorship.

As Roger Chartier writes, "one of the major expressions of the author-function [is] the possibility of deciphering in the forms of a book the intention that lay behind the creation of the text" (Chartier 55). Often the reader is curious to learn about the person who created a text; *what was his cultural context? Who were his influences? What did he experience?* This can be inferred through the concept of *Bildung,* which Franz-Georg Gadamer defines as "'the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities'" (Weinsheimer and Marshall xii). This cultivation of talent relies on channeling one's own experiences into aesthetic expression, which can be read in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's assertion of his writings:

> I by no means owe my works to my own wisdom alone, but to a thousand things and persons around me, who provided me with material. There were fools and sages, minds enlightened and narrow, childhood, youth, and mature age – all told

> me what they felt, what they thought, how they lived and worked, and what experiences they had gained; and I had nothing further to do than to put out my hand and reap what others had sown for me (Oxenford 420).

The author is therefore considered for his unique perspective of experience, in addition to how he articulates that experience. It is this which defines the author's work, as Quixote scholar William Eggington says of Miguel de Cervantes: he was the right man, at the right time, subject to just the right circumstances that led to the creation of *Don Quixote* (Eggington). I read the three *Kalīlah* translators through their hermeneutic qualities, which are founded in historical contextualization. These three men existed, and regardless of what we accurately know of them, the idea that they were "real" informs how we read their work. It is like a legend of Alexander the Great, as can be read in a version of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*.[9] Perhaps such legends come across as obviously fictionalized, but the historicity of the name, nonetheless, lends the story credibility. It brings the fantastical into the reality of the reader and gives more weight to the writing.

While some scholars think of "authorship" as a modern idea (Ede), we may say that this concept as defined by the print market is modern.[10] Book and manuscript attributions existed long before the invention of the printing press, and so the concept of

[9] Ramsay Wood's *Kalīlah* tells the story of how Alexander the Great conquered India and chose someone to rule in his stead. This ruler ended up to be very corrupt and so was overthrown by the people.

[10] Scholars such as Mark Rose and Roger Chartier have argued that censorship, property, and ownership are inherent to print culture and therefore define the author (Adema). In this market, copyright defines ownership of a work, and therefore the right to its attribution, through the "exact expression" of ideas (Apter loc. 6329).

an author can be found earlier as well. The Abbasid Caliphate had a book culture. Authors – that is, those who composed their own works or who compiled information in scholarly volumes, therefore had claim to the proceeds of their books (Gruendler, *The Rise* 62).[11] This financial claim is what we also find in modern print culture, which determines who has the right to a book's profits. And, perhaps more important than the income an author could generate was the reputation of his name. Even before the Abbasid's book culture, the Arabic oral poetic tradition recognized the contribution of the poet to his genre. When speaking of these ancient "greats," the renowned Abbasid poet al-Aṣma'ī said,

> 'The first of them in all excellence is Imru'ulqays, he has the acclaim and precedence. All of them took his words and followed his way, so he in fact made al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī one of the greats.'
>
> Abū Ḥātim said: I asked: 'What is the meaning of 'great' [*faḥl*]?' [Al-Aṣma'ī] said: 'One means by that a feature that singles out (one) from others, like the feature that distinguishes the stallion [*faḥl*] from [ordinary] adult male camels (Gruendler, *The Rise* 57).

The poet-as-author is one who presents something unique, especially apparent when his work sets a literary standard. In this way, the pre-Islamic poet (like Imru'ulqays) is like the author of *Bildung*, and like the modern author who is celebrated for his "exact expression"; the poet, as author, adds something new to his tradition.

[11] Beatrice Gruendler details the many ways in which Abbasid writers became authors by being commissioned, paid, and recognized for their books in *The Rise of the Arabic Book*.

And so, this is how the translator of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* also becomes known as the author of the work. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ lived under the Abbasid Caliphate, during which translators of so called “authorless” books were considered authors “by default” (Gruendler, *The Rise* 62-63). While these types of books “were often ignored, or defamed, by the authors of highbrow literature” (Gruendler, *The Rise* 62), it is through such translation that Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is known as the first (named) author of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* worldwide. His translation is the source of all subsequent translations since his lifetime (Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors” 3), and his introductory chapter is largely retained in these translations. While Barzawayh precedes Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ both historically and in the *Kalīlah*’s narrative, we do not have Barzawayh’s own account; it is Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s record of Barzawayh which survives, and therefore it is Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s name which is recognized.

This is a literary phenomenon in which the translator is recognized both as a translator – one who carries on the text of another, and as an author – one who makes his unique literary mark. I therefore use the term “translator-author” throughout this research to refer to the translators Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, and Alfonso X, as their translations resulted in new versions of the *Kalīlah*. They are authors, as their names have been preserved in the *Kalīlah*’s history. Their translations of the *Kalīlah* contributed something new to their respective literary traditions as well as to the work-turned-tradition that is *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, as detailed in the following chapters.

Another example of the translator-author can be found in the work of Jacques Derrida. Translators Michael Naas and Pascale-Anne Brault compiled a number of

Derrida's essays, letters, and eulogies, in a unique manuscript, which has brought new meaning to Derrida's notions of death and friendship (*The Work of Mourning*, 2017). The chapters themselves are texts written by Derrida, but the composition of the work as a whole is entirely original; as a result, Derrida says that "'[the translators, in their labor] take responsibility for an American edition…This book is thus *their* book…I hold them to be, I insist upon it, the true authors of this work'" (Gallop 63). The organization of the content illuminates new meaning in Derrida's original writings, harmonizing with them in the themes of death, friendship, and authorship. Like Cervantes considers himself to be the transmitter of *Don Quixote*, so are Naas and Brault the transmitters of Derrida. They all work towards bringing new understanding towards their textual subjects through their respective storytelling, and they are thus authors.

Derrida's assertion also reflects Roland Barthes's idea of textual "mastery," in which the author crafts a particular relationship between the signified and signifier (Barthes 106-107). The author is one who creates *by way of* language. In this notion of mastery, form and content work together to craft particular meaning. This is the task of the translator – to understand the relationship of the signified and signifier in the original text and to recompose that relationship in the language of translation. This interaction between signified and signifier constitutes the hermeneutics of the text, and how the translator interprets this rhetoric establishes his particular rhetoric. The *Kalīlah* translator must therefore understand the original hermeneutics in order to reconstruct them for a new audience in another language. And, the stakes are relatively high as the text is a didactic one meant to save the soul of its reader. The translator is therefore faced with the

challenge of maintaining the lessons of the original text and teaching their wisdom. The *Kalīlah* translator is therefore tasked with becoming the master of the text.

Methodology and Chapter Outlines

This project draws from both historical information about Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, and Alfonso X (focused on the latter two) and textual citations in a close reading of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. I am interested in how translation moves the story, as well as the role of translation within the narrative. While there is no one "authoritative" version of the text, I mostly cite the Library of Arabic Literature's edition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* throughout this dissertation to lend cohesion to my analysis. While the Library of Arabic Literature's text acknowledges that a "master" version would be both impossible and "inauthentic" (Fishbein xxxiii), it does attempt to create a singular edition from one almost complete and early Arabic manuscript (British Library Or. 4044) (Fishbein xxxiii). The editors of this edition also explain that their translation

> aims at a natural style. No attempt has been made to adhere exactly to the syntax of the Arabic or always to translate a given Arabic word by the same English word, as the result would produce a mechanical effect and hide the wide range of meanings of a given Arabic word (Fishbein xxxv).

As a result, the text reads familiarly to the English reader so that it is the story, and not the foreign source, that is most perceivable. This follows the tradition of the many *Kalīlah* manuscript writers which also rendered their versions readable to their respective audiences as opposed to a scholastic or "mechanical" rendition of the text. To underline the plurality of the *Kalīlah*, I also refer to different versions of the text in particular

intances. This is not to make a comparison among them codicologically (as Beatrice Gruendler has fantastically done), but to present the many elements which are present in the *Kalīlah*'s storytellings.

This is also written from an Arabic studies perspective. I am particularly interested in the *Kalīlah*'s phenomenon within the Arabic tradition and through Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translator-authorship. His work also serves as the source text for the Castilian translation, and some scholars also believe that Ibn al-Muqaffa' wrote at least a part of Barzawayh's story. We can perhaps then say that this is Ibn al-Muqaffa''s text, which he shares with translator-authors like Alfonso X. Consequently, the classical Arabic notion of authorship – that which can be shared, stolen, and reascribed – is pertinent to the textual analysis, both in the Arabic translator's chapter as well as the other translators' works. Abdelfattah Kilito has done significant work on authorship in the Arabic tradition, and so I often refer to his scholarship.

As a didactic text, the *Kalīlah*'s authorship is rooted in the writer's philosophical understanding. Therefore, I analyze how each of the translators assume their authorship by proving their philosophical mastery of the *Kalīlah*. Alongside the classical Arabic perspective of authorship, I also draw on Gerald Bruns's research of "open" manuscript culture. In this tradition, the grammarian or translator is expected to not just transcribe a text but to explicate it, which can result in rewriting. Alfonso X certainly participates in this practice in such a way that he creates his own textual tradition. There are a number of texts that he "translated" (perhaps also originally composed or rewrote) that are referred

to as Alfonsine texts. His reputation as a scholar, in conjunction with his position as "The Learned" king, renders him an author in textual history.

In the first chapter, I analyze Barzawayh's translation of the *Kalīlah* which is told in the chapter, "How Anūsharwān Sent Barzawayh to India to Transcribe *Kalīlah and Dimnah*." Because of the pseudo-historical and incomplete scholarship on Barzawayh, I focus on the narrative impact of his journey. As the chapter that opens the book, I argue that it serves as a model for all subsequent translators. His *adab* ("good manners, education") in a challenging journey is what gains him access to the *Kalīlah*, and his behavior reflects the text's lessons – even though he had never read it before. This proves in the narrative that the translator, as the one who must understand the book, is one who must understand its philosophical lessons. Barzawayh's chapter therefore demonstrates that the translator is an author through his philosophership. I then take this definition of authorship as the foundation for my analysis of Ibn al-Muqaffa' in the second chapter. I look at both the historical context of Ibn al-Muqaffa' as well as his introductory chapter as evidence of how the translator practices authorship. In this chapter especially, I utilize Kilito's understanding of authorship in the classical Arabic tradition as a way to explain that the *Kalīlah*'s authorship is plural. There is not one version of the text, but rather a lineage of translation that begets authors. This idea of lineage culminates in the example of Alfonso X, detailed in the third chapter. While Alfonso X does not write his own chapter like Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa', his translation can be understood through the scholarship on the Alfonsine text tradition. He translate-authors a number of historiographical texts which include stories, that he purports to be his inheritance from

the great sages and kings who have come before him. He therefore establishes himself as a philosopher like Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, but through the additional aspect of kingship. In translating a mirror-for-princes text, he implies that he listens alongside the narrative King Debshalim to Bidpai’s wisdom. By ordering the rewriting of that wisdom, he demonstrates his understanding of the text and therefore his “mastery” over it as author.

Chapter 1: Barzawayh, the Model Philosopher

The Authority of the Author

> The most excellent gift that God bestowed is the intellect. It is the faculty appropriate to all things. Only by means of the intellect can a dweller in this world who aspires to the hereafter – by striving here to save his soul from the terrors of what comes next – live a prosperous life, increase his merit, and perform deeds that are appropriate for both worlds. Only by means of the intellect can those who strive to do good act effectively and be safe from fear of punishment in the afterlife; for the intellect is the means to every good and the key to every desire– none can dispense with it. (Fishbein 3-4).
>
> وأفضل ما رزقهم ومن عليهم به العقل الذي هو القوّة الجميع الأشياء ولا يقدر أحد من أهل الدنيا وطالب الآخرة المجتهد في الدنيا الذي ينجّي روحه من الأهوال على صلاح معيشته ولا ازدياد فضل ولا عمل إلّا به في الدنيا والآخرة فإنّ المجتهد في العمل لا يأمن من هولها ول يقدر على إنفاذ العمل إلّا بالعقل لأنّ العقل سبب كلّ خير ومفتاح كلّ رغبة وليس لأحد غنى عن العقل

This is how the book of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* starts, with an exaltation to intellect. Like "knowledge (علم)," "philosophy (فلسفة)" and "truth (الاستقصاء عما غاب)"[12] (Fishbein 4-5), the *Kalīlah* tells us that intellect (العقل) is the greatest treasure man can have. It opens the door to every good, both in this world and the next. The reader must understand that the book he is holding is that very key; should he heed its lessons, he will draw favor and good will towards his life. In the narrative, the Persian king Anūsharwān also understands

[12] More literally, "the investigation into what is missing," translation mine. This concept of "truth" will be explored later in the chapter.

this. As one already bestowed with "the most excellent intellect and amplest fortune (الجدّ من العقل أفضل الرزق)" (Fishbein 2-3), a student of philosophy himself, the king hears of a book that has given the neighboring Indian kingdom all of its wealth and prosperity. This book was called *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, and Anūsharwān knows it is an important resource for both the good of his kingdom and the salvation of his soul. He therefore sends a learned man, Barzawayh, to find the book and translate it into Persian. Barzawayh is successful, and he honors the Persian kingdom with its own *Kalīlah*.

The Philosopher's Quest

Why does Anūsharwān need a translator to retrieve the book? Why not a thief? Anūsharwān is the first to suggest in the narrative that translation is more valuable than physically stealing the book, plagiarizing it, or writing something that could rival it. This is because the *Kalīlah* is a priceless treasure of the Indian kingdom. It is a book of advice for wise rulership, and the book's reputation renders it both the source and symbol of the Indian kingdom's prosperity. To translate the book – rather than to steal it, is to join a legacy of greatness already begun. In this process, the translator therefore becomes great himself. With a successful translation, he sits beside the Indian philosopher-authors in the textual history of the *Kalīlah* as a philosopher himself. His king commissioner, similarly, inherits a reputation of prosperity from the Indian kingdom. This mode of inheritance – translation, and not filial lineage or conquering, conveys that there is merit in the struggle of this translation journey. The Indian kingdom is, of course, in no hurry to give away their book of secrets. Therefore, the one who is able to retrieve this book is deserving of

it. Barzawayh's journey to India is a quest for knowledge, which is complete when Barzawayh has proved his knowledge and wisdom *in* the journey itself.

It is the wise man, and not the thief, who succeeds also in other narratives. The Monkey King, a character in the Chinese story *A Journey to the West*, agrees to help a monk retrieve some Buddhist texts from India in exchange for his freedom from a previous punishment.[13] The Monkey King's goal is to retrieve the text only to relieve his own suffering, which was brought about by his own hubris. Along the way, however, the monkey learns the lessons of humility, patience, and honor in protecting the monk, and as a result of the journey, the Monkey King becomes a sage himself. The Indian texts are then not the goal but are rather representative of the attainment of knowledge. One does not have suddenly have knowledge simply by removing a book from a shelf; rather, wisdom is acquired through the application of knowledge in navigating a muddy path, defending against a dangerous predator, and maintaining strength in the face of exhaustion.

In sending a philosopher, Anūsharwān seems to know of the ethical obstacles that will face the translator. In Barzawayh's journey, he must somehow attain the book without stealing it. King Anūsharwān specifically asks him to "extract" the book by "transcrib[ing] it into Persian (والطف بعقلك وحسن أدبك لاستخراج ذلك الكتاب [...] تاماً مكتوباً بالفارسيّة)" (Fishbein 4-5). The verb *istakhraja* (استخرج, "to extract") is associated with decoding, as found in the exemplary, "the eliciting of the meaning of that which is made

[13] More about the narrative of "scripture seeking" can be read in Anthony C. Yu's "The Formation of Fiction in 'The Journey to the West.'"

enigmatical is a cause of fatigue to minds (استخرجُ المعمّى متعبةٌ للخواطر)" (Lane's Lexicon 719). Barzawayh's task is not just to convert a Sanskrit word into a Persian one, but to extract - that is, to elicit or to evoke, the philosophical meaning in Sanskrit that is, as of yet, unrealized in Persian. The text's meaning is wrapped in the enigma of language, so that Barzawayh must decode the text's signified philosophy and *how* that meaning is conveyed through the signifier of Sanskrit.

When Barzawayh enters the Indian realm, he acquaints himself with the people there, visiting and mingling with them. He persists in this way for a while, before he finally befriends someone who Barzawayh believes he can trust with his secret. This person does indeed grant Barzawayh access to the *Kalīlah*, saying that Barzawayh has proven his worthiness through "fine character, especially in a foreign land (رجلاً أحسن منك ولا سيّما في بلاد غربة [...] أدباً)" (Fishbein 8-9). Similar to the Monkey King, Barzawayh acts in such a way that achieving his goal is possible. He exemplifies how kindness is more successful than coercion, how good manners must be embodied and not donned as disguise, and how the force of friendship is more powerful than what the individual can accomplish. Similar to the Monkey King, Barzawayh illustrates that only by living the philosophy the *Kalīlah* teaches, is it possible to obtain it. This is because he understands the value of what he seeks, and only one with this understanding will know how to attain this treasure. A thief would have never obtained the *Kalīlah*, for he would not have understood the wisdom it required.

Fig. 4: Image from "Borzuya's Voyage" chapter in manuscript P400, page 23. Photo taken from © https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/manuscripts/illustrations

This effort towards wisdom, or philosophy, is presented in the *Kalīlah* not as a scholarly pursuit but as a way of life for all people. Barzawayh plays the role that Plato's Socrates does; they both act as guides for their respective audiences. However, the two philosophers differ in their approach. The historical Socrates suggested that Athenians must choose between a political life and a philosophical life, which Plato fictionalizes in a dialogue:

> Is he to adopt the life [...] speaking in the assembly and practising oratory and engaging in politics…or should he follow my example and lead the life of a philosopher; and in what is the latter life superior to the former? (Ure and Sharpe 28).

In this citation, philosophy and politics are incompatible. According to Socrates, the "good" Athenian citizens valued "fame, honor, and reputation" and so used "agonistic" political means to achieve these things (Ure and Sharpe 28). Philosophy, conversely, was the internal process of examining one's own "inner spirit" which led to the greatest good (Ure and Sharpe 28). According to Socrates, to obtain certain social favor by pontificating in the assembly is therefore in opposition to the pursuit of living "a good human life" (Ure and Sharpe 27). This is the Socratic perspective that Plato utilizes in his dialogues.

Kalīlah and Dimnah, on the other hand, *combines* the political and the philosophical in this mirror-for-princes book. And, not only is it a guide for kings but for his subjects as well. In the *Kalīlah*, there is no difference between a good citizen and philosopher; this book teaches that each is possible through the other. A good king is prosperous because he is wise, and a good citizen benefits because he acts as the philosopher does. The *Kalīlah* teaches that prosperity "in this world […] and the next" (Fishbein 2) is not achieved through the superficiality of oratory games or bombastic performance in a public assembly, as Socrates saw in his fellow Athenians. Rather, the reader need only heed the lessons within the *Kalīlah* in order to "increase his merit, and perform deeds that are appropriate for both worlds [this one and the afterlife] (ولا ازدياد فضل ولا عمل إلّا به في الدنيا والآخرة)" (Fishbein 2-3). The way to achieve this merit is intellect, and the application of that intellect is wisdom. The translator's journey models this achievement, where he exemplifies the goodness of a philosopher as a citizen interacting with the king.

The quest-for-knowledge journey is a theme so ubiquitous, that it is also the plot in many popular culture stories. The film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Spielberg 1989) illustrates what happens when knowledge is sought for control. The character Indiana Jones discovers that the Nazis have captured his father in order to steal his lifelong research on the Holy Grail. To save his father, Jones leads the Nazis to the temple where the Grail is kept. The temple, however, attempts to trap them; in their greed, the Nazis choose not to escape but rather fall to their deaths, while the temple guard allows Jones to use the Grail to save his father's life. The Nazis in this film represent a militaristic pursuit of knowledge, defined by a lust for power, domination, and violence. Such qualities prove to be the downfall of the Nazis' journey for the treasure, as this militant *means* of retrieving the Grail is evidence of the seeker's intention. Jones's motivation for finding the Grail, in contrast, is to save his father's life – his pursuit is noble. The power of the Grail is used for love, and so we see in the temple guard's permittance that Jones is worthy of the Grail.

Anūsharwān could have similarly tried to steal the book in order to take eternal glory for himself. He could have stolen the book *away* from the Indian kingdom entirely, as if taking the physical object would also take away India's prestigious prosperity and transfer it to Persia. He could have marched into India with an army, ready to raze the realm and seize the *Kalīlah* by force. No – rather, Anūsharwān seems to understand that true wisdom can never be taken away from one who has acquired it. If he had stolen the *Kalīlah* from India, its philosophers would have simply written another one. To steal a book of knowledge is to completely misunderstand the book in the first place; the

thieving party would never benefit from it, just as the Nazis' intentions made their quest for the Grail futile. Knowledge builds upon itself, as the *Kalīlah*'s structure suggests, because knowledge is built by *multiple* philosophers. From the inner stories to the outer narrative frame, the reader learns from the sage Bidpai, and then the Indian philosophers, the physician Barzawayh, the Arabic translator Ibn al-Muqaffa', all the way to the *Infante* Alfonso X. These philosophers and translators are all retained in the story, gesturing towards the notion that true knowledge is attained through the quest for learning and not conquest or theft.

It is this seeking of knowledge, or learning, that catalyzes the entire narrative of the Persian story and all subsequent translations of the text. The *Kalīlah* describes how Anūsharwān finds out about the *Kalīlah*: "during his quest for learning, he heard about a book (وكان ممّا تيقّن عن العلم ويبحث عنه أنّه بلغه عن كتاب)" (Fishbein 4-5). The translators of the cited *Kalīlah* use "quest" for the word تيقّن, which more literally refers to "removing doubt and achieving the matter [of knowledge] (العلم وإزاحة الشك وتحقيق الأمر)" (Lisān al-'arab 4964).[14] This verb is further in its reflexive form, taking on the meaning that one removes doubt and achieves the matter of knowledge for himself. Learning, in this instance, implies clarification; and, not only clarification, but the deserved self-assurance that one has clarified some matter of knowledge for himself. This is the same sense of "truth" as in the beginning passage – the investigation of that which is not there. One who learns, like Anūsharwān, does not only absorb knowledge but acquires it. He has taken on the act of learning the lessons, and in doing so has revealed something to himself. With learning

[14] Translation mine.

as the catalyst of the narrative, it establishes the task of the reader: to persist beyond self-doubt in the pursuit of clarity and therefore knowledge. When one has completed this quest, he has achieved understanding.

Barzawayh similarly proves that knowledge is acquired through one's ability to receive that knowledge. Like the temple guard permits Indian Jones to use the Grail, Barzawayh is granted access to the *Kalīlah*. Barzawayh's behavior has passed a test; he has demonstrated how a wise man would act when faced with such a challenge. His friend of the Indian court tells Barzawayh, "anyone in whom [these wise qualities] are found deserves assistance in his quest and in reaching his objective (فمن اجتمعت فيه هذه الخصال الثماني كلّها شُفع في طلب وأُسعف بحاجته)" (Fishbein 10-11). The wise man is worthy of his pursuit *because* he is wise, and such a quality naturally invites others to help him. This is why only a philosopher could retrieve the *Kalīlah*, as "the foundation of all education, the pinnacle of every science, the guide to every benefit, and the key to salvation in the hereafter (هو أصل كلّ أدب ورأس كلّ علم والدليل على كلّ منفعة ومفتاح الطلب الآخرة)" (Fishbein 5). Only a wise man would understand the value of such a treasure and therefore how to find it.

The Philosopher's *Adab*

Barzawayh's story underlines the importance of the bonds between people, and more specifically friendship. It is this bond that helps him on his quest towards knowledge. After Barzawayh confesses the truth of his journey to his friend, Barzawayh feels confident that he can accomplish his mission. The Indian "had answered him gently, without rebuke or chiding (لم يزجره ولم ينتهره وردّه عليه رداً لينا)," saying, "nothing is better

than love (مودّة, *muwaddah*). Whoever has love in his mind deserves to have friend who shares his mind with him and doesn't hold back his thoughts (لا شيء أفضل من المودّة فن كانت لَه مودّة في نفسه كان أهلاً أن يخلطه الرجل بنفسه ولا يدخّر شيئا)" (Fishbein 10-11). *Muwadda* comes from the verb *wadda* (وَدَّ), whose noun *wudd* (ود) is defined as "the love which is in all gateways to goodness (الود الحب يكون في جميع مداخل الخير) (Lisān al-'Arab 4793).[15] Like the love that fills the Holy Grail with its healing liquid in *Indian Jones,* love opens the door that guards the *Kalīlah*. When Barzawayh shows his love – defined as honesty and good-will, his friend agrees to grant Barzawayh access to what he seeks. Love is therefore necessarily an aspect of intellect, which the *Kalīlah* defines as "the means to every good and the key to every desire (سبب كلّ خير ومفتاح كلّ رغبة وليس لأحد غنى عن العقل)" (Fishbein 2-3). The book object of the *Kalīlah* is a symbol of this "every good," and the narrative conveys how genuine friendship is the key to achieving this good. The wise man is therefore not an island. He is not a meditative recluse but a being among beings, a citizen among citizens, whose good "education" in the ways of intellect, or *adab* (أدب), necessarily includes others.

Both Anūsharwān and Barzawayh are examples of *adab*. *Adab*, in the Library of Arabic Literature's edition of the *Kalīlah*, is translated in English as "education," as in, "the nature of the intellect is latent in a person: it is made manifest through education, and strengthened by experience (وطبيعة العقل كمين في الإنسان يظهره الأدب وتقوّيه التجارب)" (Fishbein 2-3). *Adab* refers to the behavior that helps a person engage with others. The verb *adaba* (أَدَبَ) can be used to mean "invite," as in "he collected and invited people to

[15] Translation mine.

his repast" (Lane's Lexicon 34). This verb conveys taking the initiative towards generosity, which is a "praiseworthy quality." In addition to generosity, *adab* also includes "every praiseworthy discipline by which a man is trained" (Lane's Lexicon 34). *Adab* is "good education," "good manners," and overall "good discipline of the mind and manners" (Lane's Lexicon 34). These definitions are related to how someone conducts himself among others, and therefore, *adab* is learned from others. When one acts with *adab*, he also joins a tradition; *adab* is used in regard to "custom" or "ancestral traditions," and so can also refer to practical behavior as well as that which is intellectual (Bonebakker 17). To become part of a tradition or custom, one must be welcomed into it; in every sense, then, *adab* refers to one's "polite," "excellent, or "elegant" (Lane's Lexicon 35) engagement within a group.

The word *adab* both refers to these concepts of "disciplined self-presentation" (Cooperson xxv) as well as "literature." *Adab* is a word that has circulated in Arabic discourse for centuries with many meanings. Through modern discussions,[16] an idea has emerged that that *adab* encompasses both literature and *how to read* that literature (Allan 76). Works of literature are "inseparable" from the knowledge of "how to read, understand, and analyze these texts" (Allan 76). This notion is also found in literary critic René Wellek's perspective, that literariness is not only a text's aesthetic form but also includes the question of how to engage with a text "pedagogically" (Allan 74). *Adab* may

[16] One central figure in this discourse includes Husayn al-Marsāfī, a nineteenth-century Egyptian litterateur who advocated for education as a tool for societal reform. His 1881 treatise *The Eight Words* writes on nation, community, government, justice, injustice, politics, and freedom, and ends with the word "education" (*tarbiya*): "'once *tarbiya* is made perfect, everything else is also made perfect'" (Yousef).

therefore be considered that which reflects the discipline that emerges through reading. To read *adab* ("literature") with *adab* ("good discipline") is to understand the lessons that literature can teach. *Adab* as literature is therefore, also, that which develops the *adab* of self-discipline. Through this understanding, literature is not simply a form of aesthetic language; it also reinforces certain qualities in a person which equip him for interacting with the text and with others, to cultivate in himself "generosity," "politeness," and overall "excellence."

Anūsharwān acts with *adab* when he asks for the translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Compared to what he could have done to obtain the book, Anūsharwān's order is a noble one. He is in the pursuit of knowledge himself, not as a greedy ruler but as someone with "a fine education, a thirst for knowledge, an extensive knowledge of philosophy, an inquisitiveness about the unknown, and a keenness for the truth of things (بحسن الأدب والبحث عن العلم والتفتيش بجميع الفلسفة والاستقصاء عمّا غاب والتحرّي للصواب ممّا تيقّن عن العلم)" (Fishbein 3-5). Anūsharwān seeks to follow, through the refined education of *adab*, the custom of *adab* that the *Kalīlah* represents. In doing so, the Persian king may join the Indian kings' legacy of rulership. By commissioning a translation, Anūsharwān proves that he not only understands the Indian philosophers and the power of their knowledge, but that he is worthy of purporting this knowledge himself. As a result, he will be remembered as a king among kings.

Barzawayh similarly acts with *adab* as he integrates himself within the Indian court. Both his behavior of "kindness and graciousness (الرفق واللطف)," "obedience to kings and endeavoring to please them (الطاعة للملوك وتحرّي ما يرضيهم)," and "resolve in

pursuit of a goal (أصبر على طلب حاجة)," along with the inner qualities of "knowing his soul's inclinations (يعرف الرجل نفسه)" and a "fine character (أحسن خلقا)" (Fishbein 9) allow Barzawayh to assimilate in the Indian court and build genuine friendships. Barzawayh is not acting – he truly possesses *adab* ("good discipline of the mind and manners"). The friend who grants him access to the *Kalīlah* confirms the veracity of Barzawayh's *adab*; he admires these positive characteristics in Barzawayh and so joins him in friendship, though he always suspected Barzawayh's true mission (Fishbein 8-9). His friend knows that such a task required Barzawayh to keep his secret, and the Indian considers this discretion another admirable quality. The *adab* required of Barzawayh in obtaining the *Kalīlah*, a book of wisdom, tests Barzawayh's understanding of wisdom itself. His is on a quest for knowledge, and the book represents the treasure of intellect that Barzawayh has gained on his journey.

Barzawayh's story is similar to that of the hero's journey, exemplified in Hercules's twelve labors ("The Labors of Hercules"). Hercules must atone for a crime by serving the king of Mycenae, who orders Hercules to complete a number of tasks that include killing monsters, retrieving magical objects, and capturing wild animals. The outcomes of the labors are not particularly useful (except, perhaps, giving the Augean stables their first cleaning); the labors rather represent the strength and cunning required of Hercules. Because he demonstrates such qualities, Hercules proves that he has conquered the most extreme obstacles on earth and so deserves divine immortality on Mount Olympus. Hercules's journey, like Barzawayh's, is evidence of what he learns.

Both Hercules and Barzawayh therefore serve as examples of the hero, or the philosopher, on his journey.

The Philosopher's Composition

Through *adab* – that is, through the application of the "good education" that the *Kalīlah* teaches, Barzawayh proves that he is as much a philosopher as the original authors. Just like the Arabic philosopher al-Kindī is known as the "second teacher" after Aristotle, and Miskawayh of the same tradition is known as the "third teacher," (Topkara 1), Barzawayh joins the lineage begun by the *Kalīlah*'s Indian philosopher-authors. The Indian philosophers wrote this text for others to learn from its wisdom, crafting lessons through the rhetoric of talking animals. And, because Barzawayh has proven himself as a philosopher in his journey, he has earned the authority of a *Kalīlah* author. In the community aspect of *adab*, then, such authority is not taken but rather given. The relationship of Barzawayh and his Indian friend is that of an apprentice and his master; when Barzawayh is granted access to the *Kalīlah* (Fishbein 12-13), his Indian teacher is giving Barzawayh permission to rewrite the text.

This is reminiscent of the story of the eighth/first-century Arabic poet Abu Nuwās:

One day, Abu Nuwās asks his teacher, Khalaf al-Ahmar, for permission to compose poetry. Khalaf replies, "'I refuse to let you make a poem until you memorize a thousand passages of ancient poetry, including chants, odes, and occasional lines'" (Kilito, *The Author* 14).

Abu Nuwās takes the time to do as Khalaf has asked and returns to his teacher with the same question. Khalaf asks him to recite the poetry that he's memorized, and then says, "'I refuse [to grant you permission], unless you forget all one thousand lines as completely as if you had never learned them'" (Kilito, *The Author* 14).

Abu Nuwās then disappears for some time to a monastery, remaining in solitude as he forgets every line of poetry he has memorized. He finally returns to his teacher, who says, "'Now go compose!'" (Kilito, *The Author* 14).

This anecdote models two aspects of authorship in the Arabic oral poetic context: tradition and composition. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, considered classical poetry, is characterized by its shared motifs. Poems tend to include what would have been familiar to audiences in terms of custom, tradition, and history (Adonis 14). Therefore, the poet would distinguish himself through his composition: his language, the poem's meter, and the tonal quality of the poet's voice (Adonis 13-34). So, Khalaf initiates Abu Nuwās into the poetic "art of forgetting" (Kilito, *The Author* 14) by instructing Abu Nuwās to acknowledge the poetic tradition he is trying to enter, and then forget all of its poetry in order to create something new.

Nothing is truly forgotten; Abu Nuwās's poetry will contain remnants of the ancients' poetry, just as

> The rills and the runlets
> uncovered marks like the script
> of faded scrolls
> restored with pens of reed (Kilito, *The Author* 13).

These marks are faded, but not completely erased. Just as the dried runlet allows new water to flow through, so does the poetry of the ancients make way for new streams of melody. Abu Nuwās must follow the poetry of older voices before he can compose his own. His poetry then forms new runlets in the valley of the tradition, and his voice will, in turn, fade into a trace for future generations to uncover.

The Arabic oral poetic tradition parallels Barzawayh's initiation into the authorship of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Instead of composing poetry, however, Barzawayh is translating. Like Abu Nuwās, Barzawayh must first devour everything of the text to understand the *Kalīlah* in its entirety. Then, he must similarly forget the text in order to translate it. To practice his philosophy as an author, he should compose his own rhetoric in Persian as the original Indian philosopher-authors did in Sanskrit.[17] Therefore, Barzawayh rewrites the text. The narrative says that Barzawayh is given access to "the books he wanted (أعطاه حاجته من الكتب)," which he toils night and day to translate into a single "book (كتاب)" (Fishbein 12-13). To render multiple volumes into a single one is an entire recomposition. This is why the initiation of the apprentice is so important, because translation is indeed a process of rewriting. The translator apprentice needs to be verified by the philosopher master to ensure that the wisdom of the text, in its recomposition, will not be lost. In the process of translation, then, Barzawayh becomes a philosopher-author.

[17] We may consider that translation is not a mathematical "word-for-word or sense-for-sense" paradigm, but rather a process of rhetoric (Rendall et. al xi). Barzawayh certainly retains the characterizing rhetoric of the *Kalīlah* – that it is, a book of advice told through talking animals. How that appears in Persian, however, is up to his discretion as the philosopher-translator-author. He has proved his philosophership, and therefore he has proven his authorship.

The Philosopher as Author, via Translation

Translation may be considered the form of a text which is subordinate to the original, or the apprentice to the master original work (Bruns 114). However, Barzawayh has been initiated from apprenticeship to a master of philosophy in the textual tradition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Barzawayh's translation is not subordinate to the original text, and his name is just as authoritative as the Indian philosopher-authors'. How, though, does he assure his authorship to future readers? How does he ensure that his authorial signature does not fade? In the classical Arabic poetic tradition, the poet was inseparable from his work as he was expected to recite his own poem, (Adonis 14). In doing so, "the signifier is no longer a single word, but a word bound to a voice [...] the self transformed into speech-song" (Adonis 13-14). The poet leaves no doubt that the poem is his, signing his voice to it. The oral poem is a marrying of content and form, material and composition, where the poet and the poem combine to create a work that is representative of both the person who created it and the poem which he created. A poet's voice is not merely the vehicle of his song, but a seminal aspect of the song, as a work itself.

A written work, however, is more easily passed from one pair of hands to another. Over time, an author's name may be lost in the shuffle of pages, or a new transmitter may try to erase the original author's name and sign his own name to it.[18] This is especially complicated by translation, which necessarily rewrites the original author's work. We see this in the story of *Don Quixote,* where the fictional writer of the book reveals that he

[18] This was rampant in the Arabic literary tradition; as Abdelfattah Kilito writes, "the Arab critics do not necessarily condemn plagiarism" (Kilito, *The Author* 17).

actually found the book in the market, written in Arabic text. Someone translated the work by reading it out loud, which the Spanish author ostensibly wrote as the text we read today. The original Arabic author is anonymous, and it is unclear in the narrative how "faithful" the Spanish translation is to the Arabic. We are not preoccupied with the original text, however; the reader enjoys what he reads, regardless of how many of the original author's words made it to the page. And, the character of Don Quixote is decidedly Spanish. His story reflects the tales of chivalry, the Christian-Islamic contact, and the landscape of the world of the real Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes. The Arabic context seems to be largely written out of the book by both the translator-writer of the narrative and the historical author, though the citation of the Arabic origin remains.

How can Barzawayh guarantee that he does not meet this same fate of *Don Quixote*'s Arabic author? When Anūsharwān offers him the world as reward, Barzawayh only asks that a chapter about his "life and character (أمري وحالي)" be written and added to the *Kalīlah*, so that Barzawayh's efforts will be kept alive long after his death (Fishbein 17-18). The king happily grants Barzawayh's request, and this is how readers today know his story.[19]

[19] The chapter written is not the one that has been recounted here but is a biographical story about how Barzawayh grew up and cultivated his "good education." This biographical chapter supports what the chapter of the journey suggests - that Barzawayh did not stumble upon the *Kalīlah* through luck, but because he was truly deserving of attaining the text through his philosophical understanding.

Fig. 5: Image from "Borzuya's Voyage" chapter in manuscript CCCP578, page 16. Photo taken from © https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/manuscripts/illustrations

Barzawayh adds himself to the narrative, ensuring that the next translator or transcriber does not write him out of the book. Especially because Barzawayh's chapters are written *as* narrative, the line between fact and fiction is blurred. Just like in the *Quixote*, where the writer Cervantes seems to include himself in the knight's story, Barzawayh the historical translator becomes Barzawayh the character translator. In so doing, the *Kalīlah* is a book not only in translation but of translation. Such a work suggests a way to cite the translators and authors who came before; whether they are "real" or not, to refer to them is to establish the authority of the contemporary writer. He is one in a long line of storytellers, of philosophers. By referring to the ancients, Barzawayh shows the reader the tradition he has been initiated into through his rewriting of it. His intervention is not a chapter that can easily be lifted out of the book; Barzawayh's chapters rather prove that the Persian text is indeed Barzawayh's

composition. His text sits beside the Indian original, “not as reproduction but as harmony” (Benjamin 260).

A translation harmonizes with the original text, offering a different expression of the original work. Especially as a book of philosophy, the translator actually expands on the text’s wisdom through the rules of its rhetoric. This is because the translator must imitate this rhetoric in his own language, and the impact of the original text will necessarily be different in a new language. The translation therefore does not replace the original, but rather adds to its meaning. For example, one of the main sources of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is the *Panchatantra*. The Sanskrit word *tantra* contains the verbal root *tan,* meaning “‘to weave, or compose,’” and *tantra* traditionally refers to “a dialogue between a god and a goddess” (“What is Tantra?”). Because the *Kalīlah* describes how Barzawayh took the “books” of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* and translated them into a single “book,” perhaps Barzawayh initially read a work that was filled with Hindu mythology, which he redacted to compose a text more readable for a Persian audience. Barzawayh maintains the integrity of the book - that is, the “weave” of its rhetorical structure, or what we may call frame tale structure, using characters familiar to Persian readers.

This redaction-in-translation is also found in the Persian author Ḥamīdī's (Qāẓī Ḥamīd al-Din Balkhī, d. 556/1164) translation of the Arabic *Impostures* (*Maqāmāt*) by al-Ḥarīrī. While Ḥamīdī' admired the Arabic original, he recognized that its composition "did not mean very much to speakers of Persian:

> 'Wouldst thou tell thy Sorrows to Men abroad?
>
> In *their* Tongue, then, let thy Discourse be:
>
> Bid the Arab *ífʿal*! or else *lâ táfʿal*!
>
> But say *kón*, or *mákon*, to a good Parsee'" (Cooperson xxx).

Ḥamīdī therefore rewrote the *Impostures* in a way that his Persian audience would understand. For him, the purpose of translation is not to preserve the original, exactly, but to transfer its style to the countenance of the target language. Barzawayh similarly rewrites the Sanskrit *Kalīlah* so that his readership can grasp the wisdom that the book imparts.

Barzawayh's translation is then in harmony with the original, because the particularity of the work – that is, its Hindu-ness, or its Persian-ness, is one element of the rhetoric. The purpose of the book is to teach wisdom, and not to necessarily represent any one language tradition. And so, the cultural aspects of the text serve to help different readers understand it. These cultural markers are the *vessels* of the book's lessons, and it is the lessons themselves which are the treasure. The Indian friend presumably understands that any particularities of India may be written out in Barzawayh's translation, because this friend is a wise man himself. He grants Barzawayh permission, then, because Barzawayh has demonstrated his philosophy. He has *lived* the lessons of

the *Kalīlah*, and so the Indian friend can be sure that these lessons will not be lost in anything that Barzawayh writes. With "kindness (رفق)," "graciousness (لطف)," and "elegant behavior (أديباً جميلا)," as well as the ability to keep "his own secrets and the secrets of others (يكون لسرّه وسرّ غير حافظا)" (Fishbein 8-9), Barzawayh proves that he is a master of the work's wisdom. He is therefore initiated into the *Kalīlah*'s tradition of knowledge transfer, or storytelling, as a fellow philosopher-author via translation.

Barzawayh's physical journey, or quest for knowledge, becomes the model of the translator in the textual tradition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. With this chapter coming at the beginning of the book, Barzawayh exemplifies what is required of the translator. Like Barzawayh had to endure a long trip, so must the translator persist in a potentially arduous reading. As Barzawayh had to acquaintance himself with the people of a foreign court, so must the translator become familiar with the way speakers express themselves in a foreign language. While Barzawayh had to prove his personal merit to make an Indian friend, who ultimately gave him access to the *Kalīlah*, so does the translator prove his proficiency in the text's original language to its native speakers. Only after this journey has the translator proved his mastery in another language. This is what defines his credibility as not only a translator, but an author. This is because the translator must take the meaning he has acquired and recraft it, using the expression of another language.

Authorship is therefore not necessarily the creation of an entirely new idea, but rather the crafting of new meaning. Like Derrida's translators Nass and Brault, who Derrida considers the "true authors" of their unique compilation of his works (Gallop 63), Barzawayh exercises authorship when he recomposes multiple volumes of the *Kalīlah*

into one book. He takes responsibility for the work – a responsibility granted by his Indian friend. In assuming such responsibility, it is understood that the author, or the translator, is not a random transmitter but is master of the text. He is *teaching* the text in the position of storyteller, just as the character sage Bidpai instructs King Debshalim. The translator must therefore demonstrate that he understands the text's meaning in order for his story to be taken seriously as a work of wisdom. The translator, in following the initiation tradition of the *Kalīlah*'s translation outlined in Barzawayh's chapters, is therefore read as a philosopher. The chapter of Barzawayh's journey is both a claim to authorship and an instructional guide for how future translators may similarly stake their claim in the work.

Chapter 2: Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, the Model Translator

The Composition of the Author

Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s introduction demonstrates his grasp of the *Kalīlah*’s hermeneutic framework. In his own translator’s chapter, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ explains,

> This book is a work of parables and stories composed by the people of India, who sought to incorporate into it the most eloquent speech they could find in the style they preferred. In order to make their intentions comprehensible [...] [o]ne device was to put eloquent and elegant speech into the mouths of animals and birds. This enabled them to accomplish a number of things: the found a way to speak indirectly and to communicate through implication. Because such a book combined entertainment with wisdom, the wise would study it for its wisdom, and the simple for its value as entertainment; young pupils and others would be delighted to read it and it would be easy for them to memorize (Fishbein 22-23).

> وهو ممّا وضعت أهل الهند من الأمثال والأحاديث التي التمسوا أن يدخلوا فيها أبلغ ما وجدوا من الكلام في النحو الذي أرادوا ولم تزل العلماء من كلّ أمّة وأهل كلّ لسان يلتمسون أن يُعقل عنهم ويحتالون لذلك بصنوف الحيل ويبتغون في إخراج ما عندهم من العلل حتّى كان من تلك العلل وضع بليغ الكلام ومنمّقه على أفواه البهائم والطير فاجتمع لهم بذلك خلال أمّا هم فوجدوا منصرفًا في القول وشعابًا يأخذون فيها ولهوًا وحكمة فاحتمله الحكماء لحكمته والسخفاء للهوه والمتعلّمون من الأحداث وغيرهم.

This passage establishes that the purpose of the book, laid down by the original Indian philosopher-authors, is to teach wisdom. It is a book meant to be understood by all, from the king to the wise man, to the simple and young. Therefore, the work uses talking animals to appeal to these different people, and encoded within the dialogue is priceless

wisdom. By revealing the "secret" of the *Kalīlah*'s philosophy, Ibn al-Muqaffa' demonstrates that he understands it. He is a philosopher, too. He has not only figured out the meaning of the animal fables, but he has also come to understand why this meaning would be hidden in the first place. Whether speaking to a ruler or subject, wise man or young man, it is best to write philosophy "through implication" to allow the reader to come upon the meaning on his own. In this interpretive process, the reader practices using his "intellect (العقل)," the key theme of this work (Fishbein 2-3). Reading the *Kalīlah* is therefore a practice of philosophy itself, and so Ibn al-Muqaffa' signals how he will guide the reader through this practice.

Ibn al-Muqaffa' demonstrates his philosophical mastery as the translator-author by writing his instructions to the reader in stories of his own. To teach us to read the *Kalīlah* slowly, our translator warns, "the person who finds something and rushes to get it all at once, without stopping to understand it bit by bit, is likely to suffer the fate of the man who discovered a treasure but couldn't hold onto it (فإنّه من أصاب شيئًا فطمحت عيناه إلى جمعه ولم يأخذ منه ما صفا الأوّل فالأوّل فهو خليق ألّا يصيب منه إلّا كما أصاب الرجل الذي أصاب الكنز ولم يحفظه) (Fishbein 24-25). He tells this story to the reader, just as Bidpai advises King Debshalim in the narrative. Ibn al-Muqaffa' writes many similar lessons, like that a man should seek knowledge to benefit from it (Fishbein 26-27), or that he with intelligence should not seek his own benefit by harming another (Fishbein 28-29). Each heeding is followed by some story about the fate of the one who did not apply his intellect. Ibn al-Muqaffa' models the rhetorical style of the entire text, as a way of teaching the reader how they should understand the *Kalīlah*'s stories.

Fig. 6: Image from “The Arabic Introduction,” or Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s chapter in manuscript P400, page 34. Photo taken from © https://kalila-and-dimna.fu-berlin.de/manuscripts/illustrations

His translation can be read as more of a commentary than a strictly faithful rendering of the Persian. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ concludes his introduction by writing,

> When I saw that the Persians, in disseminating and translating this book from Sanskrit into Persian, had added the Chapter of Barzawayh the Physician, but made no mention of any of the things we’ve just discussed, I decided that when I translated it from Persian into Arabic I would add a chapter, one that would serve as a foundation for understanding the book for all who decide to read it and gain knowledge from it (Fishbein 34-35).

ولمّا رأينا أهل فارس قد نشروه وأخرجوه من الهنديّة إلى الفارسيّة ألحقوا فيه باب برزويه الفارسيّ المتطبّب فلم يذكروا فيه ما ذكرنا من هذا فرأينا إذا فسّرناه وأخرجناه من الفارسيّة إلى العربيّة أن نلحق فيه بابًا من العربيّة يكون له أساس فيه أمر هذا الكتاب لمن أراد قراءته واقتباس العلم منه.

He determined that the Persian source was not clear enough, that perhaps the "simple" and "young" audience would still not understand what they read. Ibn al-Muqaffa' therefore adds his introduction to prove his own understanding and his compositional skill. Gerald Bruns describes how such commentary is part of "open manuscript culture" – meaning, that a text is not finished or complete when the original writer puts down his pen. Bruns describes that in open manuscript culture, it was not uncommon for one doing a grammatical analysis to add his own commentary to the text (Bruns 120). This commentary was "an exegesis carried on under the sanction of embellishment," evidence of the grammarian's own style, skill, and understanding (Bruns 120). The translator, like the grammarian, explains the text by adding to it. Ibn al-Muqaffa' writes in his own moral stories and fables, clarifying the *Kalīlah* and demonstrating his competency as translator.

In the acts of interpretation and commentary via his role as the translator, Ibn al-Muqaffa' assumes authorship. The text becomes his, and he is known as the one who has brought this work of philosophy into Arabic. This attribution is maintained in many Arabic sources and in the translations from Arabic to other languages. Ibn al-Muqaffa''s transmission of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* can be compared to the philosopher al-Fārābī's (d.339/950) work. He is known for his Arabic translations of Aristotle and Plato, however, he did not "only" translate but wrote extensive philosophical commentaries on

the two Greeks. Al-Fārābī's manuscript, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle,* for example, is not necessarily a faithful translation but rather a clarification, expansion, and "reconstruction" of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies within an Arabic context (Mahdi xxi). Al-Fārābī's commentary is actually "a new, playful, and hence arresting" interpretation of Aristotle and Plato (Mahdi xii). His deep exploration of the Greeks earned him the honorific of "the second Teacher," second only to Aristotle himself (Mahdi vii). In his reinterpretation of the original philosophy, al-Fārābī is associated with that philosophy as a name responsible for its dissemination. He does not replace Aristotle but stands beside him, of equal authority on their subject. So does Ibn al-Muqaffa' join Barzawayh and the original Indian author-philosophers as author of the *Kalīlah*. Ibn al-Muqaffa' is understood to be a philosopher himself, because he understands how the text conveys its meaning, and can then rewrite this meaning within an Arabic countenance. He neither repeats the Persian text nor departs from it, but rather engages with the *Kalīlah*'s philosophy as a textual tradition. This tradition is defined by the transfer of knowledge between translators. Ibn al-Muqaffa' therefore participates by translating what Barzawayh translated before him. In this process, Ibn al-Muqaffa' moves from the apprenticeship of reading to the mastery that is authorship.

In Arabic literary discourse, there is a question of who can translate philosophy. In his *Kitāb al-Hayawān* (كتاب الحيوان), al-Jaḥiẓ writes one side of a conversation about translation:

> The translator never renders what the wise man says in the specificity of its meaning and its true doctrine. How could he convey the meaning accurately and truthfully unless his knowledge of it and the words used to express it and their nuances equal those of the author? Did Ibn al-Bitriq, God bless his soul, or Ibn Na'imah, Ibn Qurrah, Ibn Fihriz, Ibn Wahili, and Ibn al-al-Muqaffa' ever equal Aristotle? Was Khalid ever like Plato? (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 26).

According to the speaker, these translators could never capture the truth that lies in the work of the philosopher-author, because they are not philosophers themselves. Not only that, but the philosopher has explored the particularities of his ideas in a way that no one has, which is what distinguishes his thought from others' in the first place. And, he is the one who crafts the rhetoric of his philosophy so that its linguistic form complements and reveals the deeper meaning of its actual words. There is no one who thinks like Plato, like Aristotle – certainly not the translator, Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Arabic theorist Abdelfattah Kilito glosses, "no matter how broad his knowledge or how familiar he is with the subject matter of the book he is translating, the translator remains incapable of equaling the author" (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 26).

According to this passage, the philosopher is someone like Plato or Aristotle. To consider the philosopher in contrast to the listed translators, we may understand the "true" philosopher's work is not a translation or commentary of someone else, but

something entirely his own. The speaker also seems to name Plato and Aristotle to indicate their influence across time and culture; therefore, the speaker in *Kitāb al-Hayawān* might be referring to the systems of thought that Aristotle and Plato contributed to the world, as opposed to the much smaller number of original works that Ibn al-Biṭrīq, Ibn Na‘imah, Ibn Qurrah, Ibn Fihriz, Ibn Wahili, and Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ wrote. The speaker also seems to allude to the ancientness of Greek wisdom. Aristotle and Plato sit within a pantheon of other Greek philosophers who have built upon each other’s work for centuries, as opposed to the chronologically young Arabic “philosophers” whose linguistic tradition of scholarship has just begun. Given these premises, how, indeed, could Khalid ever equal Plato?

This perspective – that the translator could never equal the philosopher, assumes that the pursuit of translation is to replicate the original work and thus retain the author’s words as if they constitute a holy book. Perhaps that is the goal, in some cases, but “translation” meant more than that in the Graeco-Arabic movement. In al-Kindī’s translation circle, Ibn al-Biṭrīq dud sometimes try to faithfully translate Aristotle’s original texts, by transliterating certain terminology and attempting to replicate Greek sentence structure (Elsharif 90-91); however, most translations in this circle function as commentary (Elsharif 91). Ibn al-Biṭrīq restructures, rearranges, and even openly disagrees with Aristotle in his translations (Elsharif 91). Ibn Na‘imah similarly circumvents having to choose between two Arabic words for form (*ṣūra,* صورة and *naw‘*, نوع) to translate *eidos* in Plotinus’ *Enneads*, and Ibn Na‘imah actually rewrites the text in such a way that reveals the significance of Plotinus within a monotheistic theology

(Adamson). Similarly, jumping forward to circa 1200 CE in Europe, Greek and Arabic texts of Aristotle were translated into Latin, "'because the masters (lay teachers) wanted no longer to simply transmit, because they wanted to learn themselves'" (Gutas 4). In each of these examples, the translator aims to understand and contextualize the text within his own circumstances.

Perhaps the speaker in *Kitāb al-Hayawān* does not believe that Khalid and those like him are philosophers. According to the premise of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, however, they could be. As for Ibn al-Biṭrīq and Ibn Nā'imah, perhaps they were not considered the philosopher that al-Kindī was (the first Arabic philosopher); however, al-Kindi was the one who authorized their translations. This is the apprentice-to-master relationship that we see in the *Kalīlah*, where the translator need only prove that he has followed in the footsteps of the one who preceded him. Barzawayh proves his wisdom to a similarly wise Indian friend, and so Barzawayh is granted the *Kalīlah*. While Ibn al-Muqaffa' does not have a physical journey to complete, or a literal door to pass through, he models his understanding of the philosophy after Barzawayh's. The *Kalīlah* suggests that anyone can be wise, if they only heed the advice of the book, and that anyone can be a translator, as long as they can prove their philosophical insight.

Therefore, perhaps the philosophers or authors of the past did not discover everything; there is something yet to decipher. Gerald Bruns cites the prologue of the *Lais de Marie de France*, "'it was the custom of the ancients, as witnessed by Priscian, to speak obscurely in the books they wrote so that those who came later and studied those books might construe the text and add their own thoughts'" (Bruns 120). Whether the

Indian philosopher-authors and Barzawayh meant to write obscurely or not, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ believes there was some ambiguity left for the reader. As translator, therefore, he has the opportunity to claim authorship and illuminate that which is still hidden. This is reminiscent of the pre-Islamic poet ‘Antara’s verse,

> Have the poets left anywhere
> in need of patching? Or did you,
> after imaginings,
> recognize her abode?[20] (Kilito, *The Author* 9)

The holes in the cloak remain for ‘Antara to patch, just as the ruins of the abandoned Bedouin campsites are used to reconstruct a new abode. The poet, like the translator, is tasked to repeat what has been left behind by the ancients. “What, indeed, is nonrepetitive speech? Can pure invention, devoid of repetition, give birth to anything but strangeness?” (Kilito, *The Author* 11). Translation is therefore a necessary repetition to maintain that which has been written. Without translation, without commentaries, without textual reconstructions, works of the past would be left in historical obscurity. They would be relegated to a past time, a past people, and a past language that has no current relevance. Translation is therefore not mindless mimicry; it is a process of reorganizing the written “ruins” (Kilito, *The Author* 10) in a way that builds speech anew. This recomposition process is the act of the author, who creates new meaning using the principles of tradition. Translation in the *Kalīlah* is a tradition of authorship, inviting new interpretations of its philosophy.

[20] هَل غادَرَ الشُعَراءُ مِن مُتَرَدَّمِ/أَم هَل عَرَفتَ الدارَ بَعدَ تَوَهُّمِ

Authorship of the *Kalīlah* may therefore be claimed by the translator who proves himself worthy of the text. This is a phenomenon found in Arabic poetry as well, where a poet can actually adopt the lines of another. There is one anecdote where the poet Jamil, of the tribe ‘Udhra, recited,

> Whenever people march – behold! they march behind us
>
> And if we make a sign to them, they halt (Kilito, *The Author* 20)

Al-Farazdaq, the poet of Mudar, heard him and scoffed, “‘When were the sons of ‘Udhra ever kings? Kingship is of Mudar, and I am their poet’” (Kilito, *The Author* 21). Kilito asserts, “the line befits [al-Farazdaq], which suffices to make him its author” (Kilito, *The Author* 21). This notion of poetry befitting the poet is similar to the expectation that a poet will recite his own poetry: the words are inseparable from the voice who sings them (Adonis 29). One who composes is expected to know about his poetic subject – otherwise, how can the audience believe that what the poet says is true, or authentically said? Further, the poetic content is seen as representative of the poet’s own experience. This unity of form and content is more persuasive and more affective, which is the purpose of classical Arabic poetry (Adonis 13-34). Jamil betrayed this unity of poet and poem, and so his line “dangles like a useless and awkward appendage from the corpus of his poetry; it lurks like a poor, eccentric relative, unneeded because unconnected to the rest of Jamil’s oeuvre, a mismatched pearl in the necklace” (Kilito, *The Author* 21). The poet, the author, and the translator convey particular image to their audiences. If the work does not fit this image, it is unbelievable that the named author actually composed the work.

Al-Jaḥiẓ also writes of the importance of attaching a work to a name. His book, *The Book of Misers* (كتاب البخلاء), is a series of anecdotes about the most miserly people he has ever known. He begins by justifying the book in the first place. He says that he has been told by his readers that his previous book about the work of a thief was helpful, because it served as a practical guide to keeping the people's houses safe. So, Jaḥiẓ's readers apparently once again ask him for a book that can teach them how to do deal with the misers. He acquiesces, writing different stories of miserliness from those he has met or heard about. Of naming these misers, Jaḥiẓ writes that "the appositeness of [anonymous] stories cannot be realized unless the folk of whom they tell can be recognized so that they are linked with the persons appropriate to them whence these tales originate and those who fit into them" (Serjeant 6-7). Otherwise, by leaving out the name from the anecdote, "half an amusing story gets lost" (Serjeant 7). The story is only funny if we know who it is about![21] Instruction, or gossip (this book could be read as both), is only relevant if the listener has a direct experience with what is being talked about. While he could have written a completely anonymous and instructional text about miserliness, the names in Jaḥiẓ's book lend something more entertaining and more believable to the stories. The names underline that Jaḥiẓ did not invent these circumstances but that they are real examples, which in turn speak more powerfully to the reader.

[21] While Jaḥiẓ believes this, he still leaves some stories nameless "either out of fear of [the person] or out of respect for them" (Serjeant 7). He has an tenuous relationship with the audience, trying to avoid their criticism while writing a book that they would want to read.

So, it is necessary for Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ to name himself and prove himself as a philosopher. He must demonstrate to his readers that he is capable of understanding and writing such philosophy found in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. If not, as a didactic text, it is useless. Who is Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, and why should we believe what he has written? In addition to his textual intervention, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ proves his veracity as a philosopher-author of the *Kalīlah* through his other published works. He is credited with an Arabic version of the Sassanian *Xwadāy-nāmag*, a quasi-legendary, quasi-historical chronicle of Sassanian rulers and warriors (Latham). He also wrote *Al-Adāb Al-Kabīr* (الأدب الكبير), a rhetorical reflection on Sassanian spirituality, and *Al-Adāb Al-Saghīr* (الأدب الصغير), a mirror-for-princes tale (Latham). As a court secretary, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ also wrote *Resāla fi'l-ṣaḥāba* (رسالة في الصابة) to the caliph al-Manṣūr; in this text, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ details the practical problems that the Abbasids faced at the time (Latham). Our translator is like Bidpai himself. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is an advisor to the proverbial prince, versed in philosophy, court decorum, and strategic thinking. Therefore, his translator-authorship of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is believable. He is a trustworthy teacher of the text, one well acquainted with the very problems that the *Kalīlah*'s animals face in their own kingdom.

The Voice of the Author

Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* also marked a transition from orality, to orality and writing, in the Arabic tradition. Arabic was previously an oral culture, with poetic expression the center of linguistic and literary invention (Adonis 14). Poetry was meant to speak to the masses, and so poems were filled with what would be familiar to the audience, such as their history and their customs (Adonis 14). The poet

would therefore distinguish himself through his composition and his musicality, as he put on a moving performance for the listener (Adonis 16). The "Arabic-ness" – that is, the pronunciation and rhythm of this poetry, was another important aspect that led the Arabs to codify their poetic orality (Adonis 19). This was particularly important when those of Arab-Islamic culture began to interact more with Greek, Persian, and Indian cultures (Adonis 20). Therefore, there was an intellectual effort to distinguish Arabic identity and preserve the language (and the Quran) amongst new Arabic speakers' mispronunciation and solecisms (Adonis 21). Poetry has always been at the heart of the Arabic literary tradition, as the meeting point of language, traditional identity, and history.

Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* therefore did not only introduce a new work into the Arabic tradition, but a new "rhetorical style" (Wacks 181). The *Kalīlah* is the first work of prose in Arabic, intercepting an oral tradition whose poetry was celebrated for reaching the listener. Here are a few citations from different writers about comprehensibility in poetry:

> *Al-Jaḥiẓ:* Poetry is that "that which can be understood without recourse to thought and requires no interpretation" (Adonis 27).
>
> *Ibn Ṭabāṭabā:* The poet should avoid "'remote allusions, abstruse tales and ambiguous suggestions,'" and therefore "'use metaphors which [are] close to reality, not remote from it'" (Adonis 27).
>
> *Al-Āmidī:* Poetry should be "'based on what is useful, whether metaphorical or literal'" (Adonis 27).

> *Al-Fārābī:* On the musical principles of poetry, "'because many moral stances and actions are the result of the emotions and of the visions conjured up by the imagination, these perfect tunes have a beneficial effect on attitudes and morals and encourage the listeners to carry out the actions demanded of them [in poetry] and to acquire all the mental attributes such as wisdom and knowledge of the sciences'" (Adonis 25).

Even though classical poetry uses metaphor and is not strictly "realistic," the purpose was to call the listener to action. Oral poetry also served as a historical archive and upheld tradition, and so its rhetoric (*balāgha*, بلاغة) uses linguistic composition and musicality to urge its listeners to believe or do something. Classical poetry was pleasurable and useful, grounded in the real experience of both poet and audience.

While some Arabic anthologies include anecdotes supposedly quoted from the (pre-Islamic) Bedouins (van Gelder), *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is the first, and one of the only, Arabic works which largely employs talking animals. Ibn al-Muqaffa' suggests that this rhetorical choice comes from his foreign source, writing in the *Kalīlah*'s introduction,

> this book is a work of parables and stories composed by the people of India, who sought to incorporate into it the most eloquent speech they could find in the style they preferred. [...] One device was to put eloquent and elegant language into the mouths of animals and birds (Fishbein 23).

This rhetoric "enabled [the writers] to speak indirectly and to communicate through implication" (Fishbein 23). The writer al-Thaʿālibī opines that the inventors of the animal

stories wanted to teach the reader wisdom, and that people would be more receptive to such lessons through stories which incorporated both jest and seriousness (van Gelder 24). Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ says the same in his introduction, that “the wise would study it for its wisdom, and the simple for its value as entertainment; young pupils and others would be delighted to read it and it would be easy for them to memorize” (Fishbein 23). Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s translation therefore brings a new style of prosic rhetoric to Arabic. Instead of the indirect metaphor and musical rhetoric of poetry, *Kalīlah and Dimnah* uses the indirect speech of animals. While traditional Arabic literary criticism is mostly uninterested in animal fables, and especially in prose (van Gelder 24), *Kalīlah and Dimnah* seeks to instruct the audience like oral poetry does. Classical poetry means to move the listener, just as the *Kalīlah* urges the reader to heed its lessons.

Similar to poetry, then, the *Kalīlah* suggests a “real” application of its content. In the Abbasid period, books were meant to be useful, and even if there was some aspect of entertainment in the work, it should come with instruction (Gruendler, *The Rise* 32). Therefore, early Arabic prose would use a sort of realism as a rhetorical device; it was not that the stories were meant to portray something factually true, but they rather used realistic plausibility as a way to make the narrative read more powerfully (Gruendler, *The Rise* 32). For a book that seeks to educate, the element of realism is an important one. The *Kalīlah*’s stories reflect plausible questions around friendship, forgiveness, and good judgment, and so the wise reader will understand how the morals of these fables can be applied to his life. This notion of realism is also why it is both more entertaining, and therefore more readable, for Jaḥiẓ to name the misers in his *Book of Misers* than to leave

them anonymous. Just as Ibn Ṭabāṭabā writes that metaphor should not stray too far from reality, the animals of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* act as humans do. It is therefore not such a ridiculous idea that we might take advice from a talking jackal. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* helped to usher in a new realist prose rhetoric against the backdrop of classical poetry.

Both classical oral poetry and early works of prose like the *Kalīlah* utilize performance. One famous anecdote is of the performance of the poem, “Ṣawt Ṣafīr l-Bulbul” (صوت صفير البلبل, “The Song of the Nightingale”). It is attributed to the poet al-Aṣma‘ī, and the story goes as follows:

> The caliph Abū Ja’far al-Mansūr made a contest for all the poets. Whoever could come to the caliph with a poem he had never heard before would receive the written poem’s weight in gold. So, poets from across the empire came to court and presented their poems. Each one failed, as the caliph told them that he’d heard their poems before. To prove it, he would recite the poem, then call his page boy forward to recite it, then call the maid forward to recite it again. What the poets didn’t realize, was that al-Mansūr could memorize a poem after it was recited once, the boy could memorize it after hearing twice, and the maid after hearing it three times. Al-Aṣma‘ī figured out the caliph’s trick, and so came to him with a poem with so many linguistic twists and turns that al-Mansūr could not memorize it. He finally admitted defeat and awarded al-Aṣma‘ī his prize (“*Qaṣīdat Ṣawt l-Ṣafīr l-Bulbul*”).[22]

[22] Translation mine.

The poem begins with the same line it ends with, *ṣawt ṣafīr l-bulbul* (صَوْتُ صَفيرِ البُلْبُل), almost as if it is a never-ending performance where the poet could continue where he left off. It is composed using the rhetorical device *taṣrīʿ* (تصريع), where the first half of a line rhymes with the second half. There are also a number of repeated sounds within the words of a line: *wa anta ya sayyida lī wa sayyidī wa moula lī* (سَيِّدَ لِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَى وَأَنْتَ يَا لِي), and the onomatopoeia of a musical instrument: *al-ʾūdu dan dandana lī wa l-ṭablu ṭab ṭabbala lī/ṭab ṭabi ṭab ṭab ṭabi ṭab ṭaba lī* (وَالعُودُ دَنْ دَنْدَنَ لِي وَالطَّبْلُ طَبْ طَبَّلَ لِي/طَب طَبِ طَب طَبِ طَب طَب لي). "Ṣawt Ṣafīr l-Bulbul" is a poem that showcases the musicality of Arabic, using its sounds, root patterns, and grammatical syntax in a performance of language.

Rhetoric (*balāgha*) in Arabic is meant to "draw attention to the artifice of the speaker's words, in order to invest them with authority" (Wacks 179). Scholarly analyses of *balāgha* frequently refer to the *khāṭib* (خاطب), or orator, in a way that reinforces "the performative and oral nature of *balāgha* (Wacks 184). Effective rhetoric in Arabic is therefore a tool which combines the speaker and the spoken. Ibn al-Muqaffa' does this in his translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*: he draws attention to he, the translator, and his storytelling. His introduction is filled with his commentary, through which he convinces the audience of his authority on the subject. He immediately draws the reader's attention to the encoded meaning of the talking animals, as if to point out his own skill as a storyteller. Ibn al-Muqaffa' proves his masterful narration through his own didactic anecdotes in the introduction. The "artifice" of his language is not the rhythmic beat of "Ṣawt l-Ṣafīr l-Bulbul," but rather the mode of his storytelling. Just as important as the

wisdom is the vehicle of the wisdom itself; the talking animals are part of a new style in Arabic that employs prose and long narrative.

Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ brings oral performance to the page, an element which continues to the *maqāmāt* (مقامات). This is a genre of picaresque-like tales in Arabic, with al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī their most famous authors. Al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, or *Impostures* as it has been translated, follows the protagonist Abu Zayd as he travels from town to town in different chapters. He is "'a clever and unscrupulous protagonist, disguised differently in each episode,' who succeeds, through a display of eloquence in swindling money out of the gullible narrator'" (Cooperson xxiii). The work is written in rhymed prose, showcasing different characteristics of Arabic language. In the sixth chapter, Abu Zayd dictates a letter in which every second word uses only dotted letters, and every other word contains only undotted ones (Cooperson xxiii). In chapters 8, 35, 43, and 44, he tells a story with words that have so many double meanings that it can be read, equally coherently, to mean something else (Cooperson xxiii). The *Impostures* are filled with such literary tricks, utilizing rhetoric, or *balāgha*, to draw attention to the speaker himself. As this is a written text, anything that the protagonist *says* is actually what the author writes. Al-Ḥarīrī's work is a performance of written language that transforms the Arabic tradition of orality into a prosic book. Abdelfattah Kilito writes that "in certain cases, a voice takes on the properties of parchment" (Kilito, *The Author* 93). In the *Kalīlah* and the *Impostures*, the opposite is also true; the parchment takes on the qualities of the voice, bringing the reader to a poetic "ecstasy" (Adonis 27) in writing.

Just like poetic performance moves the audience (Adonis 28),[23] so does the *Kalīlah* impress upon its reader. The storytelling element mimics the performance aspect of voice, which in classical poetry was inseparable from the poem itself. While the *Kalīlah* reader does not necessarily hear the characters' voices,[24] the narrative's storytelling style "applie[s] an Arabic register to translations of foreign prose" (Wacks 181). The voices of Bidpai, of King Debshalim, and of the animals reflect the Arabic-ness of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation. We can imagine how the characters' particular utterances unite with the countenance of their voices. Bidpai, as a sage, has an even tone of wise acceptance. Debshalim, as ruler, speaks directly and with some urgency as he seeks advice for an ailing kingdom. Kalīlah, one of the jackals, talks to Dimnah as one both familiar and exasperated with his brother's trickery. And Dimnah, the conniving underdog, snivels with a syrupy tongue to get what he wants from others. If one imagines the vocal qualities of the characters, their speech takes on different meaning. Considering the voice of Dimnah, should we believe him as he pleas for his life to be spared, or is he only trying to "escape the consequences of his mischief (يريد أن يدفع عن نفسه ما قد نزل به عن عقابة سوء عمله)" (Fishbein 158-159)?

[23] Al-Fārābī writes that pure and delicate melody, physical rocking and swaying, nasality in the voice, the use of swift pacing, accentuation, and "use of the chest" are all important qualities in poetic performance (Adonis 28). To apply these techniques is to join the sound of the words to their meaning, so that listening is a pleasurable experience which can also "'encourage the listeners to carry out the actions demanded of them and to acquire all the mental attributes such as wisdom and knowledge of the sciences'" (Adonis 25).

[24] Still, early audiences would have heard the *Kalīlah* read aloud (Wacks 180).

The Authorship of the Translator-Author

The translator of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is the author. Not only is this a text in translation but is a text of translation. The *Kalīlah* demonstrates how authorship is assumed by translation both in the narrative and in the material history of the text. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, Barzawayh, and the other contributors are therefore translator-authors, because their authorship is assumed through translation, and their translation is an act of authorship.

In the narrative, Barzawayh’s story of translation tells us that he recomposed the Sanskrit *Kalīlah* into a version for his Persian readership. This act of translation sets the precedence of authorship, where the translator is granted permission to take the text into his own language. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ similarly rewrites the text for the Arabic reader in his translation. The most explicit signs of his intervention are in the introduction. This introduction is Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s commentary on *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, wherein he adds his own anecdotes of wisdom that mirror the rhetorical style of the narrative. He writes that reading the book is not enough – the reader must apply the knowledge he gains, else he ends up like the man who knew a thief was in his house but did not act (Fishbein 26-27). Our translator includes a number of such stories, guiding the audience through the benefits of the *Kalīlah*’s wisdom. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ concludes that he had noticed such instructions for reading were missing in the Persian work, and so he added this chapter for the audience to better understand *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. While there are no such explicit interventions in the narrative, there are a number of Islamic allusions throughout

the text that would not have been present in the Persian source.[25] It is also plausible that Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ added his own stories, if he believed that the text was lacking in the same way that its introduction was.

In writing the introduction in the rhetorical style of the text, and in explicating his understanding of it, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ establishes himself as the author by way of translation. His rendition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* can be compared to al-Fārābī's commentary, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*. The act of translation itself confirms the translator's authority; just as al-Fārābī' joins Aristotle as philosophy's "second teacher," so does Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ join Barzawayh and the Indian philosophers as authors of the *Kalīlah*. As the translator-author, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ must both understand the source text and turn it into a readable work for an Arabic audience. This new work should not betray the philosophical integrity of the original, just as Barzawayh's maintains the spirit of the Sanskrit he translates. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ proves his authorship, or "mastery of meaning" over the text by writing stories of his own and drawing attention to his use of the text's *balāgha*. His name is therefore attached to *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, a phenomenon which Gerald Bruns cites is part of romance literary culture:

> "'What a good romance writer is expected to do,' Vinaver says, 'is to reveal the *meaning* of the story…adding to it such embellishing thoughts as he considers appropriate; by doing this he would raise his work to a level of distinction which no straightforward narration could reach'" (Bruns 121).

[25] Such allusions include the exaltation to God on the first page (Fishbein 3), common to classical Arabic texts, and references to Quranic *sūrahs* (Fishbein 211).

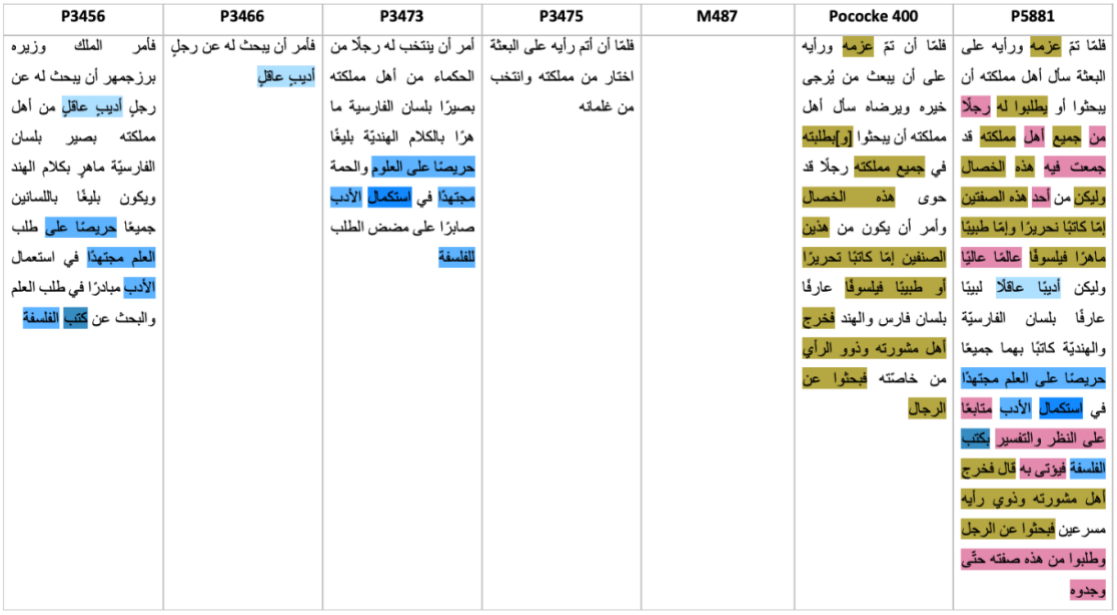
In the medieval and classical Arabic traditions, to expand on a work is perhaps better than to invent something entirely new. The notion of authorship is not restricted to a singular progenitor of an idea and its writing (Derrida, *Positions* 99);[26] authorship is also ascribed to one who can expand on the ideas of another, in such a way that he has unearthed new meaning. Vinaver's quotation suggests the importance of writing within a tradition, because a contemporary will inherit the prestige of the ancient authors. "To write is to intervene in what has already been written; it is to work 'between the lines' of antecedent texts, there to gloss, to embellish, to build invention upon invention" (Bruns 123).

Translation itself is a process that reveals another sense of a source text. This is perhaps the essence of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*: that the translator is indeed the one who brings more meaning to the text. As a work of philosophy, to translate the *Kalīlah* immediately renders the translator a philosopher, and therefore an author as one who has attained textual mastery. This can be seen in the *Kalīlah*'s material history. The book that we know as *Kalīlah and Dimnah* was translated from the Middle Persian text, which is thought to have been titled *Karīrak ud Dimnak* (Latham). This Middle Persian text is purported to be a translation of the Sanskrit *Kalīlah*, though *no such text exists*. What we know as the *Kalīlah* today comes from a number of Indian sources, including the *Panchatantra* and the *Muhabharata* (Gruendler, "Interim Report "243). And so, the Sanskrit *Kalīlah* that the narrative refers to is actually a literary element. The translator *is* the progenitor of this text, in its very first iteration. It is the translator who has brought

[26] Derrida cites Roland Barthes' critique, where the author is considered "'to be the origin and end of a collocation of thoughts.'"

Indian ideas, rhetoric, and philosophy in a new form to Middle Persian, and then to Arabic, and so the author of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* can only be a translator.

Does this mean that every translator of the *Kalīlah* is its author? Perhaps in practice, but not in name. With the circa 100 Arabic *Kalīlah* manuscripts known today, almost each one is different from the others (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 4). The manuscripts' copyists – or copyist-redactors, as Beatrice Gruendler calls them, all made unique interventions within the *Kalīlah* in terms of what is actually written, the order and number of chapters, the stories included, and spelling and vocalizations (Gruendler, "Interim Report"). Some of the copyist-redactors purport to be writing the translation of Ibn al-Muqaffa', though with each translation so significantly different from another, we know that all of these manuscripts cannot all be *the* manuscript of our original Arabic translator. And, many of the manuscripts actually redact Ibn al-Muqaffa''s name entirely (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 2). With these significant edits made to the text, are these copyist-redactors then authors like Ibn al-Muqaffa'?



P5881	Pococke 400	M487	P3475	P3473	P3466	P3456
فلمّا تمّ عزمه ورأيه على البعثة سأل أهل مملكته أن يبحثوا أو يطلبوا له رجلًا من جميع أهل مملكته قد جمعت فيه هذه الخصال وليكن من أحد هذه الصفتين إمّا كاتبًا نحريرًا وإمّا طبيبًا ماهرًا فيلسوفًا عالمًا عالِيًا وليكن أديبًا عاقلًا لبيبًا عارفًا بلسان الفارسيّة والهنديّة كاتبًا بهما جميعًا حريصًا على العلم مجتهدًا في استكمال الأدب متابعًا على النظر والتفسير بكتب الفلسفة فيؤتى به قال فخرج اهل مشورته وذوي رأيه مسرعين فبحثوا عن الرجل وطلبوا من هذه صفته حتّى وجدوه	فلمّا أن تمّ عزمه ورأيه على أن يبعث من يُرجى خيره ويرضاه سأل أهل مملكته أن يبحثوا [و]يطلبّته في جميع مملكته رجلًا قد حوى هذه الخصال وأمر أن يكون من هذين الصنفين إمّا كاتبًا نحريرًا أو طبيبًا فيلسوفًا عارفًا بلسان فارس والهند فخرج أهل مشورته وذوو الرأي من خاصته فبحثوا عن الرجال		فلمّا أن أتم رأيه على البعثة اختار من مملكته وانتخب من غلمانه	أمر أن ينتخب له رجلًا من الحكماء من أهل مملكته بصيرًا بلسان الفارسية ما هرًا بالكلام الهنديّة بليغًا حريصًا على العلوم والحمة مجتهدًا في استكمال الأدب صابرًا على مضض الطلب للفلسفة	فأمر أن يبحث له عن رجلٍ أديبٍ عاقلٍ	فأمر الملك وزيره برزجمهر أن يبحث له عن رجلٍ أديبٍ عاقلٍ من أهل مملكته بصير بلسان الفارسيّة ماهرٍ بكلام الهند ويكون بليغًا باللسانين جميعًا حريصًا على طلب العلم مجتهدًا في استعمال الأدب مبادرًا في طلب العلم والبحث عن كتب الفلسفة

Fig. 7: This table shows how the copyist-redactor of manuscript P5881 cross-copied information from other manuscripts as well as added his own writing (© Gruendler, “Interim Report” 264).

Given the function of an author, especially in an Arabic context, these copyist-redactors are not authors. Within the classical Arabic literary tradition, a work is attached to a name – whether that name represents the “true” author or not. Abdelfattah Kilito details this phenomenon in his book, *The Author and His Doubles*. As seen in the previous sections, the author of a poem is considered one who crafted the poem and/or is whom the poem befits. In the anecdote of Jamīl and al-Farazdaq, the line about a tribe of kings is attributed both to Jamīl – as the origin of the verse, and to al-Farazdaq – the one who may believably recite that verse. This is because the work is reflective of the author himself, and so the name on a work lends it authority and reputation. The name is actually what contextualizes the work, otherwise there is a danger of the reader wandering in search of the work’s meaning (Kilito, *The Author* 62). For example, sermons, like poetry, “derive power [...] from the speaker to whom they are attributed”

(Kilito, *The Author* 62). Unsuspectingly, we might consider a poem from William Butler Yeats to be less impressive if we thought came from our neighbor. Most of the Arabic *Kalīlah* manuscripts are anonymous and therefore do not attempt to highlight the work of the individual copyist-redactor (Gruendler, "A Rat and Its Redactors" 4). His name is obscured from the history of the *Kalīlah* and so has no authorial weight. Ibn al-Muqaffa''s name, on the other hand, is so influential that it is either included as the vehicle of translation from Persian to Arabic, or completely redacted.[27] Even in al-Jaḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Hayawān*, where the speaker asks "did [...] Ibn al-Muqaffa' ever equal Aristotle? Was Khalid ever like Plato?", Ibn al-Muqaffa' is still named. He is used as an example of a "mere" translator, as opposed to a "true" philosopher, but his was still a name in circulation.

The author in early Arabic book culture was also seen as someone who contributed something new. Like the poet – whose originality was not necessarily in a new idea but in the new expression of an old idea, so was an author someone who wrote something new or compiled existing information. There was a distinction between an author's compilations (*taṣnīfāt*) [تصنيفات] and his compositions (*ta'līfāt*) [تأليفات], as with the historian al-Madā'inī (Gruendler, *The Rise* 53). There was also a particular category of author who turned existing *taṣnīf* into his own *ta'līf* (Gruendler, *The Rise* 53). Arabic scholarship seems to distinguish this authorial work from that of the translator, but Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kalīlah* exemplifies how the latter type of authorship actually happens in

[27] Ibn al-Muqaffa' was eventually executed for political conspiracy ("The caliph's counselor"), and so perhaps certain commissioners did not want his reputation to contaminate the authority of their work.

translation. He took a pre-existing work and recomposed it within an Arabic expression, a work that had never existed in Arabic before. This is different from the copyist-redactors, who were building on the tradition that Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ had already started. An author, in early book culture, was also someone who contributed something new by "memorizing, collecting, arranging, commenting, and transmitting preexisting sources. This dealing with extant text made a scholar no less of an author in the eyes of his contemporaries, as he provided a repository of knowledge that they needed" (Gruendler, *The Rise* 61-62). Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ was the first to compose *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, through translating and through compiling existing information, and so he is credited as the author. In the sense of composition, he is a philosopher-writer, and in the sense of compilation, he is a scholar. Both attributes define him with the authority of the author.

However, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s original manuscript has been lost, along with Barzawayh's Middle Persian text. If we cannot see what Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ wrote as the author, what does his name mean for the readers who have come after him? In the circulation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s name represents the ideal translator-author. This can be understood through Kilito's idea of an exemplary anecdote. This type of story "depicts a character whose name [...] becomes the sign of a moral quality or other attribute, [...] preparing the ground for a proliferation of numberless [textual] bastard offspring," and this characterization gets to the point where we cannot "distinguish between legitimate and bastard [textual] children" (Kilito, *The Author* 59-60). For example, the aphorism "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results," is famously misattributed to Albert Einstein (Wallace). The

ascription is believable, because it is plausible that this accomplished scientist would speak to the process of invention. Because Einstein is held in such high regard, the quotation takes on his prestige. Anything that might invoke similar ideas of knowledge or introspection could just as easily be attributed to Einstein, and perhaps have. One would be in perpetual chase of these bastard phrases' lineage, however, and so it is easier to accept the plausibility that such a line comes from Einstein.

Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is similarly attributed to the Arabic translation of the *Kalīlah*. While some Arabic sources may have written him out, other languages which translated *Kalīlah and Dimnah* retain his name as the original Arabic translator. There are many different translations which have made their way into languages around the world, and they all name Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ as their Arabic source. Contemporary Arabic editions of the *Kalīlah* have Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s name on the cover, even as the editions contain different narrative versions. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ therefore represents the ideal translator, one who can grasp the ancient wisdom of the Indian philosophers and masterfully recompose it in a new language. Just as "every genre is built around a constellation of names," so is the tradition of the *Kalīlah*. The text's passage from translator to translator is a textual transmission that begets authorship through philosophizing. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ joins Barzawayh in the night sky, where his authorship acts as a guide to sagacity and scholarship. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, in name, exemplifies what it means to contribute one's own wisdom to this text as a translator-author.

Given that we do not have Ibn al-Muqaffa‘'s manuscript, his translation of the *Kalīlah* could also be read as an apocryphal text. While there is enough citational

evidence to confirm that Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is indeed the Arabic translator of this text, exactly what he wrote, and what his Persian source was, and where exactly the Persian source came from, has been lost. Therefore, the differences in narrative and other textual elements can be read through an apocryphal lens – namely, that certain names or events are included to lend authority to the work and to the author(s).

One famous apocryphal work is *The Book of the Secret of Secrets* (*Kitāb Sirr al-Asrār*; كتاب سر الأسرار, or *Secretum Secretorum* in Latin). It is supposedly a collection of letters between Alexander the Great and Aristotle, translated into Arabic by our Ibn al-Biṭrīq from *Kitāb al-Hayawān* (Manzalaoui)[28]. The *Sirr* is a source of instruction for rulership, ranging in topics from ethics, to astrology, to medicine. It would have been an illustrious work, as the culmination of great philosophy and great conquering for all to learn from. However, no such text in Greek has ever been found, and Classics scholars say that such a work would be well known if it existed (King).[29] Regardless of how "true" al-Biṭrīq's work is, he attaches his name to Aristotle and Alexander by translating them. Through translation, al-Biṭrīq "raise[s] his work to a level of distinction which no straightforward narration could reach'" (Bruns 121). As one who can translate philosophy and statecraft, al-Biṭrīq becomes an expert, or an author, on those topics. If he wrote his own fiction of epistles, it would not have the same authoritative weight. If the work was

[28] Even the origin and authenticity of *this* as a single text in uncertain, with a number of versions written in seven or eight books and other versions written in ten. Mahmoud Manzalaoui's "The Pseudo-Aristotelian "Kitāb Sirr al-asrār". Facts and Problems" extensively reviews surviving manuscripts and their origins.

[29] Dimitri Gutas has found that these letters mostly come from "Byzantine manuals of administration and warfare (the *Tactica*).

outright invented, readers would perhaps be less inclined to read it, thinking that any benefit they could get from it would be as false as the text itself.

The apocryphal work is an accolade for the author. The text earns prestige for the translator-author, and ushers a new name into the target language's tradition. In al-Biṭrīq's *Sirr*, Aristotle and Alexander become Arabic. They are now figures who can lend philosophical authority, historical weight, and their own mythos to the Arabic tradition.[30] So can *Kalīlah and Dimnah* be read. For Ibn al-Muqaffa' to translate the work of a Persian wise man, who was translating the text of ancient Indian philosophers, is to lend authority to his own work. It is uncertain whether Barzawayh the wise physician is a historical citation or a literary figure (Gruendler, *The Rise* 159). If Ibn al-Muqaffa' invented Barzawayh and his journey to India, then Ibn al-Muqaffa' has created his own grounds of authority of authorship. By writing this pseudo-historical tale of translation, Ibn al-Muqaffa' becomes an author verified by the great thinkers of Persia and India. To consider the *Kalīlah* apocryphal rather than historically accurate, then, highlights Ibn al-Muqaffa''s intervention. The notion of a work that is *of* translation, in translation, is Ibn al-Muqaffa''s own idea. He develops an entirely new literary style – prose, by creating the framework of its authorship.

This chain of authority is a cornerstone of the Arabic tradition. The chain called *ḥadīth* (حديث) is a line of witnesses who can attest to certain sayings or events about the

[30] There is a version of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* that begins with Alexander's conquering of India. In this preface, Alexander appoints an Indian governor to rule as his proxy. This king is terrible and unjust, and the people revolt and replace him with someone else, Debshalim. This new king is also a tyrannical ruler, and so the sage Bidpai advises him with the stories found in the *Kalīlah* (Wood).

Prophet Mohammad's life, while the chain of *akhbār* (أخبار) refers to anything else, and mostly historical and literary knowledge. The structure of these chains begins with the *isnād* (إسناد), the names of those who can attest to a certain piece of knowledge, going something like "so-and-so reported to me (or us) from so-and-so, who reported from so-and-so," and so on until the *isnād* reaches the first link of the transmission (Gruendler, *The Rise* 28). If we see the *Kalīlah* as an apocryphal text, Ibn al-Muqaffa' has used this tradition of knowledge transfer to authorize his own writing. He establishes that the authority of the translator as an author is in his truthful account and compilation of the story. Just as those who compiled books of *ḥadīth* are considered authors (through *taṣnifāt*), so may Ibn al-Muqaffa' be considered an author through his chain of philosophers.

To consider this idea with the fact that there are many *Kalīlah* versions – both Arabic and otherwise, which purport to be Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation, means that the translator has been fictionalized. *Kalīlah* scholar Stefan Leder interprets that the "juxtaposition of multiple reports about the same event, which differed in detail and style, shows that authors and readers were aware of their literary reworking, [...] an implicit marker of fictionality" (Gruendler, *The Rise* 29). The translator becomes a literary device; whether Ibn al-Muqaffa' invented Barzawayh's journey or not,[31] the impact of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kalīlah* is a work that circulates because it is easy to fictionalize. It does not matter whether the subsequent copyist-redactors' manuscripts "truly" represent Ibn al-

[31] Perhaps Ibn al-Muqaffa' translated Barzawayh's story "faithfully," but it was invented in the Persian to begin with.

Muqaffa‘’s translation; rather, his translation continued to transform through unique citations and rewritings (Gruendler, *The Rise* 157). The element of *isnād* therefore invites new translators to add their names to the chain of transmission, blurring the lines of fact and fiction in this work. Even to write Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ out of the work is to continue in his tradition. For example, there is one French descendent of the *Kalīlah* which serves as the model for Jean de la Fontaine’s fables, which he attributes to “‘le sage Pilpay’”; this is our sage Bidpai, who is rendered the author of the entire text (Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors” 4). Beatrice Gruendler writes that this would be like calling Shahrazad the author of *1001 Nights* (Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors” 4).

This attribution of authorship to the fictional storyteller is the same type of authorship that the *Kalīlah* translator inherits, that the philosophical commenter assumes, and that the classical oral poet takes. As storytellers and scholars, what is imitated or cited comes to represent the narrators and vice versa, so that the speaker and the spoken are inseparable from each other. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ is known around the world today as the author of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, though his stories come from India. While it is common knowledge that he is the translator, there is no other name with such authority in the *Kalīlah* tradition.

Another example is in the narrative of *Don Quixote*. It says about itself that the story comes from Arabic, and yet we associate the text to the fictional Spanish narrator and real Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes. A similar idea is found in Jorge Luis

Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote," where a real author (Borges) is writing the story of a fictional review of a fictional author (Menard) rewriting a real book (*Don Quixote*). Each author and text assume the reality and fictionality of the others, joining together literature and history.

Authorship is similarly shared in the Arabic commentaries of the Greek philosophers, such as al-Fārābī's *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle.* Translation-commentaries like this one brought Arabic names to the forefront of Greek philosophy, both within the Arabic tradition and in subsequent Latin translations. Finally, the apocryphal text also brings reality and fiction together; especially using the trope of translation, apocrypha like *Kitāb Sirr al-Asrār* import the mythologies of the characters they write, which authorize the name of the real translator-author.

Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* provides for a rich conversation on what it means to be an author. His Arabic text showcases the authorial work of the translator, who is not mechanically substituting one word for another but is rather using the text's rhetoric (Rendall et al. xi) to recompose in a new language. Because the original Persian and Arabic translations of the *Kalīlah* are lost, it is interesting to consider the apocryphal nature of this work. If we think of the chain of translation, or *isnād*, of the work as a fictional framework, then the *Kalīlah* becomes a commentary on translation and transmission. The translators' prefaces are a model of what it means to translate this work, and Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s translator-authorship therefore invite new translators to add themselves to the book. *Kalīlah and*

Dimnah is therefore not a singular text but rather a textual tradition, whose fictionality allows for it to easily circulate amongst languages and cultures.

Chapter 3: Alfonso X, the Model King

The Castilian *Kalīlah and Dimnah – Calila and Dimna*, demonstrates another aspect of translator-authorship different from Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s. While these two translators represent the work of the philosopher-author, mirrored in the character sage Bidpai, Alfonso X emulates the first audience of the book: the king himself. He is the prince for which this mirror-for-princes tale is intended – and, quite literally, as Alfonso was still a prince when he commissioned the Castilian translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* around 1251 CE. The king is visible throughout this text; for the Persian translation, King Anūsharwān is the one who recognizes the philosophical benefits of the Sanskrit text and so sends Barzawayh to translate it. In the Arabic translation, the caliph al-Manṣur is not explicitly written into the narrative, but he is a central figure in the historical Ibn al-Muqaffa''s work with Ibn al-Muqaffa' as his court secretary. In both cases, the king recognizes the value of the text but does not quite understand it; he must rely on someone else to translate the *Kalīlah* – that is, to interpret the work so that the king can read it. The king is an important character, but he appears as an apprentice of wisdom to the philosopher-author masters Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa'. The king commissions the *Kalīlah*'s translation, but it is clear that he is not its author. The Castilian *Calila*, however, redefines the king's role in this narrative. Unlike King Anūsharwān and al-Mansūr, the *Calila* credits Alfonso X with the translation and thus the king becomes author.

The Authorship of the King

Alfonso X's authorship is multi-faceted. Alfonsine scholar Robert J. González-Casanovas urges us to consider that Alfonso the historical figure is different from Alfonso's textual persona, which is different from Alfonso the individual bibliophile and Alfonso the king as policymaker (González-Casanovas 2). These different aspects of his person impact our reading of the Alfonsine text as a work of instruction, of literature, of history, of law, of religiosity, or some combination of thereof. González-Casanovas therefore suggests that Alfonsine scholars move past analysis that is solely focused on the king's "authorial-editorial" work – that is, scrutinizing which words he wrote versus which he commissioned others to write; instead, González-Casanovas offers that we focus on Alfonso's character in hermeneutic terms. Given the many texts he commissioned, Alfonso could be considered in the same way that biblical scholars understand the figure, the author, and the subject of Moses in the Book of Moses (González-Casanovas 2). The name Alfonso, then, represents not a singular person but rather many different roles. When reading a text of Alfonso X, his name represents Alfonso the king, the author, the translator, the textual subject, the reader, and the historical figure all at the same time. It is this kaleidoscope of personas which render such a text an Alfonsine text. His name comes to represent a tradition of authorship – "Alfonsine authority" (González-Casanovas 2) just as the *Kalīlah* renders Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa' as model philosopher-authors via translation.

In both the Alfonsine text and the *Kalīlah* tradition, the prologue is where the author defines his role in the work. The prologue is "the point of contact of the author,

the text, and the audience" (Burns 91), where the author demonstrates his mastery over the text to the reader. In Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s prologues, the translator-authors reveal the journey of obtaining the text and of translating the *Kalīlah*. In the Alfonsine text, Alfonso X similarly explains his process of authorship and therefore his authority in the work. One such text is the *General estoria* (*General History*), an attempted universal history which begins with the birth of Abraham and cites Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, French, and mostly Latin sources to compose a narrative of how the world came to be (Eisenberg). In the *General estoria*'s prologue, Alfonso X writes about his authorship:

> A king makes (writes) a book, not because be [sic] wrote it with his own hands, but because he composes its arguments, and emends them, and makes them uniform, and rectifies them, and shows the way they should be done, and thus he whom he (the king) orders writes them, but we say for this reason that the king writes the book (Burns 92).

Different from Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s authorship which rests on their philosophership, Alfonso declares himself as author by way of his kingship. This citation from the *General estoria* prologue underlines that Alfonso defines a king, and more particularly an author-king, as one who can guide the audience in their reading. As king, Alfonso is the master philosopher, scholar, and writer of the text. He understands the text's purpose and how its rhetoric works to convey its message. His conception of author-kingship is similar to what we find in Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s

prologues: their authorship is defined by their philosophership, which involves both understanding the meaning of the text and how that meaning is composed.

The difference in Alfonso's philosopher-authorship is that it is grounded in his kingship. Alfonso X's moniker is *El Sabio*, the "Learned" or "Wise" king, and so he indeed fits within the *Kalīlah*'s tradition of philosopher-authorship. In other words, he is a "believable" in that the audience can trust his interpretation and dissemination of this didactic work. The *Kalīlah*, however, makes a distinction between the king and the philosopher. A number of Arabic *Kalīlah* manuscripts[32] include in Ibn al-Muqaffa''s prologue that the book has four aims:

> One of them is to put [the words] onto the tongues of animals, so that the youth will hasten to read; the second is to show the animals with different dyes and colors,[33] so that it will delight the hearts of kings and they will safeguard it; the third is that so kings and common people will adopt it and it will be copied frequently, so that it will not fall into disuse and the illustrator and copier will benefit from it forever; and the fourth is for the philosopher in particular (Gruendler, "The Arabic Introduction" lm.158-161).[34]

أحدها ما قصد فيه على وضعه على السنة البهائم غير الناطقة ليسارع إلى قراءته أهل الهزل من الشبّان فتستمال به قلوبهم لأنّ الغرض النوادر من حيل الحيوانات والثّاني إظهار خيالات الحيوان بصنوف

[32] Found in manuscripts collected through Beatrice Gruendler's *Kalīlah* project: P3465, P2789, H170, R2407, P3473, BWII672, P3466, T2281, and P3471 (Gruendler, "The Arabic Introduction".

[33] This points to an illustrated manuscript.

[34] Translation mine, from manuscript P3465.

الأصباغ والألوان ليكون أنسًا لقلوب الملوك ويكون حرصهم عليه أشدّ للنزهة والثالث أن يكون هذه الصفة فيتّخذه الملوك والسوقة فيكثر بذلك انتساخه ولا يبطل فيخلق على مرور الأيّام ولينتفع بذلك المصوّر والناسخ أبدًا والغرض الرابع الأقصى وذلك مخصوص بالفيلسوف خاصّة.

The king, according to the *Kalīlah*, is the one who can keep the book in circulation. It is his word that commands the text's commission; the scribes and illustrators can copy this book again and again, so that many readers may benefit from it. The *Kalīlah*'s rhetoric and style is therefore one that will please the king, so that he will be more inclined to keep the work alive and read.

Alfonso X's notion of king-authorship found in his *General estoria* certainly reflects the role of the king found in the Arabic *Kalīlah*. In the *General estoria*'s prologue, Alfonso clarifies that it is the king's judgment in text selection, in the work's structuring, compiling, editing, and publishing which makes the work come into being, and thus it is the king's judgment which renders him the author. This is similar to early Arabic book culture, where authorship was attributed to those who could compile information in a new and useful way (*taṣnifāt*). The notable difference between Alfonso X's authorship and *taṣnifāt*, perhaps, is that Alfonso relies on the scribe to physically write his book. While he is reported to have been involved in the writing process – often editing and correcting the scribes' work (Hartman 48), he still reads more distantly from the book. Through the stoic dignity of a king, he commands a text into being; he does not write it.

Considering the *Kalīlah*'s prologue tradition and Alfonso X's own prologue interventions, it is interesting that Alfonso's *Calila* does not include his own translator's

prologue. Alfonso does not speak at the beginning of the book, as the translators before him do, but rather at the end:

> Here ends the book of *Calila and Dimna.* It was taken from Arabic into Latin and romanized [translated into Castilian] by order of Alfonso, son of the noble King Fernando, in the year 1299.[35]
>
> *Aquí se acaba el libro de Calina et Digna. Et fue sacado de arávigo en latín, et romançado por mandado del infante don Alfonso, fijo del muy noble rey don Fernando, en la era de mill et dozientos et noventa et nueve años* (Blecua and Lacarra 355).

The tone of this textual intervention is different than Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s. While their chapters focus on the individual translator and his efforts, sometimes in the first-person voice, Alfonso X's colophon is more characteristically the third-person voice of the king. We read of the sage's struggle to bring this text to the reader, both in the narrative and in the translators' prologues, but we do not read of the king's. The king's journey of philosophical understanding is not revealed as it is for Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa'. The Castilian work does not demonstrate how Alfonso obtained the text, how he read the text, or even what he contributed through translation, as is written for the Persian and Arabic translator-authors. It is this story of obtaining, reading, and translating which is explicated in the prologues and proves Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s authorship.

[35] Translation mine.

And so, can we call Alfonso X a translator-author of the *Calila*? I suggest that we can, though the authorial weight of his name is different depending on the perspective. Examining the name of Alfonso X in the context of the *Kalīlah*'s tradition, his name certainly follows, rather than is equal to, Barzawayh's and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s. Ibn al-Muqaffa' has perhaps the most authorial weight in the *Kalīlah*, as it was his translation which produced the *Kalīlah* that would serve as the original text for all subsequent translations around the world, over centuries. Further, as seen in the Castilian translation and in others, Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Barzawayh end up as part of the narrative. Their prologues do not stand apart from the text; they are rather transformed from authors' introductions or translators' prefaces to chapters of the *Kalīlah*'s story. Therefore, the Persian and Arabic translators' authorship is crystallized within the work. There is no other translator-author of the *Kalīlah* who has made the textual impact that Barzawayh, and especially Ibn al-Muqaffa', have. While *Kalīlah and Dimnah* invites new translator-authors to make their mark, these two names save *Kalīlah and Dimnah* from the oblivion of anonymity. A text needs an author – even a falsely attributed one, or many authors, because "it derives its value from their presence" (Kilito, *The Author* 63).

Fig. 8: Illustration from one Spanish translation copy of the *Kalīlah* entitled, *El Examplario contra los engaños y peligros del mundo*. The text reads, "humility is the trap that ensnares the proud" (translation mine). Image taken from the National Library of Spain, © http://bdh-rd.bne.es/

So, within the *Kalīlah*'s tradition, Alfonso's name is an "apprentice" (Bruns 114) of Ibn al-Muqaffa', following the tradition of the model Arabic translator. From the perspective of Alfonso X's own legacy, however, his Castilian *Calila and Dimna* represents his ultimate authority as king-author. In Alfonso X's king-authorship is a wisdom. He learns from the books he reads in order to fulfill the role of the sage-king himself. These roles of king, author, and sage are intertwined, as the Wise King writes in the prologue of *The Chronicle of Alfonso X*:

> The sages who lived in times past desired that things that were discovered and events that took place be made known. Thus, by their own nobility, serving as an example by themselves to future generations, they had them written down, understanding that in this fashion those who came after them might be able to understand better and that these deeds would be protected and preserved for the

> ages. This is how knowledge of the art of astrology and the other sciences were discovered. [...] Alfonso, [...] desiring that the feats of the kings who were before him be found in writing, ordered the old histories and chronicles inspected. [He] ordered them written in this book so that those yet to come may know how things happened in the days of the aforesaid kings (Thacker and Escobar 25-16).

In this prologue, Alfonso declares himself as part of a lineage of writing through kingship. The first links in this chain are the sages, who in their wisdom wrote down important facts and events so that future generations might learn from that information. Alfonso then intervenes similarly, but he instead records the acts of kings. This choice underlines the importance of the king figure; Alfonso suggests that the king's acts, his policies, and his reputation also contribute knowledge in a way that future kings and subjects may benefit from. The king is the epitome of knowledge, as can also be seen in "Barzawayh's Journey" in the Arabic *Kalīlah*. After Barzawayh returns to Persia with the book, King Anūsharwān is so grateful that he actually offers Barzawayh to be "co-ruler (شركة في الملك)" (Fishbein 16-17). It is as if on the climb towards wisdom, the king is at the peak. He not only has the wisdom of the philosopher, but the power of a ruler to make that wisdom known. Additionally, the model king is one who is wise, as we see in the *Calila*'s dialogue between King Debshalim and Bidpai. And so, acting as the author-sage in recording the feats of his predecessors, Alfonso steps forward as a sage among sages, an author among authors, and therefore a king among kings. He establishes his legacy as such, memorializing himself, his father King Fernando III, and their predecessors within the medium of the text.

Even without a prologue in the *Calila*, we can read Alfonso X's *Calila* authorship through his textual authority in later works like the *General estoria* and *The Chronicle*, and in conjunction with the symbolism of translation. It is in translation where Alfonso X's inheritance of legacy is most apparent. He similarly declares his authority through his lineage, describing himself in the *Calila*'s colophon as "Alfonso, son of the noble king Fernando." In Alfonso's other commissioned works of science, law, literature, and historiography, he also announces himself as Fernando's son. In his identity as the son of a king, Alfonso is the heir, rather than the founder of, the cultural institutions of his texts (Szpiech). Translation marks the process of inheritance, where the translator's merit as author is not in the creation of a new idea, but in his ability to interpret what has come before and write it anew. The translator therefore acts as a sage in his linguistic discernment, just as the heir of the king wisely uses the tradition of his predecessors to establish his own legacy. The twelfth-century philosopher Adelard of Bath wrote, "When I want to make public a personal idea I attribute it to another and say, 'So and so said it, not me,' so as to avoid the inconvenience of having someone think that someone as ignorant as I am brought out an idea from myself" (Gutwirth 386). This inconvenience is the justification that an author must provide for his reader to accept an idea. This is common in Classical Arabic literature as well, where authors use plagiarism and forgery to bolster their own names, rather than risk attributing their own ideas to themselves (Kilito, *The Author*).

The writing of *Don Quixote* also follows a textual lineage. In the chapter "In which the stupendous battle between the gallant Basque and the valiant Manchegan is

concluded and comes to an end," the fictionalized author of the narrative reveals that he found the story of Don Quixote in a market. It was written in Arabic script, which the author got a young Morisco boy to translate out loud into Castilian. Our author amends the translation to include "everything that could be rightly desired in the most pleasant history, and if something of value is missing from it, in my opinion the fault lies with the dog who was its [Arab] author rather than with any defect in its subject (*Si a ésta se le puede poner alguna objeción cerca de su verdad, no podrá ser otra sino haber sido su autor arábigo, siendo muy propio de los de aquella nación ser mentirosos; aunque, por ser tan nuestros enemigos, antes se puede entender haber quedado falto en ella que demasiado* [Cervantes])" (Grossman 69). This is similar to what Ibn al-Muqaffa' writes in his introduction, that he added his own instructions of reading because the Persians had left them out (Fishbein 34-35). What is interesting about these two examples, is that in both cases the speaking author is the one who wrote the insufficiencies of the previous translator into the book. The *Quixote*'s narrative does not need to refer to an original author at all, and yet the fictive author is eager to tell us that he received a deficient copy of Don Quixote's history. Some scholars also surmise that Ibn al-Muqaffa' actually wrote Barzawayh's chapters himself (Marroum). In writing those chapters, he could have simply written the instructions instead of pointing out that the Persian chapters were missing useful information. The translator in both of these examples wants the audience to know that he intervened – he added something vital to the text. In translation, one benefits from the reputation of an established legacy, while the translator gets to clarify his own contribution to that legacy.

Inheritance, then, or translation, comes without the inconvenience of something new and unestablished. An ancient idea is ready to be received because its antiquity "command[s] respect" (Kilito, *The Author* 70). Alfonso X therefore commands the respect of his kingdom as the inheritor of his father's regency and the translator of ancient works, a notion found in the structure of the *Kalīlah* as well. With Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa''s introductions preserved with the narrative as prologues of the narrative, this work demonstrates the textual legacy of translation. Alfonso X joins himself to this legacy when he translates the *Kalīlah* into Castilian. He becomes "a 'new' heir of an 'old' lineage" (Szpiech 216) of translators, or of philosopher-authors. As such, contemporary scholars credit Alfonso X as the "'father of Castilian prose,'" "'father of the Spanish university,'" and "'father of the Castilian language'" (Szpiech 211). Like Ibn al-Muqaffa' brought prose to Arabic through his translation of the *Kalīlah*, so does Alfonso X bring prose to Castilian. The *Calila* is one of many Alfonsine texts which employ Castilian prose, to the point when Castilian supersedes Latin as an official language in the Iberian Peninsula (Cammarata 8). Acting as king-author, Alfonso used the ancients to establish his own textual legacy; this led to the codification of a new language, resulting in the Spanish spoken today. Translation aided in this codification, taking something already accepted – the Arabic *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, to develop from it something new.

The Colophon of the King

As opposed to a prologue or introduction which is reserved for the author, a colophon is where the scribe signs his name. The use of colophons dates back as far as ancient Mesopotamia, and throughout the centuries, colophons have served to record the

instances of a text's production – who wrote what, and when and where they wrote it (Kiraz and Schmidtke 1). Colophons also evolved from being strictly informational to using more literary phraseology, and some scribes have even included in the colophon certain historical events that happened before or during the manuscript's production (Kiraz and Schmidtke 1). If the prologue, or introduction, is where the author speaks to the reader, the colophon is where the reader talks back. It is a place for the scribe-reader to denote the conditions of reading and the impact of the manuscript within the scribe's own individual, cultural, and historical circumstances. The copyist affirms his reading in the form of a colophon, indicating to future audiences how he has used the text. And, while his name is not elevated to the same level of reputation as the author's, the scribe's colophon asks for his name to be recognized as part of the life of the work. One monastic scribe in tenth-century León, Obeco, signed his name to the *Book of Revelation*; in his colophon, he draws the reader's attention to his great effort in copying and so asks for both prayers and remembrance for this exertion (Oliveira Dias). The colophon asks the audience to remember the scribe-reader, speaking to how a text has moved among different audiences.

The difference between the authority of the author and the authority of the copyist can be read in Chaucer's admonishing of his scribe:

> Adam scribe, if ever it should happen to you
> To write Boethius or Troilus anew,
> Under your long locks you must have the skill,
> But after my making you write more true;

So often a day I must renew your work,

To correct it and also to rub and scrape;

And all is through your negligence and haste (Bruns 127).[36]

The scribe "is not authorized to go beyond the letter of his original" (Bruns 128). This, of course, has not always been the case. The great variance in Arabic *Kalīlah* manuscripts prompted Gruendler to coin the term "copyist-redactors" to underline the authorial choices the scribes made in their manuscripts. In another example, researchers F. Redwan Karim and Yousry Elseadawy suggest that for a scribe to take on the long and arduous task of copying a book, he "would need to be intimately invested with the contents of this work" (Kiraz and Schmidtke 367).[37] Despite these textual liberties that scribes took in their work, it is undeniable that it is the author whose name is written into the memory of history. We know well the name of Chaucer; we recognize Ibn al-Muqaffa' as the *Kalīlah*'s Arabic translator-author; and, it is Sībawayh who is acknowledged for codifying Arabic grammar into a single text – not their copyists.

And so, with the author as master of textual authority in the face of his apprentice scribe, who is Alfonso X in the colophon of his Castilian *Calila and Dimna*? He is

[36] The original Old English reads: ADAM scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
Boece or Troylus for to wryten newe,
Under thy long lokkes thou most have the scalle,
But after my makyng thou wryte more trewe;
So ofte a-daye I mot thy werk renewe,
It to correcte and eek to rubbe and scrape;
And al is thorugh thy negligence and rape

[37] Karim and Elseadawy examine the example of Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār (d. 1009 CE), who copied Arabic's first grammar book, *Kitāb Sībawayh* – a tome, not for a patron but for himself.

certainly not a "mere" copyist, in the sense that his name is overshadowed by the author. This colophon rather indicates Alfonso as reader of the *Kalīlah*. Not only is he a reader, but he is the reader-king to whom the *Kalīlah* is written in the first place. The Persian and Arabic translators' prologues reflect the role of Bidpai in the story, who is advising the tyrannical Indian king Debshalim. Both Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa' are in the service of their own kings, and so their translations serve as advice to the ruler. Their prologues therefore reflect the role of philosopher in the transmission of this text – a philosopher who has mastered the *Kalīlah*'s wisdom and is passing it on to others. Alfonso X, however, is like Debshalim receiving the advice. When Alfonso reads the text, he acknowledges that it is meant for him. It is as if he is consulting the stories of Bidpai, the *adab* of Barzawayh, and the rhetoric Ibn al-Muqaffa' and passing that knowledge on to his audience. For Alfonso X to read the *Kalīlah* is to heed ancient knowledge that has been passed on from one translator and from one kingdom to another. The colophon at the end of the text, then, is his affirmation of understanding. It is not a prologue written in the assured voice of the philosopher-author, but rather the contemplative reply of the listener. In Alfonso's colophon, he indicates that he has read the stories of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* and has therefore understood the sages' advice. As one who understands, he assumes his authority as the one who gives the order for this Castilian text to come into being (*por mandado del infante don Alfonso* [Blecua and Lacarra 355]).

Alfonso's affirmation of understanding that comes at the end of his *Calila* is also reflected at the end of the book's chapters. Each chapter opens with King Debshalim

asking Barzawayh a question about friendship, about honesty, and about good judgment, which Barzawayh answers with his animal fables. The end of "The Lion and the Bull" concludes with Debshalim summarizing the lesson to be learned, saying about Dimna's trickery, "it is necessary to guard against everything and understand who are the tricksters and the low, and what is false in their falsehoods and their deceptions[38] (*es asaz complimineto para se guardar omne et de se aperçebir de los mezcladores et de los terreros et de los falsos en las sus falsedades et sus engaños que fazen*)" (Bleuca and Lacarra 178). Each chapter ends similarly, with either the king or the sage articulating the lesson to be learned. The end is therefore a place of reflection, and it is where we see that the king understands the wisdom of the work. These lessons also serve as signposts to the reader, where any confusion is assuaged and knowledge is solidified. "As the Wise and the King, Alfonso presents himself as a mediator between scholars and people: he is a model reader of texts who guides both those who rewrite and those who enact" (González-Casanovas 4). Therefore, the moral sense at the end of each chapter reflects the colophon at the end of the text itself. These two spaces indicate the result of reading, translation, and interpretation, whereafter Alfonso X has learned the lessons of Bidpai's fables and passes this wisdom on to the reader.

[38] Translation mine.

The Name of the King

King Alfonso X's translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* illustrates the role of the king in the text's tradition of translation. Within the narrative, the king is the one with the power to circulate the text and therefore ensure that more readers can benefit from its knowledge. Alfonso X further elevates the role of the king to an author, given his own historical circumstances. His interest in books and scholarship motivated him to commission the writing of many different works, and his prologues at the beginning of these works established him as the author. It is the king's discernment, perspective, and word which renders him the author – the one responsible for the text. It is Alfonso X's name which stands out in his translation of the Castilian *Calila*, though he was not necessarily the one to do the pen-to-paper translation work. He signs his name in the form of a colophon, and in the narrative structure, this intervention at the end of a chapter and at the end of a book signals a place of reflection. It is where the characters in the *Calila* recount the lessons learned from the fables, and it is seemingly where Alfonso acknowledges that he, the prince, has understood the mirror-for-princes philosophy he has just read.

While the prologue is the author's lectern, advising the reader about how to use the book, Alfonso X's name is what solidifies his *Calila* colophon as an authorial signature. His legacy as the son of a king and as a translator (or at least, translation commissioner) turn every text from Alfonso into an Alfonsine text. His name therefore represents the hermeneutics of a text, with Alfonso the historical figure, the bibliophile, the king, the "learned," and the textual persona culminating in his role as author. When

we read an Alfonsine text, all of these different aspects of his person contribute to the entire sense of the work. Alfonso's name comes to represent a tradition of reading, of writing, and of philosophy in such a way that his name carries the prestige of the subjects of his books. What he "really" wrote is less important than the idea that what he *could* have written, based on the narrative of his legacy. In this sense, he can be considered an apocryphal figure, just as Aristotle and Alexander the Great are "translated" into *The Book of Secrets* in Arabic. For example, there are some scholars like A. G. Solalinde who actually don't believe Alfonso X was the first to Romanize the *Calila*.[39] The present research illustrates that within the tradition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, we do not know exactly what Barzawayh and Ibn al-Muqaffa'; and yet, their names come to represent the model sage, the model translator, and therefore the model author. So too does Alfonso's name come to represent an idea larger than his person – he is the model king, as author.

[39] Solalinde writes, "si Alfonso X hubiera sido el traductor del Calila e Dimna, sin ningún género de duda hubiera aprovechado su propia versión en su General Estroia y no otra distinta" (Blecua and Lacarra 16-17). This theory is largely not accepted by scholars, but there has been some discussion over the date of translation. One Castilian *Calila* manuscript cites 1299 as the year of translation, though 1299 refers to the Hispanic Era calendar and coincides with the year 1261 CE. Alfonso commissioned this translation as the Infante and not the king; by the fact that he was coronated in 1252, in conjunction with another *Calila* manuscript citing the completion date as 1251, it is likely that the Castilian *Calila* was written in 1251 (Keller and Linker xxi-xxii). Even the record 1299 is debated, as there is another *Calila* manuscript which marks the completion year as 1289 (Blecua and Lacarra 15-20).

Concluding Discussions

The Foreign Text

The preceding chapters on Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, and Alfonso X demonstrate that to translate *Kalīlah and Dimnah* is to become the work's author. This authorship is grounded in their mastery over the text, which includes an understanding of its surface content as well as its rhetoric. According to the *Kalīlah*'s narrative as well as codicological sources, each translator alters the text so that it may be received by each respective audience. The characterizing features of the text remain; it is a didactic text of animal fables, framed by a dialogue between a king and his sage, that attempts to teach wisdom to both its intra- and extradiegetic audiences. How the text rhetorically presents that content is different for the Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and Castilian reader, as crafted by the translator-author. This decision reflects Wilhelm von Humboldt's notion of the relationship between the *Fremde* and *Fremdheit* in translation: "a translation should indeed have a foreign flavor to it, but only to a certain degree […]; as long as one does not feel the foreignness (*Fremdheit*) yet does feel the foreign (*Fremde*), a translation has reached its highest goal" (Biguenet and Schulte 58). In the *Kalīlah*, this "foreign flavor" (or *Fremde*) is what legitimizes each translator-author. His authority, or mastery over the text, comes from his ability to read a foreign source and bring its knowledge to his own readership. The *Fremde* also contributes to the *Kalīlah*'s reputation itself, as a book that has been passed from one ancient civilization to another.

The fact that it is "foreign" conveys the idea that it is both everyone's book and no one's. It is this malleable element of being "foreign" in every language that renders

Kalīlah and Dimnah easily adaptable by different traditions. Illustrating the elements of *Fremde* and *Fremdheit,* one English translator writes in an introduction,

> I foresee the sort of mental dialogue which will pass between my reader and myself. 'What,' the reader will exclaim, 'the first literary link between India and England, between Buddhism and Christendom, written in racy Elizabethan with vivacious dialogue, and something distinctly resembling a plot. Why, you will be trying to make us believe that you have restored to us an English Classic!'
>
> 'Exactly so,' I should be constrained to reply [...] (Doni lviii).[40]

The *Fremde* piques the interest of the reader without the feeling of *Fremdheit,* or foreignness. A skillful translator is able to make a foreign text still relevant to his readers, which may include removing some linguistic or even content-based elements that the new audience will not understand. One of many such interpretations of the translator can be found in the Castilian *Calila*; in the story "The Rat Transformed into a Girl," the Sanskrit *Panchatantra* presents a devout ascetic bathing in the Ganges River,[41] while the Castilian writes this scene as "a good religious man [...] was one day on the banks of the river" (Blecua and Lacarra 11).[42] These changes that can be seen in the comparison of

[40] This comes from an 1888-reprint of Sir Thomas North's 16th-century English translation, entitled *The Morall Philosophie of Doni,* to which modern versions add *popularly known as the fables of Bidpai* (Beecher). North translated from Anton Francesco Doni's *La Filosofia Morale del Doni* of 1552. As Bidpai, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Alfonso X before him, Doni attaches his name to the book as a translator-author – master of the text. North acknowledges Doni's authorship by retaining his name in the title of the translation, carrying Bidpai into Elizabethan English via the authority of Doni's name.

[41] Found in Theodor Benfey's German translation of the *Panchatantra* in 1859.

[42] Translation mine.

manuscripts in different languages, as well as the translation-redaction practice among the Arabic manuscripts. The many iterations of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* reveal that this work is one that is meant to be translated. In the beginning, it is Barzawayh's friend in the Indian court who first gives permission to translate, only under the conditions that Barzawayh has demonstrated his philosophical understanding of the text. The *Kalīlah* does not mandate a "faithful" practice of translation; subsequent versions are understood to be the work(s) of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* not because of their word-for-word or even sense-for-sense translation, but because they capture the rhetorical character of the book (Rendall xi). Each *Kalīlah* somehow maintains the foreign, or the *Fremde*, of the Indian source, while freely interpreting what of the foreignness, or *Fremdheit*, should be edited. This translator-authorship highlights that the *Kalīlah* is a work not only in translation, but of translation. As such, "one cannot read one version without thinking of the same passage in others (where it is precisely *not* the same). The process of reading becomes horizontal, across versions, as well as vertical, in the sequence of the narrative" (Gruendler, "A Redactor" 37).

The Singular Text

This is different from some modern perspectives on translation, where reading a translation rather draws our attention to the original source text. Such a reading practice venerates the originality of the source – that is, something that is irreplicable (Goodman 113). An original work is a testament to the author himself, and we marvel when "exactly the right man at exactly the right moment in history [...] put into exactly the right situations [starts] writing" (Eggington). An original source in translation almost has the status of a holy book, whose words should be preserved exactly as they are written so as not to erase the memory and the greatness of the original work and its author. For example, Romance scholar Tom Lathrop reviews Edith Grossman's translation of *Don Quixote* to be fine but insufficient. While Lathrop concedes that the translation is "readable" for a general audience (Lathrop 237), he "warn[s] serious students of literature in translation [to] consider looking elsewhere for more faithful translations" (Lathrop 240). He cites a number of what he considers to be mistakes in translation that do not significantly alter the plot, but that, according to Lathrop, misrepresent either historical or literary elements. Lathrop reads these historical and literary elements as what characterize the *Quixote*'s originality, and so to make a "mistake" in translation would be to erase what makes *Don Quixote* a notable work in the first place. This book is distinguished by its clever word play, ridiculous imagery, and the earnestness of its errant knight protagonist, contextualized by and manifested through Miguel Cervantes's own experiences (Eggington). According to Lathrop, an unfaithful or inauthentic translation

would therefore chip away at the originality of the work, and the world would lose the innovation of Miguel de Cervantes.

I do not necessarily disagree with this perspective; certainly, there are choices a translator can make that will capture more of the original text than others, through which an English reader would become better acquainted with Cervantes's characters as he wrote them. However, should this always be the goal in translation? And, to what extent? At least in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, retaining the original work and the words of the first author(s) are less important than the spirit of the work itself. Its essence is that which defines the *Kalīlah* and which distinguishes it and is something that can be expanded on in translation. This is the task of the translator, Walter Benjamin says; translation is not merely a reproduction of meaning in the target language but is rather "an echo of the original" (Benjamin 258-260). Translation should be a "linguistic complementation" that does not block the light of the original but allows it to shine through (Benjamin 260). Lathrop's review indicates that Cervantes's original *Quixote* is the brightest light of all, and subsequent translations should be careful not to dim it too much. Benjamin's perspective, however, professes that a work has a life – an "afterlife," that extends beyond its first moment of writing (Benjamin 256). This is certainly the philosophy found in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*; more than a work of wisdom, it is a testament to the philosophy that a text continues to transform based on its different readerships. A text is not *a* text – it proposes the possibility of infinite iterations, each expanding on the overt and hidden meanings of the original. The *Kalīlah*'s translation history certainly embodies this perspective, with each translator-author crafting the text for his audience anew thereby

rendering the work his own. Unlike *Don Quixote*, *Kalīlah and Dimnah* has no singular source and so to consider its originality in the same way is impossible. This is not to say that the *Kalīlah*'s philosophy of translation replaces the faithful translation practice for which Tom Lathrop advocates; rather, the *Kalīlah*'s narrative offers another consideration of translation that does not uphold the word-for-word or sense-for-sense authority of the original.

While early *Kalīlah* translator-authors and copyist-redactors took creative liberties in their work, some modern *Kalīlah* editors and translators have strayed from this tradition and have attempted to uphold a singular *Kalīlah*. In his introduction, English translator Thomas Ballantine Irving is careful to alert his readers to the "impurities" of the manuscripts used to construct this translation of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* (Irving xiii). He indicates which manuscripts are more "reliable" than others, and which translators of the consulted texts are more trustworthy or not (Irving xii-xiii). There is a palpable anxiety in both Irving's and Lathrop's writing – no doubt out of great appreciation for the works and their authors, which seeks to preserve the original despite the maiming of translation. This comes in part from, perhaps, the impact of the printing press. As opposed to an "open manuscript culture," where the grammarian is expected to "embellish" the text with his own re-writing of it (Bruns 120), "print closes off the act of writing and authorizes its results" (Bruns 113). For a modern audience reading in print, the book we read becomes The Book. It becomes our singular point of reference for the work, and we are searching for this exact source in other iterations. This sentiment can be seen in Jorge Luis Borges's "An Autobiographical Essay"; Borges he writes that he first read *Don*

Quixote in English, and when he later read the story in the original Spanish, "it seemed like a bad translation" (Borges). Borges could not entertain a second Quixote; there was only one, and he lived in the first (English) book that Borges read.

Irving's approach to translating the *Kalīlah* is a more historical than literary one. Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Alfonso X, and the many anonymous Arabic copyist-redactors do not let the "truth" of the original get in the way of a good tale; they are storytellers. Like the early Arab poets whose voices became part of the very poetry they sang, so do the pens of the *Kalīlah* translator-authors reflect a particular iteration of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* that is attached to their respective names. Irving, however, is careful to justify his intervention as a scholarly one (Irving xiv):

> What I have endeavored to do here is offer to the English speaking public as complete a version, from as many sources, and in as readable and comprehensible a form as possible, of *Kalilah and Dimnah* (Irving xiv).

As opposed to creating a literary text, Irving sets out to faithfully reconstruct this story through a codicological perspective. His intervention is more distant, as one studying the text rather than writing it. Irving's task is certainly no less valuable and no less arduous than Barzawayh's, but it is different, to be sure. Irving's translation speaks to a modern audience, accustomed to the authority that a printed text conveys. Part of the authority of print culture rests in the "codification of a shared language" (Gruendler, *The Rise* 60). As a result of the codification of language, it seems that literary works are also codified. A printed work cannot be changed; it is bound, and therefore complete. Any changes made

must come in the form of a new edition, which declares the differences between this edition and the previous one.

In Irving's translation, he explains his process in order to legitimize his work as a scholar. He attempts to restore the *Kalīlah* through a historical archive of manuscripts, while qualifying the veracity of his sources. This is different from the work of the translator Ibn al-Muqaffa', because our Arabic translator clarifies the changes he makes to the text, in order to persuade the reader of his philosopher-authorship. He understands the text's didactic message as well as how it rhetorically conveys this message, and this is why Ibn al-Muqaffa' writes in his introduction that he added instructions for reading that the Persians seemed to leave out (Fishbein 34-35). The difference in Irving's perspective and Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the other translator-authors', is that Irving does the work of a translator-historian, while the others are translator-authors. Irving seeks to reconstruct, while Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Alfonso X, and even Anton Doni (whose *Kalīlah* is entitled *The Moral Philosophy of Doni*), recreate and therefore author the text.

Translatability

Comments like those from Tom Lathrop and Thomas Irving about "good," i.e. faithful translations, suggest an expectation of translatability. Such an idea indicates that while this or that translation may be inadequate, there are others we can rely on which more "authentically" capture the original text. In contrast, scholar Emily Apter asserts that readers accept the "Untranslatables" of literature. Apter defines the untranslatable as the quality which renders the process of translation "interminable" (Rendall vii). "To speak of *untranslatables* in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions,

the syntactical or grammatical terms, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating" (Rendall xvii). In her book *Against World Literature*, she posits the Untranslatable against the idea of an institutional World Literature (capitalized, as opposed to the neutral descriptive term "world literature"). According to Apter, World Literature seeks to market "commercialized 'identities'" in an attempt to "anthologize and circularize the world's cultural resources" (Apter loc. 127). This happens via translation where one cultural element in an original work is substituted, as if one-for-one, with another element in the target language. This leads to a homogenous and globalized culture whose sub-cultures are easily interchangeable amongst each other, because they are presumed to be translatable.

An example of erasing authenticity of the original text via World Literature can be seen in the publication of Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*. An American editor initially said that this book was

> too naive, for Western readers, who were more worldly, more jaded, more 'experienced' at an earlier age. Also, some of the intimate scenes were painful to read, made me cringe a little. I'm trying, as an editor, to channel what readers might think, and I'm thinking, It's a no-go. 'Too' Japanese, won't transport (or translate) (Karashima).[43]

On the one hand, this raises the ridiculous question of *how can a Japanese work be "too Japanese"?* Certainly, because English is a dominant global language, Apter suggests

[43] *Norwegian Wood* was finally published in the U.S., and it is Murakami's best selling novel around the world. Evidently, its American English-reading audience enjoyed the story despite its "naivete."

that it is an exploitation of linguistic power to edit an original "marginalized" language text to fit the English reader's expectations (Apter loc. 127). On the other hand, this is what each of the *Kalīlah*'s translator-authors did. They recomposed the book to be relevant to their respective readerships. The notable difference in these translation-redactions is that the Persian, Arabic, and Castilian translators were of burgeoning traditions, as opposed to English's current status as global lingua franca. The *Kalīlah*'s narrative tells of how the Persian king Anūsharwān marvels at the more ancient and prosperous Indian kingdom. The historical contexts of the Arabic and Castilian versions also illustrate how translation was used to legitimize Arabic and Castilian in the face of the long-standing traditions of Greek and Latin. And so, the question of redaction for the reader is different in today's (English) publishing world; however, the Murakami example is still useful to consider how faithful the translator must choose to be to the original text and to his audience.

As a work with no original, *Kalīlah and Dimnah* demonstrates an alternative aspect of "global" translation. The *Kalīlah* can be considered a text of world literature, or global literature, in the sense that it has traveled far beyond its original literature, time, and text (Damrosch 9). While Apter's sense of globalism includes an exploitive commercialism, the material history of the *Kalīlah* reveals that it is not susceptible to the erasure of identity that Apter warns against. The *Kalīlah* only exists in plurality; while it is considered a canonical text in the Arabic literary tradition, it does not belong *only* to Arabic. Indian literature may authentically claim this text through its Sanskrit *Panchatantra*; Persian literature may claim it through its author-hero Barzawayh; and

Castilian reveres its *Calila* as the first work of Castilian prose fiction, an important moment in Spanish literary history. *Kalīlah and Dimnah* cannot be mistranslated, because it exists *only* in translation. Therefore, there is no such thing as the Untranslatable in the *Kalīlah* – simply the non-translated. Barzawayh distills multiple Sanskrit volumes into one and calls it *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, and we can deduce that he redacted Hindu and other Indian references to make a text readable for a Persian audience. The Arabic and Castilian versions are also devoid of any Indian and Persian *Fremdheit*, or foreignness, while maintaining the foreign source(s) of the text. What remains are the essential and seemingly universal features of the animals, a king and his hubris, and the theme of perpetuating ancient wisdom. These are the characteristics which continue to be translated and that propel *Kalīlah and Dimnah* into different times, languages, and iterations. While Emily Apter views the untranslatable as that which keeps not translating, and therefore keeps the text undefined in a state of translating, the *Kalīlah* rather highlights the translatable – that which renders the text receptive to translation and to re-authoring.

Classical Arabic scholar Alexander Key discusses the task of the translator, depending on his text. Key is currently translating the 11th/5th-century scholar al-Jurjānī's *Dalā'il al-i'jāz* (*The Arguments of Inimitability*), and Key uses al-Jurjānī's own distinction of *adab* ("literary arts," أدب) and *'ilm* ("sciences," علم) to differentiate the translation of each.

> If you are translating *adab*, I think you are in a world where all the [translation] choices are legitimate and they are all on the table. The only thing I would leave

> out is the super clunky literal translation that doesn't attempt any aesthetic impact. But to be honest, even that has use. Because sometimes those super clunky non-aesthetic translations are good primers. So that is the *adab* side. Meanwhile, if you're on the *'ilm* side – the theory side – and al-Jurjani was very clear he was doing *'ilm*, it is rational, it is useful, it is important, it makes sense. It is equivalent to how we think of science today. If you are translating *'ilm*, I think you must be 110 percent domesticated (Key).

This is the question of Emily Apter's "Untranslatable," of the American editing of Murakami's novel, and the central theme of *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. What gets translated, and how? According to Key, the expressive nature of art may remain in translation. Literature (*adab*) is aesthetic language, and so its artistry should not be shed simply for a more faithful, and potentially less imaginative, translation. Key calls the literal translation of literature "clunky," though believes this style also has its place. In contrast, Key opines that *'ilm* ("science") is read to be useful, and so should its translation be. As opposed to literature, the translation of science favors practicality over aesthetics so that the reader can reach the text's meaning more easily. It should be domesticated within the target language, so that the translation reads as if it were originally written by a native speaker. We might say that according to this perspective, the foreign (*Fremde*) aspect of the work has less significance in translating *'ilm* versus *adab*.

What does this mean for *Kalīlah and Dimnah*? It has been translated with all the creative liberties of *adab*, but it defines itself as *'ilm*. Ibn al-Muqaffa''s chapter starts by explaining the book's rhetoric, telling the reader

> This book is a work of parables and stories composed by the people of India, who sought to incorporate into it the most eloquent speech they could find in the style they preferred. In order to make their intentions comprehensible, scholars [...] put eloquent and elegant language into the mouths of animals and birds. This enabled them [...] to speak indirectly and to communicate through implication (Fishbein 23).

As opposed to Alexander Key's description of *'ilm*, which he says should be "useful" and therefore easily read, the *Kalīlah*'s knowledge is wrapped in the intricacies of eloquence. It is not straightforward; its message is intentionally indirect. If "the most excellent gift that God bestowed is the intellect" (Fishbein 3), and if one can cultivate his intellect by understanding the wisdom of the *Kalīlah*, why should it be written as *adab*? Perhaps one reason is the *Kalīlah*'s first audience: the king. One version of the introduction depicts what happens when one is too frank with him. In this version, the sage Bidpai confronts King Debshalim with his tyranny. "Does it bore you then, Sire, to know that though you can peer at stars easily from your magnificent observatory, you remain blind to the suffering right in front of your nose? Are you a king or some kind of melon?" (Wood 53). Bidpai is almost killed for his insolence, but instead suffers in prison before Debshalim realizes his ignorance. And so, if the original Indian philosopher-authors wrote this text for the benefit of their king, surely the advice would be better received from a talking jackal than from the philosophers themselves. The king – that is, the model unwise king – is arrogant and quick to anger. He must therefore be spoken to with an elegance, eloquence, and indirectness that can appease him.

Kalīlah and Dimnah exemplifies that the form and the message cannot be separated. It is the relationship between the two – that is, the hermeneutics, which defines the text itself. *Adab* and *ʻilm* are not mutually exclusive in this work; its *adab* is the vehicle for its *ʻilm*. This is not only for the benefit of the king but of the common reader, as well.

> Because such a book combined entertainment with wisdom, the wise would study it for its wisdom, and the simple for its value as entertainment; young pupils and others would be delighted to read it and it would be easy for them to memorize. When the young person reached maturity and gerw in knowledge, he would ponder what he had memorized [...] and would come to realize that he had acquired a great treasure (Fishbein 23).

The *Kalīlah*'s *adab* is certainly meant to entertain, but to entertain for the purpose of learning. Its indirect speech perhaps makes it more likely to be studied, as one must work to understand the fables' lessons. The wise will further understand both the lessons and the way of writing those lessons. To return to Alexander Key's subject of translation, al-Jurjānī's *Dalāʻil al-ʻijāz al-qurʻān* (دلائل الإعجاز القرآن), al-Jurjānī likewise writes of the importance of an entire textual construction (*naẓm*, نظم). While he is commenting on the eloquence of the Quran, his linguistic analysis can be applied to *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. He declares that it is not the individual words that matter in the conveyance of meaning (*maʻānī*, معاني), rather how those words are arranged in relation to what comes before and after them (Larkin 80). This is the philosophy that pervades the *Kalīlah*. It does not matter what Barzawayh, Ibn al-Muqaffaʻ, and Alfonso X edited from the original in their

translations; it almost does not matter whether the translations we have today are "really" theirs or not, in a literary sense, because it is the philosophical essence of the text which pervades. While the names of the translator-authors certainly turn this collection of stories into a work, it is also the work which begets the authors. It is not only that Ibn al-Muqaffa' wrote *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, but also that the *Kalīlah*'s form, in addition to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s historical context, sanctioned him to intervene as an author via translation. It is the entire composition of a dialogue between a sage and a king in the form of talking animals, which propagates among language traditions.

And so, it is this rhetoric that the philosopher-author, as translator, replicates in his sagacity. With no singular or original *Kalīlah*, we can only speculate about how that would change analyses on this text. As for now, the *Kalīlah* is a work that, inherently, exists in many different forms. It is up to the translator to act as author and rewrite the text for his own readership.

Lost in Translation

Discourse on translation so often includes the notions of failure and loss, at the root of which is the hierarchical relationship between an original text and its translation (Gutwirth 384). The contemporary scholars in this chapter – Tom Lathrop, Thomas Ballantine Irving, and Emily Apter, certainly uphold this relationship. And for good reason, to be sure; those who appreciate literature are naturally moved by the work of the author, and for those who are multilingual, it can seem like an act of disregard to "mistranslate." The experience of the writer may be erased in favor of something more "readable" (Lathrop 240), especially for those who do not know the language of the

original work. Or, there are translations which are neither enjoyable to read nor reflective of the original text. Abdelfattah Kilito says that Ibn Rushd (Averroës), "who tried to be completely faithful to Aristotle,[44] betrayed him this time and distorted his ideas [...] Overall, it is an unreadable commentary, which does not enrich anyone's understanding of the *Poetics*" (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 38-39). Michael Cooperson more optimistically, though still in consideration of the original, writes that, "all translations fail, but all the failures are necessary" (Cooperson xlv). Kilito actually describes translation as potentially combative, recounting situations where speaking to a foreigner in one's own language can lead to feelings of intolerance, embarrassment, affront, and even suspicion (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 86-94). Such sentiments underline that translation maims. It is begrudgingly necessary, and sometimes even done well, but it is inherently destructive towards the original work.

I offer that *Kalīlah and Dimnah* provides another perspective on translation. With no original to protect within the hierarchy of textual authority (Bruns 114), the translators of the *Kalīlah* have complete poetic freedom in their balance of the foreign (*Fremde*) and the foreignness (*Fremdheit*). The *Kalīlah* is malleable, and so the translators' compositions reflect their understanding of the overall meaning (*ma'ānī*). It is an exercise of hermeneutics, where one can experiment with form and content. Shakespeare's Juliet croons "that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Shakespeare Act 2 Scene 2). Barzawayh's name is written in many different ways, including Berzebuey (Blecua and Lacarra), Borzūya (Khaleghi-Motlagh), and Borzoi (Younes). He

[44] Though how could he, with no knowledge of Greek? (Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not* 16)

reincarnates through these different versions of his name, born into new language traditions. Barzawayh is foreign, but not foreignized; he is domesticated through the transliteration of his name. As for Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s name, it is completely redacted in many of the Arabic manuscripts (Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors” 2). He and Barzawayh are also both absent in Irving’s English translation of the *Kalīlah* (which is largely based on 19th-century Jesuit Louis Cheikho’s Arabic edition) (Irving xii). Regarding the name of the book, the *Kalīlah* has been renamed in Italian and carried over into English as *The Moral Philosophy of Doni*, and it was also translated from Hebrew into Latin in the 13th century as the *Directorium Vitae Humane* (Irving xi). It was also translated into Persian under the title *Lights of Canopus* (*Anvár-i-Suhaylî*), and it was written as part of La Fontaine’s *Fables* (Irving x). Not to mention, the scholastic analyses refer to the *Kalīlah*’s Indian origin – a separate text, the *Panchatantra*, which the narrative does not name but alludes to. And yet, these different iterations are all considered to be *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. It is the philosophical hermeneutics which render this work recognizable in their different forms.

The translation tradition of *Kalīlah and Dimnah* suggests the possibility of reading in translation without referring to the original text – or at least, not a single text but rather multiple versions of it.[45] In the case of the *Kalīlah*, one translation does not overwrite another. It is not the same as when one sees a film adaptation and bemoans, “the book was better!”, as if the film was incomplete or mischaracterized the original

[45] As Beatrice Gruendler says about reading the *Kalīlah*: that it draws one’s attention to the same passage as it appears (or not) in other editions (Gruendler, “A Rat and Its Redactors” 37).

work. This complaint is like what Jorge Luis Borges says of reading *Don Quixote* in English; the (first) book is always better. Rather, each iteration of the *Kalīlah* adds to its meaning and expands the literary world of both the work and the target language tradition. For Walter Benjamin this is textual harmony. For Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, the most perfect translation and its original do not exist as one instead of the other, but each perfectly "in the other's place" (Schulte and Biguenet 61). The result of such a translation, according to him, is a revolution of language: "what versatility has come to the Germans, what rhythmical and metrical advantages are available to the spirited, talented beginner, how Ariosto and Tasso, Shakespeare and Calderon have been brought to us two and three times over as Germanized foreigners" (Schulte and Biguenet 61). Expression in the German language evolved to include the foreign utterance of these authors and their linguistic traditions, made possible via the textual mastery – or authorship, of the translators.

To read a translation as a literary work itself allows for new possibilities within the notions of originality and authorship. With this perspective, readers in the translated language can engage with the translation directly and not read suspicious of its accuracy. This is how authors like Homer, Kafka, Cervantes, and Dostoevsky have become part of the literary canon in English, without being from the English literary canon. In reading in (modern English) translation, scholar Jane Hirshfield's students remarked that "they were hearing the poems for the first time as relevant to their own lives, as genuinely moving [...] Poems brought into current-day English could speak as they did when first written: as this moment's murmur into this moment's ear" (Hirshfield). This idea that a translation

should speak as presently to the audience as the original did for its own reflects the story of translation in *Kalīlah and Dimnah*. Each translator-author composes the text in a way that will speak to his own readership; in so doing he becomes the model philosopher and therefore a translator-author. Barzawayh's journey towards knowledge, Ibn al-Muqaffa''s introduction of prose, and Alfonso X's codification of the Spanish language all happen through the translation of the *Kalīlah*. Each translator's story reflects a different moment in time, a different cultural context, and a different style of translation. The translator is a sage, an author, and a reader all at once, and it is his composition which constitutes the work *Kalīlah and Dimnah*.

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