Meyd un kale, froy un vayb:

The Characterisation of the Feminine in Early Eighteenth Century Yiddish Chapbooks

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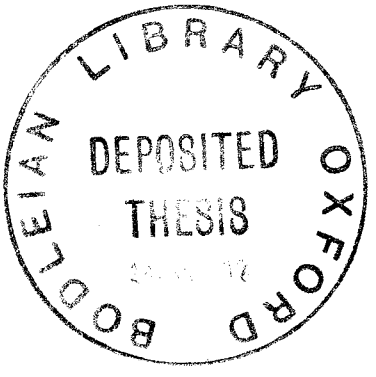


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This thesis is concerned with the behaviour of female characters in four, popular, non-ritualistic Yiddish chapbooks published at the beginning of the eighteenth century: *Mayse fun a kale*, *Mageleyne lid*, *Mayse man un vayb*, and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*. Most Yiddish chapbooks from this time do not narrate stories which include women as the main protagonists. However, these four rhymed booklets, published before the influence of either the Enlightenment and Hasidism, do include women as principal characters. The mimetic qualities of these four chapbooks, although obviously distorted in that they are presented from a highly educated male viewpoint, demonstrate a clear perspective on how women should behave, especially those whom the author could reach through his didactic, yet entertaining material. Through an analysis of the four booklets in question, one is able to derive a picture of how women were perceived in early modern Ashkenaz. It is also possible to draw a much smoother line of influence in the characterisation of the feminine from pre-modern Yiddish literature to modern Yiddish than drawn before now.

Three specific questions are addressed in the thesis. The first of these concerns the dynamics in the relationships between men and women. How are relationships defined and prescribed? In light of this male/female dynamic, what is the relationship between gender and power? Finally, what is the cultural construction of gender, the prescriptions for proper behaviour, and how are women portrayed in chapbook literature? Keeping in mind that the mimetic quality of these fictive texts is a reflection of the attitudes of the author, it is the goal here to find the symbolic categories as they are defined in these four texts, and determine their meaning within the context of eighteenth century Ashkenaz.

The thesis is presented in three parts. The first part presents introductory matters concerning terminology and orientations presented in the work. It also includes a background survey of the educational possibilities and limitations afforded women prior to the *Haskole*. The second part of the thesis details the characterisation of the feminine as presented in the texts, followed by the conclusions. Lastly, the texts themselves are presented in three formats: first, a scanned copy — with the discolourations and aging from the title page removed for demonstrative purposes — showing the original typefaces, decoration and publishing quality; the text is then presented in a more modern typeface, retaining however, original spellings; and lastly a translation of each text is included.

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This thesis is concerned with the behaviour of female characters in four, popular , non-ritualistic Yiddish chapbooks published at the beginning of the eighteenth century. During the early modern period of Yiddish literature (from 1504 until 1814), publishers fulfilled the desire of a Yiddish-speaking public for easily accessible reading material. Most of these booklets little or nothing to do with women. Women in these booklets frequently serve in secondary roles and little is said about their characterisation. However, among the array of material published between 1660 and 1720, there are four chapbooks of rhymed prose in which women do play principal roles. Published around 1700, these works are *Mageleyne lid*, *Mayse fun a kale*, *Mayse man un vayb*, and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* . Of these, three (*Mayse man un vayb*; *Mayse fun a kale*; and *Mageleyne lid*) narrate tales about female, human protagonists — single as well as married, exemplary in addition to iniquitous. The fourth text, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh,* is not directly related to female characters, or feminine characterisations. However, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* warrants equal attention specifically because this overall exclusion is connected to two brief, yet dramatic, appearances of female characters.

These four booklets, which are the subject of the present work, have been chosen from among the narratives, poetic and prose, published prior to 1750 for a number of specific reasons. First, while so few early Yiddish chapbooks have female protagonists, these texts are exemplary in that all four of the texts deal with female characters in a salient manner. Therefore they are particularly useful in offering a glimpse of the feminine in early modern Ashkenazic culture. Second, all four booklets are assumed to be the work of one talented, male author. The author of this group of booklets follows in a tradition of the majority of pre-modern Yiddish authors by not directly claiming authorship; although the author's identity remains anonymous, the texts demonstrate that he was a highly literate member of the educated elite. Similarly, his craftsmanship is particularly unique among Yiddish literature from the turn of the eighteenth century. Finally, the fourth booklet has a very conspicuous lack of female characters. The overwhelming exclusion of women in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, coupled with brief inclusions in two separate incidents, impart clear messages about the behaviour of women and their place in societal relationships in the eighteenth century European Jewish community. As a whole, the major emphases of our tales are on what was considered to be the proper role and behaviour of women in early modern patriarchal Ashkenaz.

The author's erudite background is demonstrated through his use of sources and influences ranging from Hebrew prophetic writings (as demonstrated in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*), Yiddish versions of Provençal chivalric tales (*Mageleyne lid*), common folktales (*Mayse man un vayb*), and the ambient Gentile literature (*Mayse fun a kale*). Rather than appropriating entire

narratives, the author unravelled particular tales (for example, from *Di zibn vayzn maynster fun roym*), removed Christian and obfuscating threads, and rewove the narratives with Jewish motifs and devices to form original tripartite tales to which the intended Jewish audience could more easily relate.

Despite the fact that men as well as women would comprise the booklets' actual audience, female characters in these four booklets figure more predominantly than do male characters. The women in these tales are rebelling against society's prescribed roles: daughters defying parental control, wives flouting spousal authority. In one case we see a husband, on the brink of being cuckolded, allowing himself to be manoeuvred into committing murder. Women in these narratives, even the heroine who appears to be a model of exemplary behaviour, are rebellious, manipulative, difficult to control while in dire need of control, and on the verge of upsetting the entire social order.

The mimetic qualities of the four chapbooks, although obviously distorted in that they are presented from a male viewpoint, are unified in that they share an author with a clear perspective on how women should behave, and especially women whom he can reach through his didactic, yet entertaining material. Through a clear analysis of the four booklets in question, one is able to derive a picture of how men, perceived women in early modern Ashkenaz. It is also possible to draw a much less ragged line of influence in the characterisation of the feminine from pre-modern Yiddish literature to modern Yiddish than drawn

before now. Thus, through these texts, it is possible to show that the characterisations which recur again later in modern literature, are older than formerly believed.

The primary concern, then, is with non-ritualistic, chapbook literature of the pre-maskilic era, when publishing in Yiddish was still centred in Western Europe. However, during the discussion reference will be made to the various ethical works (*muser* literature), Biblical and apocryphal texts; these are referred to only when they are sources of material contained within the tales, or are somehow referred to in the narratives themselves. Likewise, the entire body of religious works, which targeted women readers (for example *Tsenerene*, *Mitsvos noshim*, the numerous *tkhines*), is referred to, but are not analysed per se.

To augment discussion of popular literature, the publications under scrutiny appeared during the lifetime of Glikl of Hameln (1646-1724), whose books are the only complete memoirs authored by a Jewish woman living before the nineteenth century. While women such as Glikl, Rebekah bat Tiktiner, or Sarah bas Tovim could serve as points of comparison to the women of the intended audience of the four works under scrutiny, one must always bear in mind that these were all exceptional women — educated, literate, and, usually, although not always, comfortable financially — and accordingly they cannot justifiably be considered a measure of the norm. However, their writings, in particular Glikl's memoirs, can help considerably in our attempts to map the social and historical contexts in which the texts in question were produced and received.

For comparison and broader contextual analysis, the principal concern here is the vernacular Yiddish literature, rather than a comparison between Yiddish and Hebrew literature, or Yiddish and its surrounding Gentile counterparts. *Loshn koydesh*, or Hebrew together with Aramaic, was the language of prayer, and more importantly the language of study and education for the Jewish community. Women were usually given only a perfunctory foundation in language, and what they did learn was generally without the aid of a formal education. This foundation, in most cases, entailed the mastery of the rudiments of the Hebrew alphabet and those Hebrew prayers which would enable them to fulfil the minimum of religious observance required of women. Hebrew literature was generally unavailable to the masses, especially women, and was intentionally written with this in mind. Literary references to women would therefore not be included for the edification or entertainment of women, but rather were authored by educated men for other men whose wealth, education, and/or talents made Hebrew literary works inaccessible to them. On the other hand, an author of Yiddish literature, because he was writing in the vernacular, had to keep in mind the audience to which the work was intended — women and *ameratsim* (the ignorant). The latter group, comprised the majority of the male Jewish population at the time.

It is the intention to look at the feminine (i.e., female behaviour as determined not by biology or physiology but cultural definitions) characterisation in four Yiddish chapbooks, as posited by a single — albeit presumed solitary — male author, and to gauge the possible reception by a contemporary female audience of such characterisations. We will examine how, within the patriarchal

Ashkenazic communities of seventeenth/eighteenth century Europe, chapbooks functioned as a vehicle to inculcate acceptable behaviour among women (as defined by the established patriarchy), and to illustrate how deviation from the norms could lead to tragic consequences.

It is necessary therefore to commence our discussion with an examination of the socio-historical contexts of our texts. We may begin by examining the question of the gender of the authors of these chapbooks. It is generally believed that the majority of works published before the Haskole were written by men, while it is widely held that only two groups of texts can be credited to women. One is the early modern autobiography, exemplified only by Glikl of Hameln. The other is the genre of *tkhines* (supplicatory prayers), a large number of which can be ascribed to women (the study of which is being pursued by Weissler). There were female typesetters, and some women did author individual booklets, but to be able to examine a group of texts, other than *tkhines*, created by women — as advocates of feminist theory are most keen to do — is nigh onto impossible for the early modern period.

There are three specific questions which are to be addressed in this thesis, the answers to which will assist in elucidating the situation of women in early modern Ashkenaz. The first of these issues concerns the dynamics in the relationships between men and women. How are relationships defined and prescribed? Secondly, in light of this male/female dynamic, what is the

relationship between gender and power? Lastly, what is the cultural construction of gender? In other words, what are the prescriptions for proper behaviour, and how are women portrayed in chapbook literature?

In light of these issues, it should be remembered, as Weissler points out (1989:9), that at the turn of the eighteenth century, at least two systems for gender definition existed in Ashkenazic culture: *halakha* (religious precepts), which relegated 'real', normative, social behaviour and in which definitions were not very flexible; and popular definitions of behaviour, some of which can be ascertained through a study of the literature. While *halakha* prescribed the social categories of behaviour, the *symbolic* category was found elsewhere and allowed the creation of ones' identity by defining traits which one person/group has and the other does or does not have. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that the mimetic quality of these fictive texts is not a pure mimesis, but rather a reflection of the attitudes of the authors, who, as we were reminded above were male and more than likely part of the scholared elite. It is the goal here, therefore, to find the symbols and symbolic categories as they are defined in these four texts, and determine their meaning within the context of seventeenth/eighteenth century Ashkenaz.

The first role which the feminine plays in these tales is that of *meyd* ('maiden', 'young woman'). Inherent in this role is the assumption that the *meyd* is also a daughter. Thus, the young girl is the responsibility of her parents, in particular her father. If she is also a *kale* (i.e., a *meyd* of an marriageable age), then she

is — usually — under the age of twenty. The *kale* is likewise under the guardianship of her father and remains so until married.

In addition, there are young women who are unmanageable, and whose behaviour becomes a discredit to her family and community. The *nekeyve*, a term originally from the *loshn koydesh* meaning a 'female', is a woman with little or no decorum, lacking in the 'proper' social graces. She is beyond the confines of civilisation, and with her promiscuous behaviour, runs the risk of bringing ignominy upon herself and her family. Such a female has given way to her true 'nature' and as such can only be tamed by nature itself.

After the girl has reached maturity she assumes the role of *froy* ('woman'). Whether married or not, this adult woman is no longer the responsibility of her father. As a *vayb* ('wife'), she belongs to the household of her husband, and thus comes under his aegis. Should her husband perish or disappear, the *vayb* becomes an *agune* ('abandoned wife'), one of the other roles present in the texts. The *agune* has a questionable place in Jewish society. As a woman who has no proof of her husband's demise, she is ineligible for re-marriage, and thus exists on the fringes of 'normal' society.

Each of the various female protagonists in these *mayse-bikhlekh* deals with her own individual predicament in a unique manner. Nonetheless, they all share a single personality trait: rebelliousness. However one may depict these women (and each is characterised in a different light), they question patriarchal authority, as clearly represented by the male characters in the tales. That the author himself believes that Ashkenazic society is, as it stood, correct, is

reaffirmed by the fact that nothing in the narratives seem to change, with the exception, of course, of individual feminine behaviour. Two major arenas for a struggle between gender and power arise: (1) marriage arrangements; and (2) the relationships between adult men and women (i.e., married or in the least older).

Despite the custom that marriages were arranged, women were allowed a certain degree of freedom to express their consent, dissent, or in some cases their actual choice of a marriage partner. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh,* for example, the female, who is fairly young, is given free rein not only to select her future spouse, but also to meet him without a chaperone. It is emphasised that women, when left to their own initiative, cannot be guaranteed to prudent judgements. Rather than looking at religious learning and status within the Jewish community, the female is concerned with physical strength and happiness.

Arranging marriages was considered to be a matter of discovery, as the partnerships had already been arranged in heaven (Zborowski and Herzog 1952:269). Thus, women were expected to allow their futures to be managed by their parents, in particular their fathers. The future bride was expected to passively stand by while her care was transferred from the hands of her father to those of her husband. Nevertheless, we find that the feminine has an opinion, and at times it contradicts what is presented to be in her best interest. In *Mayse fun a kale*, Rokhl refuses to accept her father's decision. Instead, she believes she herself should have the final voice as to whom she should marry.

In addition, she shows disregard for God's will, as believed to be demonstrated by the arrangement, and confirmed for her when Reb Eliezer declares that he has found her 'pre-destined groom'. The arrogance, as well as the sexuality inherent in the feminine' brings about the protagonist's downfall (Gravdal 1992:571). Likewise, the tale warns readers that failure to conform to tradition (i.e., to wed) is 'so severe a threat to the social fabric that they will be compelled to submit' (Rowe 1979:247).

In *Mageleyne lid*, we know that the likelihood that Zigmund would be chosen (had his true identity been known) as Mageleyne's suitor is indeed very slim. Mageleyne realises that in order to marry whom she desires —the son of her father's enemy— she must defy parental and patriarchal authority. Inasmuch as Zigmund appeared to be the champion of the tourney held to determine who would wed Mageleyne, it can be inferred that the couple were pre-destined for each other, and had Mageleyne remained within the boundaries of proper decorum, the two would have been married. At the end of *Mageleyne lid*, the two lovers are reunited and with their public union, peace is established and the two warring kingdoms unified, reaffirming their suitability. However, Mageleyne's revolt against authority leads to her abandonment and isolation as she leads the life of a forsaken wife — alone and marginalised.

Throughout *Mageleyne lid*, the protagonist is compared with nature, reminding readers that women are objects close to that which is wild (as opposed to civilisation), and as such run the risk of becoming feral. At the same time, *Mageleyne lid* also demonstrates for the reader the cost of improper,

unrestrained emotions: like weeds in a garden, when passions take over, order is ignored. Once the women in these texts acknowledge the consequences of their behaviours and yield to society's expectations, order is restored. In *Mageleyne lid* this applies not only to the protagonist's life, but also to the entire world. With villainesses, such as the wife in *Mayse man un vayb*, the disorderliness is blatant. But even heroines, such as Mageleyne, pose an implicit threat to order. This threat can be contained by rigid adherence to social rules, or deflected by the attribution of the women's achievements to their love for men (Wiltenburg 1992:47). Clearly by exulting Mageleyne's dependency and self-sacrifice, the author implies that the survival of Ashkenazic culture depends heavily upon women's acceptance of their roles which relegate them to motherhood and domesticity' (Rowe 1979:239).

The tales portray the masculine in an entirely different fashion. Unlike the feminine, independent males, even those who live on the periphery of society and display a conscious lack of propriety, still retain their civility, and even settle disagreements through conventional means. Only when men are under the influence of women, especially with regard to their sexuality such as the two pirate captains in *Mayse fun a kale*, and the men in *Mayse man un vayb*, are males shown to resort to obstructive and violent patterns of behaviour. Women, on the other hand, once allowed to stray from the patriarchal rule, can only be controlled by nature itself — the only feminine stronger than the women in these texts.

The preeminent theme in our tales is that proper control over the feminine is necessary, lest society fall into a state of decay. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* the narrator infers that brute force, such as that used on the oxen who plow the fields, should be used when a female does not abide by the rules of proper decorum. Here the author demonstrates the rationalisation that the patriarchy must be protected, even if it means that extreme violence was to be used against those whom the patriarchy rules (Miles 1990:17).

The feminine in these texts does not demand tangible possessions, as females often do in German and English chapbooks (see Wiltenburg 1992). In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* , for example, the wife demands access to that which is the locus of masculine power in Ashkenazic society: religious learning, symbolised by the transference of knowledge from King Solomon to the husband. The wife has demanded, at any cost, the privilege of acquiring knowledge to which she, and all women, have been denied access. To grant her desire is tantamount to the destruction of Jewish society itself, represented by the man. Therefore the wife must be subdued — as one would subdue a beast which has become unruly and defiant. The message is clear: if the feminine is not properly controlled, as *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* implies, society will fall into decay. Only by putting females (and those 'males' who have relinquished their control to women) into their proper place — outside the centre of male culture — will civilisation become healthy once again.

Mayse man un vayb demonstrates this belief very clearly through the adulterous relationship between Zigomindo and the 'wife' of his chamberlain. Here the feminine uses the ultimate threat to the masculine: her innate sexuality. Once the king has fallen victim to the wife's sexual prowess, he falls ill with leprosy. Now weak and emasculated, Zigomindo joins the ranks those who are no longer proper guardians of society and its rules, because they have fallen victim to women (Gravdal 1992:579; Zucker 1987:145). Only by turning away the feminine, can the masculine regain control.

The author clearly utilises the stereotypical depiction of the feminine as found in early Hebrew and medieval Hebrew texts. As Dishon (1994:39) has outlined, the stereotyped feminine behaviours include fearfulness, cruelty, laziness, greed, light-headedness, shrewness, and unending deceit. The description of the feminine, it is important to remember, is generally restricted to its destructive impact on men, and by extension, society as a whole (see also Zucker 1987:144), and thus her lack of understanding of broad social issues (Sokoloff 1988:149). These over-simplified images express common-place fears about women and their possible impact on the stability of the patriarchy; they are controlled thereby through cathartic public disapproval. The feminine is then used against the reader, lest they become like the stereotype and therefore suffer the fate of the protagonists found in these texts (cf. Wiltenburg 1992:254-55).

Should the feminine fail to control her behaviour, violence is an acceptable recourse, whether or not this is mirrored in reality. That the narrator does not display alarm at the use of violence is a sign that such behaviour has been legitimised and accepted by society (Frakes 1994:132). The overlying threat of spousal abuse, carried out in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, is clearly a didactic tool underscoring for the reader the social boundaries to which she is expected to adhere (Wiltenburg 1992:183). The violence in these texts demonstrates that there exists 'a power struggle for the *maintenance* of a certain kind of order' (de Lauretis 1989:242). Indeed both the spousal abuse and the threat of rape are used as tools to inculcate the female reader into believing she has no choice but to accept the role of victim (Walker 1979:14-16).

Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh clearly demonstrates that while the feminine should be impressed by erudition, genealogy and spiritual concerns, in reality the feminine is concerned with carnal matters. Likewise, we find that the feminine is often defiant of patriarchal authority, as represented by the male characters in the texts. As objects of nature, the feminine manifests, for the male reader, as well as the female who wishes to remain within society's circle, those emotions, attitudes and behaviours over which they must gain control in order to remain civilised (Miles 1990:17 and Wiltenburg 1992:19). Thus depicted as uncivilised and unruly, the feminine characterised in *Mayse fun a kale* and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* are also arrogant and boisterous, lacking in modesty and decorum. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, the feminine was intrusive, and demanding.

It has been stated elsewhere (Zucker 1987:4) that the **modern** woman in Yiddish literature emerges only in the late nineteenth century. The characterisation of a 'modern' female would be, according to Zucker (1987:5) 'the women's recognition of the conflicting forces that seethe within them, and the desire to have more control over their lives'. It is not the dissatisfaction with the *status quo* therefore that is 'modern', therefore, but the female's want to control her social environment. Zucker later (1987:35) defines her women (authors and characters) as modern or 'as standing on the brink of modernity, if they dare to question and/or revolt against the circumscribed roles of wife and mother to which traditional society has relegated them, and have ceased to link their destiny to a greater one prescribed by God or society [...] modern heroines will frequently consult their own will before consulting the will of the community.' The characters Zucker studied (1987:5-6) question and/or revolt by yearning for romantic love, refusing to get married, or defying parental authority

.

Yet, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the feminine as characterised in these texts are 'modern, or standing on the brink of modernity' (Zucker 1987:35). The major difference here is that a definition of modernity, such as the one used by Zucker, relies upon the idea of individualism, which was not prevalent in early eighteenth century thought (cf. Wiltenburg 1992:19). Nevertheless, the feminine, as characterised throughout these narratives, follows the definition of 'modern' above. Thus, as Zucker (1987:7) says with regard to later Yiddish literature, 'the fate of the female protagonist in literature became a metaphor for the fate of the Jewish people, and she became the

focal point for the conflict between modernity and tradition which is the very essence of modern Yiddish literature'. As we have seen, the author here is very much against the 'modernist' trends he witnessed around him. Later, the behaviour of women, the feminine as described above, was firmly ingrained in popular literature. Early in the eighteenth century, the typology and genres found in later treasures of modern Yiddish literature (for example Ayzik Meyer Dik, see Roskies 1977:854-856) were already present.

The thesis is presented in three parts. The first part presents introductory matters concerning terminology and orientations presented in the work. It also includes a background survey of the educational possibilities and limitations afforded women prior to the *Haskole.* The second part of the thesis details the characterisation of the feminine as presented in the texts, followed by the conclusions. Lastly, the texts themselves are presented in three formats: first, a scanned copy — with the discolourations and aging from the title page removed for demonstrative purposes — showing the original typefaces, decoration and publishing quality; the text is then presented in a more modern typeface, retaining however, original spellings; and lastly a translation of each text is included.

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Part I: Background

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

This thesis is concerned with four, popular, non-ritualistic Yiddish booklets published at the turn of the eighteenth century. Each uniquely deals with the behaviour of female characters. Since the mid-1500s, publishers fulfilled the demand of the Yiddish speaking public for easily accessible reading material. For instance, Zfatman's (1985) bibliography of the early Yiddish prose narrative produced during the period from 1504 until 1814, contains 195 books and booklets, the majority of which have survived — frequently as single copies — in national, public, and university libraries around the world.

Most Yiddish books from this early period have little or nothing to do with women. In fact, the majority narrate tales with male protagonists, for example, events from the lives of pious rabbis. Women in these booklets frequently serve in secondary roles and little is said about them. That is not to say that all early Yiddish popular material had male protagonists. There are,

for example, exceptional works in which the female protagonist is not human, but rather a demon such as *Mayse Vestindye* (c.1665, Prague; Steinschneider 1852-60: 620, n. 3942; Cowley 1929:405; cf. Erik 1979:344, Zfatman 1985: 51 and 1987), or is the passive receptacle of the possession by a *dybbuk* (an evil spirit or demon which possesses the bodies of others), as in *Mayse fun ruekh bek[ehiles] k[edoysh] Korets* (c.1665, Prague; Steinschneider 1852-60:616, n. 3922; Cowley 1929: 405; cf. Zfatman 1982a where the text is reproduced and 1983, vol. 1:194-200). Likewise, there are other booklets which narrate events surrounding female protagonists, or antagonists, such as *A sheyn mayse* ([1714-22], Offenbach; Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3930; Cowley 1929:405; Zfatman 1985:95 and 1988), *Mayse fun a kale mit dray khasanim* (c.1700, Amsterdam; Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3930; Cowley 1929:405; Zfatman 1985:79-80 and 1993), and *Mayse hagodl* (printed 1711 in Halle; Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3934; Cowley 1929:405; and Zfatman 1985:101-02). These works provide tales of passive female protagonists affected by events beyond their control. On the other hand, there are tales where the female protagonists are mischievous, such as in the often rewritten *Istorye mishelosh nashim*, the original of which is only known to us through the censure lists from Mantua (see Zfatman 1985:28). In this tale (retold, for example, in *A hipshe mayse fun dray vaybern* printed in Prague around 1665; Steinschneider 1852-60:619, n. 3981; Cowley 1929:405; Erik 1979: 342-43; Zfatman 1985:50) is a Yiddish variant of AT1406 — 'The Merry Wives' Wager'. Lastly, there is the carnivalesque tale *A sheyn, naye [sic] lid fun dray vaybern*, (printed around 1700 in Amsterdam; cf.

Steinschneider 1852-60:567-68, n. 3667; Cowley 1929:92) which is a retelling of a Hans Sachs' tale of a wife who, after a night of drinking with her friends, abuses her husband.

Among the collection of material published between 1660 and 1720, there are four uniform, rhymed booklets in which women do play principal roles. These works may be described as non-ritualistic books because they supply their readers with edifying entertainment, and sometimes plain entertainment (Miron 1973:2; see also Niger 1959:70; Zfatman 1983, vol.1:x). Published around 1700, the four works are *Mageleyne lid*, *Mayse fun a kale*, *Mayse man un vayb*, and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*. These pamphlets, which blend three different main episodes or stories, sometimes from divergent language sources, into single tripartite tales, are believed to be authored by a single writer who has been lauded for his narrative and poetic flair (Erik 1979:335-40; Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:215-31). Of these, three (*Mayse man un vayb*; *Mayse fun a kale*; and *Mageleyne lid*) narrate tales about female, human protagonists — single as well as married, exemplary in addition to iniquitous. The fourth text, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh,* is not directly related to female characters, or feminine characterisations. However, it warrants equal attention specifically because of the brief, yet dramatic, appearances of two female characters.

I have specifically chosen these four booklets from among the wide array of various contemporary and earlier narratives, in verse and in prose, for several reasons. First, all four texts deal with female characters in a salient

manner and are therefore particularly useful in offering us a glimpse of the feminine in early modern Ashkenazic (i.e., European, primarily Yiddish speaking) culture. This is because, of the works available from the period in question, the characterisation of the females in these tales is not only exceptionally well-developed, but their individualistic and recalcitrant behaviours directly affect the outcome of the tales themselves.

Second, all four booklets are believed to be the work of one talented, male author (Erik 1979:335-40; Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:215-31). Although the author's identity remains anonymous, he demonstrates, through narrative and poetic style, as well as a mastery of diverse sources, including 'rare Midrash and legends' (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1: 222), that he was a highly literate member of the educated elite.

Finally, I have chosen the fourth booklet by our author because of its very conspicuous lack of female characters, which is significant as well. The overwhelming exclusion of women in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, coupled with brief inclusions of females in two separate incidents, impart clear messages about the behaviour of women and their place in societal relationships in the early eighteenth century European Jewish community. As a whole, the major emphases of our tales seem to be on what was considered to be the proper role and behaviour of women in early modern patriarchal Ashkenaz.

The author of our four booklets remains anonymous, as was often the case with authors of many pre-modern Yiddish chapbooks, pamphlets and short collections of narratives. Nevertheless, his craftsmanship, which particularly stands out among the Yiddish literary production from the turn of the eighteenth century, demonstrates that the four narratives are most likely the work of a single author: first, Yiddish booklets written in rhymed prose were exceptionally rare; second, the rhyming pattern of all four booklets is the same; and lastly, both the narrative and sentence structures of all four are consistent (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1: 57-59). Despite the author's conventional anonymity, Erik (1979:335-40) and others following him (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:57-59, 215-31), acknowledge that the uniformity of the four booklets, each with its similar length (220-240 lines,) and long flowing rhyming pattern (*aabbccddee*), corroborates that our four booklets were written by one author.

It has been posited that the author was possibly an immigrant to Central Europe who had escaped from the troubles confronting the Eastern European Jewish communities of the time. Erik (1979:335-40; Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:57-59, 213-14) extrapolates from the following lines in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* that the author had emigrated westward from Poland.

דער צו בין איך איין גרושיר (מיוחס) פֿון פֿאטר אונ' מוטרס (צד)
איבר דיא פֿיגל אין לובלינר וואלד וואר לאנד (רבּ) מיין טעט:
אונ' מיינר מוטרש פֿאטר וואר (רבּ) אין דען קראקאווּר וואלד.
אונ' דער צו בין איך קלוג אונ' פֿר שטענדיג אונ' וואול גישטאלט:
דיא בתּולה שפּראך צו אים וואש העלפֿט מיך דער (ייחוס) דיין.

(I am a well-bred [lit. one with a great pedigree] [person] on
my father's and mother's side.
My father was rabbi over all the birds in Lublin's forest,
And my mother's father was rabbi in the Cracow forest.
And [that is the reason why] I am so clever and
knowledgeable and well-built.
The maiden said to him 'How does your pedigree help me?')
(page 1a, lines 19-23)

Considering the political crises confronting the Jews in Eastern Europe, particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is plausible that the author was indeed a recent immigrant from Poland. However, the inferences about the author's life-history (i.e., that the author himself came from such a family), based on the assumption that this portion of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is autobiographical, are tenuous and cannot be substantiated. In the opening portion of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, we find an adaptation of a folktale concerning King Solomon and a boastful bird (see Chapter 6, page 161; Bin-Gorion 1976:172, and Schwarzbaum 1968:139-40). The male bird attempts to persuade a female bird to marry him, by reciting an illustrious genealogy, thus giving the impression that he is a *meyukhes* (someone with a well-connected and well-thought of family). The Jewish religious leaders and *yeshivas* in Poland were held in high regard throughout Ashkenazic communities, and boys from Western and Central Europe were sent there to study with eminent scholars (see Glikl 1962:26). Thus, Poland, and in particular Lublin and Cracow, would be an impressive choice as the place of origin for a fictional character, such as the braggadocio in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*. While such details certainly are interesting,

there is nothing in this passage to warrant the assumption that the first tale of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is actually autobiographical.

The poetic and narrative structures of the tales, as well as their sources, show that the author was competent not only in Jewish literatures, but quite possibly the surrounding Gentile literary traditions as well. This is clearly demonstrated by his use of discrete sources and influences, ranging from classical Hebrew sources (as demonstrated in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*), Yiddish versions of Provençal chivalric tales (*Mageleyne lid*), common folktales (*Mayse man un vayb*), and the ambient Gentile literature (*Mayse fun a kale*). Rather than appropriating entire narratives, our author unravelled particular tales (for example, from *Di zibn vayzn maynster fun Roym*), removed Christian and obfuscating threads, and interwove the narratives with Jewish motifs and devices to form new, outwardly Judaised, and internally original tripartite tales to which the intended audience could more easily relate (cf. Dowling 1992).

Within these original, and now distinctly Jewish booklets, our author demonstrates his ability to use entertaining stories as didactic tools. Despite the fact that men as well as women would comprise the booklets' actual audience, female characters in these four works figure more predominantly than do male characters. More importantly, the women in the tales are rebels against society's prescribed roles, or at the very least, appear to threaten the 'natural' patriarchal order. We see daughters defying parental choices of husbands, as well as wives flouting spousal authority. In one case a husband,

on the brink of being cuckolded, allows himself to be manoeuvred into committing murder. Even those females who otherwise appear to be models of exemplary behaviour, are rebellious, manipulative, difficult to control while in dire need of control, and on the verge of upsetting the entire social order. Even in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, which blatantly excludes women, the brief but important appearances of two female characters impart strong messages concerning the characterisation and place of the feminine in pre-modern Ashkenazic society.

The mimetic qualities of our four booklets, although obviously distorted in that they are presented from a male viewpoint, are unified in that they are the creation of an author with a clear perspective on how women should behave, and especially women whom he can reach through his entertaining, yet didactic material. Thus, an analysis of the four booklets in question, enables us to derive an image of how men, (or in the least one apparently from the educated elite), perceived women in early modern Ashkenaz. It is also feasible through our analysis of these four booklets to draw a much less ragged line of influence in the characterisation of the feminine from pre-modern to modern Yiddish literature than previously possible.

The primary concern of the present study, then, is with non-ritualistic, chapbook (see below, page 8) literature of the pre-Jewish Enlightenment era, which Weinreich (1967:2210) refers to as the time of the 'First Literary Language'. This was a time when publishing in Yiddish was still centred in Western and Central Europe, yet during which no new forms nor great works

of literature appeared (Weinreich 1928:273; Mark 1960:1192, 1197). However, during our discussion, reference will be made to the various ethical works (*muser* literature), and Biblical and apocryphal texts. These are referred to when they are sources of material contained within the tales, or if they are somehow referred to in the narratives themselves. Likewise, the entire body of religious works, which targeted women readers (for example, the very popular exegetical paraphrase of the Pentateuch and Five Scrolls, entitled *Tsene rene*, the ethical instructional work *Mitsvos noshim*, or the numerous *tkhines* — supplicatory Yiddish prayers often written for women), is referred to, but not analysed per se.

In order to map the social and historical contexts in which the texts in question were produced and received, I shall refer to the autobiography of Glikl of Hameln (1646-1724), whose life history (see Glikl 1962 and 1979), written for her family, is the only complete memoir authored by a Jewish woman living before the nineteenth century (see page 49 below). Works by women such as Glikl are, however, of limited use. Women such as Glikl (or, for that matter, Rebekah Tiktiner, or Sarah bas Toyvim) could certainly serve as comparisons to the women of the intended audience of our four booklets, especially Glikl, whose autobiography provides direct information and references to, as well as quotations and borrowings from, contemporary Yiddish literature and folklore. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that such

women were all exceptional — educated, literate, and, usually, although not always, comfortable financially — and accordingly they cannot justifiably be considered a measure of the norm.

For comparison and broader contextual analysis, the principal concern here is Yiddish literature exclusively, rather than a comparison between Yiddish and Hebrew literature, or Yiddish and its surrounding Gentile counterparts. Hebrew, together with Aramaic, formed the *loshn koydesh* ('the holy tongue' or 'the language of holiness'; see J. Fishman 1981c:6), the language of prayer, and more importantly the language of study and education for the Jewish community. Women were usually given only a perfunctory foundation in language, and what they did learn was generally without the aid of a formal education (see page 43). This foundation, in most cases, entailed the mastery of the rudiments of the Hebrew alphabet and those Hebrew prayers that would enable them to fulfil the minimum of religious observance required of women. In the synagogue, or when an occasion required more knowledge, the women were either directed by *firzogerins* or *zogerkes* (women who led other women in the repetition of prayers in synagogue), or instructed by their male leaders (see Niger 1959:52; Weissler 1987b and 1987c). If the occasion warranted, women wrote their own prayers in the vernacular (see Weissler 1987b, 1988, and 1992). Hebrew literature was generally unavailable to the masses, especially women. Literary references to women in Hebrew literature was usually written by educated male writers for other men. Thus, women in Hebrew literature were

characterised differently than in Yiddish literature (Dishon 1994). On the other hand, an author of Yiddish literature, because he was writing in the vernacular, had to keep in mind the audience to which the work was intended — women and *ameratsim* (the ignorant). It is important to remember that the latter group, sometimes referred to as 'men who are like women' (see Weissler 1989), i.e., from the viewpoint of their literacy or lack thereof, apparently comprised the majority of the male Jewish population at the time.

1.2 Preliminary Definitions

1.2.1 Chapbook, *Volksbuch*, *Folksbukh*, and *Mayse-bikhl*

In this section I wish to address the proliferation of terms used by scholars to describe the form and format of the collection of texts from which our four booklets were drawn. First, I will define what chapbook means and how it refers to the format of the material, not the genres. I will then discuss the differences between chapbook and *Volksbuch*. Lastly, I will establish the relationship between the analytical term chapbook and the ethnic phrase *mayse-bikhl*.

1.2.1.1 Chapbook

I have referred to the four booklets selected for this study as 'chapbooks'. Unlike the larger, more expensive, and durable collections of tales, such as the *Mayse bukh* (Basle, 1602) and *Mayse nisim* (Amsterdam,

1696) — both immensely popular and reprinted often — our booklets contain single stories. These booklets are also relatively small (octavo in size), and have little or no decoration.

They clearly fit the description of a 'chapbook', defined as a small, paper-covered book (sometimes broadsheets), sold by chapmen or peddlers (Neuburg 1964:1, Weiss 1969:1-3). Chapbooks were of uneven print quality — ranging from fair to 'execrable' — and were sold by itinerant peddlers in early modern England (Weiss 1969:1-2). The stock of hawkers of Yiddish chapbooks was not very different: the black letter of English type is comparable to the early fonts (Zafren 1973; Fuks and Fuks-Mansfield 1984). The language and style of the booklets varies from 'transliterated German' (cf. discussions throughout Howard 1972 and Frakes 1989 as to whether the language of these texts is Yiddish, Judeo-German, or German, and the implications of such distinctions), to a Yiddish significantly close to a literary, stylised early modern Yiddish. Given their small size, (approximately 3 1/2 x 6 inches, and 16 leaves or less; see the Appendix), chapbooks, as can be seen with our four texts for example, were easily transported and were relatively inexpensive for hawkers to purchase in bulk.

The adoption of the English term 'chapbook' for this thesis is justified for a number of reasons. First, one may use this term without referring to, or implying, a particular genre of literature, although the literary calibre of such works is closer to rough-hewn works, or at best bowdlerised editions of what was considered 'high literature'. In fact, the classification scheme for English

and American chapbooks in the Harvard University's Library, as developed in 1905 by Tillingcast (see Neuburg 1964:7-8; Weiss 1969: v), lists twenty-three different (although at times overlapping) categories, including religious books, travel narratives, stories of the fantastic, fairy tales, jest books and calendars. While there are certain categories which are not as prevalent in early modern Yiddish literature as in English and American, Tillingcast's classification demonstrates the breadth of material covered by the term 'chapbook'. It is for this reason that the term is well-suited to refer to the works analysed in this study.

1.2.1.2 *Volksbuch*

The German term *Volksbuch*, coined in 1807 by Joseph J. Görres (used by Paucker 1959a and 1959b, and Howard 1972, for example), is similar to 'chapbook', referring to a variety of popular reading material sold (from the 1600s until the early 1900s), to an ever-growing audience. However, I chose not to use this term for two reasons. *Volksbuch* in, for example, the Garlands' *Oxford Companion to German Literature* (1986:899-900), is defined as 'popular literature in *prose narrative* form (emphasis mine)'. Braak (1969:189-90) further delineates the *Volksbuch* as a prosaic genre into which earlier poetic, epic works were transmuted. If one accepts such definitions, then a large number of Yiddish booklets of the early modern period, as well as those under scrutiny here, would have to be excluded.

A look at the collection of small, Yiddish booklets found in the Oppenheim Collection at the Bodleian Library should suffice to prove the inapplicability of the term. These materials not only differ stylistically, their contents range from rhymed dirges, to jest books, and hagiographies, thus clearly falling outside the definition of *Volksbuch*. With regard to the texts forming the corpus of this thesis, the very fact that they are written in rhyme precludes them from consideration as *Volksbücher*.

The second issue with the adoption of *Volksbuch* is its definition as 'a degenerate form of literature [...] *gesunkenes Kulturgut* [deteriorated cultural asset]. They were intended to satisfy the hunger of a new public, eager to read, but without knowledge or taste' (Garland 1986:900). The inherent problem here is its qualitative definition of *gesunkenes*. It is widely held that, for Yiddish, high reading material — i.e., material which presented a suitable moral and could be recommended for Sabbath reading (when secular material was not to be read) — included only those works, especially story collections, translated, or styled as translated from *loshn koydesh* (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:x). All other material, in particular works translated or adapted from foreign, non-Jewish sources were regarded as diversionary — something to be read on a long trip for example — and therefore of a lower cultural value.

The question to ask is: who makes the determination as to what is *gesunken* and what is not? In most cases it was not the readers themselves. In the seventeenth century it was the learned elite, including authors, publishers, and censors, who generally defined certain types of literature as

inferior. For example, the following admonition is to be found in the introduction to the 1602 edition of the *Mayse bukh* (as quoted in Zfatman 1985:37; also Meitlis 1933:25-26, Shmeruk 1988:44):

דרום איר ליבן מאנן אונ׳ ורויאן. לייאנט איר אפֿט דרויש זא ווערט איר דריכן ביהויאן. אונ׳ ניט צו לייאנן אויש דעם ביכֿר פֿון קויאן. אונ׳ פֿון די טריך פֿון בערן אונ׳ מיינשטר הילדא ברנט זאלט איר אך אייך ניט טון מיאן. נון עש זיין וועלך אייטל שמיץ. זיא געבן אייך ניט נאך וואַרים נאך היץ. אך זיין זיא ניט געטליך דער בייא.

> (Therefore dear men and women, read often from it so that you will become well-versed in it. Do not read from the *Ku bukh*. You should also not trouble yourself with *Ditrikh fun Bern* [*Dietrich von Bern*], and *Master Hildebrant*. They are indeed nothing but dirt. They do not give you warmth nor heat. Also, they are not godly.)

Already at this point in the history of printed Yiddish literature, there was a determination of what was considered to be 'low' or unworthy literature. However, this degenerate literature, deemed suitable only for women and other 'illiterates', was nevertheless recognised as a valuable tool for introducing the morals and values of the elite to the public. Bascom's (1956: 298) concluding note on the role of folklore can be applied to the tales here:

> It is used to inculcate the customs and ethical standards in the young, and as an adult to reward him [*sic*] with praise when he conforms, to punish him with ridicule or criticism when he deviates, to provide him with rationalizations when the institutions and conventions are challenged or questioned, to suggest that he be content with things are they are, and to provide him with a compensatory escape from "the hardships, the inequalities, the injustices" of everyday life. Here, indeed, is the basic paradox of folklore, that while it plays a vital role in transmitting and maintaining the institutions of a culture and in forcing the

> individual to conform to them, at the same time it provides socially approved outlets for the repressions which these same institutions impose upon him.

The notion that this *gesunkenes Kulturgut*, at least in Yiddish, was targeted at, and consumed mostly by women (see Niger 1959, for example), parallels what has been said about the novel in general, and the romance novel in particular. William Ray's (1994:424-5) statement regarding the novel may also be applicable to the Yiddish booklets under scrutiny here: the persistent identification of this literature with women was, in part, a reactionary attempt to marginalise a genre considered menacing to the traditional systems of power. It was thus also an attempt to exclude women from more serious modes of cultural expression. Similarly, by attributing these Yiddish booklets to the realm of women, the elite were performing two tasks: the devaluation of the booklets as a means of cultural authority, and the ensuing dampening of its readers' influence in the public sphere (Ray 1994:424).

A statement concerning the quality of literature likewise reflects on the public itself:

> It would be easy enough to dismiss the Smithton's readers; conflicting beliefs (they do not expect to be able to apply rules of a fantasy world to their own yet believe that the fantasy world is congruent with their own) about the realism of the romantic fantasy by attributing them to a lack of sophistication. Such a move, however, would once again deny the worth of the readers' understanding of their own experience. [...]
>
> (Radway 1984:186-87)

> Whereas "good books" require a complex intellectual and emotional response and lead to self-enhancement [...], "bad books" are escapist pap, uncritically consumed by readers who are lulled into a deadening cultural accommodation.
>
> (Long 1987:10)

While the female member of the Jewish community may have been uneducated — especially in the eyes of the contemporary learned male elite and lay leadership — and possibly only functionally literate, her eagerness for reading/listening to material does not necessarily discount her knowledge of cultural codes, textual competency, or aesthetic tastes. Until recently, twentieth century criticism of mass-culture, in particular literature, assumed a stance similar to that of the Garlands. Elizabeth Long (1987:9) writes:

> The spectre of massification in literature is essentially the fear that book production geared to large audiences will result in standardized and degraded literary fare serving only the lowest common denominator of literary taste. [...] In fact, commercialization of literature *has* been linked to the expansion of the reading public since the eighteenth century when the middle classes and "their" literature — most notably the novel — achieved undisputed cultural hegemony. The educated and affluent middle and upper classes have not lost their cultural preeminence since then.

A similar attitude toward 'popular culture' as *gesunkenes Kulturgut* can be seen in literary criticism of the twentieth century. Long and Radway (see also Rabine 1985:186) both have studied the twentieth century readers of mass-produced, popular fiction, the 'good' books and the modern romance respectively. Their findings provide insights that can be applied regressively.

Their findings demonstrate that readers, especially women, tend to appropriate literature in such a way as to momentarily blend the psychological boundaries of fiction and reality in a way that can be therapeutic (Long 1987:23, Radway 1986:8). The 'romance' in particular takes advantage of this, and authors of this genre utilise this merger in order to get the reader to accept whatever point is being made in the narrative. Readers of mass culture, especially women, 'incorporate books into their lives primarily as special life-experiences, they often judge them according to the same criteria and values they apply to their non-literary lives' (Long 1987:22; cf. Radway 1984:86). The use of a 'simple and resolutely familiar' language (Radway 1986:61), i.e., the vernacular, allows a reader to rely on the cultural codes previously learned, and allows verification of these codes and values.

That is not to say that mass literature is simply a regurgitation of the status quo. The function of mass culture is indeed to express the status quo; it also fulfils a transformational function, albeit temporarily, enabling the reader to leave the daily routine (Radway 1986:8). Likewise, it permits a reader to express vicariously (and thus safely) emotions and opinions which could threaten the dominant ideology (Radway 1986:142-3)

While some of the material contained in early Yiddish chapbooks could assuredly qualify as *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (see, for example, the bawdy and carnivalesque *A sheyn naye lid fun dray vaybern*, printed at the turn of the eighteenth century, possibly in Prague); however, this is to be expected when one considers the 'hunger' of a public, which as a whole could only relatively

recently afford reading material, no matter how educated, literate, or competent its members may have been.

1.2.1.3 *Folksbukh*

Within Yiddish scholarship, פֿאָלקסבוך (*folksbukh*), מעשה-בוך (*mayse-bukh*), and מעשה ביכל (*mayse bikhl*) have all been employed to describe the types of booklets under scrutiny here. The first term, *folksbukh*, is too similar to the German not to conjure confusion between two distinct literary entities. Likewise, in light of Frakes' discussion (1989) as to the ulterior motives behind the naming and transliteration techniques of scholars in the field of Old Yiddish, the term implies a German genealogy, a line which I consciously choose to avoid here (cf. Dowling 1991; also Weinreich 1960:102). While one cannot discount the influence of the cultures of the surrounding majority populations in which the authors and publishers of Yiddish texts found themselves (cf. Weinreich 1960, 1967:2204-05), and from which they borrowed, it is necessary to reiterate that a text transcribed/translated/adapted into Yiddish, was then appropriated and thus interpreted differently by the Yiddish-speaking audience. Once transformed in this manner, a work's basic nature changes as well, for a text does not exist without the interpretation of an addressee, whether reader or listener. It is her cultural knowledge, her life experience, and her competency in literature that gives a text meaning (cf. J. Fishman 1981a:747). If an experience described

in a text is not shared with the addressee, the reader will either ignore it, or reinterpret it to suit her reading. No matter what the actual source of a work, as I have argued elsewhere (Dowling 1991), it becomes an 'original' once brought into the Jewish milieu. Moreover, even Yiddish literary scholarship, more often than not, searched for hypothetical and putative extra-Yiddish sources of pre-modern Yiddish literature at the expense of paying attention to its own internal literary and oral traditions (cf. Kahan 1952:242 and Dowling 1991).

1.2.1.4 *Mayse-bikhl*

The phrase *mayse bukh* is not suitable for the purposes of the present study for two reasons. While in popular usage the term generally corresponds to 'story book' (cf. Reyzen 1932), or a collection of stories. Thus, the phrase lends itself all too readily to confusion with the classical Yiddish text *Mayse bukh*, printed in Basle in 1602 (cf. Meitlis 1933; Gaster [1934]1981; Sand 1965). This popular collection of 257 tales, selected by the author/collector for their 'edifying value', enjoyed a wide audience. While some Yiddish chapbooks could have perhaps suited the lofty ideals of the author of the *Mayse bukh* — who condemned the reading of two contemporary books, adapted from European sources, as frivolous — many would have undoubtedly been recommended for censure.

Closer to the English 'chapbook', yet still problematic is the analytical use of the term מעשה-ביכל (*mayse-bikhl*, see for example Zfatman 1979:126, 1983; also Roskies 1977:852, Shmeruk 1988:141). Zfatman (1983 and 1985) uses this term to describe both the format and the content of her corpus. She (1983:7-11) categorises four different types of narrative publications which appeared between 1540 and 1814 as: 1) a collection of stories printed together as in *Mayse bukh* and *Mayse nisim*; 2) framed stories such as those found in *Sheyne artlikhe geshikhtn*, the Yiddish translation of a number of stories from *Il Decameron* (1577); 3) individual stories published singly; and 4) stories attached to other publications. She describes (1983, vol. 18) type three, the *mayse-bikhl*, as a '[...] booklet, small in size (octavo format, 4-16 pages) which includes, in most cases, only one narrative unit.'

Although the application of the term *mayse-bikhl* came into use after the emergence of this type of booklet, Zfatman (1983, vol. 19) applies it in order to differentiate the *mayse-bikhl* from other small booklets printed contemporaneously. She emphasises that it is a phenomenon of the printing press and thus no manuscript equivalent to a *mayse-bikhl* has been found thus far. On the basis of its ephemeral characteristics — inexpensive, small (thus making it portable), and the ease with which the material could be read (i.e., in one sitting) — the *mayse-bikhl* was generally read once and rarely published more than once. Similarly, it appears that the *mayse-bikhl* is a

phenomenon unique to early modern Yiddish literature, without a German or Hebrew counterpart (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:xi).

Yet the phrase *mayse-bikhl* can pose similar problems with respect to material classified as *mayse bukh*, although its diminutive properties (ביכל *bikhl* as opposed to בוך *bukh*) allow only for the inclusion of small booklets. Firstly, there is the connotation of *mayse-bikhl* as a 'fairytale', derived in part from some of the fantastic tales included in the *Mayse bukh* (see for example the translations for *mayse-bikhl* given in Harkavy's [1988:311] and in Uriel Weinreich's popular *Modern English-Yiddish/Yiddish-English Dictionary* [1968:540] respectively). Two objections to such a usage of *mayse-bikhl* arise. If 'fairy tale' is used to denote a folk tale (an oral tale, or a tale told among 'peasants'; see for example Bascom 1981, Zipes 1979:28-30), or in the least a folk tale where fairies and other such entities play a major part, then none of the stories under discussion here are accommodated by the term, as none of the four booklets, nor many other *mayse-bikhlekh*, involve supernatural beings (other than the implied presence of God). Likewise, only portions of the booklets have known oral, or folk, backgrounds: in the first part of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* and the last episode in *Mayse man un vayb*. On the contrary, *Mayse fun a kale* is set in a contemporary situation and an urban setting, and has its roots in literary tradition.

Similarly, if one were to observe the more academic distinction (see Bascom 1981, Noy 1966, and Zipes 1979) between legend (oral narrative concerning an historical figure), folk tale (an oral narrative set in a remote, 'unfamiliar' past but bearing no historical veracity), and fairy tale (a literary emulation of the folk tale), one again runs into serious problems. It is true that one could find an oral variant, or perhaps ultimately an oral source for portions of the tales, although the majority of the tales have their immediate origins in oral literature: *Mageleyne lid* stems from a translation, possibly German, of a local, chivalric Provençal legend; and the remaining (*Mayse man un vayb*, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, and *Mayse fun a kale*) ultimately have 'literary' origins.

Despite the fact that the term *mayse-bikhl* became a popular reference only later — during the rise of modern Yiddish literature, i.e., in the nineteenth century — this term is compatible with our choice of the term 'chapbook' only in so far as discussion is limited to narratives (מעשה *mayse)*. Hence, the term *mayse-bikhl* would exclude any other ephemeral material published in a similar format: songs, calendars, 'news' (all of which include narratives), etc. It is interesting that although Zfatman (1983, vol. 1:2) intentionally limits her analyses to 'prose narratives', she does look closely at three of the four booklets under scrutiny here, referring to them as 'rhymed prose'. The fourth, *Mageleyne lid*, is excluded, apparently because it itself purports to be a *lid* — a song — despite the similarities in structure shared with the other three.

While the booklets here do not demonstrate a clear metrical rhythm, such as the sophisticated *ottava rima* used in Elye Bokher's *Bove d'Antone* (1541, Isny) and the anonymous *Pariz un Viene* (1594, Bern), all four are composed in 'open couplets': two lines of roughly the same length, linked together by rhyme, but woven into a longer form. Nevertheless, the four booklets do comprise narrative units, and thus still fulfil the requirements of the *mayse-bikhl*. Thus, since in these instances the booklets are narrative units the emic ('a mode of communication' also called the 'ethnic category' in Ben-Amos 1969) term *mayse-bikhl* will be used when discussing the booklets in an *intracommunal* context (i.e., with regard to the eighteenth century Yiddish speaking community). When discussing the texts in an *intercommunal* context (i.e., with regard to other, non-Yiddish speaking cultures, contexts and sources), the etic term 'chapbook' will be employed (the latter being an analytical model employed by scholars for the organisation of artefacts, see Ben-Amos 1969:275).

1.2.2 Genres of the texts

Since 'chapbook', in the etic sense, as well as '*mayse-bikhl*' in the emic sense, both allow for the inclusion of more than one genre, it behoves us to investigate the possibility of further grouping these individual booklets into genres. Owing to its original source, it is clear that *Mageleyne lid* falls within the category of legend (Bascom 1981:98). Such categorisation becomes more complicated with the other three works, since they are stylistically similar.

Thus one cannot assign these texts to a genre based solely upon style. However, it can be said with certainty that the other three are 'chained narratives' (Jason 1977: 82-87), i.e., narratives composed of two or more otherwise independent tales, melded together. More specifically, they are 'framed chains' (Jason 1977: 83), where the episodes are not interchangeable, but rather follow a logical order and are joined together by narrative intervention.

Zfatman (1983, vol. 1:12) divides her single narratives into two groups: translated (either from foreign or Jewish sources) and original. She (*ibid*, p. 13) defines original (as we do here in this thesis) in the medieval sense of a new creation — in the case of our texts, either in their radical editing or their recombination. Thus, according to Zfatman, all three *mayses* definitely belong to the group of 'original' *mayses*.

By contrast, Erik (1979:314-23) further divides *mayse-bikhl* into three genres: מעשה (*mayse*), ראָמאַן (*roman*), and נאָוועלע (*novelle*). A *mayse* is an entirely Jewish tale — taken from Hebrew/Aramaic sources. *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is, according to Erik, a true *mayse*. A *roman* is a tale taken from foreign sources. *Mageleyne lid* may therefore be classified a *roman* since the legend from which it was adapted is not a Jewish one. *Mayse fun a kale* is most likely a *roman* as well, as no Jewish antecedents can be found for its first two episodes, while the third portion is definitely foreign. However, it could also be classified as a *novelle*: a work which combines both

foreign and Jewish sources. *Mayse man un vayb* is a *novelle* as it includes non-Jewish tales (although they were translated earlier into Yiddish) along with a folktale found in Jewish culture.

It should be stressed, that although these etic terms have been adopted for analytical purposes, their use is not without problems. However, following emic definitions, there are two genres represented in this thesis: *lid* (song, poem) and *mayse* (story, event). The author and/or publisher of our four booklets provided each with a succinct title which declared the apparent genre (*lid, mayse*). While all four are written in the same long, flowing couplets, only *Mageleyne lid* is titled such. Since a *lid* by virtue of its characteristics, is intended to be read, performed, or sung in a particular manner, the author must have intended *Mageleyne lid* to be read differently than the others. It is quite probable that the author intended his *lid* to be read not only as a poem, but also as a narrative with historical veracity. On the other hand, the three *mayses*, are to be read *not* as true events, but rather as stories or fictions, to be believed or not, from which the reader will, hopefully, glean the proper lesson.

1.2.3 Popular Literature

Commonly, the term 'popular' can have a variety of meanings, including 'widely accepted', 'reflecting the tastes of the people at large', 'suitable for the talents, tastes or grasp of ordinary people', and lastly, 'originating from the people'. In Williams' article ([1976] 1992) on the

etymology of the term 'popular', a number of meanings are discussed, including those quoted above. The notion of 'popular' as base or inferior (supported by the definition of *Volksbuch*, see page 13), was likewise common in the sixteenth century. In light of the opinion, often historically expressed (see, for example, Goldsmith 1976), that Yiddish was the vernacular, and therefore the language of a 'baser culture', the negative definition had support.

By the eighteenth century, the meaning of 'popular' as 'well-liked' or 'favourably received' had taken hold. The definition of 'popular' as being from the 'people', or from the 'folk', dates back to the nineteenth century. While this meaning is applicable to certain genres, such as *tkhines*, it unfortunately cannot be applied to the booklets under scrutiny in the present study, simply because they cannot be considered products of the 'people', but works authored by members of a learned elite. Here the term 'popular' refers to a body of literature, written expressly for readers of the 'popular' language, i.e., the vernacular. In other words, the literature was intended for a large audience, which would (hopefully) receive it favourably, and which spoke a language deemed unsuitable (by those controlling literary production) for scholarly, esoteric and learned works. The term identifies a 'body of texts [...] intended for a general audience, and excluded from the "literary" canon' (Radway 1982:398). Likewise, the literary and scholarly language, *loshn*

koydesh, could not possibly produce a body of 'popular' literature since the majority of the people could not gain access to, or acquire direct competence in its literature.

1.2.4 Narrative, Story, Text

While the three terms above can be, and often are, used interchangeably, several distinctions need be noted. 'Narrative' is the narration of a sequence of events, where succession is important. 'Narrative fiction' therefore concerns itself with a succession of fictional events. On the other hand, 'story' is the 'narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events' (Rimon-Kennan 1983:2-4).

Finally, the term 'text', mentioned in the definition of 'story', can refer to any discourse, written or spoken. However, the 'text' is the only artefact available to the reader/audience. Although I accept Rimon-Kennan's (1983) distinctions, it must be noted that the distinctions between 'narrative' and 'story' is not easily applicable to several of our texts. The narrators in these four booklets do not recant the events outside of their chronological order. In the tales, where there are instances of simultaneous occurrence, the narrator intervenes with a digression, and returns to the other events (see for example *Mageleyne lid* and *Mayse fun a kale*). In *Mayse man un vayb,* however, the plot is more complex; the narrative interventions describing events occurring

simultaneously force the reader herself to rearrange the events into a sequence which she is able to manage.

1.2.5 Characterisation, Characters

'Characterisation' according to Rimon-Kennan (1983:43), is the 'representation in the text of the character component of the story'. Their representation is either 'direct' (1983:59-61), i.e., explicitly stated in the text, or 'indirect' (1983:61-67), where characterisation is brought forward through action, speech, description or environment, and reinforced through names, analogies, or landscapes. The protagonists in our stories are introduced to the audience directly. While not always given personal names from which the readers might draw intertextual inferences, they are given titles, or other descriptors, which are then reinforced through the procedures described above.

The 'heroes' and 'heroines' of these stories often display clearly unheroic behaviour — indeed even the 'hero' from the chivalric tale (e.g. *Mageleyne lid*) is anything but a paladin. On the other hand, some of the women (e.g. Mageleyne of *Mageleyne lid* and Rokhl of *Mayse fun a kale* during her abduction) display what could be construed as tremendous courage. Thus, in order to remove any controversial and possibly confusing referents, I will refer to the main character(s) as the 'protagonist'. Characters confronting or opposing the protagonist can be referred to as the 'antagonists'.

Included among the characters of the stories, is the narrator. Defined as 'the agent who at least narrates' (Rimon-Kennan 1983:88), it is unclear in most cases whether the narrator and author are the same because all of our texts are anonymous. With the exception of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* where a portion of the first tale has been construed by scholars as autobiographical for the author and perhaps the narrator as well (see above, p. 5). It is the intention therefore, to discuss the narrator as the character, a creation of the author, who directs the narration of the tripartite tales. There are different levels to the narrators' participation in the events of the stories. Generally, the narrators in these texts are all 'extradiegetic' (Rimon-Kennan 1983:94). They are above the story, and therefore display a degree of omniscience.

1.2.6 'Female' and 'Feminine'

Gender definition is based, in part, on cultural assumptions concerning the physiological aspects of male and female. This part of one's identity incorporates those biological differences between the sexes, and the social interaction which occurs (Weissler 1989:7). 'Female' is used in this thesis to mean the natural, biological being (i.e., 'girl', 'woman') and the roles which she fulfils in society as a result of this biological state (for example, 'daughter', 'woman', 'child-bearer').

There also exists the symbolic aspect of gender which is not necessarily based on biology. Rather, this category is a construct of what is expected of a person who may, or may not, physiologically be a 'female'. Thus, 'masculine' and 'feminine' are symbolic definitions imposed by society upon its members. This construct governs the roles which society expects one to play, as well as how people define themselves — with regard to others. As this category develops through reflexive definitions, there is always a reference to the 'other', usually from the perspective of those in power, that is to say, the patriarchy. Accordingly, 'feminine'/'masculine' is related to perceptions of power and powerlessness, status and '*interconnections* between domestic and sociopolitical, public and private, sexual and historical spheres' (Rabine 1985:13; cf. also Weissler 1989:7). 'Feminine' will refer, therefore, to the roles and characteristics which are prescribed to 'females' by Ashkenazic society (i.e., 'wife', 'bride', 'light-headed', but not 'scholar'.)

1.2.7 Intended Reader and Actual Audience

Within the world of the printed Yiddish book, particularly those published before the rise of the Jewish Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century, an author's addressee could fall into one or two possible categories, namely reader or audience. It has been suggested that these are one and the same (for example Ong 1977:58); however, for our purposes, it may be necessary to make a distinction between these two categories.

'Audience' may be defined as the persons within hearing, an assembly of listeners, and by transference to readers of a book. Walter J. Ong (1977:58) points out that 'audience' is a collective noun. 'Reader' — and by extension its plural 'readers' — on the other hand, is defined as the person or persons engaged in the actual act of reading the text, privately, or aloud to an audience. There are other terms by which one may define the agent who reads, hears, or interprets a text (such as 'listener', 'addressee', 'interpreter'), however, it befits the thesis here to use the term most closely related to the 'fictionalised' entities (Ong 1977:53-88) to whom the booklets are addressed. Addresses to buyers and/or readers are ubiquitous in Yiddish chapbooks, thus yielding useful material for a description of the 'intended' readers/audiences (Rimon-Kennan 1983:89, 119). At times they simply addressed their audience as מאנען, פֿרויאן, יונג, אלט (men, women, young and old). Others, authors and publishers, complying with a formula already established in Yiddish literature by 1700 (the approximate date of our chapbooks), often called upon their readers to buy their material, before it quickly disappeared (cf. Niger 1959:70). Thus, it would be appropriate to utilise the terms 'reader' and 'readers' when discussing the audience of our texts.

In contrast to the 'intended reader', the 'actual audience' is an elusive concept even for twentieth century Yiddish literature. Yet, while modern 'actual readers' can be identified through surveys and sales records, making such an identification of early modern Yiddish readers of such texts is

problematic. Mention of specific titles is rare in auto/biographies and ethical wills, with exceptions such as the *Lev-tov*, *Brantshpigl*, *Tsene rene*, *Mayse bukh*, and the general genre of *tkhines* (see, for example the ethical wills of the Hurwitz family, Moses Hasid, and Jonah Landsofer in Abrahams 1976:257 and 286-7 respectively). Therefore, we can arrive — at best — at possible models of the 'actual' reader. In order to ascertain this construct, there is a need to review the social history of the education system, and the acquisition of literacy and literary competence (see Chapter 2 below, page 38).

1.3 Methods, Theories, Orientations

It is the intention here to look at the feminine characterisation in four Yiddish chapbooks, as posited by a single, male author, and to gauge the possible reception by a contemporary female audience of such characterisations. Until recently, the study of Jewish history has not included the indoctrination of women of patriarchal values (Magnus 1990:30). We will examine how, within the patriarchal Ashkenazic communities of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, chapbooks functioned as a vehicle to inculcate acceptable behaviour among women (as defined by the established patriarchy), and to illustrate how deviation from the social norms was presented as the cause of tragic consequences.

It is necessary therefore to commence our discussion with an examination of the socio-historical contexts of our texts. We may begin by examining the question of the gender of the authors of these chapbooks. It is

generally believed that the majority of works published before the late eighteenth century Jewish Enlightenment were written by men, while it is widely held that only two groups of texts can be credited to women. One is the early modern autobiography, exemplified, for example, by Glikl of Hameln. The other is the genre of *tkhines* (supplicatory prayers), a large number of which can be ascribed to women (see Weissler 1982-89). There were female typesetters, and some women did author individual booklets, but to be able to examine a group of texts, other than *tkhines*, created by women — as advocates of feminist theory are most keen to do — is nigh unto impossible for the early modern period.

In this highly stratified society, knowledge, in particular education in the traditional texts, was equated with wealth and power. A young but impoverished scholar could wed a wealthy man's daughter (as in *Mayse fun a kale mit dray khasanim*, c.1700 [Amsterdam], for example), or a merchant's son could be engaged to a prominent scholar's daughter, and make a good match (cf. Katz 1971:199-209). Since women were not allowed formal access to traditional texts and thus were not capable of obtaining such power directly, the grouping of women with the unlearned or ignorant, suggests a 'sociology of religious learning', and that — in addition to social position and economics — religious learning was an important determinant to status (Dworkin 1959:202; Weissler 1989:10 emphasises that religious scholarship, *more so than* class, was the key factor in determining status).

There are three specific questions which are to be addressed in this thesis, the answers to which will assist in elucidating the situation of women in early modern Ashkenaz (Weissler 1987c: 87). The first of these issues concerns the dynamics in the relationships between men and women. How are relationships defined and prescribed? Secondly, in light of this male/female dynamic, what is the relationship between gender and power? Lastly, what is the cultural construction of gender? In other words, what are the prescriptions for proper behaviour, and how are women portrayed in chapbook literature?

In light of these issues, it should be remembered, as Weissler points out (1989:9), that at the turn of the eighteenth century, at least two systems for gender definition existed in Ashkenazic culture: *halakha* (for a discussion of the woman's place in Jewish religious law — *halakha*, see Biale 1984), which relegated 'real', normative, social behaviour and in which definitions were not very flexible; and popular definitions of behaviour, some of which can be ascertained through a study of the literature. While *halakha* prescribed the social categories of behaviour, the *symbolic* category was found elsewhere and allowed the creation of ones' identity by defining traits which one person/group has and the other does or does not have. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that the mimetic quality of these fictive texts is not a pure mimesis, but rather a reflection of the attitudes of the authors, who, as we were reminded above were male and more than likely part of the scholared elite. It is the goal here, following Davis (1976:92), to find the

symbols and symbolic categories as they are defined in these four texts, and determine their meaning within the context of seventeenth and eighteenth century Ashkenaz.

Chapter 2: The Socio-Historical Contexts of the Readership

2.1 Introduction

There is the stereotype, based partially on popular conception within Ashkenazic society itself, that Jewish women have always been more literate (or at least more accustomed to reading), than their Gentile counterparts (e.g., Sheffer 1992). In his article about literacy among Ashkenazic Jews in the modern period, Stampfer (1987:459) quotes the proverb:

אַ יידענע אָן אַ צאינה וראינה איז ווי אַ שייגעץ אָן אַ פייפעלע.

(A Jewish woman without her *Tsene rene* is like a non-Jewish man without a pipe [whistle].)

Likewise, the popular image of Jewish women as depicted in paintings and in illuminated texts is of a literate group. One such example is the fifteenth century Darmstädter *Haggadah* (pages are reproduced in Schilling 1963), where women are depicted seated around the frame reading. It can be argued that these examples represent either the higher echelons of Jewish society, or an ideal within the community (similar to the ideal within modern

Hispanic communities that 'ladies' can read and write English, while common women cannot, see Rockhill 1993:168). Although the proverb quoted above is from the early part of the twentieth century, such examples demonstrate that the belief that women can or should read was firmly ingrained within the Jewish culture.

Regarding the impetus to learn to read Yiddish, Stampfer (1987:482) later goes on to state that:

צמיחת העיתונות והספרות ביידיש קדמה בית-ספר שבהם לימדו יידיש. ההתפתחות של ספרות יידיש התאפשרה הודות לכך שרבים יכלו כבר לקרוא, והיא מצדה עודדה עוד יותר אנשים, בעיקר נשים, ללמוד לקרוא.

> (The emergence of Yiddish press and literature advanced schools in which Yiddish was taught. The development of Yiddish literature was possible because most could already read [Yiddish] and this [development] in turn encouraged even more people, primarily women, to learn how to read.)

Stampfer infers, anachronistically, that Yiddish literature began historically within the modern period; the notion that the appearance of Yiddish literature encouraged literacy can, nevertheless, be applied regressively. Historians of Yiddish literature (for example Erik 1926, 1979; Niger 1959; Shmeruk 1978,1988; Weinreich 1928, 1960, 1973; and Zfatman 1983, 1985) give ample evidence of the popularity of early printed Yiddish books, particularly the numerous editions of the *Tsene rene* and various *tkhines*, which support a sizable *female* readership. Niger (1959:52) maintains that *in the least*

(emphasis mine) there were women, *zogerkes* or *firzogerins*, who read texts aloud to other women, primarily in synagogue but also elsewhere.

Ashkenazic Jewry held books, and the ability to read them, in the highest regard, and those who could read the authoritative texts exerted power over those members of the community who could not read these texts. Support for this power is the culturally-specific definition of literacy as the ability to read and comprehend *loshn koydesh* (Hebrew/Aramaic), as well as the classification of Yiddish as the worldly, everyday vernacular. To be 'literate' in Ashkenaz therefore meant to be able to read *loshn koydesh* — Hebrew and Aramaic. Only people who were uneducated, or rather those whose talents fell below the community's standards — in other words, women and the ignorant — would read Yiddish. Those who had a 'decent' education would obviously 'prefer' to read books in *loshn koydesh* — a situation which finds its parallels throughout early modern Europe.

Remembering that in the Yiddish language nearly each sound represented by a single letter (the exception being of course, those words which originated as Hebrew or Aramaic and were therefore spelled etymologically), it took less time for a girl to be able to read a book in Yiddish — the language spoken in the home — than a person learning Hebrew — a language typically reserved for ritual and formal study. Likewise, if a woman could read, she could easily pass her knowledge on to others; silent reading

was not yet an established practice, and women who could read often did so to an audience, be it of family members or other women (Stampfer 1993:194; Thomas 1986:107). Thus, it is easy to draw the conclusion that many women were *functionally* literate. Indeed, the list of publications which addressed the female reader (Niger 1959, Stampfer 1993:192; Roskies 1977; Weissler 1987-92; for the situation in England see Thomas 1986:103), regardless of who actually read the material, attests to a female public which was able to read.

Moreover, the lines of power were drawn between people who could read the sacred texts and people who could not. Although composed of different groups, those who could not read Hebrew, and even less so Aramaic, were generally lumped together — women and *ameratsim* ('the ignorant'). Thus women were seen to be among the unlearned, and indeed, the 'illiterate'. Yet Niger (1959), among others (see Mark 1960:1192 for example), maintains that these 'illiterate' women were the economic mainstay of early Yiddish literature. Somehow they not only learned to read in the vernacular, they also attracted the attention of those with power.

2.2 Women and Education

2.2.1 General Education

In medieval Europe, it was a religious requirement for Jews to learn to read (Ben-Sasson 1976:522; Stampfer 1987:481); for the non-Jew it was a privilege. Within the Gentile community, accessible education was unavailable until after the Thirty Years War (1618-48), when, as a result of closer contacts between communities and the advent of the Reformation, Europe witnessed a marked increase and improvement in educational facilities (I. Fishman 1944: 13). Nevertheless, with the exception of the German states, the idea of compulsory education for children was a late idea, and where such provisions existed they were far from adequate and not regularly enforced.

Educating Jewish children was compulsory. Moreover, since it was considered a requirement for a boy to become *bar mitsve* at the age of thirteen, there was considerable peer pressure upon the family, or, in the case of orphans, the community, to provide for a boy's education. As the public ceremony for a *bar mitsve* includes a demonstration of both the ability to read *loshn koydesh* and display an understanding of the material read, failure to ensure a proper education for a boy was regarded as tantamount to dereliction of parental or communal duty.

In early modern Ashkenaz, parents had three options for the education of their sons: the private tutor (I. Fishman 1944: 22); the *kheyder* (also, *heder*, lit. "room'; I. Fishman 1944:17; cf. Kugelmass and Boyarin 1983:105-07); and

for orphans and those children whose parents could not afford either of the two options above, there was the *Talmud toyre* (also *Talmud torah*). The *Talmud toyre* was established and administered by a committee, known as the *Khevras talmud toyre* (Society for the Talmud Torah), whose members were either elected or volunteered. Those boys who demonstrated a predilection for learning would later be encouraged, and perhaps supported, by the community to attend a *yeshive*.

Whichever avenue of learning the parents chose, curricula varied little. Established by tradition, most children began their long hours of study — up to twelve hours per day — at the age of five, although children as young as three could attend for half a day (I. Fishman 1944: 79-80). The model for the cirricula originated in the Mishnah (*Pirke Avot* 5:21; I. Fishman 1944: 86, Assaf 1925, vol. 1:3), where Bible was taught at the age of five, Mishnah at ten and the Talmud at fifteen. One of the more famous, detailed descriptions of a study programme comes from the legislation from sixteenth century Cracow (I. Fishman 1944: 85; Assaf 1925, vol. 1:101), where we read the order of learning: the Hebrew alphabet with vowels; the prayerbook; Torah with *Beer Moyshe* — a Yiddish lexicon and grammar (printed in 1605; see Aptroot 1988:46-49); Torah with Rashi; prayers; morality and behaviour; reading and writing in vernacular; and in the last years Hebrew grammar, arithmetic, and Talmud.

Religious studies permeated the traditional Jewish education system. Although formal secular education was loosely forbidden, in the *Talmud toyre* children were taught writing skills, as well as arithmetic. Likewise, some children were taught additional skills, such as music and foreign languages — usually French and German — especially if it would be advantageous in procuring a job later on. Trades were taught, either at community schools or through apprenticeship schemes, the most common of which were medicine, tailoring, locksmithing, and of course, printing (I. Fishman 1944:114-15).

2.2.2 Education for Girls

The debate about the merits of educating daughters began early in Jewish history. In the Biblical times, girls were primarily educated by their mothers or nurses, while learning their household duties. A girl's education was limited by her family's status, and in addition to the domestic sphere, there was also the family business to learn. Yet there is some evidence that women were also allowed to study for specific professions, learning with masters, possibly their own mothers: singing, midwifery (Exodus 1:21), professional mourning (Jeremiah 9:19), magic, and witchcraft (I Samuel 28:7). In the Mishnah, two different opinions competed. First, Rabbi Eliezer held that 'if any man gives his daughter a knowledge of Law it is as though he taught her lechery.' (Sotah 3:4). Later in Nedarim 4:3 it is expounded that 'though he [the father] may teach Scripture to his sons *and* his daughters [...].' (emphasis mine).

During the early centuries of the Diaspora, education was generally approved for both genders until the age of twelve or thirteen, however, the emphasis was always on the education of boys. Egalitarian opportunities for a basic education eroded even further later on, and schooling was usually not offered to girls. Females continued to learn the duties necessary for the running of the household, and often the prayers which accompanied these tasks. Most women were, however, only functionally literate, if not completely illiterate. Nonetheless, the debate for and against a daughter's education continued.

In Spain, the Muslim countries, and Renaissance Italy, girls were given only a rudimentary education (Ben-Sasson 1976:520-21; Assaf 1930/1, vol. 2:112, 121, 171-5; Roth 1977:50). After the waning of the so-called 'Golden Age', and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the focus of Jewish educational ideals shifted to Italy. There it was quite common to find highly educated women who actively sponsored literary endeavours (Roth 1977:49-51, 57; Zinberg 1972-78, vol. 2:195). Women were commonly employed to teach smaller children the Hebrew alphabet and elementary reading skills:

בית הת״ת לא יפחות משני מלמדים ומלמדת [...] המלמדת לילדים הקטנים מאד, יתירים מבן ג׳ שנים, הכרת אותיות אלפא ביתא עברית והקריאה בלה״ה עד שידעו קריאת הפסוק כתיקונו, ויהיו מחונכים גם כן בטעמים שאפשר.

(A Talmud torah will not have less than two male teachers and one female [...] who teaches the very young children, extras from three years old, knowledge of the letters of the

Hebrew alphabet and reading in this language until they know [how to] read the Scriptures properly, and will be educated proper Torah reading and cantation as much as possible as well.)

(Rules of the *Hevrat Talmud torah* of Modena 1597, number 9, in Assaf 1930/1, vol. 2:174)

המלמדת תלמד לנערים הקטנים מאד, יתירים מבן ג׳ שנים, אשר ילכו לביתה ללמוד [...]

(The female teacher will teach very young children, older than three years old, who will go to her house to learn [...])

(Rules of the *Hevrat Talmud torah* of Modena 1597, number 10, in Assaf 1930/1, vol.2:175)

In the event that the community was small and had a larger ratio of women to men, female teachers were not restricted to teaching girls and small boys as noted. Under those circumstances they were allowed to teach the alphabet, as well as Torah, religion, and medicine (Assaf 1930/1, vol. 2:197-8, 207-08). In 1745 the community of Rome established a *Talmud torah* especially for girls who were instructed by female teachers (Assaf 1930/1, vol. 2:203-4, Roth 1977: 50; see also Sheffer 1992:90-93). Girls could be taught by men, but only if female teachers were unavailable (Assaf 1930/1, vol, 2:112; number 5, p. 174). Perhaps at this point it is worth remembering that the statutes and rabbinic *responsa* regarding educational policies do not necessarily indicate a trend, but rather an incident which solicited an answer as in *Ma'ase rav*, the responsa from c.1700 London denouncing the tutoring

of girls by bachelors. Again it needs to be emphasized that for most, especially in areas where the educators needed to be paid by the parents, education for girls was a luxury.

The education of women in Ashkenaz was less egalitarian. Wealthy families could always afford to hire private teachers for their daughters, but poorer families did without such benefits. Nevertheless, from *Sefer Hasidim* (a thirteenth century text attributed to Judah Hahasid — founder of the mystical, moralistic *Hasidei Ashkenaz* movement— here as quoted in Assaf (1925, vol. 1:18-19), we learn that:

יג חייב לאדם ללמד לבנותיו המצווה [...] באיזו לשון שידעו
יד ילמד אדם את בנותיו כדי שידעו להתפלל

(13. A man is required to teach his daughters the commandment [...] in whatever language is known.
14. A man will teach his daughters in order that they will know how to pray.)

The responsibility for a girl's education thus rests upon the father's shoulders. It is interesting that even early on the education of girls need not be in Hebrew, but could be in the vernacular, thus opening the way for girls to be taught in Yiddish. Although the text implies that Hebrew and Aramaic *should* be taught to girls in order that they might understand the *siddur* (Hebrew prayerbook), later publication of prayerbooks in Yiddish (*tkhines*) complemented the idea of instruction in the vernacular.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the education of girls was an accepted reality, but one which demonstrated varying degrees of acceptance and effectiveness — some girls obviously received a better education than others. In light of this, Rabbi Jonah ben Elijah Landsofer (1678-1712) of Prague (Assaf 1936, vol. 3:180) instructs:

למדו לבנותיכן לקרות בספרים הנדפסים בלשון אשכנז [...] כי נשים דעתן קלות הן [...] וכשאתם משיאים נשים לבניכם הזהרו לפחות שיהיו נשיהם יודעין היטב לקרות בספרים הנדפסים בלשון אשכנז.

> (Teach your daughters to read books printed in the Ashkenazic language [i.e. Yiddish] [...] because women are fickle-minded [...] and when you wed women to your sons, take care that at least their wives will know well [how] to read books printed in the Ashkenazic language.)

Clearly women somehow learned how to read, yet the above passage does not explain how and where they were to receive such an education.

Girls were allowed in *kheyders*, but there were restrictions on how many and what subjects they were permitted to learn. For example, in Nikolsburg in 1691 it was decided that if there were five or fewer girls in a *kheyder*, the teacher could instruct all his pupils in the Pentateuch. Likewise, if the teacher's wife was giving household instruction to a girl, or group of girls, aged seven or younger, on the same storey as the *kheyder*, the boys were prohibited from studying the Talmud there (I. Fishman 1944:118-119; Assaf 1930/1, vol. 2:140-43). The subjects generally taught to girls included prayers, reading and writing in Yiddish (but not Hebrew), arithmetic, and sewing

(Stampfer 1993:188). It is important to note, however, that whether a girl went to a *kheyder* or received private instruction at home, the teacher had to be either a woman or a married man. This restriction did not seem to apply if the girl was very young. In *Sefer Hasidim* (as quoted in Assaf 1925, vol. 1:18-19) parents are admonished that:

ט"ו לא יתכן לבחור ללמד לבנות שגדלו

(15. It is not possible for a young man to teach grown-up girls.)

Despite this warning, it was apparently common practice for young bachelors to teach girls. Thus, the practice of allowing girls to be tutored at home, apparently common in London at the beginning of the eighteenth century is denounced as dangerously immoral in *Ma'ase rav* (responsa printed in 1700 in London).

Turning to the subject taught to females, it was generally believed that instruction in religious matters, beyond an understanding of the commandments and prayers incumbent upon women, was a wasted effort. Learning practical skills, on the other hand, was accepted for girls, especially if these skills might help the girl find and, more importantly, support a husband and family.

את הבנות יש לחנך כמו שמחנכים את הבנים. יש אמנם קצת למודים,
תלמוד וגמרא וכיוצא בה, שאין בהם צורך לבנות אבל יש ללמדן
כתיבה, חשבון, שפות שונות, איזו אומנות וגם עבודות הבית.

(You need to educate your daughter as you educate your sons. There are indeed a few subjects, Talmud, the Gemara and so forth, which girls have no need for, but it is necessary to teach them writing, arithmetic, different languages, some skill and also house work. [i.e., needlework, cooking, etc.)
(*Sefer gidl bonim oder kinder ertsihung*), Anon., London 1771, in Assaf 1936, vol. 3:224)

2.3 Notable Women

The readership which was addressed by the openings of many *mayse-bikhlekh* was therefore not a highly educated one. In general, the majority of women who could read were probably functionally literate, as I have pointed out earlier (see page 40 above and Rockhill 1992). However, that is not to say that there were not women who were indeed literate; some were even literate in the traditional sense of mastering *loshn koydesh*. However, that was not the case for the majority of Ashkenazic women, although mention of some of these women will help to restore them to their rightful place as truly remarkable individuals (Kelly 1976:810).

Sheffer (1992:101) claims that 'our Glückel [1646-1728] may not have been as rare a creature as the sources indicate. [...She] may be more representative of her class and time that prior research has led us to believe.' This might be true, however, it must be kept in mind that Glikl's family was wealthy and influential enough to be allowed to remain in Altona, while the majority of the Jews were forced to leave. Glikl's first husband was a successful businessman, and despite the loss of three husbands, and her

own economic hardships, she managed to make matches for her children among the respected and learned elite of the Jewish communities throughout Europe. Her family, though they suffered financial hardships, could not be counted among the masses of the Jews, a large majority of whom were on the brink of abject poverty

Later Sheffer (1992:105) mentions Sarel Gutman, a woman from Prague who ran a mail courier service with her husband. Sheffer refers to Gutman's letters from 1619. These documents attest to the literacy of their author, however, they were not in Sarel's own handwriting. Hence, Sheffer asks (1992:105) 'Was Sarel insecure about her own handwriting? Was she so upset by the situation about which she writes that she dictated the letter to her son-in-law?' Here Sheffer assumes that Sarel could write, because she could read letters and operate a postal business. However, as we have seen, writing was taught later in schools. Secondly, Sarel's ability to read does not necessarily mean that she was able to write fluently, or that she was able to write letters in the formulaic style regarded as proper in the latter part of the seventeenth century. It would be useful to remember that scribes, as well as others, doubled as professional letter-writers during that time. It was not uncommon for people, especially women, to hire others to write out their letters for them (i.e., those who were familiar with formulaic greeting, courtesies and spelling).

Although Glikl did not write her memoirs for publication (she wrote them in 1690-91 for her children's benefit and to drive away her melancholia), there were a number of other exceptional women in the Ashkenazic literary circles, who wrote for public audiences (Zolty 1993:213-215; Niger [1959:88-94] contains a more complete listing of these women writers and printers, some of which are mentioned here). Reyzl Fishl of sixteenth century Cracow (Korman 1928: XXXVI, XLIII-XLIV; Niger 1959:91) wrote a rhymed introduction for Moyshe Shtendal's translation of Psalms (Cracow 1586). Toybe Pan (Korman 1928:XXXV, XXXVII-XLI; Niger 1959:91), also wrote and published poems in the sixteenth century. In addition to these poetesses, one of the earliest female writers in Yiddish was Rebekah bas Meyer Tiktiner (Erik 1928:315; Korman 1928:XLIV; Niger 1959:90-91; Shmeruk 1978b, 1981:56-62 and 1988:128; Weissler Zolty 1993:193-98, 202-08). Known also for her public discourse on religious matters, Rebekah wrote an ethical tract in Yiddish entitled *Meynekets Rivke* (Prague 1609), as well as poems in Yiddish (Shmeruk 1981:66-69). Khane Kats (Korman 1928: XXXV, XLI-XLIII; Niger 1959:88) wrote a rhymed Yiddish *droshe* ('sermon' or 'discourse') and *tkhines*, in Amsterdam around 1700. Similarly, a woman named Sarah bas Toyvim (see Niger 1959:82-85, Weissler 1982-89, Zinberg 1972-78, vol. 7:253-56), is credited with authoring the most influential *tkhines*. Well-read in the sacred texts, Sarah bas Toyvim also wrote works in Yiddish for the general public, not just women.

2.4 Literature for Women

Yiddish literature during Glikl's lifetime was, for the most part, a body of works written by men (see Weissler 1982-92 for discussions on the appearance of *tkhines*, the genre of supplicatory prayers which included works written by women). Given the lower status of Yiddish vis-à-vis Hebrew/Aramaic, the vernacular literature was seen by the elite as both a liability and an asset. As a liability, since the material produced in Yiddish (often referred to as *vayber-taytsh*, a reference to both the typeface and the audience) was generally not of high religious or scholarly value.

On the other hand, there were of course also pearls of literature created which were indeed edifying, such as those mentioned above as well as the *Tsene rene,* and the *Mayse bukh* with its collection of stories self-promoted as the Yiddish *gemara* (commentary on religious works). These works, however, were never intended for the consumption of the learned, but rather to aid the understanding of the un-scholared. The lists of chapbooks collected and housed in libraries throughout the world include numerous works of little, or questionable, didactic value. Generally it was those titles which were condemned in the prefaces and introduction to more 'suitable', works such as the 1602 edition of the *Mayse bukh* noted above.

While the condemnation of these frivolous booklets continued, their appearances in the packs and barrows of the *pakn-treger* did not falter. Rather, new materials were translated, adapted and created for the Yiddish

reading public. The authors and publishers of the materials were, however, able to turn their liability into an asset, by using the dissemination of the reading material hawked by the *pakn-tregers* (peddlers, chapmen) into tools for the inculcation of 'proper' behaviour.

Notwithstanding, this insight into what was 'proper' comes to the female reader from a male author's vantage point. He, and the publisher who ultimately is responsible for the printed form in which the text spreads its message, were generally a part of the learned male sub-culture which determined how the others conducted their lives. While literature was not the only method through which 'proper' behaviour was demonstrated, advocated and bolstered, the dissemination of cheap literature found a community which traditionally held the written word in high regard.

The narratives under scrutiny here have their precedents in Yiddish literary tradition before the seventeenth century. Thus the authors needed not to invent any new strategies for presenting codes of behaviour; in other words, the strategies and codes were already present, and therefore easily utilized. These textual codes (Rabine 1985:4) aided the female reader in determining how she should perceive her world. The same can be said for the narratives mentioned under scrutiny in this thesis. The narratives teach the female readers the behaviours which are deemed 'desirable' to the patriarchy of early modern Ashkenaz. That the reader's part in the social construct would be that of 'other' was also inherent in the nature of the male-authored texts as well as the male-authored society.

Part II: Textual Analyses

Chapter 3: *Mayse fun a kale*

Equality and Arranged Marriages

3.1 Introduction

As with the other poems by our author, no other copy of *Mayse fun a kale* has been found to date (Cowley 1929:92, Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3929, and Zfatman 1985:81). *Mayse fun a kale* is the adventure of a young woman who is kidnapped by pirates, shipwrecked and later marooned on an island inhabited by an ape. Stories similar to *Mayse fun a kale* were published by the seventeenth century, most notably by the Milanese friar Francesco Maria Guazzo, in his *Compendium Maleficarum* (=*Handbook of Witches*), and by Sieur de Clairville, in *L'Amelinte* (Paris, 1635; see Janson 1952:275-76, and also §3.3 below). It appears that our anonymous poet was familiar with the European street literature of his time. He translated and re-wrote some of those stories, incorporating popular motifs already in circulation at the time of publication to suit the morals he wished to present to his audience. In this

manner, he created what may be considered an original Yiddish tale through which he encouraged his female readership to accept the patriarchal system, especially with regard to the arrangement of marriages.

3.2 Summary of *Mayse fun a kale*

Reb Eliezer is a wealthy man who lives in the Jewish community of London. He has a twenty year old daughter, named Rokhl, who remains unmarried because she has found fault with all her suitors. Her father, in desperation, finds her a match from Italy, but, in order to prevent her from refusing the engagement, arranges it so that Rokhl will not meet the groom until their wedding day.

One day, Reb Eliezer instructs Rokhl to go to the market to buy fish. Rokhl, dressed in fine clothes and jewellery, leaves for the market determined to purchase the best of the day's catch. Arriving at the fish market, she steps on to a boat in order to inspect the merchandise more closely. The fisherman, finding himself alone with the girl, and noticing her beautiful clothes and expensive jewels, decides to kidnap and rob her. Convinced that no one saw the girl boarding, he steers his boat away from shore towards the open sea. He threatens to throw Rokhl into the water after he steals her jewellery, to prevent her from reporting the crime to the authorities. Rokhl pleads with the fisherman, but to no avail.

As Rokhl argues with the fisherman, a pirate ship sails by. The pirates hear the girl's cries, and quickly seize the fishing vessel, taking the two passengers captive. The pirates, who have two captains, allow Rokhl to recount her story. Having heard of the fisherman's extortion, they bind the man with the intention of selling him in the slave market in Constantinople. However, affected by the girl's beauty, each of the two pirate captains wants the girl for himself. The two men quarrel and the argument escalates into a duel. During the sword fight, the two captains kill each other. The crew, enraged over the loss of their leaders, threaten to kill Rokhl, until the eldest pirate convinces the others that slaying the girl would not be in their best interest. Rather, he argues, they should first choose a new captain and let him decide Rokhl's fate. Rokhl watches in dismay as the pirates begin to cast lots. Suddenly, a violent storm moves in, tearing the ship asunder and washing everyone overboard. Rokhl clings to a plank for six hours until she finally drifts ashore. Everyone else perishes in the storm, and the girl finds herself alone on a strange island.

Meanwhile, Rokhl's groom has arrived in London for the wedding. Reb Eliezer, who has been unsuccessful in finding his missing daughter, urges the groom to wait for seven years. If his daughter is not found after that time, he will permit the groom to find another bride. In the meantime, he will provide for the groom as a son. Moreover, he promises that should he die during the stipulated time, the groom will be the sole heir to his estate. The groom finds the proposition satisfactory and agrees to wait.

Back on the island, Rokhl decides to go in search of people. Uncertain of what she will find, she disguises herself by donning one of the pirate's clothes, and taking another's sword. Her search, however, is unsuccessful. Finally she enters into a wooded area, where she finds an abundant supply of fruit and fresh water. After satisfying her hunger and thirst, she lies down to rest. While Rokhl is asleep, a large white ape captures her, dragging her to his cave. The ape provides Rokhl with food but keeps her captive. Rokhl thus begins a seven year stay on the remote island. She sneaks out of the cave to scan the horizon for signs of an approaching ship, but is always brought back to the cave by the ape. One day, she observes a ship in the distance and calls out to it. The passengers spot her beckoning and she is rescued. Seeing Rokhl leave, the ape is heart-broken and in despair flings himself into the sea. Rokhl returns home to an overjoyed father, and is married to her groom from Italy.

3.3 Sources and Analogues

3.3.1 Antecedents for *Mayse fun a kale*

Erik (1979:336) suggested that *Mayse fun a kale* is a judaised version of a tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (before 1368), namely 'The Sultan of Babylon' (II, 7). Zfatman (1985:81) questions this, although she does not pursue the subject further. While *Mayse fun a kale* does resemble Boccaccio's 'The Sultan of Babylon', the similarities are superficial. The major

similitudes, which at first glance suggest a close relationship between the tales, are common motifs prevalent in popular 'romances' even to this day (see §1.2).

If *Mayse fun a kale* were indeed an adaptation of the tale from the *Decameron*, as Erik believed it to be, the source of the translation would need to be ascertained. If we bear in mind, as generally accepted, that the text was printed in Amsterdam at the turn of the eighteenth century, then the most likely source would be either a late Italian edition, a French, or perhaps Dutch translation. Of the one hundred tales presented in the *Decameron*, 'The Sultan of Babylon' is one of the *least* translated (see Monostory 1971). However, in 1710, Yosef Maarsen translated and published a number of *Decameron* tales in his *Sheyne artlikhe geshikhtn*, including 'Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter...' (pp. 21v - 30v). Maarsen's source was a Dutch translation, to which he claims to have remained very faithful (see Aptroot, forthcoming, for a discussion of *Sheyne artlikhe geshikhtn*). As will be discussed below, the similarities between *Mayse fun a kale* and 'Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter...', lead us to believe that they are related only through their shared use of common motifs.

It is likely, however, that our anonymous author was familiar with other non-Yiddish European street literature of his time, and that he borrowed and re-wrote those stories to suit the morals he wished to present to his audience. Stories similar to *Mayse fun a kale* were published by the seventeenth century Milanese friar Francesco Maria Guazzo, in his *Compendium Maleficarum*

(=*Handbook of Witches*; see Janson 1952:275-76), and by Sieur de Clairville, in *L'Amelinte* (Paris, 1635; see also the discussion below). Indeed, in *Compendium Maleficarum* ([1929] 1970:29) there occurs a story of a woman in a predicament similar to *Mayse fun a kale*. In Guazzo's tale, however, the female protagonist is a felon who is arrested and subsequently deported to a deserted island as punishment for her crime. Once ashore, she is surrounded by apes, and the largest of them leads her away and feeds her in his cave. The ape then rapes and impregnates her. She later gives birth to twins. Some years later a ship from Portugal sails by the island and rescues the woman. The ape, realizing that his captive has escaped, angrily gestures her to return to the island, and when she does not, he drowns her children. When these measures fail to bring the woman back, the ape swims out toward the ship himself, but is overcome by waves. Thus, it is highly likely that the author of *Mayse fun a kale* could have been familiar with the literature and popular motifs already in circulation at the time of publication, using, and adapting them to create an original Yiddish tale.

3.3.2 *Mayse fun a kale* and 'The Sultan of Babylon' ['Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter']

Like all other works attributed to this author, no other copy of *Mayse fun a kale* has been found to date (Cowley 1929:92, Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3929, and Zfatman 1985:81). However, as discussed above, it is commonly held that *Mayse fun a kale* stems from *Il Decameron*, or in the least, a translation of it. A closer inspection of the episodes of 'Vi der zuldan

fun bovl zayn tokhter...' — the acknowledged translation of that *Decameron* tale — and *Mayse fun a kale*, demonstrates that *Mayse fun a kale* is not an adaptation of either the Italian or the Yiddish version.

The story, 'Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter', is about Altil, a daughter from a large family, whose marriage to the King of Garbo is arranged by her father for political reasons. While she and her entourage are on their way to the wedding, a storm causes the ship to wreck near Majorca. Here begin Altil's numerous seductions by her rescuers or captors. She is seduced, kidnapped and raped, while men fight and die over the right to possess her. Finally, Altil is reunited with Antigone, an old friend of her father, who is sympathetic to her situation. In light of the fact that a cancellation of her marriage would have severe political ramifications, Altil and Antigone invent a story to account for her disappearance — omitting her sexual liaisons — to tell her father when she is reunited with him. Her marriage to the King of Garbo takes place, and on her wedding night Altil is able to convince the groom that she is a virgin.

Through a comparison of the two tales, it is clear that some episodes are indeed similar. However, these events do not relate to the chronology of the narrative in the same manner. In 'Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter', the shipwreck occurs at the start of Altil's adventures, as she is travelling with her wedding party: for Rokhl, it occurs in the middle, just as her fate at the hands of the pirates is to be decided. Altil and the other survivors of the shipwreck land on a populated island: Rokhl, the sole survivor, is tossed on to an island

inhabited only by an ape. In *Mayse fun a kale*, the duel between the pirate captains comes before the shipwreck: Altil's captors duel over who shall possess the girl after they kill Markone, who had himself kidnapped her from his brother. Finally, Altil's reunion with her father is arranged by a family friend: Rokhl's reunion is a result of her rescue by strangers.

The two protagonists also possess different personalities. For example, Altil — who comes from a large, aristocratic family — is beautiful, but does not display supercilious attitudes. Rokhl, the only daughter of a wealthy family, is arrogant and cruel: she is a woman whose attitude is changed only through humiliation and isolation. While Altil may seem to be more libertine, she is unsure of her fate at the hands of her suitors/captors. On the other hand, Rokhl is isolated from society, spending most of her seven years on an island in the company of an ape.

The tales also differ in other respects. If we look at the moral of the two stories, we find differing emphases. *Mayse fun a kale* concludes as follows:

> (And so all you maidens and young women of Israel, each and every one,
> Take this as an example, whether poor or rich
> You should not deride your bridegrooms, all young men are good
> And you should not deride anyone, nor have a harsh opinion
> No one Jewish child is better than any other
> Often a man is well-connected, but hasn't one good hair on his head
> Often a man is good-looking, bright or is very wealthy
> But still cannot be happy being in the world
> It is the blessing from God which makes one richer
> All our wisdom and tricks do not help.)
> (page 5r, lines 211-220; for the full text of the story's moral see below, page 84)

On the other hand, we read at the beginning of 'Vi der zuldan fun bovl zayn tokhter...' that:

דיא זעקשטי גישיכטנים: לערנט אונש . וויא דיא פֿרויאן איר שונהייט
איר זעלבשטן שענדליך איז : אויך אור זך איז פֿון פֿיל ביז אונ'
מעניכס זיין טויט.

(The sixth tale teaches us how for women's beauty is [the cause of] their own harm. Also [it] is the reason for a lot of evil and some [men's] death.)
(page 21v)

Thus, the story published in *Sheyne artlikhe geshikhtn*, addressed to men and women alike, appears to be concerned with the negative effects of a woman's beauty, the behaviour of men toward each other and toward women. *Mayse fun a kale*, on the other hand, while emphasizing its moral for a female audience, draws attention not only to the perception of beauty, but also to the other characteristics, such as money and lineage, or family backgrounds, according to which people, primarily prospective grooms, are judged. It is possible that the author of *Mayse fun a kale* was familiar with the *Il Decameron* tale, either through Maarsen's, or perhaps another European translation (cf. Erik 1979:336). It is implausible, however, to say that *Mayse fun a kale* is simply a judaised rendition of 'The Sultan of Babylon'.

3.4 Construct

As the above summary demonstrates, *Mayse fun a kale* is set in the reader's present. The Jewish community in London had been legally re-established in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Baron 1952:256). The reader quickly learns that one of the wealthier men cannot marry off his only daughter, despite her renowned beauty and cleverness. Rokhl's arrogance, as well as the father's ineffectualness, is highlighted:

אבר דיא טעט אויז אל דיא בחורים נייארט שפאטן אונ׳ לאכין:
אויף איין אידרן וואושט דיא איין חסרון צו זאגן גאר באלד.
דא בליב דיא זיצן ביז דיא וואר איבר צוואנציג יאר שון אלט:

(She did nothing except scoff and laugh at all the young men.
She quickly knew a fault to mention for each one.
So she remained until she was already over twenty years old.)

(page 1v, lines 6-8)

Here, the reader is reminded that while a daughter should not be obligated to marry a man against her will, her objections need to be sensible rather than petty, an idea which is reiterated in the final address to the readers. Her father, not uncommonly (see Glikl 1977:132; Bloom 1971:29), finds her a foreign groom who will arrive only on the day of the wedding. Since the age of marriage for children of wealthy families was usually in the early teens (see Glikl 1977:23), the reader is led to sympathise with Reb Eliezer's daunting task of finding a husband for his spinster daughter, and would agree

that his was perhaps the best course to follow. Once informed of the decision, Rokhl is denied the opportunity to voice her opinion, and the narrator tells his reader:

אבר דיא שיני רחל דיא גידאַפט זיך אין אירם שטאלצן זין[.]
וועד איז שינר אוּנ' רייכר אוּנ' קלוגיר אלד וויא איך בין[:]
וועז איך ניט ביקום איין מאן דער מיינם שינן לייב איז וועריט[.]
זוא וויל איך ליבר בלייבן איביג פֿר זיצן אוּנ' בישווערט[:]

(But the pretty Rokhl thought to herself in her pride,
'Who is prettier, wealthier or smarter than I am?
If I do not get a man who is notworthy of me
I would rather remain an old maid forever.')
(page 2r, lines 25-28)

By refusing to marry Rokhl defies not only her father's wishes, but society as a whole (Dworkin 1959:203). However, the issue here is not simply her refusal of unsuitable matches. The motif of a highly desirable female refusing suitors until she finds her pre-destined match is not uncommon and can be found, for example, in *Pariz un Viene* (1594, Berne). What is criticised is Rokhl's openly derisive and abusive behaviour toward the suitors her father has found. Thus, she demonstrates that she sees herself well above the constraints of her culture; however, the consequences of such actions are not as Rokhl would expect. As an unmarried adult female, she is already on the margins of seventeenth century Jewish society, but her opprobrious behaviour drives her further away.

It becomes evident from the very beginning of the story that Rokhl believed herself to be equal to men; she has insulted and demeaned all her suitors, voicing dissatisfaction at the idea of an arranged marriage. She believes herself a better judge than her father as to whom she will to marry. She tells him:

דיא טאכטר שפראך דאש ווער מיר יוא איין גרושי שאנד.
דז איך זעלט נעמן אייגן דער מיר נאך ניט איז רעכט בקאנט:
איך מוז אים יוא ערשט זעהן אוב ער איז שין אונ׳ איז קלוג:
אונ׳ אוב ער האט אן זיך אלי מעלותֿ טובותֿ אונ׳ געלט גינוג:

(The daughter said, 'This will truly be a great disgrace for me,
That I should take one whom I do not rightfully know yet.
I must see him first, if he is handsome and clever,
And if indeed he has all the good virtues and enough money.')

(page 1v, lines 19-22)

Rokhl believes herself better than most, but it was held that marriage is a decision which is out of one's own hands, and Reb Eliezer's reply reaffirms the importance in accepting marriage arrangements::

דער פאטר שפראך איך וויש ער איז דייגר וואול ווערט.
ער ווערט קומן בזמן החתונה ער איז דער דיר איז בישערט:

(The father said, 'I know he is indeed worthy of you.
He will arrive at the time of the wedding. He is your pre-destined match.')

(page 1v, lines 23-24)

This answer is not good enough for Rokhl and she comes dangerously close to rebellion when she declares — to herself — that she alone will choose her future:

אבר דיא שיני רחל דיא גידאכט זיך אין אירם שטאלצן זין[.]
וועד איז שינר אונ׳ רייכר אונ׳ קלוגיר אלד וויא איך בין[:]
וועז איך ניט ביקום איין מאן דער מיינם שינן לייב איז וועדט[.]
זוא וויל איך ליבר בלייבן איביג פֿר זיצן אונ׳ בישווערט[:]

(But the pretty Rokhl thought to herself in her pride,
'Who is prettier, wealthier or smarter than I am?
If I do not get a man who is notworthy of me
I would rather remain an old maid forever.')
(page 2r, lines 25-28)

Rokhl's blatant disregard for communal institutions further demonstrates her belief that she is not bound by traditional values. Tragedy is to be expected, as portended by Rokhl's own statement.

Other aspects of Rokhl's deportment display her arrogance as well. For instance, she is sent to the market to buy fish, a dish commonly served for the Sabbath meal. That it was Friday, and probably in the afternoon, is evident from the fact the price of the fish in the market may have already risen (see Abrahams 1985:60, 84); the question arises with the possible interpretations of the word שוין-שון more often than not meaning 'already', but also used simply as an adverbial emphasis:

דיא גינג אויף דען פֿיש מארק פֿיש איין צו קויפֿן גאר באלד[.]
אונ׳ דיא גינג גיצירט מיט אייטל אבנים טובֿות אונ׳ מיט גאל[ד:]
[...]
אונ׳ דיא וואלט דיא בעשטי פֿיש קויפֿן וועז דיא שון טייאר ז[יין:]

(She left for the fish market, to quickly buy a fish.
She was adorned with precious gems and gold.[...]

She would buy the best fish [even] if it were already expensive.)

(page 2r, lines 31, 32, 36)

The haste which Rokhl displayed, as well as her attire, suggest that she put off buying the fish until the very last minute. Sumptuary laws were relaxed for the Sabbath and other holidays, and on such occasions women were allowed to wear their best clothing and jewellery (Baron 1945, vol. 2:305; Bloom 1971:86-88; Abrahams 1985:92, 295). Nevertheless, despite rabbinical pronouncements that Jewish women were not to go to the market alone, or dress in a manner which would attract undue attention, Rokhl does just that.

Those who disregard their social roles and obligations risk ostracism, and consequently place themselves outside the protection of the community. Thus, Rokhl's non-conformist attitudes steadily drive her away from the mainstream of society. The first move is still within the confines of the city, since the fish markets were generally located at the outer fringes of cities. She crosses the line once she steps on to the boat.

דער פֿישר זאך אן דיא שיני מיד גאר עבן זוא שין גיצירט[.]
גישמוקט מיט קליידר מיט גאלד אונ׳ מיט פערלן גיבראטיר[ט:]
דער פֿישר גידאכט זיך העט איך דייני שיני גילדני קיטין[.]
זוא וער איך ארמיר פֿישר דער ליזט אויז אלין מיינן ניטן[:]

(The fisherman looked at the pretty maiden, indeed so prettily adorned,
Dressed in clothes embroidered with gold and pearls.
He thought to himself, 'Had I your beautiful attire
Then I, poor fisherman, would be freed from all my worries.')

(page 2r, lines 37-40)

We read that a woman's beauty rends the fabric of society, causing men to abandon their position and shun their responsibilities. Here a fisherman is used didactically to demonstrate that behaviour such as Rokhl's can only result in disaster. That the author would use a fisherman in the antagonist's role is not surprising. Fishermen, who subsist on the periphery of the community, were held in low regard (Abrahams 1985:60, 84) and seen as prone to insolent behaviour. Likewise, rabbis repeatedly warned that non-Jewish fish-vendors grossly inflated their prices late on Friday mornings so as to swindle their Jewish customers (*ibid*; see also *Mayse man un vayb*, below, chapter 6), thus equating fishmongers with thieves.

These notions are supported in the story when the fisherman, distracted by the outward manifestations of Rokhl's beauty, i.e. her gems and jewels, kidnaps the girl. However, the repeated reference to Rokhl's attire confirms for the reader that the fisherman is not solely to blame for his actions. Indeed, such conduct is to be expected. It is Rokhl's own behaviour which brings about whatever calamities she must endure.

While the author of the story later provides a moral to guide his reader, the insinuations within the narrative itself imply that his objections to women's deportment goes beyond their judgements about future husbands, or even other Jews. Rather, the independence which Rokhl demonstrates throughout the story hints at a potentially dangerous threat to the ruling establishment, of which her father is a part. This independence is illustrated not only by Rokhl's attitudes and defiance of conventions, but it is further demonstrated by the

narrator's depiction of Rokhl's supplications to God. When she is kidnapped by the fisherman, the narrator tells us simply that:

דיא שיני כלה דיא שרייאט אונ׳ ווייגט גאר ביטרליך צו גאט[.]

(The pretty bride [to-be] screamed and pitifully cried to God.)
(page 2r, line 51)

That briefest description is all we are given, since Rokhl regains a bit of her composure and tries, unsuccessfully, to bargain with the fisherman. At first the fisherman is intent on just stealing Rokhl's jewels and clothing, but he quickly realises that he can have much more than the girl's possessions. There is no one who can come to Rokhl's rescue, or so it would seem, since he is confident no one witnessed the event. The fisherman implies what he plans to do by the severity of the punishment he will receive should his victim survive:

דער פֿישר שפראך דייני קליידר אונ׳ גישמוק מושטו מיר געב[ן.]
דער נאך וויל איך דיך דאך גלייך וואול ניט לאזן בלייבן לעבן[:]
דען קומשטו ווידר אן דאש לאנד זוא ווערשטו אויז זאגן[.]
וואש זיך צווישן אונז דען הייגטיגן טאג האט צו גיטראגן[:]
דער נאך ליז מיך דער מלך צו לונדין קעפֿין אדר הענקין[.]
דרום וויל איך דיין שינן לייב אלהיר אין דאש ים פֿר זענקין[:]

(The fisherman spoke, 'You must give your clothes and
jewels to me.
And so I will, anyway, not let you live.
Because, if you return to land again you will reveal
What went on between us today.
And so the King [would] have me beheaded or hung.
Therefore I will fling your pretty body into the sea.')
(page 2r, lines 45-50)

Clearly, Rokhl's jewels are no longer simply a symbol of her wealth and status, they have become a sign of her feminine allure. Rokhl becomes increasingly aware that the fisherman intends to take more than her clothing and jewellery, and the reader shares in her fears:

זיא שפראך אך ליבר פֿישר שענק מיר דאך מיין יונגיש לעבן.
אל מיין קליידר אונ׳ פערלין אונ׳ גאלד וויל איך דיר גערן געבן:
דער פֿישר שפראך עש איז דאך אלש מיין וואז דוא האשט אן.
וואז ווילשטו מיר דען גאבן וון איך עז זעלברט נעמן קאן:

(She spoke, 'Dear fisherman, spare my life.
I will willingly give you all my clothes, pearls and gold.'
The fisherman said, 'What you are wearing is already mine.
What will you give me? I can take it [anyway].')
(page 2v, lines 55-58)

Utilizing the interplay between of לעבן 'life' and לייב 'body', expressed by the fisherman, Rokhl openly voices the fisherman's intent to forcibly take whatever he wishes: he will not stop at her visible signs of status but will take from her her honour, and with that her life. Yet, Rokhl has not strayed far from the mainstream, as evidenced by the fact that the aggression perpetrated by the fisherman, is confined to words ('As they argued with each other'. אין דעם ווייל זיא אזו מיט אנגדר טעטן שרייאן מיט ווארטן). However, as they remain adrift and under the pull of the ocean's currents, the fisherman's verbal assault on the protagonist foreshadows even more dire events looming on the horizon.

Thus, as Rokhl tries to dissuade her abductor, a ship approaches. She naively thinks that her deliverance is at hand, only to find out that her would-be rescuers are vicious pirates. Thus, they are picked up by pirates who, well-known for their truculence, are depicted as even further from society's centre than the fisherman, exemplified by their pelagic environs and predatory mien:

דיא לייט אויף יענם שיף דיא ווארן אייטל גזלנים אל צו גלייך:
דיא טעטן גזלן אויף דען ים וועם זיא גיפֿינדן ארם אונ' ריך:

(The people on that ship were nothing but pirates one by one.
They steal at sea when they find poor and wealthy.)
(page 2v, lines 63-64)

Notwithstanding, that they accept society's code of behaviour is demonstrated by their acknowledgement and mockery of its rules. They assure Rokhl that they are foremost businessmen:

אונ' שפראכֿן צו דער כלה פֿאר דען פֿישר האב דו ניט זארג:
פֿר וואר ער ווערט אונז נוא גאר ניט מער קענן אנטלויפֿן.
מיר וועלן אין ברענגן אין טירקייא אונ' דארטן פֿאר קויפֿן:

(They said to the bride, 'Do not worry about the fisherman.
'Indeed, he is no longer able to run from us.
We will bring him to Turkey and sell [him] there.')
(page 2v, lines 70-72)

The incongruous attempt to express compassion for Rokhl while threatening to sell the pirate into slavery, is only a ruse, as any reader would have surmised. Pirates often did kill their captives (see for example, Berckman 1979, especially pp. 63-67 on the murder and gang rape of Jewish

passengers). However, the men on board are ruled over by two captains, demonstrating that while pirates may be known to be hostile, there remains a semblance of structure and balance within their group.

As Rokhl passes from the hands of the fisherman into the clutches of vicious pirates, she finds herself the object of their lust. The captains of the ship argue over the possession of the girl:

דיא שפראכן אונ׳ איין איידר פון זיא נאך דער כלה גריף:
דער אייגר שפראך איך וויל מיר זיא נעמן צו אייגם ווייב.
אונ׳ דוא נעם דיר אליש וואש זיא האט אן אירן שיגן לייב:
אבר דר אנדרי ראש שפראך נעם דיר אליש וואז זיא האט אן.
אונ׳ גיב מיר נייארט איר בלושן לייב איך וויל זיין איר מאן:

(They spoke, and each one of them reached for the bride.
The one said, 'I will take her as my wife
And you can have all she is wearing on her pretty body.'
But the other captain said, 'You take all that she is wearing,
And give me just her naked body; I will be her man.')
(page 2v, lines 74-78)

That the pirates are on the periphery of society, and farther removed than the fisherman, is supported by how they saw Rokhl's rich attire. While the fisherman wished to use Rokhl's fine clothing and jewels to move himself upward in society, the pirates do not wish to better their situation. They have no need of such signs of status, and thus the symbolism is removed: no longer are there details of Rokhl's attire in the story. For the pirates, Rokhl's womanhood, i.e. her natural state, is clearly the primary object of their lusts and therefore their main concern.

The seeming co-operation between the men breaks down and, in a travesty of duelling, the two pirate captains fight each other to determine who will win the girl:

דיא צווייא הערן קונטן אונטר אנגדר גאר ניט מושווה וועדן.
ביז אייגר פֿון זיא שלוג דען אנדרן דר נידר צו דער ערדן:
דער שפרונג באלד ווידר אויף אונ׳ גריף נאך זיינם שווערט.
דאש גיפֿעכט צווישן זיא האט איין גנצי שטונד לנג גיווערט:

(The two captains could not settle this with each other,
Until one of them hit the other down to the ground.
The other quickly sprung back up and grabbed his sword.
The sword fight between them lasted an entire hour.)
(page 2v, lines 79-82)

As the two cross swords, Rokhl thinks to herself:

ליבר גאט וואש וער איך האבן פֿאר אייגם גיווין[:]
ערשט האב איך ניט גוואלט האבן אייגן חשובֿ בחור צום מאן[.]
אונ׳ איצונט ויל מיך אייגר פֿון די צווייא גזלנים מיט גוואלט ה[אן:]
אלמעכטיגר גאט העלף מיר אויז אירי און דר ברמיגי הענ[ט :]
ביהיט מיך פֿאר זינד אונ׳ שאנד דיין מלאך מיר צו הילף זענ[ד:]

('Dear God. Could I have fared any worse?
First, I did not want to have a respected young man for a husband,
And now one of the two pirates will take me by force.
God Almighty, Save me from their merciless hands,
Keep me from sin and shame. Send your angel to help me.')
(page 3r, lines 84-88)

Here the tragedy about to befall Rokhl is used to remind the readers that haughty deportment, such as hers, can only lead to shame and disgrace. However, two problems arise from her supplication. Although she admits that

she was reluctant to marry the man chosen for her by her father, she does not fully acknowledge that her plight is of her own doing. Secondly, rather than repenting her actions and requesting God's help, she pleads to be protected from sin and shame, and that an Angel be dispersed for her sake. In other words, she does not fully accept responsibility for her actions and thus has not truly repented of her sin of arrogance.

The bloody duel ends with both captains mortally wounded and the remainder of the pirates thirsting for revenge. Enraged over the loss of their leaders, they blame Rokhl for their misfortune, and angrily castigate the girl:

דא שפראכן זיא צו איר דוא פֿר פֿלוכטי הור אונ׳ מיד[.]
איבר דיך האבן זיך דער שלאגין אונזרי הערן אלי בייד[:]
איצונדרט מושטו אויך שטערבן פֿון אונזרן הענדן גאר בלד[.]
דוא ווערשט ניט לאנג מער לעבן אונ׳ ווערשט ניט ווערן א[לט:]

(They said to her, 'You accursed whore and maid,
Over you both our captains killed each other.
Now you too must soon die by our hands.
You will not live much longer, nor will you grow old.')
(page 3r, lines 93-96)

With these words, the pirates remind readers — male and female alike — that a woman who remains unmarried runs the risk of becoming a whore (Swidler 1976:139; *San* 76a). By the seventeenth century, prostitutes had lost the protection they had enjoyed during the Middle Ages, living instead on the margins of society, in a surrounding suffused with violence (cf. Rossiaud 1988). Accordingly, the pirates blame Rokhl herself of inviting sexual advances and subsequent violence by her own deportment (i.e. refusing to

marry, arrogant behaviour, dressing in her finery, proceeding unescorted to the market), equating her with a prostitute. Thus, the events clearly demonstrate to the reader the disruptive and destructive nature of unbridled female behaviour. Still, Rokhl does not repent, and wants simply to be rescued:

דיא ארמי כלה הוב ווידר אן צו ווייגן אונ׳ צו שרייאן צו גאט[.]
זיא שפראך אלמעכטיגר גאט העלף מיר דאך אויז דיזר נוי[ט:]

(The poor girl began to weep again and cry to God.
She said, 'Almighty God, help me out of this trouble.')
(page 3r, lines 97-98)

However, just as a young woman has brought chaos, an elder man restores control and order to the situation:

דא הוב דער עלצטי אונטר זיא צו דיא אנדרי צו רידן אן[.]
איר ליבן ברידר וועז מיר דיא זאך גאנץ רעכט וועלן בדענ[קן:]
זוא זעלטן מיר יוא ביליך דיזר ארמן מיד איר לעבן שענק[ן.]
דען מיר האבן זיא יוא דער ליצט אויז דש פֿישר זיינר הא[נט.]
אונ׳ זעלטן מיר זיא איצט ערשט ממית זיין דאש ווער איין ש[אנד:]
אבר מיר האבן הייגט פֿר לארן אונזרי ביידי הערן ווער[ט.]
גלייך אז וויא איר זיא זיכט ליגן טויטרהייט אויף דער ער[ד:]
דארום מוזן מיר ווידר אייגם אויז אונז אויז דער ווילן[:]
דער זעלביגר זאל הערשן אונ׳ גיווועלטיגן איבר אלי זייני גז[ילן:]
דאש ווארן זיא אלי צו פֿרידן אבר זיא קונטן ניט וועהרן איין[:]
איין איטליכר וואלט גערן איין ראש אונ׳ הער איבר אלי זיין[:]
דא שפראך דער עלצטי גזלן ווידר זיא אלי צו הויף.
עש איז ניט בעשיר אז דאש מיר אלי וועהרפֿין גורל דרויף:
אויף וועלכים אונטר אונש דאש גורל וועהרט טון גיפֿאלין.
דער זאל זיין איין ראש אונ׳ הער איבר דיא אנדרן אלין:

אונ׳ דער זאל אויך נעמן דיזי שיני מיד צו אייכם ווייב:
אדר זאל האבן מאכט צו טון וואז ער ויל מיט אירן לייב:

(The eldest of them began to speak to the others,
'Dear brothers, if we consider this affair properly
Then it is better if we spare this young maiden's life.
Since we have indeed rescued her from the fisherman's hands,
Should we now kill her first, it would be a great pity.
But today we lost both our captains
Just like we, she sees [them] lying dead on the ground
Therefore we must again choose one of us
Who shall rule and reign over all his companions.'
This pleased all of them but they could not agree
Each one would gladly be the captain and rule over all
So the eldest pirate spoke again to all of them,
'Is it not better that we should cast lots
The one of us on whom the lot falls
Shall be a lord and captain over all the others.
He shall also take this pretty girl as a wife
Or have the power to do whatever he wills with her body.')
(page 3r-3v, lines 100-15)

The eldest pirate's oration poses two issues: Rokhl's likely fate, and the civility which the pirates still adhere to. First, it is highly unlikely that the pirates will allow Rokhl to die without being raped; this is reinforced by his advice to wait before they kill her. Why else would they have rescued her from the fisherman, if not to suit their own purposes? However, before doing so, he appeals to the others to resolve their present lack in an orderly manner. Since they cannot agree on a new leader, they must decide in the most equitable way they know — the casting of lots (Schwarzbaum 1968:237-38; *Mayse fun a kale mit dray khasanim* [c.1700, Amsterdam] where the sacrifice of one person to save many is decided by the casting of lots; and Leviticus 26:8). By

doing so, they demonstrate to the reader that even the most hostile, marginal group of men can still follow codes of civilised demeanour.

As the pirates begin to cast lots a violent storm arises. Thus the cycle of escalating violence set in motion by Rokhl's behaviour is interrupted by violence from beyond the men's realm, i.e. nature, the antithesis of civilisation. Comparisons between women and storms, and the damage which ensues from both is a metaphor common to Talmudic texts (Dishon 1994:39). Rokhl now faces two possible fates: violation at the hands of the pirates or death by drowning. She begins to realise that matters are not in her hands and that she is not going to be the one to determine her fate:

אלמעכטיגר גאט ביהיט מיך דאך פֿון דען שטורם אין מער:
אבר אי איך חס ושלום פֿון דיא גזלנים זאל קומן צו און ערין.
אונ' אי איך זאלט חס ושלום פֿון דיא מטומא ווערן.
זוא לאז מיך ליברשט אין דיא וואשיר שטרבן אונ' פֿר טרינקן.
אונ' לאז מיין רייגן גוף ליברשט אין דיא וואשיר פֿר זינקין:

('Almighty God, save me from the storm at sea.
But if I — heaven forbid — come to dishonour at the hands of the pirates,
And if I should — heaven forbid — be defiled by them,
Then leave me rather in the water to drown and to die
And let my pure body sink in the waters instead.')
(page 3v, lines 127-31)

The pirates drown, but Rokhl does not, confirming the idea that women are men-killers (cf. Swidler 1976:58-59) and that nature (i.e. women) can and does destroy civilisation (i.e., men). For six hours the girl stubbornly hangs on

to a plank from the wreckage of the ship. She is finally washed ashore on what appears to be an uninhabited island.

At this point, Rokhl's prayers begin to resemble those of a truly repentant person. As the tale continues, we learn not the content of her prayers, which matter little, but of Rokhl's attitude — a more important guide:

דאך דאנקיט זיא גאט דז ער זיא הוט דר לידט פֿון טוט אונ׳ שנד[.]
אונ׳ דאש ער זיא האט ווידר גיבראכֿט אירגנץ אן איין לאנד:

(So she thanked God that He saved her from death and
shame
And that He had once again brought her somewhere on dry
land.
(page 4r, lines 146-47)

זיא ווייגט גאר ביטרליך וויא גישריאן איבר מיני גרושי זינ[ד:]

(She wept bitterly, like cries over my great sins.)
(page 4v, line 181)

However, as she dries her clothes in the sun, Rokhl decides:

איך בין איין נקיבֿה אונ׳ קום נירגנץ פֿארט וואו איך בין:
זיא צוך אייגם גזלן דיא קלייֿדר אויז אונ׳ טעט זיך זיא אן.
דער זיא האט גידעהן האט גימיינט זיא איז איין רעבֿטר מאן.
זיא נאם אויך איין שווערט פֿון איין גזלן אונ׳ הינג זיך עש אן.

('I am a female and go no further where[ever] I am.'
She stripped a pirate of his clothes and put them on.
Whoever would see her would think her a proper man.
She also took a sword from a pirate and put it on,)
(page 4r, lines 157-60)

Rather than the more commonly used word מויד 'maiden', Rokhl now describes herself as a נקיבה, from the Hebrew meaning 'female'. While she could have also described herself as an אשה (also from the Hebrew) 'woman, wife', since she was engaged to be married, and she is, throughout the story, referred to by the narrator as a כלה ('bride' or 'bride-to-be'). However, she consciously chooses this particular term. Not only does נקיבה mean 'female', it also connotes a 'strong, bold woman' and is a euphemism for a prostitute (cf. modern Yiddish נקיבה which means 'whore'). Thus, by her choice of words, Rokhl seems to be concurring with the pirates' opinion of her deportment.

Her actions could confuse the reader, as Rokhl dons pirate's clothing. However, the reader would remember that one of the demonstrations of Rokhl's impudent behaviour was her own attire 'adorned with precious gems and gold'. That Rokhl disguises herself as a man, although normally frowned upon by the rabbinic authorities (stemming from Deut. 22:5), is not an uncommon ruse whose use is sanctioned for the protection of women (Abrahams 1985:275). Rokhl is unsure of the reception she would receive should she find any other people, and based on her past encounters, chooses a less lavish disguise.

However, coupled with the lines following it, the reader realises that Rokhl wants to evade all roles which are imposed by virtue of her sex, be they cultural or 'natural'. No other choice of word would reflect the dissatisfaction with Rokhl's 'natural' state. Thus, she not only questions what society imposes upon her, but also what God, or nature, would restrict her to. Likewise, the locale of her 'change of habit', i.e. the uninhabited island, emphasises that Rokhl's role has gone beyond society, into the realm of nature.

The juxtaposition of female/nature, male/civilisation is now given additional support by the narrator's timely intervention. Leaving Rokhl on an uninhabited island, the narrator returns the reader to London and her father, Reb Eliezer. Upon discovering that his daughter has disappeared, Reb Eliezer initiates a search.

דען דיא כלה וואר פֿר לארן מן וואושט ניט וואו דיא וועד[.]
מן ליז דיא איבר אל זוכֿין אין אלי לענדר אונ׳ אויף דען מער[:]

(For the bride was lost--no one knew where she was,
They had searched all the countries and at sea.)
(page 4v, lines 170-71)

The groom, arriving for his wedding, finds that the bride is not there. Understandably, the prospective son-in-law wants to dissolve the agreement, as is his right, but is dissuaded from doing so. Situated in the midst of society, the two men come to an amicable solution, i.e. without recourse to confrontation or violent dispute.

דער חתן איז אויך אן גיקומן אונ׳ וואלט חתונה מאכן.
אבר דער מחותן וואושט קיין עצה צו געבן צו די זאכ[ן:]
[...]
אונ׳ דער חתן וואלט דען שידוך שון גאר לאזן אב גין.
אבר דער מחותן וואלט עש גאנץ אונ׳ גאר ניט לאזן גישען[:]
ער שפראך צו דען חתן וואלט זיבן יאר אויף מיין אייניציג קינ[ד.]
אונ׳ וען מן זיא אין דיא זיבן יאר נירגנץ ניט ווידר גיפינט[:]
זוא מאגשטו איין אנדרי כלה נעמן אונ׳ וען איך וער שטרבן[.]
זוא זאלשטו ווייל דז זיבן יאר וואלשט מיין האב אונ׳ גוט ערבן[:]
דער חתן ואר דר מיט צו פרידן אונ׳ ער ביגאב זיך צו רוא[.]

(The groom had also arrived and wanted to marry,
But the father-in-law had no advice to give [him] on the matter, [...]
The groom wanted to give up the match already,
But the father-in-law wanted it [the marriage arrangement] a lot and would not allow it [the dissolution] to happen.
He said to the groom, 'Wait seven years for my only daughter,
And if she is not found again, anywhere, during the seven years,
Then you may take another bride and If I die
You will, since you are waiting the seven years, you will inherit all my possessions and wealth.'
The groom was pleased with this and quieted himself down.)
(page 4v, lines 172-78)

Like Jacob (Genesis 29), the groom must wait seven years for his intended bride. However, unlike the patriarch, the young man need not toil; no doubt he will spend his years studying, as would be expected of the future son-in-law of a wealthy man.

While the groom is in London awaiting her return, Rokhl explores the island in search of people. She wanders from the desert to a great forest, where she finds fresh fruit and water. After eating her fill, she falls soundly asleep. She wakes up to find herself taken captive by a white-haired ape. The narrator thus enforces the belief that feminine 'nature' cannot be disguised and it distracts any male, although in this case it is an ape rather than a man.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, apes were common characters in literature and the arts (see Janson 1952). They were anthropomorphised, given the characteristics one would customarily accord wayward humans: they represented a fantastic race of people, as well as the 'fallen', sinners, and those with animal instincts (licentiousness, aggression). In a similar vein, the tale of a woman carried off and seduced by an ape was not an uncommon motif in seventeenth century adventures. For example, in *Compendium Maleficarum* (1920:29, see also Janson 1952:275-76), a woman was deported to an island inhabited only by apes. One of the apes takes her into cave, where he gives her fruit and rapes her; she subsequently gives birth to two children. She is later rescued by Portuguese sailors, and as she sails off the ape drowns his children and himself in despair.

Rokhl, however, was not impregnated by the ape. Such an abominable circumstance would have not allowed the narrator to reunite the girl with her prospective groom. Likewise, the description of the ape's behaviour further supports the narrator's idea that it is the male who is able to rise above his nature and bring civility into the picture:

[ג]ער באלד ער שפרינגט אונ׳ ליף אונ׳ פֿאסט דיא כלה אן׃
[ע]ר שלעפט דיא מיט גיוואלט דיא שרייאט מושט מיט אים גין.
[ע]ר בראכֿט זי אין זיין היל אבר ער טעט איר קיין ביז ניט מין׃
[ע]ר בראכֿט איר דיא בעשטי פירות צו עשין אלי טאג.
[זי]א וואר ביטריבט דאך צו לעצט טעט דיא פֿר גענסן איר פלאג׃
אלי טאג ווען דר אף גינג פֿון איר אוועק זוא גינג דיא אויך בלד.
בייא דען ים אום צו זעהן אוב ניט איין שיף קומין וואלט׃
אבר דער אף קאם באלד ווידר אונ׳ ער בליב ניט לאנג אויז.
ער זוכֿט אונ׳ גיפֿאנד דיא בלד אונ׳ שלעפט דיא ווידר נאך הויז׃

(Quickly he jumped and ran and grabbed the maiden.
He forcefully dragged her. She screamed [but] she had to follow him.
He brought her to his cave but he did her no harm. He brought her to his cave but he did her no harm.
He brought her the best of every kind of fruit to eat every day.
She was extremely despondent, but at least she [could] forgot her affliction.
Every day when the ape went away from her, she quickly went out
To the sea to see if a ship would not come.
But the ape returned soon and did not stay out long.
He searched and found her quickly and dragged her back home.)

(page 4v-5r, lines 191-98)

Rokhl's treatment at the hands of the ape is interesting. Unlike the other males she encountered during her ordeal, the ape treats her deferentially. That does not mean that Rokhl can forget her station in life. With the apes, as with the humans, the female belongs in the domestic sphere — in the house, i.e. the cave; clearly, even in nature her role is pre-determined for her.

Rokhl remains a captive for some time. On the seventh year of her captivity on the island, she is rescued from the island, and sails back to England. She is reunited with her father, and re-established within the community and a proper wedding is arranged. The moral at the end of the story holds little surprise:

אונ׳ נוא אל איר כלותֿ אונ׳ איר בתּולותֿ ישראל אלי צו גלייך:
נעמט אייך איין בייא שפיל דראן איר מעגט זיין ארם אדר רייך
איר זאלט אייערי חתּנים ניט פֿר אכטן אלי בחורים זיין גוט[.]
אונ׳ איר זאלט קיינם פֿר אכטן אונ׳ טראגט קיין שטאלצן מוט[:]
אלי יודישי קינדר איז אייגר ניט בעשר אז דר אנדר פֿר וואר[.]
אופֿט איז מאנכֿר איין מיוחס אונ׳ איז אן אים קיין גוט האר[:]
אופֿט איז מאנכֿר שין אדר קלוג אדר האט גאר פֿיל געלט.
אונ׳ קען זיך דאך דער נאך ניט מחייה זיין אין דער וועלט:
דיא ברכֿה פֿון גאט מאכֿט רייך ווייטר איז אליש אום זונשט.
עש העלפֿט אונז ניקש אלע אונזרי חכּמותֿ אונ׳ אונזרי קונשט.
השם יתּברך זאל אונז במהרה בימינו דער ליזן אויז דען גלותֿ
אונ׳ כל ישראל ביהיטן אונ׳ ביוואדן מכל צרותֿ ובּהלותֿ.
אמן ואמן.

(And so all you maidens and young women of Israel, each and every one
Take this as an example, whether poor or rich
You should not deride your bridegrooms, all young men are good
And you should not deride anyone, nor have a harsh opinion
No Jewish child is better than any other
Often a man is well-connected, but hasn't one good hair [on his head].
Often a man is good-looking, bright or is very wealthy
But still cannot be happy being in the world
It is the blessing from God which makes one richer
All our wisdom and tricks do not help.
God, Blessed be He, will hurriedly release us from our Exile in our days

And guard and keep the Jewish people safe from all sorrows
and frights.
Amen and Amen.)

(page 5r, lines 211-24)

This moral does not compel a re-reading of the story (as opposed to *Mayse man un vayb*, see chapter 5). On the other hand, it confirms the reader's notions that had Rokhl not been so judgmental and arrogant, she would surely have been spared the long torment she suffered.

3.5 Conclusions

Mayse fun a kale demonstrates the author's support of the status quo, the patriarchal order. Here we find that the most potent threat to the stability of the status quo is posed by women. Violence, transgression, and death are shown to follow women; the most reprehensible and dangerous of whom attempt to place themselves on the same level as men by questioning or shirking their designated role in society. Throughout the story, the narrator reiterates for the benefit of the reader the idea that women have a retrogressive effect on society, while men, on the contrary, are depicted as an active part of civilisation, at least conceding its laws and order. The narrator moves his deviant female character from the centre of society (and thus away from accordance and consonance, as epitomised by her father and groom) to the unrestrained turbulence of nature. The protagonist's movement away from civilised life and its established rules and protection, parallels a move from the security offered by the status quo toward the danger which licentious,

independent thinking is shown to incite. This clearly and forcefully illustrates the fate of those who believe themselves better judges than are the guardians of society.

In *Mayse fun a kale* we are not presented with a consciously malevolent woman; we are however, furnished with a pre-cursor to the more modern feminine characters which prevail in later Yiddish popular literature (cf. Zucker 1987). Rokhl demonstrates an independence and desire to set her own course, even when it goes against the conventions of the Jewish community (Zucker 1987:35). Nor is the story set in the distant past, or some remote corner of the world, with the exception, of course, of the island to which the female protagonist is temporarily 'exiled'. Instead, the narrator furnishes us with a Jewish girl from a known, and geographically close although young (having been granted sovereign permission to re-settle in London only since 1655), community which had already published *responsa* (*Ma'ase rav*, London 1700) concerning, in part, the practice of permitting bachelors to tutor young women. By using names common in any Jewish community (unlike Zigmund and Mageleyne, see *Mageleyne lid*, chapter 4) the narrator presents a character whose faults and lessons can be transferred to almost any man's daughter. Similarly, once the contract between her father and her groom is struck, the narrator no longer refers to Rokhl by name, using instead the term כלה, 'bride/bride-to-be'. Now nameless, Rokhl is merged with all other brides-to-be into one female. Like all adult females, this bride-to-be alone is responsible for her behaviour and resultant marginality. Lest any

reader is still tempted to emulate Rokhl's demeanour, the narrator measures her move away from the mainstream not only by distance, but also by a corresponding escalation in violence.

After she is left abandoned on a seemingly deserted island, Rokhl accepts whatever she finds: the fresh water, the fruit, and even her position as a female. Her drive for independence is effectively squelched, and when she has served out the time for her isolation, as stated by her father, she is allowed back into the community. Repentant, and having no further desire to upset the status quo or shirk her given role, she is married to her groom, whom, like the patriarchal order, she now happily accepts. The message imparted in *Mayse fun a kale* is clear: resistance to the cultural imperative to wed constitutes so severe a threat to the integrity of the social fabric that those who refuse, like Rokhl, will be compelled to submit (Rowe 1979:247).

Chapter 4: *Mageleyne lid*

Idealisation and the Abandoned Wife

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine *Mageleyne lid*, one of four contemporary versions of the Magdalena and Peter of Provence legend which were printed in Yiddish, prior to 1720. Unlike other Yiddish variants of this legend, *Mageleyne lid* is highly abridged, with many of the chivalric motifs either only briefly mentioned or altogether absent. *Mageleyne lid* is the story of Zigmund's quest for self-identity, and the love and loyalty of Mageleyne, a princess from a rival kingdom.

The author uses Mageleyne's love and fidelity to demonstrate the proper decorum and piety which women were expected to display, especially widows and *agunes* ('anchored/abandoned wives'), who were left without a divorce or witnesses who could vouch for their husband's demise and therefore could not remarry according to Jewish law. The beautiful Mageleyne is separated from her love and reduced to the marginality of an abandoned wife (*aguneh*), with no chance of remarriage, alone and impoverished. Yet her piety and steadfastness prove to yield her richness and reunion — something other *agunes* could only hope for.

4.2 Summary of *Mageleyne lid*

Our story begins in the court of the King of Spain, where Zigmund, the prince of Spain, overhears some nobles discussing Mageleyne, the daughter of the King of France, with whom Spain has been at war. The nobles describe her as 'the most beautiful flower in the world'. Learning of the princess' beauty, Zigmund decides to seek her out. His parents tearfully agree to let him travel across the sea and his mother gives him three very valuable rings to take with him.

Zigmund arrives in Naples, the capital of Spain [*sic*], where there is a large number of other foreign aristocrats in the city as well. Zigmund learns from the proprietor of an inn where he takes up lodging that the King has arranged a tournament, the winner of which will receive the hand of the King's beautiful daughter, Mageleyne. Zigmund decides to compete in the tourney and knocks all the other competitors to the ground. Mageleyne and her father watch the tournament from above the audience.

At this point, she sees Zigmund and immediately falls in love with him. Mageleyne dispatches her maid to secretly bring Zigmund to her. When he arrives at the castle, both confess their instant love for the other. Zigmund gives her the first of the three rings he brought with him. When she sees the valuable ring, she realises that he must be of noble blood, and asks him about his pedigree. Zigmund reveals his parentage to her, and gives her the two other rings as a token of remembrance.

Some time later he returns to Mageleyne and informs her that he is returning home. She refuses to let him leave without her, preferring death to a life without him. They steal away in the night, taking with them provisions and three horses. After travelling some distance, they come to a forest by the sea, where they dismount and eat, and subsequently Mageleyne falls asleep. Zigmund, spying a red kerchief in her dress, takes it out and finds the three rings he has given her inside. He replaces the rings in the kerchief and places the bundle on a rock. A bird flying overhead mistakes the kerchief for meat, and steals the bundle. Panic stricken, Zigmund chases the bird until he sees it land on a rock some distance from the shore. Zigmund manages to scare the bird, who takes flight, leaving the bundle behind. Zigmund jumps into a broken-down boat in order to reach the rock, but the wind carries him off to sea and he later falls captive to pirates. He is sold to the Sultan in Constantinople, where he quickly becomes the Sultan's favourite slave, attaining immense wealth and status.

Meanwhile Mageleyne awakens to find herself alone in the forest. Alarmed, she looks for Zigmund in vain and upon seeing all their horses, she senses that he did not desert her willingly. Realizing that she cannot return home, Mageleyne allows the horses to lead her in whichever direction they choose. Eventually Mageleyne reaches a road, where she finds a beggar woman who is willing to exchange clothes with her. Thus disguised, Mageleyne continues her travels to Zigmund's home country in search of her

lost love. She takes up accommodation at an inn managed by a widow, who relates to her the disappearance of the King's only son, the 'handsome Zigmund'.

After a period of grief, Magelyene decides to devote her time to serving the poor in a nearby hospital. Mageleyne puts all her money and efforts into rebuilding the dilapidated institution. Some time later, she buys a fish at the market, but when she begins to prepare it for her meal, she notices a red kerchief inside. Pulling it out, she discovers her three rings inside, and concludes from this that Zigmund must have perished.

The story shifts back to Zigmund, who is now second to the Sultan. The Sultan, however, is concerned about Zigmund who is never happy. He asks him the reason for his down-trodden mood; Zigmund explains that he is worried about his parents, whom he has not seen in many years. The Sultan grants Zigmund permission to visit his parents, after promising that he would return. Zigmund takes his gold and silver and hides it in caskets of salt, which he had purchased. He finds a ship from his home country, and arranges passage for himself on the vessel. The captain queries Zigmund about the salt, but Zigmund tells him he has promised it to a hospital. During the voyage, the ship moors at an island, and the passengers and crew are allowed to rest there for a while. Zigmund falls asleep among some roses, however, and does not hear the boarding call. Not wishing to delay his trip any longer, the captain sets sail, leaving Zigmund alone on the island. When the captain finally reaches his port of call, he takes the salt to Mageleyne's

hospital, explaining that the owner has died but had told him he had promised the cargo to a hospital. When Mageleyne later opens one of the caskets, she finds some of the hidden gold.

Meanwhile, Zigmund wakes up on the island and realises that he has been deserted. After many weeks Zigmund is rescued by a passing ship. The crew takes him, weak and near death, to the same hospital which is run by Mageleyne. She agrees to take him in and nurses him back to health. When he is able to talk, she explains to him the circumstances which brought him to the hospital. Zigmund then recounts for her his life and how he had lost his beloved Mageleyne. When she asks him what he would do if he saw this woman, he responds that he would give her his kingdom. At that point, Mageleyne identifies herself and the couple are reunited. Once over the shock, Zigmund makes a speedy recovery. Word reaches the King and Queen, who quickly come to the hospital. A wedding is arranged, Mageleyne's father is sent for, and peace is established between the two kingdoms. The families live long and happily, eventually uniting the two kingdoms.

4.3 Sources and Analogues

4.3.1 Antecedents for *Mageleyne lid*

Mageleyne lid is an adaptation of a well known chivalric romance based on the Languedoc legend of Pierre of Provence and Maguellone from Montpelier. During the latter part of the fifteenth century the legend was published contemporarily in two prose tales: a French version ('La Historie de Pierre du Provence et de la belle Maguellone', for the early versions of the French tale see Biedermann 1913), and an Italian variant ('Historio di Otinello e Julia'). The French version eventually overshadowed its Italian counterpart in popularity.

The German version of the French legend, also in prose, was translated by Veit Warbuck and published in 1533; it was quickly disseminated in other European languages, including Polish. The early Polish versions have been lost, however, and we know of their existence only through surviving Czech and Russian translations (Krzyzanowski 1978:105). During the seventeenth century, the legend became very popular in Poland and soon many variations, including ballads, were circulated (for further discussions on the dissemination of the tale throughout Europe see Cizevskij 1971; Krzyzanowski 1972; and*Kindler's Literatur-Lexikon* 1978, vol. 3:1920-21 and vol. 6:951-56).

The Yiddish versions of the Magdalena cycle are adaptations from Veit Warbuck's German translations (Erik 1979:326). In light of the fact that

Warbuck's translation is the basis for a great number of Central and Eastern European variations, this appears plausible. However, it has been suggested that an earlier Yiddish version may have existed, but was somehow lost (Erik 1979:236). Thus, there may have been another source for the Jewish variants. In the Bodleian Library's Reggio manuscript collection, there exists a Hebrew manuscript from 1490, Reggio number 21, attributed to Avigdor Bonastruc. The last item of this manuscript's table of contents is entitled:

אגרת מגלונה מצרפת ללשון הקודש שהעתקתיה אני הצעיר בנאשטרוק.

> (The letter of Magelon from France into Hebrew [lit. The holy tongue] which I, Bonastruc the younger, translated [lit. copied].)

Unfortunately, the entry is all that remains: the rest of the manuscript is missing. Thus, whether the Yiddish variants were based on French by way of a German, Polish, or perhaps a Hebrew source, remains a mystery.

4.3.2 Contemporaries of *Mageleyne lid*

Mageleyne lid is one of four Yiddish versions of the Magdalena and Peter of Provence legend printed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: these include *A sheyn lid fun a riter oyz proventsyon land*, which was published in Fürth by Josef Schneior in 1698; *A sheyn lid fun a riter oyz proventsyon land*, which comes, most probably, from Prague around 1704; and *A sheyn historye fun riter Zigmunt un Magdaleyne*, printed in Offenbach in 1714 (Cowley 1929:61; Steinschneider 1852-60:566, n. 3655, 3656,3657

and 3658 respectively; a mention of *Historye fun riter Zigmunt un Magdaleyne* appears in Zfatman 1983:45, but not in her 1985 bibliography). The latter three vary little from each other, with the exception of small typographical and editorial changes typical of reprints of that time. *Mageleyne lid,* however, departs from all the others in that the tale itself has been drastically condensed to fit on to a mere five pages.

Based on its poetic structure, *Mageleyne lid* is similar to our author's other three works: a short, rhymed five-page, sparsely decorated booklet in the same typeface. There are, however, some typographic differences. The layout of *Mageleyne lid* does not imply, at first glance, a poem, as it does with the others. The lines are not divided according to rhyme, but rather flow together, as if they were sentences in a paragraph. This same format was used for the last lines of *Mayse man un vayb*, but only on the last page. Likewise, in *Mageleyne lid*, there are instances where the lines do not rhyme (see Appendix, pp.) and the geographical confusions from its textual source(s) is embellished (cf. Paucker 1959a:216), intimating either a hasty typesetting, or perhaps hasty writing. The failure to print the poem according to its rhyme could also be due to the fact that authors themselves often paid for the costs of printing of their works. Since printers charged according to actual sheets of paper used, the author was perhaps trying to 'squeeze' as much as possible on as few pages as possible (and hence the discontinuance of line division in *Mayse man un vayb* as well).

There are blatant confusions present in the text, mainly that of geography: for example, although the protagonist in *Mageleyne lid* starts his journey from his homeland in Spain to France, he arrives in Naples, the capital of Spain! This geographical mix-up is exceptionally interesting in that it calls into question previous assumptions that the anonymous author was well-educated, see Chapter 1 above), for if he was, how could he confuse Spain with France and Italy? It is possible that in his attempt to imitate previous Yiddish texts (either the 1698 Fürth or the 1704 Prague edition), the author failed to notice the error. If he was unfamiliar with the German edition (1661 Nürnberg; cf. Paucker 1959a:190; Howard 1972:220-222), such errors would remain unnoticed. It is also possible that the author did overlook these incongruities, or perhaps they were left as they were in order to reiterate the fictional setting of the tale. Since the author of *Mageleyne lid* published four works within a relatively short time, it is likely that the demand for, or cost of, his work precluded time to ensure the parsimony of the text, that all the lines rhymed, or that they were printed properly.

We can also query the reason why the male protagonist's name, Peter, was changed to Zigmund. Paucker (1959:190) has reminded us that the name 'Peter' and its direct reference to St. Peter, the first apostle, was perhaps too Christian to be acceptable to a Jewish audience. Thus far, a non-Yiddish intermediate text which can convincingly show an external shift in the protagonist's name has not been found. It should be assumed, therefore, that the change in question was an internal one. While it is admissible that the

name was changed to suit the audience's sensibilities, no one has postulated why 'Peter' became 'Zigmund'. It is possible that it is an allusion to either Emperor Sigismund of Germany (cf. Baron 1956), under whose protection the Jewish communities flourished, or to King Zygmunt of Poland, who allowed the Jews to settle within his domain in the sixteenth century. It was also during the reigns of Zygmunt Stary (1506-48) and Zygmunt August (d.1572), when times were still peaceful that the beginning of Polish 'Renaissance' occurred and vernacular literature was encouraged (Krzyzanowski 1978:26).

The name 'Magdalena/Maguellone' is also problematic. 'Magdaleyne' is similar to the German term 'Mägdlein', but the allusion to Mary Magdalene, and the Christian cults, which rose in medieval Europe bearing her name, are likewise sensitive for a Jewish audience. However, in none of the four Yiddish versions of the tale has the female protagonist's name been changed; in one version (Offenbach, 1714) the name in fact reverts from 'Mageleyne' to 'Magdeleyne'.

Among the four Yiddish texts in circulation at this time, *Mageleyne lid* is the shortest, as I have already stated. As this version is an abridgement, there are many omissions; these deletions do not appear to interfere with the main narrative. Such alterations do, on the other hand, remove it further from its traditional chivalric romance origins. As Paucker (1959:189) suggests, the author of *Mageleyne lid* copied at least part of the text, developed a motif added by the first adapter, and finally removed the last vestige of Christianity. Firstly, the tournament's favoured champion, Heinrich, who, in the longer

versions of the tale has already been promised Magdaleyne's hand, is conspicuously absent. Zigmund does arrive in Mageleyne's country in time for a tourney, but rather than proving himself against Heinrich, he sees Mageleyne during the competition, while she sits in her father's company. In the German versions, the relationship between the respective protagonists' families is hardly mentioned. In the Yiddish versions, however, their relationship is made quite clear, being one of dislike, which later develops into full-fledged hatred and war in *Mageleyne lid* (Paucker 1959a:218). Magdalena, in addition to devoting her time to building a hospital, builds a church or cloister, (קלוסטר ,קלאסטר), which in the German versions is dedicated to St. Peter, while in the Yiddish texts it is named after to Zigmund (Paucker 1959a:210). In *Mageleyne lid*, she dedicates all her efforts not to building a church, but to renovating a badly dilapidated hospital; the building, however, is not dedicated to anyone, and thus the religious motif is neutralised further. Lastly, only *Mageleyne lid* reconciles the two feuding families with their children, completing the narrative with the inheritance and unification of the two kingdoms (cf. Paucker 1959a:219).

4.4 Construct

To the reader familiar with the Zigmund/Magdalena cycle, *Mageleyne lid* holds few surprises. Chivalric romances, which had long been adapted in *mayse-bikhlekh* were not uncommon; thus, details of court life (e.g., tourneys,

quests, political marriages) would be familiar, even to a Yiddish-speaking audience, who had generally been denied the chance to participate in such events.

The reader is introduced first to Zigmund, the only son of the King of France (this 'fact' becomes unclear later in the tale because there are geographical inconsistencies in the tale [see §4.3 above]). No more is said about him at this point. In fact, nothing more need be said to the reader who is accustomed to such tales; the knowledge that he is heir to a throne is sufficient to imply that he is brave, chivalrous, and desirable.

It is significant, on the other hand, that Mageleyne, the primary female character, is introduced only through hearsay (likewise see *Pariz un Viene* where the announcement of an impending tournament is used to introduce the female protagonist into the story). She is rumoured to be 'the prettiest flower in the field'. Her description as a flower, whose hyperbolic beauty makes her not only outstanding among all the others, establishes her as worthy of her royal suitor, yet at the same time it dehumanises her by making her an object to be acquired (Kahn-Blumstein 1977:110, 113, 144).

Zigmund reveals to his parents his intentions to pursue a quest, although whether he revealed his plans to seek out the daughter of the rival kingdom is unclear. His parents reluctantly acquiesce:

ער נאם רשות פֿון זייני עלטרן דיא וויינן זער . דיא וואלטן אים ניט
געהן ציהן לאזן איבר מער : אבר די מוזטן אים ענטליך לאזן ציהן

(He received permission from his parents who cried a lot;
they would not willingly allow him to go across the sea, but
finally they had to let him go after all.)
(page 1v, lines 12-13)

The parent's hesitation may be due to the fact that the seas are very dangerous places, rather than their knowledge of the true nature of his enterprise. At the same time they know that the prince must venture forth in order to find his own identity.

The mother then presents her son with a parting gift:

דיא מוטר האט אים דרייא קעשטליכי פֿינגליך פֿר וואַרט : דיא וואַרן
איין גרושן שאַץ ווערט : די האט דיא אים מיט גיגעבן אן בישווערט :

(His mother gave him three rings; they were very valuable,
[but] she gave them to him without hesitation.)
(page 1v, lines 13-15)

It is quite fathomable that the rings, noted to be of considerable value, could have been given to Zigmund to be used as love-tokens, or gifts, for the woman he is going to seek. However, no one could have been certain Zigmund will either find her or that she would be the beauty expected. The rings were also to serve as proof of his identity, his nobility, and/or his demise.

Mageleyne's further objectification occurs shortly after Zigmund's quest begins. Once in Naples, Zigmund does not reveal his identity, not only because he has ventured into enemy territory, but also because he is unsure

of himself. Yet Zigmund is curious (as is the reader), as he notices that there is a large number of nobles in town.

דר ווערט שפראך אונזר קיניג הוט איין אייניצגי טאכטר בייא לעבן. דר זעלבן וועלט ער גערן איין מאן געבן : דרום קומן אזו פיל גרושי הערן אהער . איין איטליכר מיינט ער וועלט האבן די עהר. דז ער די שיני מגליכה צום ווייב וועלט אהיים פירן . דרום טון די גרושי הערן טעגליך מיט אנגדר פעכטן אונ׳ טורנירן :

(The innkeeper said, 'Our king has a single daughter alive. He would like to be able to wed her to someone. That is why a lot of great lords have come here; each one believes he will have the honour to take the beautiful Mageleyne home as his wife. Therefore, all the great lords fence and tourney against each other daily.')
(page 1v, lines 19-23)

Thus it would appear that Zigmund's arrival is propitious. It becomes evident that in order to fulfil his quest, he too must compete for Mageleyne's hand in marriage, and thus prove himself an eligible suitor (i.e., of noble birth, and trained in the chivalric arts). Zigmund is confident in his training, if not in himself:

דא גידאכט זיגמונד איך ווייל אויך דר בייא זיין . אונ׳ פיל לייכט מאג מיר די שיני מגליכה נאך ביטערט [בישערט?] זיין :

(Then Zigmund thought, 'I will be there also, and perhaps the beautiful Mageleyne might be bestowed upon me.')
(page 1v, lines 23-25)

Expectations by the reader that Zigmund will joust and thus prove his courtliness are fully met as we read:

זיגמונד רייט אויך אויף דען מרק צו פפערד . ער שטיס אלי הערן דר
נידר אויף דיא ערד : קיינר קונט קיגן אים בישטין :

(Zigmund also rode to the market on horseback. He knocked all the lords down on the ground; no one could get the better of him.)

(page 1v-2r, lines 25-27)

While Zigmund may be hesitant and unsure of himself ('perhaps Mageleyne will notice me...') as he takes the first steps toward his self-realisation; but Mageleyne's position vis-à-vis male/female relationships is unambiguous.

First, it is clear that this particular woman is highly desirable, sought by 'the great lords'. True to custom, the father arranges the marriage (see Swidler 1976:83), but rather than using a marriage broker, he hosts a public competition in order to find a suitor and apparent heir. This idealisation of Mageleyne's beauty and virtues places her above others, yet at the same time it clearly puts her in a position of inferiority, as she is dehumanised and becomes the prize given away by he father and a prize to be won in a tourney by another man. Likewise, she becomes an instrument of death (cf. Prov. 11:22 and *Mayse man un vayb*, Chapter 6 below), as the competition is extremely fierce, and the losers could easily die during the tourney.

Mageleyne, like other women contemporary to *Mageleyne lid*, stands in the audience watching as the tourney, and by implication her future, is being decided by the men. Standing next to her father, thereby demonstrating her

relationship and station in society at the moment, Mageleyne spots Zigmund.

However, as she has no public voice, she thinks and muses to herself:

אבר מגליכה זאך דען יונגן זיגמונד פֿרייִנטליך אן : אונ׳ גידאכֿט זיך
פֿילייכֿט ווערט דז זיין מיין מאן : וועז איך נור זעלט גיוואר ווערן קענן.
פֿון וואנן ער זיך אהער טוט נענן . אוב ער איז פֿון קיניגליכֿר משפחה
אהער . אונ׳ וואש זונשטן מיט אים איז דער מער .

(Mageleyne looked at the young Zigmund lovingly and thought to herself, 'Perhaps this could be my husband. If I could only learn where he came from, if he came here from a royal family, and what else there is [to know] about him.')
(page 2r, lines 28-30)

Mageleyne's attraction to Zigmund is unrelated to the outcome of the tourney. It is unclear if Zigmund indeed becomes the tourney's champion. Mageleyne's infatuation with the young contender grows until she becomes love-sick:

זי קאנט ניט רואן אונ׳ ראשטן ניט . ביז זיא איר דינשט מיד היימליך
ביט : דז זי זאלט צו דען יונגן זיגמונד גין : אונ׳ דז זיגמונד זעלט
היימליך צו איר קומן הין :

(She could neither be still nor rest until she secretly sent for her maid, so that she would go to the young Zigmund and that Zigmund should secretly come to her.
(page 2r, lines 32-34)

Mageleyne lid allows the reader the opportunity to explore desires which might otherwise threaten the social fabric. The reader is allowed, albeit vicariously through the female protagonist, to imagine the outcomes of her

ideas and passions. The romantic love and sexual desire are contained here in the narrative which acts as a safety net for the reader (Rabine 1985:2). The reader need not fear that her own emotions and ideas will unbalance society; yet at the same time she can experience with Mageleyne the results of such desires.

Unable to control her emotions any longer, she sends her maid to fetch Zigmund. As this is a defiant act, a breach of conventions, it must be done secretly — without a voice — and behind closed doors. The two meet, in the king's garden, a place which, like Mageleyne, is nature beautifully cultivated, but also always on the verge of returning to its natural state if not guided properly. Likewise, it is a reminder that Mageleyne, like the garden, is still her father's property.

די דינשט מיד גאר בלד צו זיגמונד לויפֿן טעט : אונ׳ אין היימליך צו
מגלינה אין קיניגש גארטן ברענגן טעט: זיגמונד שפראך גאר פֿרייַנטליך
צו איר אלר שינשטי מגלינה פֿר צייאט עש מיר . דז איך צו אייך קום
און פֿר שעמט . מיין הערץ קינן אייך אין ליב פֿר ברענט : מגלינה די
שפראך וועו איך די וואר הייט זאל זאגן : זוא טוט איך אייך רעכט ליב
האבן : אונ׳ דא איך אייך האב גיזעהן צו דר ערשטן שטונד דא הב
איך אייך גיליבט פֿון הערצן גרונט :

> The servant ran quickly to Zigmund and secretly brought him to Mageleyne in the king's garden. Zigmund spoke lovingly to her, 'Dear most beautiful Mageleyne, forgive me that I come to you without shame, [but] my heart is burning with love for you.' Mageleyne said, 'If I should tell the truth, I also rightly love you. From the first moment I saw you, I loved you from the bottom of my heart.')
>
> (page 2r, lines 34-41)

As is ususal in of many chivalric romances, Zigmund gives Mageleyne the three rings as love-tokens. From first glance Mageleyne had hopes that the young man, her champion, would be her equal (for an interesting comparison, see the protagonist's search for her equal in *Mayse fun a kale* Chapter 3 above). The reader would sympathise with Mageleyne as she interprets the increasing value of each ring as a tangible sign of her destiny to be with Zigmund. The obvious value of the love tokens confirms for the heroine the compatibility of the man with whom she has fallen in love. However, for the reader it supports an idea she may have gleaned from earlier readings of other similar romances in Yiddish, one of which is the tale of *Mayse Beria veZimra*, first published in the latter half of the sixteenth century (cf. Steinschneider 1852-60:618; Timm 1988; and Zfatman 1985:79-80, 131-32). It is apparent to the reader that the future of the lovers is to be one fraught with difficulties; the reader's experience with other tales of forbidden affairs and clandestine meetings guides her in the anticipation of trouble, and foreshadows the separation the protagonists will surely encounter.

The couple continue to meet clandestinely for a while, until one day Zigmund announces that he must leave the country to check on his parents. Now, Mageleyne must make a fateful decision about her future:

איך קאן ניט לענגר בלייבן היר : איך מוז ציהן ווידר אין מיין לנד
אהיים : אונ' ווּיל זעהן אוב מיין פֿאטר אונ' מוטר נאך בייא לעבן זיין:
דא די דיש הערט וואר די זער דר שראקן: אויז אירי אויגן שיסן די
טרעהרן אונ' לויפֿן איבר די באקן : די שפראך ווען איר מיך ניט נעמט

מיט אייך : זוא ווער איך מוזן שטערבן גלייך: וואו איר זייט דא וויל איך אויך זיין . אונ׳ ווייל פֿר לאזן פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר מיין : זי טעטן זיך מיט אננדר בישיידן : וויא זי וואלטן בייא נאכֿט היימליך אוועק ציהן אלי ביידי :

('I cannot remain here any longer. I must travel back home to my country to see if my father and mother are still living.' When she heard this, she was shocked. Tears poured from her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She said, 'If you do not take me with you, I will surely die. Where you are so shall I be and shall forsake my [own] father and mother.' They agreed with one another, that they would both secretly ride away.)

(page 2r-2v, lines 57-64)

The reader's own personal experiences would have guided her empathy with Mageleyne: both are expected to defer the decision of their marriage partner to their parents. While the reader may have had some say in the choice of the suitor brought before her parents by a marriage broker, or family friend (Dworkin 1959:202-04), she, like Mageleyne, stands as an outsider to the manipulation of her future. Especially if she finds herself in a less than satisfying arrangement, the reader's empathy may be with Mageleyne and Zigmund who have chosen to forego the dictates of their parents (who also happen to be bitter political rivals) and decide themselves.

The reader who would like to think that perhaps the couple could have a happy future, has her hopes bolstered:

זיא ריטן בייא נכֿט היימליך דער פֿון . קיינר אין דש קיניגש שלאש וואושט דר פֿון די ריטן אין איינם וולד נאהנט בייא דען מער : וואו קיין וועג אונ׳ שטעג ניט ווער : דז מן זיא ניט קונט פֿינדן דז מן זי ניט הערט . דר נאך שטיגן זי אב פֿון אירי פפֿערד. זי זעצטן זיך

הידר אונ׳ עשן אונ׳ טרינקן וויין . דער נאך קאם איין שלאף איבר מגלינה אונ׳ די טעט שלאפֿן איין .

(They rode away secretly by night. No one in the king's castle knew of it; they rode into a forest, close to the sea where there was neither a road nor a path, so that they could not be found or heard. After that they dismounted their horses. They sat down and ate and drank wine. Afterwards, a sleep came over Mageleyne and she fell asleep.)

(page 2v, lines 67-72)

Her energies spent, Mageleyne drifts off into sleep. Whether or not the 'marriage' has been consummated is left up to the reader. It is not uncommon for narrators of *mayse-bikhlekh* to leave textual gaps concerning instances which society dictates should be left unsaid. Notwithstanding, the idea that they were intimate is given support:

זיגמונד זאס בייא איר אונ׳ וואר פֿול פֿרייד̈ן: ער זאך איין רוט זיידן טיכֿלה הענגן אויד דען בוזין פֿון דר שינן מיידן: ער גידאכֿט זיך וואש מוז זיא אין דען רוט זיידן טיכֿלה האבן דרינן: ער באנט אויף דז טיכֿל אונ׳ טעט דרינן זייני דרייא פֿינגרליך גיפֿינן: ער וואר די ווידר איין בינדן אונ׳ ליגט די אויף איין שטיין : אונ׳ וואר ווידר אן זעהן דיא שיני מגלינה זיין :

(Zigmund sat by her and was very happy. He saw a red, silk kerchief hanging out of the pretty maiden's bosom. He thought to himself, 'What does she have in the red silk kerchief?' He undid the kerchief and found his three rings in there. He tied them [into the kerchief] again, lay them on a stone and looked at his beautiful Mageleyne.)

(page 2v, lines 72-77)

Unless given previous permission for sexual intimacy, Zigmund would not have taken the rings out. Instead of returning the bundle to Mageleyne, Zigmund lays it on a stone in the open. It is possible for the reader to equate Zigmund's discovery of the rings, and putting them on the stone, with his desire to have the relationship in the open. However, he has expropriated his bride and must face the consequences which arise from such a situation. This is clear from the events which follow:

ווייל ער אזו וואר זעהן קאם איין פֿוגל גיפֿלוגן אהער . דר הונגר הוט
אים איבר צוואונגן ער מיינט איין שטיק פֿלייש עש ווער : אזו בלד
נאם דר פֿוגל דז רוט זיידן טיכֿלה אונ׳ פֿליגט דר מיט אוועק: דש דר
זאך זיגמונד אונ׳ גאר יעמרליך דר שרעקט: ער גדאכֿט אין זיין זין דז
מעכֿט ניט ווערן גוט . ווערט עש די מגלינה גיוואר זוא ווערט ביטריבט
איר מוט .

(While he was looking thus, a bird flew by. Hunger overtook him [the bird and] he thought that it was a piece of meat. Very quickly the bird took the red silk kerchief and flew away with it. Zigmund saw this and was horribly shocked. He thought to himself: 'This may not be good. If Mageleyne discovers this, her courage would fail.)

(page 2v, lines 78-83)

In this scene, which is reminiscent of Zigmund and Mageleyne's hurried elopement, a hungry bird swoops down and takes the kerchief from the rock. Overcome by lust for Mageleyne, Zigmund has taken the girl from her rightful owner — her father. Likewise, Zigmund's guilty feelings over his relationship, and the manner in which it was conducted, have manifested themselves in the appearance of the hungry bird that takes something which is not the bird's. Thus, the narrator reinforces for the reader that such

relationships — those without the proper sanction of authority — do not deserve to be made public, and will not follow an easy course.

Realizing the parallels as well, Zigmund is shocked and he chases the bird. He follows the bird, until it lands on a stone near the sea.

זיגמונד זאך די פֿינגרליך ליגן אבר קונט פֿר וואשר ניט דר צו : ער
לוף הין אונ׳ הער אונ׳ האט קיין רוא : ביז ער זאך פֿון ווייטן איין צו
ברוכן שיפֿל שטין : ער הוט איין גרושי פֿרייד ער גידאכט ער דרפֿט ניט
זארגן מין ער שטיג אין דז שיפֿל אונ׳ נאם איין שטעקן שלעכט: אונ׳
וואלט צום פֿעלזן פֿארן אבר דז שיפֿל גינג ניט רעכט :

(Zigmund saw the rings lying [there] but could not [get to them] because of the water. He ran to and fro and could not rest, until he saw a broken-down little boat in the distance. He was overjoyed, and thought he must not worry any more. He got into the boat and took a plain stick and wanted to go to the cliff but the boat did not go the right [way].)

(page 2v-3r, lines 88-92)

The boat drifts far from the shore, and continues to take Zigmund to what seems to be certain death. Thus, the couple have enjoyed only one night of nuptial bliss. In contrast to his behaviour at the tourney, when the rules of the game and the competition were familiar, Zigmund quickly becomes despondent and helpless. Both readers and characters have equated the future of the couple with the rings; while they were in Mageleyne's possession, things appeared to go smoothly. However, their theft by the bird has rightfully heralded the couple's separation.

Thus, the narrator equates the sea with Zigmund's future. Just as Zigmund eloped with Mageleyne without preparation and forethought, he has now set himself adrift in an unseaworthy vessel. His future is foreboding and certain to go off course. In the meantime, Zigmund's lack of care has affected another whom he has left alone, sleeping in the forest. His guilt over his actions is apparent in his words while in the boat:

ער שפראך עש גישיכט מיר רעכט דיא שטראף איך ביליך לייד : ווייל
איך זוא זער האב ביטריבט די אלר שינסטי מיידּ : אלר שינשטי מגלינה
דיך זול איך נימר זעהן . מיין פֿרייד הוט ניט לנג גיווערט וויא איז מיר
גשעהן . ווער איך ליבר גישטורבן פֿר דרייאן טאגן . אוֹנ' איר ווערט
נאך בייא אייערן פֿאטר אוֹנ' ניט מיט מיר גיצוגן .

(He said, 'The punishment is just what I deserve; I humbly accept [it] because I have so saddened the most beautiful maiden, the most beautiful Mageleyne – I shall never see you [again]. My happiness did not last long. Woe is me! Rather had I died three days ago, then you would still be by your father and would not have come with me.')
(page 3r, lines 97-102)

However, Zigmund is captured by pirates and sold as a slave. This motif is very common in popular literature of the eighteenth century, as we have seen earlier in *Mayse fun a kale* (see Chapter 3, above). Likewise, in *Mayse hagodl* (1711, Halle) the female protagonist is captured by a Tartar peasant and sold in the slave market of Constantinople. Lastly, in *Mayse fun a kale mit dray khasanim* (c.1700, Amsterdam), the female protagonist's first groom is captured by dog-headed barbarians and forced to work in the galleys.

Taken to Constantinople, Zigmund drew the attention of the Sultan who quickly grew fond of his new slave. Readers would draw parallels to the story of Joseph's captivity, as Zigmund was well-liked by the Sultan and quickly became his second-in-command:

זיגמונד גיפֿיל דעם טירקישן קיסר גאר זער . ... דער קיסר גיוואן זיגמונד זער ליב דז מן ניט קאן זאגן . זיגמונט וואר שני למלך אין קורצן טאגן .

(The sultan grew fond of Zigmund, so much so that it cannot be said, [and] Zigmund became the vice-king in a short while.)

(page 3r, lines 108-111)

At this point, the narrator leaves the despondent Zigmund behind and directs the readers' attention back to Mageleyne. Lost in an unfamiliar terrain, and deserted by the person in whom she had put all her trust, Mageleyne's despair is demonstrated by her behaviour:

זי אנט וואכֿט אונ׳ גיפֿאנד אירן ליבשטן ניט . זי דר שראק אונ׳ קונט ניט גין קיין טריט . זיא הוב אן צו וויינן אונ׳ גינג דורך דען וואלד . זיא רופֿט זיגמונד ביז זיא וואר הייזר בלד . זיא שפראך ליבר זיגמונד וואורום האט איר אייך פֿון מיר טון שיידן : אונ׳ אין ווילדן וואלד הט איר זיצן גילאזט מיך ארמי מיידן . וואורום הוט איר מיך אין וואלד אזו פֿר פֿירט . אונ׳ מיך אין וואלד לאזן זיצן אז איין שאף פֿר אירט : אך ליבר זיגמונד וואז איז אין אייער הערץ קומן אריין . דז איר מיך אין וואלד הוט גילאזט זיצן אליין . זעלט איר דש מיט גוטן ווילן האבן גיטאן . עז ווער פֿר וואר אין דר גנצן וועלט קיין גטרייאר מאן .

(She woke up and did not find her beloved. She was shocked and could not go a step. She began to cry and go through the forest. She called for Zigmund until she was soon

hoarse. She said, 'Dear Zigmund, why have you separated yourself from me? And you abandoned me, poor maiden, in the wild woods. Why have you led me astray in the forest, and left me in the forest like a lost sheep? Oh dear Zigmund, what came into your heart that you left me in the woods alone. If you did this out of your free will, there is no reliable man in the entire world.')

(pages 3r-3v, lines 116-25)

Lost and alone in a forest, the reference here to sheep takes an additional meaning and the dangers are thus highlighted for the reader. Rather than following society's rules regarding marriage, she blindly followed her own passions, thus allowing herself to be led astray and seduced in the woods.

In a conflicting thought, wishing to regain her confidence in herself and her belief in Zigmund, Mageleyne suggests to herself that there may have been reasons beyond Zigmund's control which led to their separation. At this point however, she must make a decision and she begins to weigh her options:

די וואר זיך בידענקן וואו די וואלט אהין . צו מיין פֿאטר צו ציהן נעם
איך מיר ניט אין זין . איך פֿערכֿט מיך פֿאר זיין צארן דז ער מיך טיטן
וועלט . איך וויל מיין אלר ליבשטן זוכֿן דורך די גנצי וועלט .

(She considered where she should go: 'I cannot think about going to my father. I fear his anger; he will have me put to death. I will search the entire world for my most beloved.')

(page 3v, lines 128-31)

Mageleyne's thoughts reflect the earlier, chivalric, renditions of this Provençal legend which carried with them the tradition that a woman who defies her king, and marries — or has a liaison — with someone other than the man who is chosen for her, faces death for her disobedience. Mageleyne realises that she cannot return to the castle, whose occupants have by now surely realised that she has disappeared, and upon discovery of the missing provisions, realised that she has left on her own. Remembering that Mageleyne was to marry the champion of the tourney, it would seem that her marriage would have been sanctioned. However, as Zigmund himself pointed out, he is the son of the enemy, and thus such a marriage is tantamount to treason. Thus, the reader, whose knowledge of chivalric tales may well include the 'courtly romances' of the Arthurian cycles (cf. Paucker 1959), would anticipate the dangers Mageleyne faced by leaving with Zigmund. By marrying without her father's permission, Mageleyne has sealed her fate.

Had Mageleyne been a 'contemporary' Jewish woman, the fact that there had not been any witnesses could likely lead to severe reprimands against both parties. The Lithuanian Council, for instance, decided that couples who were married without the presence of ten witnesses (i.e. In a public ceremony) would receive forty lashes, and be condemned to excommunication and ostracism for the remainder of their life, as well as in the world to come (see Baron 1945, vol. 2:310-315, and Biale 1986:80-81). Mageleyne had acknowledged the consequences of her decision to be with Zigmund earlier:

די שפראך ווען איר מיך ניט נעמט מיט אייך : זוא ווער איך מוזן
שטערבן גלייך: ווא איר זייט דא ויל איך אויך זיין . אונ׳ ויל פֿר
לאזן פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר מיין :

(She said, 'If you do not take me with you, I will surely die.
Where you are so shall I be and shall forsake father and
mother.')

(page 2r, lines 60-62)

She had indeed forsaken everything to marry Zigmund, and she realises she cannot return home. By her own admission, Mageleyne has 'married' Zigmund. Should she decide to return home with the best of justifications, or lies, she would then be married to another man and thus be guilty of adultery. Rather, Mageleyne decides to face life as an *agune*, a woman whose husband has disappeared, or is presumed dead, but neither a body, nor reliable witnesses to attest to his death can be found. As an *agune*, Mageleyne cannot remarry, and must support herself.

Mageleyne mounts her horse and, with the other two horses following, allows it to lead her into Zigmund's homeland. Thus, rather than returning home to the original state of separate existences (self and other), Mageleyne, illustrates a 'feminine historicity' commonly found in romance narratives as 'the desire to heal the division of society into the separate spheres of the feminine domestic and the masculine sociopolitical' (Rabine 1985:13). Mageleyne's intent, albeit subconsciously, is to reunite herself with her lover, if not in actuality then by living in his homeland.

However, since Mageleyne's beauty has been widely reported to be beyond compare, she must find a disguise.

מגלינה גאב איר די גוטי קליידר אונ׳ די וואר צו איין בעטלירין גידיאן.
אונ׳ די פֿר קלייידיט זיך דרום דז מן די ניא קענן זעלט . דז די בעשר
זעלט קענן פֿארט קומן אין דר וועלט.

(Mageleyne gave her [the beggar] her good clothes and she [Mageleyne] took on the appearance of a beggar woman. She dressed herself so that she would never be recognised, so that she could better travel in the world.)
(page 3v, lines 144-46)

It is thus fitting that she trades clothes with a beggar, a common folklore motif (K1817.1). It also symbolises her resignation of her fate. No longer dressed as a woman of high station, and in obvious grief for her disappeared lover, Mageleyne now mingles among the marginalised, with other refugees who have been displaced from their homes because of wars, expulsions, misfortunes, and economic hardships. She need not give any explanation of her losses to the reader, nor to the proprietress at the inn, for the story she would tell would surely sound similar to the many others already in circulation.

Her decision to devote herself to charity work — as would be proper for a widow with means — further signifies her acceptance of her state of abandonment. In early modern Ashkenaz, hospitals were not only a refuge for those who were ill, they also served as hospices and harborage for refugees fleeing the frequent political and economic upheavals common throughout the Europe of the early modern period (Baron 1945, vol. 2:327). In such a place,

Mageleyne would go relatively unnoticed. Likewise, it demonstrates that our female protagonist's quest is different from Zigmund's quest for self-identity. Based on the maintenance of relationships and connections rather than self-identity and totality, Mageleyne wishes to 'heal the mind-body split as well as the split between immediate gratification and self-reflection, [...] [going] beyond love as the fusion of two people into one' (Rabine 1985:188-89). In rebuilding a hospital in Zigmund's homeland, Mageleyne has symbolically fused herself with Zigmund. Her charitable devotion to the ill and poor promoted both difference and intimacy, and blended together the different spheres of the 'feminine' world of the house and the 'male' world of public life, i.e. politics and economics.

She continues to languish without news of Zigmund's fate, Mageleyne, sometime later, buys a fish in the market. While cutting the fish's belly open, she discovers her kerchief with the three rings bundled inside, which she interprets as evidence that Zigmund did not deliberately abandon her, and as a sign that he is dead:

איין מאל וואר איין פֿיש אויף דען ים גיפֿנגן . דען קויפֿט מגלינה ווייל די טעט נאך אים פֿר לנגן . זי פֿאנד דריבן איין רוט זיידן טיכֿלה אין דז פֿיש זיין בויך . אונ' די דריי פֿינגרליך ווארן דריבן אויך. מגלינה דר קענט זי בלד אונ' הוב אן צו ווינן זער . אונ' שפראך נון זעה איך וואול מיין זיגמונט איז פֿר טרונקן אין דען מער .

(Once a fish from the sea was found, which Mageleyne bought since she had a craving for it. She found a red silk kerchief inside its stomach, and the three rings were in there as well. Mageleyne soon recognised them and began to cry, and she said, 'I see well that my Zigmund drowned in the sea.')

(page 4r, lines 162-66)

Among the tales of Solomon's wanderings (cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. IV:170-71), a lost magic ring was discovered by Naamah (the daughter of Ammon, and one of Solomon's wives) in the belly of a fish she was preparing. With the magic ring in hand, Solomon recovered his throne from Ashmodai. Likewise here, the reader is able to find some reassurance in the notion that since the rings are back with their rightful owner, the couple will also soon be reunited and restored to their rightful positions.

At this point in the tale, the narrator returns the reader to Zigmund, who, as the Sultan pointed out, is never seems happy, despite his wealth and status:

זיגמונד שפראך וויא זאל איך ניט טרויאריג אויד זעהן . איך האב מיין פֿאטר אונ' מוטר אין לנגי יארן ניט גידעהן .

(Zigmund said, 'How can I not appear sad; I have not seen my father and mother in many years.')

(page 4r, lines 173-74)

Zigmund's guilt over the possible fate of his beloved Mageleyne is apparent in his statement to the Sultan; he does not mention her at all. Rather, he reverts to the same reasoning he had given Mageleyne when he wanted to leave her before their elopement:

איך קאן ניט לענגר בלייבן היר : איך מוז ציהן ווידר אין מיין לנד
אהיים : או ויל זעהן אוב מיין פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר נאך בייא לעבן זיין:

('I cannot remain here any longer. I must travel back home to my country to see if my father and mother are still living.')
(page 2r, lines 57-58)

The Sultan agrees to allow Zigmund to go home provided that he swears to return soon thereafter. Zigmund agrees, and is promptly given a letter which guarantees him access to whatever supplies and services he should require.

It is obvious at this point to the reader that Zigmund has sworn a false oath. Thus, one can assume perhaps that Zigmund, as well as the reader, would consider the oath to be a way to escape from slavery, and perhaps to save one's life as no repercussions for swearing falsely are brought up in the text. The reader's acuity is confirmed as Zigmund gathers up his gold and silver which he had received during his service to the Sultan and hides it in barrels of salt, a seasoning considered 'worth its weight in gold and silver' and one without which it was believed people could not live without (for example, compare the well-known variant from the Cinderella cycle, 'Love You like Salt', a Yiddish version of which can be found in B. Weinreich 1988:85-88).

Once Zigmund procurs passage on a ship home, the captain inquires as to why he would want to ship such a large amount of salt. As discovery of his hidden store of gold would alert the Sultan that he did not intend to return as promised, Zigmund claims that the salt had been promised to a hospital.

The captain is satisfied with Zigmund's answer and they set sail. However, on the way home, the ship lands on an island in order to gather provisions:

ביז די קאמן אין איין איילנד אן . דארטן טעטן זי איין וויניג רואן אויף
דען לנד . דא גינג זיגמונד שפאצירן פֿיל רוזין ער דארטן גיפֿאנד :
ער זעצט זיך דארטן נידר אונ׳ טעט שלאפֿן איין . דר שיפֿר וואלט
אוועק פֿארן אונ׳ וואושט ניא וואו זיגמונט טעט זיין : ער קונט אין ניט
פֿינדן ער טעט רופֿן זער . עש וואלט אים קיינר ענטפֿרן ער וואלט ניט
ווארטן מער . ער וואר דר פֿון פֿארן אונ׳ ליז זיגמונד שלאפֿן דא צו
מאל . אונ׳ דר שיפֿר קאם צו פֿארן צו מגלינה פֿאר בייא איר שפיטאל :
איין איטליכֿר טעט אב לאדן אונ׳ גינג דר פֿון . אונ׳ דר שיפֿר וואושט
ניט וואז ער מיט דען זאלץ זעלט טאן . ער גינג בייא מגלינה אונ׳
שפראך ליבי פֿרויא איך שענק אייך דש זאלץ . דעם עש צו גיהערט
דר איז פֿר לארן גיוואארן אדר אום גיקומן אין דען הולץ :

(...until they came to an island. There they rested a short while on land. Zigmund went for a walk, finding a lot of roses there. He sat down on the ground and fell asleep. The captain wanted to leave but did not know where Zigmund was. He could not find him; he called for him, but no one answered. He did not want to wait any longer. He departed and left Zigmund sleeping then. The captain came to go past Mageleyne at her hospital. Every one had unloaded [their cargo] and gone from [the ship], but the captain did not know what to do with the salt. He went to Mageleyne and said, 'Dear woman, I am giving you this salt. The owner got lost or perished in the woods.')

(page 4v, lines 189-99)

Interestingly, it is now Zigmund who falls asleep and is deserted. It would not surprise the reader that Zigmund falls asleep among the roses, as she would remember that Mageleyne was, at the beginning of the story, compared to a flower. Likewise, the story circles as the captain informs

Mageleyne that the owner of the barrels of salt, Zigmund, was left in the woods to an uncertain fate, complementing her own history.

Zigmund is rescued by the next ship which stops on the island, and he is taken to Mageleyne's hospital.

אונ׳ זיגמונד דר צילט איר אל זיין אויז פֿארן . וויא ער זיין ליבי מגלינה הוט פֿר לארן . אונ׳ וויא ער דר נאך איז וואַרן גיפֿאנגן . אונ׳ אליש וואש זיך וויטר מיט אים האט ביגאנגן . אונ׳ וויא ער הוט פֿר לארן זיין זילבר אונ׳ גאלד . אונ׳ וויא ער אליין איז גיבליבן בייא דיא רוזן אין דען וואלד .

(Zigmund told her all of his travels: how he had lost his beloved Mageleyne; and how he later was captured, and everything that had later happened to him; how he had lost his silver and gold; how he remained alone in the roses in the woods.)

(page 5r, lines 230-34)

A reader accustomed to chivalric tales would not be surprised that the two do not recognise each other until their tales are exchanged, and the love tokens are displayed. Both have been tested and remained loyal to each other, and now can be reunited with their families. As is typical of other chapbook endings, the two are remarried and the closure is what the reader would anticipate with the couple uniting the warring kingdoms in the end.

4.5 Conclusions

The fact that *Mageleyne lid* is an adaptation of a Provençal romance narrative is important, not only to the genealogy of the *mayse-bikhl* under scrutiny, but also to the modern understanding of the mechanisms at work in the text. As a romance narrative, it allows the reader expression and interpretation of the myth of 'romantic' love — a concept not emphasised in the reality of early modern Ashkenazic nuptial arrangements, but nevertheless expressed in literature, for example in *Mayse Beria un Zimra*, as well as in *Pariz un Viene* and Levita's *Bove d'Antone*. It also elucidates the dynamics of sexual relationships as a struggle for validation and power, through the course of Zigmund's quest for self-identity (Rabine 1985:2, 9).

Zigmund, despite his disappearance and sojourn in Turkey, remains the centre of the tale and the focus of power. On the other hand, Mageleyne is set up as a subordinate object from her very first introduction. She is described as a flower, an inanimate object, one which can not only be picked out from among the other women, but symbolically can be picked as well. This idealisation, called a veil of misogyny by some (Kahn-Blumstein 1977:110), consigns women to a position of inferiority, reinforcing for the reader the notion that all women are objects to be chosen and transferred from the care of one male (i.e., the father) to another male (i.e., the husband).

This link between Mageleyne and the object-flower occurs again when the couple meet clandestinely in the King's garden, and then later when Zigmund falls asleep in the roses. The garden — nature beautifully cultivated, but also always on the verge of returning to its natural state — refers the reader to the idea that women, if not properly controlled, will become feral. At the same time, *Mageleyne lid* also demonstrates for the reader the cost of improper love — when passions take over — and order is ignored. Once Mageleyne acknowledges the role which she has brought upon herself and yields to society's expectations for her in this role, order is restored, not only to her life, but also to the entire world. Thus *Mageleyne lid* illustrates the simultaneous nature of later romantic love literature where there are both a 'chaotic revolt against established order and an imposition of rational order on chaotic passions' (Rabine 1985:2).

Zigmund wishes Mageleyne to identify with him in order that she follow him in his quest for self-identity:

דא גידאכט זיגמונד איך וויל אויך דר בייא זיין . אונ' פיל לייכט מאג
מיר די שיני מגלינה נאך ביטערט [בישערט?] זיין :

(Then Zigmund thought, 'I will be there also, and perhaps the beautiful Mageleyne might be bestowed upon me.')
(page 1a, lines 23-25)

Thus Mageleyne becomes 'everything *but* the subject of her own autonomous language, of her own desire, and of her own history' (Rabine 1985:12, emphasis mine). That Mageleyne seems to later have developed a path of her

own, is a misreading, for indeed her goal within the context of the narrative is always to be reunited with her lover. Mageleyne remains passive, never taking measures into her own hands, but rather allowing her destiny to play itself out.

Mageleyne plays the role which the narrator would have all women play: that of a passive object. Once abandoned in the woods, Mageleyne admits that she does not decide her future for herself; rather she allows herself to be led, either by her passions for Zigmund, or by her destiny (symbolised by the horses who lead her to Zigmund's homeland). As Karen Rowe suggested with regard to fairy tales, narratives which exalt women who are passive, dependent and self-sacrificing, suggest that women's acceptance of these virtues (i.e., those of motherhood and domesticity) ensures 'that culture's very survival' (Rowe 1979:239). On the other hand, according to such tales, women who do not extol these virtues will surely cause the downfall of society. The female protagonist can never obtain anything from her own efforts, but rather from passive absorption into the male protagonist's identity (Rowe 1979:246; Rabine 1985:7), perpetuating a patriarchal status quo which requires her 'assent to the proposition that marriage is the best of all possible worlds'. (Rowe 1979:247)

In *Mageleyne lid* we find a 'pre-romantic' narrative (Rabine 1985:14): a narrative which demonstrates many of the ideas found in later romance narratives. Typically, romance love narratives, like *Mageleyne lid*, were popular when communities based on personal relationships were under

pressure and beginning to crumble (Rabine 1985:186). *Mageleyne lid*'s contemporary reader, living in turbulent times, fraught with wars, epidemics, persecutions and poverty, when women could find themselves widowed, alone, or displaced, could easily empathise with Mageleyne's predicaments. Likewise, Mageleyne was a woman 'standing on the brink of modernity' (1987:35) ,who abandoned the will of the community to pursue her own desires, forsaking the comforts of the station for which she had been trained.

Chapter 5: *Mayse man un vayb*

Prostitution, Adultery and Power

5.1 Introduction

Mayse man un vayb is a chapbook printed probably in Amsterdam around the turn of the eighteenth century (Cowley 1929:92, Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3932, and Zfatman 1985:81-82). No other edition of this *mayse-bikhl* is known to exist. *Mayse man un vayb* is a combination of three separate tales: two from *Di zibn vayzn maynster fun Roym*, and the third from a European folktale (see §5.3 below). Our author has melded the three tales into a single story of power and the disruption to the status quo when control over others is used incorrectly. *Mayse man un vayb* reinforces the traditional view that women as sexual creatures, use men's lust to contribute to their downfall.

5.2 Summary of *Mayse man un vayb*

The King of Persia, Zigomindo, is an extremely powerful and wealthy ruler, yet he is unable to arrange a marriage for himself because he is exceptionally ugly. He has sent out marriage proposals, we are told, but these

have all been turned down. Finally, in desperation, the King turns to his chamberlain, ordering him to procure a woman for him that same night. The chamberlain does not believe he will be able to find a woman who will lie with the ugly Zigomindo, and tells him so. Nevertheless, the King tells him to promise any amount of money and riches.

The chamberlain leaves, thinking that his own wife would be willing to earn the money which the King would pay for one night. He broaches the idea to his wife, but she refuses because Zigomindo is so ugly. Ultimately the husband persuades her to agree to sleep with the King. The chamberlain returns to the castle and informs the King that he has found a woman who, for the sum of 100,000 golden guilder will come to the castle. The King promptly gives the gold to his chamberlain and the transaction is completed. At the end of the night, the chamberlain comes for the woman but the King refuses to release her. The chamberlain returns an hour later, but to no avail. Finally in despair, he confesses that the woman is his own wife. Zigomindo, upon hearing this, is enraged that the chamberlain has prostituted his own wife, and summarily banishes him from the kingdom. The husband flees the city through the 'Gates of Mercy'. He travels through a forest and eventually reaches the banks of a river, where he collapses from exhaustion. A fisherman passes by and, finding the man soundly asleep, relieves the chamberlain of his gold and clothes. The next morning the chamberlain wakes up, finding himself destitute and naked. As a result, he is forced to wander from town to town as a beggar.

Meanwhile, Zigomindo is stricken with leprosy. The physicians are baffled and unable to prescribe a cure. Finally, one doctor concludes that the King's affliction is a consequence of his adultery, and the only cure is to cast the woman out. The King is reluctant, however, to dismiss the woman. Zigomindo's brother intervenes and expels the woman from the palace. The woman returns to her home, where she lives alone for a short time. In the meantime, the chamberlain, realising no one will recognise him any longer in his pauper's garb, decides to return home to his wife, and they live peacefully together.

However, these circumstances do not last long. The chamberlain's wife is solicited by one of the King's servants who, it is said, desires her. She tells him she will do whatever he wants, only when her husband is not at home, and demands one hundred gold guilder. He agrees, and she tells the servant that she will let him know when he can come to her. This royal servant leaves, and another rides by. He too lusts for the woman and the same arrangement is agreed upon. When the second servant leaves, a third approaches with the same result. The woman then relates the events to her husband and demands that he do as she says. She instructs him to take either an axe or a hatchet and stand behind the door and decapitate each of the callers as they enter the house. Through this homicidal scheme the wife hopes to recoup some of the money her husband lost. The husband, however, is worried that the bodies will be discovered, but the wife assures him that she already has a solution to the problem. The plan is put into action.

The wife summons the royal servants, one at a time, and the husband murders them. She then directs him to put each corpse into a separate sack, and place each one in a different corner of the room. Meanwhile she invites her brother, a city night-watchman, to her house. After he has had a glass of wine, she tells him that a gentleman came to the house and started an argument with her husband, who, in a rage, had killed him. She asks for his help, and the brother agrees to dispose of the corpse. He takes the sack and throws it into the water. When he returns to his sister's house for another glass of wine, she begins to cry that the dead man has returned, and shows him a second sack. This time the brother adds a stone to the sack, and again throws the corpse into the water. He returns for more wine, only to be told that the dead man has returned again. The night-watchman decides that disposing of the body in water is not an adequate solution, and he builds a pyre on to which he throws the third sack. As he watches the corpse burn, he notices an approaching rider. Believing the dead man has returned a fourth time, he seizes the unwary rider and throws him along with his horse into the flames. Content that he has finally accomplished his task, he returns to his sister and informs her that the man and his horse have been incinerated.

The narrator now takes the reader back to the King, who, during the interlude, has been cured of his leprosy. Zigomindo, while walking in the woods, overhears a woodcutter complaining to himself that he and his wife have been relegated to a life of hard work because of Adam's single transgression. The King takes the woodcutter and his wife to his palace,

where he provides them with every imaginable luxury. Each lavish meal is accompanied by fine confections, but one dish always remains covered. The King instructs the woodcutter and his wife to leave that one plate untouched. As long as they comply, they may continue to live luxuriously in the palace. If they uncover the plate, they will be sent back to live as they had before. Curiosity gets the better of the wife, and she asks the husband to lift the plate just a little so that they might see what was hidden. As the woodcutter lifts the top plate with a knife, a mouse jumps out, causing the wife to scream, and their transgression is discovered. The *mayse-bikhl* ends with the couple back to their life of toil and misery.

5.3 Sources and Analogues

5.3.1 Antecedents for *Mayse man un vayb*

Zfatman (1983:223-31) compares *Mayse man un vayb* with its textual sources. Since her analysis is very thorough, it would be useful in the context of the present discussions to briefly recapitulate her findings. *Mayse man un vayb* is a tripartite tale: the first two parts are adapted primarily from earlier Yiddish translations of non-Jewish sources, namely the 1677 Yiddish version of *The Seven Wise Sages of Rome* [=*Di zibn vayzn maynster fun roym*], printed in Amsterdam (see Zfatman 1983:223-31; on *Di zibn vayzn maynster fun roym* see Paucker 1959a:104-156, Howard 1972:196-202; on its import on Dutch Yiddish see Aptroot 1988). The first vignette corresponds to the fifth

tale of the queen, while the second to that of the fifth wise man's response (Epstein 1967:209-27; Paucker 1959a:136; however, in Zfatman 1983:225-26 and 1985:83, they are incorrectly listed as the sixth day's tales). The Christian message in the original — the doom of a lustful King who desires both beautiful women and saintly relics — has been removed in the earlier Yiddish version and is absent here as well. In our tale, the King of Persia, Zigomindo [*sic*], is so ugly that, despite his enormous wealth and political power, he cannot find a woman who would willingly lie with him. He does not covet anything else, nor is his fate tragic as in *Di zibn vayzn maynster*. Paucker notes (1959:153-156) that the Yiddish versions of *Di zibn vayzn maynster* are far more erotic than their German counterparts; likewise our author does not bowdlerise his own rendition of the tales.

The last part of *Mayse man un vayb*, very loosely connected to the other two by the re-appearance of King Zigomindo, is a variant of AT1416, known as 'The New Eve' or 'Mouse in the Silver Jug' (Aarne 1961). Some slight, perhaps insignificant differences do arise between this Yiddish version and that described by Aarne, primarily the motif of a locked box. However, it is similar to the more commonly seen motif C234 ('cannot open a silver jug') where a mouse jumps out when the jug is finally pried open (motif H1554). There is, on the other hand, one very significant deviation from the European variant. Zfatman (1985:230-31) has pointed out that most if not all the variants of AT1416 have a female protagonist, while in this version the protagonist is a

woodcutter. Unusual as this may appear, perhaps this is to be expected in light of the moral presented at the end of the text:

נון איר ליבן לייט קענט איר זעהן . וואז דיא מאנן פֿון ביזי ווייבר
קאן גישעהן : אבר איין פֿרום ווייב ציהט איין גוטן מאן :
דאש זאל איטליכי פֿרומי פֿרויא טראכטן צו טאן : זוא ווערן
אלי מאנן זיין פֿרום אונ׳ גוט . דען פֿון (חוה) האבן מיר אהער דש
דער מאן דעם ווייב פֿאלגן טוט :

(So dear people you can see what can happen to the husbands of evil women. But a pious wife attracts a good man. Every pious woman should think of doing this, so that all husbands will become pious and good. For [we] have here [as in the story of] Eve that the man follows his wife.)
(page 5r, lines 232-36)

Thus, in *Mayse man un vayb* the narrator wishes to emphasise the woman's influence upon her husband, not a woman acting on her own accord. It clearly follows then that, had the protagonist from part three been female, the connectives of the tripartite tale would not have held together.

5.3.2 Singularity of *Mayse man un vayb*

Mayse man un vayb was, like the other three booklets, printed around the turn of the eighteenth century, probably in Amsterdam (Cowley 1929:92; Steinschneider 1852-60:618, n. 3932; and Zfatman 1985:81-82). It is singular as no other version of this chapbook is known to exist. As to its structure, Zfatman (1983, vol. 1:223-31; vol. 2:155-60) analyses this chapbook as a 'composite story' typical of pre-modern Yiddish popular prose narrative.

5.4 Construct

Having thus briefly outlined *Mayse man un vayb*, it may be noted that the tale begins in a utopian past, tenuously cast in a framework of Jewish history. This link is supported by references from rabbinic culture, and perhaps influenced as well by travel literature, such as that of Benjamin of Tudela, and their reprints (cf. Abrahams 1985:211-12, 245, 255; on this genre of old and early modern Yiddish literature see Erik 1979:380-83; Zinberg 1967, vol. 6:213-20). The setting allows the reader to envision the Persian Kingdom, where Jews were known to have lived, yet where the reader's lack of concrete, contemporary information allows for any outcome to be plausibly presented in the tale.

The name of the King, Zigomindo, implicitly calls for a comparison with another character, Zigmund, whom the reader could have met in readings of the Yiddish versions of the Pierre of Provence legend (see *Mageleyne lid*, chapter 4). Indeed, if the reader was competent enough, the imagery of Zigmund would sway her to look for the attributes of that particular character here. However, she would be disappointed, as the King in this tale is the antithesis of the protagonist of the Zigmund cycle: exceptionally powerful but horribly ugly, and seemingly unadventurous.

As the reader learns:

[ע]ר קונט קיין ווייב בקומן דען עד וואר קייני דיא אים האבן וואלט:
[וע]ר אים אן זאך דער טעט פֿאר שרעקן פֿון אים אנטלויפֿן בלד.

([Zigomindo] could not get a wife, since there were none that
wanted him;
Whoever looked at him would quickly run from him in horror.)
(page 1v, lines 4-5)

A man without a wife cannot effectively control his 'evil desire', or 'sexual drive' (*yeytser hore). The* King's failure to find a wife would evoke the empathy of a female reader. She reads how attempts at marriage have failed, and will most likely continue to do so, if Zigomindo has not already exhausted all his legitimate means of finding a wife. While it seems implausible that a king as rich and powerful as Zigomindo would be unable to forge an alliance with another king through marriage, the reader is nevertheless expected to accept his failure at procuring a wife. The chamberlain too believes the King's search to be futile:

[דע]ר קאמר דינר שפראך גנעדיגר הער וואו זול איך אייני נעמן.
[אי]ך מוז דיר דיא וואהרהייט זאגן אונ׳ וועו איך מיך גלייך טוא שעמן
[א]יך גלויב ניט דז איין אשה אין דר וועלט זאלט וועלן בייא דיר ליגן.
[אב]ר עז זייא דען דאש מיט גרוש געלט אונ׳ גוט זעלט מן זי בטריגן

(The chamberlain said 'Noble sir, where will I get one?
I must tell you the truth, even though it fills me with shame.
I do not believe that one woman in the world will want to lie
by you,
Unless she is deceived with a lot of gold and goods.')
(page 1v, lines 13-16)

Consequently, with the double meaning of וויב — which appears in the title as well — as both 'woman' and 'wife' and a foreshadowed deception, the reader would wonder why the King had not hired a prostitute, since they must surely have abounded in his kingdom, as they did in the reader's time (cf. Pollack 1971:130).

The same thought occurs to the chamberlain as well, but with a more drastic solution:

דער קאמר דיכר הוב אן צו לאכֿין אוכ גינג אייני אירגנץ צו זוכֿן אהין.
אבר דא ער אזוא גינג דא גידאכֿט ער זיך ווידר אין זיינם זין:
דער מלך וויל איין גרוש שטיק געלט געבן פֿאר אייני נאכֿט צו לון.
דש געלט קאן מיין אייגן ווייב פֿר דינן עז איז אום איין נכֿט צו טון:

(The chamberlain began to laugh and went to look for one somewhere,
But as he went he thought again to himself,
'The king will reward a great amount of money for one night.
My own wife can earn the money. It is [just a matter of] spending one night [with him].')
(page 1v, lines 19-22)

The chamberlain quickly emerges as the antagonist in the story — a scheming and greedy man seeking quick riches. He attempts to justify himself by stating that 'it is just for one night'. Conveniently, for the sake of generating suspense, the passage ends as the wife refuses to comply with the husband's suggestion.

However, the reader discovers that her refusal to sleep with Zigomindo, is not because of fidelity, but due to the King's ugliness. Perhaps, in anticipation of the reader's expectation of a more heartfelt argument from the wife, the author quotes from the Talmud (B. Shabbat 33b) to remind his readers how women are easily led astray:

(נשים דעתן קלות) זיא ליד זיך איבר רידן אונ' ווער צו פֿרידן שון[.]

('Women are fickle-minded.' She let him persuade her and
was pleased [with the plan].)
(page2r, line 28)

Thus it is the chamberlain who is depicted as responsible for prostituting his wife.

The wife agrees to go to the castle to sleep with the King. Upon hearing that a woman has been found, the King eagerly pays the extravagant (given in Hebrew) price of 100,000 guilder. Given that the average yearly income of Jews living in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century was less than 800 guilder per year (Bloom 1969:69-71), this amount must have left the reader contemplating whether, for such a sizeable sum, she too might agree to sleep with the King. The reader is left at this point with a large textual gap, where the details of the night's activities must be supplied from the reader's own imagination, according to her own marital status and experience.

It will be remembered that the King said:

[ד]ארום גיא הין אונ׳ שאף מיר נור איין אשה דיא מיר זאל זיין עבן

(Therefore go and get me just one woman who will be [with] me this moment.')

(page 1v, line 18)

The reader may question his reluctance to permit the woman to leave in the morning. In actuality, the chamberlain assumes that the King would let the woman leave at the end of the night; Zigomindo himself never says that that was his intention. Thus, twice the chamberlain attempts to persuade the King to release the woman, appealing first to the King's impending personal embarrassment upon discovery, and later to the fact that as a public figure, his shame would disgrace the entire country.

Under the guise of 'doing the right thing,' the chamberlain finally confesses that the woman is his wife. The King is enraged at being duped by his trusted servant and his wife. The King banishes the servant, who ironically leaves through the 'gates of mercy,' implying that the punishment was more lenient than it should have been. Thus, the chamberlain, who sought to benefit by prostituting his wife, is allowed to keep the money but loses his position and his wife.

The chamberlain goes into the forest, from civilisation to nature. The reader knows that in this wild place anything can happen. The exhausted chamberlain lies down by a river, where by chance a fisherman appears. Once again, the fisherman is cast as a villain and thief (cf. Abrahams 1985:60.69) as he robs the chamberlain of his gold and clothing. The

identification of the reader is, however, not with the chamberlain. Robbed of the last of his worldly possessions, the chamberlain now finds himself a pauper and total outcast, one of the numerous, nameless figures who must reside at the periphery of society. The chamberlain's misfortune is thus the result of one man's lust for a woman, i.e. the King for the chamberlain's wife.

While the adulterous affair has cost the chamberlain his position, family and fortune, the King also pays a price.

דער מלך דער האט נוא איין פֿרויא ביקומן נאך זיינם אייג[נ]ן ווילן[.]
ער קונט איצונד גאר וואול זיין ביגערן אונ׳ זייני גילושטן שטילן:
אבר דיא שמחה רויארט איין קורצי צייט וויא איר וועלט הערין.
דער מלך פֿיל אין איין קרענק אונ׳ פֿינג אן גאנץ מצורע צו ווערן.

(The King had indeed obtained a woman according to his only desire,
He could now appease his desires and lusts very well.
But the happiness lasted [only] a short while, as you will hear.
The King fell ill and started to change completely into a leper.)

(page 3r, lines 85-88)

As a consequence of his lust for a woman (another man's wife) Zigomindo contracts a terrible disease, for which the court physicians had no cure. Finally one doctor is able to diagnose the cause of the disease and suggests a cure:

איין רופֿא שפראך אדוני המלך איך קאן דיא זאך וואול שפירן:
איך וויל דיר דיא וואהרהייט זאגן וואו דיר דר צרעת קומט אהער.

דוא ליגשט בייא איין אנדרן מאן זיין ווייב דרום איז מיין ביגער:
ווילשטו אנדרשט ווידר ווערן הייל אונ׳ ווילשט ווידר ווערן גיזונד.
זוא פֿר טרייב דאש פֿרעמדי ווייב אוועק פֿון דיר צו דיזר שטונד.
דען ווער דא ליגט בייא איין אשת איש דער ווערט מצורע באלד:
אונ׳ איז אים ניט צו העלפֿן ביז ער אב לאזט אונ׳ הוט זי נימר
האלד[.]

(One doctor said 'My lord King, I can well sense [what caused] the [illness].
I will tell you truthfully where your leprosy has come from.
You are sleeping with another man's wife, thus my suggestion is:
If you wish to be cured and healthy again,
Drive this strange woman away from you this very moment.
He who lies with [another] man's wife will quickly become a leper.
And cannot be helped until he leaves [her] and never loves her again.')

(page 3r, lines 90-96)

The King has enjoyed carnal pleasures, and is reluctant to send the woman away. With this, women are linked directly to leprosy. This connection stems from the Talmud and commentaries where women are commonly compared with the dreaded disease (Dishon 1994:39). The narrator informs us that Zigomindo is vacillating between the gratification of his carnal desires and the cure for his 'leprosy' likewise implying that he will release her after he has had sex with her at least one more time. Whether or not they do have intercourse before the woman is forced to leave is left ambiguous; the reader is allowed to decide for herself. However, the King's brother, who — hitherto not mentioned — has not fallen prey to the woman's seductive nature, takes the initiative and drives her from the castle. Thus, while it was a woman who

brought disease and possible death to the kingdom, it is a man who restores order, and well-being to the royal house. The King's brother will believe he has settled the matter, for he knows that the King will not venture out of the confines of his castle during the course of his affliction. The brother's motives are unclear — was it to cure his brother, or was he fearful of a scandal? — and the reader must supply her own interpretation.

Zigomindo's affliction with this horrible disease evokes images of the fate of King David who, after his affair with Bath-Sheba, suffered from leprosy for six-months (Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. IV:104, vol. VI:266, n.96; see also vol. III:213-14, vol. VI:78, n.413). Like King David, Zigomindo is punished for sexual relations outside the sanctity of marriage, in particular for sleeping with 'another man's wife', with the phrase אשת איש, being used to connote the allusion to King David, as well as the enormity of the deed.

Meanwhile, the chamberlain's wife is forced to return home, but without her husband. The chamberlain, who has been wandering as a beggar for some time thinks of returning home:

ענטליך דאכט דער קאמר דינר עש איז דאך קיינר דר מיך קענט.
איך גיא אז וויא איין בעטלר איך וויל אהיים גין איך בין און בקענט

(Finally the chamberlain thought, 'There is no one who will
recognise me
I will go as a beggar. I want to go home; I am
unrecognisable.')

(page 3r, lines 103-104)

If he feels that even the King's guards, who must surely have known him during his employment at the court, will not recognise him, then it is probable that his transformation is the result of a considerable passage of time. From this we can surmise that the King's relationship with the wife lasted for a considerable time as well. Once the chamberlain returns home, his wife accepts him back into the house:

זיא לעבטן מיט אנגדר אין ארמוט אוג׳ אין גרושן קומר אוג׳ נוט.
זיא לעבטן דאך מיט אנגדר בשלום אוג׳ אסן דאש טרוקני ברוט:

(They lived together in poverty, in great grief and misery:
They lived with one another in peace and ate the dry bread.)
(page 3r, lines 111-12)

The reader understands that this is not likely to continue, by the phrase 'in peace' also meaning 'safely', hinting that danger will arise soon. At this point the narrator provides additional information about the woman:

אבר דאש ווייב וואר שין אוג׳ דר נערט זיך מיט איר אייגנר האנד.
אוג׳ זיצט אימר פֿאר דער טיר אוג׳ וואר בייא דז מלך דינר ביקאנט:

(But the wife was pretty and provided for herself by her own hands.
She always sat in front of the door and was well-known by the King's servants.)
(page 3r, lines 113-14)

If the reader had misread the first conversation between the chamberlain and his wife and inferred that the wife had stayed unwillingly with the King, then the lines above will compel the reader to reassess her opinion of the wife. Whether she had been a prostitute before, or had taken up the occupation as a result of her adulterous experience is unclear; what has been made certain is that whatever bread is brought into the house is bought with her money.

Knowing that in the Talmudic dictum that 'bad temper, insolence and shame hold sway where the wife supports the husband' (cf. Swidler 1976:41), tragedy is foreshadowed. Again the wife's beauty is emphasised, reminding the reader that, as opposed to the King who could not find a wife because of his ugliness, the chamberlain's wife could feed herself and her husband by utilising her physical attractiveness. Similarly, how the wife supports herself and her husband is evident. The fact that the woman, who has no visible means of support, sits idly in front of her door, lends validity to the idea that the wife has become a prostitute (cf. Rossiaud 1988:180, and 196). However, while other occupations would have allowed the wife to sit 'in front of the door' and support 'herself by her own hands', there is no reason why she would be 'well-known by the King's servants'. Apparently, her reputation had spread beyond the King's chambers.

A continuance of sexual relations was implied in the re-establishment of conjugal life between the chamberlain and his wife. Likewise, it adumbrates the second part of the story when the wife is approached by one of the King's servants:

זיין פר לנגן שטונד נאך דעם ווייב ער גינג בייא איר אין הויז אריין

(His desire for the woman was aroused and he went to her into her house.)

(page 3v, line 117)

Here, the author utilises a play on the word הויז ('house'). The implication here is that of sexual relations, as the entrance into the wife's house alludes to sexual intercourse. More apparent, however, is the idea — now familiar in this tale — that when a man and a woman are alone behind closed doors, the narrator withdraws his omniscience for a short time.

The true nature of the wife as an evil seductress has been revealed. That her reputation is wide-spread becomes clearer as the author describes how three servants of the King ride by, one by one, seeking her sexual services.

Now the wife uses her seductive powers, taking full advantage of the men's weakness in order to restore some of the wealth lost by her husband. But it is murder, not prostitution which she has in mind. This becomes clear when the wife reveals her plans:

אונ׳ זיא שפּראך צו אים וואש איך דיר הייש דאש זאלשטו טאן׃
מיר זיין דאך גאר ארם אונ׳ דרום אויך זאלשטו פֿאלגן מיר׃
מיט אייַן שוועריַ בייל אדר האק זאלשטו דיך שטעלן הינטר די טיר׃
איך וויל ערשט אייַנם לאזן רופֿן אונ׳ וועַן ער וועַרט קומן אריַין.
זוא זאלשטו אים מיט דען בייל טיטן אונ׳ דען קאפֿף שלאגן אייַן׃
דר נאך וויל איך דען אנדרן לאזן רופֿן דעם זולשטו עז אך אזו מכֿן.
אונ׳ דר נוך דען דריטן זוא ביקומן מיר גועלט אונ׳ אלי אירי זאכֿן׃
דער מאן שפּראך אונ׳ וואו קענן מיר דיא טויטי לייבר אהין טאן.
דז עש זאלט בלייבן פֿר שוויגן אונ׳ פֿר בארגן פֿאר אידר מאן
דאש ווייב שפּראך טוא דוא נייארט וואש איך דיר דא הייש[׃]
צו דיא אנדרי זאכֿין איך שון אייַן גוטי עצה צו גועבן ווייש[.]
דער מאן ליז זיך איבר רידן [..]

(She said to him 'What I tell you, you must do.
We are very poor and therefore you must obey me.
You must stand behind the door with a hatchet or an axe.
I will call for the first [servant] and when he comes in
Then you must kill him with the hatchet and then smash his head.
Afterwards when I summon the other one, you must do the same thing,
And with the third one. Thus we will get money and all their things.
The husband said 'And where can we hide the dead bodies?
So that it would remain discreet and hidden from every man.'
The wife spoke 'You do only what I tell you.
I already have a good plan to take care of all the rest.'
The husband allowed himself to be persuaded...)
(page 3v-4r, lines 136-47)

The role of a woman as a 'man-killer' follows other texts, including religious tales, and even canonic texts such as the Book of Judith and the Book of Esther. In both of these cases the women craftily utilised their

sexuality to destroy Israel's enemies (see Swidler 1976:58-59). However, it is not the wife who will do the actual task of murder, but the husband.

Just as the chamberlain easily persuaded his wife to sleep with the King for money, in a role reversal the wife now easily persuades him to commit murder for money. His concern is not that he will be taking human lives, rather how to cover up the planned crimes. The chamberlain's concern with the disposal of the bodies is based on more than simply the elimination of the physical evidence. As attested to in other tales (see for example 'A bilbul af Regensburger yidn' *Mayse bukh* (Meitlis 1969:167-69), corpses can be resurrected to reveal the identities of their murderers. Chopping off the heads will not suffice, for it was believed that a beheaded corpse could still point or even write the name of the murders. The wise murderer must therefore dispose of the bodies completely.

The plan is carried out and the King's servants are slain. Like the husband, readers are given instructions, but no more. Later, as the husband follows his wife's instructions, we too are taken further into the intrigue. Now, without knowing exactly what the wife has planned, the husband continues to do as she instructs:

דאש ווייב שפראך שווייג שטיל אונ' פֿאלג נייארט מיר וואז איך זאג:
אונ' שטעק דיא טוטי לייבר איין איטליכֿן אין איין ביזונדרן זאק.
אונ' ליג איין איטליכֿן זאק אין דיא קאמיר אין איין ביזונדר עק:
דר נאך ווייל איך שון מאכֿן דז דיא ווערן אויז דען הויז קומן אוועק.

(The wife said 'Be still and just obey me, do [as] I say.

Place the dead bodies, each one in a separate sack,
And lay each sack in the room in a separate corner.
Afterwards I will make certain that they disappear from the house.')

(page 4r, lines 157-60)

As we see, violence predominates in the second part of the tale: the wife plans, and the husband carries out homicidal acts. He murders three royal servants who are his wife's clients. Rather than simply killing them, the wife wants their heads smashed. They are in fact, beaten to death:

דא גינג ער אריין אבר דער מאן שלוג אים בלד צו טוט אונ׳ דר
נידר[.]
דר נאך ליז זיא דען אנדרן רופֿן דעם צו שלוג ער קאפף אונ׳ גלידר:
דר נאך רופֿט מן דען דריטן אונ׳ דער מאן שלוג אים אויך צו טויט[.]

(He went in, but the husband quickly hit him to the ground dead.
Afterwards she called for the other, to hit him, his head and limbs.
Later the third one was called and the husband also beat him to death.)

(page 4r, lines 151-53)

The victims are thus robbed of their identities, and merged into one incident when their corpses, gruesomely silenced, are shoved into sacks and placed in separate corners. Yet their murder is not enough, they must be removed entirely, for no matter how mutilated the bodies are, they can still find a way to name their murderers (cf. Cunningham 1990).

To ensure the success of her scheme, she beguiles yet another man, this time her brother, a night-watchman for the city. The phrase נאכט וועכטר, or 'night-watchman', also has a meaning from the colloquial German as 'dolt' (Betteridge 1978:434; cf. also the idiomatic expression in Yiddish חכם-בלילה, lit. 'a sage at night'). The author uses this play on words to stress that foolish men are easily led astray by wicked women. As one of the city's watchmen, it is understood that his reputation is, at best questionable (for the relationships between the medieval watch and prostitutes, see Rossiaud 1988:12, n.4; 35, n.17; and also 181), and she knows he will help her.

She supplies her brother with large quantities of wine and then bids him to take the cadavers away:

זיא שפראך ליבר ברודר איך וויל דיך וואש ביטן ער שפראך זאג אן
אליש וואש דוא פֿר לאנגשט פֿון מיר דאש וויל איך דיר באלד טאן:
זיא שפראך הייגט בייא טאג איז איין אידל מאן אריין קומן אין הויז
אונ'' האט מיט מיין מאן אן גיהובן צו צענקן דז עז וואר איין גרויש:
דא וואר מיין מאן צארניג אונ' ער האט דען אידל מאן דר שלאגין.
דרום מיין ליבר ברודר טוא אים דאך אווענק אין דז וואשר טראגן:

(She said 'Dear brother, I want you [to do] what I bid.' He said, 'Go on.
All that you desire from me I will surely do for you.'
She said 'Today, during the day, a gentleman came into the house
And began to argue that it was a horror.
My husband became angry and he killed the gentleman.
Therefore, my dear brother, carry him away to the water...')
(page 4r, lines 165-70)

When the brother returns from carrying the first corpse to the water, his sister obliges him by giving him more wine to drink. She then dupes him into disposing of all three bodies, leading him to believe that they are the same corpse in a sack.

אך מיר דר טויטי אידל מאן דר איז ווידר אין דז הויז גקומן:
[א]ונ' זיא ווייזט אים דען זאק מיט דען אנדרן טויטן אידל מאן.
[ע]ר נאכט וועכטר שפראך איך וויל דיר דש ווידר קומן בלד פר טאן
[ע]ר טרוג אים ווידר פורט אונ' לעגט אויך אין זאק איין גרושן שטיין
אונ'' ער וואורף אים אזוא אין דאש טיפשטי וואשיר אריין:
אונ' דער נאכט וועכטר גינג ווידר בייא זיין שוועשטיר אריין.
אונ' ער שפראך צו איר נון שענק מיר איין דען אליר בעשטן וויין:
[ד]ען איך האב דען זאק אן גיפילט מיט גאר פיל שווערי שטיין.
ער ווערט דיר גיוויש ניט ווידר קומן צו גין אין דאש הויש אריין:
זיא גאב אים ווידר צו טרינקן אונ' הוב באלד ווידר אן צו קלאגן.
אך דער טויטי אידל מאן מיט דען זאק איז ווידר דא טעט זיא זאגן

('Oh my, the dead gentleman had come into the house again!'
And she showed him the sack with the other dead gentleman.
The night-watchman said 'I will quickly finish the returnee for you.'
He carried him away again and put a big stone inside the sack,
And he threw him thus into the deepest water,
The night-watchman went again back into his sister ['s house]
And he said to her 'Pour me one of your best wines,
Since I have filled the sack with really heavy stones.
He will surely not return to you, to go into the house.'
She gave him [something] to drink again and soon began to moan again,
'Oh, the dead gentleman [in] the sack is back here', she said,)

(page 4v, lines 176-86)

After disposing of the body a second time, only to be told that it had returned yet again, the brother decides to incinerate the body:

ער נאם דען זאק אונ'' גינג ווידר דער מיט פֿארט אונ' ער שפראך:
דו זאלשט מיר ניט ווידר קומן אונ' ער מאכט איין גרוש פֿייאר אן.
אונ' ער פֿר ברענט דרינן צו פולפֿיר דען דריטן טויטן אידל מאן:

(He took the sack and went away with it again and said:
'You should not come back to me', and he prepared a big fire,
And in it he burned the third dead gentleman to a powder.)
(page 4v, lines 188-9)

The sister's wicked scheme which has made the watchman an unwitting accomplice to multiple murders now turns him into a murderer as well, for at that moment while the fire is still ablaze, a rider approaches:

אין דעם קאם אייגר צו רייטן דר נאכט וועכטר זאך אים אן:
ער גידאכט דאש איז גיוויש ווידר דר פֿר ברענטי טויטי אידל מאן:
ער נאם דען פֿרעמדן לעבנדיגן מאן מיט זיין פפֿערד גאר בלד.
אונ' וואורף זיא אין דאש פֿייאר דאש ער פֿאר ברענן זאלט:

At that moment someone came riding by. The night-watchman saw him.
He thought 'This is surely the burned dead gentleman again.'
He immediately took the unfamiliar, living man [along] with his horse,
And threw them in the fire so that he [the man] should burn.)
(page 4v, lines 191-94)

Thus called in to dispose of the corpse(s), the brother falls for the ruse that the single intended victim has risen. The three murders have become one chain of events: whether you kill one, or three, matters not. The brother, who is cozened into being an accomplice by believing he is ridding his sister's

home of the corpse of a man who insulted her husband, becomes a murderer when he throws a rider (and his horse) into the flames. Strictly speaking, whether one is an accomplice, or the murderer, does not matter; in the end, both are guilty of murder. The wife's smug silence, upon hearing of this unexpected turn confirms her inherently violent nature.

The last part of the story brings the reader back to King Zigomindo, who is by now cured of his horrible affliction. Overhearing a woodsman bemoaning his fate, and the hard work he must do to support himself and his wife, Zigomindo demands to know why the wood chopper blames Adam for his troubles.

דער מאן שפראך איין אייניציגי מצוה הוט אדם הראשון ניט גיהלטן:
דרום מוז איך אונ'' מיין ווייב אזו זויאר ארבייטן ביז מיר אלטן:

(The man said 'Adam did not follow one single commandment,
[And] therefore I and my wife must so bitterly toil until we grow old.')

(page 5r, lines 208-09)

The King puts the woodsman and his wife into the equivalent of 'Paradise', by taking them to his castle and providing them with every imaginable luxury. There is only one 'delicacy' that they must not touch; to do so would immediately return the couple to their impoverished life. The reader knows this story all too well, and no surprises are in store for her. True to the Adam and Eve tale, the wife asks the husband to inspect the forbidden

'delicacy', and he complies. The test given them only proves to the reader that women are not trustworthy (Dishon 1994:43). Once the infraction is discovered, they are sent back to the woods, to eke out a living from the earth through hard work.

By presenting the moral, the author reinforces the reader's interpretation that the third story is a retelling of the fall of Adam and Eve:

נון איר ליבן לייט קענט איר זעהן . וואז דיא מאנן פֿון ביזי ווייבר
קאן גישעהן : אבר איין פֿרום ווייב ציהט איין גוטן מאן :
דאש זאל איטליכי פֿרומי פֿרויא טראכֿטן צו טאן : זוא ווערן
אלי מאנן זיין פֿרום אונ' גוט . דען פֿון (חוה) האבן מיר אהער דש
דער מאן דעם ווייב פֿאלגן טוט : ובֿא לציון ג[ואל] אכי"ר:

(So dear people you can see what can happen to the
husbands of evil women.
But a pious wife attracts a good man.
Every pious woman should think of doing this, so that
All husbands will become pious and good. For we have here
[as in the story of] Eve
That the man follows his wife. And the Redeemer will come
to Zion, amen, and so may be the will of God.)
(page 5r, lines 232-36)

According to the moral of the *mayse-bikhl*, it is clear now that the wife is actually responsible for the husband's evil-doings and for his fall from a position of power, for the wife was the instigator. This is in spite of the implication at the beginning of the text that the husband prostituted his wife:

אבר דיא וואר ניט צו פֿרידן דען דיא עש (לגמרי) ניט טון וואלט:

(But she was not too happy; she did not want to do it (at all).)
(page 1v, line 24)

דיא שפראך אוכ׳ וועלן דר מלך שון ניט ווער אזו העסלך זער[:]
דאך גלייך וואול בייא איין פֿרעמדן מאן צו ליגן איך ניט בגע[ר.]

(She said 'Even if the King was not so very ugly;
I would not want to lie with a stranger whom I do not desire.')
(page 2r, lines 25-26)

In the above statements the wife hints that she is not so much adverse to adultery as engaging in sexual intercourse with someone to whom she is not attracted. Still revealing is the chamberlain's response:

דר קאמר דינר שפראך וועלן איך דירש מוחל בין זו מאגשטטו עד טו[ן.]

(The chamberlain said 'If I forgive you, you may do this.')
(page 2r, line 27)

When read in light of the retelling of the Adam/Eve myth as portrayed in the final episode of the tale, the female protagonist of the first two episodes, i.e., the chamberlain's wife is inherently fickle-minded and easily persuaded to do what she knows is wrong. This fickle-mindedness is the primary cause of evil, the result of which is murder. And thus the narrator emphasises the consensus of feminine behaviour with the familiar quote:

(נשים דעתן קלותֿ) דיא ליז זיך איבר רידן אוכ׳ וואר צו פֿרידן שון[.]

('Women are fickle-minded.' She let him persuade her and
was pleased [with the plan].)
(page 2r, line 28)

Here, especially in light of the third episode and the moral presented at the end of the *mayse-bikhl*, the reader could possibly construe that the wife was, by her very nature, pre-disposed to do as her husband suggested, but for appearance's sake, she 'let him persuade her'. A second construction is that while the wife is indeed appalled by the King's appearance, the promise of a large payment entices her to agree to the act.

In the 'new' reading, the husband becomes anxious, not out of his concern to protect the King, but because he realises that should the King keep his wife too long, one of the other royal servants, who — as the reader now remembers are familiar with the chamberlain's wife — will see her emerging from the King's chamber and thus expose the deception. In desperation, he confesses the truth to the King himself: ironically, much to the dismay of the chamberlain, the King does not see the gesture as honourable, and he banishes the servant.

Confirmation of the reader's suspicion that the wife may have been a prostitute becomes clearer. The allusion to King David is evident; like David, Zigomindo falls ill with 'leprosy'. However, 'leprosy' also refers to venereal disease, which was common in Europe from the Middle Ages on (Bloom 1969:180;303-04, n. 127). Likewise, since the Reformation in Europe, prostitution had become linked with violent crimes (Rossiaud 1988:50). By juxtaposition, it comes as no surprise that the evil wife is also capable of instigating murder.

5.5 Conclusions

While it is remotely possible that the anonymous author of this text could have been female, clues in the text itself suggest otherwise. In fact, the narrator's selective omniscience (or lack thereof), the physicality of the text (eroticism and violence), and the moral attached to the story, all support the more traditional view that not only the author, but also the narrator were men. They suggest, moreover, that the author was an advocate of the established patriarchal society of seventeenth/eighteenth century European Jewry, and viewed disruption of the status quo as fundamentally harmful to the Jewish way of life. At the core of this dissension are women, his principal readers. A discussion of these issues will demonstrate this concern.

During the course of the tale, readers are given insight into what the male characters are thinking, foremost, the chamberlain:

אבר דא ער אזוא גינג צו גידאכט ער זיך ווידר אין זיינם זין:
דער מלך וויל אייך גרוש שטיק געלט געבן פאר אייני נאכט צו לון.

(But as he went he thought again to himself,
'The King will give a great amount of money as a reward for one night.')

(page 1v, lines 20-21)

דעם קאמר דינר וואר באנג ער גידאכט זיך וואז וועד איך היבן אן[.]

(The chamberlain became anxious. He thought to himself,
'What have I started?')

(page 2r, line 43)

ענטליך דאכט דער קאמר דינר עש איז דאך קיינר דר מיך קענט.

(Finally the chamberlain thought, 'There is no one who recognises me.)

(page 3r, line 103

Secondly, we read that:

דער פֿישר זאך דען מאן ליגן אונ' דאכֿט גאר באלד אין זיינם זין.
איך מוז זעהן ווער דער איז אונ' ער גינג גישווינד בייא אים אהין:

(The fisherman saw the man lying [down] and thought quickly to himself,
'I must see who he is', and he went quickly to him.)
(page 2v, lines 67-68)

Lastly, at the funeral pyre the night-watchman sees a stranger riding past and:

ער גידאכֿט דאש איז גיוויש ווידר דר פֿר ברענטי טויטי איידל מאן:

(He thought 'This is surely the burned dead gentleman again.')
(page 4v, line 192)

While we are never directly enlightened as to Zigomindo's private thoughts, as with the other male characters, we are given descriptions of his state of mind, especially during his cohabitation with the chamberlain's wife. He is portrayed as happy, sexually satisfied, and reluctant to part with his new lover. On the other hand, we are never told what the women are thinking, neither the chamberlain's wife, nor the woodcutter's. Here his omniscience fails him, for he cannot know what the women are thinking. The narrator does not identify with the females because they are outside the norm — educated men like himself (demonstrated by his use of a quote from the Talmud). The

reader, on the other hand, is assumed to identify, on the basis of her own gender and therefore life-experiences, with the wives, and thus understand their motivations.

This selective omniscience returns in the tale during times of sexual intimacy. Whether the narrator is or is not truly omniscient, he chooses not to disclose what is happening when only two people, i.e., a man and a woman, could possibly be in the room, i.e. during sexual intercourse. In line with the conventions in Yiddish devotional and ethical literature (cf. Weissler 1987c:89-90), the author out of courtesy, or perhaps respect for his primarily female audience, withdraws and leaves gaps of textual silence.

The longest of these textual gaps occur when the chamberlain's wife is sent to the King. Previously, when the chamberlain suggested to his wife that she sleep with the King, we are told that she was entirely reluctant to do so. However, we are later informed that after some persuasion, she changed her mind. How she was persuaded is unclear, but the notion that the husband used more than verbal persuasion is intimated by a preceding statement:

דאך גלייך וואול בייא איין פֿרעמדן מאן צו ליגן איך ניט בגע[ר.]

('I would not want to lie with a stranger whom I do not desire.')

(page 2r, line 26)

as well as one which follows, when the chamberlain goes before the King:

גנעדיגר הער איך האב אייך איין שיבי יונגי פֿרויא טון אויד פֿראגן[:]

('Noble Sir, I have examined [negotiated with] a young,
beautiful woman for you',)
(page 2r, line 30)

The first sentence could be read as simple refusal (the wife does not wish to sleep with someone other than the man she 'knows', i.e. her husband), when coupled with the 'examination/negotiation' by the chamberlain it insinuates sexual intercourse.

The next of the gaps occurs during the King's relationship with the wife, and leads us to her eviction from the castle. We read:

דער מלך וואלט לאנג ניט דראן דיא אשה פֿון זיך אוועק צו יאגין.
אבר דעם מלך זיין ברודר גינג הין אוכ' טעט קיינם ניט פֿראגין.
ער גינג גישווינד אוכ' יאגט דאש ווייב אויז דען מלך זיין שלאס ארויז

(The King would not long thereafter let the woman go away
from him,
But the King's brother went there and asked no one.
He went quickly and chased the wife out of the King's castle.)
(page 3r, lines 97-99)

That the narrator would replace his omniscience with silence during moments of sexual intercourse should not surprise us. Although deemed entirely natural, sexual relationships are a very private matter in Jewish culture. Yet, even here the narrator conceals his omniscience and supplies information only as the wife relays it. The motivation in this case is not modesty, or courtesy to his female audience, but a need to remove himself from the action. As a result, the suspense is heightened while the narrator

skilfully removes any fore-knowledge which could implicate him in the crime, emphasising a selective, chronological *showing* over a straightforward *telling*. Conversely, readers who, by virtue of their own gender identify with the wife, are given instructions.

The narrator, unlike the wife, is not silent about violence: it permeates the tale beginning with the King's desire for a wife. It is interesting that although Zigomindo is hideously ugly, he is exceptionally powerful: he is wealthy, and rules a large population. Yet, he cannot find any king who is willing to give his daughter in marriage with him. Apparently, there is not a single woman who is willing to sleep with Zigomindo. Despite the allure of political and financial gain, the obvious result of such a union, his offers are all rejected: rather than a future with Zigomindo, the daughters would prefer to be buried alive, or simply killed. While physical appearance could also refer to his intrinsic nature, with Zigomindo this does not seem to be the case. Although desperate to satisfy his sexual urges, nothing else in the text refers to a reprehensible or sinful nature. As with King David, who repented after his union with Bath-Sheba, Zigomindo learns his lesson successfully, even if unwillingly. Likewise, such an 'ugly' personality is in opposition to the leniency Zigomindo shows his chamberlain upon learning of his deception: he is allowed to keep his money, but is banished — through the 'Gates of Mercy'.

In her work on *tkhines* — the supplicatory Yiddish prayers, generally printed for women — Weissler (in particular 1992:110) has shown that the authors of the *muser* literature — ethical and moralistic literature — view Eve as 'fully paradigmatic for all women', whereas the *tkhines* imply that such a concept is problematic. *Tkhines* concentrate on the positive nature of women, using the matriarchs as examples. While not denying that Eve brought menstruation and the pain of childbirth into the world, the connection between women's suffering and Eve's sin is one of simple disobedience (Weissler 1992:107). On the other hand, according to the *Brantshpigl* (Basle 1602:3a-4b in Weissler 1992:104-05) Eve's sin is seen as insubordination, Eve is a paradigm for all women. Women, therefore, by virtue of their inherent sexuality, are more sinful than men; consequently, they lead men to transgression through the misuse of their sexuality. Here too, as in the *Brantshpigl*, Eve (viz. the wife, and by transference the female reader) is insubordinate, attempting to dominate not only her husband but all men. Therefore the wife's natural inclination and her 'transformation' into a prostitute does not come as a surprise. She was a natural temptress and sinner.

Likewise, women, according to the *Brantshpigl*, 'were the murderers of all men, not just Adam' (Weissler 1992:106). The logical progression of the wife's evil thus leads from prostitution to murder. The fact that she herself did not commit the murders shows her success in undermining the domestic order of her house and kingdom.

The violence in the text demonstrates that there exists a power struggle for the *maintenance* of order (de Lauretis 1989:242). Violence in this text must however, be understood to include not only the murders, but also the adultery between the King and the chamberlain's wife. While, in modern terms, such a liaison is not violent, it should be remembered that adultery in traditional Jewish society was a crime as socially and morally repugnant as idolatry and murder (Swidler 1976:148). The social order is maintained here through tangible punishments. The King is distracted from his duties by the woman who has been prostituted by her husband; he is punished by a very visible disease. The chamberlain abuses his position of trust by deception; he is banished from the kingdom. Later, when the chamberlain is asleep, he is robbed of his gold and clothes by a passing fisherman and thus loses all outward signs of his former status and identity. Finally, when the woodcutter and his wife fail to follow the King's orders, they are sent back to their life of poverty and hard labour.

It appears somewhat problematic therefore that the malefactors — the wife and her accomplices — do not receive a just punishment for their insubordinate actions. In this respect, the wife is a 'modern' female in that she (1987:35) she overturns her prescribed role as wife to seize control over her environment and those around her. The fact that they are not caught, and hence held accountable and punished, informs us that the narrator sees the threat to the established order as an on-going one. Until it is squelched by

those who know of these crimes, namely the narrative's female readers, and by transference all women, such acts of disobedience will continue.

Chapter 6: *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*

Courtship, Education and Spousal Abuse

6.1 Introduction

Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh, not to be confused with *Shloyme hameylekh lid* (see §6.3.2 below), was printed in Amsterdam at the turn of the eighteenth century (Cowley 1929:406, Steinschneider 1852-60:618-19, n. 3936, and Zfatman 1985:81-82; Erik [1979:340-42] published the first portion of the tale). The only known copy of this *mayse-bikhl* is to be found in the Oppenheim Collection of the Bodleian Library. *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is a fusion of diverse tales, all of which deal with humans who possess the ability to understand the languages of animals (for a detailed analysis of this work's Hebrew sources, see Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:213-23). According to Zfatman (1983, vol. 2:151, n. 316ℵ), it is the only *mayse-bikhl* from this period in which animals provoke the protagonists into taking action. *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* deals with some of the issues which can be found in abundance in European street literature in general as well as in Yiddish *mayse-bikhlekh:* marriage arrangements, the diffusion of education and knowledge, spousal abuse, and redemption.

6.2 Summary of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*

As a prologue to the *mayse-bikhl*, the narrator reminds readers of King Solomon's wisdom and his knowledge of the arts, sciences, his fluency in various languages, and especially his ability to understand the languages of the animals. The tale opens with King Solomon strolling in his garden, where he overhears the conversation of two young birds, one male and one female. The male, who wishes to persuade the young female to marry him, tries to impress her with his family's pedigree and his own erudition. When he fails to evoke the desired response from the young female, the bird boasts that he is so powerful he could utterly demolish the King's castle in an hour. This statement impresses the female, and she agrees to marry him. Distressed by the bird's claim, King Solomon captures the creature in order to determine the truth. Upon interrogation, the bird admits that he does not possess the power he claimed to have and that he had boasted simply to persuade the female to marry him. The monarch does not accept his defence and sentences him to death. The bird, however, begins an elaborate soliloquy in order to persuade Solomon to revoke the sentence. The bird relies on the known effects of 'love' on those afflicted, the fatal repercussions of Amnon's 'love' for Tamar, the dictum that a newlywed cannot be conscripted to fight in a war or leave his home for the first year of his marriage, and the protection promised his family (i.e., birds) after they assisted Rebecca when she fell off her camel. The bird's speech persuades King Solomon to release him.

The next portion of the narrative focuses upon a wealthy relative of King Solomon who wishes to learn animal languages from him. At first King Solomon refuses to teach his kinsman, but after constant beseeching, he finally acquiesces, but on the condition that he is never to reveal his new-found knowledge. To disclose the secret, the King warns him, would mean an immediate death sentence. The man agrees to the condition and Solomon imparts to him the secret knowledge. After this, the man returns home.

One day the man, accompanied by his wife, enters the stable where he happens to overhear a conversation between the ox and horse. The ox, in response to the horse's concern over his apparent tiredness, admits that he feels he is over-worked and beaten too often while in the field. The horse suggests a solution to the ox, advising him to refuse to eat anything that night and then, come morning, he would appear to be too weak to be sent into the field, and thus would be allowed to rest. The ox accepts the horse's advice and refuses to eat. The man, who has heard and understood all this, bursts out in laughter. However, when his wife enquires as to why he laughed, the man simply leaves the stable.

Later, the servant comes in to tell his master that the ox had apparently taken ill and refuses to eat. The man directs his servant that in the morning he is to yoke the horse instead of the ox, so that the latter may recuperate. The servant does as he is told. The ox, who realises that he has an easy way to avoid toiling in the fields, repeats the ploy the next day as well. The servant is thus forced to yoke the horse again and put him to work in the fields. The

man, who is privy to the animals' plan, decides to wait and see how the horse will handle the predicament. One day when the horse returns from the field very tired, he informs the ox of a dire rumour he overheard. The horse informs the ox that the master, being convinced that the ox is terminally ill by his refusal to eat and weakening condition, has decided to have him slaughtered soon. The alarmed ox, not wishing to be slaughtered, begins to eat voraciously. The man, who was in the stable with his wife and overheard the conversation, breaks into laughter at this turn of events and instructs his servant to yoke the ox in the morning.

Once again, the wife asks her husband to explain his sudden outburst of laughter in the stable. This time the man replies that to answer her would mean certain death for him. The wife, who rebukes her husband for his ranting, insists that he tell her the truth regardless of the consequences. The man, who knows he will die as soon as he reveals his secret, requests a day to get his affairs in order. The wife grants him a reprieve of a day, but demands to know the answer in the morning.

While in his room contemplating his doom, the man hears his dog howling and wailing in the courtyard. The rooster enters the courtyard, he notices the dog's obvious state of despair. When the rooster begins to dance and flap around the courtyard, the dog demands he show some remorse as their master is about to die. The rooster replies to the hound that their master is a fool for allowing his wife decide his fate and make demands on him. The man, the rooster says, should treat his wife as he does his flock of twenty

hens. Their master, he further suggests, should take a stick and beat his wife soundly. The man, who overhears this whole conversation, realises that he had indeed been a fool. In the morning when his wife demands an answer to her questions, he picks up a stick and proceeds to thrash her with a stick. The wife cowers and covers herself in fear and the man's dilemma is solved.

Many years later, when the man has reached his final days, he calls his family to him and reveals his secret to his wife and children, and teaches his children what he knows. After the man's passing, King Solomon's secret knowledge continues to be passed on in this family from generation to generation, and one of the bearers of this knowledge has settled in the Holy Land. Once, as a large number of lions and other wild animals had come into the Holy Land attacking the domestic livestock, the descendant overhears a conversation between one of his cows and an attacking lion. The cow tells the lion to leave her alone since, as the time of Redemption and the coming of the Messiah are obviously at hand, it had been prophesied that all animals would live peacefully together. When the lion demands proof that such events are transpiring, the cow replies that the great number of learned and pious people is evidence of the coming of the Messiah. The lion argues that the pious live off charity, which is contrary to scripture, quoting the passage in Daniel which states that those who hate gifts would be the ones to be alive when the Messiah comes. It is also prophesied, the lion continues, that there would be a great war in Israel, during which a new leader would rise up and take over the land of Africa and attack Israel. At that time, the Angel Michael would

come down and protect the people of Israel. During the time of this war, the misery of the people would be greater that any seen to date in the world, and only then will the Messiah come and redeem the People of Israel and her allies. As these events have not occurred, the lion concludes, the time for the redemption has not yet arrived. With the lion's final statement the discussion abruptly ends; apparently the cow is the only one in the tale who is not able to postpone her death.

6.3 Sources and Analogues

6.3.1 Antecedents of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*

Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh is a unique tale, the three sections of which are united by the ability of the main characters to understand animal languages. Moreover, the author has woven his stories around incidents of men eavesdropping on conversations between animals, making it the only 'animal story' of its kind in early modern Yiddish literature (Zfatman 1983, vol. 1:214). The sources of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* have been thoroughly researched in Zfatman's dissertation (1983, vol. 1:213-23) and it would behoove us to briefly recapitulate her findings here.

The first portion of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is built from the belief that King Solomon was fluent in animal languages (cf. I Kings 5:13; Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. VI:287, n. 33 and 288, n.34). The tale centres around the boasting of a young male bird to his female companion that he has the

power to destroy King Solomon's palace. Called upon by the monarch to defend his vaunting claim, the bird enters into a monologue which persuades King Solomon to release him. The folktale is wide-spread and well-documented. A variant is retold in Bin-Gorion's *Mimekor Yisrael* (1976:171, 1496, n. 84) and the sources of the tale analysed in Schwarzbaum (1968:13-41), who concludes that the story may well have its ultimate origin in Sumeria.

The more direct influence on our author's text was probably the Biblical commentary by the Spanish Rabbi Abraham ben Jacob Saba (died c.1508) *Tseror hamor* published posthumously in Venice in 1522. However, our author has added elements which go beyond the other variants. When he fails to impress the King with his claim to be blinded by love, the bird reminds King Solomon of the fatal repercussions of Amnon's love for his sister Tamar (II Samuel 12:2-3; cf. Epstein 1967:228-30, where the incident is also mentioned in *Mishle Sendebar*). He next calls upon Biblical precedence (Deut. 20:7) which forbids a young man to be called into military service during his first year of marriage. Lastly, the bird reminds King Solomon that since it was members of his family who protected Rachel's reputation by covering her virginal blood after she fell off her camel when she met Jacob (Gen. 24:64; Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. I:297, vol. V:263, n. 301), its progeny is protected by God.

The second tale is a variant of AT670 'The Animal Languages' (see Noy 1971 where the Jewish variant is classified as type AT670B). Like the first part of the tale above, variants of this portion are found throughout the

world. The inspiration for this section of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is the Hebrew version of *Barlaam and Josaphat* translated by Abraham ibn Hasdai (early thirteenth century), entitled *Ben hamelekh vehanazir*, published in Constantinople in 1518. An earlier Yiddish version of *Ben hamelekh vehanazir* was printed in the second half of the sixteenth century (*Codex Munich* 347; cf. Erik 1926:219-32, 1928:173-74, 333-35; Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. VI:287-8, n.34; and Bin-Gorion 1976:161-63, 1496, n. 81). Of the variants known thus far, only Ibn Hasdai's *Ben hamelekh vehanazir* and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* have King Solomon as the teacher. Likewise the choice of animals, while they vary greatly among known variants, are identical in both *Ben hamelekh vehanazir* and in our *mayse-bikhl*.

The final section of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is a blend of quotes from the Books of Daniel and Isaiah. Here the author has taken several lines out of context, rewriting them as a dialogue between a lion and a cow. The animals, one of whom is about to be devoured by the other, discuss and weigh the signs of the coming of the Messiah so as to determine whether or not the Time of Redemption has arrived. The actual derivation of the conversants' arguments is given in detail in below (§6.4), as well as in the Appendix in the translation of the text (see below, pp. 297-306).

6.3.2 Analogues of *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*

In Erik (1979:336) two titles have been confused: *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* and *Shloyme hameylekh lid*. Erik (*ibid*) states that the tale discussed here is *Shloyme hameylekh lid*, printed in Prague during the second half of the seventeenth century. *Shloyme hameylekh lid* was printed in Prague during the reign of Leopold, as stated on the cover page, and recounts a tale about King Solomon, the building of the First Temple, and the acquisition of the *shmirl* (a mythical worm which can cut stone) from Ashmodai. On the other hand, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* has nothing to do either with the building of the Temple, nor Solomon's encounters with Ashmodai. Rather, the tale in this story deals with attempts by the various protagonists to postpone or even cancel their impending deaths. In the first, the bird talks King Solomon into cancelling the order for the bird's death sentence. In the second episode, King Solomon's relative learns from his own rooster how to postpone his impending death and live until a ripe, old age. Lastly, the final episode is about a cow who tries, albeit apparently unsuccessfully, to delay her attacker, a rampaging lion, from killing her. Stylistically, neither the content nor the rhyming pattern of the two is similar. As stated before, all the works by our anonymous author are written in long flowing lines, ending with the pattern *aabbccddee*. *Shloyme hameylekh lid* does not follow this pattern.

However, Steinschneider's earlier *Catalogus* (1852-60:372-73 and 618-19) is in part to blame for the confusion noted by Erik. Steinschneider (1852-60:372-73) states that our *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* is from

Prague, printed during the same time period '[Prag Saec XVII?]'. This too is unlikely, as other books by this author or publisher are listed as having been printed in Amsterdam at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century (Steinschneider 1852-60:566, 617-18). All four have a similar typeface and the same sparse decoration, none of which resemble the Prague typeface used to print *Shloyme hameylekh lid* (for a discussion of early Hebrew and Yiddish typefaces see Zafren 1969-70).

6.4 Construct

The present tale is very different from those already discussed in the thesis. While the main protagonists in the other three were women, here they are primarily men. Furthermore, the tone of the various portions of this tale varies greatly: the first and second parts deal with courtship and the relationship between spouses. The third portion, however, presents a dialogue between a cow and a lion, prey and predator, concerning the 'End of Days', in which the author makes use of quotes from various Biblical texts to illustrate the interchange. While the discussion of the 'end of days' is historically and culturally important and interesting, given the events which had transpired during the history contemporaneous with the tales' publication, such analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the messages which the three portions of the tale impart together — i.e. those concerning education and learning, women, and their place in the patriarchal order — will be analysed here.

In the first portion the reader is reminded of the folklore concerning King Solomon and his legendary wisdom (cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, vol. VI:287, n. 33 and 288, n.34). It begins in the King's garden where, as we have seen, a young female bird is being pursued by an amorous suitor:

דער אייני פֿוגל וואר נאך איין זכר דער אנדר פֿוגל איין נקיבה וואר.
(דהייטו) דיא נקיבה וואר נאך איין בתולה פֿון אנדרט האלב יאר:
דר זכר וואר אויך נאך איין בחור ער וואלט גערן האבן איין וויב.

(The one bird was a male, the other was a female.
In other words, the female was still a maiden, a year-and-a-half old.
The male was also still a young man, he wanted to have a wife.)

(page 1v, lines 13-15)

We know that the female is young, a year and a half, because her age is emphasised, while that of the male is not. She is in the same category as that of a large number of young girls who were commonly married by their mid-teenage years (see Glikl 1977:23). Remembering that it was the norm for marriages, in particular first marriages, to be arranged by the parents or a match-maker, it is important to note here that these two young birds are left to their own devices. Not only is the male attempting himself to persuade the female to marry him, they are meeting unescorted, distanced from society and thus guidance and intervention.

After the male begins by emphasizing his physical attraction to the female, the reader is reminded of some of the attributes deemed desirable by those arranging marriages:

ער שפּראך צו דיא בתּולה נעם מיך צום מאן גיב מיר דיין יונגן לייב:
מיין הערץ דאש איז פֿר ליבט אין דיך אונ׳ ברענט אז וויא פֿייאר.
איך וויל דיר איין גרושי (כתּובּה) מאכּן אונ׳ שרייבן אויף פּפּייאר:
דער צו בין איך איין גרושיר (מיוחס) פֿון פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטרש (צד)
איבר דיא פֿיגל אין לובלינר וואלד וואר לאנד (רבּ) מיין טעטי:
אונ׳ מיינר מוטרש פֿאטר וואר (רבּ) אין דען קראקאוור וואלד.
אונ׳ דער צו בין איך קלוג אונ׳ פֿר שטענדיג אונ׳ וואול גישטאלט:

(He said to the maiden: 'Take me as your husband, give me
your young body.
My heart is in love with you and burns as if on fire.
I will write you a big marriage-contract and write [it] on paper.
I am a well-bred [person] on my father's and mother's side.
My father was rabbi over all the birds in Lublin's forest,
And my mother's father was rabbi in the Cracow forest.
And I am clever, and knowledgeable and well-built.')
(page 1v, lines 16-22)

Indeed, two of the primary concerns of a marriage-broker were the pedigrees of the couple (an important concept in Yiddish — namely ייחוס *yikhes*), the education of the groom and/or the bride's father, along with the wealth of the respective families of the bride and groom (Dworkin 1959:202). That the male's father is a learned rabbi with a large following, and that his mother's father is his equal, is indeed an impressive genealogy. These rabbis are not only the spiritual heads of large, relatively wealthy Jewish communities, both communities are known for their very large *yeshivas* (institutes of higher-learning for young, talented Jewish men) and the training of religious scholars. For example, Glikl's brother-in-law went to Poland in

order to further his religious study (1926:26). That the young bird is himself learned, and supposedly noted for his own advanced education, should further impress the young female. It is interesting to note that while the contemporary reader may not have regarded the bird's *yikhes* and erudition as facetious, it is nonetheless amusing for the modern reader to read about a bird, in King Solomon's garden, talking about his forefathers as the prestigious rabbis of Lublin and Cracow forests. Likewise, the anachronism of the text, while may not have struck the contemporary reader, it is nevertheless blatantly apparent to the modern reader (cf. Turniansky 1991 for a discussion of such anachronisms in Biblical epics).

The female bird remains unimpressed, however, and the reader learns her response to the suitor's claims:

דיא בתּולה שפראך צו אים וואש העלפֿט מיך דער (ייחוס) דיין.
זאג מיר נייארט אהער מיט וואש קענשטו מיך (מחיה) זיין:

(The maiden spoke to him: 'How does your pedigree help me?
Instead, tell me how you can make me happy.')
(page 1v, lines 23-24)

The young male, like the reader, believed the girl would have been impressed with the statement and is left to not only support his claims, but to also attempt to further influence the girl's decision:

דר זכֿר שפראך (החכֿמה תחייה אתּ בעליה) טוט שלמה המלך זאגן
דיא (חכֿמה איז מחיה) דען בן אדם אל זיין לעבנש טאגן:

(The male spoke: 'Wisdom will preserve her owners', as King Solomon says
The Wisdom is sustenance for the human all the days of his life.)

(page 2r, lines 25-26)

The suitor attempts to win her favour by giving her the answer he presumes would impress her:

אונ׳ איך בין איין חכם אונ׳ איין (גבור) וועלן איך שון בין קליין.
איך קאן אין אייגר שטונד שלמה המלך זיין שלאס (מחריב) זיין:

(I am a scholar and a (hero) even though I am small.
I can, in one hour, lay waste to King Solomon's castle.')

(page 2r, lines 27-28)

Thus, the bird quotes King Solomon (Eccelesiastes 7:19) himself in his presence — albeit unknowingly — that his wisdom and strength are so mighty that he can destroy the palace, a symbol of the King's power, status, and wealth. The naive and gullible maiden is at last impressed and eager to be married. Although realising the import of a religious education and prestige in the Jewish community, the reader could have perhaps empathised with the young female. Europe was still resounding from the effects of the various wars and uprisings, Reformation and Counter-Reformation, as well as horrendous persecutions and massacres which spread throughout Eastern and Central Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Any woman, especially one who perceived herself as belonging to a community at threat,

would have been pleased to accept a proposal from one who met all the traditional criteria of religious education, family wealth, and good lineage, but more importantly possesses the ability to protect her.

But the reader knows that the bird is simply boasting (cf. Schwarzbaum 1968:139-40), despite the knowledge that in the story King Solomon himself falls for the bird's rodomontade. Solomon, however, is impressed for a different reason. Known for his own wisdom, the King recognises the value of the bird's family heritage and his own educational background. Likewise, that the bird quotes Solomon himself, no doubt impresses the monarch. The fact that the bird *is* learned and comes from a rabbinical lineage located in the centre of religious learning leads King Solomon to believe that perhaps this creature is in possession of a learning and power he himself does not hold. Thus, he calls the bird forth to defend himself and to instruct the King in this previously unknown power. The bird's self-defence begins glibly:

דער פֿוגל שפּראך אדוני המלך איך וויל דיר דיא וואהרהייט זאגן.
איך האב עד נייארט גירעט דז איך האב די בתּולה צון ווייב גקראגן:
אבר אדוני המלך וואש זאל איך קלייגר אונ׳ שוואכּיר פֿוגיל קענן.
דרום לאז מיך ווידר פֿליהן אונ׳ לאז מיך ווידר צו מיין יונג ווייב רענן

(The bird spoke: 'My lord the king, I will tell you the truth.
I said this just to get the young maiden to be my wife.
But my lord the king, what could I, [a] small and weak bird,
be able to do?
Therefore, let me fly again, and let me run back to my young
wife.')

(page 2r, lines 39-42)

Hence, the bird has set himself up to be simply a braggadocio, for which he is sentenced to death. It is at this point the bird enters into a soliloquy, confirming his erudition. At first, he appeals to what is known to Solomon himself, that love leads men to reckless action.

אונ׳ אויך אדוני המלך דוא האשט זעלברט אין דייני ספֿרים גשריבן
(האהבֿה מקלקלתֿ אתֿ השורה) דיא אהבֿה מאכֿט אייגם ביטריבן
דיא (אהבֿה) האט קיין מאס אונ׳ קיין ציל אונ׳ טוט אלש פֿר דרבן.

(And, also my lord King, you yourself have written in your books
'Love spoils the line' Love makes one distressed.
Love has no measure and no purpose and spoils everything.)
(page 2v, lines 47-49)

In order to support his statement, he provides an example close to King Solomon's heart:

איבר דיא (אהבֿה) האט דיין ברודר (אמנון) מוזן שטערבן:
דא ער דורך אהבֿה זיין שוועשטר תמר הוט בישלאפֿן אונ׳ ביטרוגן
דרום הוט אים דר נוך זיין אונ׳ דיין אייגנר ברודר אבֿשלום דר שלגן

(Because of love your brother Amnon had to die;
Through love he slept with your sister Tamar and deceived her.
Therefore, your and his own brother Absalom killed him afterwards.)
(page 2v, lines 50-52)

While those familiar with Biblical history would know of this story of tragedy in Kind David's household, not all of eighteenth century Ashkenazic readers were aware of the story's origins. Glikl (1977:230-32), who had more education than the average seventeenth/eighteenth century woman, thought it

to be an Arabian tale, which she had read in German and translated into her memoirs for her children to read.

The bird next quotes Halakhic precedence by paraphrasing, and explaining, Deut. 20:7 and 24:5:

אונ׳ אך שטיט אין דר תורה ווער דא נעמט איין ווייב דז ערשט יאר
דר ברויכט ניט אין מלחמה צו גין אונ׳ איז פֿרייא פֿון אלים גאר:
דען דיא תורה האט דען טעם אויך דער בייא טון אן שרייבן.
תאמר וועדט ער דאש ערשטי יאר אירגנץ טויט בלייבן:
אונ׳ דרום האט דיא תורה גיהיישן ער זאל בלייבן צו הויז דש יאר.
אונ׳ וואדום ווילשטו מיך טיטן איך האב יוא ניקש גידינדיגט גאר:
אונ׳ וועו איך שטערב זו בלייבט מיין ווייב איין (עגונה) פֿר זיצן.
אדר ווילשטו מיך דאדום טיטן דז דו די צון ווייב ווילשט נעמן אונ׳
ניצן

(And also it stands in the Torah that who[ever] takes a wife,
that first year
Is not required to go to war and is exempted from everything.
And the Torah provided the reason [for this exemption],
In the event that he would die somewhere in the first year,
And therefore the Torah commands that he remain at home
the first year.
Why will you kill me? I have indeed not really sinned,
And if I die my wife will remain an 'anchored' wife.
Or will you, therefore, kill me so you can take her as a wife?)
(page 2r-2v, lines 53-60)

Thus, the bird cleverly generates sympathy by stressing the fate of his new bride should the sentence be carried out. An *agune* (sometimes translated as an 'anchored' woman), it will be remembered, is a woman who has either been deserted, or whose husband has died but no credible witness

or proof can be found to substantiate his demise. In such instances, the *aguneh* is unable to remarry and she will remain in the margins of the community (cf. *Mageleyne lid* above, p. 114).

However, sensing that the King's sympathy has not been fully roused, the bird continues his self-defence by reminding Solomon of how birds such as he had protected Rebecca's honour when her virginal blood had been spilled after a fall off her camel (cf. Gen. 24:63; Ginzberg 1909-54, vol. I:297, vol. V:263, n. 301). The bird then reminds Solomon how it was decided that, due to his family's efforts on the matriarch's behalf, they and their descendants would receive divine protection, and that revenge would be taken upon whosoever spills the blood of a member of that family. Upon hearing the bird's soliloquy, King Solomon naturally rescinds the death sentence, and the bird is granted freedom.

Thus, the narrator has demonstrated that the female, who was impressed not by education, but by a braggardly claim, is light-headed. However, the male bird, who demonstrated a lack of clear judgement while courting the female, is indeed highly educated. Not only can he recite Biblical writings, midrashic and exegetic traditions, and law, he is familiar with his family's history, as well as the tragedy from King Solomon's past. Matters of the heart, therefore, can have dangerous results. On the other hand, learning and wisdom can save one from certain death.

The second episode in the story, as we have seen, begins with a male relative of King Solomon approaching him with the request that he teach him the languages of animals. While Solomon at first refuses, he later acquiesces on the condition that what the man learns is to remain a secret.

Two points concerning the transmission of knowledge by King Solomon to his kinsman are of interest. First and foremost, it is to remain a secret between the two of the men. No one is to know of the new-found knowledge. Secondly, the knowledge is passed on between men. Given the nature of Jewish education, neither is surprising. Women, as we know (see §2.2.2, pp. 44-50), were given only a rudimentary education, and then usually only informally and at home, and rarely including anything beyond reading fundamentals. Boys were traditionally educated at least until the age of thirteen (the *bar-mitsve*), but few actually continued their education past their early teens. While a large number of men were able to go to communal study sessions in the *beys medrash* (study house), the level of study was not necessarily profound. Only a minority had the talents and/or the opportunity to delve into the deeper texts: the supra-commentaries and mystical texts. Thus, a large body of knowledge was, in effect, unattainable for women, and for most men as well.

Conversant in most of the languages of 'the birds and the beasts' the man returns home. The narrator's description of the man's household is intriguing:

ער האט זיין אייגן אײַן פּפֿערד אונ׳ אײַן אוקשן שטרק אונ׳ פֿײַן׃
אונ׳ אײַן ווײַב אונ׳ אײַן הונד אונ׳ צוונציג היגר אונ׳ אײַן האן׃

(He owned a horse and an ox — strong and fine,
And a wife, one dog, twenty chickens and one rooster.)
(page 3r, lines 90-91)

The man's wife, it must be noted, is listed neither first nor last, but halfway down the list of his possessions, and more importantly, among his animals. With this, the narrator reinforces not only that wives are property of their husbands — items to be listed in an inventory. Likewise, it caustically implies that animals understand women better than men do.

The man returns home, and begins to eavesdrop on the conversations between his animals, allowing the situation between the horse and ox to play itself out. However, when his wife first requests, and later demands, to know why the man laughs whenever he enters the stable, the situation takes a deadly turn. She confronts him for a second time:

דאש ווײַב שפּראך מיין ליבר מאן אײַן זאך ווײַל איך דיך פֿראגן׃
אונ׳ דוא זאלשט מירש ניט פֿר העלין אונ׳ דיא וואַרהייט זאגן׃
וואַרום טושטו אלי צייט לאכֿן וועז דוא גיאשט אין דען שטאל׃
איך קאן ניט פֿר שטיין וואש דאך דאש לאכֿין בידייטן זאל׃

(The wife said 'My dear husband, I would ask you one thing,
And you should not hide from me and tell me the truth.
Why do you laugh every time you go into the stable?
I cannot understand what the laughter means.')
(page 3v, lines 141-44)

The man, who knows that revealing the secret would mean his untimely death, attempts to explain this to his wife:

דער מאן שפראך מיין ליבש ווייב איך טאר דיר עש ניט זאגן.
אזו באלד אז איך דירש זאג זוא האב איך אויז גילעבט מייני טאגן:

(The man said 'My dear wife, I am not permitted to tell you.
As soon as I tell you, I have lived out my days.')
(page 4r, lines 145-46)

She refuses to accept his explanation, however, and persists with her questioning, claiming that her husband is talking like a fool. Again, the husband responds by stressing the gravity of his situation, but the wife, who remains unresponsive to his plea, retorts that she does not care whether he lives or dies, as long as he tells her what she wants to know. The husband acquiesces:

דער מאן שפראך גיב מיר נייארט צייט אייגן אייגציגן טאג.
מארגן וויל איך דיר רעכט ענטפֿרן אויף דייני פֿראג:
ווען איך יוא זאל שטערבן זוא לאז מיך דאך ערשט (צוואה) מאכֿן.

(The man said 'Give me but one single day's time
Tomorrow I will answer your questions correctly.
If I do indeed die, allow me first to make a will.')
(page 4r, lines 153-55)

The wife agrees to his request, and leaves laughing.

While sitting in his room, he overhears a conversation between his dog and his rooster. The dog, who perceives his master will die soon, demands to know why the rooster is prancing around at such a sad moment. The rooster replies:

דא שפראך דער האן צום הונד אונזר הער דער איז איין נאר.
ער לאזט זיך פֿון אייַן אייַנציגן ווייב אזוא זער דרילן פֿר וואר:
אונ׳ איך האב צוונציג ווייבר וועו איך נייארט טוא דיא פֿליגל צוקן.
זוא מוזן זיך אלי מייני ווייבר שטראקט פֿאר מיר נייגן אונ׳ בוקין:
וועו אונ׳זר הער וועו קלוג זו זעלט ער נעמן אין די הנד איין שטאק.
אונ׳ זעלט זיין ווייב פֿיין דיכֿט דער מיט פריגלן אב:

(The rooster spoke to the dog 'Our master is a fool.
He lets himself be drilled by one single wife
And I have twenty wives. If I but twitch my wings
All my wives must immediately bow low before me.
If our master were clever he would take a stick in his hand
And thrash his wife soundly.')

(page 4r, lines 167-72)

The man realises the truthfulness in the rooster's words, and decides to heed the advice. He goes to sleep knowing his life would be spared in the morning because the knowledge he learned from Solomon would save his life.

דען אנדרן טאג קאם דאש ווייב ווידר בייא דעם מאן צו גין.
אונ׳ שפראך צו אים לאז מיך איין מאל ווישן אונ׳ לאז מיך פֿר שטין:
וואורום דוא האשט אלי צייט גילאכֿט בייא דיא בהמותֿ אין שטאל.
דער מאן שפראך וועו עש יוא ניט אנדרשט זיין זאל:
דז דוא עש ווילשט ווישן וועו איך שון דריבר שטערבן זעלט.
ער נאם איין שטאק אין דיא האנד אונ׳ הוט זיך בייא איר גשטעלט:
אונ׳ שמירט זיא גידיכֿט אב דז זיא ניקש מער ביגערט צו ווישן:
אונ׳ זיא האט זיך באלד פֿאר אנגשט בישיסן.

(The next day his wife came back to the man
And said to him 'Let me know for once, and let me understand
Why you laughed at the animals every time [you were] in the stable.'
The man said 'If it cannot be any other way,
And you want to know even if I should die because of it.'

He took a stick in his hand and stood by her
And covered her thickly so she would not want to know any more
And from fear she immediately lost control over her bodily functions.)

(page 4v, lines 179-86)

Here the narrator has implied that a woman who wishes to include herself in knowledge entrusted to men deserves punishment. In Medieval Hebrew literature, the discussion concerning the virtues of women (which are outweighed by negative qualities) is commonplace until the seventeenth century (Dishon 1994:36-37). Similar to the narrator's position here, Moshe ibn Haviv (*Darkhei Noam*, quoted in Dishon 1994:38-39) advocates the beating of one's wife as one would a cow. To support the treatment of the man's wife, the reader would recall that when the narrator introduced the wife, it had been in the middle of a list of farm animals which the husband owned. It becomes clear the her place is indeed between the horse and ox (who are beaten as they plough the fields), and the dog. Since, in the eyes of the husband, the wife had shown no compassion for his situation (whereas the dog had), she is only slightly better than the dog. Since women were products of 'nature', while men were products of 'civilisation', it was not aberrant for the woman to be treated as an animal, and hence the rooster's advice is heeded. Cowering in fear, the woman now knows her place. The reader, who, like the woman would have felt that the husband was talking utter nonsense, has learned her lesson from the safety of her own home, and will realise that she is not to pry into men's matters.

It should be remembered that tales such as this, where the wife is punished for her curiosity or meddlesome behaviour, were not uncommon in Yiddish. The *Mayse bukh* for example has a tale which deals similarly with a greedy wife. 'The Rabbi Who Turned Into a Werewolf' (Meitlis 1969: 321-41; Gaster 1981:576-95) ends with the greedy and malicious wife being turned into a donkey, an animal which is regularly beaten and abused. In fact, the reason the rabbi was condemned to spend years as a dreaded werewolf was, it is said succinctly, because he confided in his wife.

The final portion of our tale seems, at first, to be connected only by the passing on of Solomon's knowledge to the kinsman's family members. We are told that family members passed this information on until the day when one of his male descendants, who lives in the Holy Land, at the time of the narration, overhears a conversation between one of his cows and a marauding, male lion.

The cow attempts to save its life by quoting prophecy regarding the Coming of the Messiah, claiming that the signs are apparent to those who are able to discern them:

דא שפראך דיא קוא צום ליבן איך זאג דירש לאז מיך צו רוא.
דען דיא צייט איז קומן האשטו עש דען ניט פֿר נומן:
דאש (משיח) דער (גואל ישראל) ווערט בלד קומן.

(So the cow said to the lion, 'I say to you, leave me in peace
The time has come, have you not yet grasped this?
The Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel will soon come,)
(page 4v, lines 196-98)

Continuing, the cow recites prophecy concern the relations between predator and prey:

אונ׳ עש שטויט גישריבן וועו דיא צייט פֿון דר (גאולה) ווערט זיין:
דא ווערט גרוש שלום צווישן דיא בהמות אונ׳ חיות זיין:
דער ליב ווערט קיין בהמה ניט מער צו ריישן אונ׳ פֿר צוקן.
נייארט ער ווערט ויא איין קוא גראז עשן אונ׳ אב פפֿלוקן:

(And it is written: when it is the time of Redemption
There will be a great peace between the animals and the beasts;
The lion will no longer rip nor tear any cattle;
Rather he will become like a cow, eating and plucking grass.')

(page 4v, lines 199-202)

The lion, however, questions the logic behind the cow's announcement:

דא שפראך דר ליב צו דר קוא וויא ווייששטו דז עז קומן איז דיא צייט
דאז ישראל ווערן דער ליזט ווערדן אונ׳ דער פֿרייאט:

(The lion spoke to the cow 'How do you know that the time has come
That Israel will be redeemed and freed?')

(page 4v, lines 203-04)

With her response, the cow demonstrates that the pronouncement is not based upon discernment of actual signs, but by an impression made of other people:

דא שפראך דיא קוא וויא איז ניט דיא (גאולה) פֿאר האנדן.
עש זיין דאך אזוא פֿיל חסידים אונ׳ לומדים אין אלי לאנדן:

(Thus spoke the cow, 'How it not be the [time of] redemption?
Are there not a lot of pious and learned [men] in all the countries?')

(page 5r, lines 205-06)

There ensues a lengthy discussion of the receipt, but not necessarily the donation, of charitable gifts, where the lion demonstrates a keen knowledge of scripture and thus, for the eighteenth century reader, an erudite mind:

דא שפראך דער ליב (שונא מתנות יהיה) וועד מתנות הוט פֿיינט
דער ווערט לעבן ווען משיח ווערט קומן מארגן אדר הייַנט:
איין רעבֿטר חסיד גיהער ניט איין מאל איין (מטבע) צו קענען.
אונ׳ גיהער זיך מיט וויניג לאזן פֿר גניגן אונ׳ זיך איין (עני) נענען:
וגם אונ׳ אויך קען דר רעבֿטר (זמן גאולה) נאך ניט זיין.
עש מוז ערשט איין (מלחמה אין ארץ צבי) קומן אריין:
דאש מיינט (ארץ ישראל) וויא אין (סוף דנואל) טוט שטין.
דאש אין דיא לעצטי צייטן איין נייאר (מלך) ווערט אויף שטין:
דר ווערט ביצווינגן אונ׳ אויד פלינדרן גאנץ (מצרים אפֿריקא לנד).
דער נאך ווערט ער קומן מיט איין גרוש (חיל) אז אן (ים) איד זאנד:
אונ׳ ער ווערט קומן מיט זיין פֿאלק אין (ארץ ישראל) אריין.
דארטן שרייבט (דניאל) ווערט ערשט זיין (מפלה) זיין:
דער נאך ווערט קומן דער (מלאך מיבֿאל) דער (שר).
אונ׳ ווערט בישיצן דאש הייליגי פֿאלק (ישראל) פֿון אלים (צר):
אונ׳ עש ווערט אזוא איין גרושי (צרה) זיין אונטר דיא לייט.
אז נאך ניט איד גיוועזן אין (עולם) אין קיינר צייט:
אונ׳ דען זוא ווערט קומן דער זעלביגי דער דא קומן זאל.
אונ׳ דען זוא ווערט דער פֿרייאט ווערדן דש הייליגי פֿאלק ישראל:
(יהי רצון) עז זאל זיין דער ווילן צו פֿאר דען אייניגן גאט.
דז זיין פֿאלק ישראל זאלן דר ליזט ווערן אויז שאנד אונ׳ שפאט:

אונ׳ דיא זיך צו ישראל ביהעפֿט האבן זאלן אויך ווערן גידאכֿט.
אונ׳ זאלן אויך אין (ארץ ישראל) ווערן אריין גיבראכֿט:

(The lion said, 'He will be a hater of gifts'. Whoever dislikes gifts
Will live if the Messiah comes, [be it] tomorrow or today.
A proper pious person is not concerned, at any time, with having a single coin,
And concerns himself little with pleasure and calls himself a pauper.
And also the proper time of Redemption cannot yet be
There must be a war in the land of the gazelle first —
This means the land of Israel as it says at the end of Daniel —
That in the last days a new king will rise up
Who will subdue and plunder all of Egypt, the land of Africa.
Afterwards he will come with a great army, like sand on the shore
And he will come with his people into the land of Israel.
There, writes Daniel, will his first defeat be.
Afterwards, the Angel Michael, the guardian angel will come
And will protect the holy people [of] Israel from all the enemy.
And there will be such a great misfortune among the people,
As has not yet happened in the world at any time.
Then the same who shall come, will come
And then the holy people [of] Israel will be freed.
It shall be [His] will; It shall be the will of the one God
That his people [of] Israel shall be delivered from shame and mockery.
And they who have joined with Israel shall also be remembered,
And shall also be brought into the Land of Israel.)
(page 5r, lines 212-32)

It is thus apparent that the lion is better versed in scripture than the cow. According to the genders used in the tale, this portion of the story harkens back to statements made earlier. The young bird, when given the male's pedigree remarked:

דיא בתּולה שפראך צו אים וואש העלפֿט מיך דער (ייחוס) דיין.

זאג מיר נייארט אהער מיט וואש קענשטו מיך (מחיה) זיין:

(The maiden spoke to him: 'How does your pedigree help me?
Instead, tell me how you can make me happy.')
(page 1v, lines 23-24)

Clearly unimpressed with mental acuity, the maiden was more interested in physical strengths. Unlike the young female bird, however, the cow (by definition also a female) here *is* impressed with learning, and especially with the large number of seemingly educated and pious people she notices. However, as the lion emphasises, appearances can be misleading. While many people claim to be learned, their behaviour suggests otherwise; in other words they have not learned to incorporate their learning into their lives.

Likewise, the cow demonstrates how partial understanding can lead to false assumptions. The cow has taken what she has heard, but does not fully understand, or perhaps as a result of being led astray by those she mistakes as pious, and has used this information to misinterpret the events transpiring around her. Here we are reminded of the wife, who wishes to share in the husband's knowledge, no matter what the consequences might be. The lion, on the other hand, is truly learned, despite his outward predatory appearance, much as the male bird was despite his giddy behaviour under the influence of love. It can be posited that in the end the lion devours the cow, as it is he who has the last word. Thus, the violent demise of the cow suggest that those, and in particular women, who try to meddle in matters which they do not fully

understand will meet with dire consequences. Like the wife of the second episode, the cow is violently quieted.

Such a mistaken application of prophecy strikingly corrected by the lion's discourse is reminiscent of the flourishing of Sabbatean followers, many of whom gave up their worldly possessions to follow the false Messiah. Such a reference to the turmoil prefacing the rise and subsequent demise of Shabbetai Zevi in the European community (both Ashkenazic and Sephardic), as well as the subsequent messianic manifestations and turmoils that occurred throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, would not be lost on a contemporary reader, who may have had personal experience with the matter. Likewise, the war and plundering which the lion describes as minor in comparison to those preceding the coming of the Messiah, would evoke memories of recent wars (for example, the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), or the invasion of Altona by the Swedes in 1657-58, as well as recurring persecutions, such as the Chmelnitski massacres of 1648-49. The suffering which the cow has taken to be a sign of the end of the world and the redemption of the Jews, is actually, according to the interpretation provided by the lion, simply a taste of what will come in the future.

6.5 Conclusions

Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh is unlike the other texts discussed in this thesis in that it relies on animals to impart messages to the *male* protagonists concerning the behaviour of women and men under the influence

of women. However, the women in these texts can be said to be reflecting 'modernist' trends which the author despises, such as the desire to choose their own husbands as well as the desire to obtain knowledge which was relegated to the masculine domain. Throughout the tale three concepts are emphasised with regard to women. First, women, especially young women, are fatuous. Thus inclined, they tend to disregard those things which are important to society and emphasise transient matters. Furthermore, women cannot be trusted with matters which belong in the control of more intelligent and controlled adults. As is often the case, it is argued, men allow women the opportunity to influence their judgement which often puts the men in life-threatening situations. Lastly, although there are women who do have an education, they are unable to utilise correctly the knowledge they possess. Thus, since women appear to be unteachable, education is wasted upon them; this is further supported by the cow's clear lack of understanding of that which she has learned.

The first female encountered in the tale reminds readers of the idea that women are 'light-headed' (cf. *Mayse man un vayb*, Chapter 6) and frivolous in nature. Young women, in the guise of the maiden bird, are not impressed with learning, i.e., they do not truly understand what is important. This female, unguided and dependent upon her own intuition demonstrates for us that education is unimportant in the sub-culture of women, i.e., it is against women's 'nature'. It is especially significant that the discussion of the

importance of learning occurs between animals, for in the second part of the tale women are listed among the animals.

However, the second female is of a slightly different ilk than the bird; she herself is eager to learn. However, she is not content to learn those things which are relegated to the woman's domain. Instead she wishes to share in the learning reserved for men, something secret to which she is not normally privy. Her curiosity goes beyond accepted limits, as a satisfactory answer risks the death of her own husband. In actuality, she is demanding equality, which, as we are shown, is perceived as unnatural. Such a woman, we are told, cannot be reasoned with; indeed they will persist with their demands even if it means the death of civilisation.

In order to subdue such a deviant woman, one must therefore revert to lessons of nature. The wife is listed among the man's possessions, among the animals which have been domesticated and now work for man. Thus, not only does she not share the same social position as her husband, women in general are not on the same plane of civilisation. As the animals control their mates with violence, if necessary, so must a husband (or father as the case be).

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Early 'Modern' Women

It has been our purpose here to look at characterisations of the feminine as presented in four early eighteenth century Yiddish texts: *Mayse fun a kale*, *Mageleyne lid*, *Mayse man un vayb*, and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*. These chapbooks, which blend three different main episodes or stories, sometimes from divergent language sources, into single tripartite tales, are believed to be authored by a single writer. Of these, three (*Mayse man un vayb*; *Mayse fun a kale*; and *Mageleyne lid*) narrate tales specifically about female, human protagonists — single as well as married, exemplary in addition to iniquitous. The fourth text, *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh,* is not directly related to female characters, or feminine characterisations. However, it warrants equal attention specifically because of the brief, yet dramatic, appearances of two female characters.

As we have seen, the four tales recount how women who deviate from the social norms pertaining to feminine behaviour meet with misfortune and disaster. As the intellectual creation of a male, these works express prevailing viewpoints about the feminine in a male-dominated society. Our analysis of

the texts revolved around three interrelated questions concerning the characterisation of the feminine: the nature of male/female relationships; the relation between gender and power; and prescriptions for proper behaviour.

Our four booklets state predominant paradigms of proper, improper and undesirable female behaviour in early modern Ashkenazic society. The author's conception of women's preferences and behaviours may or may not have matched reality, but they represent his attempts, conscious or unconscious, to convey to his female readers the correct behaviours and attitudes. As such, these four texts analysed here offer us a unique glimpse into the life of eighteenth century European Jewry. Though the author's influence was no doubt indirect and is difficult to assess, his audience, in particular his female readers found a dark mimesis within these *mayse-bikhlekh* (Wiltenburg 1992: 40), one which drew the female reader into a process that used her reading against herself (Schweikhart 1986:42).

The first role which the feminine plays in these tales is that of *meyd* ('maiden', 'young woman'). Inherent in this role is the assumption that the *meyd* is also a daughter. Thus, the young girl is the responsibility of her parents, in particular her father. Within the texts, if the character is also a *kale* (i.e., of an marriageable age with a marriage contract), then she is — usually — under the age of twenty. The *kale* is likewise under the guardianship of her father and remains so until married.

In addition, there are young women who are unmanageable, and whose behaviour becomes a discredit to their family and community. The *nekeyve*, a term originally from the *loshn koydesh* meaning a 'female', is a woman with little or no decorum, lacking in the 'proper' social graces. She is beyond the confines of civilisation, and with her promiscuous behaviour, runs the risk of bringing ignominy upon herself and her family. Such a female has given way to her true 'nature' and as such can only be tamed by nature itself.

After the girl has reached maturity she assumes the role of *froy* ('woman'). Whether married or not, this adult woman is no longer the responsibility of her father. As a *vayb* ('wife'), she belongs to the household of her husband, and thus comes under his aegis. Should her husband perish or disappear without witnesses who can account for his death, the *vayb* becomes an *agune* ('abandoned' or 'anchored' wife), one of the other roles present in the texts. The *agune* has a questionable place in Jewish society. As a woman who has no proof of her husband's demise, she is ineligible for re-marriage, and thus exists on the fringes of 'normal' society.

Each of the various female protagonists in these *mayse-bikhlekh* deals with her own individual predicament in a unique manner. Nonetheless, they all share a single personality trait: rebelliousness. Two major arenas for a struggle between gender and power arise: (1) marriage arrangements; and (2) the relationships between adult men and women (i.e., married, or in the least, older women). However one may depict these women (and each is characterised in a different light), they question patriarchal authority, as clearly

represented by the male characters in the tales. That the author himself identifies with and supports the prevailing social norms is reaffirmed by the fact that nothing in the narratives seem to change, with the exception, of course, of individual feminine behaviour.

Despite the custom that marriages were arranged, women were allowed a certain degree of freedom to express their consent, dissent, or in some cases their actual choice of a marriage partner. In addition, the notion of a romantic love was prevalent in early pre-modern Yiddish literature, as evident in such texts such as *Bove d'Antone* (by Elye Bokher printed in 1541, Isny), and *Pariz un Viene* (1594, Berne) as well as in *Mageleyne lid* discussed in this thesis. Marriage arrangements were considered too important to be left up to the whimsical desires of young women who would more likely be influence by their own sexuality and fancies of romantic love than by the social and religious demands of traditional Ashkenazic patriarchy. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh,* for example, the female, who is young, is given free rein not only to select her future spouse, but also to meet him without a chaperone. What is clearly emphasised here is that women, when left to their own initiative, cannot be guaranteed to make prudent judgements. Within the eighteenth century European Jewish community, couples were matched according to a list of socially prescribed criteria, the foremost of which were: religious learning, social class, and *yikhes* . As to be expected, rather than looking at these criteria, the female is concerned with her own individual desires and happiness.

Arranging marriages was considered to be a matter of discovery, as the partnerships had already been decreed in heaven (Zborowski and Herzog 1952:269). Thus, women were expected to allow their futures to be managed by their parents, in particular their fathers. The future bride was expected to passively stand by while her care was transferred from the hands of her father to those of her husband. Nevertheless, in our texts we find that the feminine has an opinion, and at times it contradicts what is presented to be in her best interest. In *Mayse fun a kale*, Rokhl refuses to accept her father's decisions. Instead, she believes she herself should have the final voice as to whom she should marry. In addition, she shows disregard for God's will, as believed to be demonstrated by the arrangement, and confirmed for her when her father, Reb Eliezer declares that he has found her pre-destined groom. The arrogance, as well as the sexuality which is inherent in the feminine, brings about the protagonist's downfall (cf. Gravdal 1992:571). Likewise, the tale warns readers that failure to conform to tradition (i.e., to wed) is 'so severe a threat to the social fabric that they will be compelled to submit' (Rowe 1979:247).

In *Mageleyne lid*, we know that the likelihood that Zigmund would be chosen (had his true identity been known) as Mageleyne's suitor is indeed very slim. Mageleyne realises that in order to marry whom she desires —the son of her father's enemy— she must defy parental and patriarchal authority. Inasmuch as Zigmund appeared to be the champion of the tourney held to determine who would wed Mageleyne, it can be inferred that the couple were

pre-destined for each other, and had Mageleyne remained within the boundaries of proper decorum, the two would have eventually been married. At the end of *Mageleyne lid*, the two lovers are reunited and with their public union, peace is established and the two warring kingdoms unified, reaffirming their suitability. However, Mageleyne's revolt against authority leads to her abandonment and isolation as she leads the life of a forsaken wife — alone and marginalised. While *Mageleyne lid* was adapted for a Jewish readership, it seems also clear that the protagonists were probably not identified as Jewish by the readers. Therefore, the message, while conveyed in a non-Jewish 'reality', nevertheless receives a universalistic stamp that further validates the conventions of the European Jewish patriarchy of the early eighteenth century.

Throughout *Mageleyne lid*, the protagonist is compared with nature, reminding readers that women are objects close to that which is wild (as opposed to civilisation), and as such run the risk of becoming feral. At the same time, *Mageleyne lid* also demonstrates for the reader the cost of improper, unrestrained emotions: like weeds in a garden, when passions take over, order is ignored. With villainesses, such as the wife in *Mayse man un vayb*, the disorderliness is blatant. But even heroines, such as Mageleyne, pose an implicit threat to order. This threat can be contained by rigid adherence to social rules, or deflected by the attribution of the women's achievements to their love for men (Wiltenburg 1992:47). Clearly by exulting Mageleyne's dependency and self-sacrifice, the author implies that the

survival of Ashkenazic culture depends heavily upon women's acceptance of their roles which relegate them to motherhood and domesticity (Rowe 1979:239). Thus, once the women in these texts acknowledge the consequences of their behaviours and yield to society's expectations, order is restored. In *Mageleyne lid* this applies not only to the protagonist's life, but also to the entire world.

The tales portray the masculine in an entirely different fashion. Unlike the feminine (which stand for disorder, chaos and nature), the masculine here represents the patriarchy with its civilisation and order. Independent males, even those who live on the periphery of society and display a conscious lack of propriety, still retain their civility, and even settle disagreements through conventional means. Only when men are under the influence of women, especially with regard to their sexuality such as the two pirate captains in *Mayse fun a kale* and the men in *Mayse man un vayb*, are they shown to resort to obstructive and violent patterns of behaviour. Females, on the other hand, once allowed to stray from the patriarchal rule, can only be controlled by nature itself — a counterpart to, and the only 'feminine' stronger than, such wayward women.

The preeminent theme in our tales is that proper control over the feminine is necessary, lest society fall into a state of decay, and ultimately, chaos. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* the narrator implies that brute force, such as that used on the oxen who plow the fields, should be used when a female does not abide by the rules of proper decorum. There the author

demonstrates the rationalisation that the patriarchy must be protected, even if it means that extreme violence was to be used against those whom the patriarchy rules (Miles 1990:17).

The feminine in these texts does not demand tangible possessions, as females often do in German and English chapbooks (see Wiltenburg 1992). In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, for example, the wife demands access to that which is the locus of masculine power in Ashkenazic society: wisdom, and by inference religious learning, symbolised by the transference of knowledge from King Solomon to the husband. The wife has demanded, at any cost, the privilege of acquiring knowledge to which she, and all women, have been denied access. To grant her desire is, at least symbolically, tantamount to the destruction of Jewish society itself, here represented by the husband. Therefore the wife must be subdued — as one would subdue an animal which has become unruly and defiant. The message is clear: if the feminine is not properly controlled, as *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* implies, society will fall into decay. Only by putting females (and those 'males' who have relinquished their control to women) into their proper place — outside the centre of male culture — will civilisation become whole once again.

Mayse man un vayb demonstrates this belief very clearly through the adulterous relationship between Zigomindo and the chamberlain's wife. Here the feminine uses the ultimate threat to the masculine: her innate sexuality. Once the king has fallen victim to the wife's sexual prowess, he falls ill with leprosy. Now weak and emasculated, Zigomindo joins the ranks with those

who are no longer proper guardians of society, because they have fallen victim to women (Gravdal 1992:579; Zucker 1987:145). Only by turning away the feminine, can the masculine regain control.

The author clearly utilises the stereotypical depiction of the feminine as found in early and medieval Hebrew texts. As Dishon (1994:39) has outlined, the stereotyped feminine behaviours include fearfulness, cruelty, laziness, greed, light-headedness, shrewishness, and unending deceit. The description of the feminine, it is important to remember, is generally restricted to its destructive impact on men, and by extension, society as a whole (Sokoloff 1988:149; see also Zucker 1987:144). These over-simplified images express common-place fears about women and their possible impact on the stability of the patriarchy; they are controlled thereby through cathartic public disapproval. The feminine is then used against the reader, lest they become like the stereotype and therefore suffer the fate of the protagonists found in these texts (cf. Wiltenburg 1992:254-55).

Should the feminine fail to control her behaviour, violence is an acceptable recourse, whether or not this is mirrored in reality. That the narrator does not display alarm at the use of violence is a sign that such behaviour has been legitimised and accepted by society (Frakes 1994:132). The overriding threat of spousal abuse, carried out in *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, is clearly a didactic tool underscoring for the reader the social boundaries to which she is expected to adhere (Wiltenburg 1992:183). The violence in these texts demonstrates that there exists 'a power struggle for the

maintenance of a certain kind of order' (de Lauretis 1989:242). Indeed both spousal abuse and the threat of rape are used as tools to inculcate the female reader into believing she has no choice but to accept the role of victim (Walker 1979:14-16).

Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh clearly demonstrates that while the feminine should be impressed by erudition, genealogy and spiritual concerns, in reality the feminine is concerned with carnal matters. Likewise, we find that the feminine is often defiant of patriarchal authority, as represented by the male characters in the texts. As objects of nature, the feminine manifests, for the male reader, as well as the female who wishes to remain within society's confines, those emotions, attitudes and behaviours over which they must gain control in order to remain civilised (Miles 1990:17 and Wiltenburg 1992:19). Thus depicted as uncivilised and unruly, the feminine characterised in *Mayse fun a kale* and *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* are also arrogant and boisterous, lacking in modesty and decorum. In *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh*, the feminine was intrusive, and demanding.

It has been stated elsewhere (Zucker 1987:4) that the *modern* woman in Yiddish literature emerges only in the late nineteenth century. The characterisation of a 'modern' female would be, according to Zucker (1987:5) 'the women's recognition of the conflicting forces that seethe within them, and the desire to have more control over their lives'. It is not the dissatisfaction

with the *status quo* that is 'modern', therefore, but the female's desire to control her social environment. Zucker (1987:35) later defines her women (both authors and characters) as modern or:

> as standing on the brink of modernity, if they dare to question and/or revolt against the circumscribed roles of wife and mother to which traditional society has relegated them, and have ceased to link their destiny to a greater one prescribed by God or society [...] modern heroines will frequently consult their own will before consulting the will of the community.

The characters Zucker studied (1987:5-6) question and/or revolt by yearning for romantic love, refusing to get married, or defying parental authority.

Yet, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the feminine as characterised in our four texts can, in effect, be construed as modern, or at least 'standing on the brink of modernity' (cf. Zucker 1987:35). The major difference here is that a definition of modernity, such as the one used by Zucker, relies upon the idea of individualism, which was not yet prevalent in early eighteenth century thought (cf. Wiltenburg 1992:19). Nevertheless, the feminine, as characterised throughout these narratives, follows the definition of 'modern' above. Thus, as Zucker (1987:7) says with regard to later Yiddish literature:

> the fate of the female protagonist in literature became a metaphor for the fate of the Jewish people, and she became the focal point for the conflict between modernity and tradition which is the very essence of modern Yiddish literature.

As we have seen, the author of the early modern Yiddish works that were analysed in this thesis was very much against the 'modernist' trends he witnessed around him. Rokhl, in *Mayse fun a kale*, can clearly be described as a pre-cursor to the 'modern' woman which flourished in later literature: she belonged to a community which was new in the eyes of the contemporary Western, Central and Eastern Ashkenazic communities (the London Jewish community was given sanction to re-establish itself only after 1655); and likewise her father was a wealthy and respected member of this new, and burgeoning community. Rokhl questioned the authority of her community and ventured beyond the confines as her own will directed her. Only later, when she was forced to realise that her will was, perhaps not in her best interest, did she accept her role. Like the community of London, the feminine as described above, was beginning to blossom as a recurring phenomenon in popular literature.

Some of these characterisations discussed above can be gleaned from the Eastern European Yiddish reworkings and adaptations of the old and pre-modern Yiddish literature (see Reyzen 1932) which appeared more than a hundred years later in the Ukraine and Lithuania. In 1801 adaptations and translations of important Hebrew and Yiddish literary works were brought to print by Eliezer Pavir (see Shmeruk 1988:241-42; Kerler 1988b:462-63). Finally, 1847 saw the rise of the literary career of Ayzik Meyer Dik, whose phenomenal literary output effectively modernised the traditional *mayse-bikhl*

into a typologically diversified array of early modern forms and modes of Yiddish fiction writing (see Roskies 1974 and 1977).

Perspectives for Future Research

In this study we have analysed the characterization of the feminine in early popular, non-ritualistic Yiddish literature. The female protagonists of our stories were shown to be individualists, who put their own will and desires above those of their families and the Jewish community as a whole. Their yearning to overcome the limitations placed upon them by society connects them directly to characters presented in later Yiddish literature (i.e., from the latter half of the nineteenth century on). The protagonists were shown to be 'modern females' in that they were struggling against the confines of the roles given them by society and its leaders. The conclusion one may make is that the personalities of female protagonists, such as those developed in the canonic works of Yiddish literature written since the 1850s, can clearly be traced to early eighteenth century *mayse-bikhlekh*, exemplified by the four texts analysed in this thesis.

Until recently, the study of Jewish history has not included the analysis of how women were indoctrinated in patriarchal values (Magnus 1990:30). In a society where power was directly related to one's literacy and competence in the inaccessible, sacred texts, women were considered to be among the lower echelons of eighteenth century Ashkenaz society. The four chapbooks analysed here offer us a glimpse into the subtle method of inculcation of

women, a sub-class of people who were unable to gain literacy in *loshn koydesh* texts, and thus were limited to the literature they could read. These small booklets functioned as a vehicle to inseminate acceptable feminine behaviour (as defined by the established patriarchy), illustrating how deviation from the social norms would lead to tragic consequences. Thus, despite the fact that men, as well as women, were among the booklets' actual audience, the author used his entertaining stories as didactic tools to propagate the prevailing notions of the feminine within the patriarchal society, concepts which he fully supported.

Although the characterisation of the feminine in French, German and English popular literature of various time periods has been examined by several researchers (for example see Blumstein 1977; Rabine 1985; Bottigheimer 1987; Douthwaite 1992; Orr 1992; Wiltenburg 1992; Cheesman 1994; Frakes 1994; and Ray 1994), no such attempt have been made with respect to Yiddish *mayse-bikhlekh*. It is hoped that the approach outlined here, further refined and elaborated, and coupled with research being done in the religious modes of discourse (Romer-Segal 1986; Weissler 1987-92; Wolfson 1993) as well as Hebrew and modern Yiddish literature (Roskies 1977; Sokoloff, et al. 1992; Parush 1994; Dishon 1994), might also be applied to the vast body of hitherto unanalysed materials, providing further insights into women's social identity, and the relationship between of gender and power/powerlessness.

Appendix

> If books are silent, our history is lost to us
> Battin 1991:11
>
> For the millions of books that are beyond physical restoration — brittle to the point of falling apart at the touch — the only remedy is transference to another medium.
> Rütimann 1994:169

In the conclusion of her dissertation Zfatman (1983, vol.1:249) points out the major problem one encounters when researching Old Yiddish material.

אין ספק כי הכרה יסודית עם סיפורת זו עתידה להעשירנו בשדה חדש ומופלא של סיפורת יהודית מקורית, אשר לרוע המזל נעלמה עד עתה מעיני המחקר, כנראה עקב נדירות הטקסטים והקשיי הגישה אליהם. חשיפתו של שדה זה עשויה לפתוח דף חדש הן בחקר ספרותנו הימי-הביניימית על שתי לשונותיה, הן בחקר ספרותנו העממית בכללה ובמיוחד במחקר של ספרות יידיש הישנה.

> (There is no doubt that a fundamental awareness with this [Yiddish] literature in the future, will enrich us in the new and wonderful field of original Jewish prose narrative which has, unfortunately, been virtually unkown to scholars, apparently due to the rarity and inaccessibilty of texts. Improved accessibility to these works will open a new page in the research of our [=Jewish] medieval literature in both

its languages, as well as in the research of our folk-litlerature in general and especially in the research of Old Yiddish literature.)

Zfatman continues her hopes for future research in Old Yiddish prose narrative by suggesting among other things, the 'complete and precise publication of these texts' (*ibid*).

The *mayse-bikhlekh* discussed in this thesis, are distinct in authorship and style from other *mayse-bikhlekh* published in the early eighteenth century. A number of booklets exist in multiple copies, or were published in repeated versions throughout the years. Notwithstanding, those that can be found in more than one locale, are often found in a fragmentary, fragile or damaged condition. Owing to their rare and delicate states, access to booklets such as these are, by necessity, limited in order to protect them.

Thus, early modern literature if relatively inaccessible to a large majority of researchers because of their condition, the distance between collections, and the expenditures necessary to enable a research to travel to the holding libraries. While one can obtain photographs and xerox copies from stored microfilm copies, research costs can become insurmountable.

As a natural by-product of this thesis, it is suggested to adopt the optical scanning method for a cost and quality efficient method of the preservation and restoration of rare Yiddish texts. It behoves the protectors of these invaluable cultural artefacts to ensure that future

investigators will have access to them, while at the same time preserving them from the ravages of time and use. The advances in computers, electronic scanning, and storage technologies as well as the accessibility of the World Wide Web allow solutions to many of the problems noted above.

Optical scanning and electronic storage of these rare texts would allow the scholar easier access to the rare collection of texts. Likewise, it makes possible a certain degree of textual manipulation, without harming the original text, which in many cases can enable a scholar the opportunity to 'recreate' and 'repair' damaged texts. Likewise, access to the documents is also possible through the Internet and World Wide Web, as many libraries and businesses are discovering daily. The documents presented in this appendix are an example of the ease with which the texts can be scanned and stored, as well as the clarity in which they can be restored, read and preserved.

There is considerable discussion among archivists and librarians as to the future of the millions of books and documents, such as those discussed in this thesis, presently housed in the world's libraries. Their major concern is the fate of books printed on acidic paper, i.e. the cheap medium produced during the nineteenth century, containing a large amount of acid used to break down wood quickly and cheaply into pulp.

However, the acid continues to weaken the paper, and books made from this paper disintegrate as they sit on the shelves. Patricia Battin (1994:11), explains:

> 'Americans call the problem "brittle books." To the Norwegians, it's sour books — "sure bøker" — and to the Germans "Bröselbukh", or the book of crumbs. But the French use the subtlety of their language to project the true horror of the world's potential loss — "livres incommunicables", or silent books'.

Some libraries temporarily remedy the situation by placing these brittle books in acid-free boxes. However, that solution cannot work for books which are taken off the shelf and used frequently by scholars and the public. Presently, microfilming documents and books is seen as the most dependable and popular way to transfer and conserve these decaying books. However, there are trends for copying and transferring materials on to optical disks. Optical disks, compact discs, etc. are smaller, and suffer less wear and tear from use as well as changes in humidity and temperature (Stielow 1992:338). Material can be scanned and stored on WORM (Write Once Read Many) disks, allowing the public the chance to retrieve, view, enhance, and copy materials without actually handling, and thus damaging, either the originals or the library's copy.

One institute, the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Spain, is presently digitising its vast holdings. In *American Archivist* (1992, 55:156-65) the AGI details their efforts and the problems associated with an archive or library holding documents printed before the invention of acidic paper, but

nevertheless facing problems of decay through age. In order to minimise the loss of material, yet enhance public's access to historically valuable information, they have chosen to digitise their archive and store the information on optical disks. This allows anyone working within the AGI, as well as the increasing numbers of scholars who have Internet capabilities, access to their holdings, without the threat of damaging fragile and unique documents. From the public's standpoint, the digitisation of the AGI allows for faster, more accurate retrieval of material. Likewise, without the public's mediate access to the original documents, loss and theft are reduced — a threat faced by any facility which allows access to its holdings. A similar endeavour is being undertaken by the Jewish National and University Library of Hebrew University. The Judaic Archival Project (JAP) has been digitising Hebrew works since 1990, and presently has a good amount of material available through the Internet.

The benefits of digital transference and storage are obvious, but that is not to say that difficulties do not exist. There are the obvious problems due to the necessity of human handling for the placement of pages to be scanned, formatting, checking the images, compressing and storing the information. Likewise, the documents themselves can present a bevy of problems: yellowed (or coloured) paper, faded or bleeding ink, stains, or decay, all of which can effect the quality and legibility of the end product. The AGI (1992:162-64) discovered that they ran into problems which necessitated careful weighing of factors such as quality and storage. Since they are dealing

with texts which do not require colour reproduction, but rather a high quality reproduction beyond what black and white could produce, they needed to decide how many levels of grey to use with their documents. While graphics programs are capable of showing millions of colours, 256 different levels of greys, or simply black and white, the AGI discovered that their compromise would be to use sixteen levels of grey, at 100 dots per inch (dpi — see below for what was used here). Their decision requires quite a bit of storage, but the quality of the images is higher.

In his article 'Archival Theory and the Preservation of Electronic Media: Opportunities and Standards Below the Cutting Edge' (*American Archivist* 55:332-43), Frederick Stielow describes both the benefits and detriments of optical storage (as well as microfilm and magnetic storage). Scanning and storage on to an optical disk, in Stielow's opinion (1992:339), outweigh use of magnetic tapes or disks. However, WORM disks and the drives capable of writing on these disks are still costly. Similarly, the standards by which the various repositories preserve their material are not consistent as electronic preservation is still in a transitional state where products are constantly being up-dated or completely superseded by new models and modes.

The Scanning Process

The scanning of three of our chapbooks was done from microfiche copies of the original texts housed in the Bodleian Library; *Mayse fun Shloyme hameylekh* was done from a photocopy of the original text. While

this tertiary copying increases the loss of resolution, clarity and/or readability caused by the second copying (the microfilming), the final outcome would be little different than had it been scanned from the original.

The documents were scanned on a UMax DPI-flatbed scanner (model UTA 11), since a hand held scanner would not have been able to process as much information in one pass as does the flatbed. The scanning program incorporated in the scanner is *Umax Magicscan* (V 2.1). In a compromise between clarity of reproduction and available storage, the texts were scanned on grey scan mode (as opposed to scanning for colour pictures/photographs or linear graphs/drawings). The resolution used was 400 dpi with the sharpening filters activated in order to sharpen the edges and reduce the blurring of the copies.

Once scanned, the files were saved on an Apple PowerMac 8100/800 computer as either PICT or GIFF files, with *Adobe Photoshop* (V 3.0 for PowerMac). There the images can be sharpened, darkened, lightened or the resolution enhanced in any way necessary to ensure that the reproduction was clear and readable, keeping it as close to the 'original' copy as possible. The texts were later transferred to a WORM compact disc, whose storage capacity is 650 megabytes.

Once stored on a compact disc, the texts can be imported to be read into almost any program, including the very basic *SimpleText* available on the recent Macintosh/Apple computers using System 7.1.3 and above. While this

program does not allow for the manipulation of the images, a simple graphics program which does allow for changes in resolution, clarity and colours, as well as cropping, cutting and pasting will allow the researcher to 'paste' missing characters in the text. It should be noted that Apple computers were used in this case simply because the researcher is familiar with their products, and Apple products are supported by the lab (Higher End Learning Lab of the College of Arts and Sciences, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, USA) in which they were scanned.

Each tale is presented in its entirety as scanned. The first page is presented twice: once in its scanned, but unenhanced form; the second is after the text has been cleaned up. Due to the yellowing of the original paper, extraneous marks and discolouration were present on the microfilmed copy, and thus on the scanned copy. Using a simple graphics program, these extraneous marks are removed.

מעשה פון אריך בלה

עש ווער מיין רייכר אמן פק"ק לונדין מין מגילאנר •
דער המט גיהאט מיין בת יחידה רחל גינאנט
איר גלייכן מון סונהייט וואר ניט צו גיפינדן מין רר וועלט •
וון ואר מוך קלוג מוג פר חעגנדיג מוג רייך ועד פון בעלט:
מיך פאטר וועלט וון בעדן לעגסט צו מיין כלחשון אחלין •
אבר וון טאג מוו מן היה בחוריק נייאריט ספאטן מוג לופלין:
מוך מיין מידרן וואטט וון חיין חסרון צו וואנן בחלר •
וון בליב וון וון זיין ביו וון וואר חיבר לוואנליג יאר סון אלט :
איר פאטר ספרואך מיך ווין ניט גענגר וואריטן עס מיו ניין :
מיך ווין רייך פר קנסן עס אמן דיר וון ליב מרי ניין •
ועד פאטר גידאכט וון מיך ווין וון פר קנסן פון וויטן •
וון ווערט וון קיין חסרון מוך דען וועלבידן קענן ביריטן •
מוך וון וון חיר חתן גאר נים וועהן מוג גאר ניט קענין •
בין לואן החתונה דא וון ער ערשט יהתער קוון צו דענין :
איר פאטר ווער דער רייכר רבי חלינר צו לונדן גינאנט •
ער פר קנסת זיין טאכטר איט מיין בחור מוו וועלט לאנר •
ועד פאטר ספרואך אול טוב דוא חלר ליפאטר טאכטר איין •
דיין חתן מיו מוו וועלט לאנר מיין קלוגר בחור יונג מוג פיין :
דיא טאכטר מברואך דאס ווער איר יוא מיין גרוסי סאנר •
וו מיך וועלט נעאן מיינן דער איר נאך ניט מיודעלט בקאנט :
מיך אוו מיך יוא ערשט וועהן אוב ער חיו סין מוג מו קלוג :
מוג אוב ער המט מן זיך מלראעות טובות מוג בעלט גיטוג :
דער פאטר ספרואך מיך ווייס ער מיו דיינר וואל וועדט •
אלוועדט קוון בואן החתונה פר מיו דער דיר מיו ביספרט :

אבר

מעשה פון אייך בלה

עש וואר מיין רייכר אמן פק"ק לונדין מין מגילאנר •
דער המט גיהאט מיין בת יחידה רחל גינאנט
מיט גלייכן מון סונהייט וואר ניט צו גיפינדן מין רר וועלט •
וויא ואר מויך קלוג מוג מר חעגריג מוכ רייך ויער פון בעלט:
מיך פאמר וואלט ויא בערן לענגסט צו מיין כלחשון אחלין •
אבר ויא טאט מויא מן היא בחוריק נייאריט ספאטן מוכ לונלין:
מויך מיין מידרן וואמט ויא מיין חסרון צו אמן בחלר •
וא כליב ויא ויל ויא וואר מיבר לוואנליג יאר פון אלט :
איר פאמר ספראך מיך ואל ניט לענגר וויארטן עס מיז לייט •
מיך ואל דיך מר קנסן עס אמן דיר ויין ליב מרי דיר •
ויער פאטר גידאכט ויך מיך ואל ויא מר קנסן פון וויטן •
וא ווערט ויא קיין חסרון מויך רצן ויעלבינן קענן בידויטן •
מול ויא ואל מיר חתן גאר ניט ויבן מוכ גאר ניט קענין •
בין לואן החתונה דא ואל ער ערשט יהאער קואן צו רעניין :
איר פאטר וואר דער רייכר רבי חליעזר צו לונדן גינאנט •
מר מר קנסת ויין טאכטר איט מיין בחור מוא וועלט לאנר •
דער פאטר ספראך אולטוב דא חליר ליבשטר טאכטר איין •
ריין חתן איז אוא וועלט לאנר מיין קלוגר בחור יונג מוג מיין :
דיא טאכטר ספראך ריאס ווער איר יוא מיין גרוסי סאנר •
דו מיך ואלט נעאן מיינן דער איר נאך ניט איז רעכט בקאנט :
מיך אוא מיא יוא ערשט ואהן אוב מר איז מין מוג מיא קלוג :
מוג אוב מר המט מן זיך מלי אלות טובות מוג בעלט גיטוג :
דער פאטר ספראך מיך ויא איז דיינר ואול ווערט •
מר ווערט קואן בואן החתונה מר איז דער דיר איז ביסערט :

נעש וואר איין רייכֿר מאן בק"ק לונדין אין ענגילאנד .
דער האט גיהאט איין בתּ יחידה רחל גינאנט [:]
אירש גלייכן און שונהייט וואר ניט צו גיפֿינדן אין דר וועלט .
דיא וואר אויך קלוג אוכ, פֿר שטענדיג אוכ, רייך זער פֿון גועלט :
איר פֿאטר וואלט דיא גערן לענגשט צו איין כלה שון מאכֿן .
אבר דיא טעט אויז אל דיא בחורים נייארט שפאטן אוכ, לאכֿן :
אויף איין אידרן וואושט זיא איין חסרון צו זאגן גאר באלד .
דא בליב דיא זיצן ביז זיא וואר איבר צוואנציג יאר שון אלט :
איר פֿאטר שפראך איך וויל ניט לענגר ווארטן עש איז צייט .
איך וויל דיך פֿר קנסן עש מאג דיר זיין ליב אדר לייד .
דער פֿאטר גידאכט זיך איך וויל זיא פֿר קנסן פֿון וויטן .
זוא ווערט זיא קיין חסרון אויף דען זעלביגן קענן ביידייטן .
אוכ, זיא זאל איר חתּן גאר ניט זעהן אוכ, גאר ניט קענין .
ביז לזמן החתּונה דא זאל ער ערשט אהער קומן צו רענין :
איר פֿאטר וואר דער רייכֿר רבי אליעזר צו לונדן גינאנט .
ער פֿר קנסת זיין טאכֿטר מיט איין בחור אויז וועלש לאנד .
דער פֿאטר שפראך מזל טובֿ דוא אליר ליבשטי טאכֿטר מיין .
דיין חתּן איז אויז וועלש לאנד איין קלוגר בחור יונג אוכ, פֿיין :
דיא טאכֿטר שפראך דאש וער מיר יוא איין גרושי שאנד .
דז איך זעלט נעמן אייכן דער מיר נאך ניט איז רעכֿט בקאנט :
איך מוז אים יוא ערשט זעהן אוב ער איז שין אוכ, איז קלוג :
אוכ, אוב ער האט אן זיך אלי מעלותּ טובֿותּ אוכ, גועלט גינוג :
דער פֿאטר שפראך איך ווייש ער איז דייכר וואול ווערט .
ער ווערט קומן בזמן החתּונה ער איז דער דיר איז בישערט :

אבר

(ב1)

אבר דיא שיני רחל דיא גידאכט זיך אין אירם שטאלצן זין [.]
וועו איז שינר אונ׳ רייכר אונ׳ קלוגיר אלז וויא איך בין [:]
וועו איך ניט ביקום איין מאן דער מיינם שינן לייב איז וועו [.]
זוא ווייל איך ליבר בלייבן איבינ פר זיצן אונ׳ בישווערט [:]
אונ׳ עש וואר נאך עטליכן חדשים אונ׳ נאך עטליכן וואוכן [.]
דער פאטר שפראך צו איר טוא מיר גוטי פיש קאכן [:]
דיא גינג אויף דען פיש מארק פיש איין צו קויפן גאר באלד [.]
אונ׳ דיא גינג גיצירט מיט אייטל אבנים טובות אונ׳ מיט גאל[ד [:]
דער פיש מארק צו לונדן איז בייא דעם וואשיר אדר מער [.]
דארט ברענגט מן אויך דיא שיפן מעבר לים פיל פיש אהע[ר [:]
דיא כלה ליף גאר גישווינד אין איין זולכיש פישר שיף אריין [.]
אונ׳ דיא וואלט דיא בעשטי פיש קויפן וועו דיא שון טייאר ז[יין [:]
דער פישר זאך אן דיא שיני מיד גאר עבן זוא שין גיצירט [.]
גישמוקט מיט קליידר מיט גאלד אונ׳ מיט פערלן גיבראטיר[ט [:]
דער פישר גידאכט זיך העט איך דייני שיני גילדני קיטין [.]
זוא וועו איך ארמיר פישר דער ליזט אויז אלין מיינן ניטן [:]
דער פישר זאך עש וואר זונשט קיין מענש מער אין דען שי[פ .]
נייארט ער אונ׳ דיא כלה גאר באלד ער דיא רודיר ביגריפ [:]
אונ׳ פור מיט דען שיף פון לנד גאר ווייט אויף דאש ים אוועק [.]
דיא כלה שרייאט גאר זער אונ׳ וואר אין אנגשט אונ׳ שרעק [:]
דער פישר שפראך דייני קליידר אונ׳ גישמוק מושטו מיר געב[ן .]
דער נאך וויל איך דיך דאך גלייך וואול ניט לאזן בלייבן לעבן [:]
דען קומשטו ווידר אן דאש לאנד זוא וועו ערשטו אויז זאגן [.]
וואש זיך צוויישן אונז דען הייכטיגן טאג האט צו גיטראגן [:]
דער נאך ליז מיך דער מלך צו לונדין קעפפין אדר הענקין [.]
דרום וויל איך דיין שינן לייב אלהיר אין דאש ים פר זענקין [:]
דיא שיני כלה דיא שרייאט אונ׳ ווייכט גאר ביטרליך צו גאט [.]
אונ׳ דיא פיל דען פישר צו פוס אונ׳ דיא באט אים אום גנאד [:]
דער פישר לאך איר אויז איר שין אונ׳ קעשטליך קלייד [.]

דיא

זיא הילט אונ׳ שרייאט אונ׳ ווינט דיא אליר שינשטי מיד :
זיא שפראך אך ליבר פֿישר שענק מיר דאך מיין יונגיש לעבן .
אל מיין קליידר אונ׳ פערלין אונ׳ גאלד וויל איך דיר גערן גענן :
דער פֿישר שפראך עש איז דאך אלש מיין וואז דוא האשט אן .
וואז ווילשטו מיר דען גענן וון איך עז זעלברט נעמן קאן :
אין דעם ווייל זיא אזו מיט אנכדר טעטן שרייאן מיט וואַרטן .
דא קאם איין אנדר שיף צו פֿארין גישוויכד פֿון דארטן .
דא טעט דיא ארמי כלה דיא לייט אויף יענם שיף דער זעהן .
דא הוב זיא אן צו שרייאן אום הילף אך איז מיר גישעהן :
דיא לייט אויף יענם שיף דיא וואַרן אייטל גזלנים אל צו גלייך :
זיא טעטן גזלן אויף דען ים וועם זיא גיפֿינדן ארם אונ׳ רייך :
זיא הערטין דאש געשרייא פֿון דיזר ארמין כלה גאר באלד .
אונ׳ זיא קאמן צו פֿארן אונ׳ שריאן צו דען פֿישר שטיל האלט :
זיא פֿינגן דען פֿישר אונ׳ דיא כלה אונ׳ נאמן זיא אין איר שיף .
אונ׳ דיא כלה מוזט פֿר צילן דאש מעשה וויא עש זיך ביליף :
דא טעטן דיא גזלנים דען פֿישר בינדן גאר פֿעשט אונ׳ שטרק .
אונ׳ שפראכן צו דער כלה פֿאר דען פֿישר האב דו ניט זארג :
פֿר וואר ער ווערט אונז נוא גאר ניט מער קענן אנטלויפֿן .
מיר וועלן אין ברענגן אין טירקייא אונ׳ דארטן פֿאר קויפֿן :
דא וואַרן צווייא ראשים איבר דיא גזלנים אין דען זעלבן שיף .
דיא שפראכן אונ׳ איין אידר פֿון זיא נאך דער כלה גריף :
דער אייגר שפראך איך וויל מיר זיא נעמן צו אייגם ווייב .
אונ׳ דוא נעם דיר אליש וואש זיא האט אן אירן שינן לייב :
אבר דר אנדרי ראש שפראך נעם דיר אליש וואז זיא האט אן .
אונ׳ גיב מיר נייארט איר בלושן לייב איך וויל זיין איר מאן :
דיא צווייא הערן קונטן אונטר אנכדר גאר ניט מושווה ווערדן .
ביז אייגר פֿון זיא שלוג דען אנדרן דר נידר צו דער ערדן :
דער שפרונג באלד ווידר אויף אונ׳ גריף נאך זיינם שווערט .
דאש גיפֿעכט צווישן זיא האט איין גנצי שטונד לנג גיווערט :
דיא

(2ב)

דיא ארמי כלה זיפֿצט אונ׳ גידאכֿט זיך אין אירם זין [.]
ליבר גאט וואש וער איך האבן פֿאר אייגם גיווין [:]
ערשט האב איך ניט גוואלט האבן איין חשובֿ בחור צום מאן [.]
אונ׳ איצונט וויל מיך אייגר פֿון די צווייא גזלנים מיט גוואלט ה[אן :]
אלמעכֿטיגר גאט העלף מיר אויז אירי און דר ברמיגי הענ[ט :]
ביהיט מיך פֿאר זינד אונ׳ שאנד דיין מלאך מיר צו הילף זענ[ד :]
דיא גזלנים האבן אזוא לאנג מיט אנגדר דז גפֿעכֿט אן גטרי[בן .]
ביז זיא ביידי זיין נידר גיפֿאלן אונ׳ זיין ביידי טויט גבליבן :
דא דיא אנדרי גזלנים אלי אין דען שיף האבן אליש צו גידעה[ן .]
וואש אירי הערן איז איבר דיזי מיד ווידר פֿארן אונ׳ גשע[הן :]
דא שפראכֿן זיא צו איר דוא פֿר פֿלוכֿטי הור אונ׳ מיד [.]
איבר דיך האבן זיך דער שלאגין אונזרי הערן אלי ביד [:]
איצונדרט מושטו אויך שטערבן פֿון אונזרן הענדן גאר בלד [.]
דוא ווערשט ניט לאנג מער לעבן אונ׳ ווערשט ניט ווערן א[לט :]
דיא ארמי כלה הוב ווידר אן צו ווינן אונ׳ צו שרייאן צו גאט [.]
זיא שפראך אלמעכֿטיגר גאט העלף מיר דאך אויז דיזר נוי[ט :]
דא ווארן אין דען שיף פֿון דיא גזלנים זעקש אונ׳ אכֿציג מא[ן :]
דא הוב דער עלצטי אונטר זיא צו דיא אנדרי צו רידן אן [.]
איר ליבן בריידר וועו מיר דיא זאך גאנץ רעכֿט וועלן בדענ[קן :]
זוא זעלטן מיר יוא ביליך דיזר ארמן מיד איר לעבן שענק[ן .]
דען מיר האבן זיא יוא דער ליצט אויז דש פֿישר זייגר הא[נט .]
אונ׳ זעלטן מיר זיא איצט ערשט ממית זיין דאש ווער איין ש[אנד :]
אבר מיר האבן הייגט פֿר לארן אונזרי ביידי הערן ווער[ט .]
גלייך אז וויא איר זיא זיכֿט ליגן טויטרהייט אויף דער ער[ד :]
דארום מוזן מיר ווידר אייגם אויז אונז אויז דער ווילן [:]
דער זעלביגר זאל הערשן אונ׳ גיווועלטיגן איבר אלי זייני גז[ילן :]
דאש ווארן זיא אלי צו פֿרידן אבר זיא קונטן ניט ווערן איין [:]
איין איטליכֿר וואלט גערן איין ראש אונ׳ הער איבר אלי זיין [:]
דא שפראך דער עלצטי גזלן ווידר זיא אלי צו הויף .

עש

(3א)

עש איז ניט בעשיר אז דאש מיר אלי וועלפֿן גורל דרויף :
אויף וועלכֿים אונטר אונש דאש גורל וועלט טון גיפֿאלין .
דער זאל זיין איין ראש אונ׳ הער איבר דיא אנדרן אלין :
אונ׳ דער זאל אויך נעמן דיזי שיני מיד צו אייכם ווייב :
אדר זאל האבן מאכֿט צו טון וואז ער ווייל מיט אירן לייב :
דא וואלן דיא גזלכים אלי צו פֿרידן צו דיזם גוטן ראט .
אבר דיא ארמי כלה וואר ווידר ביטריבט אונ׳ זיך גידאכֿט הוט [:]
ליבר גאט וואש וועלט אויז מיר וועלדן אונ׳ וויא וועלט עז זיין [.]
אויז אייגר צרה קום איך ווידר אין דיא אנדרי צרה אריין :
דיא גזלכים זעצטן זיך אונ׳ פֿיכגן אן דאש גורל צו וועלפֿין .
אבר איין גרושר שטורם וויכד ביגונט זיך צו שעלפֿין :
דאש ים האט אן גיהובן דאש שיף צו וועלפֿן הין אונ׳ הער .
אלי אויגן בליק וואלט דש שיף אונטר גין אין דש טיפֿי מער :
דיא גזלכים דיא ליזן איר גורל וועלפֿין בלייבן גאר באלד .
איין אידיר ליף זיך מציל צו זיין אונ׳ העט זיין לעבן האלד :
דיא ארמי כלה הוב ווידר אן צו ווייכן אונ׳ צו שרייאן זער .
אלמעכֿטיגר גאט ביהיט מיך דאך פֿון דען שטורם אין מער :
אבר אי איך חס ושלום פֿון דיא גזלכים זאל קומן צו און ערין .
אונ׳ אי איך זאלט חס ושלום פֿון זיא מטומא וועלן .
זוא לאז מיך ליברשט אין דיא וואשיר שטרבן אונ׳ פֿר טרינקן .
אונ״ לאז מיין רייכן גוף ליברשט אין דיא וואשיר פֿר זינקין :
דער שטורם וויכט וואר אבר נאך אימר שטערקר אלש פֿאר .
ביז דאש שיף אין טוויזכט שטיקליך גאנץ צו בראכֿן וואר .
איין אידיר הילט זיך אן איין שטיק ברעט אדר שטיק האלץ .
דאש טעט אויך דיא ביטריבטי כלה דיא וואר ניט מער שטאלץ [:]
דיא הילט זיך אויך אן גאר פֿעשט אן איין גרוש פרעט .
אונ׳ דיא וויכט ביטרליך אונ׳ טעט צו גאט תפֿילה אונ׳ גיבעט :
אבר דעם שטורם וויכד שלוג דיא גזלכים אין וואשר צו גרונד .
עש בליב קייגר פֿון זיא לעבן אין אייגר הלבן פֿירטל שטונד :

דאך

דאך דיא ארמי כלה האט גאט דער האלטין בייא דען לעבן .
אונ׳ זיא טעט זעקש שטונד לנג אויך דען ים ארום שוועבין :
אונ׳ זיא טעט איר חיות אויך איין ברעט אונ׳ האלץ דר אלטין :
דען עש ווער איר אויף גיליגט פון גאט דז זיא זאל זיך הלטין .
אונ׳ לסוף האט זיא דאש ים אויז גיווארפן אן דאש לאנד :
אבר דיא זעלביגי מדינה ווער איר גאר ניט ביקאנט :
דאך דאנקיט זיא גאט דז ער זיא הוט דר ליזט פון טוט אונ׳ שנד [.]
אונ׳ דאש ער זיא האט ווידר גיבראכט אירגנץ אן איין לאנד :
אונ׳ זיא הענקט אויף אירי נאשי קלידר דז זיא טרוקין ווערדן .
אונ׳ זיא זעצט זיך דער ווייל דער בייא נידר אויף דיא ערדן .
דא האט זיא ווידר נייאי זארגן ביקומן וואש ווער איך טאן :
וואש ווער איך ארים אונ׳ ביטריבט מענש ווייטר היבן אן .
זיא זאך זיך הרום איבר אל אונ׳ וואושט ניט וואו זיא ווער .
זיא זאך נירגנץ קיין הויז אלז נייארט ווישטנייא אונ׳ דאש מער :
אין דעם וויא זיא אזוא אין זארגן איז גידעשין אויף דען זאנד .
דא האט דאש עם אויך אויז גיווארפן דיא גזלנים אן דש לאנד :
דיא ווארן אבר אלי טויט דא גידאכט זיא זיך אין אירן זין .
איך בין איין נקיבה אונ׳ קום נירגנץ פארט וואו איך בין :
זיא צוך אייכם גזלן דיא קליידר אויז אונ׳ טעט זיך זיא אן .
דער זיא האט גידעהן האט גימיינט זיא איז איין רעכטר מאן .
זיא נאם אויך איין שווערט פון איין גזלן אונ׳ הינג זיך עש אן .
אונ׳ גינג פארט דורך דיא ווישטנייא איין הויז צו זוכן טאן :
אונ׳ זיא וואלט נייארט גערן אירגנץ בייא איין בן אדם קומן .
דען וואז זיא אין עולם ווער דאש העט זיא זער גערן פר נומן :
נוא ווען מיר דיא ביטריבטי כלה איין ווייל לאזן ארום גין .
דען זי ווער זיבן יאר אין דר ווישטנייא וויא ווייטר ווערט שטין [.]
אונ׳ מיר ווען זעהן וואו איר פאטר אונ׳ איר חתן איז גבליבן :
דען איר פאטר האט גרוש צער אום זיין בת יחידה פר טריבן [.]
דער

דער חתן איז אויך אן גיקומן אונ׳ וואלט חתונה מאכין .
אבר דער מחותן וואושט קיין עצה צו גיבן צו די זאכ[ן :]
דען דיא כלה וואר פֿר לארן מן וואושט ניט וואו זיא ווער [.]
מן ליז זיא איבר אל זוכין אין אלי לענדר אונ׳ אויף דען מער [:]
אונ׳ דער חתן וואלט דען שידוך שון גאר לאזן אב גין .
אבר דער מחותן וואלט עש גאנץ אונ׳ גאר ניט לאזן גישען [:]
ער שפראך צו דען חתן וואלט זיבן יאר אויף מיין אייניציג קינ[ד .]
אונ׳ וועו מן זיא אין דיא זיבן יאר נירגנץ ניט ווידר גיפֿינט [:]
זוא מאגשטו איין אנדרי כלה נעמן אונ׳ וועו איך ווער שטרבן [.]
זוא זאלשטו ווייל דו זיבן יאר וואלטשט מיין האב אונ׳ גוט ערבן [:]
דער חתן וואר דר מיט צו פֿרידן אונ׳ ער ביגאב זיך צו רוא [.]
אבר דיא ביטריבטי כלה האט אין דר וואשטנייא קיין רוא [:]
זיא גינג דען גאנצן טאג אונ׳ קונט קיין הויז נירגנץ גיפֿינדן [.]
זיא ווינט גאר ביטרליך וויא גישריאן איבר מיני גרושי זינ[ד :]
זיא וואר שון מיד פֿון גין זיא זעצט זיך איין ווינג נידר .
אונ׳ זיא רואט זיך אויז אונ׳ שטונד אויף דער נאך ווידר :
זיא גינג ווידר ווייטר זיא קאם אין איין גרושן גידאכטן וואלד [.]
דארטן גיפֿאנד זיא אליר האנד פירות אונ׳ איין ברונין קאלט [:]
[ד]אש וואשיר אויז דען ברונין שמעקט איר אז דר בעשטי ווין [.]
[ז]יא ליגט זיך פֿר מידיקייט נידר אונ׳ שליף בייא דען ברונן איין :
[ז]יא שליף דיא גאנצי נאכט אונ׳ דא עש ביגינט צו טאגין גאר .
[דא] קאם איין גרושיר אף צו גין דער האט שניא ווישי האר .
[ד]ער אף דער וואלט טרינקן אונ׳ זאך דיא כלה דארטן אן .
[ג]אר באלד ער שפרינגט אונ׳ ליף אונ׳ פֿאסט דיא כלה אן :
[ע]ר שלעפט זיא מיט גיוואלט זיא שרייאט מושט מיט אים גין .
[ע]ר בראכט זי אין זיין היל אבר ער טעט איר קיין ביז ניט מין :
[ע]ר בראכט איר דיא בעשטי פירות צו עשין אלי טאג .
[זי]א וואר ביטריבט דאך צו לעצט טעט זיא פֿר געסן איר פלאג :
אלי

(ב4)

אלי טאג וועז דר אף גינג פֿון איר אוועק זוא גינג זיא אויך בלד .
בייא דען ים אום צו זעהן אוב ניט איין שיף קומין וואלט :
אבר דער אף קאם באלד ווידר אונ׳ ער בליב ניט לאנג אויז .
ער זוכֿט אונ׳ גיפֿאנד זיא בלד אונ׳ שלעפט זיא ווידר נאך הויז :
דאש וואר ביז אין דאש זיבנטי יאר דא גינג זיא אלי טאג .
בייא דען ים ביז זיא איין מאל איין שיף אן קומין זיך :
דש שיף וואר אויז ענגילאנד זיא נאמן זיא אין דאש שיף אריין .
דער אף דער קומט צו לויפֿן ער וואלט אויך גערן בייא איר זיין .
אבר זיא פֿארט בלד פֿון לנד דר אף קונט זיא ניט דער רייכֿין .
פֿאר גרושין צער טעט זיך דער אף אין דען ים פֿר זייפין [:]
דאש שיף דאש קאם גאר באלד צו לונדין אין ענגילאנד אן .
איר פֿאטר קאם גאר באלד אונ׳ גאב דען שיפֿר זייגן לון :
דער פֿאטר נאם זיין טאכֿטר אונ׳ האט זיא נייא גיקלייט .
אין זילבר אונ׳ אין גאלד אונ׳ אין אייטל שאמיט אונ׳ אין זייד :
דער חתֿן קאם אויך אן זיא האטן מיט אנגדר גרושי פֿרייד .
זיא מכֿטן באלד חתֿונה אונ׳ ברייאטן אין דער קהילה אלי לייט :
אונ׳ נוא אל איר כלות אונ׳ איר בתֿולות ישראל אלי צו גלייך :
נעמט אייך איין בייא שפיל דראן איר מענט זיין ארם אדר רייך
איר זאלט אייערי חתֿנים ניט פֿר אכֿטן אלי בחורים זיין גוט [.]
אונ׳ איר זאלט קיינם פֿר אכֿטן אונ׳ טראגט קיין שטאלצן מוט [:]
אלי יודישי קינדר איז אייגר ניט בעשר אז דר אנדר פֿר וואר [.]
אופֿט איז מאנכֿר איין מיוחס אונ׳ איז אן אים קיין גוט האר [:]
אופֿט איז מאנכֿר שין אדר קלוג אדר האט גאר פֿיל געלט .
אונ׳ קען זיך דאך דער נאך ניט מחייה זיין אין דער וועלט :
דיא ברכֿה פֿון גאט מאכֿט רייך ווייטר איז אליש אום זונשט .
עש העלפֿט אונז ניקש אלע אונזרי חכֿמות אונ׳ אונזרי קונשט .
השם יתֿברך זאל אונז במהרה בימינו דער ליזן אויז דען גלות
אונ׳ כל ישראל ביהיטן אונ׳ ביוואלן מכל צרות ובהלות .
אמן ואמן.

(א5)

A Bride's Tale

There once was a wealthy man in the community[1] of London, in England
Who had an only daughter named Rokhl.
The likes of her beauty could not be found in the world.
She was also clever, bright and very wealthy with money.
Her father had wanted to make her a bride long ago,
She did nothing except scoff and laugh at all the young men.
She quickly knew a fault to mention for each one.
So she remained [unmarried] until she was already over twenty years old.
Her father said, 'I will wait no longer. It is time.
I will betroth you, whether you like it or not.'
He thought to himself, 'I will betroth her [to someone] from far away,
Then she will not be able to point out a fault with that one[2].
She shall neither see nor know her groom,
Until the time of the wedding[3]; then he will come here for the first time.'
Her father was called the rich Reb Eliezer of London.
He betrothed his daughter to a young man from Italy.
The father said, 'Congratulations, my dearest daughter,
Your bridegroom is from Italy; a clever man, young and fine.'
The daughter said, 'This will truly be a great disgrace for me,
That I should take one whom I do not rightfully know yet.
I must see him first, if he is handsome and clever,
And if indeed he has all the good virtues[4] and enough money.'
The father said, 'I know he is indeed worthy of you.
He will arrive at the time of the wedding. He is your pre-destined match.[5]'

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[1]Literally, 'holy community', i.e. an established Jewish community.

[2]Literally, 'the same one.'

[3]Hebrew.

[4]Hebrew.

[5]Literally, 'the one, who is pre-destined for you.'

But the pretty Rokhl thought to herself in her pride,
'Who is prettier, wealthier or smarter than I am?
If I do not get a man who is not[6]worthy of me
I would rather remain an old maid forever.'
AND after a few months and weeks
Her father said to her 'Cook some good fish for me.'
She left for the fish market, to quickly buy a fish.
She was adorned with precious gems[7] and gold.
The fish market in London is by the water, or the sea.
Many fish are brought there on ships from across the sea.
The maiden ran quickly aboard such a fishing ship,
She would buy the best fish [even] if it were already[8] expensive.
The fisherman looked at the pretty maiden, indeed so prettily adorned,
Dressed in clothes embroidered with gold and pearls.
He thought to himself, 'Had I your beautiful attire[9]
Then I, poor fisherman, would be freed from all my worries.'
The fisherman saw that there was no one else on the ship:
Just he and the bride [to-be][10]. Quickly he grabbed the rudder,
And steered the ship far from land, out to sea.
The bride screamed a lot and was in anguish and terror.
The fisherman spoke, 'You must give your clothes and jewels to me.
And so I will, anyway, not let you live.
Because, if you return to land again you will reveal
What went on between us today.
And so the King [would] have me beheaded or hung.
Therefore I will fling your pretty body into the sea.'
The pretty bride screamed and pitifully cried to God.
She fell at the fisherman's feet, and she pleaded without grace,
The fisherman made fun of her and her beautiful, expensive clothes.

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[6]Literally, 'worth my pretty life.'

[7]Hebrew.

[8]Or, 'indeed.'

[9]From the German *kitten.*

[10]The term also refers to a woman who is betrothed but not yet married.

She whined, screamed and cried, this prettiest maiden.
She spoke, 'Dear fisherman, spare my life.
I will willingly give you all my clothes, pearls and gold.'
The fisherman said, 'What you are wearing is already mine.
What will you give me? I can take it [anyway].'
AS they argued loudly with each other,
Another ship swiftly approached them from afar.
The poor bride saw the people on the other ship.
She began to scream, 'Help has come for me!'
The people on that ship were nothing but pirates one by one.
They steal at sea when they find poor and wealthy.
They soon heard the cry from this poor maiden,
And they came and yelled to the fisherman, 'Stop! Halt!'
They captured the fisherman and the bride and took them aboard her [sic] ship.
The bride had to tell the story, as it happened to her.
Then the pirates bound the fisherman fast and secure.
They said to the bride, 'Do not worry about the fisherman.
'Indeed, he is no longer able to run from us.
We will bring him to Turkey and sell [him] there.'
There were two captains over the pirates on the same ship
They spoke, and each one of them reached for the bride.
The one said, 'I will take her as my wife
And you can have all she is wearing on her pretty body.'
But the other captain said, 'You take all that she is wearing,
And give me just her naked body; I will be her man.'
The two captains could not settle this with each other,
Until one of them hit the other down to the ground.
The other quickly sprung back up and grabbed his sword.
The sword fight between them lasted an entire hour.

THE poor bride sighed and thought to herself,
'Dear God. Could I have fared any worse?
First, I did not want to have a respected young man for a husband,
And now one of the two pirates will take me by force.
God Almighty, Save me from their merciless hands,
Keep me from sin and shame. Send your angel to help me.'
The pirates continued the duel with each other for a very long time.
Until they both had fallen and both were dead.
All the other pirates on the ship saw everything
That happened to their captains because of this girl.
They said to her, 'You accursed whore and maid,
Over you both our captains killed each other.
Now you too must soon die by our hands.
You will not live much longer, nor will you grow old.'
The poor bride began to weep again and cry to God.
She said, 'Almighty God, help me out of this trouble.'
There were eighty-six men on the pirate ship,
The eldest of them began to speak to the others,
'Dear brothers, if we consider this affair properly
Then it is better if we spare this young maiden's life.
Since we have indeed rescued her from the fisherman's hands,
Should we now kill her first, it would be a great pity.
But today we lost both our captains
Just like we, she sees [them] lying dead on the ground
Therefore we must again choose one of us
Who shall rule and reign over all his companions.'
This pleased all of them but they could not agree
Each one would gladly be the captain and rule over all
So the eldest pirate spoke again to all of them,

'Is it not better that we should cast lots
The one of us on whom the lot falls
Shall be a lord and captain over all the others.
He shall also take this pretty girl as a wife
Or have the power to do whatever he wills with her body.'
The pirates were all happy with this good advice,
But the poor bride again became despondent and thought to herself,
'Dear God what will become of me and how will this be?
I go from one problem to another.'
THE pirates sat and began to cast lots
But a big storm wind began to blow.
The sea began to throw the ship to and fro.
In the blink of an eye the ship could go down in the deep sea.
The pirates quickly abandoned casting their lots
Each one leapt to save himself and spare his life
The poor bride began again to cry and scream a lot
'Almighty God, save me from the storm at sea.
But if I — heaven forbid — come to dishonour at the hands of the pirates,
And if I should — heaven forbid — be defiled by them,
Then leave me rather in the water to drown and to die
And let my pure body sink in the waters instead.'
The storm wind became even stronger than before
Until the ship broke up into a thousand little pieces.
Each person holding on[11] to a fret or a board
So did the troubled bride as well; she was no longer proud.
She also held on fast to a big fret
And she wept bitterly and prayed to[12] God.
But the storm wind beat the pirates in the water to the shore
Not a single one of them was left alive within a half, [or] a quarter of an hour.

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[11]Literally, 'wrapping, covering himself.'

[12]Literally, 'prayers and requests.'

The poor bride entrusted God with her life,
And she floated around in the sea for six long hours.
She supported her life[13] on one fret and wood.
Then it was decreed by God that she should be saved,
And finally she was thrown from the sea unto the land.
But this same country was unknown to her.
So she thanked God that He saved her from death and shame
And that He had once again brought her somewhere on dry land.
She hung up her wet clothes so they would dry,
In the meantime she sat down on the ground.
Thus, she began to worry again[14] 'What will I do?
How will I, a poor and grieving person, begin again?'
She looked around over all and did not know where she was
She saw no houses anywhere, nothing but desert and the sea.
While she sat on the sand deep in worry
The sea also threw the pirates onto the land
They were all dead, so she thought to herself,
'I am a female and go no further where[ever] I am.'
She stripped a pirate of his clothes and put them on.
Whoever would see her would think her a proper man.
She also took a sword from a pirate and put it on,
And went after all through the desert to look for a house.
She would gladly rather come across a human somewhere,
Than where she was in the world, to which she had very readily resolved [herself].
So, we will leave the despondent bride to wander around a while,
Until she was seven years in the wilderness, as it will be written later,
And we will see where her father and her groom remained.
Her father was very worried about his only daughter [who had been] driven away.

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[13]Hebrew.

[14]Literally 'new worries came to her.'

THE groom had also arrived and wanted to marry,
But the father-in-law had no advice to give [him] on the matter,
For the bride was lost--no one knew where she was,
They had searched for her in all the countries and at sea.
The groom wanted to give up the match already,
But the father-in-law wanted it [the marriage arrangement] a lot and would not allow it[15] to happen.
He said to the groom, 'Wait seven years for my only daughter,
And if she is not found again, anywhere, during the seven years,
Then you may take another bride and If I die
You will, since you are waiting the seven years, you will inherit all my possessions and wealth.'
The groom was pleased with this and quieted himself down[16].
But the despondent bride had no peace in the wilderness,
She went the entire day and did not found a house.
She wept bitterly, like cries over my great sins.
She was already tired from walking [so] she sat down a little while.
She rested herself, then got up again.
She went further [until] she came to a great, thick forest.
There she found all sorts of fruits and a cold well.
The water from the well tasted like the best wine to her.
She lay down from exhaustion and slept by the well.
She slept the whole night and then [when] the day broke
There came a big ape. He had snow white hair.
The ape wanted to drink and saw the bride there.
Quickly he jumped and ran and grabbed the bride.
He forcefully dragged her. She screamed [but] she had to follow him.
He brought her to his cave but he did her no harm[17].
He brought her the best of every kind of fruit to eat every day.
She was extremely despondent, but at least she [could] forgot her affliction.

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[15]i.e. the dissolution.

[16]Literally, 'gave himself peace.'

[17]Literally, 'no kind of evil.'

Every day when the ape went away from her, she quickly went out
To the sea to see if a ship would not come.
But the ape returned soon and did not stay out long.
He searched and found her quickly and dragged her back home.
That was until in the seventh year; thus she went out every day,
To the sea, until she saw one time a ship arrive.
The ship was from England. They took her onto the ship.
The ape came running, he would gladly be by her [side],
But she went quickly from the shore; the ape could not catch her.
In great sorrow, the ape threw himself into the sea.
The ship came quickly to London in England.
Her father took his daughter and had her dressed anew
In silver and in gold and in delicate velvet and in silk.
The groom arrived also. They were happy with each other.
They quickly married and everyone in the community made ready [the feast]
And so all you maidens and young women of Israel, each and every one
Take this as an example, whether poor or rich
You should not deride your bridegrooms, all young men are good
And you should not deride anyone, nor have a harsh opinion
No Jewish child is better than any other
Often a man is well-connected, but hasn't one good hair [on his head.]
Often a man is good-looking, bright or is very wealthy
But still cannot be happy being in the world
It is the blessing from God which makes one richer
All our wisdom and tricks do not help.
God, Blessed be He, will hurriedly release us from our Exile in our days
And guard and keep the Jewish people[18] safe from all sorrows and frights.
Amen and Amen.

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[18]Literally, 'All of Israel.'

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קינן

(1ב)

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לויפֿן טעט : אונ׳ אין היימליך צו מגליכה אין קיניגש גארטן ברענגן
טעט : זיגמונד שפראך גאר פֿרייינטליך צו איר אלר שינשטי מגליכה
פֿר צייאט עש מיר . דז איך צו אייך קום און פֿר שעמט . מיין הערץ
קיגן אייך אין ליב פֿר ברענט : מגליכה די שפראך וועו איך די וואר
הייט זאל זאגן : זוא טוט איך אייך רעכט ליב האבן : אונ׳ דא איך
אייך האב גידענן צו דר ערשטן שטונד דא הב איך אייך גיליבט פֿון
הערצן גרונט : זיגמונד דר נאם איין ריכג וואש אים זיין מוטר גענבן
האט : אונ׳ גאב אים מגליכה די גרוש פֿרייד דריבר האט : מגליכה
נאם דש פֿינגרל אין די הנד . אונ׳ גידאכט זיך דר אזו איין פֿינגרל
האט דער מוז אויך האבן לייט אונ׳ לנד : דען דז פֿינגרל וואר איין
גרושן שאץ ווערט . מגליכה שפראך יונגר הער הוך גיהערט : זגט
מיר דאך וואו איר זייט אהער : אונ׳ וואש מיט אייער פֿאטר אונ׳
מוטר איז דר מער : דא ענטפֿרט זיגמונד צו איר הוך גיבונדי קיגן
רייך : עש איז ביליך דז איך זאל זאגן איך בין איין זון פֿון דען קיניג
פֿון פֿרנצן לנד : דר הט אופֿט מלחמה מיט אייערן פֿאטר אין שניען
לנד : איך האב פֿר לאזן פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר אום אייך צו זעהן : אונ׳ עש
מאג מיר אויך וואש עד וויל גשעהן : ווערט עד אייער פֿאטר גוואר :
ער ליג מיך בלד טיטן פֿר וואר . דא גאב ער איר נאך איין פֿינגרליין :
דש טעט נוך טייארר אז דז ערשטי זיין : ער נאם זיין דריט פֿינגרליין
דז אים זייני מוטר שענקט . נעמט איר דש פֿינגרליין דז איר מיינר
גידענקט : דר נאך טעט זיגמונד ווידר אהיים גין : זי שרייאט אים
נאך קומט בלד ווידר איך הוב צו רידן מין : ניט לנג דר נאך קאם ער
ווידר צו איר : אונ׳ שפראך איך קאן ניט לענגר בלייבן היר : איך מוז
ציהן ווידר אין מיין לנד אהיים : אונ׳ ווייל זעהן אוב מיין פֿאטר אונ׳

מוטר נאך בייא לעבן זיין: דא די דש הערט וואר זי זער דר שראקן:
אויד אירי אויגן שיסן די טרעהרן אונ׳ לויפֿן איבר די באקן : זי שפראך
ווען איר מיך ניט נעמט מיט אייך : זוא ווער איך מוזן שטערבן גלייך :
וואו איר זייט דא וויל איך אויך זיין . אונ׳ ווייל פֿר לאזן פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר
מיין : זי טעטן זיך מיט אנדר בישיידן : וויא זי וואלטן בייא נאכֿט
הייטליך אוועק ציהן אלי ביידי : זיגמונד נאם דרייא פֿפֿערד אייניש
וואר בילאדן : מיט עשן שפייד אונ׳ וואז זיא ניטיג האטן : אויף דען
אנדרן זאס מגליכה דיא שיני מיד אויף דען דריטן זיגמונד זעלברט
רייט : זיא ריטן בייא נכֿט הייטליך דער פֿון . קיינר אין דש קיניגש
שלאש וואושט דר פֿון זי ריטן אין אייגם וולד נאהנט בייא דען מער :
וואו קיין וועג אונ׳ שטעג ניט ווער : דז מן זיא ניט קונט פֿינדן דז מן
זי ניט הערט . דר נאך שטיגן זי אב פֿון אירי פפֿערד . זי זעצטן זיך
נידר אונ׳ עשן אונ׳ טרינקן וויין . דער נאך קאם אייז שלאף איבר
מגליכה אונ׳ זי טעט שלאפֿן אייז . זיגמונד זאס בייא איר אונ׳ וואר פֿול
פֿרייידן : ער זאך אייז רוט זיידן טיכֿלה הענגן אויד דען בוזין פֿון דר
שינן מיידן : ער גידאכֿט זיך וואש מוז זיא אין דען רוט זיידן טיכֿלה
האבן דריגן : ער באגט אויף דז טיכֿל אונ׳ טעט דריגן זייני דרייא
פֿינגרליך גיפֿינן : ער וואר זי ווידר אייז בינדן אונ׳ ליגט זי אויף אייז
שטיין : אונ׳ וואר ווידר אן זעהן דיא שיני מגליכה זיין : ווייל ער אזו
וואר זעהן קאם אייז פֿוגל גיפֿלוגן אהער . דר הונגר הוט אים איבר
צוואונגן ער מיינט אייז שטיק פֿלייש עש ווער : אזו בלד נאם דר פֿוגל
דז רוט זיידן טיכֿלה אונ׳ פֿליגט דר מיט אוועק : דש דר זאך זיגמונד
אונ׳ גאר יעמרליך דר שרעקט : ער גדאכֿט אין זיין זין דז מעכֿט ניט
ווערן גוט . ווערט עש די מגליכה גיוואר זוא ווערט ביטריבט איר
מוט . ער נאם זיין מאנטל ליגט אין איר אונטר זייברליך . אונ׳ לוף
בלד צו זעהן וואו דר פֿוגל אהין פֿליך . ער וואורף אויף דען פֿוגל ער
זעלט דיא פֿינגרליך לאזן פֿאלן : דר שטעלט זיך אויף אייז פֿעלזן אן
ים פֿר הולין : ער וואורף זער דז ער דען פֿוגל טעט אוועק טרייבן
דר פֿוגל פֿליגט אוועק אונ׳ ליז די פֿינגרליך אויף דען פֿעלזן ליגן בלייבן .
זיגמונד זאך די פֿינגרליך ליגן אבר קונט פֿר וואשר ניט דר צו : ער
לוף הין אונ׳ הער אונ׳ האט קיין רוא : ביז ער זאך פֿון ווייטן אייז צו
ברוכֿן שיפֿל שטין : ער הוט אייז גרושי פֿרייד ער גידאכֿט ער דרפֿט

ניט

ניט זארגן מין : ער שטיג אין דז שיפֿל אונ׳ נאם איין שטעקן שלעפֿט:
אונ׳ וואלט צום פֿעלזן פֿארן אבר דז שיפֿל גינג ניט רעפֿט : דען עש
קאם איין וויכד אונ׳ פֿירט דש שיפֿל אין מער אנייז : דא קונט דעם
ארמן זיגמונד יוא ניט וויאר גדיין : ער וואלט יוא גערן שיפֿן דז ער
צום בארטן קומן קענט דר ווינט איבר זיין ווילן דז שיף אין ים וועגט.
ער גדאפֿט אן זיין אלר ליבשטי די ער הוט שלאפֿן לאזן אליין :
ער וואלט פֿר יאמר פֿאלן אין דש ים אנייז . ער שפֿראך עש גישיפֿט
מיר רעפֿט דיא שטראף איך בילין לייד : ווייל איך זוא זער האב
ביטריבט די אלר שינסטי מייד : אלר שינסטי מגליכה דיך זול איך נימר
זעהן . מיין פֿרייד הוט ניט לנג גיווערט וויא איז מיר גשעהן . וועד
איך ליבר גישטורבן פֿר דרייאן טאגן . אונ׳ איר וועדט נאך בייא
אייערן פֿאטר אונ׳ ניט מיט מיר גיצוגן . ער ליז דש שיפֿל פֿרייא וואו
עז הין וואלט . ער וואדטיט נאך דען טוט וועז ער קומן זאלט : דא
קאם גלייך צו פֿארן איין שיף מיט גזלכים אהער . דיא זעהן זיגמונט
אין דען קלייגן שיפֿל אויף דען מער . זי נאמן זיגמונט גיפֿאנגן אין
איר גרוש שיף אריין . זיא זעהן אים אן דז ער וואר גאר יונג אונ׳
פֿיין . זיא בראכֿטן אין קען קונשטנטינאפל אין דיא שטאט . דארטן
אים דר טירקישי קיסר פֿאר איין קנעכֿט גיקויפֿט האט . זיגמונד
גיפֿיל דעם טירקישן קיסר גאר זער . ער דאכֿט ער מוז זיין פֿון הוכֿן
לייטן הער[.] דער קיסר גיוואן זיגמונד זער ליב דז מן ניט קאן זאגן .
זיגמונט וואר שני למלך אין קורצן טאגן . זיגמונט וואר ריין גיוואלטיגר
הער אונ׳ זמלט פֿיל געלט אונ׳ גוט . דאך קענט ער ניט האבן איין
פֿרייאן מוט . זיין הערץ קונט אים ניט ווערן גריגג . דז ער גערן
ווישט וויא עז די מגליכה אויז גינג . כון וועלן מיר זיגמונט בייא דען
טירקשן קיסר לאזן בלייבן . אונ׳ מיר וועלן ווידר פֿון דער מגליכה
שרייבן . זי אנט וואכֿט אונ׳ גיפֿאנד אירן ליבשטן ניט . זי דר שראק
אונ׳ קונט ניט גין קיין טרויט . זיא הוב אן צו ווינן אונ׳ גינג דורך דען
וואלד . זיא רופֿט זיגמונד ביז זיא וואר הייזר בלד . זיא שפֿראך ליבר
זיגמונד וואדרום האט איר אייך פֿון מיר טון שיידן : אונ׳ אין ווילדן
וואלד הט איר זיצן גילאזט מיך ארמי מיידן . וואדרום הוט איר מיך
אין וואלד אזו פֿר פֿירט . אונ׳ מיך אין וואלד לאזן זיצן אז איין שאף פֿר
אירט : אך ליבר זיגמונד וואז איז אין אייער הערץ קומן אריין . דז

מיר

איר מיך אין וואלד הוט גילאזט זיצן אליין . זעלט איר דש מיט גוטן
ווילן האבן גיטאן . עז ווער פֿר וואר אין דר גנצן וועלט קיין גטרייאר
מאן . אונ׳ וויא זיא אזו זוכט אין דען וואלד הין אונ׳ הער דא גיפֿאנגד
זיא אירי דריי פּפֿערד נאהנט בייא דען מער : דא זי די פּפֿערד דר
זאך הוב זי צו ריידן אן . דו בישט ניט מיט גוטן ווילן פֿון מיר גישידן
דש איך וואול מערקן קאן : זי וואר זיך בידענקן וואו זי וואלט אהין .
צו מיין פֿאטר צו ציהן נעם איך מיר ניט אין זין . איך פֿערכט מיך
פֿאר זיין צארן דז ער מיך טיטן וועלט . איך וויל מיין אלר ליבשטן
זוכן דורך די גנצי וועלט . זי שפראך צו דען פּפֿערדן וויל איך אייערן
הערן הוב פֿר לורן אין דען וואלד . דא זאלט איר אויך לויפֿן וואו אהין
איר וואלט . דר נאך זיכט זי אזו לנג ביז זי איין גיבאנטן וועג גיפֿאנגט .
זי זעצט זיך אויף איין זייט דז מן זיא ניט זעהן קאנט . זיא אבר קונט
אליש זעהן די דא פֿארן אונ׳ רייטן . דר נאך זאך זי איין בעטלירין
קומן פֿון ווייטן . זי רופֿט זי צו זיך דז זיא בלד זול קומן צו איר . דיא
בעטלרין שפראך ליבי פֿרויא וואש וואלט איר האבן פֿון מיר : זיא
ענטפֿרט איך ויל אייך געבן די גוטי קליידר מיין . אייערי ויל איך
דרום נעמן די זער צו רישן זיין : די בעטלרין שפראך מיין גנעדיגי
פֿרויא : איר זאלט די ארמן ניט אויז שפאטן אזו . דען איר הט קליידר
די צירן אייערן לייב זער.אבר מייני מוז איך האבן צו גין בעטלן הין
אונ׳ הער. מגליכה ענטפֿרט איר מיין ליבה שוועשטר מיין . איך ציין
עש וואריך מיט דען גנצן הערצן מיין . דא די בעטלירין דש הערט
טעט זי זיך באלד אויז ציהן . מגליכה גאב איר די גוטי קליידר אונ׳ זי
וואר צו אין בעטלירין גידיאן . אונ׳ זי פֿר קליידיט זיך דרום דז מן זי
ניא קענן זעלט . דז זי בעשר זעלט קענן פֿארט קומן אין דר וועלט.
ביז זי קאם אין דז לנד וואו אהער איר זיגמונט וואר זי שטונד איין
אן איין הערבריג וואו די וועלטין איין אלמנה וואר . זי פֿרעגט איין
מאל איר וועלטין וועם דז לאנד טוט צו גיהערן . אונ׳ וואש זי האבן
פֿר איין קיניג אדר הערן . די וועלטין ענטפֿרט מיר האבן איין
קיניג איין גוטן מאן . אבר ער הוט פֿר לורן זיין אייניגן זון . דר זעלביג
היישט דר שיני זיגמונט גאר איין שטרקר העלד . אבר קיין מענש
ווייש וואו ער איז אין דר וועלט . מגליכה קונט זיך ניט לענגר אויף
הלטן אונ׳ הוב אן ביטרליך צו וויינן . אונ׳ טעט גאר יעמרליך קלאגן
אונ׳ גרייגן . מגליכה וואר זיך ביזינן

(3ב)

ביזינן וואז זי וואלט ווייטר טאן . דר ווייל זיא ניט הוט גיפֿונדן אירן
ליבן מאן . זי וואלט פֿרום ווערן אונ׳ וואלט ארמי לייט דינן . זי שפּראך
ליבי ווערטן וואו קאן איך איין שפּיטאל גיפֿנן . זי ענטפֿרט איר איין
שפּיטאל גיפֿנט איר ניט ווייט . דאַרטן בייא דען ים וואו מן ווייל אין
דר טירקייא פֿארן אויף אונ׳ נידר די לייט . מגלינה גפֿינד דש שפּיטאל
גאר זער צו בראכֿן . זי ליש עש פֿון אירן געלט אויף דאש נייאי ווידר
מאכֿן . איין מאל וואר איין פֿיש אויף דען ים גיפֿנגן . דען קויפֿט
מגלינה ווייל זי טעט נאך אים פֿר לנגן . זי פֿאנד דרינן איין רוט זיידן
טיכֿלה אין דז פֿיש זיין בויך . אונ׳ די דריי פֿינגרליך וואַרן דרינן אויך .
מגלינה דר קענט זי בלד אונ׳ הוב אן צו ווייַנן זער . אונ׳ שפּראך נון זעה
איך וואול מיין זיגמונט איז פֿר טרונקן אין דען מער . אבר מיר וועלן
די מגלינה דא לאזן בלייבן : אונ׳ מיר וועלן ווידר פֿון זיגמונד שרייבן.
דר טירקישי קיסר קונט ניקש טון זיגמונט מוזט אלצייט דר ביי זיין.
דאך גידאכֿט זיגמונט אלי צייט אן די מגלינה זיין . איין מאל וואר דר
טירקישי קיסר דען זיגמונט פֿראגן . וואַרום בישטו אלצייט טרויארג
דש זאלשטו מיר זאגן . דו הושט דאך בייא מיר קיין מאנגל אונ׳ הושט
גרוש געלט אונ׳ גוט . אונ׳ גלייך וואול האשטו קיין מאל קיין פֿריליכֿן
מוט . זיגמונד שפּראך וויא זאל איך ניט טרויאריג אויז זעהן . איך
האב מיין פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטר אין לנגי יארן ניט גיזעהן . דר קיסר
שפּראך איך ווייל דיר רשות געבן אהיים צו צייהן אין דיין לנד . וועו
דו מיר פֿר שפּרעכֿט בלד ווידר צו קומן צו הנד . זיגמונד שפּראך
דא פֿר זאלט איר זארגן ניט . דא גאב אים דר קיסר איין גוטן בריכֿ
מיט . דז מן אים איבראל זאלט ביהילפֿלך זיין וואש ער וואלט . דר נאך
נאם זיגמונד מיט זיך פֿיל זילבר אונ׳ גאלד . אונ׳ ער טעט דש זילבר אונ׳
גאלד אין פֿירצעהן פֿעסר אונ׳ טעט אובן דרויף זאלץ שיטן . אונ׳ דאש
זילבר אונ׳ גאלד דש טעט ער אין די מיטן . ער גינג אזו לנג זוכֿן אויף
די שיף בייא דען מער . ביז ער איין שיף גיפֿאנד דז פֿון זיין אייגן
לנד וועו . ער טעט זיך אויף דינגן דר שיפֿר נאם אים גערן . אונ׳ דא
דר שיפֿר דש זאלץ זאך שפּראך ער מיין ליבי הערן . פֿר קויפֿט איר
אייער זאלץ פֿאר געלט . מן גיפֿינט זאלץ גינוגן וואו איר אהין וועלט .
זיגמונט שפּראך איך האב עש (מנדר) גוועזן אין שפּיטאל :
וואש גיט עז אייך אז וועו איך אייך דר פֿיר ביצאל . דא וואר דר
שיפֿר צו פֿרידן אונ׳ פֿורן דער פֿון

פֿון . בײַ זי קאמן אין איין אײַלנד אן . דאַרטן טעטן זי איין וויניג
רואן אויף דעם לנד . דא גינג זיגמונד שפּאַציִרן פֿיל רוזין ער דאַרטן
גיפֿאנד : ער זעצט זיך דאַרטן נידער אונ׳ טעט שלאפֿן איין . דר שיפֿר
וואלט אוועק פֿארן אונ׳ וואושט ניט וואו זיגמונט טעט זיין : ער קונט
אין ניט פֿינדן ער טעט רופֿן זער . עש וואלט אים קיינר ענטפֿרן ער
וואלט ניט וואַרטן מער . ער וואר דר פֿון פֿארן אונ׳ ליִד זיגמונד
שלאפֿן דא צו מאל . אונ׳ דר שיפֿר קאם צו פֿארן צו מגלינה פֿאר בייא
איר שפּיטאל : איין איטליכֿר טעט אב לאדן אונ׳ גינג דר פֿון . אונ׳ דר
שיפֿר וואושט ניט וואז ער מיט דען זאלץ זעלט טאן . ער גינג בייא
מגלינה אונ׳ שפּראך ליבי פֿרויא איך שענק אייך דש זאלץ . דעם עש
צו גיהערט דר איז פֿר לארן גיוואַרן אדר אום גיקומן אין דען הולץ :
מגלינה וואלט איין מאל זאלץ ברויכֿן איין פֿעס זי אויף טון וואלט : דא
גיפֿאנד זי דרינן אייטל זילבר אונ׳ גאלד : זי שפּראך צו זיך זעלברט דא
טוא איך נוא זעהן : דז איך ניט אליין בין דעם פֿיל צרות זיין גשעהן .
אבר מיר וועלן ווידר פֿון זיגמונד שרייבן באלד : דא ער ווידר אנט
וואכֿט צום שיף ער לויפֿן וואלט : ער זוכֿט דש שיף אונ׳ קונט עש ניט
גפֿינן . דא קאם ער באלד גאר פֿון זינן . ער שפּראך עש איז קיין
מענש אויף ערדן דעם דש שלים מזל אזו נאך לויפֿט אז מיר . ליבר
גאט וואַרום לאשטו מיך נאך לענגר לעבן דש ביגער איך פֿון דיר .
ליבר גאט איז דש ניט גינוגן גוועזן אויף מיר איין לייד . דז איך הוב
פֿר לארן מגלינה די שיכי מייד . אונ׳ בין וואַרן גיפֿנגן אונ׳ פֿר קויפֿ[ט .]
אונ׳ איצונדרט מיר ווידר דש שלים מזל נאך לויפֿט . זיגמונט קאנ[ט]
פֿון דען לנד ניט אוועק קומן . דען עש וואר וואשר ארום אום או[ן]
אומן . ער וואר דאַרטן פֿיל וואוכֿן גיזעסן . ער הוט ניקש אלז אייט[ל]
קרייטר צו עשן . ענטליך וואר ער אזן מאגר אונ׳ מאט . דז ער נידֿ[ר]
פֿיל פֿאר שוואכֿהייט אז ווען ער ווער טוט . דא קאם עבן איין אנד[ר]
שיף פֿאר בייא צו פֿארן דארט . דיא גיפֿאנדן דען זיגמונט ליגן א[ין]
יענן ארט . זיא שפּירטן נאך איין וויניג לעבן אין אים . גאר בל[ד]
זיא ווידר דר מינטרטן אים . זי נאמן אים אין איר שיף אריין . א[וכ׳]
זי בראכֿטן אים אין דש שפּיטאל אריין : אונ׳ שפּרעכֿן צו מגלינה ל[י]בי]
פֿרויא וואלט איר האבן איין זכוֹת בייא גאט . זו נעמט דיזן מענ[ש]
אריין דען האבן מיר גיפֿונדן הלב טוט . אבר ער איז נאך זער שוא[ך]
אונ׳ מאט דער נעבן . פֿילייכֿט קענט איר אים

אים כוך דר הלטן בייא דען לעבן . זי נאם אים אין איר שפיטאל אונ׳
ליגט אים אין איין בעט . אונ׳ טעגליך זי אים פֿלייסיג אויף וואַרטן
טעט . ביז ער ווידר איין וויניג קרעפֿטן ביקומן האט . דז ער ניט
מער וואר אזו זער מאט . ער הוב שון אן צו עשן אונ׳ צו רידן ווידר .
זי זעצט זיך איין מאל בייא אים נידר . אונ׳ זי שפראך וויא אים ווער
גישעהן . דז אים דר שיפֿר אזו שוואך אונ׳ מאט טעט אים איר שפיטאל
גיכעהן . זיגמונט שפראך ליבי פֿרויא איך וויל אייך אליש זאגן . וואש
זיך מיט מיר האט צו גיטראגן . אבר איר זאלט פֿאר קיינם אנדרן
מענשן ניט בישיידן . אונ׳ קיינר זאל ווישן דר פֿון כור מיר בידן . אונ׳
זיגמונד דר צילט איר אל זיין אויז פֿארן . וויא ער זיין ליבי מגלינה הוט
פֿר לארן . אונ׳ וויא ער דר נאך איז וואַרן גיפֿאנגן . אונ׳ אליש וואש
זיך ווייטר מיט אים האט ביגאנגן . אונ׳ וויא ער הוט פֿר לארן
זיין זילבר אונ׳ גאלד . אונ׳ וויא ער אליין איז גיבליבן בייא דיא רוזן
אין דען וואלד . דא שפראך דיא פֿרויא אונ׳ וועז מגלינה נאך ווער
ביי לעבן . וואש זעלט איר דרום געבן . זיגמונט שפראך מיינש פֿאטרש
קיניגרייך וועלט איך דרום געבן . וועז זי נייארט ווער נאך בייא
לעבן . די פֿרויא שפראך איך בין מגלינה אונ׳ קענט איר מיך ניט מער .
אונ׳ זי ווייזט אים די דרייא פֿינגרליך אונ׳ דש גאלד דש נאך אין דען
זאלץ ווער . זיגמונט קונט פֿר פֿריידן ניקש זאגן איין גנצי שטונד :
דא וואר ער אזו בלד פֿריש אונ׳ גיזונד . די צייטונג קאם אין דש קינגש
שלאס גישווינד . וויא ער איז ווידר קומן דש קיניגש אייגציג קינד .
[ד]ר מלך מיט דר מלכה מיט אלי שרים פֿורן אין דאש שפיטאל .
[א]ונ׳ אנטפֿינגן זיגמונד דיא שמחה האט קיין מאש נאך קיין צאל .
[ד]יא חתונה וואר גימאכט מיט גרושן פֿריידן . מן טעט אויך
[מ]גלינה איר פֿאטר דר צו בישיידן . דיא צווייא מלכים וואורדן מיט
[א]נגדר גוטי פֿרייגד . זיגמונד אונ׳ מגלינה האבן דיא צווייא מלכים
[פֿ]ר איינט . זיגמונט אונ׳ מגלינה לעבטן מיט אנגדר אין פֿריידן
[ל]אנגי יאר . ביז אירי עלטרן שטורבן דא ירשן זי צווייא מלכות גאר
נאך פֿיל בעשר זאל אונש זיין .

ווען מיר ווערן קומן
אין ארץ ישראל
אריין .
אכי״ר

(5א)

Mageleyne's Song

THERE was a king in Spain who had a son named Zigmund. Not far from there was the French province where the king of France lived. These two kings hated each other very much, and always fought great wars against each other. The king of France had a fine daughter, the likes of her beauty could not be found in the entire world. Once Zigmund heard his servants talking [about] how the king of France had an only daughter who was the prettiest [woman] in the entire world. Mageleyne is her name, the prettiest flower in the field. Zigmund thought to himself, 'I must see this beautiful Mageleyne. I will go to her there.' He received permission[1] from his parents who cried a lot; they would not willingly allow him to go across the sea, but finally they had to let him go after all. His mother gave him three rings; they were very valuable[2], [but] she gave them to him without hesitation[3]. Finally Zigmund rode and came to Spain[!]; there in the city of Naples[!] he lodged at an inn. He asked the innkeeper 'What is new in the city? And why are there so many foreign gentlemen here?' The innkeeper said, 'Our king has a single daughter alive. He would like to be able to wed her to someone[4]. That is why a lot of great lords have come here; each one believes he will have the honour to take the beautiful Mageleyne home as his wife. Therefore, all the great lords fence and tourney against each other daily.' Then Zigmund thought, 'I will be there also, and perhaps the beautiful Mageleyne might be bestowed[5] upon me.' Zigmund also rode to the market on horseback. He knocked[6] all the lords down on the ground; no one

against

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[1]Hebrew.

[2]Literally, 'a great treasure.'

[3]Literally, 'without difficulty.'

[4]Literally, 'give her to a man.'

[5]ביטערט is here read as בישערט 'destined', 'bestowed'.

[6]Or perhaps 'pushed' in reference, presumably, to the tourney mentioned above.

could get the better of him. The king and his daughter watched all this with laughter, but Mageleyne looked at the young Zigmund lovingly and thought to herself, 'Perhaps this could be my husband. If I could only learn where he came from[7], if he came here from a royal family, and what else there is [to know] about him.' She could neither be still nor rest until she secretly asked her maid, to go to the young Zigmund and [ask] that Zigmund come secretly to her. The maid-servant ran quickly to Zigmund and secretly brought him to Mageleyne in the king's garden. Zigmund spoke lovingly to her 'Most beautiful Mageleyne, forgive me that I come to you without shame, [but] my heart is burning with love for you.' Mageleyne said, 'If I should tell the truth, I also rightly love you. From the first moment I saw you, I loved you from the bottom of my heart.' Zigmund took a ring which his mother had given him and gave it to Mageleyne with great joy. Mageleyne took the ring in her hand and thought to herself, 'He who has such a ring, must also have people and land, since the ring is so valuable.' Mageleyne spoke 'Young lord, high-born sir, tell me why you are here and what about your father and mother?' Zigmund answered her 'Highly born princess[8]? It is proper that I should say I am a son of the king of France who has often warred with your father in Spain. I have deserted my father and mother to see you, and it might also be what will happen to me if your father were to be informed. He would quickly have me put to death.' Then he gave her another ring, which was more expensive than the first one. He took his third ring that his mother gave him, 'Take this ring. This is my token.'[9] As Zigmund went to go back home[10], she cried after him 'Come back quickly. I must speak with you more.' Not long afterward, he came to her again and said, 'I cannot remain here any longer. I must travel back home to my country to see if my father

mother

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[7]Literally, 'how he is called', referring to place name

[8]Typographical error? קינגרייך. '

[9] Literally, 'that [will be] my memory' Rings were often given to women as love-tokens.

[10]At this point it presumably means to the inn, not to France.

and mother are still living.' When she heard this, she was shocked. Tears poured from her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She said, 'If you do not take me with you, I will surely die. Where you are so shall I be and shall forsake my [own] father and mother.' They agreed with each other, that they would both secretly ride away. Zigmund took three horses: one was laden with food to eat and what they needed. On the other sat Mageleyne, the pretty maiden. On the third rode Zigmund himself. They secretly rode away at night. No one in the king's castle knew of it. They rode into a forest, close to the sea where there was neither a road nor a path, so that they could not be found nor heard. After that they dismounted their horses. They sat down and ate and drank wine. Afterwards, a sleep came over Mageleyne and she fell asleep. Zigmund sat by her and was very happy. He saw a red, silk kerchief hanging out of the pretty maiden's bosom. He thought to himself, 'What does she have in the red silk kerchief?' He undid the kerchief and found his three rings in there. He tied them [into the kerchief] again, lay them on a stone and looked again at his beautiful Mageleyne. While he was looking thus, a bird flew by. Hunger overtook him [the bird and] he thought that it was a piece of meat. The bird Very quickly took the red silk kerchief and flew away with it. Zigmund saw this and was horribly shocked. He thought to himself: 'This might not be good. If Mageleyne discovers this, her courage would fail.' He took his mantel, put it carefully under her, and ran quickly to see where the bird had flown. He threw [something] at the bird [so that] he would let the rings drop, he [the bird] landed himself on a rock hidden near the sea. He threw a lot so that he would drive the bird away; the bird flew away and left the rings lying on the rock. Zigmund saw the rings lying [there] but could not [get to them] because of the water. He ran to and fro and could not rest, until he saw a broken-down little boat standing in the distance. He was overjoyed, and thought he must

not

not worry anymore. He got into the boat and took a plain stick and wanted to go to the cliff but the boat did not go properly. Then a wind arose and steered the boat into the sea. The poor man, Zigmund, indeed could not see.[11] Indeed, he would have gladly navigated so that he could come to the shore. The wind, against his wishes, blew the boat into the sea. He thought about his most beloved whom he had left sleeping alone. He wanted fall into the sea from sorrow. He said, 'The punishment is just what I deserve; I humbly accept [it] because I have so saddened the most beautiful maiden, Most beautiful Mageleyne — I shall never see you. My happiness did not last long. Woe is me! Rather had I died three days ago, then you would still be by your father and would not have come with me.' He let the ship go freely where it would. He waited for death, if it would come. Just then a pirate ship came by. They saw Zigmund[12] on the sea in the little boat. They took Zigmund captive on their [sic] big ship. They noticed that he was young and fine. They took him to the city of Constantinople where the Turkish Sultan[13] bought him as a slave. Zigmund pleased the Sultan very much, and [the Sultan] thought "He must be from a high-born, royal sire." The Sultan grew fond of Zigmund, so much so that it cannot be said, [and] Zigmund became the vice-king in a short while. Zigmund became a great lord and acquired a lot of money and possessions, but he was not able to be in good spirits. His heart would not let him become comfortable, until he knew how [things] had worked out for Mageleyne. Let us leave Zigmund with the Turkish sultan and we will write again about Mageleyne. She woke up and did not find her beloved. She was shocked and could not go a step. She began to cry and go through the forest. She called for Zigmund until she was soon hoarse. She said, 'Dear Zigmund, why have you separated yourself from me? And you left me sitting, poor maiden, in the wild woods. Why have you led me astray[14] in the forest, and left me sitting in the forest like a lost sheep? Oh dear Zigmund, what came into your heart that

you

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[11] From the French *voyeur.*

[12]At this point the Yiddish varies between זיגמונד to זיגמונט, however for continuity in the English text we will remain with Zigmund (for final de-voicing in Dutch Yiddish see Aptroot 1986).

[13]Literally, 'kaiser.'

[14]Also 'seduced'.

you left me in the woods alone. Should you have done this out of your free will, there is no reliable man in the entire world.' And as she searched here and there in the forest, she found her three horses near the sea. When she spotted the horses, she began to speak: 'You were not separated from me for a good reason, I can mark this well.' She considered where she should go: 'I cannot think about going to my father. I fear his anger; he will have me put to death. I will search the entire world for my most beloved.' She spoke to the horses, 'Since I have lost your master in the forest, you shall also run in whatever direction you wish.' Afterwards she searched for a long time until she found a well-marked path. She sat off to one side so that she could not be seen, but [so that] she could see all who travelled or rode by. Afterwards she saw a beggar woman coming from the distance. She called her to quickly come to her [Mageleyne]. The beggar spoke, 'Dear lady, what do you want of me?' She answered, 'I want to give you my good clothes; I will take yours, those which are too tattered.' The beggar woman said, 'My lady, you should not make fun of the poor this way. You have clothes that adorn your body very [nicely], but I must have mine to beg here and there.' Mageleyne answered her 'My dear sister mine, I truly mean this with all my heart.' When the beggar woman heard this, she quickly undressed. Mageleyne gave her [the beggar woman] her good clothes and she [Mageleyne] took on the appearance of a beggar woman. She dressed herself so that she would never be recognised, so that she could better travel in the world. When she came to the country from where Zigmund came, she lodged at an inn, where she proprietress was a widow. Once she asked the proprietress who ruled over the country, and what [type] of king or lord they had. The proprietress answered 'We have a king, a good man, but he has lost his only son. [He is] the same one who is called 'the handsome Zigmund' a really strong hero. But no one knows where in the world he is.' Mageleyne could no longer restrain herself, and began to bitterly cry and despondently moan and weep. Mageleyne was

considered

considered what she would do now, since she had not find her beloved husband. She wanted to become religious, and serve the poor people. She said, 'Dear proprietress, where can I find a hospital?' She answered her 'You will find a hospital not far; there by the sea where one can travel to Turkey, and below the community.'[15] Mageleyne found the hospital very dilapidated. With her own money, she had it rebuilt like new. Once a fish from the sea was found, which Mageleyne bought since she had a craving for it. She found a red silk kerchief inside its stomach, and the three rings were in there as well. Mageleyne soon recognised them and began to cry, and she said, 'I see well that my Zigmund drowned in the sea.' But we shall leave Mageleyne and write again about Zigmund. The Turkish Sultan could not do [anything without] Zigmund nearby. Zigmund thought of his Mageleyne all the time. Once the Turkish sultan asked Zigmund 'Why are you always sad. You must tell me. You lack for nothing with me, and you have a lot of money and possessions. Nevertheless, you are never in a good mood.' Zigmund said, 'How can I not appear sad; I have not seen my father and mother in many years.' The sultan spoke 'I will give you permission to travel home to your country, if you promise to quickly come back.' Zigmund said, 'You should not worry.' The sultan gave him a good letter that he should be assisted everywhere with whatever he wanted. Afterwards Zigmund took with him a lot of silver and gold, and he put the silver and gold in fourteen barrels, poured salt on top, and put the silver and gold in the middle. For a long time, he looked at the ships by the sea, until he found a ship from his own country. He hired the ship's captain to take him willingly. When the captain saw the salt he said, 'My dear lord, sell your salt for money. Salt can be found aplenty where you want [to go].' Zigmund said, 'I have promised this to a hospital. What business is it of yours since I am paying you for the transport?' The captain was satisfied with this and they travelled

from

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[15]Literally, 'people'; hospitals tended to be on the outskirts, away from the main part of the city.

from there, until they came to an island. There they rested a short while on land. Zigmund went for a walk, finding a lot of roses there. He sat down on the ground and fell asleep. The captain wanted to leave but did not know where Zigmund was. He could not find him; he called for him, but no one answered. He did not want to wait any longer. He departed and left Zigmund sleeping then. The captain was going past Mageleyne at her hospital. Every one had unloaded [their cargo] and gone from [the ship], but the captain did not know what to do with the salt. He went to Mageleyne and said, 'Dear woman, I am giving you this salt. The owner got lost or perished in the woods.' Once Mageleyne broke a [block of] salt to make a feast. Inside she found some silver and gold. She said, to herself: 'I can certainly see that I am not the only one who has had a lot of troubles.' But we will quickly write again about Zigmund. He woke up again and wanted to run to the ship. He searched for the ship but could not find it. He soon went out of his mind[16]. He said, 'The is no person on this earth who has such bad luck as I[17]. Dear God, why do you allow me to continue living, this I want from you. Dear God, has it not been enough to load upon me: I lost Mageleyne, the beautiful maiden, and I was captured and sold, and now again misfortune is running after me.' Zigmund could not get off the land, since there was water around him on all sides. He sat there for many weeks. He had nothing to eat but some cabbage. Eventually he became so thin and weak that he fell to the ground from weakness, as if he were dead. Just then another ship travelled past. They found Zigmund lying on that spot. They detected a little bit of life left in him. They quickly treated him. They took him on their ship and brought him into the hospital and spoke to Mageleyne: 'Dear woman, if you want to have merits with God, take this man in, whom we have found half dead. But he is still weak and feeble besides. Perhaps you can

him

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[16]Or lost consciousness.

[17]Literally, 'after whom bad luck runs like me.'

still sustain his life.' She took him into the hospital and lay him in a bed, and daily she assiduously waited on him until he regained a little strength and was no longer so very weak. He began to eat and talk again. Once she sat down near him and said what had happened to him, how the captain had brought him, weak and feeble, to her hospital. Zigmund said, 'Dear woman, I will tell you everything that has gone on with me, but you shall not disclose this to anyone else, and no one will know, only the two of us', and Zigmund told her all of his travels: how he had lost his beloved Mageleyne; and how he later was captured, and everything that had later happened to him; how he had lost his silver and gold; how he remained alone in the roses in the woods. Then the woman spoke 'And if Mageleyne is still alive? What would you give her?' Zigmund said, 'I would give her my father's kingdom, if she were only still alive.' The woman spoke 'I am Mageleyne but you do not recognise me anymore.' She showed him the three rings and the gold that was still in the salt. From happiness, Zigmund could not say anything for an entire hour. Then he was soon lively and healthy. The news that the king's only son had returned quickly spread to the king's castle. The king, with the queen and all the nobles went to the hospital, and greeted Zigmund: the happiness knew no bounds. The wedding was held with great joy. Mageleyne's father was also sent for. The two kings became good friends. Zigmund and Mageleyne united the two kings. Zigmund and Mageleyne lived with each other happily for many years, until her parents died and they inherited the two kingdoms.

[Things] should be even better for us,
when we come into the Land of Israel
Amen, and so may be the will of God.[18]

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[18]A formulaic ending, cf. *Mayuse man un vayb*, Chapter 6.

מעשה מאן אוב ווייב

מעשה מאן אוב ווייב

עש וואר איין מאל איין מלך אין (פרס) זיגומינדו גינאנט .
ער וואר גאר רייך אונ׳ מעכטיג פון לייט אונ׳ לאנד :
אבר גאר העשליך אונ׳ הוט גאר איין שרעקליכי גשטאלט .
[ע]ר קונט קיין ווייב בקומן דען עז וואר קייני דיא אים האבן וואלט :
[וונ]ר אים אן זאך דער טעט פאר שרעקן פון אים אנטלויפן בלד .
[ע]ר שיקט בייא דיזן אונ׳ יענם מלך דז ער אים זיין טוכטר גענן זאלט
[אב]ר קיין אייניגים מלך זיין טאכטר וואלט אים נעמן אונ׳ האבן .
[איי]ן איטליכי וואלט זיך ליברשט לאזן טיטן אדר לעבנדיג פר גראבן
[דא]רום מוזט ער בלייבן אליין אונ׳ ווייב זיצן לאנגי יארן אונ׳ טאגן .
[ער] רופט איין מאל זיין קאמר דינר אונ׳ שפראך איך ווייל דיר זאגן :
[איך] קאן ניט לענגר לעבן אונ׳ ווייב איך ווייל דיזי נאכט אייני האבן .
[דארו]ם זעה דז דוא מיר אייני שאפשט פר שפרעך איר גרושי גאבן :
[דע]ר קאמר דינר שפראך גנעדיגר הער וואו זול איך אייני נעמן .
[אי]ך מוז דיר דיא וואהרהייט זאגן אונ׳ וועו איך מיך גלייך טוא שעמן
[א]יך גלויב ניט דז איין אשה אין דר וועלט זאלט וועלן בייא דיר ליגן .
[אב]ר עז זייא דען דאש מיט גרוש געלט אונ׳ גוט זעלט מן זי בטריגן
[דע]ר מלך שפראך אונ׳ האב איך דען ניט גינוגן געלט צו גענן .
[ד]ארום גיא הין אונ׳ שאף מיר כור איין אשה דיא מיר זאל זיין עבן :
דער קאמר דינר הוב אן צו לאכין אונ׳ גינג אייני אירגנץ צו זוכן אהין .
אבר דא ער אזוא גינג דא גידאכט ער זיך ווידר אין זיינם זין :
דער מלך וויל איין גרוש שטיק געלט געבן פאר אייני נאכט צו לון .
דש געלט קאן מיין אייגן ווייב פר דינן עז איז אום איין נכט צו טון :
ער גינג גישווינד בייא זיינם ווייב אונ׳ טעט איר אליש זאגן באלד .
אבר זיא וואר ניט צו פרידן דען זיא עש (לגמרי) ניט טון וואלט :

זיא

זיא שפּראך אוכ, ווען דר מלך שון ניט וועט אזו העסלך זער [:]
דאך גלייך וואול בייא איין פֿרעמדן מאן צו ליגן איך ניט בגע[ר .]
דר קאמר דיכר שפּראך ווען איך דירש מוחל בין זו מאגשטו עד טו[ן .]
(נשים דעתן קלות) זיא ליז זיך איבר רידן אוכ, וואר צו פֿרידן שון [.]
דער קאמר דיכר גיכג ווידר צום מלך אוכ, טעט אים תשובה זאגן [:]
גנעדיגר הער איך האב אייך איין שיכי יוכגי פֿרויא טון אויז פֿראגן [:]
אבר זיא וויל האבן מאה אלפֿים גולד גילדן פֿאר איין אייכציגי נכֿט [:]
אוכ, דאש געלט וויל זיא האבן אי זיא ווערט בייא אייך גיבראכֿט [.]
דר מלך שפּראך דא האשטו דאש געלט אוכ, ברענג זיא צו מיר [.]
דער קאמר דיכר גיכג הין אוכ, בראכֿט זיא בייא נכֿט דען מלך פֿיר [:]
וויא נון דיא נכֿט בלד וואר פֿר בייא קאם דר קאמר דיכר צו גין [:]
אוכ, קלאפּפֿט אן אוכ, שפּראך צו דען מלך לאזט דש ווייב אוועק גי[ן :]
דען דיא נאכֿט איז באלד פֿר בייא דיא לייט מעכֿטן עש פֿר נעמן [:]
זוא ווער עש אייך א שאנד אוכ, איר זעלט אייך מוזן זער שעמין [.]
דער מלך שפּראך איך שוועך בייא מיינם קאפּף אוכ, בייא מיין לעב[ן :]
ווער דיא אשה שון אייכש פויערן טאכֿטר ווער זיא איז מיר עבן :
איך לאז זיא כימר מער ניט גין איך וויל מיר צום ווייב ביהלטן [.]
איך האב איין מאל איין ווייב איך וויל מיט איר לעבן אוכ, אלטן :
דעם קאמר דיכר וואר באנג ער גידאכֿט זיך וואז ווער איך היבן אן [.]
ער וואכֿטיט נאך איין שטונד ער קלאפּפֿט אן דש מלך קאמר אן [:]
ער שפּראך עש איז באלד טאג לאז דאך דאש ווייב ווידר פֿון אייך .
זונשט ווערן עש דיא לייט גיוואר עד ווער איין שנד דעם קיניגרייך .
דער מלך שפּראך איך זאג דיר נאך איין מאל איך לאז זיא כימר גין .
דארום קלאפּף ניט מער אן דוא טושט בחכם(?) פֿר מיין קאמר שטין :
דר קאמר דיכר וואכֿטיט נאך איין שטונד אוכ, קלאפּפֿיט ווידר אן .
אוכ, שפּראך גנעדיגר הער איך וויל אייך די וואכֿהייט קונט טאן :
דיא איז מיין אייגן ווייב אוכ, איך בין איר מאן דרום לאזט דיא גין .
דר מלך וואר צארניג אוכ, שפּראך איצט טוא איך דיא זאך פֿר שטין :
דוא רשע האשטו פֿאר געלט דיין אייגן ווייב פֿר קויפֿט צו מיר .
זוא וויל איך דיא ביהאלטן אוכ, וויל דיך פֿר טרייבן גאר פֿון היר :
אוכ,

(2א)

אונ׳ דער מלך שפראך צו דעם קאמיר דינר אין צארן צו האנד .
גיא נור באלד אונ׳ מאך דז מן דיך ניט גיפֿינט אין מיינם לנד
זונשט וועד איך דיר דען קאפֿף לאזן אב שלאגן דז זאג איך דיר .
דרום גיא ווייל דוא צייט האשט אונ׳ היט דיך ווייטר פֿאר מיר :
דער קאמר דינר נאם זיין מאה אלפֿים גאלד גילדן בייא זיך באלד .
אונ׳ גינג צום שער הרחמים ארויז אונ׳ קאם אין אייגם דיכטן וואלד
ער גינג צווייא טאג אונ׳ צווייא נאכט זונדר געשן אונ׳ וואר שוואך .
ער גינג אזוא לאנג ביז ער קאם בייא אייגם גרושן וואשיר באך :
ער טרינקט אונ׳ ער לעשט זיין דורשט אונ׳ ליגט זיך שלאפֿן נידר .
ער וואר גאר שוואך אונ׳ מיד מיט לייב אונ׳ אלי זייני גלידר :
ער שליף גאר שטארק אונ׳ לאנג עש קאם פֿאר בייא צו פֿארן .
איין פֿישר מיט זיין שיף דער פֿינג דיא פֿיש מיט זיינם גארן :
דער פֿישר זאך דען מאן ליגן אונ׳ דאכט גאר באלד אין זיינם זין .
איך מוז זעהן וועד דער איז אונ׳ ער גינג גישווינד בייא אים אהין :
אונ׳ ער גיפֿאנד אים זער הארט שלאפֿן אז ווען ער וועד טויט .
אונ׳ ער ביזוכט אין אן לייב אונ׳ גיפֿאנד דז ער אזוא פֿיל גאלד האט .
אונ׳ ער נאם דאש גאלד אונ׳ ער צוך אים אלי זייני קליידר אויש .
אונ׳ בראכט עש אויף זיין שיף אונ׳ פֿארט גישווינד דר מיט נור הויש
נאך עטליכן שטונדן אנטוואכט דער קאמר דינר אונ׳ זאך זיך אן .
ער וואושט ניט וויא אים גישעהן וועד אונ׳ וועד אים האט גיטאן :
ער פֿר פֿלוכט דיא שטונד אין וועלכיר ער איז וואדרן גיבארן .
ער שפראך איצונד האב איך מיין ווייב אונ׳ מיין געלט פֿר לארן :
אונ׳ איך בין נאך דר צו נאקיט אונ׳ בלוט אונ׳ האב קייני קליידר אן .
ער גינג אזו אין בלושן העמד ביז ער איז קומן בייא איין מקום אן :
דא בעטילט ער אזוא לאנג ביז ער עטליכי אלטי לומפין ביקאם :
דא מיט בידעקט ער זיין לייב פֿון דארטן ער זיין רייז ווייטר נאם
אונ׳ ער גינג בעטלן פֿון הויש צו הויש אונ׳ פֿון שטאט צו שטאט .
דאש ער נייארט העט צו עשין דאש טרוקני אונ׳ הארטי ברוט :
נון וועלן מיר דען קאמר דינר אין דער וואלט לאזן באטלן ארום גין
אונ׳ מיר וועלן זעהן וויא עש מיט זיינם וויב אונ׳ דען מלך טוט שטין
דער

(ב2)

דער מלך דער האט נוא איין פֿרויא ביקומן נאך זיינם אייג[נ]ן ווילן [.]
ער קונט איצונד גאר וואול זיין ביגערן אונ׳ זייני גילושטן שטילן :
אבר דיא שמחה דויארט איין קורצי צייט וויא איר וועלט הערין .
דער מלך פֿיל אין איין קרענק אונ׳ פֿינג אן גאנץ מצורע צו ווערן .
קיין רופֿא קונט אים ניט העלפֿן אונ׳ קיינר קונט אים ניט קורירן .
איין רופֿא שפראך אדוני המלך איך קאן דיא זאך וואול שפירן :
איך וויל דיר דיא וואהרהייט זאגן וואו דיר דר צרעת קומט אהער .
דוא ליגשט בייא איין אנדרן מאן זיין ווייב דרום איז מיין ביגער :
ווילשטו אנדרשט ווידר ווערן הייל אונ׳ ווילשט ווידר ווערן גיזונד .
זוא פֿר טרייב דאש פֿרעמדי ווייב אוועק פֿון דיר צו דיזר שטונד .
דען ווער דא ליגט בייא איין אשת איש דער ווערט מצורע באלד :
אונ׳ איז אים ניט צו העלפֿן ביז ער אב לאזט אונ׳ הוט זי נימר האלד [.]
דער מלך וואלט לאנג ניט דראן דיא אשה פֿון זיך אוועק צו יאגין .
אבר דעם מלך זיין ברודר גינג הין אונ׳ טעט קיינם ניט פֿראגין .
ער גינג גישווינד אונ׳ יאגט דאש ווייב אויז דען מלך זיין שלאם ארויז
זיא גינג אונ׳ ליף גישווינד אונ׳ קאם ווידר אהיים אין איר הויש :
זיא וואונ׳ט ווידר אין איר הויז אבר זיא העט דאך קיינם מאן .
דען איר מאן גינג בעטלין ארום אונ׳ דא וואר קיינר דר אים קאן .
ענטליך דאכט דער קאמר דינר עש איז דאך קיינר דר מיך קענט .
איך גיא אז וויא איין בעטלר איך וויל אהיים גין איך בין אונ׳ בקענט
ער קאם ווידר אין איין מקום אונ׳ גינג בעטלין פֿר זיין אייגן הויז .
ער קלאפֿט אן דש ווייב הערט עז אונ׳ זיכט צום פֿענשטר ארויז :
זיא דער קענט אים גאר באלד אונ׳ נאם אים ווידר אין דז הויש .
אבר זיא האטן ווייטר ניקש איר אייגן אלז דאש בלושי הויש :
דען זיין דינשט וואר אויז אונ׳ פֿאר דען מלך טארט ער ניט קומין .
אונ׳ אל זיין געלט דאש האט אים דער פֿישר אין שלאף אב גינומן :
זיא לעבטן מיט אנכדר אין ארמוט אונ׳ אין גרושן קומר אונ׳ נוט .
זיא לעבטן דאך מיט אנכדר בשלום אונ׳ אסן דאש טרוקני ברוט :
אבר דאש ווייב וואר שין אונ׳ דר נערט זיך מיט איר אייגנר האנד .
אונ׳ זיצט אימר פֿאר דער טיר אונ׳ וואר בייא דז מלך דינר ביקאנט :

דא

דא קאם איין דינר פֿום מלך איין מאל צו רייטן פֿאר בייא .
ער זאך דאש ווייב זיצן אין דער טיר אונ׳ דז זיא אזו שין זייא :
זיין פר לנגן שטונד נאך דעם ווייב ער גינג בייא איר אין הויז אריין
ער שפראך זיא אן זיין ווילן צו טון ער פֿר שפראך דז געלט זיין :
זיא שפראך דוא מושט מיר הונדרט גולד גילדן צו לון ברענגן אהער
זונשט טוא איך דיין ווילן ניט אונ׳ טוא אויך ניט דיין ביגער :
אונ׳ אויך וויל איך דיך לאזן רופֿן אונ׳ וויל דיר שון צו ווישן טאן .
וועז איין מאל אין אייגר נאכֿט ניט ווערט זיין צו הויש מיין מאן :
דר דינר פֿום מלך שפראך די הונדרט גאלד גילדן וויל איך געבן דיר
לאז דוא מיך נייארט רופֿן וועז איך זאל קומן אהער צו דיר :
ער רייט ווידר אוועק דא קאם נאך אייגר צו רייטן פֿאר איר טיר .
דער ביגערט אויך וויא דער ערשט זיין ווילן צו טון מיט איר :
זיא בידינגט מיט אים אויך די הונדרט גאלד גילדן זולן זיין אן ביריט
זוא וויל זיא אים לאזן רופֿן בייא נאכֿט בייא גווישר שטונד אונ׳ צייט :
דר אנדר רייט אויך ווידר אוועק דא קאם איין דריטר צו רייטן אן .
דר דריטר וואלט אויך האבן דאש זיא ווילן זעלט טאן :
דאש ווייב שפראך אויך צו אים הונדרט גאלד גילדן מושטו האן .
וועז איך דיר אנדרשט זאל דיין פֿר לאנגן אונ׳ דיין ווילן טאן .
אונ׳ איך וויל דיך שון לאזן רופֿן וועז עז ווערט זיין די רעכֿטי צייט :
דאש וואר ער אויך צו פֿרידן אונ׳ ער אויך ווידר אוועק רייט :
דאש ווייב גינג אין איר הויז אונ׳ דר צילט דאש מעשה אירם מאן .
אונ׳ זיא שפראך צו אים וואש איך דיר הייש דאש זאלשטו טאן :
מיר זיין דאך גאר ארם אונ׳ דרום אויך זאלשטו פֿאלגן מיר :
מיט איין שווערי בייל אדר האק זאלשטו דיך שטעלן הינטר די טיר :
איך וויל ערשט אייכם לאזן רופֿן אונ׳ וועז ער ווערט קומן אריין .
זוא זאלשטו אים מיט דען בייל טיטן אונ׳ דען קאפֿף שלאגן איין :
דר נאך וויל איך דען אנדרן לאזן רופֿן דעם זולשטו עז אך אזו מכֿן .
אונ׳ דר נוך דען דריטן זוא ביקומן מיר געלט אונ׳ אלי אירי זאכֿן :
דער מאן שפראך אונ׳ וואו קענן מיר דיא טויטי לייבר אהין טאן .
דז עש זאלט בלייבן פֿר שוויגן אונ׳ פֿר בארגן פֿאר אידר מאן
דאש

דאש ווייב שפראך טוא דוא נייארט וואש איך דיר דא הייש [:]
צו דיא אנדרי זאכן איך שון גוטי עצה צו געבן ווייש [.]
דער מאן ליז זיך איבר ריידן אונ׳ זיא ליז ערשט אייגם רופֿן בייא נכט [.]
דר קאם גאר באלד אונ׳ קלאפפט אן דיא טיר ווייל זי וואר צו גימכט [.]
דש ווייב שפראך הושטו דיא הונדרט גאלד גילדן מיט גיבראכט .
ער שפראך יוא איך ברענג זי דא האט זי אים די טיר אויף גימכט :
דא גינג ער אריין אבר דער מאן שלוג אים בלד צו טוט אונ׳ דר נידר [.]
דר נאך ליז זיא דען אנדרן רופֿן דעם צו שלוג ער קאפף אונ׳ גלידר :
דר נאך רופֿט מן דען דריטן אונ׳ דער מאן שלוג אים אויך צו טויט [.]
דר נאך שפראך דער מאן צום ווייב איצט זיין מיר אין גרושר נויט [:]
ווערט מן אנדרשט דיא טוטי לייבר אין אונ׳זרן הויז טון פֿינדן .
זוא מוזן מיר אלי ביידי שטערבן פֿון וועגן דיידי גרושי זינדן .
דאש ווייב שפראך שווייג שטיל אונ׳ פֿאלג נייארט מיר וואז איך זאג :
אונ׳ שטעק דיא טוטי לייבר איין איטליכֿן אין איין ביזונדרן זאק .
אונ׳ ליג איין איטליכֿן זאק אין דיא קאמיר אין איין ביזונדר עק :
דר נאך ווייל איך שון מאכֿן דז זיא ווערן אויז דען הויז קומן אוועק .
דער מאן טעט עז בלד דר ווייל גינג דש ווייב צו אירן ברודר אהין
דער וואר איין נכט וועכטר אין דר שטאט אונ׳ זיא זאגט צו אין :
ליבר ברודר קום דאך איין קליין וויניג צו מיר אין מיין הויז אריין .
אונ׳ זיא גאב אים צו טרינקן איין גלאז נאך דען אנדרן פֿול מיט וויין
זיא שפראך ליבר ברודר איך וויל דיך וואש ביטן ער שפראך זאג אן
אליש וואש דוא פֿר לאנגשט פֿון מיר דאש וויל איך דיר באלד טאן :
זיא שפראך הייגט בייא טאג איז איין אידל מאן אריין קומן אין הויז
אונ׳ האט מיט מיין מאן אן גיהובן צו צענקן דז עז וואר איין גרויש :
דא וואר מיין מאן צארניג אונ׳ ער האט דען אידל מאן דר שלאגין .
דרום מיין ליבר ברודר טוא אים דאך אוועק אין דז וואשר טראגן :
דער נאכֿט וועכטר נאם גישווינד דען זאק מיט דען אייגם טויטן .
אונ׳ טרוג אים בייא נכט אוועק אונ׳ וואורף אים איגש וואשר אונ׳ נוט
אונ׳ קאם גישווינד ווידר בייא זייני שוועשטר אין דאש הויז אריין .
אונ׳ שפראך ער איז שון פֿארט דרום גיב מיר נאך איין גלאז ווין
זיא

[ז]יא גאב אים צו טרינקן אונ׳ הוב אן צו שרייאן אונ׳ צו [ברו]מן .
אך מיר דר טויטי אידל מאן דר איז ווידר אין דז הויז גקומן :
[א]ונ׳ זיא ווייזט אים דען זאק מיט דען אנדרן טויטן אידל מאן .
[ע]ר נאכט וועכטר שפראך איך וויל דיר דש ווידר קומן בלד פר טאן
[ע]ר טרוג אים ווידר פורט אונ׳ לעגט אויך אין זאק איין גרושן שטיין
אונ׳ ער וואורף אים אזוא אין דאש טיפשטי וואשיר אריין :
אונ׳ דער נאכט וועכטר גינג ווידר בייא זיין שוועשטיר אריין .
אונ׳ ער שפראך צו איר נון שענק מיר איין דען אליר בעשטן וויין :
[ד]ען איך האב דען זאק אן גיפילט מיט גאר פיל שווערי שטיין .
ער ווערט דיר גיוויש ניט ווידר קומן צו גין אין דאש הויש אריין :
זיא גאב אים ווידר צו טרינקן אונ׳ הוב באלד ווידר אן צו קלאגן .
אך דער טויטי אידל מאן מיט דען זאק איז ווידר דא טעט זיא זאגן
אונ׳ זיא ווייזט אים דען דריטן זאק דא דאש דר נאכט וועכטר זאך .
ער נאם דען זאק אונ׳ גינג ווידר דער מיט פארט אונ׳ ער שפראך :
דו זאלשט מיר ניט ווידר קומן אונ׳ ער מאכט איין גרוש פייאר אן .
אונ׳ ער פר ברענט דרינן צו פולפיר דען דריטן טויטן אידל מאן :
אין דעם קאם אייגר צו רייטן דר נאכט וועכטר זאך אים אן :
ער גידאכט דאש איז גיוויש ווידר דר פר ברענטי טויטי אידל מאן :
ער נאם דען פרעמדן לעבנדיגן מאן מיט זיין פפערד גאר בלד .
אונ׳ וואורף זיא אין דאש פייאר דאש ער פאר ברענן זאלט :
אונ׳ דר נאכט וועכטר גינג אהין צו זייגר שוועשטר אונ׳ זאגט צו איר .
נון שענק מיר איין דען בעשטן וויין דרייא גלעזר אדר פיר :
דען איך האב דען טויטן אידל מאן מיט זיין פפערד פר ברענט .
ער ווערט דיר שון ניט ווידר קומן אין דיין היוז אריין גירענט :
דאש וויב מערקט וואול דז ער נאך איין לעבנדיגן מענשן האט :
פר ברענט אבר זיא שוויג שטיל אונ׳ ניקש זי אים גיענטפרט האט :
נאך דיזם אלים איז דר מלך פון זיינם צרעת ווידר גיהיילט ווארן
דא איז ער איין מאל אין אייגם שינן וואלד שפאצירן גיפארן :
דא הערט ער עטוואז איין טרויאריגי חטים פון אייגם מאן צו זאגן
פר פלוכט איז אדם הראשון וויל ער הוט חוטא גוועזן מוז איך מיך
וואזו פלאגן :

דר

דר מאן וואר איין האלץ האקר אין דען וואלד דער אזו הוט גירעט [.]
דער מלך צו אים שפראך וואורום ער אדם הראשון פֿלוכֿן טעט [.]
דער מאן שפראך איין אייבציגי מצוה הוט אדם הראשון ניט גיהלט[ן :]
דרום מוז איך אונ׳ מיין ווייב אזו זויאר ארבייטן ביז מיר אלטן :
דר מלך בראכֿט דען האלץ האקר אונ׳ זיין ווייב מיט זיך נאך הויש [:]
אונ׳ ליז זיא גאנץ נייא קליידן אונ׳ ליז זיא די אלטי קליידר ציהן אויש [:]
אונ׳ ליז אירי אלטי קליידר מיט דר האק פֿון זייני דינר פֿר וואורן [.]
אונ׳ דען מאן מיט זיין ווייב ליז דר מלך טעגליך וואול טראקטירן [:]
אלי מאלצייט מיט פֿופֿציג שיסלן פֿון אלר הנד שפייזן אונ׳ קונפֿעק[ט :]
דא בראכֿט מן אויך אויף דען טיש איין שיסל מיט אייבר אנדרן שיס[ל]
צו גידעקט: אונ׳ דר מלך שפראך צו אים אלי שייזן מאגשטו עשין [:]
נייארט פֿון דר צו גידעקטן שיסל זאלשטו ניט אויף דעקן דאש עשן [.]
אן וועלכֿן טאג אז דוא דאש אייבציגי גיבאט וועשט אבר טרעטן .
זוא וועשטו ווידר קומן אין צרות אונ׳ אין דייני ערשטי נעטין :
דען מאן אונ׳ זיין ווייב טראקטירט מן טעגליך מיט פֿלייש אונ׳ פֿיש .
אונ׳ דיא צו גידעקטי שיסל שטונד אויך אלי צייט אויף דען טיש :
איין מאל וואר קיין מענש אין דער קאמר נייארט דער מאן אליין .
דא שפראך זיין ווייב צו אים ליבר מאן זעה דאך וואז דרייבן מאג זיין
ער ליז זיך איבר רידן אונ׳ שטאך מיט דען שפיץ פֿום מעשר דרויף .
אונ׳ היבט די צו גידעקטי שיסל אין קליין וויבג מיט דען מעשר אויף
דא שראנג ארויז איין מויז אונ׳ דז ווייב שרייאט אונ׳ דר שרעקט .
דא קאמן די דינר אונ׳ פֿראגן וואורום הוט איר די שיסל אויף גדעקט
אונ׳ דער מלך קאם אויך דער צו אונ׳ שטראפֿט דען זעלביגן מאן .
אונ׳ מן בראכֿט אים ווידר זיין האק אונ׳ טעט זייני קליידר ווידר אן :
אונ׳ מן בראכֿט אים אויז דז מלך זיין שלאס ווידר אין דען וואלד .
דז ער דארטן אל זיין לעבנש טאג ווידר איין האלץ האקר זיין זאלט :
נון איר ליבן לייט קענט איר זעהן . וואז דיא מאנן פֿון ביזי ווייבר
קאן גישעהן : אבר איין פֿרום ווייב ציהט איין גוטן מאן :
דאש זאל איטליכֿי פֿרומי פֿרויא טראכֿטן צו טאן : זוא ווערן
אלי מאנן זיין פֿרום אונ׳ גוט . דען פֿון (חוה) האבן מיר אהער דש
דער מאן דעם וויב פֿאלגן טוט : ובֿא לציון ג[וא]ל אכי"ר:

(א5)

Tale[1] of a Man and Wife

ONCE there was a king in (Persia) named Zigomindo.
He was very rich and powerful, with people and land,
But really ugly and had a truly hideous countenance,
He could not get a wife, since there were none that wanted him;
Whoever looked at him would quickly run from him in horror.
He sent [requests] to this and that king [proposing] that they should give him their daughter,
But not one single king's daughter would take or have him:
Each one would rather be killed or buried alive.
Therefore, he had to remain alone, without a wife, for many years and days.
Once he called to his chamberlain[2] and said 'I want to tell you,
I can no longer live without a wife. I want to have one tonight.
Therefore, see that you get me one; promise her a lot of gifts.'
The chamberlain said 'Noble sir, where will I get one?
I must tell you the truth, even though it fills me with shame.
I do not believe that one woman in the world will want to lie by you,
Unless she is deceived with a lot of gold and goods.'
The King said 'And do I not have enough money to give?
Therefore go and get me just one woman who will be [with] me this moment.'
The chamberlain began to laugh and went to look for one somewhere,
But as he went he thought again to himself,
'The king will reward a great amount of money for one night.
My own wife can earn the money. It is [just a matter of] spending one night [with him].'
He went quickly to his wife and soon told her everything.
But she was not too pleased; she did not want to do it at all.

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[1]Can also mean 'deed, act'

[2]However, in Middle High German this means simply 'valett'or 'man's servant'

SHE said 'If the King was not so very ugly;
[It is as] good as lying with a stranger[3] whom I do not desire.'
The chamberlain said 'If I forgive you, you may do this.'
(Women are fickle-minded[4]) She let him persuade her and was pleased [with the plan].
The chamberlain went back to the King and gave him an answer.
'Noble Sir, I have examined[5] a young, beautiful woman for you,
But she wants one hundred thousand[6] gold guilder for one single night,
And she wants to have the money before she is brought to you.'
The King said ' Here you have the money, bring her to me.'
The chamberlain went, and brought her before the King at night.
When the night was almost over, the chamberlain came,
Knocked and said to the King 'Allow the woman to leave.
The night will be soon over, the people might find out.
It will be a disgrace for you and you shall shame yourself.'
The King said 'I swear on my head and on my life
Even if the woman is a peasant's daughter, she is mine just now.
I will never allow her to go. I want to keep her as my wife.
I have [had] a woman once; I want to live and grow old with her.'
The chamberlain became anxious. He thought to himself, 'What have I started?'
He waited another hour; [then] knocked on the King's room.
He said 'It will soon be daylight. Let the woman [leave] you,
Otherwise the people will learn of it. It will be a disgrace for the Kingdom.'
The King said 'I am telling you once more: I will never let her go.
Therefore do not knock anymore; you stand freely[7] in front of my room.'
The chamberlain waited another hour and knocked again,
And said 'Noble Sir, I want to be able to do the right [thing].
She is my own wife and I am her husband. Therefore, let her go.'
The King was angry and said 'Now I understand this thing.
You, evil man, have sold your wife to me for money,
So I will keep her and drive you [away] from here.'

[3]Or 'foreigner'.

[4]i.e., easily talked into things, Shabbat 33b.

[5]Also 'negotiated with'.

[6]Hebrew.

[7]Hebrew, literally 'without payment'.

AND The King spoke to the chamberlain angrily
'Go very quickly and make [sure] that no one finds you in my country.
Otherwise I will have your head cut off. This I say to you.
So, go while you have time and keep yourself far from me.'
The chamberlain quickly took his one hundred gold guilder with him,
And went out from the 'Gates of Mercy' and came to a dense forest.
He walked [for] two days and two nights without eating and became weak.
He went so long until he came to a large river of water.
He drank and relieved his thirst and lay himself down to sleep.
He was very weak and tired from head to toe[8].
He slept soundly and long. There passed by
A fisherman with his ship, catching fish in his nets.
The fisherman saw the man lying [down] and thought quickly to himself,
'I must see who he is', and he went quickly to him.
He found him fast asleep as if he were dead,
And he searched his person and found that he had a lot of gold.
He took the gold, and he took off all his [the chamberlain's] clothes
And he put them on his ship and quickly travelled to his house.
After a few hours, the chamberlain woke up and saw himself.
He did not know what had happened nor who had done this to him.
He cursed the hour in which he was born.
He said 'Now I have lost my wife and my money.
In addition, I am naked, destitute and have no clothes on.'
He went thus wearing nothing but a shirt until he came to a city.
There he begged long enough until he got some old rags.
With [them] he covered his body. From there he took his journey farther,
And he went begging from house to house and city to city.
He had only dry, hard bread to eat.
So, we will allow the chamberlain to go begging around the world
And we will see how [things] stand with his wife and the King

[8]Literally, 'with his life and all his limbs'.

The King had indeed obtained a woman according to his only desire,
He could now appease his desires and lusts very well.
But the happiness lasted [only] a short while, as you will hear.
The King fell ill and started to change completely into a leper.
No doctor[9] could help him, nor could any cure him.
One doctor said 'My lord King[10], I can sense [what caused] the [illness].
I will tell you truthfully where your leprosy has come from.
You are sleeping with another man's wife, thus my suggestion is:
If you wish to be cured and healthy again,
Drive this strange woman away from you this very moment.
He who lies with [another] man's wife[11] will quickly become a leper.
And cannot be helped until he leaves [her] and never loves her again.'
The King would not long thereafter let the woman go away from him,
But the King's brother went there and asked no one.
He went quickly and chased the wife out of the King's castle.
She went and ran quickly and came again home to her house.
She lived again in her house, but she had no husband
Since her husband was going around begging and no one recognised him.
Finally the chamberlain thought, 'There is no one who will recognise me
I will go as a beggar. I want to go home; I am unrecognisable.'
He came again to a city and went begging at his own house.
He knocked, the wife heard it and looked out of the window.
She recognised him immediately, and took him again into the house.
But they had nothing of her [!] own except the bare house,
Since his service was over and he dare not go before the King,
And the fisherman had taken all his money in [his] sleep.
They lived together in poverty, in great grief and misery:
They lived with one another in peace[12] and ate the dry bread.
But the wife was pretty and provided for herself by her own hands.
She always sat in front of the door and was well-known by the King's servants.

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[9]Hebrew.

[10]Hebrew, as opposed to the chamberlain's address (see page 1).

[11]Hebrew.

[12]Hebrew, also meaning 'safely' .

ONCE a servant of the King came riding past,
He saw the woman sitting in her doorway and how pretty she was.
His desire for the woman was aroused and he went to her into her house.
He spoke to her to do his will; he promised his money.
She said 'You must bring here to me a hundred gold guilder as payment,
Otherwise I am not going to do your will or your desire.
And also, I will send for you and will surely let you know
As soon as, once, in one night, my husband will not be in the house.'
The King's servant said 'I will give you the hundred gold guilder.
Only, you summon me when I must come here to you.'
When he rode off again, another came riding in front of her door.
He also desired, like the first, to do his will with her.
She stipulated to him also [that] the hundred gold guilder should be ready.
Thus she will summon him by night at a certain hour and time.
When the other rode away again as well, a third came riding by.
The third would also have [it] that she do his will.
The wife spoke to him also 'You must have a hundred gold guilder.
If indeed I am to do your desire and your will,
And I will certainly summon you when it will be the right time.
He too was happy [with this] and also rode off again.
The wife went into her house and told the story to her husband.
She said to him 'What I tell you, you must do.
We are very poor and therefore you must obey me.
You must stand behind the door with a hatchet or an axe.
I will call for the first [servant] and when he comes in
Then you must kill him with the hatchet and then smash his head.
Afterwards when I summon the other one, you must do the same thing,
And with the third one. Thus we will get money and all their things.
The husband said 'And where can we hide the dead bodies?
So that it would remain discreet and hidden from every man.'

THE wife spoke 'You do only what I tell you.
I already have a good plan to take care of all the rest.'
The husband allowed himself to be persuaded and she summoned the first one at night,
Who came very quickly and knocked on the door which she had closed.
The wife said 'Have you brought the hundred gold guilder with you?'
He said 'Yes, I bring them.' She opened the door for him.
He went in, but the husband quickly hit him to the ground dead.
Afterwards she called for the other, to hit him, his head and limbs.
Later the third one was called and the husband also beat him to death.
Later the husband spoke to his wife 'Now we are in great danger.
Should the dead bodies be found in our house.
So, we both must die because of these great sins.'
The wife said 'Be still and just obey me, do [as] I say.
Place the dead bodies, each one in a separate sack,
And lay each sack in the room in a separate corner.
Afterwards I will make certain that they disappear from the house.'
The husband did it quickly; meanwhile the wife went to her brother,
Who was a night-watchman in the city and she said to him:
'Dear brother, come to my house for just a short while.'
And she gave him one glass after another filled with wine to drink.
She said 'Dear brother, I want you [to do] what I bid.' He said 'Go on.
All that you desire from me I will surely do for you.'
She said 'Today, during the day, a gentleman came into the house
And began to argue that it was a horror.
My husband became angry and he killed the gentleman.
Therefore, my dear brother, carry him away to the water.'
The night-watchman quickly took the sack with the dead [man]
And carried him at night and threw him into the water without trouble.
He quickly came back to his sister in her house
And said 'He is already gone, so give me another glass of wine.'

SHE gave him [more] to drink and began to scream and [shout]
'Oh my, the dead gentleman had come into the house again!'
And she showed him the sack with the other dead gentleman.
The night-watchman said 'I will quickly finish the returnee for you.'
He carried him away again and put a big stone inside the sack,
And he threw him into the deepest water,
The night-watchman went again back into his sister['s house]
And he said to her 'Pour me one of your best wines,
Since I have filled the sack with really heavy stones.
He will surely not return to you, to go into the house.'
She gave him [something] to drink again and soon began to moan again:
'Oh, the dead gentleman with the sack is back here,' she said,
And she showed him the third sack which the night-watchman saw.
He took the sack and went away with it again and said:
'You should not come back to me' and he prepared a big fire,
And in it he burned the third dead gentleman to a powder.
At that moment someone came riding by. The night-watchman saw him.
He thought 'This is surely the burned dead gentleman again.'
He immediately took the unfamiliar, living man [along] with his horse,
And threw them in the fire so that he should burn.
The night-watchman went to his sister and said to her:
'Give me one of the best wines, three or four glasses,
Because I have burned the gentleman with his horse.
He will not come running to you again in your house.'
The wife was well aware that he had burned a living person
But she was silent and she did not answer him.
AFTER all this, the King recovered from his leprosy.
One time he went for a walk in a beautiful forest,
Where he heard a man saying something of a sad confession[13]
'Cursed is Adam[14]. Because he sinned, I must toil so.

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[13]Hebrew literally, 'sins'.

[14]Hebrew, 'Adam the First'.

The man who spoke was a wood-chopper in the forest.
The King asked[15] him why he cursed Adam.
The man said 'Adam did not follow one single commandment,
[And] therefore I and my wife must so bitterly toil until we grow old.'
The King brought the wood-chopper and his wife with him to the house,
He gave them brand new clothes and had them take their old clothes off
And had them keep their old clothes with his servant's [wood-chopper's] axe.
The King had the old man with his wife treated well every day:
Every meal [came] with fifty dishes of all kinds of food and confections.
One dish covered with another dish was also brought to the table,
And the King said to him: 'You may eat all the food
But you may not uncover the food from the covered dish.
On the day that you disregard this one request,
You will return to your troubles and first lifestyle.
The man and his wife were treated daily to meat and fish ,
And the covered dish stood on the table all the time.
Once, when no one but the man [!] was in the room,
His wife said to him' Dear husband, see what might be in there.'
He let himself be persuaded and poked around with the point of a knife,
And lifted up the covered dish a little bit with the knife.
Out sprang a mouse and the wife screamed and was shocked.
The servants came and asked 'Why have you uncovered the dish?'
The King came as well and punished the same man
And his axe was brought back to him and his clothes put back on,
And he was taken out of the King's castle and back into the forest,
So that he should go back to being a wood-chopper for the rest of his life.
So dear people you can see what can happen to the husbands of evil women.
But a pious wife attracts a good man.
Every pious woman should think of doing this, so that
All husbands will become pious and good. For we have here [as in the story of] Eve
That the man follows his wife. And the Redeemer will come to Zion, amen, and so may be the will of God.[16]

[15] 'spoke'.

[16] A formulaic ending, commonly seen in *mayse-bikhlekh* of this period.

מעשה פון שלמה המלך

מעשה פון שלמה דער מלך

מעשה פון שלמה המלך

נוּשׁ איז ווישיגליך אונ׳ עש איז צו (כל עולם) וואול ביקאנט
דז הש׳י האט גיגעבן צו שלמה המלך גרושן פֿר שטאנד
אל דיא חכמות אין דער וועלט האט (שלמה המלך) גיקענט אל
אונ׳ אל דיא לשונות אפֿילו וויא דיא בהמות רידן אין דען שטאל
אונ׳ וויא דיא (חיות) מיט אנכדר רידן טון אויף דיא פֿעלדר
אונ׳ וויא דיא עופות מיט אנכדר רידן אין דיא גריכי וועלדר
דיזי לשונות האט (שלמה המלך) אלי גאר וואול פֿאר שטאנד
איין מאל איז אים איין מעשה מיט צווייא פֿיגל גיקומן צו האנדין
שלמה המלך דער האט אין זיינם שלאס איין שינן גארטן שטין
פֿון אליר האנד שיני ביימר דרויף ווארן אליר האנד פֿיגל שין
דא זאך איין מאל שלמה המלך אויז דען שלאס צום פֿענשטר ארויש
אונ׳ ער זאך אין דען גארטן צווייא קלייני פֿיגל זיצן אין גישטרויז
דער אייני פֿוגל וואר נאך איין זכר דער אנדר פֿוגל איין נקיבה וואר
(דהייגו) דיא נקיבה וואר נאך איין בתולה פֿון אנדרט האלב יאר
דר זכר וואר אויך נאך איין בחור ער וואלט גערן האבן איין ווייב
ער שפראך צו דיא בתולה נעם מיך צום מאן גיב מיר דיין יונגן לייב
מיין הערץ דאש איז פֿר ליבט אין דיך אונ׳ ברענט אז וויא פֿייאר
איך ווייל דיר איין גרושי (כתובה) מאכן אונ׳ שרייבן אויף פפייאר
דער צו בין איך איין גרושיר (מיוחס) פֿון פֿאטר אונ׳ מוטרש (צד)
איבר דיא פֿיגל אין לובלינר וואלד וואר לאנד (רב) מיין טעט
אונ׳ מיינר מוטרש פֿאטר וואר (רב) אין דען קראקאוור וואלד
אונ׳ דער צו בין איך קלוג אונ׳ פֿר שטענדיג אונ׳ וואול גישטאלט
דיא בתולה שפראך צו אים וואש העלפֿט מיך דער (ייחוס) דיין
זאג מיר נייארט אהער מיט וואש קענשטו מיך (מחיה) זיין
דער

דר זכר שפראך (החכמה תחייה את בעליה) טוט שלמה המלך זאגן
דיא (חכמה איז מחיה) דען בן אדם אל זיין לעבנש טאגן :
אונ׳ איך בין איין חכם אונ׳ איין (גבור) ווען איך שון בין קליין .
איך קאן אין אייגר שטונד שלמה המלך זיין שלאס (מחריב) זיין :
דא ליג דיא בתולה איבר רידן אונ׳ נאם אים צו אייגם מאן .
אונ׳ דיא צווייא פיגל טעטן באלד מיט אנגדר (חתונה) האן :
דאש טעט אליש שלמה המלך צו זעהן אונ׳ טעט אליש צו הערן .
ער דאכט אין זיגם זין דר קלייני פוגל קען מיין שלאס פר שטערן :
אונ׳ דאש קען ער טון אין אייגר אייגציגן שטונד פר ווער .
אונ׳ איך האב דראן גיבויאט מיט פיל טויזנט מענשן גאר פיל יאר :
שלמה המלך קונט ניט רואן נאך דען פוגל שטונד זיין פר לאנגן .
ער טעט מיט זייגר חכמה דען זעלביגן פוגל גאר באלד פאנגן :
אונ׳ ער שפראך צו דעם פוגל נוא לערן מיך אויך דיא קונשט דיין .
וויא קענשטו אין אייגר אייגציגן שטונד מיין גנץ שלאס מחריב זיין :
דער פוגל שפראך אדוני המלך איך וויל דיר דיא וואהריט זאגן .
איך האב עז נייארט גירעט דז איך האב די בתולה צון ווייב גקראגן :
אבר אדוני המלך וואש זאל איך קלייגר אונ׳ שוואכיר פוגיל קענן .
דרום לאז מיך ווידר פליהן אונ׳ לאז מיך ווידר צו מיין יונג ווייב רענן
שלמה המלך שפראך דוא בישט (חיב מיתה) פאר וואר .
וויל דוא מיך האשט גיאוצט אונ׳ האשט מיך גימאכט צום נאר :
דער פוגל שפראך (אדוני המלך) וויא האב איך ווישן זאלן .
דז דו מיר הושט צו גיהערט אונ׳ דז דו מייני רידט פר שטישט אין אלן
אונ׳ אויך אדוני המלך דוא האשט זעלברט אין דייני ספרים גשריבן
(האהבה מקלקלת את השורה) דיא אהבה מאכט אייגם ביטריבן
דיא (אהבה) האט קיין מאס אונ׳ קיין ציל אונ׳ טוט אלש פר דרבן .
איבר דיא (אהבה) האט דיין ברודר (אמנון) מוזן שטערבן :
דא ער דורך אהבה זיין שוועשטר תמר הוט בישלאפן אונ׳ ביטרוגן
דרום הוט אים דר כוך זיין אונ׳ דיין אייגנר ברודר אבשלום דר שלגן
אונ׳ אך שטיט אין דר תורה ווער דא נעמט איין ווייב דז ערשט יאר
דר ברויכט ניט אין מלחמה צו גין אונ׳ איז פרייא פון אלים גאר :

דען

דען דיא תורה האט דען טעם אויך דער בייא טון אן שרייבן .
תאמר וועלט ער דאש ערשטי יאר אירגנץ טויט בלייבן :
אונ׳ דרום האט דיא תורה גיהיישן ער זאל בלייבן צו הויז דיש יאר .
אונ׳ וואלום ווילשטו מיך טיטן איך האב יוא ניקש גידינדיגט גאר :
אונ׳ וועלן איך שטערב זו בלייבט מיין ווייב איין (עגונה) פֿר זיצן .
אדר ווילשטו מיך דאלום טיטן דיך דו זי צון ווייב ווילשט נעמן אונ׳ ניצן
דוא הושט יוא שון טויזנט ווייבר אונ׳ ווילשט האבן נאך מער .
דאש פֿיל ווייבר נעמן וועלט דיך (לשוף) ברענגען אין אונ׳ עהר :
אונ׳ איך ארמש פֿיגליין האב יוא נייארט איין אייניציג ווייב .
דיא זעלביגי איז מיין אייניציג לעבן אונ׳ דיא זיל פֿון מיינם לייב :
אונ׳ וואלום ווילשטו מיך טיטן דיר איז דאך גאר וואול ביקאנט .
וויא דיא עופֿות פֿון מיינר משפחה האבן (רבקה) ביהיט פֿר שנד :
דא זיא טעטן איר (דם בתולים) פֿר וואלן אונ׳ צו דעקין .
אונ׳ וויא ווילשטו (שופֿך) מיין (דם) זיין אונ׳ אנטפלעקן :
(לבן ארץ אל תכסי דמי ואל תהא מקום לזעקתי :
עד שישקיף אלהים מן השמים וינקום את נקמתי :)
דיא ערד זאל ניט צו דעקן מיין (דם) אונ׳ זול קיין אורט ניט זיין .
ביז הש"י וועלט עז זעהן אונ׳ וועלט מיין (דם נוקם) זיין :
דא שלמה המלך האט גיהערט פֿון דעם פֿוגל דיא קלוגי וואלט .
ער לאכט אונ׳ ליז דען פֿוגל פטור אונ׳ ליז אין ווידר פֿליהן פֿארט :
ויהי אחרי הדברים האלה אונ׳ עש וואר נאך דען דאזיגן זאכין .
עש וואר ביקאנט אין עולם דז שלמה קונט אלי שפראכן :
דא קאם איין איש חשוב אונ׳ זיין קרוב בייא שלמה המלך צו גין .
דר וואלט אויך גערן די לשונות פֿון דיא עופֿות אונ׳ בהמות פֿר שטין :
ער באט גאר זער דז אים שלמה המלך זעלט אל דיא לשונות לערן .
אבר שלמה המלך טעט אויף דען זעלביגן זיין קרוב זער צערנן :
אבר דער מאן וואר אזוא לאנג מפֿציר אן שלמה המלך מיט ביט .
ביז עש אים שלמה המלך שון ווייטר קונט פֿר זאגן ניט :
שלמה המלך שפראך ענטליך איך ווייל דיר דיין ווילן טון .
אבר דוא זאלשט קיינם מענשן אין דער וועלט ניקש זאגן דר פֿון :
אן

אן וועלכן טאג אז דוא אייכם מענשן וווערט עטוואש זאגן דר פון
אם זעלביגן טאג וווערשטו שטערבן דאש ווערט זיין דיין לון :
דער מאן וואר דר מיט צו פרידן אונ׳ שלמה המלך לערנט אים אויז
אונ׳ דא ער אליש קונט דא גינג דער מאן ווידר נאך הויז :
ער קאם נ[א]ך הויז ער וואר קיינם מענשן ניקש (מגלה) זיין .
ער האט זיין אייגן אין פפערד אונ׳ אין אוקשן שטורק אונ׳ פיין :
אונ׳ אין ווייב אונ׳ אין הונד אונ׳ צוונציג היכר אונ׳ אין האן .
דאש וואר אליש וואש דא האט גיהאט זיין אייגנש דיזר מאן :
דער מאן אין מאל מיט זיין ווייב אין דען שטאל אריין טעט גין .
וואו דאש פפערד אונ׳ דער אוקש מיט אנדר דריכן טיטן שטין :
דא שפראך דאש פפערד צום אוקשן זאג מיר אין מאל איך ביט .
וויא איז עש דיר הייכט דר גאנגן וואורום בישטו אזוא זער מיד :
דער אוקש שפראך וויא זאל איך ניט זיין אזוא מיד אונ׳ אב גימאט .
ווייל מן מיט מיר אין גאנצן טאג אזוא שווער גיאקרט הוט :
מן גיט מיט מיר אונ׳ דר ברמיג אום אונ׳ מן טוט מיר מכות גענבן .
פר וואר מיין טויט ווער מיר שיר בעשיר אלז מיין זויאר לעבן :
דש פפערד שפראך איך וויל דיר אין גוטי (עצה) גענבן צו די זאכן .
דוא זאלשט הייכט אויף דען אובנט ניקש עשן זולשט דיך קרנק מכן :
זוא ווערט מן דיך מארגן ניט צו דער ארבייט נעמן טון .
דר ווייל קאנשטו דער היים בלייבן אונ׳ דיך אין טאג אויז רואן :
דר מאן הערט דש אליש צו וויא דז פפערד אונ׳ דר אוקש מיט אנדר.
טעטן ריידן דא לאכט דער מאן דא שפראך זיין ווייב צו אים צו הנד :
ליבר מאן וואורום טושטו לאכן זאג מיר דיא וואורהייט אן .
אבר דער מאן וואלט איר ניקש זאגן ער גינג אויז דען שטאל דר פון :
אויף דען אובנט קאם דער קנעכט אונ׳ שפראך צו זיינם הערן .
דער אוקש וויל ניקש עשין עש שייכט דז ער וויל קראנק ווערן :
דער מאן שפראך דיא ארבייט אויף דען פעלד מוז דאך זיין גיטאן .
דרום נעם דר ווייל דש פפערד אונ׳ לאז דען אוקשן דר היים שטאן :
דא נאם דער קנעכט דש פפערד אונ׳ אקרט מיט אים דען טאג .
אונ׳ דער אוקש בליב צו הויש אונ׳ וואושט פון קיינר פלאג :

דא

דא דער אוקש זאך זיין רמאות טעט אים פֿארטייל אין דער זאכן
דא אש ער ניט פֿיל אונ׳ טעט זיך נאך אלי טאג עטוואש קרנק מכין
אונ׳ דער הער וואושט עש וואול ווייל ער איר לשון טעט פֿר שטין
אבר ער וואלט זענן וויא זיך דאש פּפֿערד ווערט ווייטר ביגין
דש פּפֿערד גידאכט זיך וויא איז מיר גישענן וואז האב איך גטאן
ווייל איך האב דעם אוקש איין (עצה) געבן דרום מוז איך דראן
דאש פּפֿערד גינג נאך איין טאג אויף דיא ארבייט אונ׳ זיפֿצט דער
דען דיא ארבייט וואר אים גאר זויאר אונ׳ וואר אים גאר שווער
צו אובנט בראכט מן דאש פּפֿערד פֿון פֿעלד ווידר אין שטאל אריין
דא קאם דר מאן מיט זיין ווייב אונ׳ זיא גינגן אך אים שטאל היניין
דר מאן וואלט הערן וואז דז פּפֿערד ווייטר צום אוקשן ווערט זאגן
דר אוקש שפּראך צום פּפֿערד וואז האט זיך נייאש צו ג[ט]ראגן
דאש פּפֿערד שפּראך מיין ליבר אוקש איך האב גיהערט זאגין
דער הער ווייל דיך מארגן גיוויש לאזן שלאכטן אונ׳ צו טויט שלאגן
דען אונ׳זר הער זאגט דער אוקש עשט ניקש אונ׳ ער איז קרנק
איך פֿערכט מיך ער ווערט שטערבן אונ׳ ער ווערט ניט לעבן לנג
דרום איז בעשיר דז איך אים נאך צייטליך לאז שלאכטן באלד
אי ער שטערבט אונ׳ אי אים דער הענקיר פֿון היר אווענק האלט
דא דר אוקש דש הערט ער פֿינג גישוויכד אן צו פֿרעשן אונ׳ צו ביישן
ער שפּרונג אז איין גזונדר אונ׳ וואלט פֿר הונגר דען שטריק צו ריישן
דער מאן לאכט אונ׳ שפּראך צו דעם קנעכט גאר באלד
דאש ער גישוויכד דעם אוקשן נאך מער צו פֿרעשן געבן זאלט
אונ׳ מארגן זאל מן אים ווידר אין דיא ארבייט ברויכן אונ׳ פֿירן
דען ער איז ווידר גיזונד דאש קאן איך וואול מערקן אונ׳ שפּירן
אונ׳ דער מאן לאכט אונ׳ ער גינג ווידר אויז דען שטאל ארויש
אונ׳ גינג מיט זיין ווייב ווידר אין זיין שטוב אונ׳ הויז
דאש ווייב שפּראך מיין ליבר מאן איין זאך ווייל איך דיר פֿראגן
אונ׳ דוא זאלשט מירש ניט פֿר העלין אונ׳ דיא וואהרהייט זאגן
ווארום טושטו אלי צייט לאכן ווען דוא גיאשט אין דען שטאל
איך קאן ניט פֿר שטין וואש דאך דאש לאכין ביידייטן זאל

דער

דער מאן שפראך מיין ליבש ווייב איך טאר דיר עש ניט זאגן .
אזו באלד אז איך דירש זאג זוא האב איך אויז גילעבט מייני טאגן :
דאש ווייב שפראך דאש זיין נרישי רייד דיא דוא טושט זאגן .
זאג דוא מיר נייארט באלד וואש איך דיך טוא פֿראגין :
דער מאן שפראך ווילשטו האבן דז איך זאל שטערבן באלד .
זוא וויל איך דירש זאגן ווען דוא ניט האשט מיין לעבן האלד :
דאש ווייב שפראך דוא מאגשט שטערבן אדר לעבן נימר מער .
זוא וויל איך דאך ווישן וואש מיט דיין לאכֿן איז דער מער :
דער מאן שפראך גיב מיר נייארט צייט אייכן אייכציגן טאג .
מארגן וויל איך דיר רעכֿט ענטפֿרן אויף דייני פֿראג :
ווען איך יוא זאל שטערבן זוא לאז מיך דאך ערשט (צוואה) מאכֿן .
דאש ווייב שפראך איך וויל ווארטן ביז מארגן אונ׳ הוב אן צו לאכֿן :
דער מאן דער גינג אין זיין קאמיר אונ׳ זעצט זיך טרויאריג נידר .
זיין הונד דער ווער אויך טרויאיג אונ׳ הייליט אונ׳ יאמרט ווידר :
דען דר הונד דער וואושט גאר וואול דז זיין הער זול שטרבן מורגן .
דא קאם דער האן אויך אין דיא שטוב אריין צו גין אונ׳ זארגן :
דר האן דר שפראך אונ׳ טאנצט אונ׳ מיט הוכֿיר שטים ער קריאט .
ער שלוג מיט זייני פֿליגל אונ׳ מיט זייני פֿליגל ער גריכנש ארום וויאט :
דא שפראך דער הונד צום האן וויא איין עזותֿ פנים מוזטו זיין .
דו טושט שפריכנן אונ׳ טנצן אונ׳ אונ׳זרש הערן טויט גיט דיר ניט איין
ווייששטו דען ניט דז אונ׳זר הער זאל שטערבן דען מארגנדיגן טאג .
אונ׳ ו[ו]יא זאלשטו ניט אויך טרויארן אונ׳ זאלשט טרייבן גרושי קלאג:
דא שפראך דער האן צום הונד אונזר הער דער איז איין נאר .
ער לאזט זיך פֿון אייכן אייכציגן ווייב אזוא זער דרילן פֿר ווער :
אונ׳ איך האב צוונציג ווייבר ווען איך נייארט טוא דיא פֿליגל צוקן .
זוא מוזן זיך אלי מייני ווייבר שטראקט פֿאר מיר נייגן אונ׳ בוקין :
ווען אונ׳זר הער ווער קלוג זו זעלט ער נעמן אין די הנד איין שטאק .
אונ׳ זעלט זיין ווייב פֿיין דיכֿט דער מיט פריגלן אב :
דער מאן האט דאש אליש צו גיהערט אונ׳ פֿר שטאנדן גאר [וו]אול .
ער גידאכֿט זיך דער האן זאגט אמתֿ איך בין גיוועזן טול :
איך

איך וועל יוא א איין גרושר נאר וועל איך מיינם ווייב דש זעלט זאגן .
אונ׳ וועל איך שון שטערב טוט זיא דאך ניקש דער נאך פֿראגן :
אונ׳ דער מאן גינג צו בעט אונ׳ וואר דיא גאנצי נאכֿט אונ׳ זארגן .
ער שלאפֿט ביז אן דען העלין אונ׳ ליכֿטן מארגן :
דען אנדרן טאג קאם דאש ווייב ווידר בייא דעם מאן צו גין .
אונ׳ שפראך צו אים לאז מיך איין מאל ווישן אונ׳ לאז מיך פֿר שטין :
וואורום דוא האשט אלי צייט גילאכֿט בייא דיא בהמות אין שטאל .
דער מאן שפראך וועל עש יוא ניט אנדרשט זיין זאל :
דז דוא עש ווילשט ווישן וועל איך שון דריבר שטערבן זעלט .
ער נאם איין שטאק אין דיא האנד אונ׳ הוט זיך בייא איר גשטעלט :
אונ׳ שמירט זיא גידיכֿט אב דז זיא ניקש מער ביגערט צו ווישן :
אונ׳ זיא האט זיך באלד פֿאר אנגשט בישיטן .
ויהי אונ׳ עש וואר דא דער מאן האט אויז גילעבט זייני יאר :
דא רופֿט ער זיין ווייב אונ׳ אלי זייני קינדר פֿאר .
אונ׳ ער זאגט אינן דש מעשה וויא אים שלמה המלך הוט גילערנט :
אונ׳ ער הוט זייני קינדר אויך אלי דיא (לשונות) גילערנט .
אונ׳ פֿון זייני משפחה איז נאך הייכט אין ארץ ישראל איין מאן :
דער דיא לשונות פֿון די בהמות אונ׳ חיות אונ׳ עופֿות פֿר שטין קאן .
אונ׳ עז וואר איין מאל קאמן פֿיל חיות רעות אין דאש לאנד :
דיא טעטן צו ריישן פֿיל בהמות אין ארץ ישראל דען הייליגן לאנד .
דא קאם איין מאל איין ליב אונ׳ וואלט צו ריישן דידן מאן זיין קוא :
דא שפראך דיא קוא צום ליבן איך זאג דירש לאז מיך צו רוא .
דען דיא צייט איז קומן האשטו עש דען ניט פֿר נומן :
דאש (משיח) דער (גואל ישראל) וועלט בלד קומן .
אונ׳ עש שטיט גישריבן וועל דיא צייט פֿון דר (גאולה) וועלט זיין :
דא וועלט גרוש שלום צווישן דיא בהמות אונ׳ חיות זיין :
דער ליב וועלט קיין בהמה ניט מער צו ריישן אונ׳ פֿר צוקן .
נייאלט ער וועלט וויא איין קוא גראז עשן אונ׳ אב פֿפֿלוקן :
דא שפראך דר ליב צו דר קוא וויא ווישטו דז עז קומן איז דיא צייט
דאז ישראל וועלן דער ליזט וועלדן אונ׳ דער פֿרייאט :

דא

דא שפראך דיא קוא וויא איז ניט דיא (גאולה) פֿאר האנדן
עש זיין דאך אזוא פֿיל חסידים אונ׳ לומדים אין אלי לאנדן
דא שפראך דער ליב (כי עוד למועד) האט (דניאל) שון זאגן
דיא דאזיגי חסידים נעמן מעות איך טוא ניקש נאך דיא פֿראגן
דא שפראך דיא קוא וואו זעלטן דען דיא חסידים נאמן צו לעבן
ווען מן אינן ניט זעלט (מתנות אונ׳ מעות גענבן[1])
דא שפראך דער ליב (שונא מתנות יהיה) ווער מתנות הוט פֿייגט
דער ווערט לעבן ווען משיח ווערט קומן מארגן אדר הייגט
איין רעכטר חסיד גיהער ניט איין מאל איין (מטבע) צו קענן
אונ׳ גיהער זיך מיט וויניג לאזן פֿר גניגן אונ׳ זיך איין (עני) נענן
וגם אונ׳ אויך קען דר רעכטר (זמן גאולה) נאך ניט זיין
עש מוז ערשט איין (מלחמה אין ארץ צבי) קומן אריין
דאש מיינט (ארץ ישראל) וויא אין (סוף דנואל) טוט שטין
דאש אין דיא לעצטי צייטן איין נייאר (מלך) ווערט אויף שטין
דר ווערט ביצווינגן אונ׳ אויד פֿליכדרן גאנץ (מצרים אפֿריקא לנד)
דער נאך ווערט ער קומן מיט איין גרוש (חיל) אז אן (ים) איז זאנד
אונ׳ ער ווערט קומן מיט זיין פֿאלק אין (ארץ ישראל) אריין
דארטן שרייבט (דניאל) ווערט ערשט זיין (מפלה) זיין
דער נאך ווערט קומן דער (מלאך מיכאל) דער (שר)
אונ׳ ווערט בישיצן דאש הייליגי פֿאלק (ישראל) פֿון אלים (צר)
אונ׳ עש ווערט אזוא איין גרושי (צרה) זיין אונטר דיא לייט
אז נאך ניט איז גיוועזן אין (עולם) אין קיינר צייט
אונ׳ דען זוא ווערט קומן דער זעלביגי דער דא קומן זאל
אונ״ דען זוא ווערט דער פֿרייאט ווערדן דש הייליגי פֿאלק ישראל
(יהי רצון) עז זאל זיין דער ווילן צו פֿאר דען אייניגן גאט
דז זיין פֿאלק ישראל זאלן דר ליזט ווערן אויז שאנד אונ׳ שפאט
אונ׳ דיא זיך צו ישראל ביהעפֿט האבן זאלן אויך ווערן גידאכט
אונ׳ זאלן אויך אין (ארץ ישראל) ווערן אריין גיבראכט
דאש זאלן ווערן ווער גאר באלד אין אונזרן טאגן
דרויף וואלן מיר (אמן) זאגן

(א5)

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[1] (sic)

King Solomon's Deed

It is recognized and the whole world knows well
That God[2] had given to King Solomon great understanding.
King Solomon knew all of the sciences[3] of the world .
And all [the] languages, even how the beasts talk in the stable,
And how the animals speak with one another in the fields,
And how the birds speak with one another in the green forests.
King Solomon understood these languages very well.
Once, an incident with two birds was brought to his attention.
King Solomon had a fine garden standing in his castle;
On all kinds of pretty trees were all kinds of beautiful birds.
Once King Solomon looked through the window into the garden,
And he saw in the garden two small birds sitting in [the] shrubbery.
The one bird was a male, the other was a female.
In other words, the female was still a maiden[4], a year-and-a-half old.
The male was also still a young man, he wanted to have a wife.
He said to the maiden: 'Take me as your husband, give me your young body.
My heart is in love with you and burns as if on fire.
I will write you a big marriage-contract and write with paper.
I am a well-bred[5] [person] on my father's and mother's side.
My father was rabbi over all the birds in Lublin's forest,
And my mother's father was rabbi in the Cracow forest.
And I am clever, and knowledgeable and well-built.'
The maiden spoke to him: 'How does your pedigree help me?
Instead, tell me how you can make me happy.'

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[2]Hebrew acronym ברוך=י השם = ה"ש 'The Name Blessed Be He'.
[3]Hebrew origin words, could mean arts, sciences or simply wisdoms; Cf. I Kings 5:13.
[4]Hebrew, literally 'virgin'.
[5]Hebrew, literally 'one with a great pedigree'.

The male spoke: 'Wisdom will preserve her owners[6], as King Solomon says
The Wisdom is sustenance[7] for the human[8] all the days of his life.
I am a scholar and a hero even though I am small.
I can, in one hour, lay waste to King Solomon's castle.'
Thus, the maiden allowed herself to be persuade and took him as her husband
And the two birds soon married one another.
King Solomon saw and heard all this.
He thought to himself: 'The little bird can destroy my castle
And he can do this in one single hour,
While I built it with thousands of men over many years.'
King Solomon could not rest, he longed for the bird.
He soon caught the same bird with his cunning,
And he said to the bird: 'So, teach me your skill too.
How can you, in one single hour, demolish my entire castle?'
The bird spoke: 'My lord the king, I will tell you the truth.
I said this just to get the young maiden to be my wife.
But my lord the king, what could I, [a] small and weak bird, be able to do?
Therefore, let me fly again, and let me run back to my young wife.'
King Solomon said: 'You are indeed liable for the death penalty
Because you have triumphed[9] and had made a fool [out of] me.'
The bird said: 'My lord the king, how could I have known
That you heard me and that you understood all of my speech?'
And, also my lord King, you yourself have written in your books[10]
'Love spoils the line'[11] Love makes one distressed.
Love has no measure and no purpose and spoils everything.
Because of love your brother Amnon had to die[12];
Through love he slept with your sister Tamar and deceived her.
Therefore, your and his own brother Absalom killed him afterwards.
And also it stands in the Torah that who[ever] takes a wife, that first year
Is not required to go to war and is exempted from everything

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[6] Eccelsiastes 7:19.
[7] Proverbs 4:6, 7.
[8] Hebrew, lit. son of Adam.
[9] From the German *jauchzen*, to be triumphant.
[10] Hebrew, inferring books written in Hebrew, or holy books.
[11] See Proverbs 10:12
[12] II Samuel 13.

And the Torah provided the reason [for this exemption],
In the event[13] that he would die somewhere in the first year,
And therefore the Torah commands that he remain at home the first year.
Why will you kill me? I have indeed not really sinned,
And if I die my wife will remain an 'anchored' wife[14].
Or will you, therefore, kill me so you can take her as a wife?
You already have a thousand wives[15] and you still want more?
To take so many wives will in the end bring you dishonor,
And I, poor little bird, have but one single wife[16]
The same is my life and the purpose of my life.
Why do you want to kill me? It is well-known to you
How the birds from my family saved Rebecca from shame[17]
That they did keep and cover her virginal blood.
How will you spill and reveal my blood?

(Therefore the earth will not cover my blood and not be the place of my cries[18]

Until God looks from the Heavens and is my vengeance)

The earth shall not cover my blood and shall not be a place
Until God Blessed Be He sees this and becomes my vengeance.'
Thus King Solomon heard the wise words from the bird.
He laughed and released the bird and let him fly after all.
(And it was after these things.) It was after these things
It was well-known in the world that King Solomon knew all languages.[19]
An important man, one of King Solomon's relatives came,
Who also wanted to be able to learn the languages of the birds and the beasts.
He begged King Solomon to teach him the languages,
But King Solomon became very angry with this relative of his.
But the man urged and begged King Solomon so long,
Until King Solomon could no longer say no to him.
King Solomon said finally 'I will do as you will
But you can tell no person in the world about it.

[13]If the word is intended to actually be תאמר then this can be translated as 'You could/will say'.

[14]I.e., an 'anchored' or abandoned wife, who has no verification of her husband's demise and therfore is unable, according to Jewish law, to remarry.

[15]See I Kings 11:3.

[16]Compare II Samuel 12:1-5.

[17]See also Genesis 24:64.

[18]Job 16:18; cf. Leviticus 17:13

[19]Based in part on

On the day that you say something about this to one person,
On the same day, you will die. This will be your punishment.'
The man was pleased with this, and King Solomon taught him.
Thus when he knew everything, the man went home again.
He came home; he revealed nothing to anyone.
He owned a horse and an ox — strong and fine,
And a wife, one dog, twenty chickens and one rooster.
Once the man went with his wife into the stable
Where the horse and the ox stood with one another.
The horse said to the ox 'Tell me, once, I ask
What happened to you today that you are so tired?'
The ox said 'How shall I not be so tired and weary
Since I plowed so hard for an entire day.
They go with me and without mercy beat me.
Indeed, my death would be almost better than my bitter life.'
The horse spoke 'I will give a good [piece of] advice about these things.
Tonight you should not eat in order to make yourself sick,
So that tomorrow they will not take you to work.
Meanwhile, you can stay home and rest a day.'
The man heard everything that the horse and the ox
Said to one another. The man laughed. The wife said immediately to him:
'Dear husband, why do you laugh. Tell me the truth.'
But the man would tell her nothing. He went out of the stable.
In the evening the servant came and said to his master
'The ox will not eat. It seems that he will be sick.'
The man said 'The work in the field must be done.
Therefore take the horse in the meantime and the ox will stay home.'
The servant took the horse and plowed with him the day,
And the ox stayed at home and knew no torment.

Thus, the ox saw that his deceit profited him in these matters,
So he did not eat much and made himself sick with something
every day.
The master knew this well because he understood their language,
But he wanted to see what the horse would do later.
The horse thought to himself 'How did this happen to me? What have I done?
Because I gave the ox advice, I must become lean.'
The horse went to work one day and sweated a lot.
The work was very bitter for him and was very hard.
In the evening they brought the horse from the field back to the stable.
The man came with his wife and also they went into the stable.
The man wanted to hear what the horse would later say to the ox.
The ox said to the horse 'What has happened to you?'
The horse said 'My dear ox, I have heard [it] said
[That] in the morning the master will surely have you slaughtered and killed[20];
That our master said "The ox does not eat and he is ill.
I fear he will die and will not live long
Therefore it is better that, in time, I have him butchered soon
Than he dies and the butcher[21] keeps him for a long time."'
The ox heard this; he began quickly to eat and drink
He sprang like a healthy [ox] and would tear the rope from hunger.
The man laughed and said quickly to the servant
That he should give the ox more to eat
And in the morning he should be led to work again,
'Since he is well again, I can mark [this] full well.'
The man laughed and went back out of the stable
And went with his wife back into his courtyard and house.
The wife said 'My dear husband, I would ask you one thing,
And you should not hide from me and tell me the truth.
Why do you laugh every time you go into the stable?
I cannot understand what the laughter means.'

[20] Literally, 'knocked dead'.
[21] Literally, 'executioner'.

The man said 'My dear wife, I am not permitted to tell you.
As soon as I tell you, I have lived out my days.'
The wife said 'This is foolish talk, what you have said.
Indeed tell me quickly what I have asked you.'
The man said 'Would you have me quickly die?
If I tell you then I do not keep my life.'
The wife said 'You may die or live never again,
I want to know what is with your laughter.'
The man said 'Give me but one single day's time
Tomorrow I will answer your questions correctly.
If I do indeed die, allow me first to make a will.'
The wife said 'I will wait until morning,' and began to laugh.
The man went into his chamber and sat down sadly.
His dog was also sad and whined and lamented
Because the dog knew well that his master would die in the morning.
The rooster also came into the courtyard and became anxious.
The rooster spoke and danced and with a loud voice he crowed.
He flapped his wings and with is wings he easily wandered about.
The dog said to the rooster 'What an impudent one you must be.
Do you not know that our master will die at day-break?
And how can you not be sad and lament?'
The rooster spoke to the dog 'Our master is a fool.
He lets himself be drilled by one single wife
And I have twenty wives. If I but twitch my wings
All my wives must immediately bow low before me.
If our master were clever he would take a stick in his hand
And thrash his wife soundly[22].'
The man heard everything and understood well.
He thought to himself 'The rooster says the truth. I have been insane.

[22]Literally, 'fine densely beat his wife'.

I would really be a big fool if I tell my wife
And if indeed I do die, she will ask nothing.'
The man went to bed and was without [a] worry the whole night.
He slept until the bright and light morning.
The next day his wife came back to the man
And said to him 'Let me know for once, and let me understand
Why you laughed at the animals every time [you were] in the stable.'
The man said 'If it cannot be any other way,
And you want to know even if I should die because of it.'
He took a stick in his hand and stood by her
And covered her thickly so she would not want to know anymore
And from fear she immediately lost control over her bodily functions.
And it was And it was that the man had lived out his years.
And he called for his wife and all his children.
He told them the story of how King Solomon taught him,
And he also taught his children all the languages.
And from his family there is until today one man in Israel
Who is able to understand the languages of the beasts and the animals and the birds.
Once a lot of wild beasts[23] came into the country,
Tearing up animals in the Land of Israel, the Holy Land.
Once a lion came and wanted to rip this man's cow.
So the cow said to the lion, 'I say to you, leave me in peace
The time has come, have you not yet grasped this?
The Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel will soon come,
And it is written: when it is the time of Redemption
There will be a great peace between the animals and the beasts;
The lion will no longer rip nor tear any cattle;
Rather he will become like a cow, eating and plucking grass.'[24]
The lion spoke to the cow 'How do you know that the time has come
That Israel will be redeemed and freed?'

[23] Literally, 'evil animals'.
[24] cf. Isaiah 11:6, 7.

Thus spoke the cow, 'How it not be the [time of] redemption?
Are there not a lot of pious and learned [men] in all the countries?'[25]
The lion spoke, 'Because more to the time?' Daniel did indeed say
These same pious ones take money. I do nothing when they ask.'
The cow said, 'How should the pious make a living
If one does not give gifts and money[26] to them?'
The lion said, 'He will be a hater of gifts'[27]. Whoever dislikes gifts
Will live if the Messiah comes, [be it] tomorrow or today.
A proper pious person is not concerned, at any time, with having[28] a single coin,
And concerns himself little with pleasure and calls himself a pauper.
And also the proper time of Redemption cannot yet be
There must be a war in the land of the gazelle[29] first—
This means the land of Israel as it says at the end of Daniel[30]—
That in the last days a new king will rise up
Who will subdue and plunder all of Egypt, [in the] land of Africa.
Afterwards he will come with a great army, like sand on the shore[31]
And he will come with his people into the land of Israel.
There, writes Daniel, will his first defeat be.
Afterwards, the Angel Michael, the guardian angel will come
And will protect the holy people [of] Israel from all the enemy[32].
And there will be such a great misfortune among the people,
As has not yet happened in the world at any time.[33]
Then the same who shall come, will come
And then the holy people [of] Israel will be freed.
It shall be [His] will; It shall be the will of the one God
That his people [of] Israel shall be delivered from shame and mockery.
And they who have joined with Israel shall also be remembered,
And shall also be brought into the Land of Israel.
This shall be really soon in our days.
Therefore, we shall say Amen.'

[25] Isaiah 11:9.
[26] Daniel 11:35.
[27] cf. Proverbs 15: 27.
[28] Literally, 'not concerned with knowing....'
[29] i.e., Israel.
[30] Daniel 11:16.
[31] Literally, 'like sand on the (sea)'.
[32] Daniel 12:1.
[33] Daniel 12:1.

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