What They Served at the Banquet for the Wedding of Shim'on Nathan's Daughter: Considerations on the Sense of tsvi, in Sources from East and West

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This article explores lexicological and anthropological aspects of a particular Hebrew zoonym: the various senses in which the word צבי– tsvi – was understood in Hebrew sources from recent centuries. In his Hebrew-language zoology of Mammals, under the entry for *tsvi*, Sholem Abramowitsch (aka Mendele Mokher Sforim) was clearly describing the roe-deer, and this is the sense in which it is used in a novel by SY. Agnon, set in Galicia. In current Israeli usage, however, the word conforms to the sense it had in the Hebrew Bible and also how the word was understood within Middle Eastern Jewish communities, namely, that צבי – *tsvi* – refers to the gazelle, and was described as such in a popular halakhic compendium. As recently as the first half of the 20th century, gazelles were raised by some Iraqi Jews, even in their urban homes, a circumstance that was described in a passage in that popular halakhic work. We take our cue for this discussion from an episode in Agnon's novel.

Introduction

"What did Gitl cook, and what did Čičikov eat?" is the title of a Hebrew article by Itamar Even-Zohar, published in the first few pages of the October 1976 issue of *HaSifrut*. Our present study uses a literary text as a springboard for an examination of the lexicon of wild ruminants from an anthropological perspective within Jewish studies.

In this article, we contrast how the Biblical Hebrew name for "gazelle" was understood by European and Middle Eastern Jews. Our

concerns are lexicological and anthropological. While we will be broaching the issue by considering an episode from a novel by Agnon, we are not so much interested in the literary function of the details of the banquet as in the anthropological and lexical aspect, which is our more general thrust. Our discussion of this literary episode is focused on what it says about the "horns" – or rather the antlers – placed on the table as a trophy, befitting a particular sense of *tsvi*, the one current among Jews in Eastern Europe.

Tsvi as meat served at a Jewish wedding:

Setting the scene

The Hebrew-language novelist and author of short stories, Shmuel Yosef Agnon, is known by the acronym of his Hebrew initials as Shai Agnon. He was born Samuel Josef Czaczkes in Buczacz, Galicia, in 1888, and died in Jerusalem in 1970. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966. Agnon lived in Germany from 1913 to 1924, and in Palestine both before that (1907 to 1913) and afterwards. Agnon has an episode, in his Hebrew novel *The Bridal Canopy* (הכנסת כלה: 1931), set in what can be reconstructed as the early 1820s. The Hebrew title of the novel, *Hakhnasát Kalláh*, literally means "Making a bride enter", meaning "Welcoming a bride" or "Bringing about a marriage". Several critical essays on this novel are reprinted in Barshai (1992: 1–93). There exists an American annotated edition (Holz 1986) of the Hebrew text of *The Bridal Canopy*, an edition which not only deals with the work itself but also considers its historical, sociological and geographical background.

Agnon was already living in Palestine when this novel, set in Polish and then Hapsburg Galicia, was published. The fact that Eastern European Jewish culture – as well as Eastern European Hebrew usage – are reflected in the book, is central to our discussion here. The novel is organised as a frame story with embedded narratives, many of which are separate, distinct episodes, connected by their characters. The frame story device employed in Agnon is of pan-European derivation, even though thoroughly meandering texts in the Jewish tradition are already found in the Talmud.[1] In Hebrew, the device of the frame story proper was first applied in mediaeval Spain. Based on Arabic models, the device is ultimately of Indian origin. It was imported into Europe through "the overwhelmingly one-way traffic of seminal commodities, artefacts and ideas that flowed westward from the South Asian subcontinent between at least 3000 B.C.E. and

1400 C.E. Along this stream […] were borne the Gypsies, the game of chess, the mathematical concept of zero and the notation with which to use it, the literary device of the Frame Story, and a flood of stories to stock it" (Perry 2003: 63).

In Agnon's novel which we are considering, the protagonist of a few of the embedded stories, related by characters of the frame story, is a notable who — even though he plots to sabotage a forthcoming wedding, and out of vindictiveness tries to trap the daughter of another character in an unsuitable marriage — is outwardly perceived to be scrupulous in his Jewish orthopraxy. He is a member of Poland and Lithuania's autonomous representation of the Jews (the Diet of the Four Lands, *Va'ad Arba' Aratsot*, ועד ארבע ארצות). In 1764, Poland's Sejm passed a resolution for the liquidation of the central and land organisation of the Jews. Therefore, the narrated time must be prior to that date.

Let us consider, in Book One, Chapter Eleven of the novel, Agnon's description of the wedding, during which the young man whom the protagonist assumed was completely lacking in education, gives a superb speech on *Divrei Torah*, religious matters, and therefore, by the norms prevailing in that society, turns out to be a brilliant prospect as a bridegroom. The protagonist, a childless notable, sponsored this orphan from out of town, whom he raised in his home while denying him an education. Nevertheless, unbeknown to the host, the youngster had been receiving free tuition from an excellent teacher, and the pupil had responded very well to his teaching, becoming in turn a luminary. This quality of his is only revealed during the learned speech he gives at his wedding banquet.

Thus, the glowing qualities that his host and apparent "benefactor" had mischievously ascribed to him while arranging for his marriage to the only daughter of a former opponent who now is pathetically eager to please him, turn out to be true and even exceeded. The bridegroom obtains a rabbinic chair right away, there at the banquet, as the right people were listening: invitees who, unknowingly, were intended to be the witnesses of his and his father-in-law's shame. Nobody is more surprised than the prominent "benefactor", but in these circumstances, he must hide his disappointment. He had expected to gloat once his "adoptee" would have been revealed to be an ignoramus by his inability to deliver the speech expected of a bridegroom with a rabbinic

education. Yet once the brilliant speech has been made, his sponsor can do nothing but accept the congratulations of those present. And oh, the secret teacher is among the invitees, and he too receives a well-deserved position as a result.

In this story, the narrator is omniscient. What may surprise an attentive reader is that it is one of the characters in the novel's frame story who, at another banquet, relates this embedded narrative omnisciently. Omniscience, by literary convention, would have not been surprising, had the narrator been the author. We are not told how, in the universe of the novel's narrative(s), anybody other than the hypocritical and actually wicked notable had become aware of his motives and his full *modus operandi*. Still, in the frame story, the notable is only referred to with deference, as a remarkable communal leader of old.

The magnate's gift of a not-yet slaughtered *tsvi* for the wedding

The gentile magnate who is a business associate of Shim'on Nathan, the prominent member of the Jewish community who is about to marry off his only daughter, makes a gift of food: large fish which are carried inside a cart, and also a ***tsvi***, arguably a ***roebuck*** (Capreolus capreolus) walking in front of the cart, with a wreath of red sweet peppers (i.e., paprika fruits, pimiento) on its horns. The gentile aristocrat also sends his cook, either because he is in charge of the nobleman's kitchen, or because he can advise as to how to prepare the exotic meat, the *tsvi*.

Later on, during the wedding banquet, while about to commence his *derashah*, the bridegroom is described, staring at the horns of the *tsvi* which are standing on the table, with various things hanging from them. This indicates that there was no problem in eating the *tsvi*.

One interesting aspect of this fictional narrative is that it appears that the *tsvi* is slaughtered at the same time as the other meat animals are, in preparation for the banquet. Yet, veal, lamb or chicken are more tender than the meat of game such as deer or gazelle, or for that matter pheasants as well. Game is kept until it is "high", that is to say, one waits until it starts to rot before using it; until that moment, the meat is hung. The meat of deer is "well-high" when it turns green, which is a few days after it has become "high". Some prefer deer meat only to be cooked when it has become green.

It is quite uncharacteristic for Jewish cuisines to be faced with the need to keep meat until it is "high", and it is quite possible that this aspect of the matter eluded Agnon when he was writing the relevant passage. Yet, bear in mind that actually, beef, unlike veal, is also typically left hanging for one week after slaughter in present-day Britain and elsewhere.[2]

Moreover, Agnon's authorial freedom need not have been fettered by such realistic considerations. The nobleman had sent the live *tsvi* as a gift and sent his cook as well, to advise how to prepare and cook its flesh. As the magnate's own cook was involved, it is unlikely that the live animal would have been sent too late, just shortly before the banquet. More plausibly, it would have been sent a few days earlier, early enough for the slaughtered meat to become "high".

Kislev (1987) has discussed the identity of worms or insects found in vegetable crops, such as the *zizin* found in lentils, mentioned in early rabbinic sources, and how rabbinic authorities until the early modern period have dealt with the problem of worms or insects being found, for example in cheese. Kislev (1987: 90) also mentions that deer or gazelle meat is hung in the air for a few days until it is "high", or then for a few more days until it becomes green. Enzymes and microorganisms are active during that period, and these must be ascribed responsibility for making the meat "high".

Kislev mentions this because typically, while the meat is left hanging, flies leave their eggs in it, and these have time to develop. Those who then eat the meat, whether roasted or boiled, typically eat it along with the worms inside it. As generally the people eating such food are not Jewish, they are not faced with problems concerning the effects on the *kosher* status of the meat with such worms being inside it. These are worms that have developed in the meat after it was slaughtered as opposed to worms found inside the animal when it was still alive, and there are interesting *halakhic* considerations that Kislev addresses, although his main concern is with worms and insects found in crops, and to a lesser extent in cheese.

A close examination of Agnon's *tsvi* in relation to the banquet

As we shall see, to Eastern European Jews, *tsvi* was a name for the roe-deer, whereas in Biblical Hebrew, as well as for Middle Eastern

Jews, the sense is “gazelle”. The horns of these two species are shaped differently. In the description of the horns of the *tsvi* standing on the table, there appear to be things dangling down from them. In Israel, *tsvi* is what the gazelle is called, but the gazelle does not live in Europe, and its horns do not have branches: if you make them stand on a table, you would not have anywhere to hang things on, in the manner described in the passage quoted from Agnon.

ועדיין קולם של בהמות ועופות גועה מבית השחיטה.
גלגל עגלה מנסר ברחובה של עיר והעגלה מלאה ירקות.
וצבי הולך לפניה וקרניו מצופות ירקות ועטרת של פלפל אדום בראשו.
וטבח בית הפריץ הולך אחריה.
ושניהם הצבי והירקות מתנה הם מן הפריץ למשתה בתו של שמעון נתן.

> And still, the voices of beasts and fowl resounded from the abattoir. The wheel of a cart shrieks in a street in town, and the cart is laden with vegetables. A *tsvi* precedes it, its horns are covered with vegetables, and a crown of red peppers is on its head. The cook from the magnate’s house follows the cart. Both things, the *tsvi* as well as the vegetables, are a present from the magnate, for the [wedding] banquet of the daughter of Shim‘on Nathan.[3]

Moreover, children are described reciting biblical verses about the *tsvi*, which is not very realistic– whereas children running out to see the *tsvi* is realistic indeed. As for the wedding banquet:

ועדיין היה החתן יושב ושותק כשהוא מסתכל בקרני הצבי
שהיו זקופות על השולחן ועליהן כל מיני מגדים

> The bridegroom was still sitting in silence, staring at the horns of the *tsvi*, which were standing upright on the table, with various kinds of foodstuffs upon them.

A possible problem with this, yet one which can be overcome, is that the horns or antlers of the roebuck are rather small, although this depends on age. Each horn has from one bifurcation when the animal is younger, to three branches. According to Dor (1965), from the fifth year on, they no longer grow any further branches beyond the third one. The horns reach a length of 40 cm.

At the symbolic level: the gifts dangling down from the horns of the *tsvi*, the centrepiece on the table at the wedding banquet

"What is the significance of the pyramid of fruit which confronted Elizabeth Bennet at Pemberly?" asks Maggie Lane in *Jane Austen and Food* (Lane 1995); what is the role of alimentary symbolism in James Joyce's creative process, as displayed in *Ulysses*? This second question is addressed by Lindsay Tucker in *Stephen and Bloom at Life's Feast* (Tucker 1984).

In the episode we have been considering, from *The Bridal Canopy*, the father of the bride just cannot imagine what his former enemy, the sponsor of the bridegroom, has been planning in order to put him to shame. Friends and business associates of the father of the bride have been sending presents, and so too did the Polish magnate who had sent the *tsvi*, whose horns now stand on the table at the banquet, indeed its centrepiece.

Before the bridegroom gives his speech, he is sitting in silence, staring at the horns of the *tsvi*, from which all sorts of *megadim*, all sorts of good things, are dangling down. Whether or not he is going to deliver a masterly speech will determine his fate and the fate of the bride, and it will also determine whether the father of the bride might incur a total loss of face. This is something that the bride's father is not suspecting, as he was assured that the young man is a genius. The plan of his nemesis is that the bridegroom would fail the test miserably, and the bride's father would be socially destroyed. It is not out of the question that in such a situation, even though this is not said explicitly, the father of the bride could suffer a heart attack and leave this world for good.

Apparently, to the schemer, the gloating he is already savouring is an an added bonus to the pleasure to be derived from the disgrace of the bridegroom and the father-in-law. As for himself, he is childless and he has been raising an adolescent, who is not his son, in his home. Should this recipient of his "kindness" prove to be a disappointment, this would not be as damaging to him as if it were actually his own son.

An author so attentive as Agnon was to the treasures hidden in rabbinic Hebrew, and moreover, an author to whom symbolic meaning meant much, having inserted into the story the horns of the *tsvi* as the

centrepiece on the table, he could not but have intended to fully evoke a Mishnaic expression that is very well known: *qarnei ha tsvi*, "the horns of the *tsvi*", which represents precariousness and utter jeopardy. Place your money on the horns of the *tsvi*, and you'll soon be parted from it. In the Mishnah, at Kethubboth 13:2, we find:

הניח מעותיו על קרן הצבי

He has put (*hinníaḥ*) his coins (*ma'otav*) on the horn of the *tsvi*.

Jastrow's dictionary (1903: 1258, s.v. *tsvi*) explains: "he has put his money on a deer's[4] horn, i.e. he cannot reclaim the unauthorised expense". In the episode from Agnon that we are analysing, the bride's father will incur an irretrievable loss, or, at any rate, this is what his nemesis expects to happen.

There is more to it. Another locus of the expression "the horn of a *tsvi*" is found in the *Tosefta*, at *Gittin*, 2:4, as well as in the Palestinian Talmud, at *Gittin* 2, 44b, bottom: a rather awkward medium for writing a letter of divorce is the horn of a *tsv*, though it is not ontologically impossible to write text on a horn. Consequently, the Sages have discussed such a possibility, writing: כתבו על קרן של צבי — "if he wrote a letter of divorce on the horn of a deer, and cut it off and gave it to her …" (Jastrow 1903: 1258).

This, crafting of symbolic elements in the narrative by Agnon befits the situation as envisaged by the schemer: this marriage is going to fail immediately at the wedding. The schemer, the narrator, and the reader are aware that this is what is supposed to happen. The schemer, unlike the narrator and the reader, is unaware that the bridegroom has received excellent tuition free of charge, from a teacher who had known his real father. Yet Agnon creates suspense: when everybody expects the bridegroom to stand up to give a speech, he is still sitting down, and staring at the horns of the *tsvi*, on which the *megadim* "depend" in the etymological sense — of being supported and dangling down from them — just as everything is going to revolve on how impressive the speech would be.

Agnon has us see, between the two covers of the same book, what a failed wedding is like, when a bridegroom fails to deliver a duly brilliant speech. In fact, in another embedded story, in the same novel,

Agnon relates that a secular Jew who, when an adolescent, was a talented pupil of rabbinics and therefore was the intended son-in-law of an important personage. At the wedding, he had to pass the last test before the *verba solemnia* were pronounced, so he would become a married man. At the very moment when the rabbis present were assessing him, his mind was distracted with thoughts about the daughter of the woman in whose house he was lodging.

Another boy provides the right answers and marries the girl, whereas the boy who had failed went on to fail to marry even the socially less desirable daughter of his landlady. Having become secular (this is Galicia in the 1820s, unlike the much earlier narrated time of the story about the *tsvi*), he had his gentile maidservant laugh at the itinerant Reb Yudl, the devout and naïve protagonist of the novel, who never even trims his beard. In the end, when the impecunious Reb Yudl is able, against the odds, to marry off his eldest daughter to a rich boy (a cock, running away, causes the girl to discover a treasure), we learn that the secularist we had met before received his just desserts, so to speak: his maidservant made false accusations against him, and her accomplices took off with his possessions.

Tsvi, between the Lexicon and the Onomasticon:

On the *tsvi* in Hebrew sources from Europe

What do other Hebrew sources of Eastern European writers tell us about the *tsvi*, in their own usage of Hebrew? Let us consider, first of all, a Hebrew zoology book from 1862, a copy of which was, it has been reported in recent scholarly literature, found in the possession of the famous and much revered Rabbi Yosef Ḥayyim of Baghdad. This is the important Hebrew popular zoology work by Sholem Yankev Abramowitsch, the famous writer Mendele Mokher Sforim (ca. 1837–1917). An innovator in Hebrew zoonymy, he "spent more years on *Natural History* than on any of his novels" (Aberbach 1993: 79). Abramowitsch reworked a book by Harald Lenz. His three Hebrew volumes covered Mammals (1862), Birds (1866), and Reptiles (1872).

Mordechai Zalkin (2005: 267) says of Abramowitsch : "One of the key figures among these compilers of popular science was Shalom Jacob Abramowitsch, better known as Mendele Mokher Sefarim. [...] [I]n the early 1860s he began publishing his comprehensive *Toledot ha ṭeva*ʿ (History of nature), a Hebrew translation of various works on natural sciences by Harald Othmar Lenz, Alfred Edmund Brehm, Philip

Jacob Beumer, and Christoph Gottfried Andres Giebel." Abramowitsch's work was to become an important and influential landmark on naming animals in Modern Hebrew.

In the volume on Mammals, Abramowitsch has an entry on ha-*tsvi*, and this clearly is about the roebuck (Abramowitsch 1866: 413-415). The scientific name is given there as "C. capreolus", namely the now obsolete *Cervus capreolus*, the name now in use being *Capreolus capreolus*. This is the roebuck.

The roebuck used to be the only member of the *Cervidae*, the deer family, to be found in the Land of Israel. It was localised on Mt Carmel. It became extinct in 1912, owing to hunting pressure: a butchery in a local town of Christian "Templars" from Germany had retained the services of Druze hunters to ensure a supply of roebuck meat. The current Hebrew name of the roebuck is *ayyal ha Karmel* (אַיַּל־הַכַּרְמֶל "the deer of Mount Carmel").

It is now clear that the name *tsvi* in Biblical Hebrew denotes the gazelle rather than the deer. The gazelle belongs to the family *Bovidae*, along with goats, sheep, cattle, and antelopes. There are two species of the genus *Gazella* in Israel: the so-called "*tzvi* of the Negev" (*G. dorcas*), and the "common *tzvi*" (*G. gazella*), found also elsewhere in Israel, the horns of which are closer to each other. The twenty or so species of *Gazella* range from tropical and northern Africa to the Middle East, and from there to India and Siberia. None is found in the wild in Europe.

Linguistic usage in Hebrew from Europe varies. Presumably in mediaeval Spain, Arabic-speaking Hebrew poets may have been thinking of the *gazelle* from Arabic poems, as well as of biblical references, or of species found in Spain, such as, on the mountains, the chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), whose name in Spanish is *gamuza* or *robezo*. The chamois is not found south of Anatolia, and therefore it is not found in Israel, where it is called in Modern Hebrew the "*ya'el* (ibex) of the Alps". The chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) is called *chamois* in French and English, but *Wild Gams* in German. In Italian, the male is called *camoscio*, but the female, *camozza*.

As in Europe there are no gazelles, in European Hebrew sources from recent centuries, especially from Eastern Europe, the name *tzvi*

was applied to the roebuck, a slender member of the family *Cervidae*. As we have seen, when Agnon mentions the *tsvi* at the banquet, he is referring to a cervid, not to the gazelle. Importantly, this appears to be the roebuck, which is of slighter build than the deer more often referred to in European popular culture, namely the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*).

What Abramowitsch says about the horns of roe deer

In Abramowitsch's book on Mammals the entry concerning *Cervus capreolus*, which in Hebrew he was referring to as the *tsvi*, makes the following statement about the horns (1862: 413–414):

> קרני הצבי העולות על ראשו בפעם ראשונה, תרוממנה כרמחים, מהבציר הראשון להולדו עד תחלת חדש ניסן משנה השנית באורך שתים שלש אצבעות, והן מכוסות מלמעלה בקליפה, אשר יחכך אותה ביותר בעצי־מחט לחים..., ומראה הקרנים הקטנות האלה בעת ההיא חום־בהיר, ואז יקרא הצבי בשם בן־הרומח (שפיעסבאקק). בחדש כסלו הבא ישליך מעל ראשו את העוקצים או הקרנים הראשונות, ועד חדש ניסן תעלה על ראשו קרן גדולה וענפה אשר לכל אחד מבדיה יש שני חדודים בולטים הדומים לקלשון, ולכן זה שמו אשר יקראו לו בעל־הקלשון (נאבעלבאָקק). בבַציר הבא תעלה על מקום הקרן הזאת קרן אחרת, אשר מכל אחד מבדיה יצאו שלשה חדודים ומעתה לא ירבו עוד מספר החדודים בשנים הבאות, אמנם תחתית בדי הקרן (הנקראת שושנה), אשר מלפנים בשנה השנית היתה גבוהה מהראש חצי האצבע, הנה עתה היא הולכת הלוך וקרב יותר אל הגלגולת, והעבעבות והדוּרים ירבו עליה למאד, הצב יקרא אז רק בשם צפיר (באָקק) לבד. קרני הצבי רעות תואר הנה לפעמים.

Before we offer an English translation, note that Abramowitsch has replaced the months indicated in Harald Lenz's German source with Hebrew months; that he refers to the autumn by the term for "vine harvest"; and that he provides literal Hebrew translations from German for the various stages of the growth of the male roe deer. Moreover, quite interestingly, once the earliest, separate antlers fall off, the subsequent ones always grow out of a "rose", which Abramowitsch renders as *shoshannah*. Therefore, he refers to both antlers in the singular, *qeren*[5], presumably because biblical references to horns that come in pairs are expressed in the singular. Either antler is referred to by the Hebrew noun bád ("branch"):

> The horns of the *tsvi* [roe deer] that rise on his head for the first time, would rise like daggers, from the first autumn following his birth to the beginning of the month of Nissan of the second year,

> the length being two to three inches, and they are covered from above with a protective covering, which he scratches extensively on wet conifers[6] … The colour of those little horns, at that time, is light brown, and then the *tsvi* is called *ben haromaḥ* (*Spiessbock*). During the next month of Kislev, he throws the points, or his first horns, off his head, and by the month of Nissan, a large branched horn grows on his head, such that either one of its branches has two protrusions (*ḥiddudim*: pointed ends) resembling a fork, and then he is called by the name *ba'al haqilshon* (Gabelbock). The next autumn, instead of this horn, a different horn grows, such that out of each branch, three branches (pointed ends) emerge, and thereafter, the number of the branches would not increase in subsequent years. Actually the base of the branches of the horn (called a "rose"), that earlier on, in the second year, ascended above the head half an inch, now comes closer and closer to the skull, and boils (*ava'bu'ot* [the initial '*ayin* instead of *aleph* is a typographical error in the book]), and protuberances multiply on it, and at this time the *tsvi* is called just a *tsafir* (buck: Bock). The horns of the *tsvi* are sometimes ungainly.

As we have already noted, in the mountains of Europe there is also a species referred to in Hebrew as יְעֵל הָאַלְפִּים, *Rupicapra rupicapra*, which is known in Italian as *camoscio*, Spanish as *gamuza* from Arabic, and in French and English as chamois (in Israel the skin is called, זֶמֶשׁ *zemesh* whereas in English it is called *chamois* or *shammy*). The horns of the chamois do not have branches but are hooked backwards. Only with difficulty could anything be hung on them. And finally, there is the steinbock or ibex from Europe: its horns are large and curved backwards.

Consider, in the second last sentence from the quotation block where we translated from Abramowitsch's Hebrew, the word "boils". The Hebrew word employed is *ava'bu'ot*. The Hebrew pronunciation as given here, *ava'bu'ot*, while translating the quotation from Abramowitsch, is the pronunciation current in Israeli Hebrew, rather than Ashkenazic *avabíes*. Abramowitsch was a Lithuanian Jew, who later in life settled in Odessa. While his terminology has had an enduring impact on the Hebrew language, it is as well to be aware that he would have pronounced the terms he introduced into the language somewhat differently from the way that they are sounded today.

Also consider the young roebuck, "called *ben haromaḥ*

(Spiessbock)". The Hebrew compound is Abramowitsch's neologism, partly patterned after the German term he mentions. Let us say something more about the German name *Spiessbock*, that Abramowitsch transliterates into Hebrew characters (Yiddish spelling), in parenthesis after the Hebrew name he coined for it, *ben haromaḥ* (literally: "the son of the dagger"). At present, in standard German, *Spiessbock* denotes the genus *Oryx* (English and French *oryx* and Italian orice), thus, a kind of animal[7] from Africa and the Middle East, but not occurring in the wild in Europe. This reflects the widened geographic horizon of our own generation: exotic animals have become no less familiar than European animals. Accordingly, the name *Spiessbock* is now specialised for the genus *Oryx*. Actually, the shape of its horns is such that it has been associated with the unicorn (see for example Godbey 1939). Not unlike the German name *Spiessbock* is the English name *scimitar-horned oryx* or *scimitar oryx*, of the North African species *Oryx dammah*.

Other examples of semantic shift for *tsvi* from Europe

Amar (2008) discusses the rabbinic tradition of identification of the *tsvi*. The older references clearly indicate that it is the gazelle, the evidence being in the Aramaic and Arabic terms used in translation, as against *ayyal* for "deer", that is, "any of the *Cervidae*". Spanish-born Abraham Ibn Ezra, even though he wandered through various European countries and apparently died in England, had knowledge concerning the identity of the *tsvi* that was shared with other Arabic-speaking Jews. This can apparently be gathered from his gloss to *Deuteronomy* 14:5, where he states: "*Tsvi* and *ayyal* are known, whereas the other ones [kinds of animals listed there] require a tradition (*qabbalah*)".

The absence of the gazelle from Europe caused a semantic shift in Europe, as can be seen from Rashi's gloss on *tsvi* at tractate *Ḥullin*, 59b, of the Babylonian Talmud:

> והרי צבי דאין [קרניו] מפוצלות – לא ידענא מאי קאמר דהא
> ודאי מפצלות הן, ונראה בעיני שמה שאנו קורין צבי לא היו הם
> קורין צבי, אלא אותן הנקראים שט"נבו"ק וקרנים שלהן אינן מפוצלין.

> Yet for the *tsvi*, whose horns are not branched, I do not know why it says that, as they certainly have branches, and it appears to me to be the case that what we call *tsvi* is not what

> they call *tsvi*, but those [animals] that are called *steinbock*, whose horns do not have branches.

From this we see that Rashi realised that the *tsvi* was not the deer, contrary to the usual identification among Jews in Franco-Germany, who were used to identifying it with ruminants whose horns have branches (that is, cervids). Yet, as knowledge of the gazelle was not available to him, while looking for a wild ruminant whose horns have no branches, he had to settle for a European mountain goat, the steinbock. Its name is, in Modern French, *bouquetin*, which is from Provençal *boc estain* or *boc estanc*, whereas Rashi's own Old French term is closer to the forms of the term as found in Germanic languages. Importantly, the Provençal etymology yields a literal sense ("a he goat with a firm foothold", *bouc au pied stable*) different from that of German *Steinbock* (which has to do with the rocks, on which the steinbock lives).

In French, *bouc* means "he-goat", and the scapegoat is called *bouc émissaire*. In present-day France, there exists the family name *Boutrolle d'Estaimbuc*, and in Mont-Saint-Aignan, there is a Rue Boutrolles-Estaimbuc, but more precisely: Rue Jacques Boutrolle d'Estaimbuc. In fact, *estaimbuc* (Italian *stambecco*) is an ancient regional French name for "steinbock", which standard French calls *bouquetin*.

In French, the female of the *bouquetin* is called both *bouquetin femelle*, and *étagne*, the latter related to the Provençal name of the steinbock. In present-day French, the *bouquetin* is more specifically called *bouquetin des Alpes*. In English, *Alpine ibex* refers to *steinbock*, while in Italian it is known as *stambecco*, but more precisely *stambecco delle Alpi*, or *stambecco alpino*. This is in distinction from the names for the species *Capra pyrenaica*: French *bouquetin d'Espagne*, German *Spanischer Steinbock*, Italian *Stambecco della Spagna*.

In given contexts, namely, in *materia medica*, the name *bocchettino*, an adaptation from French, used to occur in Italian; here is an entry from Cevasco (1840 vol. 2: 514), a book about Genoan lore and data: "SANG DE BOUC et de Bouquetin. *Sangue di Becco e di Bocchettino (Stambecco)*. C'est le sang de ces animaux qui a été desséché au soleil. Il est sec, dur, et difficile à réduire en poudre. *Employé en médecine*. Le Bouquetin, *Capra ibex*, en italien *Stambecco* ou *Capro selvatico*, est un mammifère, du genre des chèvres, rare aujourd'hui, qui ne se trouve que sur les sommités des Alpes".[8]

As we have mentioned, Rashi's interpretation of the Hebrew noun *tsvi*, an interpretation unrelated to the gazelle, considers that in Old French gentile culture (thus, in Rashi's places and times) there was awareness of the gazelle as being an exotic animal. Discussing how Old French epics represented antiquity, Guy Raynaud de Lage ([1961] 1976: 139) remarks that in some famous romances about Troy and even more about Alexander the Great, exotic details appear or are even prominent, "Dans le Roman de Troie, mais plus encore dans the *Roman d'Alexandre*, d'Alexandre de Bernai, l'exotisme se fair jour ou s'étale" (Raynaud de Lage [1961] 1976:139), such as when it comes to chariots or mounts. In the *Roman d'Alexandre*, III, 637–640, chariots have sickles rotating with their wheels, a sight unknown to the romance's original audience. In the *Roman de Troie*, v. 7905, the Chariot of King Fion is drawn by two camels. In the *Roman d'Alexandre*, III, we have "un prince Africain étrangement monté" :

> Moab, uns rois d'Aufrique, sist sor une gazele
>
> [Moab, a king from Africa, is mounted on a gazelle]
> (Raynaud de Lage [1961] 1976: 733).

Yet, we have seen, to Rashi the *tsvi* is not the gazelle, but the steinbock. The steinbock of Europe is a subordinate concept of "ibex", that also encompasses the *ya'el* (ibex) from the Land of Israel, and actually is from the same genus as the domestic goat, with which its cross-breeding gives fertile issue.[9]

Incidentally, the gazelle of sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa (now extinct in the latter) is the Dama Gazelle (*Gazella dama*), whereas the biblical *tsvi*, in the environmental context of the Land of Israel denotes the species *Gazella gazella*. In Maghrebine French, *cornes de gazelles* (literally, "horns of gazelles") denotes crescent-shaped biscuits coated in sesame seeds. It is unnecessary for the metaphor to be zoologically precise in this case, yet the genus *Gazella* is intended, albeit through the prism of connotations that *ghzāla* takes in Arabic-speaking cultures.

Evidence from standard co-occurrence of *Tsvi* from European Jewish naming practice

There is an anecdote about Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, related by Agnon in the story *The Birth of that Righteous Man*, לידתו של אותו צדיק

(2001: 152) in his 1984 posthumous book *Takhrikh shel Sippurim*, תכריך של סיפורים, in which Agnon relates that when the mother was pregnant with this baby, she was advised by her uncle, the famous Rabbi Elimelech of Lyzhansk, to name the child *Elimelech* like him, at which she broke into tears because she (wrongly) assumed he was hinting he would himself be dead by the time of the birth, as it is against Ashkenazi custom to name a child after a living relative.

As she found it difficult to name the baby after her still living uncle, upon her own initiative she decided to name him *Tsvi Elimelech*, but her husband rather called him *Hersch Meilekh*, "as in Ivri-Taitsch [here, for Yiddish] *Tsvi* is called *Hersch*, and *Meilekh* is how *Elimelech* is called". The mother takes her baby to see her uncle, who on learning that the first name she gave the boy is *Tsvi*, tells her: "The *tsvi* is not a *Meilekh* (king)". He blesses the boy with running like a *tsvi* to perform the wishes of Our Father in Heaven, using an image from the *Nishmat kol chai* prayer.

It is telling, concerning the confusion in Europe, that in recent centuries, the European Jewish naming conventions coupled the name *Naftali* — after one of Jacob's sons, a tribal eponym, whose biblical blessings and thus his emblem features a fleet-footed *ayyalah* "doe" (Genesis 49:21) — with the name *Tsvi*, and oftentimes the Yiddish personal name *Hirsch*, from the German and Yiddish common name *Hirsch* for "deer". Such confusion, Amar (2008) points out, is not to be detected in the naming practice of Ashkenazi Jews who called their son *Naftali–Hirsch*, by reference to the biblical blessing mentioning the *ayyalah*, and who omitted from the given names the component *Tsvi*. By contrast, presence of that component in the compound names *Naftali–Tsvi–Hirsch* or *Tsvi–Hirsch*, frequent until recent times in Ashkenazi names, is evidence that the *tsvi* was taken to be the deer.

Also consider that a well-known family from the elite of the Jewish community of Venice is called *Basevi* (from Bashevis), but two branches of that family are more fully named after their respective emblems:

> *Basevi Della Gondola*, "the Basevis with the gondola". Query whether there is any connection with the fact that at *Deuteronomy* 33:23, Moses blesses Naftali with inheriting *yam*, the west (literally the sea), as well as the south.
>
> *Basevi del Cervetto*, "the *Basevis* with the little deer": the head of a deer appears in their coat-of-arms. This is clearly based

> on the swiftness of the *ayyalah* from Jacob's blessing for Naftali at *Genesis* 49:21. Sometimes, the family name occurs even just as *Cervetto* - not only in present times, but also historically. In the first half of the 18th century, the Veronese cellist Giacomo Cervetto was a friend of the composer George Frederic Handel (Ringer 1961: 24).

Gentile Italian biographical sketches include a name that is currently well recognised, and that is transparently evocative of *gazzella*, "gazelle": Severino Gazzelloni (born in Roccasecca, 1919 and died in Cassino, 1992) was a famous flautist. He was from an area of south eastern Latium known as Ciociaría, having been born in a town (now of over 7,000 inhabitants) in the province of Frosinone. It is tantalising to wonder whether this name actually derives from *gazzella*. That gazelles are not found in Italy in the wild is not in itself an obstacle: lions and leopards are not either, yet Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) was a prominent poet (incidentally, with some interest in Hebrew studies), and Giovanni Leone, from Naples, was president of the Republic in 1971–1978 (his villa used to be named *La Tana del Leone*, "The Lion's Lair"). Sergio Leone (1929–1989), a film director, was the most prominent in the genre of the spaghetti-western, and Leone Leoni (ca. 1509–1590) was a sculptor, goldsmith, and architect.

Reflexes of Jewish law

The *koy* or hircocervus: gazelle/goat crossbreed to the talmudic Sages, deer/goat crossbreed in the Western tradition

The following comparison is instructive. The Talmudic Sages of the Land of Israel (*Yerushalmi, Bikkurim* 2, end, 65) and of Babylonia (*Bavli,* Hullin 80a) possessed lore about the beast kwy (כוי — traditionally pronounced *koy*, or *kvi*, or *kaví*, in different communities), with various opinions about what it was. By one ancient opinion, it was the offspring of a he goat (*táyish*, תַּיִשׁ) and a female gazelle (*tsviyyáh*, צבִיָּה):

כּוֹי זֶה אֵיל הַבָּר, וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים: זֶה תַּבָּא מִן הַתַּיִשׁ וּמִן הַצְּבִיָּה

Contrasting with that quotation from *Bavli*, *Ḥullin* 80a, the Greeks and the Romans respectively called a wild ruminant (apparently, a bearded antelope or deer) τραγέλαφος and *hircocervus* in that order, expressing the belief that it was a crossbreed of goat and deer, not gazelle. To (gentile) Europeans, indeed, it was the deer that was relevant, whereas the gazelle was not as focal an animal as the deer, as there were no gazelles in Greece or in Italy.

In the chapter on meat in an official Swiss report, *Manuel suisse des denrées alimentaires* (MSDA 1999: 214), under a table of kinds of game that are relevant for the European markets, it is stated: "Les croisements de Wapiti avec le cerf d'Europe sont considérés comme des cerfs" — "Crossbreeds of the American wapiti with the European deer are considered to be deer".

Jastrow (1903, s.v. כּוֹי: 618–619) has this definition, not mentioning the gazelle: "Koy, (prob.) a kind of bearded deer or antelope (τραγέλαφος). [The rabbis leave it undecided whether K. belongs to the genus of cattle (בְּהֵמָה)) or beasts of chase (חַיָּה).]" (the brackets are Jastrow's own).

The German Rabbi Jacob ben Judah Weil, also known as Mahari Weil, died before 1456. He is an important authority on slaughtering and post-slaughtering examination. He considerd that the *koy* was an animal which he names by a cognate of "buffalo":

> השוחט כוי שקורין בופי"ל בלי"א יפזר עפר הרבה קודם שחיטה כי ספק חיה הוא וצריך לכסות דמו מספק. וכדי להוציא נפשיה מן הפלוגתא ישחוט עוף על גב דם הבפי"ל כדי שיוכל לעשות ברכה על הכיסוי. ואם שוחט אחד לחולה בשבת לא יכסה עד אחר השבת.

> One slaughtering the *koy*, that is called בופי"ל בל"א, (bwpy"l bl"?) let him spread much sand before the slaughtering, because it may be a *ḥayyah* (that is, a wild as against a domestic species, a *behemáh*), so it is necessary to cover its blood because of the doubt. And in order to avoid a controversial situation, let him slaughter some fowl over the blood of the בופי"ל, so that he could say the blessing for the covering [of blood]. And if it is on Shabbat, and he is [nevertheless] slaughtering [because it is a necessity] for a person who is ill, let him not cover [the blood] until after Shabbat.

The noun that the text transcribes as בופי"ל is German *Büffel*, French *buffle*. As to the water buffalo (what the Italians call *bufalo*, as in *mozzarella di bufala*), in Israeli Hebrew it is called by the rather unusually formed noun *t'o* (*tĕ'ó*, תְּאוֹ), a biblical word; but in substandard communication (whether oral, or written), sometimes the Arabic noun *jāmūs* (ג'אמוס) [[ʤa:'mu:s]).] is used in Israeli Hebrew, and the Hebrew plural *jamúsim* (ג'אמוסים) of that loanword is also heard, along with the

original Hebrew word *t'oyím* (תְּאוֹיִם). The standard Arabic form of the noun is *jāmūs* (but in the vernacular, among Iraqis, the pronunciation is *jamūs* [ʤæ'mu:s]). The Arabic plural is *jámas*.

Actually, the water buffalo appears to have only been introduced into the Land of Israel in the early postbiblical period, and neither in the Hebrew Bible, nor the early rabbinic literature is the water buffalo referred to by the name *t'o* (תְּאוֹ) The water buffalo still existed in the marshes of Lake Ḥuleh until the 1948 war, when it was destroyed. It was later reintroduced into a local nature reserve, after the small lake was drained and the marshes had been reclaimed.

Dor (1997: 38–39) proposes that Biblical Hebrew *t'o* (תְּאוֹ) denoted the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), the now extinct, wild cattle, the last individuals having perished in Europe in the early modern period. Dor also proposes that the water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) is to be identified as being the animal signified in the Mishnaic Hebrew *koy*. The occurrence of the latter in the *Mishnah*, tractate *Bekhorót*, 1:5, "nor by a hybrid (*kil'áyim*), nor by a *koy*" (ולא בכוי ולא בכלאים) proves, according to Dor, that the *koy* was not considered to be a hybrid, as it is not subsumed by *kil'áyim*. It is the semi-domestic status of the water buffalo that gave rise to the question whether the *koy* is a *ḥayyáh* or a *behemáh*; but the claim that it is a *behemáh*, was ascribed to Rabbi Shim'ón ben Gamli'él in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Hullín*, 80a.

Amar, Bouchnick and Bar-Oz (2010), in an article that pays much attention to the evidence of archaeological bone assemblages in trying to identify the ritually clean ungulates from the Hebrew Bible, identified the t'o as the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*).

The *yaḥmur*, a ruminant mentioned in *Deuteronomy* 14:5 and 1 *Kings* 5:3, has been variously identified. Amar and Serri (2005: 63–70) in an article titled "When Did the Water Buffalo Make Its Appearance in Israel?", and then Amar and Zivotofsky (2007: 379–387), proposed that the *yaḥmur* is the water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*). More recently, Amar, Bouchnick and Bar Oz (2010: 8) noted that the water buffalo was not found in any archaeozoological bone assemblage from the country, where the archaeological evidence considered covered a period up till the pre-Exilic biblical period. They therefore preferred to identify the *yaḥmur* "as the hartebeest

(*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), as is also suggested in the translation of the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Hartebeest remains are abundant in the archaeozoological record. In Arabic, a zoonym closely related to Biblical Hebrew *yaḥmur* denotes a kind of deer, whereas the hartebeest is an antelope species with long horns. The biblical texts list *yaḥmur* after *ayyal* ('deer') and *tsvi* ('gazelle'), and based on archaeozoological abundance, the hartebeest fits the bill.

Slaughtering in Hebrew literature

It may come as a surprise to some that rules of slaughtering found expression in Hebrew poetry. The rule about kissuy ha dam (covering blood with sand) is concisely referred to as

וְדָם עַל יִבָּשָׁה. תְּכַסֶּה בֶּעָפָרִים׃

in Solomon Ibn Gabirol's *Azharot* (List of Precepts) traditionally recited on the Pentecost. The *Azharot* (literally: Warnings) are hymns about the 613 precepts in the Torah, specifically arranged for the Pentecost, which commemorates the giving of the Torah. Haberman (1958/9) comments that the *Azharot*

> belong to the genre of poems that are about ritual and legal norms (שירי הדינים והלכות). This genre also includes the poems אוכל בשרים אל תהי שוכח ["O one eating meat, do not forget"] about the prohibition of dairy food [after eating meat], by Rabbi Benjamin Espinosa (אספינוזא) (no. 1818 in Davidson's incipitarium), the book שוחטי הילדים ["Slaughterers of Children", with an ambiguous genitive, for "Slaughterers' rules for children"!], about the rules of slaughtering, by Rabbi Israel Najjara (Amsterdam 5478 [1717/8]; the book was so titled because the norms of slaughtering in this poem are quite easy, to the extent that even children may study them), and so forth.[10]

Kissuy ha dam ("The Covering of Blood") is also the title of an important long novella by Agnon. The title is motivated, on the surface, by a central episode, about a rabbi who, having found employment in America as a slaughterer of poultry, stands all day in the basement and, having been denied a break on a fast day, needs to have a leg amputated because of a blood clot. It is a complex novella. Studies devoted to it included, in the 1970s, much of the doctoral dissertation of a prominent Agnon scholar, Hillel Weiss.[11]

On a tradition setting the distinction of *tsvi* vs. *ayyal* based on the horns

The main thrust in Amar (2008) is to make the distinction of the *tsvi* (gazelle) from the ayyal (deer) independent from considerations of lexical philology, but rather grounded in animal morphology, that is, in anatomy. He remarks that not only did the early rabbinical authorities point to the shape of the "horns" (branched in the ayyal, not branched in the *tsvi*) a distinctive trait (Ḥullin 59b); they also made much of the branching of the antlers of the ayyal in Midrash. We find indeed, again in the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 29a):

'למנצח על אילת השחר' (תהילים כב א) מה אילה זו קרניה מפצילות לכאן ולכאן, אף שחר זה מפציע לכאן ולכאן ... מה אילה זו כל זמן שמגדלת קרניה מפצילות, אף צדקים כל זמן שמרבין בתפילה, תפלתן נשמעת.

> "To the conductor [of the chorus], on the 'doe of dawn (sháḥar: dawn, literally blackness)' [i.e., the aurora]" (*Psalms* 21:1): Just as this *ayyalah* (deer) has horns branching out to this side and to that, so too this dawn [the red aurora] breaks (maftsía', literally wounds, bleeds) to this side and to that [...]. Just as this *ayyalah* (deer), as long as its horns grow, they keep branching out, so too the righteous ones, as long as they keep adding prayer to prayer, their prayer is heard [High Above].

Significantly, lifelong growth in the antlers of cervids had been observed in biblical times. And significantly, Rashi's gloss above understood that *ayyalah* is used here for "deer" as being semantically unmarked; it is not as if the feminine here refers to the female:

'אילה זו' – לאו דווקא נקט – שהרי אין קרנים לנקיבה.

> "This ayyalah": it employs [the feminine] not necessarily [to denote the female], as [in point of fact], the female has no horns.

Maimonides made the feature of the horns in animals that have a cloven hoof and are ruminants, whether branching or not – yet shapely: *hadurót* הדורות a distinctive trait of clean animals, traits archetypally associated with the deer (*ayyal*), and the *tsvi* (gazelle), in that order (Maimonides, *Hilkhot Ma'akhalot Asurot*, 1:10).

In the last quarter of the 13th century, a Hebrew encyclopaedia, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim*, by the Provençal Rabbi Gershon ben Shelomo,[12] mentions "the *tsvi* and the *ayyal*" as a fixed relationship: it

is of biblical derivation, yet in that encyclopaedia, it appears to be just one signifier, denoting any deer, and even if it were taken to stand for two distinct signifiers, at any rate they both denote members of *Cervidae*. In fact, the claim appears there that:

> ויש מבעלי החיים שמחליף קרניו כמין הצבי והאיל לעת זקנותם.
>
> There are some animals that change their horns, like the *tsvi* and the *ayyal*, when they are old [this must mean: in adulthood, when they are grown up].

It is only members of Cervidae that shed their horns, or rather antlers, and grow another pair of horns in their stead. This is not the case of the gazelle. We shall return to that encyclopaedia later in this article.

The gall-bladder as a distinctive trait, and R. Joseph Caro's (mis)ascription of its absence (a cervid feature) to the *tsvi*

The celebrated halakhic compendium, the *Shulḥan 'Arukh*, has been fundamental for halakhic discussions since the early modern period. Rabbi Joseph Caro, its author, published it in 1565. He was a Sephardi, but it is well-known that he also relied on an Ashkenazi tradition. He was born in the Iberian Peninsula in 1488 (at a time when its Jews, except those of Granada, were steeped in Romance culture, no longer in Arabic culture). He left his native country, Spain, as a child in 1492, and then left Portugal in 1497, later living in the Balkans (at first in Nicopolis in the north-western part of present-day Greece, then from the early 1520s in Adrianople in present-day Turkish Thrace, then in Salonica and Constantinople), eventually moving to Safed in the Galilee, where he died in 1575. During the last thirty years of his life, his reputation was immense, both in Europe and the Levant. Even if his third and last wife had not been from an Ashkenazi family (the daughter of talmudist Zechariah Sechsel or Sachsel), it would be safe to say that whatever he knew of the *tsvi* owed much to European traditions.

The main original contribution in Amar (2008), is the clarification of why the *Shulḥan 'Arukh*, while dealing with what makes a slaughtered animal non-kosher, identified the absence of a gall-bladder in the liver of the *tsvi* (added emphasis):

> יש מיני עופות שאין להם מרה כמו תורים ובני יונה ואין לאוסרן כיון שכל המין כך, **והצבי אין לו מרה בכבד** אבל יש לו למטה סמוך לזנבו.

> There are such fowl that they have no gall, like the turtledoves and pigeons, and these are not to be forbidden, the reason being that the entire species is that way, and the *tsvi* has no gall in its liver, but has [it] down, next to its tail.

This is quoted from *Shulḥan ʻArukh*, *Yoreh Deʻah*, 42:8. Caro appears to have been of the opinion that it is the gall-bladder of the *tsvi* that is found beside its tail, whereas presumably what he took to be gall, was an odorous secretion of a different gland. More significantly for our purposes, the gazelle does have a gall-bladder, whereas in all members of the *Cervidae*, the gall-bladder is indeed missing.

Therefore, Caro must have been confusing the identities, and taking, in European fashion, the *tsvi* to be a deer. Caro's dependence on some European source in this matter finds support, Amar (2008) remarks in a footnote, in other ruminant terminology. In the same textual corpus, the water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) is called by the Italian term *bufalo* (בופלו), in *Shulḥan ʻArukh, Yoreh Deʻah* 28:4.

Amar (2008) was able to trace Caro's source for his claim concerning the absence of the gall-bladder in the *tsvi* to a mediaeval Provençal rabbi, Aharon ha Cohen of Lunel. Other authors, mediaeval or early modern, had ascribed such absence to the *ayyal*. Such absence in the deer was already noted by Aristotle, but Amar, who recognises that lore from Aristotle was available in Jewish texts, considers that the recurrence of the information about the absence of the gall-bladder in texts by various rabbinic authorities stems from a centuries-long experience of deer slaughtering.

In the last quarter of the 13th century, Gershon ben Shelomo's Hebrew encyclopaedia, *Shaʻar ha-Shamayim*, had stated concerning "the *tsvi* and the *ayyal*" that they both shed their horns (thus, they must both be members of the *Cervidae*), and moreover, that

> וקצת בעלי חיים שאין להם מרה כלל, וזה שיש להם במעים כגון יונה ומין השליו וצפור דרור ... וצבי ואיל אומרים עליהם שהמרה היא באליה שלהם.
>
> And there are a few animals that have no gall/bile (and therefore no gall bladder either) at all, and this is because they have it in their intestines, like the dove, and the quail, and the sparrow [...]. As to the *tsvi* and the *ayyal*, it is claimed concerning them that the gall is inside their tail [*alyah* is a sheep's fat tail].

Amar (2008) also remarks that the gall-bladder is missing as well from the giraffe. The dissection, in Israel, of a stillborn giraffe was described by him and his co investigators in Zivotofsky et al. (2002/3).

The absence of the gall-bladder in a member species of the Cervidae is also noted, in a kosher slaughtering context, by Rabbi Y.P. Adler (2004/5), concerning an American cervid, the elk. Using Yiddish spelling rules, he refers to that animal as "the animal called *elk*", writing the *e* of *elk* with the letter ʻayin (בעל חי הנקרא עלק). The spelling עלק while naming this animal is already to be found in Abramowitsch's (1862) zoology of Mammals.

A 19th-Century Eastern contradictor of R. Joseph Caro concerning the *tsvi's* having or not having a gall-bladder

Importantly, by referring to Rabbi Joseph Caro's statement concerning there being no gall-bladder in the liver of the *tsvi*, Rabbi ʻAbdallah Somekh (1813–1889) of Baghdad contradicted him (added emphasis):

במדינתינו פה בגדאד יע"א מין הצבי **יש לו מרה** כבהמה.

> Here in our city of Baghdad — let the Higher One maintain her, amen — the *ṣebí* [i.e., gazelle] species **does have bile**, like domestic ruminants.

This is quoted from his book *Zibḥei Ṣedeq* (I, on *Yoreh Deʻah*, §42, 8). There is written as well as oral evidence in support of the claim concerning the availability of gazelle meat among Baghdadi Jews. Again the book *Zibḥei Ṣedeq* (I, on *Yoreh Deʻah*, §80, 2), Rabbi ʻAbdallah Somekh[13] also claimed:

ופה בגדאד יע"א יש לנו מסורת וקבלה על ג' מיני חיות, והם הצבי והאיל והיחמור

> And here in Baghdad — let the Higher One maintain her, amen — we possess an authoritative tradition concerning three animal kinds, namely, the *ṣebí* [gazelle], and the *ayyál* [deer], and the *yaḥmúr* (Somekh 1899).

More documentary evidence can be found in a widespread work by a pupil of the same rabbi. The next section is concerned with that other passage.

A passage from *Ben Ish Ḥay* about the raising of gazelles

In Amar and Nissan (2009), we discussed the use made, among modern Iraqi Jews, of the meat of gazelles, as well as of gazelle skins in the manufacturing of Torah scrolls. As hunting pressure would not have been sustainable, supply did not rely just on gazelles captured in the wild. There were Iraqi Jews raising gazelles on farms, as well as some Baghdadi Jews raising them in their urban homes. A passage in Rabbi Yosef Ḥayyim's (1834–1909) Ben Ish Ḥay (1911/12) points out:

> ופה עירנו בגדד יש הרבה בני אדם שדרכם לגדל צבאים בביתם, אך דרכם לגדלם שהיו מלַמדים לעמוד למעלה על הגג או באכסדרה תמיד ולא ירדו לחצר, כי חוששים פן יצאו לרשות הרבים ויברחו לחוץ.

> And here, in our city of Baghdad, there are many people who are used to raising gazelles at home, but their custom is to so raise them as to make them used to always stand above, on the roof, or in the *akhsadrah* (colonnaded corridor) and not come down into the courtyard, because they fear lest [the gazelles] would go out into public space and would escape outside.

What he meant by *ḥaṣer* was the courtyard or patio (called *ḥōsh* in the vernacular), in the middle of the house. What he meant by the rabbinical term *akhsadrah* clearly was the *ṭarma*. There were two kinds of corridors in Baghdadi "courtyard houses":

> The *ṭarár*, a colonnaded covered corridor on the same level as the central patio (courtyard) of the house. It used to be a multi-functional space. It may or may not have flanked the cool cellars, but at any rate in summer it was cooler than upstairs. Guests were received there, sometimes, and also some banquets were held there, as the corridor was broad enough for that.
>
> The *ṭarma*, any of the corridors, one floor up, from whose parapet one could look down on the courtyard, and which in fact surrounded the courtyard. The *tarma*, too, could host a banquet. In the house inhabited by Nissan's mother in her childhood and adolescence, at one end of the first-floor *ṭarma* into which the rooms on the house façade opened, there was a cupboard with Passover ware.

That kind of architecture in Jewish households is described by Nissan (in press, a).

The structure of *Ben Ish Ḥay* is as a collection of sermons for the Shabbat weekly Torah readings of two consecutive years. Unusually, these sermons do not deal (other than at the beginning of the sermon) with the subject of the corresponding Parashah, but are each devoted to ritualistic popularisation. This was based on how this rabbi was actually preaching on Shabbat. The passage we have quoted earlier, is from Year Two, Parshath Va'erá.

Having read a draft of Amar and Nissan (2009), a literary studies scholar, the Baghdadi-born Professor Shmuel Moreh in Jerusalem, commented "Now I understand what is the significance of the story [by] Mr. Eliahu Agasi, the son of the Chief Rabbi Shim'on Agasi, who in [...] his memoirs or short stories spoke of the gazelle which they kept at their house. He said that when the moon was full, the gazelle was dancing as usual on the second floor, and in one of her jumps, she fell to the courtyard and died".[14] This testimony, along with the interviews and other evidence presented here, is important in as much as it is indicative of the limits to which captive gazelles became adapted to their domestic environment. Moreover, if Mr Agasi (Ághasi) was writing about this in a short story (however autobiographical), rather than in mundane prose with no literary pretence, we can see that a powerful image made its way into the *belles lettres*, from a little-known fact which was part of the material culture of modern Iraqi Jews.

Concluding remarks

In this article, we have discussed cultural, anthropological, and lexicological aspects of the Hebrew zoonym *tsvi*. This is a contribution to clarifying an issue in the shifting sands of denotation of Hebrew names for animals. We first considered its occurrence in an episode from a novel by Agnon, set in Eastern Europe.[15] "Animals in human culture" has been a popular theme among anthropologists in the past several years.

Our discussion has taken us through Sholem Abramowisch/Mendele Mokher Sforim, not in his capacity as a major Hebrew writer, but in his role as an innovator of Hebrew zoology/zoonymy. Even more enlightening is the realisation that of those Jews who understood *tsvi* as denoting the gazelle (the original

sense intended by the Bible and the talmudic Sages) rather than the roe-deer, some were raising gazelles at home in recent generations. Literary studies concerned with East European Jewry accustomed us to Jews raising geese in the loft, for meat, fat, and feathers — but gazelles? — that is another matter.

While Reb Yudl, the protagonist of *The Bridal Canopy*, travels around in order to put together the dowry for his three daughters — often forgetting or disregarding the purpose of his peregrinations as soon as he can put his hands on a traditional book — what are his long-suffering wife and daughters doing? They spend their lives plucking geese. When, against the expected workings of human society, a treasure found by Reb Yudl's daughter enables her to marry into the moneyed elite, among the varieties of fish served at the wedding feast, some are costly, but others are species affordable to the impecunious — so that they would not be shamed into only finding at the banquet foodstuffs that they could not afford in their normal diet.

When the *tsvi*, which in Agnon, as we have seen, is a roebuck, comes into the picture, at another wedding from perhaps eighty years earlier, it is only there because a Polish magnate had sent it as a present to the wedding of the daughter of his Jewish business associate. Yet, if we were to cave in with undue haste to assumptions about Jewish societies, roe-deer would have appeared to be a "foreign" presence in Jewish society, as Jews normally did not have access to game, which turns up during the preparations for the wedding for the very reason that it is kosher.

Accordingly, the magnate had sent along his likewise gentile cook to instruct the Jews as to how to prepare its meat. But as we now see, wild ruminant species, far from merely being kosher but unobtainable, actually had a *Sitz im Leben* in Jewish material culture in a different geographical setting, modern Mesopotamia, just as they had a place in theoretical discussions among the mediaeval and early modern rabbinical authorities in Europe, let alone in poetic metaphors as early as the Hebrew Bible, and as famously as in the Spanish Golden Age of Hebrew poetry.

One of the outstanding poets of that era was Yehudah Halevi, and Arabic was the spoken language in Spain at the time. In Arabic *ghazala* "gazelle" is the paragon of beauty. Interestingly, as observed

by one of the reviewers of this article, Yehudah Halevi and other Mediaeval Spanish poets used the terms צבי *tsvi* and צביה *tsviyyah* to refer to "a youth, a young boy" and "a young girl" respectively. In Arabic, صبيّ, which is identical in sound to the traditional Sephardi pronunciation of צבי (*ṣebî*), though etymologically distinct, means "a young boy, a youth".[16] These poets, in effect, have "domesticated" an Arabic word into Hebrew poetic language, combining the grace and beauty of the gazelle with the concept of youth.[17]

From Scheindlin (1991), one can see that the doe and the gazelle were roughly interchangeable in mediaeval poetic metaphor. In translations from modern Hebrew literature, sometimes "doe" is still used to translate *tsviyyah* — even when the setting is in Israel, and the reference is to an animal in the wild. This is the case of Yitzhak Orpaz's "*Tseid Ha-Tsviyyah*" — *Hunting of the Gazelle* (Orpaz 1973), a work analysed by Giulia Miller (2008). In an earlier edition of this work, the title had been translated as *Hunting of the Doe*.[18]

Our present article can be read on a number of levels and by a number of audiences. It is perhaps most successful (or at any rate, one of the referees — whose wording we are adopting here — kindly stated as much) for those interested in the precise trajectory of Hebrew terminology for specific types of deer and other ruminants. It highlights the presence or absence of such terms in Hebrew writing, whether biblical and rabbinic literature, mediaeval poetry, or 19th–20th century literature and scientific writing in Hebrew, relative familiarity with certain species of animals, and consequently which animals they were referring to when Hebrew terms were used.

We have been less concerned with demonstrating exactly how the findings reported in great detail are relevant to understanding Agnon, or more exactly, why the amount of detail provided here is needed to explicate the passage in Agnon and just what it shows. Indeed, readers who turn to this article in order to understand Agnon's reference — the starting point of the article — may well wish we had discussed the literary ramifications of our zoological (or rather, "animals in culture" anthropological) findings at greater length. Admittedly, Agnon has been for us a springboard to looking at the way the term *tsvi* was used by Jewish communities in different cultural settings.

Hopefully, the article suggests important issues about Jewish

awareness of certain animals, and the extent to which Jews kept them, and even about the extent to which non-Jews, real or literary, might be aware of game animals allowed or disallowed by the strictures of Kashrut. We therefore trust the reader will find this article useful and interesting. We do not deny that our presentation choice may come through, to some, as an appendix on literary zoological references suggested by Agnon. In a sense, the anthropological discussion of the varieties of animals concerned was as important to us here as discussing Agnon from a literary studies perspective.

Still, prodding readers to think about what Agnon was doing in his text we see as a bonus, providing insight to the background of his writing – the Israeli reader today, used to understanding the term *tsvi* to mean gazelle might well be puzzled in reading Agnon without knowledge of the historical circumstances. As one of the referees wondered: can "novelistic time" actually match "historic time"? In this case, the referee remarks, Agnon may have been well aware that some details were anachronistic if his novel were placed in one century as opposed to another, or that the symbolism of *tsvi* in Hebrew and Aramaic sources may have been more important to his novel than the actual animal.

Endnotes

1. The Babylonian Talmud was largely completed in the middle of the sixth century CE. It covers discussions from rabbinical academies from the previous three centuries on biblical themes, Jewish law and folklore.
2. In Japan meat is not hung, for as an alternative to hanging, live cattle are prepared by repeated massaging, in order to make the costly meat more tender.
3. This is an *ad hoc* translation, simply for the purposes of this article.
4. Significantly, Jastrow, an outstanding Talmudic scholar, born in Rogoźno, a Polish town, then under Prussian rule in 1829, like Agnon and Abramowitsch understood "*tsvi*" to be a deer, rather than a gazelle.
5. The principal meaning of Hebrew word *qeren* which Abramowitsch uses for antlers is a horn, reflecting the confusion concerning the use of the word *tsvi*.
6. The term which Abramowitsch uses for conifers literally means "needle trees", a term which has been retained in Israeli Hebrew.

7. These terms refer to kinds of animals rather than to "species" in Linnaean taxonomy. They are popular names (folk-taxons) rather than corresponding to the scientific Linnaean system of classification.
8. This translates as: "Blood of Bouc and of Bouquetin. [In Italian, *Sangue di Becco e di Bocchettino (Stambecco)*]. This is animal blood which has been dried in the sun. It is hard, dry, and difficult to reduce to a powder. Used in medicine. The Bouquetin, *Capra ibex*, in Italian *Stambecco* or *Capro selvatico*, is a mammal, one of a variety of goats, rare today, which can only be found on mountain tops in the Alps."
9. In the 1970s in Israel, a breeder called such hybrids *ya'ez*, from *'ez* "goat" and *ya'el* "ibex". For such portmanteau lexical formations, in American English *cattalo* and *beefalo* have been created, denoting cross-breeds of domestic cattle and the American buffalo, the name being a merger of *cattle* and *buffalo*. See Nissan (in press, b).
10. This passage has been translated by the authors of this article.
11. For a discussion of that particular episode, see Ben-Dov (2006), Weiss (1976, 1978, 1980) and Shaked (1989).
12. For a discussion of this work, see Zonta (1996).
13. The traditional Iraqi Jewish pronunciation of this family name is Sumékh.
14. Emailed communication, 30 May 2008, from Moreh to Nissan.
15. The banquet episode is interesting also in respect of the theme of "food in literature", now fashionable in literary criticism. See Nissan (2009).
16. On the comparative etymology of the Hebrew and Arabic terms, see Kopf (1976) and Klein (1986). The Arabic cognate of Hebrew צבי is ظبي, while Arabic صبيّ, youth, is apparently related to Hebrew צבא.
17. The connection of *tsvi* with beauty is also found in the Talmud. Jastrow quotes a passage from Yalquṭ Shim'oni at Song of Songs 988 concerning the mother of Moses and Aaron, questioning "Why is Yochebed likened to a hind (*tsviyyah*)?" – again interpreting the *tsvi* to be a deer rather than a gazelle. "Because she reared the (two) beauties (*tsviyyotheyhen*) of Israel, Moses and Aaron". The term for "beauty" which is here applied to Moses and Aaron, curiously is *tsviyyah*, the feminine form of *tsvi*.
18. Donà (2007) discusses the appearance of a deer or doe in mediaeval Christian hagiography. For example, St Hubert

encounters a deer with a cross between its antlers. Here, the deer represents the Christian Saviour. This symbolism may explain why the Nazis did not discard a photograph of Hitler exiting from a church, with a cross seen on top of his head, appropriating to himself symbols of the Saviour.

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