

with Yiddish as the language of instruction!" utterly betrayed his contempt for the Jewish people. Bauer tried hard to cover up this contempt with a flood of genuine or pseudo-dialectical verbiage, but without much success. It was this contempt, most probably, that drove him to break with one of the axioms of democratic Socialism, the right to national self-determination. Estranged from his own people, he suffered from what may be called "the Jewish complex," so common among assimilated Jews. This complex makes such Jews believe that the way they have chosen for themselves is not only desirable for all other Jews but, historically, the only one possible. It is this complex more than anything else that seems to have led Bauer to maintain that Socialism and Jewish national aspirations are mutually exclusive.

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## THE UNICORN IN CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH ART

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**E**XAMINATION of the ever growing literature on the unicorn in legend and art will disclose to the interested student only passing reference to Jewish influence on the Christian conception of the mythical single-horned animal and nothing at all on this creature in Jewish art. While it is easy to account for the neglect of Jewish art and its iconography, which only recently have begun to attract the attention of scholars, it is rather surprising to note that the investigation of the Jewish literary elements in the unicorn story should have made so little headway.

The *Physiologus*, an early Christian work in Greek on the nature of animals, plants, and some minerals that is our source for the unicorn story, shows unmistakable traces of Jewish influence. This was recognized as early as 1898 by E. Peters, according to whom the *Physiologus* is a "product of Egyptian and Hebrew animal symbolism."<sup>1</sup> More recently, Wellmann has pointed out a passage in Josephus (*Bell. Jud.*, II. 8.6) which he considers as alluding to a Jewish work on natural history. In his opinion, this work may be the nucleus around which the *Physiologus* built up its fables.<sup>2</sup> Shepard, in his book on the unicorn, mentions the talmudic discussions of single-horned animals.<sup>3</sup> All these were only tentative and casual suggestions, however, not followed up in further study.

<sup>1</sup> Emil Peters, *Der griechische Physiologus und seine orientalischen Übersetzungen* (Berlin, 1898), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Max Wellmann, "Der Physiologus," *Philologus, Supplementband XXII.1* (Leipzig, 1930), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (Boston, 1930), p. 45.

The earliest extant manuscripts of the *Physiologus* are of the ninth century C.E.<sup>4</sup>

Origen (185-254) refers to the work in such phrases as "nam *Physiologus* scribit" (for the *Physiologus* writes).<sup>5</sup> Who is the *Physiologus*? The word means "naturalist." The anonymous author of the work recounts his stories on the authority of the physiologus, the naturalist, who in one manuscript is several times referred to as Solomon<sup>6</sup> and in another as Aristotle.<sup>7</sup>

The place of origin of the *Physiologus* is generally held to be Alexandria or, according to Wellmann, Caesarea Stratonis.<sup>8</sup>

The animal stories are treated in the *Physiologus* in separate chapters; each begins with a biblical quotation relative to the animal, proceeds with a description of its nature and habits, and finally offers a christological explanation of the story. It is believed that the allegorical interpretations were developed by the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, while further additions may have been made in the medieval copies and translations.

#### THE UNICORN OF THE PHYSIOLOGUS AND ITS LITERARY BACKGROUND

According to the *Physiologus*, the unicorn was a small animal resembling a goat and provided with a single sharp horn that prevented the hunters from approaching him. He could be subdued only by a virgin. The hunters drew his glance to a pure (in other versions, fair) virgin, and he leaped to her and put his head in her lap. When captured he was led away to the palace of the king.

<sup>4</sup> Among the earliest, ninth century manuscripts of the *Physiologus*, Codex 318 of the Stadtbibliothek in Bern, Switzerland, discussed by Helen Woodruff, "The *Physiologus* of Bern," *The Art Bulletin*, XII (1930), pp. 226-253, may be mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Lauchert, *Geschichte des Physiologus* (Strasbourg, 1889), p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Fritz Hommel, *Die aethiopische Übersetzung des Physiologus, nach einer Londoner, Pariser und Wiener Handschrift herausgegeben* (Leipzig, 1877), pp. 53, 104.

<sup>7</sup> Lauchert, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> Wellmann, p. 11.

The description has much in common with the story of the Indian kartazon in Aelian, *De natura animalium*, XVI 20. The kartazon was a single-horned animal, fierce and untractable, wandering about alone. He became gentle toward the female in the mating season. The foals were taken when quite young to the king of the Prasii. No full-grown specimen was ever caught.<sup>9</sup> For all the similarities of the story, it is to be noted that the kartazon was a large horse-like animal with the legs of an elephant, while our unicorn was small and resembled a goat. In another Aelian fable (*De nat. anim.*, I. 38)—this one about the elephant—we find the motif of the fair maiden who alone could subdue the animal. Thus the female kartazon became a fair maiden and finally the virgin of the Christian *Physiologus* story. The author of the *Physiologus* sums up the meaning of the story thus: "The unicorn is a figure of the Savior who has dwelt in the womb of the Virgin." To justify this allegorical interpretation he adduces Psalm 92:10, "But my horn shall thou exalt like the horn of the unicorn," which establishes the identity of the animal with the "unicorn" of the Old Testament. Another quotation, this one from Luke 1:69, associates the horn of the unicorn with the horn of salvation, and a reference in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," points up the idea of incarnation.

The unicorn of the *Physiologus*, then, is the *reem* of the Hebrew Bible. In the Ethiopian translation of the *Physiologus* the medieval scribe added, to make it quite clear: "... which is the *reem*."<sup>10</sup> That the *reem* is nowhere in the Bible actually depicted as a unicorn or a one-horned animal mattered little. Psalm 92, where the horn is mentioned in the singular, made such an interpretation possible; and the author of the *Physiologus* relied on this reference inasmuch as in the Septuagint, *reem* was rendered as *monokeros*, the one-horned.

<sup>9</sup> Lauchert, p. 24, points out that Aelian's description of the kartazon goes back to Megasthenes' *Indika* (ab. 300 B.C.E.).

<sup>10</sup> Hommel, p. 68.

But what about the shape and size of the animal? The Bible says nothing about the appearance of the *reem*. By implication we learn that it was an awe-inspiring creature. It conveyed the fury of the Lord (Is. 34:7), the exalted position of the Lord (Ps. 22:21), strength (Num. 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 33:17), wildness (Job 39:9-12), and swiftness (Ps. 29:5). The Talmud enlarges on these traits, portraying the *reem* as a huge animal, too large to enter Noah's ark (Zebahim 113b) and easily mistaken for a mountain (Midrash Tehilim to Ps. 22:21).

The emphasis on the smallness and goat-like appearance of the unicorn reveals a deliberate departure of the *Physiologus* from the traditional idea of the *reem*.

Shepard believes that the one-horned goat of Daniel's vision may have influenced the concept.<sup>11</sup> In Daniel 8:5 a one-horned goat, a figure of Alexander the Great, overpowers the double-horned ram, a figure of Persia and Media. However, there seems to be no point in adding to the powerful *reem* the characteristics of another powerful animal. Besides, the small size of the unicorn of the *Physiologus* contradicts this suggestion.

Fortunately, some versions of the *Physiologus* offer an explanation of what the small size and the goat-like appearance of the unicorn were meant to imply.<sup>12</sup> The smallness of the unicorn, we are told, was intended to convey the humility of Christ, and the goat-like appearance his desire to be like any human sinner.

The goat, then, to which the unicorn of the *Physiologus* bears resemblance, is the sacrificial goat, the goat offered by Aaron for the redemption of the people (Lev. 16:9 ff.). The goat of the sin offering contributed something indeed to the concept of the unicorn that the *reem* lacked: the idea of expiatory suffering. In a similar way early Christian theology used the sacrifice of Isaac as a figure of the

<sup>11</sup> Shepard, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Lauchert, p. 22.

sacrificial death of Jesus.<sup>13</sup> The idea of the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus was expressed in John 1:29 by the metaphor of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." St. Basil (c. 330-379) calls Jesus "son of unicorns" to convey his power, and a "sheep led to the slaughtering block" to allude to his death.<sup>14</sup> Now, the lamb and the goat were both animals used in the Jewish sacrificial service (Lev. 22:19).

The author of the *Physiologus* amalgamated the *reem* with the goat into one symbolic figure. What suggested to him this seemingly incongruous image?

One-horned animals were discussed in the Talmud in connection with the problem of ritual purity. Even though the Temple was no more, and the sacrificial service was long abolished, animals were still classified according to their fitness for sacrifice and hence for food. A ruminant with cloven hoofs was likely to be declared clean; doubt would arise, however, with regard to single-horned animals. Tradition had it that Adam had sacrificed a one-horned ox (Hulin 60a), which was regarded as a precedent. Nevertheless, Sabb. 28 b had misgivings about the *tabash* (held to be single-horned) of Exodus 26:14, whose hide was used by Moses for the covering of the Tabernacle. On the other hand, the single-horned *keresh* was considered ritually clean (Hulin 59 b).<sup>15</sup> The *reem* was not regarded as a one-horned animal.<sup>16</sup>

The discussions of the rabbis regarding the sacrificial purity of one-horned animals may have been familiar to the compiler of the *Physiologus*. With these speculations in

<sup>13</sup> Hans Joachim Schöps, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Paul's Theology," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXV (1946), 385 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Homily to Psalm XXVIII; see Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, XXIX, p. 295.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of these animals see Ludwig Lewysohn, *Die Zoologie des Talmuds* (Frankfurt a.M., 1858), p. 151, and *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Shepard, p. 45, n. 8, cites Zebahim 113 b as evidence that the Talmud conceived the *reem* as one-horned. However, in the Hebrew text of the tractate the term "horn" is used in the plural. The *reem*, which could not enter Noah's ark owing to its huge size, was taken in tow by "tying his horns on to the ark." The *reem* is a double-horned beast also in the story of David, who mistook a sleeping *reem* for a mountain and was lifted by him to the clouds, as recounted in Midrash Tehilim to Ps. 22:21.

mind, he could readily have visualized the sacrificial aspect of his unicorn. The ambivalent concept of the unicorn would then have a certain organic unity.

In some minor Greek manuscripts of the *Physiologus*, a "second" trait was added to the nature of the unicorn. According to this version, the unicorn purified the water poisoned by a snake for the benefit of the animals. He did it by dipping his horn, a symbol of the cross, into the water.<sup>17</sup>

This feature is a dramatization of a sober report of the Greek physician Ktesias (fourth century B.C.E.) on the properties of the horn of the Indian unicorn, a kind of ass large as a horse. According to this source, now lost but preserved in fragments, dust filings from the horn of this animal, taken in a potion, were an antidote against poison, and drinking from such a horn protected one against epilepsy.<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to note that a story somewhat similar to that in the *Physiologus* is found in Midrash Tehilim 25.187. Whenever a drought occurred the animals applied to the pious hind to pray to God. The hind dug a hole, stuck her horns into it, and prayed for rain, whereupon God caused water to flow from the hollow. Louis Ginzberg points to Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, VIII. 50 [32]), who mentions the use of burnt stag's horns to drive away serpents.<sup>19</sup> In Ktesias, Pliny, and other ancient authors we find stories in which horns are employed against serpents, poison, disease. Nowhere, however, has the story the form of a fable with the animals, bearers of the horns, acting as dramatic personae. This feature, as well as the motif of the life-sustaining water and, above all, the pious moral, is common only to the *Physiologus* and the Midrash narrative.

<sup>17</sup> Lauchert, p. 23, n. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ancient India as described by Ktesias the Knidian*, tr. by J. W. McCrindle of the abridgement of his *Indika* by Photios and of fragments of that work preserved in other writers (London, 1882), p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, V (Philadelphia, 1942), 19, n. 190.

## THE UNICORN IN CHRISTIAN ART

With the literary background of the unicorn in mind, we may consider now his pictorial representations.

In what appears to be the earliest picture of the unicorn in Christian art, a fifth century mosaic at the basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Ravenna, the unicorn is a stocky animal with a short, pointed horn.<sup>20</sup> He is shown alone. It is possible that the Ravenna mosaic was inspired by writings of the Church Fathers, who used the symbol of the unicorn for Christ, rather than by the *Physiologus*, which could not as yet have had wide currency. In the earliest surviving illustrated *Physiologus* manuscript of the Stadtbibliothek of Bern, Switzerland, dating from the ninth century, the unicorn already resembles a goat. His horn is the curved horn of a goat, only larger. A woman stands before him holding his muzzle with both hands, a pose implying her power over him.<sup>21</sup>

In the course of the development of the theme in the Middle Ages, in copies and translations of the *Physiologus*, in bestiaries derived from it, and in Christian Psalters, the hunting and killing of the animal became major features of the representations. The unicorn, now more articulate, clung to the maiden, hid his head in her bosom while the hunters fell upon him with ax and spear.<sup>22</sup> In an English bestiary of the early thirteenth century in the British Museum the unicorn displays for the first time, as far as our material indicates, the long twisted straight horn projecting forward that we generally associate with this fabulous animal. It is not a goat's horn, nor a gazelle's horn that may be twisted but that always projects backward. It is in fact

<sup>20</sup> Guido Schönberger, "Narwal—Einhorn," *Städte-Jahrbuch*, IX (Frankfurt a.M., 1935/36), fig. 202.

<sup>21</sup> Woodruff, fig. 20 and p. 250.

<sup>22</sup> English Bestiary, c. 1200, Leningrad Public Library, Qu. V. 1, illustrated in Schönberger, fig. 206.

the tusk of the narwhal, a sort of whale living in arctic waters.<sup>23</sup>

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the theme of the unicorn purifying the poisoned water became popular in art. It was inserted into an expanded representation of the unicorn hunt. Taken up in tapestry design, the story was related in a series of woven pictures portraying the following scenes: the huntsmen starting for the chase, the unicorn at the fountain purifying the water, his escape, his struggle, the virgin-capture, and his death and the presentation of his body to the lord and lady of the castle or his captivity in an enclosed garden. The set of tapestries from the Château of Verteuil in France displayed at the Cloisters in New York depicts the various phases of the story.<sup>24</sup>

The Fountain tapestry is particularly charming. We see gathered beside a small stream in front of a fountain basin a lion and a lioness, a panther, a civet, a hyena, a stag, and two rabbits, while two pheasants and two small birds flutter around on the fountain ledge. The unicorn, a beautiful white animal with the noble bearing of a horse, a goat's head and beard, and a curly tail, dips his long spiraling horn into the stream unaware of the huntsmen who appear behind the greenery with their leashed hounds waiting for the signal that the quarry has been sighted.

These are the most characteristic episodes in which the unicorn appears in Christian art. In the decoration of vessels and in heraldry he is usually shown in leaping or climbing posture, very much like the lion rampant, his companion as supporter of the arms.

#### THE UNICORN IN JEWISH ART

As is known from literary evidence, medieval European synagogues were decorated with animal and floral designs.

<sup>23</sup> Schönberger, fig. 207. This Bestiary (British Museum, Royal MSF XIII) is important because it shows that the English artist already is familiar with the narwhal (cf. *ibid.*, p. 195). Even if earlier pictures of the unicorn with the tusk-like horn should be found, this particular form of the animal did not become current before the thirteenth century.

<sup>24</sup> Illustrated in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Unicorn Tapestries* (New York, 1938).



FIG. 1. Mahzor, fol. 132 a. German, 14th Century.  
Dresden, Oeffentliche Bibliothek, Ms. A. 46 a.

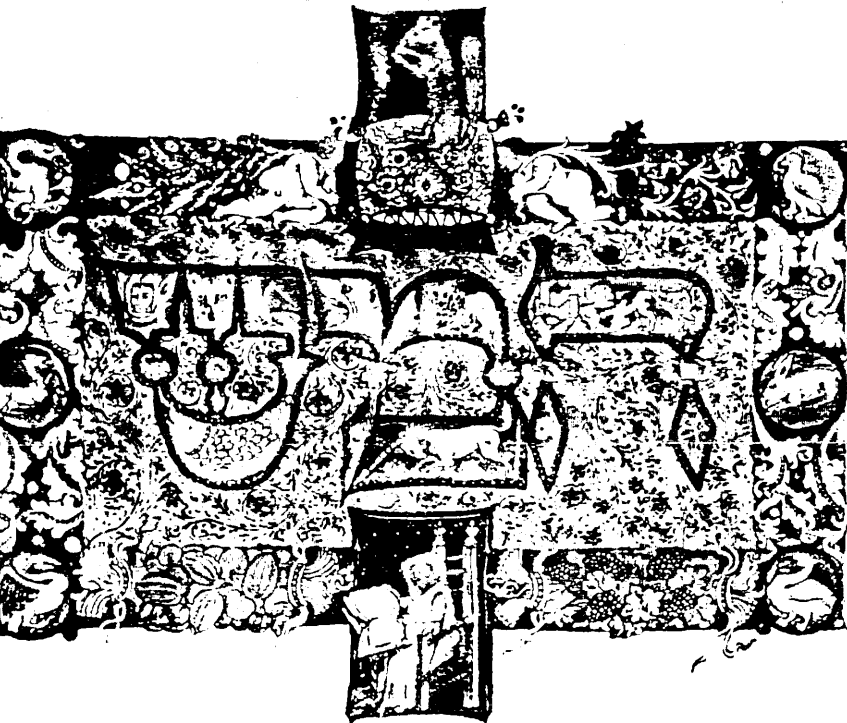


FIG. 2. Talmudic Compendium by Asher ben Yehiel, fol. 198 a. South German, 15th Century.  
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. hebr. 418.

It is possible that the unicorn played a role in these decorations. Unfortunately, none of them has survived.

The unicorn is found, however, in the illuminations of Hebrew medieval manuscripts. In the early fourteenth century Ashkenasic *Mahzor* in Dresden we find the unicorn in the decoration of the opening word *Elim* in the prayer for dew.<sup>25</sup> There he is a goat-like animal with a curly mane and short tail, a horse's head and a long twisted horn projecting directly forward (fig. 1). He is shown in leaping posture to the right in the center of the headpiece. A lion of smaller stature is seen behind the unicorn facing left. The remaining space between and around the letters is filled by two dragons. A pair of dragons is a common ornamental motif found a number of times in the manuscript; the unicorn and the lion, however, appear to have been especially selected to emphasize the meaning of the word *Elim* (The Mighty Ones).

Both animals are thus symbols of power. As a symbol of power the unicorn can only be meant to be the *reem*. The two most powerful creatures, the unicorn and the lion, appear in Psalm 22:21. With no Jewish pictorial models to draw from, the artist adopted the current conception of the animal, resembling a goat and provided with a tusk-like horn, without giving thought to its particular Christian connotation, for the unicorn, popularized by the bestiaries, had become a figure of secular folklore.

Another specimen of manuscript illumination contributes to our understanding of what the unicorn really meant to the Jewish reader. In a talmudic compendium by Asher ben Yehiel (1250-1327) in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. hebr. 418), a copy of the fifteenth century executed in South Germany, the unicorn is found in the decoration of the heading *Humesb* (Pentateuch) (fig. 2).

<sup>25</sup> Dresden, Öffentliche Bibliothek, Ms. A. 46 a, fol. 132 a; see Robert Bruck, *Die Malereien in den Handschriften des Königreichs Sachsen* (Dresden, 1906), pp. 203-204; Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "The Messianic Fox," *Review of Religion*, VI (1941), 258 ff.

The interior spaces of the letters are filled with all sorts of beasts. The unicorn appears in the lower stroke of the letter "mem" in the center of the headpiece. The animal has a goat's head with the characteristic beard, and curly mane and tail, and he stoops and lowers his head so that his long spiraling horn touches the earth of a flowery meadow. His posture is unmistakably that of the unicorn dipping his horn into the water to purify it as we know it from the fountain scene in the unicorn hunt.

The animal in the upper stroke of the "mem" is a lion. The remaining letter space and the borders of the panel are filled with a variety of creatures. There is a hind and a rabbit, a fish, the head of a tiger and of a dog, a weasel, wild and domestic birds, a dog in front of a castle on a hill, a bearded profile and a jester's head in a two-horned fool's cap—motifs evidently taken, in part, from some picture of the "Unicorn at the Fountain." Garlands and branches heavy with flowers and fruits held by nude genii combine to present a picture of the luxuriant fertility of nature.

In a rectangle inserted in the lower border of the panel a scholar in a long robe and a hood is seated in a high-backed chair holding a large open book. This is apparently a likeness of the author, Asher ben Yehiel. The unicorn is just above the portrait. Farther up, in the upper border of the panel, in a corresponding rectangle, a squirrel perched on an embroidered cushion is cracking a nut. He is intended, we assume, to indicate the difficult problems Asher ben Yehiel, an outstanding authority in Jewish law, had solved in the course of his distinguished career.<sup>26</sup> In this context the unicorn symbolizes intellectual rather than cosmic power.

The unicorn conveys spiritual strength and piety in a beautiful full-page miniature in a fifteenth century *Siddur*

<sup>26</sup> The squirrel cracking a nut appears on a tombstone in the Jewish cemetery in Lublin (Majer Balaban, *Die Judenstadt Lublin* [Berlin, 1919], fig. on p. 67) and in Warsaw (Arthur Levy, *Jüdische Grabmalkunst in Osteuropa* [Berlin, 1923], fig. 31). No information is available regarding the inscriptions and dates of the tombstones.

executed in Italy. Before the last war the manuscript was in the E. Bicar-Sée collection in Paris.

The center of the picture is occupied by the word *Shomea* (He hears) painted on a mille-fleurs background. Above the panel is depicted the interior of a synagogue with the Scriptures displayed in the open Ark. Below, yeshiva students are seated at a table with their books before them. The left border of the miniature exhibits a hind and a unicorn, each in a medallion. The animals are in resting attitude against a landscape. The unicorn with his long straight horn pointing upward toward the sky was probably inspired by the figure of the "Unicorn in an Enclosed Garden." The border decoration includes a lion rampant flanked by phoenixes, a crown shown twice, a laureled bust à l'antique, a typical amalgam of Jewish symbols and Renaissance elements.<sup>27</sup>

Judging from the context in which they appear in our picture the unicorn and the hind seem to express and emphasize the scholarly and religious mood associated with a house of prayer and of study. Their symbolism adheres basically to the old tradition.

In the examples discussed thus far, the unicorn has the appearance of the animal of the Christian legend, and some of his postures are clearly inspired by Christian pictorial representations. However, in copying these models the illuminators of the Hebrew manuscripts seem to have been totally indifferent to the fables with which the unicorn was associated. With their growing cultural assimilation during the Renaissance—in Italy perhaps earlier than elsewhere—the Jews showed a wider interest in general literature and art. It is significant, for example, that a man of no scholarly ambitions, Meshulam ben Menahem of Volterra, was acquainted with Pliny's *Natural History*.<sup>28</sup> The earliest printed edition of Pliny, by the way, was issued in Venice in 1469.

<sup>27</sup> The miniature is reproduced in Elkan N. Adler, *Jewish Travellers* (London, 1930), plate I.

<sup>28</sup> See his travelogue (1481) in Adler, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 f.

In 1491 a Hebrew animal book appeared, the *Mashal ha-Kadmoni* by Isaac ben Solomon ibn Sahula (1281), illustrated with woodcuts. It was published by Gershon ben Moses Soncino in Soncino and Brescia in the same year.<sup>29</sup> There is in the book a story of the *ofer* and the *aku* represented by a unicorn and an ibex. While the *aku* is the ibex or rock goat of Deuteronomy 14:5, the interpretation of *ofer* as a unicorn is less obvious.

*Ofer ha-aialim* is in Canticles 2:9 a young hart. Now *ofer* in Canticles is translated in a late Targum as *urzila*. We know the term *urzila d'rema* from Zebahim 113b, where it denotes the young of the *reem*.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the *ofer* became a *reem* and was illustrated as a unicorn.

The two animals are shown in the *Mashal ha-Kadmoni* conversing about the wickedness of the hunters. Whether the thirteenth century author of the book had a hart or a unicorn in mind is hard to tell; at any rate, the fifteenth century designer regarded the unicorn as a more fitting representative of the animal kingdom to speak up against evil. He did not merely borrow the figure of the unicorn from a unicorn hunt picture; he was familiar with the story of the animal and commented on it in his own way.

It is surprising to find the motif of the "Virgin and the Unicorn" in a Jewish book. In the calendar included in the *Sefer Minbagim*, a Judeo-German book on Jewish customs first printed with woodcuts at di Gara's in Venice in 1593, the sign of the zodiac for *virgo* (month of Elul) is illustrated with the stereotyped picture of the virgin and the unicorn.<sup>31</sup> It was a not uncommon practice with printers to use blocks rather indiscriminately for various books.

Owing to the dissemination of the figure of the unicorn through illustrated books, heraldry, house signs, and

<sup>29</sup> Both incunabula are in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. My thanks are due to Dr. Alexander Marx for drawing my attention to this work. The New York Public Library possesses the sixteenth century Venice edition with the set of illustrations re-cut.

<sup>30</sup> For this information I am indebted to Mr. Abraham Berger of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library.

<sup>31</sup> For the *Sefer Minbagim* see R. Wischnitzer, "The Esther Story in Art," in Philip Goodman (ed.), *The Purim Anthology* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 244.

last but not least, unicorn cups falsely represented as made of portions of the magic horn<sup>32</sup> and decorated with the animal in silver work, it becomes difficult to determine in every case as we approach the modern period just what the unicorn was meant to express in Jewish art and indeed whether he still had any symbolic significance at all.

The affronted unicorns added to the traditional lions of Judah in the decoration of a silver Torah shield (Nuremberg, c. 1700), a rare piece in the possession of the Jewish Museum in New York, may be the inspiration of the Christian silversmith. On the other hand, the unicorn darting his horn down the throat of a lion, painted in 1735 on the vault of the synagogue at Horb, Bavaria, by Elieser Susman ben Solomon of Brod, may well refer to Psalm 22:21: "Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the *reemim*."<sup>33</sup> In the Psalm the divine *reemim* are contrasted with the lions, an image that may have been responsible for the idea of the antagonism of the two animals. Midrash Tehilim to Psalm 22 notes that the *reem*, when lifting David to the clouds, dropped him at the sight of the lion and crouched before him. The unicorn fighting the lion is also found in the vault decoration of the synagogue at Gwozdziec, Galicia, painted in 1652 by Israel ben Mardochai of Jaryczow near Lwow.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Among those who exposed the fraudulent sale of all sorts of horns and tusks as alicorns—as the horns of the unicorn were called—was Amatus Lusitanus, the marrano physician (about 1558) (see Shepard, p. 115) and the Jewish physician, David de Pomis, who devised a test of the horns (see his *Dittionario novo hebraico* [Venice, 1587], s.v. *reem*). However, the magic horn was used in drugs and in the manufacture of drinking cups all through the seventeenth century.

<sup>33</sup> Illustrated in *Rimon*, *Hebrew Magazine of Art and Letters*, and in the Yiddish companion edition, *Milgrom*, III (1923), 4.

<sup>34</sup> According to an inscription, the paintings of the Gwozdziec synagogue were repainted in 1729 by another artist from Jaryczow, Isaac son of Jehuda Löb; see Alois Breier, Max Eisler, and Max Grunwald, *Holzszyngogen in Polen* ([Vienna] 1934), pp. 12-13, 51. The motif of the enmity of the unicorn and the lion is not found in the *Physiologus*. The fight between unicorns and lions, represented on a tapestry of the Borromeo palace in Isola Bella on the Lago Maggiore, alludes to the unicorn in the Borromeo arms (Shepard, p. 76). The legend about the ruse employed by the lion in combat with the unicorn, mentioned by Shepard (p. 241), may well go back to Psalm 22.



The unicorn is regarded as the emblem of Joseph on account of the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33:17), which refers to Joseph and his two sons in these words: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of *reemim* . . . and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh."

An early modern Jewish artist, Joseph Herz of Fürth (1776-1828), designed banners for the Twelve Tribes, with the half-tribe of Ephraim represented by a unicorn and Manasseh by a young bull. The Midrash, however, assigns the bullock to Ephraim—apparently because this animal is first mentioned in the Blessing of Moses, as is the name of Ephraim—and gives the unicorn to Manasseh.<sup>35</sup>

The problem has recently become of particular interest. Emblems of the tribes have been found depicted on a fourth century mosaic pavement excavated by E. L. Sukenik in Yâfâ in Galilee. One of the fragments portrays a double-horned animal inscribed *Ephraim*.<sup>36</sup> The question is whether we have here a double-horned *reem* or a bullock. The Midrash would favor the second interpretation.

An interesting piece has shown up recently in the Jewish Museum in New York. It is a silver spice box for the Havdala service at the close of the Sabbath. The hexagonal foot of the container is adorned with free-standing unicorns and bullocks placed at the angular points. On one angle, however, there is a flag instead of the two animals. Was the flag an afterthought, fitted on to replace a broken part? There is no evidence to support such an assumption. We rather think that the decoration of the spice box was meant to represent the emblem of Joseph, the banner of his tribe

<sup>35</sup> Bab. Talmud, Baba Raba, 2.7; see Ginzberg, III, p. 238; VI, p. 83, n. 447. In the ornamental framework of a *ketubah* from Modena of 1669 the unicorn appears as the emblem of the tribe of Manasseh; see *Israel. Familienblatt*, 1930, July 17, Beilage "Aus alter und neuer Zeit."

<sup>36</sup> Illustrated in *Israel Speaks* (September 15, 1950). According to information received from Dr. Sukenik of the Hebrew University, he is preparing a publication on the Yâfâ Synagogue.

with the unicorn and the bullock. The spice box, a work of the early nineteenth century, is a fine example of the awakening intellectual interest in Jewish symbols and customs that we find in the work of the designer Joseph Herz of Fürth as well as in that of the painter of Jewish scenes Moritz Oppenheim of Frankfurt a.M.

As last vestiges of the unicorn we may mention the names *Einhorn* and *Rome*. The latter is pronounced in Yiddish *reem*. The tombstone of a bearer of the name *Rome* in Warsaw (dated 1836) was decorated with two affronted unicorns.<sup>37</sup>

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

To sum up the results of our investigations, we may say that the *reem* of the Bible was a symbol of supernatural power. In the Septuagint he was identified with the Indian *monokeros* of Greek travel books, evidently a rhinoceros. Roman natural histories popularized the Greek stories about the animal. The Talmud amplified the biblical conception of the *reem*. The *Physiologus*, while identifying the unicorn with the *reem*, bestowed upon the symbolic animal traits and qualities characteristic of various animals described in the pagan sources, in the Bible and the Talmud.

Out of this complex literary background, to which must be added the influence of the trade in spurious unicorn horns—whale bones, elephant, walrus and narwhal tusks, the latter almost revolutionizing the appearance of the goat-like animal—developed the rich imagery of the unicorn in Christian art.

The Christian unicorn exerted a considerable impact on the pictorial concept of the *reem* in Jewish art. The *reem* became a unicorn in appearance. During the Middle Ages, however, he retained his significance as a Jewish symbol of strength which, through the increasing emphasis on Torah and learning, was understood as spiritual strength and piety.

<sup>37</sup> Levy, fig. 28.

With the growing acculturation of the Jews and the general decline of symbolism in art, the unicorn lost much of his significance, frequently he was hardly more than a decorative figure. Symbolic animal decoration lived on, however, in the synagogues of Eastern Europe, where we find the unicorn in a motif inspired by the Psalms. From there the motif migrated with other elements of synagogue art to the West. In the nineteenth century, in a period of reawakening pride in the Jewish historical past, the unicorn reappeared in what was regarded as an ancient tribal emblem.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE JEWS AND MODERN CAPITALISM

THE JEWS AND MODERN CAPITALISM. By *Werner Sombart*. Translated by *M. Epstein*. With an Introduction to the American Edition by *Bert F. Hoselitz*. The Free Press. Glencoe, Ill., 1951. Pp. xlii + 402.

THE distinguished historian of economics, Lujo Brentano, called Werner Sombart's *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* "one of the most deplorable publications of German scholarship" ("eine der betrüblichsten Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der deutschen Wissenschaft"); Brentano, *Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus* [Munich, 1916], pp. 158 ff.). Professor Hoselitz, in his "Introduction to the American Edition" of this work arrives at a very similar conclusion: "Thus we come to the conclusion that much of Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* must be rejected or severely modified. His historical facts are often faulty or imaginary; his analysis based on them is often methodologically assailable; his social theory is defective, and his interpretation of Jewish religion, law, and philosophy deduced in considerable part from biased and incomplete sources; last but not least his views of national character and the 'racial' characteristics of Jews are derived from untenable theories or purely romantic speculation" (p. xxx).

"Why then print a new edition of the book?" is the logical question of its most recent editor. He offers three reasons: (1) "The original and the [English] translation [of 1913] have become very scarce" (p. xvii); (2) "In spite of its defects the work poses often in sharp and unusually keen and penetrating manner all the crucial questions of the role played by the Jews not merely in the development of capitalism but of human civilization in general" (p. xxxi); (3) "*The Jews and Modern Capitalism* is a classic which inaugurated a new era in the study of Jewish social relations" (*ibid.*).

No one will deny that the book, at the time of its publication and for many years thereafter, attracted the attention of wide circles of scholars and laymen and had a stimulating effect on historical research. There can be no doubt either that it created much confusion and supplied much material for anti-Semitic "scholarship" and propaganda. Sombart's technique was indeed so masterful that for about two decades he was able to appear as a speaker on the subject of his work in Jewish as well as Christian circles all over Germany and even beyond its boundaries, without his listeners and readers being able to tell whether he