IN SEARCH OF OVIDIAN HEBREW: A PHILOLOGICAL STUDY OF A LESSER KNOWN MODERN HEBREW TRANSLATION OF OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the first substantial translation of Ovid's *Meta-morphoses* into modern Hebrew, whose author was Yehoshua Friedman (1885–1934). The first part of the paper sets Friedman into the context of modern Hebrew classical philology and explores the character of his verse. The core of the text consists of three case studies of selected excerpts from Ovid's story of Apollo and Daphne (*Met.* I, 456–465; 481–482; 545–552). Based on detailed linguistic and stylistic analysis of these texts, I argue that Friedman did not simply adopt a pre-existing linguistic register, but rather created an original Ovidian idiom that helped to win him lasting significance in the history of Hebrew translations from classical languages.

Keywords: Ovid's Metamorphoses; Yehoshua Friedman; modern Hebrew literature; classical translations; Apollo and Daphne

At what is arguably the most dramatic point of his re-telling of the story of Apollo and Daphne, Publius Ovidius Naso has his heroine, the unfortunate nymph Daphne, implore her father, the eponymous resident god of the river Peneius, to change her appearance and thus allow her to escape the unwanted attention of the sun-god Apollo, beseech-ing him *Fer, pater* […] *opem, si flumina numen habetis*.[1] Many centuries later, one of the countless translators of Ovid's *opus magnum* showed some imagination in tackling the elusiveness of the Latin word *nūmen*[2] by rendering the phrase (here represented by my prosaic English translation): "if the hand of gods is lying upon rivers". The translator was Yehoshua Friedman (1885–1934) and the language in which the "non-existent" word was rendered by this adequately poetic phrase was Hebrew. In this paper, I shall take a closer look at his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, considering both the context in

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1   Ov. *Met.* I, 546. Throughout this paper, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are cited after the edition by Tarrant (2004) published in the *Oxford Classical Texts* series.
2   For a recent study that elaborates on *numen* as a divine power inherent to objects of worship, see Levene (2012).

which it was written and Friedman's place in the modern Hebrew classical scholarship. The main section of my study will then be devoted to the linguistic and stylistic means the translator used to render in Hebrew the semantic content of Ovid's narrative and the aesthetic effects of his verses, as he understood them.

I shall begin by outlining the circumstances of the modern Hebrew linguistic and literary revival, the origins of the classical philological tradition within modern Hebrew literary culture, the main points of Yehoshua Friedman's biography and the character and metre of his translation. I will then explain the objectives and methodology of my study, in which I will present a detailed text analysis of three sample texts (Ov. *Met.* I, 456–465; 481–482; 545–552) from Yehoshua Friedman's Hebrew translation of Apollo's and Daphne's story. In the closing sections, I shall argue that Friedman's poetic idiom can justly be considered an original creation of some ingenuity and a testimony to his considerable talents. I hope to demonstrate that although his translation is not very well known today, it represents an important stage in the history of translation from classical Latin into modern Hebrew.

Hebrew's re-emergence as a living language

To begin with, it is appropriate to introduce the linguistic situation into which Friedman's translation was offered as a new contribution to the rapidly expanding corpus of modern Hebrew literature.

At the time when his translation was written, in the late 1920s, the role of Hebrew in Jewish society was undergoing a significant change. After many centuries of being revered, studied and practiced as a medium of Jewish religious and intellectual discourses without being anyone's mother tongue, Hebrew was now well on its way to becoming a living language, used by writers and speakers in all walks of life. Serious efforts to make Hebrew once again a language spoken in everyday situations on an everyday basis had been inaugurated in the late 1870s with the publication of the article titled "A burning question", written in Hebrew by the founding figure of the neo-Hebrew movement, the Lithuanian Jew Eliezer ben Yehuda (1858–1922, born Eliezer Perelman).[3] What had at first seemed to be a utopian project became a serious programme of linguistic revival by the eve of the First World War,[4] and subsequently gained new momentum and a vital impulse for further development when the Ottoman dominion over Palestine ended and a British Mandate was established, with its explicit (although by no means unlimited) support for Jewish immigration.[5] In the decades that followed, modern Hebrew man-

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[3] The text of the article may be found on the website of the Ben Yehuda Project at https://benyehuda. org/read/257 [accessed 18th July, 2021]. For a summary study of ben Yehuda's work, see Gitai (2011). It should be noted that efforts to revitalise Hebrew knowledge among the masses of European Jews and to produce new and original literary works in Hebrew that would be of comparable quality to those composed in European languages occurred already in the latter half of the 18th century – see, for example, Breuer (2018: 655–660). However, the idea that Hebrew should once again become a fully-fledged living language with native speakers was not pondered seriously until the late 19th century.

[4] For Hebrew's role in the growing Zionist movement during the decade before the war, see Aytürk (2010).

[5] See Sáenz-Badillos (1993: 269).

aged to shed its initial aura of impractical exoticism and the idea that the new Zionist settlement would be a Hebrew-speaking one gained ever greater recognition in the Land of Israel and beyond.

Hebrew's "resurrection" can be fairly considered one of the most spectacular successes on the journey to re-creating the Jewish people as a modern political nation, and perhaps the least expected one.[6] The ancient language of the Bible, the Talmud and the subsequent authoritative canon of rabbinic literature once again became the main instrument of daily communication in the renewed Jewish national homeland, in the biblical Land of Israel. Consequently, it was to become the main linguistic medium of the renewed Jewish culture, both sacred and secular. This success proved to be not only a remarkable achievement in its own right, but also a valuable contribution to building a new sense of national identity, uniting devout and secular Jews of diverse backgrounds and cementing a Palestine-centred society, which may be seen in retrospect as "proto-Israeli". The resuscitation of Hebrew was certainly not seen as an academic exercise and, especially in secular Zionist cultural circles, use of the revived language as a practical expression of the nation's renewed vitality and self-confidence was considered imperative. A rich and varied cultural life along European lines (preferably comparable in terms of quality, as well), was seen both as a logical consequence and a proof of the success of the "national re-birth".

The beginnings of modern Hebrew classical philology: an overview

Among the many areas of scholarly and cultural life in which the new generations of authors writing in Hebrew engaged was also classical philology. Although its role in the modern Hebrew culture cannot be considered central, there has nevertheless been a steady thread of writers and works devoted to the culture and literature of the Graeco-Roman antiquity since the middle of the 19th century.

The Jews' attitude towards Greek and Roman classical culture has historically been an uneasy one. Both for religious reasons and due to perceived historical experience with the pagan overlords directly involved in the destruction of the ancient Jewish state, there has been a deal of ambiguity about how permissible it is for a Jew to engage with the works of "Greek wisdom" and Roman poets. However, the interest in classical culture was never entirely absent from Jewish culture and especially in the early medieval Eastern Mediterranean, Greek (and to a lesser degree, Latin and early Romance languages) played a significant role in the life of the Jewish communities.[7]

It would be beyond the scope of this paper to recapitulate the whole history of Jewish encounters with the classics between the early Middle Ages and the 19th century. For

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[6] The founding father of the Zionist movement, Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), himself believed it neither practicable nor desirable to renew Hebrew as a spoken language of the future Jewish state. In his programmatic political pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl dismisses such an idea out of hand, instead foreseeing a form of "linguistic federalism" after the Swiss model, with the dominant language (presumably German) naturally becoming the main means of communication and a *lingua franca* of sorts for Jews of other linguistic backgrounds. See Herzl (1896: 75).

[7] For an informative overview study of Greek's role in Byzantine Judaism, see de Lange (2015).

our purposes, it is sufficient to point out that although Jewish engagement with Gentile "high culture" was generally unsystematic and often a matter of controversy,[8] there were times and places where contacts between Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals were closer, more permanent and proved an inspiration for Jewish internal cultural discourse. It was the Jewish community of Italy that most consistently engaged with the literature of its homeland's Christian majority, and through it, with the heritage of ancient Rome. The Jews of Italy have read and discussed Italian literature since at least the 14th century and were inspired by it in their own literary production, as it is documented by modern scholarship, prominently by the works of Jefim Schirmann.[9] The cultural affinity that flourished through the Middle Ages and the early modern era was conducive also to a more active involvement of Italian Jews with Latin language than was usual elsewhere. One of the great Jewish authors of the Italian Renaissance, Azariah de' Rossi (1514–1578), was among those few pre-modern Jews known to have translated from Latin, although in his case, it was not a work of Roman antiquity, but a Latin version of the originally Greek pseudo-epigraphic *Letter of Aristeas* that he converted to Hebrew.[10] But the words of ancient Romans themselves did find their way into early modern Italo-Hebrew literature, even if that way was less than straightforward. Not surprisingly, it was Ovid's poetry, which was immensely popular in Renaissance and Baroque Italy, that proved attractive enough to gain a Hebrew translation, or rather paraphrase. For the Jews of the day, the gateway to the *Metamorphoses* was its Italian translation published in 1561 by Andrea dell'Anguillaria, which at the time was an influential source of moral parables among preachers, Catholic as well as, somewhat later, Jewish.[11] Soon enough, this interest "spilled over" into a decidedly secular discourse as well. Thus, an excerpt from the *Metamorphoses*, containing the tale of Apollo and Daphne, was translated into Hebrew from Italian by Shabtai Marini of Padua.[12] Modern Hebrew-language classical philology has therefore a respectable predecessor that came to being at a time and place where Ovid was a mighty inspiration for creators of contemporary literature, music and visual arts.[13]

Among the first modern (i.e. post-Emancipation) Jewish authors to translate ancient Greek and Latin works to Hebrew were Rabbi Aaron Kaminka (1866–1950)[14] and Yisrael Rall (1838–1890), respectively.[15] The latter's Hebrew anthology of Latin verse contains a preface with a spirited defence of the appropriateness of translating ancient works to Hebrew.[16] Towards the turn of the 20th century, the first generation of the classics of

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[8] This may be said about a wide spectrum of "secular" cultural activities in the realms of art, belletristic literature or artificial music throughout the pre-modern era, which on the one hand formed a familiar background to the Jews' everyday life in the midst of non-Jewish society, but on the other hand were only rarely practiced by those Jews who continued to see themselves as part of their faith community and were accepted as such. For recent studies of this phenomenon beyond the realm of literature, see Epstein (2018) and Seroussi (2018).

[9] See Schirmann (1934) and Schirmann (1979).

[10] See Dykman (1965: 13).

[11] See Facchini (2020: 85–86).

[12] Bonifacio (1991).

[13] For the boom of interest in Ovid's work in Renaissance Florence that provided a mighty impulse for the whole of Italian culture, see Barolsky (1998).

[14] His Hebrew study "An introduction to Greek poetry", containing translated excerpts from Homer's *Iliad* and several poems by Anacreon, was published in 1886. See Dykman (1965: 14).

[15] See Shavit (1997: 233).

[16] See Shavit (1997: 132). Rall's anthology was published 1867.

modern Hebrew poetry emerged. As noted above, for Zionist advocates of the language, creating an active community of Hebrew writers, readers and, above all, everyday speakers had a higher priority than producing Hebrew translations of Homer or Virgil. Nevertheless, it was one of the foremost Hebrew writers of the early 20th century who was also to become a prominent figure in modern Hebrew classical philological tradition. Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875–1943), although not an academic classicist, was a passionate reader of the classics and translations of the main works of the Greek canon constitute an important part of his poetic output[17] and arguably remain a reference point to this day for many Israelis, if and when they feel the need to cite these classical works. However, Tchernichovsky's main focus was on producing his own, original poetic oeuvre (inspired, among other influences also by his experience with the ancient literature).[18]

The great Polish-Israeli classical philologist Shlomo Dykman, author of first comprehensive studies of classical translations into Hebrew, who published mostly in Hebrew, but produced also an influential study in English,[19] reminds the reader that the nascent classical philology in modern Hebrew has long shown a "distinct bias in favour of the Greek".[20] Yaacov Shavit in his excellent in-depth study of the nineteenth-century Jews' interest in the classics[21] reflects this state of affairs by focusing mostly on the reception of Greek authors and cultural concepts. However, he does devote some space to Rall's aforementioned anthology of Roman poems and specifically addresses the implications of Rall's including excerpts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* among the selected texts, pointing out that according to Rall, the *Metamorphoses* display a "deep-seated link to the cosmogony of the Holy Scriptures", in contrast to "heretical" *De rerum natura* by Lucretius, whose Epicurean philosophy is seen as antagonistic to Jewish worldview.[22] This implies that from the early days of modern Hebrew-language classical philology, Ovid has been seen favourably as an author worthy to be studied by Jewish readers.

The following sections of this paper will focus on the first translator who systematically devoted his efforts to Ovid and gave his readers first substantial rendition of his *Metamorphoses* in modern Hebrew.

Yehoshua Friedman: a biographical sketch

Similar to Shaul Tchernichovsky, Yehoshua Friedman[23] was not a professional academic, but his work has won him a lasting place about the great figures of Hebrew classical philology. Indeed, Dykman praises him together with Tchernichovsky as "the true fathers of the Hebrew literary translation" who "generated a veritable revolution in

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[17] See, for example, Tchernichovsky (1933–1934) for his translation of the *Iliad*.
[18] It is significant that the dactylic hexameter is one of the principle forms of his own works as well. See Dykman (2007: 240).
[19] Dykman (1965). This is the text I used for the purposes of this paper.
[20] Dykman (1965: 17). It was Dykman himself who contributed significantly to filling this gap with his translations from Latin produced in the 1950s and 1960s.
[21] Shavit (1997).
[22] Shavit (1997: 132).
[23] For biographical information, see Lipetz, Goren (1966–1967).

Hebrew letters".[24] Born in Vilna in 1885, Friedman belonged to the same generation as Tchernichovsky but, unlike him, he is now known not primarily as an author of his own poetry, but as a translator of Latin verse. Friedman, although a Zionist, spent most of his life in the old fatherland and elsewhere in Europe, only emigrating to Mandatory Palestine in 1933, mere months before his death in May 1934. Friedman's interest in classics went hand in hand with his engagement in the field of education. This connection found its symbolic posthumous expression in the 1952 publication of his translations as a school reader, offering students at Hebrew-language grammar schools in the newly established Jewish state a selection of commented translations from the principal works of Horace, Virgil and Ovid.[25]

Friedman came from a traditional, devout Jewish family (several of his ancestors were rabbis), and duly received religious education both at the elementary level and in a Talmudic academy for advanced students (*yeshiva*). However, he also studied at a classical gymnasium in the Polish town of Częstochowa, before reading law at the universities in Warsaw and Saint Petersburg. In doing so, he gained the best secular education available at the time in the Russian Empire, a fact all the more remarkable considering the formal and informal barriers that restricted Jewish access to academic institutions in the state. The "European" character of his education and cultural interests fit well into the cultural milieu that was gradually established in the early Zionist Palestine and dominated by educated Ashkenazi Jews from the three great monarchies of Central and Eastern Europe.[26]

The question of Hebrew metre, Friedman's translation and its verse

On the following pages, I will try to analyse the main characteristic features of Friedman's Ovidian language and demonstrate its sophisticated elegance. It should be mentioned at the very start that his translation, unlike Tchernichovsky's renditions of Homer that enjoy lasting popularity, is not the standard reference version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in modern Hebrew. This distinction goes to a translation first published in 1965 by Shlomo Dykman (sixth edition 2020). As mentioned above, in his scholarly articles Dykman acknowledged Friedman's importance as a classical philologist, considering him as influential as Tchernichovsky. In the foreword to his own translation, Dykman goes

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[24] Dykman (1965: 15).
[25] The edition used here is Friedman, Fuks (1952). Alexander Fuks (1917–1978) was a classical historian and later professor of ancient history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where his main area of interest was social history of the Hellenistic period. For his life and work, see Amit (2011: 11–12). Originally, they appeared in the literary quarterly *Hatekufa*, see Dykman (1965: 15). The 1952 edition reviewed by Fuks can be considered representative version of Friedman's work. Parts of the Ovidian translation are available online on the website of the Ben-Yehuda Project (https://benyehuda.org/read/6722 [accessed 22nd October, 2021]).
[26] This settlement already saw itself as a Jewish state-in-waiting; advancing it to "European level" in as many areas as possible was a highly political issue. Educational policies were an especially contentious matter and their potential for the future character of the Jewish community in Palestine was widely recognised. For the uneasy relations between British colonial officials and proponents of Zionist national life and Hebrew-language culture and education, see Elboim-Dror (2000).

even further, praising Friedman's "marvellous translation, precise and of charming beauty" and calling its author "without doubt the greatest translator from Latin in our literature."[27] That Dykman nevertheless saw the need to translate Ovid anew, was therefore not caused by his doubts about the older version's qualities, but rather by two different reasons. Firstly, Friedman's translation is incomplete, comprising only the first four books (out of which the first two and portions of the fourth appeared in book form as a part of the school reader published 1952 in Haifa). Secondly, and perhaps as importantly, Dykman wrote in a prosodic scheme that reflects Hebrew pronunciation and accentual patterns prevalent in the State of Israel in his day (and even more dominant today), but differs markedly from the system used by Friedman and other Ashkenazi poets of the pre-state generation. This difference had far-reaching consequences for the character of their respective verses, with Friedman's sounding distinctly foreign to most native speakers of modern Hebrew.

During the long history of Hebrew poetry, the character and role of prosodic patterns and metre underwent many changes. Modern scholars tend to agree that there is no identifiable metre in biblical poetry,[28] but various forms of metrical poetry in Hebrew were arising throughout the Diaspora from the early Middle Ages onwards.[29] Indeed, some of the most highly valued works of Hebrew poetry were written in quantitative metres borrowed from classical Arabic poetry during the so-called "Golden Age" of Jewish culture in Muslim Spain (ca. 900–ca. 1150). The metre used by the greatest Iberian Jewish poets is somewhat similar to the prosodic systems of Graeco-Roman verse in that the metre's main organisational principle is the length of the syllable (which is defined by the contrast between full and reduced vowels), but there are some major differences as well.

In later centuries, a conservative tendency to emulate the style of biblical and medieval poetry competed with the adaption of poetic norms and even some linguistic specifics of the vernacular languages in the respective home countries of the Diaspora. By the 19th century, a great majority of the world's Jewish population lived in the Ashkenazi area, whose core lay in the German-speaking countries and especially in East-Central Europe (and later in the New World). For most of these Jews, the everyday spoken language was one of the many varieties of Yiddish, a West Germanic language based on Middle High German, whose phonology and prosody, with word stress tending to the penultimate syllable, had a profound impact on the way Ashkenazi Jews pronounced Hebrew. The Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew and the associated prosodic scheme, for a long time firmly established in the religious discourse among Ashkenazi Jews, gained an early momentum in spoken modern Hebrew as well.

However, with the growing number of Hebrew native speakers in the Land of Israel, and ever more intensive contacts between Jews of various backgrounds, there was an

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[27] Dykman (2020: 26).
[28] An excellent, terse but informative overview of biblical poetry and its organisational structure is offered by Linafelt (2016: 50–68). Attempts to identify a regular metre in biblical poetry were made for many centuries and especially Christian Hebraists tried to find in the Bible metrical schemes known from classical poetry. See Schulte (2021: 18; I am grateful to the author for sharing his forthcoming article with me and allowing me to cite it prior to its publication). For a detailed historical introduction to the specific character of biblical poetry, see Freedman (1977). It should be noted that this author remains ambivalent about the possible presence of metre in biblical verse.
[29] The following summary is based on Hrushovski (1981).

increasing tendency to switch from the Ashkenazi way of pronunciation to that traditionally called Sephardic (although it was originally used not only by the Sephardim, but also by Oriental and other non-Ashkenazi Jews). This code uses a prosodic scheme closer to the presumed biblical one, with word accents mostly on the last syllable, and with both consonants and vowels pronounced more similarly to the rules of biblical Hebrew (as reconstructed by academic Hebraists). After the founding of the State, the Sephardic pronunciation gradually became the norm in spoken modern Hebrew and was adopted even by new native speakers – and writers – of Ashkenazi extraction. The standard pronunciation of contemporary Israeli Hebrew is directly descended from this norm and although the label "Sephardic pronunciation" stays in use, it no longer necessarily implies a connection to any Jewish ethno-cultural subgroup.[30]

In light of these circumstances, it is easy to understand that finding an appropriate metrical structure for new Hebrew verses, original and translated, was not an easy matter. Shaul Tchernichovsky, rooted in the Ashkenazi tradition, was a prime example of a poet who devoted much time and energy to finding an appropriate metre. As mentioned above, a great amount of superb Hebrew poetry in quantitative metres had been composed in medieval Spain, but for Tchernichovsky, there was no doubt that modern Hebrew poetry must be syllabotonic.[31] The other great figure of the founding generation of modern Hebrew poetry, Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934), likewise wrote his works using accentual (syllabotonic) metres in the Ashkenazi fashion.[32] Together with the demographic prevalence of the Ashkenazi Jews among the early speakers of modern Hebrew, it was arguably the two poets' great popularity and influence that helped establish the Ashkenazi mode of pronunciation in modern Hebrew during the first third of the 20th century.

When we assess specifically the realm of translating classical poetry, we must inevitably ask how the translators proceeded converting Greek and Roman quantitative verses, especially the most emblematic among them, dactylic hexameter, the metre of Homer, Virgil and of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Given the importance of the issue for classical translation, it is remarkable that a comprehensive scholarly study of the Hebrew hexameter, written by the Israeli literary scholar Aminadav Dykman (Shlomo Dykman's son), appeared only relatively recently.[33] This article is an excellent guide to the formal and stylistic properties of dactylic hexameter and Hebrew's ability to adopt it.

To explain how Friedman solved the problem of finding his "Ovidian" metre I shall now consider two verses from my sample texts as illustrative examples. I will approach these lines intentionally from a position of a hypothetical uninitiated student for whom

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[30] For a linguistic overview of modern standard Israeli Hebrew, see Bolozky (1997). It cannot be denied that the situation "on the ground" is far more complex and that there in fact are many different "Israeli accents" and modes of pronunciation with their distinct cultural and socio-linguistical connotations, much like in other languages (see Zuckermann [2005]). However, the fact remains that the Sephardic pronunciation has largely become the common denominator to which the language spoken by most current users more or less directly relates.

[31] See Schulte (2021: 5).

[32] For a representative anthology of Bialik's verse, see Bialik (2004).

[33] See Dykman (2007). The author offers an analytical overview of the history of composing Hebrew hexameters from their tentative beginnings in the early 19th century through Tchernichovsky's and Friedman's elegant creations to the shift from the Ashkenazi prosody to the Sephardic, represented by Shlomo Dykman.

Sephardic pronunciation is the default one and who considers the verses' linguistic properties in order to determine their metrical structure.

> In *Met.* I, 550, Ovid's words
> *in frondem crines, in ramos bracchia crescunt*

are represented by the Hebrew

> הָיְתָה הַזְּרוֹעַ לְעָנָף וְשַׂעֲרוֹת-רֹאשָׁה לְעָלִים,
> [hāyᵉtā ha-zᵉrōᵃ' lᵉ-'ānāf wᵉ-sa'ᵃrot rōšāʰ lᵉ-'ālīm]
> [the arm became a branch and the hair of her head leaves].[34]

When we consider the vocalic quantities, it is obvious that no attempt is made to create a quantitative verse, be it a hexameter or one of the meters know from medieval Jewish poetry: the long, short and reduced vowels follow one another without any discernible pattern that would replicate that of other verses. Likewise, if all vowels, full and reduced, are pronounced corresponding to the reconstructed biblical rules, there is no fixed number of syllables per verse. Friedman's verse must therefore be either free or accentual, in that case adhering either to the Ashkenazi or the Sephardic mode.

If we assume that Friedman, whose poetic language is generally close to that of the Bible, chose to follow the Sephardic rules with their resemblance to biblical prosody (as far as we are able to reconstruct it), once again we have to conclude that there are no symmetrically stressed feet, let alone any that would resemble dactyls and spondees. This will become apparent when we mark in bold type syllables on which the stress will lie in Sephardic pronunciation:

> [hāyᵉ**tā** ha-zᵉ**rō**ᵃ' lᵉ-'ā**nāf** wᵉ-sa'ᵃ**rot** rōšāʰ lᵉ-'ā**līm**].

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[34] For the purposes of this paper, I have devised my own method of transliteration of the Hebrew alphabet which combines phonetic, phonological and morphological approaches. After much consideration, I decided not to use any of the standard modes of transliterations (such as the Library of Congress Romanisation rules), firstly to make my transliteration easily accessible for non-specialists without making it over-simplistic, and secondly, to clearly mark the difference between long and short vowels, which most transliteration styles omit to do. My simplifications notwithstanding, I have made an effort to faithfully represent the main phonological features of Hebrew. The gutturals א and ע are both represented by ' (and in case of א omitted at the beginning of the word), the guttural ח by ḥ. ה, the so-called *he mappiqatum*, i.e. a voiceless h sound pronounced at the end of the word, is transcribed as ʰ. The emphatic ק is rendered as q, non-emphatic plosive כ as k, fricative כ/ך as kh. The emphatic צ/ץ is represented by tz, the emphatic ט and non-emphatic ת are both transcribed as t. The sibilant שׁ is rendered by š (to be pronounced as sh in "fish"). I make no distinction between plosive and fricative realisations of ג, ד and ת, transliterating them throughout as g, d, and t, respectively. Similarly, there is no distinction made between ס and שׂ – both are transcribed as s. The fricative ב is represented by v, consonantal ו by w, consonantal י by y. I depart from common practice in deciding to mark geminated consonants inside the stem and after prepositions (but not after the definite article). I also distinguish long, short and reduced vowels, transcribing them, for example, as ā, a and ᵃ. The vowel ֱ is transcribed as e rather than ae, the *schwa mobile* and all varieties of reduced e are transcribed as ᵉ. To demonstrate their morphological and semantic autonomy, I separate the definite article, most prepositions and the conjunction ו by hyphen. These rules are applied consistently in my transliterations of Friedman's translation. Hebrew names and terms that occasionally occur elsewhere in the text appear in the form usual in English-language texts (as long as they have one).

However, matters start looking quite differently if we consider this line as pronounced according to the Ashkenazi fashion. With word stresses largely on the penultimate syllables with a full (i.e. non-reduced) vowel, and crucially, with the freedom to either pronounce reduced vowels as full short ones or omit them altogether as needed,[35] the verse can indeed be neatly divided in six dactylic feet with a caesura *post tertium trochaeum*:

[**hāy**tā ha-**zrō**aʿ le-**ʿā**nāf | we-**sa**ʾarot **rō**šāh le-ʿā**līm**].

Considering the other selected verse (Ov. *Met.* I, 461) and highlighting its prosodic schemes first in the Sephardic and then the Ashkenazi fashion, we will observe an analogous situation:

Tu face nescioquos esto contentus amores [*inritare tua*, v. 462]
אַתָּה דַּיֶּךָ כִּי לַפִּיד בְּיָדְךָ לְעוֹרֵר אֲהָבִים,
[attā dayyekkā kī lappīd be-yādekhā le-ʾōrēr ahāvīm]
[As for you, you be content that there is a torch in your hand, to excite loves].

Here, the seemingly free "Sephardic" verse

[at**tā** day**yek**kā kī lap**pīd** be-yāde**khā** le-ʾō**rēr** ahā**vīm**]

will turn into a metrical Ashkenazi one

[**at**tā day**yek**kā kī **lap**pīd be-**yād**khā | le-ʾō**rēr** a**hā**vīm].

The two examples quoted above are representative of the whole translation and allow us to answer the question which metre Friedman uses. The verses, as demonstrated above, are indeed smooth accentual hexameters in the Ashkenazi prosodic mode, following the same formal rules as those written by Tchernichovsky.[36] Using the prosody and pronunciation in which he was most at home, both as a *yeshiva* student and as a poet, Friedman reached a remarkable success in applying decidedly non-biblical accentual patterns to display his great knowledge of the biblical language. In the case studies that follow, I shall take a close look to the methods he used to let Ovid speak to his readers in elegant hexameters composed in masterful, biblically inspired Hebrew.

Case studies

In the following analysis of selected passages from the story of Apollo and Daphne, I will show how Friedman systematically turns to a consciously biblical language and style at key places of the narrative, and combines it with other techniques, thus giving his verses a distinct flavour and consciously creating a specific linguistic register. I will try to

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[35] This technique has a precedent in a very similar treatment of reduced vowels that was the norm in the metric Hebrew poetry of medieval Iberia.
[36] For examples of Tchernichovsky's hexameters, see Dykman (2007: 240–243).

present the spectrum of tools Friedman uses to achieve this effect, ranging from the use of biblical archaisms no longer routinely used in Hebrew, through specific, distinctly biblical grammatical constructions and intentional allusions to the narrative style of biblical poetry and prose, to unusual formal experiments.

I will now cite three short excerpts from the story of Apollo and Daphne in Book One of the *Metamorphoses*, first in the Latin original and A. D. Melville's English translation as published in the *Oxford World's Classics* series,[37] and then in Yehoshua Friedman's Hebrew version. The Hebrew text is accompanied by my transliteration into Roman characters, and a literal interlinear translation into English, which will allow non-Hebraist readers to follow the text closely and judge how faithfully Friedman kept to Ovid's own words, which liberties he allowed himself, and where. My selection is framed by two slightly more extensive citations, while the middle excerpt is shorter and consists primarily of a brief, succinct monologue. First, I cite the verbal velitation between Apollo and Cupid that sets in motion a series of dramatic events (Ov. *Met.* I, 456–465); second, Peneius' morose complaints about his daughter Daphne's stubborn insistence on remaining a virgin (Ov. *Met.* I, 481–482); finally, I cite in full the key scene of the story, in which Daphne implores her father to destroy her unwanted beauty and subsequently turns into a laurel tree (Ov. *Met.* I, 546–552).

In each excerpt I highlight specific words and phrases that I consider exemplary of Friedman's systematic effort to create his own distinctly Ovidian register. I then offer a detailed linguistic and stylistic commentary on each of these highlighted examples, in which I analyse how they differ from the "standard" modern Hebrew of Friedman's day and how this difference contributes to rendering the aesthetic effects desired by the translator. After these individual analyses, I attempt to provide a summary assessment of the character and nature of Friedman's "Ovidian Hebrew".

Sample text one: Ov. *Met.* I, 456–465

Situation: Apollo chances upon the boyish Cupid, who is apparently playing with a disproportionately large bow and arrows.

> *"Quid"que "tibi, lasciue puer, cum fortibus armis?"*
> *dixerat; "ista decent umeros gestamina nostros,*
> *qui dare certa ferae, dare uulnera possumus hosti,*
> *qui modo pestifero tot iugera uentre prementem*
> *strauimus innumeris tumidum Pythona sagittis.*
> *Tu face nescioquos esto contentus amores*
> *inritare tua, nec laudes assere nostras."*
> *Filius huic Veneris "Figat tuus omnia, Phoebe,*
> *te meus arcus" ait, "quantoque animalia cedunt*
> *cuncta deo, tanto minor est tua gloria nostra."*
> *‒‒*
> "Mischievous boy, what are brave man's arms
> To you? That gear becomes my shoulders best.

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[37] Melville, Kenney (1986).

My aim is sure; I wound my enemies,
I wound wild beasts; my countless arrows slew
But now the bloated Python, whose vast coils
Across so many acres spread their blight.
You and your loves! You have your torch to light them!
Let that content you; never claim my fame!"
And Venus' son replied: "Your bow, Apollo,
May vanquish all, but mine shall vanquish you.
As every creature yields to power divine,
So likewise shall your glory yield to mine."
– –

„מַה לְּךָ, נַעַר מִתְהוֹלֵל, לְךָ וּלְנֶשֶׁק אַבִּירִים?
[ma lᵉkhā na'ar mithōlēl lᵉkhā u-lᵉ-nešeq abbīrīm]
[What is this with you, mischievous boy, with you and with strong men's weapons?]

לִי הוּא לְפָאֵר אֶת כְּתֵפִי, לִי קֶשֶׁת-גִּבּוֹרִים יָאָתָה
[lī hū lᵉfā'ēr et kᵉtēfī lī qešet gibbōrīm yā'ātā]
[It is my shoulder they should grace, it is I for whom a hero's bow is appropriate,]

לַצְמִית מְשַׂנְאַי מִפָּנַי, לִמְחֹץ פְּרִיץ-חַיּוֹת כִּי יָקוּם!
[latzmīt mᵉsānay mi-pānay limḥōtz pᵉrītz ḥayyōt kī yāqūm]
[since it is able to annihilate my adversaries, to destroy wild beasts.]

הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי חֲצָצַי פִּלְּחוּ לֵב פֶּתֶן אַכְזָרִי,
[hinnē ānōkhī ḥᵃtzātzay pillḥū lēv peten akhzārī]
[Behold: as for me, my arrows pierced the heart of the vicious Python,]

רוֹבֵץ עַל מֶרְחֲבֵי אֶרֶץ וּמְזֹרֶה חֲמָתוֹ מִסָּבִיב.
[rōvētz 'al merḥᵃvē eretz u-mᵉzārē ḥᵃmātō missāvīv]
[wallowing all over the earth and spewing his fury around.]

אַתָּה דַיֶּךָ כִּי לַפִּיד בְּיָדְךָ לְעוֹרֵר אֲהָבִים,
[attā dayyekkā kī lappīd bᵉ-yādᵉkhā lᵉ-'ōrēr ᵃhāvīm]
[As for you, you be content that there is a torch in your hand, to excite loves.]

לָמָּה-זֶה תַסִּיג גְּבוּל כְּבוֹדִי וּבְמַעֲשֵׂי-יָדַי תִּתְפָּאֵר?"
[lāmmā zē tassīg gᵉvūl kᵉvōdī u-vᵉ-ma'ᵃsē yādī titpā'ēr]
[Why is it that you should claim my honour and glory in what my hand has achieved?]

עָנָה בֶן וֵנוּס: „ לוּ יִנְחֲתוּ, פֶבּוּס, בַּכֹּל חֲצָצֶיךָ,
['ānā ben wēnus lū yinḥᵉtū Febus ba-kol ḥᵃtzātzēkhā]
[The son of Venus replied: If your arrows, Phoebus, penetrate everything,]

חִצַּי – אֶת לִבְּךָ יִמְחָצוּ! כִּגְבֹהַּ חִין-עֵרֶךְ הָאֵלִים
[ḥitztzay et libbᵉkhā yimḥōtzū ki-gᵉvōᵃh ḥīn 'ērekh hā-ēlīm]
[my arrows – they will destroy your heart;[38] just as the nature of gods is higher]

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[38] For other possible meanings, see Commentary.

מִן כָּל הַחַיָּה בָּאָרֶץ, כֵּן כְּבוֹדִי אֲנִי – מִכְּבוֹדְךָ!"

[min kol haḥayyā vā-āretz kēn kᵉvōdī ᵃnī mi-kᵉvōdēkhā]

[than all animals on earth, so is my honour [higher] than yours.]

Commentary

כְּתֵפִי [kᵉtēfī] (v. 457) – SHOULDER sg. + poss. 1 sg.

The pronominal suffix is attached directly to the noun in a typical biblical manner. This is Friedman's standard way of expressing possession (rather than by using separate possessive pronouns as would be more usual in post-biblical Hebrew) and such cases are ubiquitous throughout his translation. After this example, they will no longer be specifically mentioned unless they have other remarkable features.

יָאָתָה [yā'ātā] (v. 457) – BE FITTING 3 sg. pf.; pausal form

The second radical consonant, א, is vocalised with *ā* rather than *ᵃ* as would occur in the standard (in grammatical terms, contextual) form יָאֲתָה [yā'ᵃtā]. These alternative, or pausal forms, are a typical feature of biblical poetry, occurring non-obligatorily but very commonly at the ends of verses and half-verses. They differ morphologically by the lengthening of short or reduced vowels inside the stem (and occasionally by replacing a closed vowel with an opened one), accompanied by a shift in the word stress from the *ultima* to the lengthened syllable. This last fact is highly relevant here for metric reasons. Note that the perfect tense expresses a continuous state here.

מִפָּנַי [mi-pānay] (v. 458) – FROM + FACE pl. + poss. 1 sg. – "away from me"

This preposition (or, in this case, postposition) is semantically redundant. The resulting phrase is a pleonasm highly evocative of biblical narrative style.

אָנֹכִי [ānōkhī] (v. 459) – I; archaic/higher register form

This alternative form of the standard first person singular personal pronoun, אֲנִי [ᵃnī], is prototypically used in ceremonious style and strongly implies that the speaker is claiming special attention. In the Bible, it is a typical mode of self-reference for kings and God (it is, for example, the first word of the Decalogue). The phrase הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי [hinnē ānōkhī] ("behold, I"), semantically redundant and grammatically incongruent with the rest of the sentence, is a typical way of setting the person of the speaker firmly at the centre of the narrative.

חֲצָצַי [ḥᵃtzātzay] (v. 459) – ARROW pl. + poss. 1 sg.

This form used here is an alternative to the standard חִצַּי [ḥitztzay], differing from it by the presence of both the second and the third radical consonants (in this case identical) which in the standard form would be merged into one *consonans geminata*. This alternative usage is evocative of biblical poetry (see e.g. Ps 77, 18). For a further appearance of the same form in this excerpt, see v. 463.

פֶּתֶן [peten] (v. 459) – VENOMOUS SNAKE; here a proper name

Friedman's rendition of Python's name is a creative and inspired use of a biblical word used in several places to refer to a venomous snake of uncertain zoological classification (e.g. Ps 58, 5).[39] The word's phonological and semantic resemblance to the name of the Greek monster is striking, but the similarity seems to be coincidental. Indo-European comparative linguists agree that the word Python is of Proto-Indo-European origin and has cognates in many languages throughout this linguistic family,[40] whereas פֶּתֶן is apparently not among the Indo-European loanwords demonstrably present in the Hebrew Bible.[41]

רוֹבֵץ עַל מֶרְחֲבֵי אֶרֶץ וּמְזָרֶה חֲמָתוֹ מִסָּבִיב [rōvētz ʿal merḥᵃvē eretz u-mᵉzārē ḥᵃmātō missāvīv] (v. 460)

This verse is remarkable not for the morphology or syntax of its individual elements, but for its very structure and its loose relation to the Latin original. Whereas its first half רוֹבֵץ עַל מֶרְחֲבֵי אֶרֶץ [rōvētz ʿal merḥᵃvē eretz] ("wallowing all over the earth") corresponds quite closely to Ovid's *tot iugera uentre prementem* in his v. 459, the second half וּמְזָרֶה חֲמָתוֹ מִסָּבִיב [u-mᵉzārē ḥᵃmātō missāvīv] ("and spewing his fury around") is Friedman's addition without any equivalent in the original text. However, I am prepared to argue that the translator's creativity is justified here and, besides metrical considerations, serves another clear purpose. If we compare the two half-verses, we find that the second unit mirrors the first one both in content and in grammatical structure (the verb forms used in both parts are active participles), in a manner closely reminiscent of the biblical *parallelismus membrorum*, one of the basic organisational principles of biblical poetry.[42] This method (which is applied again shortly afterwards, in vv. 462 and 463–464) is one of the most original features of Friedman's Ovidian idiom.

דַּיֶּךָ [dayyekkā] (v. 461) – ENOUGH + 2 sg. masc.

The attachment of pronominal suffixes to adjectives, such as דַּי [day] ("enough"), is a typical feature of biblical Hebrew. Two further distinctly biblical morphological details

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[39] See Gesenius (2013: 1094). The root is also attested in other Semitic languages, including Akkadian, Ugaritic and Aramaic. Historically, there has been a deal of uncertainty as to what sort of serpent this term denoted. In modern Hebrew it is used both as a generic term for a venomous snake, and as a zoological name for true cobras of the genus *Naja*, see the same entry in Even-Shoshan (2006: 1561). At this point, it is appropriate to make explicit that I refer to Gesenius' biblical dictionary not because Friedman would have been likely to use it himself, but because my study is broadly rooted in the European academic tradition of Hebrew philology for which this dictionary is a standard reference tool. The intriguing question to what extent Jewish men of letters of Friedman's generation were aware and appreciative of Gesenius and other great figures of Christian Hebraism is worthy of a separate study. I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers of this paper for pointing this issue out to me.

[40] See Watkins (1995: 461–462), who demonstrates the word's connection to the Proto-Indo-European root *bʰeudʰ ("to wake up"), but also suggests that it may be a taboo metathesis of another monster's name, Typhon (likewise of Proto-Indo-European origin). The whole chapter ('Python and Ahi Budhnya, the Serpent of the Deep', Watkins 1995: 461–463) is extremely enlightening regarding the cultural and linguistic consequences of the word's uses in ancient Indo-European cultures. I am grateful to Dr Jan Bičovský of Charles University in Prague for bringing this book to my attention.

[41] Noonan (2019) does not include the word in his comprehensive list of non-Semitic loanwords in the Hebrew Bible, nor does he mention it in the list of words commonly misidentified as non-Semitic (see Noonan 2019: 516–561).

[42] For a detailed study on *parallelismus membrorum* in Hebrew poetry, see Tsumura (2009).

merit our attention here. The consonant ד lacks the *dagesh lene* and is therefore fricative, despite being in the initial position in the word. This occurs under the influence of the final vowel of the preceding word and mirrors a phenomenon common in the Hebrew Bible. It is a token of Friedman's attention to detail that he cares to mark such minutiae even in the case of the consonant ד, where the lack of *dagesh* has no impact on (modern) pronunciation. The punctuation and pronunciation of the suffix ךְָּ- [-ekkā], here used instead of the standard form ךְָ- [-ēkhā], is even more interesting. This is another intentional biblicism, since the gemination of the *k* sound indicates the vestigial presence of the assimilated weak consonant נ [n].[43] This so called *nun energicum* was occasionally inserted into pronominal suffixes to give the word added emphasis.[44] It is also noteworthy that this word occurs after the personal pronoun 2 sg. masc. אַתָּה [attā] in a pleonastic construction comparable to that used in verse 459. The word's near juxtaposition to the word יָדְךָ [yādᵉkhā] (composed of the very same consonants in a different order) is highly remarkable; it creates a loose grammatical rhyme evocative both of its occasional use in (otherwise not rhymed) biblical poetry and of the occasional assonances in classical Latin hexameters (although not in the original of this particular verse).

אֲהָבִים [ᵃhāvīm] (v. 460) – GIFT OF LOVE pl.

In what is probably a deliberate effort to indicate Apollo's somewhat arrogant lack of appreciation for Cupid's power to excite love (*nescioquos amores*), Friedman chooses not to use the usual Hebrew word for love, אַהֲבָה [ahᵃvā], but its rarely used[45] cognate אֲהָבִים [ᵃhāvīm], a *plurale tantum* derived from the unattested hypothetical singular אֹהַב* [ahav] translated by the great lexicologist Gesenius as "Liebesgeschenk" (gift of love).

עָנָה בֶּן וֵנוּס ['ānā ben wēnus] (v. 463)

This is the only occurrence in my excerpts of Friedman's use of the distinctly biblical (and distinctly Semitic) V-S-O word order, with the verb עָנָה ['ānā] preceding the subject.[46] Appropriately, it is used in the short passage told from the perspective of the omniscient narrator, marking it as different from the surrounding dialogue.

וֵנוּס [wēnus] (v. 463) – proper name

Unlike in v. 459, Friedman here chooses not to use an *interpretatio Hebraea* in rendering the love goddess' name, although the planet Venus does have a traditional Hebrew name נֹגַה [nōgaʰ] ("Brightness"). Instead, Friedman renders her name like those of other Roman deities, in a simple Hebrew transliteration that reflects the way Latin was traditionally pronounced among Central European classicists. It is all the more interesting, therefore, that in the case of Python, Friedman did decide to evoke the desired atmosphere by using a word from the biblical repertoire.

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43 The assimilation is not obligatory and the non-assimilated form ךָ- נֶ [-enkā], though rare, does occur in the Bible, see e.g. Jer 22, 24.
44 For *nun energicum*, see Gesenius, Kautzsch (1910: 157–158).
45 For a biblical use, see for example Hos 8, 9.
46 In post-biblical and modern Hebrew, the prevalent word order is S-O-V, usual in many Indo-European languages spoken throughout the lands of Jewish Diaspora and probably adopted under their influence.

לִבְּךָ [libbᵉkhā] (v. 464) – HEART + poss. 2 sg.

Taken at face value, this word is Friedman's own addition, since Ovid refers to Phoebus as a whole and does not single out his heart. However, the word לֵב [lēv] ("heart") can often mean "life" in biblical narratives and poetry, and (especially in connection with pronominal suffixes) can be even used as a general reference to a person or other being, as is apparently the case here. See also a similar example in v. 459.

יְמְחֹצוּ [yimḥōtzū] (v. 464) – DESTROY 3 pl. masc. impf.; pausal form
Pausal form used instead of the contextual יִמְחֲצוּ [yimḥᵉtzū].

לוּ יִנְחֲתוּ פֶבּוּס, בַּכֹּל חֲצָצֶיךָ,\ חִצַּי – אֶת לִבְּךָ יִמְחֹצוּ [lū yinḥᵉtū febus ba-kol ḥᵃtzātzēkhā ḥitztzay et libbᵉkhā yimḥōtzū] (vv. 463–464)

Following Ovid's example, Friedman builds a chiastic phrase that spreads across two lines. This becomes apparent when we compare the original

Figat	*tuus* (A)	*omnia* (B),	*Phoebe,*
	te (B)	*meus* (A)	*arcus*

with Friedman's version (accompanied by my word-for-word translation)

[lū]	**[yinḥᵉtū] (A)**	[febus]	**[ba-kol] (B)**	**[ḥᵃtzātzēkhā] (C)**
IF	PENETRATE 3 pl. masc. impf.	PHOEBUS	IN def. + ALL	ARROW pl. + poss. 2 sg. masc.
	[ḥitztzay] (C)		[et libbᵉkhā] (B)	[yimḥōtzū] (A)
	ARROW pl. + poss. 1 sg.		ACC. HEART + poss. 2 sg. masc.	DESTROY 3 pl. masc. impf. pause

Of course, this is no straightforward imitation. Firstly and most obviously, Friedman's figure is augmented from two elements to three and it is therefore no chiasm *stricto sensu*, although the basic idea remains. Secondly, by choosing to state the predicate in the second verse explicitly (in contrast to Ovid), but using a different verb, the translator gains a chance to employ the biblical *parallelismus membrorum* once again, here in the form of *parallelismus antitheticus* (the parallel syntactical structure in the second branch contrasts and opposes the first): "If your arrows, Phoebus, penetrate everything / my arrows shall destroy you." These two verses are therefore simultaneously both the only place in my sample texts where Friedman more or less directly reproduces a Latin literary figure from the original in his Hebrew text, and the only place where he merges a literary technique typical in Roman poetry (chiasm) with one emblematic of biblical verse (*parallelismus membrorum*). Finally, we should note that it is the third place in a short sequence (after v. 460 and v. 462) where Friedman echoes biblical parallelisms, thus creating a specific tricolon of great poetic strength.

בָאָרֶץ [vā-āretz] (v. 465) – IN + EARTH sg. def.

The preposition בּ lacks the *dagesh lene*, under the influence of the final vowel in the preceding word (cf. דָּיֵךְ in v. 461 and בָאָרֶץ once again in v. 551). In this case, this vicinity does have an influence on pronunciation and the בּ will be realised as a *v* rather than a *b* sound (the latter would normally be the case at the beginning of the word). We may plausibly speculate that this (non-obligatory) "binding" of words, usual in the biblical language, might be used here as an intentional reminiscence of the (likewise non-obligatory) vowel elisions across verse borders occasionally encountered in classical Latin poetry.

אֲנִי [ᵃnī] (v. 465) – I

The personal pronoun after the noun כְּבוֹדִי [kᵉvōdī] ("my honour"), which thanks to the possessive pronominal suffix already explicitly declares the semantic subject, is strictly speaking redundant and creates an expressive pleonasm reminiscent of biblical poetical language (we have already encountered a similar case in v. 461).

Sample text two: Ov. *Met.* I, 481–482

Situation: Peneius complains about his daughter Daphne's continuing virginity and his own resulting lack of grandchildren.

> *Saepe pater dixit "Generum mihi, filia, debes";*
> *saepe pater dixit "Debes mihi, nata, nepotes."*
> – –
> Often her father said, "My dearest daughter,
> It is my due to have a son-in-law."
> Often her father said, "It is my due,
> Child of my heart, to be given grandchildren."
> – –

פַּעַם בְּפַעַם לָהּ יֹאמַר אָבִיהָ: ''הוֹי, חָתָן לִי הָבִי!''
[paʼam bᵉ-faʼam lāʰ yōmar āvīhā hōy ḥātān lī hāvī]
[Again and again says her father to her: Oh give me a son-in-law,]

פַּעַם בְּפַעַם לָהּ יֹאמַר: ''בִּתִּי, הוֹי, הָבָה לִי נֶכֶד!''
[paʼam bᵉ-faʼam lāʰ yōmar bittī hōy hāvā lī nekhed]
[again and again he says to her: my daughter, oh do give me a grandson].

Commentary

יֹאמַר [yōmar] (v. 481) – SAY 3 sg. masc. impf.

In a typical biblical manner, but in stark contrast to the modern usage, the verb in the imperfect denotes a repeated action in the past. This is in full accordance with the imperfect's original value as the marker of the imperfective aspect, essentially independent of time.

הוֹי [hōy] (v. 481) – OH/WOE

This is an interjection that introduces a direct address, which is commonly used in the narrative and poetic discourse in the Hebrew Bible, and is especially frequent in the

prophetic books. Typically, it expresses sorrow (e.g. 1 Kings 13, 30, in a funeral lament). Here, it is used analogically to the particle *o* in both Greek and Latin, as a semantically empty address marker, unless we choose to speculate that the tragical connotations of the biblical word are used here to an intentional comical effect, emphasising Peneius' arguably over-dramatic moaning. The word's occurrence here is in any case a good example of an innovative use of a biblical rhetorical device in a new context.

הָבָה [hāvā] (v. 482) – GIVE imp. fem. sg. + EMPH.

This verbal root (of Aramaic origin, according to Gesenius) occurs in the Bible exclusively in the imperative. This particular form is typical for the biblical idiom since it contains the emphatic suffix הָ- [-ā]. Whereas in the later stages of Hebrew's development the whole word became a semantically empty adhortative particle (cf. similar situation regarding the English imperative "let"), here it is used in accordance with its original semantic content. This use can thus be considered an actualisation of an obsolete meaning.

These two verses are as a whole remarkable for another reason. As I have shown above, Friedman's Hebrew verses are accentual hexameters, written in the Ashkenazi fashion. Applying the associated prosodic pattern, the metrical structure of the verses is as follows:

[**pa**'am be-**fa**'am lā^h **yō**mar ā**vī**hā | hōy **ḥā**tān lī **hā**vī]
[**pa**'am be-**fa**'am lā^h **yō**mar | **bi**ttī hōy **hā**vā lī **ne**khed].[47]

However, even if we consider the "Sephardic" accents as they would be distributed in these verses, we shall observe that in this particular case, the result is remarkably similar:

[**pa**'am b^e-**fa**'am lā^h yō**ma**r ā**vī**hā hōy ḥā**tān** lī **hā**vī
pa'am b^e-**fa**'am lā^h yō**mar** bi**ttī** hōy **hā**vā lī **ne**khed].

Whether it is by chance or, as seems probable, the result of careful search for the right words, Friedman translated this urgent monologue with two lines containing a great proportion of words that even according to the Sephardic (and presumably biblical) prosodic rules have stresses on initial/penultimate syllables. Doing so, Friedman seems to have foreshadowed the method used by writers of "Sephardic hexameters" who likewise had to search for such words, as the more common words with the stress on the *ultima* can appear neither at the very beginning nor at the very end of the line. If we compare the cited verses to Dykman's "Sephardic" translation of the same place, we observe that it starts with the very same words and even afterwards closely resembles Friedman's version:

פַּעַם בְּפַעַם יַגִּיד לָהּ אָבִיהָ: ,,הָבִי נָא חָתָן לִי!",
[**pa**'am b^e-**fa**'am ya**ggīd** lā^h ā**vī**hā | h^a**vī** nā ḥā**tān** lī]
[Again and again tells her her father: Give me, please, a son in law,]

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47 It is worth noting that in this verse, Friedman made a rare choice to divide his verse with a diaeresis rather than a caesura, which is best explained by his intention to have both Peneius' pleas marked by a preceding pause, as has Ovid's original (although in his case, both verses have a caesura).

פַּעַם בְּפַעַם יַגִּיד לָהּ אָבִיהָ: „הָבִי נָא לִי נֶכֶד!"

[**pa**ʾam be-**fa**ʾam ya**ggīd** lā^h āvīhā | h^a**vī** nā lī **ne**khed]

[again and again tells her her father: Give me, please, a grandson].[48]

This similarity may or may not be an indication that in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a tendency towards Sephardic pronunciation was making a mark among Ashkenazi poets as well. In any case, this place bears witness to Friedman's ability to work with a broad repertoire of biblical vocabulary, to great aesthetic effect.

Sample text three: Ov. *Met.* I, 546–552

Situation: Daphne, exhausted by her flight from the love-sick Apollo, reaches the banks of the river Peneius and urgently asks her father, the river's god-in-residence, to help her.

> *"Fer, pater," inquit, "opem, si flumina numen habetis;*
> *qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram."*
> *Vix prece finita torpor grauis occupat artus;*
> *mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro;*
> *in frondem crines, in ramos bracchia crescunt;*
> *pes modo tam uelox pigris radicibus haeret;*
> *ora cacumen habet; remanet nitor unus in illa.*
> – –
> And called; "Help, father, help! If mystic power
> Dwells in your waters, change me and destroy
> My baleful beauty that has pleased too well."
> Scarce has she made her prayer when through her limbs
> A dragging languor spread, her tender bosom
> Was wrapped in thin smooth bark, her slender arms
> Were changed to branches and her hair to leaves;
> Her feet but now so swift were anchored fast
> In numb stiff roots, her face and head became
> The crown of a green tree; all that remained
> Of Daphne was her shining loveliness.
> – –

„חוּשָׁה, אוֹי, אָבִי, עָזְרֵנִי! אִם יֶשְׁנָה יַד אֵלִים בִּנְהָרוֹת

[ḥūššā ōy āvī ʿozrēnī im yešnā yad ēlīm bi-nhārōt]

[Do hurry, o father, help me; if the hand of gods lies upon rivers,]

תַּרְאֶה נִפְלָאוֹת וְאִסְפָה אֶת יָפְיִי, לִי נֶהְפַּךְ לְמַשְׁחִית!"

[tarʾē niflāʾōt we-osfā et yofyī lī nehpakh le-mašḥīt]

[show miracles and remove my beauty [that] turned into my ruin!]

עוֹד אֲמָרֶיהָ בְּפִיהָ וַתְּהִי תֹּמֶר-מִקְשָׁה גּוִיָּתָה,
['ōd ªmārēhā bᵉ-fīhā wa-tᵉhī tōmer mikšā gᵉwiyyātāʰ]
[Her words were still in her mouth when her body became [like] a scarecrow in a cucumber field;][49]

תַּעֲטֶה קְלִיפַת-עֵץ רַכָּה אֶת עֶדְנַת עֲלוּמֵי חָזֶהָ,
[taªtē qᵉlifat 'ētz rakkā et 'ednat ªlūmē ḥāzēhā]
[a soft tree-bark envelopes the delightfully youthful chest,]

הָיְתָה הַזְּרוֹעַ לְעָנָף וְשַׂעֲרוֹת-רֹאשָׁהּ לְעָלִים,
[hāyᵉtā ha-zᵉrōªʾ lᵉ-'ānāf wᵉ-sa'ªrot rōšāʰ lᵉ-'ālīm]
[the arm became a branch, the hair of her head leaves,]

שָׁרְשׁוּ בָאָרֶץ וְנִצְּבוּ בְּלִי-נוֹעַ רַגְלֶיהָ הַקַּלּוֹת,
[šōršū vā-āretz wᵉ-nitztzvū bᵉlī nōªʾ raglēhā ha-qalot]
[her light feet took root in the earth and remained standing motionless,]

רֹאשָׁהּ כָּאָמִיר עָלֶיהָ – רַק עוֹרָהּ עוֹד יִקְרַן כְּקֶדֶם.
[rōšāʰ kā-āmīr 'ālēhā raq 'ōrāʰ 'ōd yiqran kᵉ-qedem]
[her head is like a tree-crown upon her, only her appearance (lit. complexion) is as radiant as before].

Commentary

חוּשָׁה [ḥūšā] (v. 546) – HURRY imp. sg. masc. + emph.
The verbal imperative is here augmented by the typically biblical emphatic suffix ־ָה [-ā] (see also above, v. 482).

אוֹי [ōy] (v. 546) – WOE
In the Bible, this noun is routinely used as an interjection in mournful or anxious utterances, similarly to its nearly identical synonym הוֹי [hōy] (see v. 481). It is noteworthy and characteristic of Friedman's method that both these words are (when compared to Ovid's original) new additions, inserted with apparently intentional symmetry into Peneius' appeal to Daphne, and Daphne's to Peneius, respectively, in the former case with implied comic undertones, in the latter quite seriously.

עָזְרֵנִי ['ozrēnī] (v. 546) – HELP imp. sg. masc. + obj. 1 sg.
The pronominal suffix of the first person singular is attached directly to the verbal form, here expressing an indirect object or more precisely the beneficiary of the proposed action. In modern Hebrew, the same meaning would be conveyed by the imperative and the suffix would be attached to the preposition (in this case, postposition) לְ [lᵉ], "to" or "for".

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[49] For the biblical inspiration of the Hebrew words used here and their interpretation, see Commentary.

יֶשְׁנָהּ [yešnā^h] (v. 546) – THERE IS + pers. 3 sg. fem.

In contrast to many Indo-European languages, the copula in present nominal predicates cannot be expressed by the present form of the verb "to be" in biblical Hebrew (since there is no formal present tense). The copula is therefore either absent, or represented by the positive particle יֵשׁ [yeš] ("there is") or its opposite אַיִן [ēn] ("there is not"), originally abstract nouns meaning "existence" and "non-existence", respectively. Here, the positive particle is accompanied by the semantically redundant pronominal suffix of the third person singular feminine, referring to the feminine noun יַד [yad] ("hand") with which it forms the nominal predicate. This pleonasm, once again, marks a distinctly higher register that is typical for biblical narrative.

אִם יֶשְׁנָהּ יַד אֵלִים בִּנְהָרוֹת [īm yešnā^h yad ēlīm bi-nhārōt] (v. 546)

This phrase, quoted at the beginning of this paper, is an especially fine example of Friedman's considerable linguistic ability to use the wide range of linguistic and stylistic instruments available to him from biblical Hebrew. By translating the Latin *numen* with the Hebrew words meanings "the hand of gods", he manages to represent in a convincing manner a concept foreign to the spiritual world of biblical (and post-biblical) Judaism, so that the result is both semantically close to the original and aesthetically satisfying.

וְאָסְפָה [w^e-osfā] (v. 547) – AND + COLLECT imp. sg. masc + EMPH.

The imperative of the verb אָסַף [āsaf] ("collect", "pick up", here "take away") is augmented by the emphatic particle הָ- [-ā], with the resulting word אָסְפָה [osfā] replacing the standard form אֱסֹף [esōf]. For similar cases see above, vv. 482 and 546.

לִי נֶהְפַּךְ לְמַשְׁחִית [lī nehpakh l^e-mašḥīt] (v. 547)

Friedman's translation here differs considerably from what is now the accepted authoritative version of Ovid's text; this is most likely because the Latin text he was working with apparently diverged here from the normative text. Whereas v. 547 in major critical editions reads *qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram* ("destroy my beauty that has pleased too well"), there is also a known alternative version *quae facit ut laedar, mutando perde figuram* ("destroy my beauty that causes me harm"),[50] on which Friedman's translation "remove my beauty that turned into my ruin" is clearly based.[51] Beyond text-critical considerations, this verse is remarkable for its use of a distinctly biblical syntactical feature, namely the omission of the *nota relationis* אֲשֶׁר [ªšer] that would normally be expected at the beginning of a relative clause. This absence helps to draw attention to the content of the following relative clause and marks the latter as the semantic core of the whole sentence.

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[50] See Tarrant (2004: 21, note to vv. 544–545). Tarrant states that according to most scholars, both versions are Ovid's own creation and this passage originally existed in "duplici quadam recensione".

[51] On the other hand, the first half-verse in Friedman's translation, תַּרְאֶה נִפְלָאוֹת [tar'ē niflā'ōt] ("show miracles"), is an addition, and clearly serves as an explicative augmentation of Ovid's terse and, for a non-classicist audience perhaps slightly obscure words.

עוֹד אֲמָרֶיהָ בְּפִיהָ [ʿōd ᵃmārēhā bᵉ-fīhā] (v. 548)

The ablative absolute construction of the Latin original (*uix prece finita*) is rendered here by a non-finite clause with the noun אֲמָרֶיהָ [ᵃmārēhā] ("her words") as the semantic subject and with an implicit predicate, indicating that the clause is cotemporal with the main sentence. Once again, Friedman decided to ornate his translation with an inner grammatical rhyme, formed by the repeated possessive suffix 3 sg. fem. ־יהָ [-hā]. For a previous occurrence of this figure in my sample texts, see above, v. 461.

וַתְּהִי [wa-tᵉhī] (v. 548) – AND consc. + BE 3 sg. fem. impf. consc.

In the selected texts, this is the only occurrence of the typically biblical *imperfectum consecutivum*. Formally marked by the special vocalisation of the conjunction וַ [wa] and, in this particular verbal class, by the shortened form of the imperfect – תְּהִי [tᵉhī] instead of the standard תִּהְיֶה [tihyē] – the consecutive imperfect obligatorily denotes a past action (whereas without the *waw consecutivum*, imperfect would tend to denote the future or a continuous state). Typically, it is used when introducing a new development in a past setting that has already been established by the previous narration. The verb "to be" occurs here in its fairly common alternative meaning "to become".

תֹּמֶר־מִקְשָׁה [tōmer miqšā] (v. 548)

This may be the most creative translation encountered in the three sample texts. Indulging in considerable artistic licence, Friedman translates Ovid's words *torpor grauis occupat artus* ("dragging languor spread through her limbs") using a Hebrew idiom that means as much as "motionless, frozen".[52] However, there seems to be little room for doubt that Friedman's choice is directly inspired by this idiom's biblical source, a phrase found in the Book of Jeremiah.[53] Both words comprising the phrase are somewhat obscure: the rare noun מִקְשָׁה [miqšā] is understood to mean "cucumber field", in an interpretation that connects the word to the noun קִשֻּׁאִים [qiššuʾīm] ("marrows" or "cucumbers"). Yet it also resembles the adjective קָשֶׁה [qāšē] ("heavy"), which has raised some uncertainty about its etymology.[54] מִקְשָׁה occurs twice in the Major Prophets as part of a metaphor, conveying the same sentiments both times:

1. "And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a *cucumber field* (מִקְשָׁה [miqšā], my emphasis), like a besieged city." [Isa 1, 8]
2. "Their idols are *like scarecrows in a cucumber field* (כְּתֹמֶר־מִקְשָׁה [kᵉ-tōmer miqšā], my emphasis), and they cannot speak […]." [Jer 10, 5][55]

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52 In this sense, the phrase is used in contemporary Hebrew as well. See under the entry תֹּמֶר in Even-Shoshan (2006). Dykman (2020: 55) translates the same verse "עוֹד אֲמָרֶיהָ בְּפִיהָ וּפֶתַע קָפְאוּ אֲבָרֶיהָ" [ʿōd ᵃmārēhā bᵉ-fīhā u-feta' qāfᵊʾū ᵃvārēhā] – "her words were still in her mouth when suddenly her limbs froze".

53 In so doing, Friedman finds himself in situation contrary to that faced by European translators of the Bible, whose difficult task was to convert biblical idioms into their own languages and cultural contexts. For this phenomenon, see Vayntrub (2016).

54 Gesenius makes sure to point out that not all Bible scholars agree with the traditional interpretation, which he himself favours. See the entry מִקְשָׁה₂ in Gesenius (2013: 732).

55 Both verses are cited after the New Revised Standard Version, the English translation most commonly used by modern scholars. The enormously prestigious King James Version agrees with these translations in the former case but not in the latter, indicating the uneasiness of the words' interpretation.

In the second cited verse, the two words borrowed by Friedman occur together, offering him a chance to mirror in his translation their unpleasant air of hopelessness, helplessness and futility. However, there is almost certainly more to his choice. Like מִקְשָׁה, תֹּמֶר [tōmer] is of uncertain etymology, but the most common interpretation is that it is cognate with תָּמָר [tāmār] ("date palm") and denotes a dry palm-trunk used as a scarecrow. It appears that in Friedman's mind, these two Hebrew words resonated with Ovid's original in ways that are perhaps not obvious at first sight. Whatever the actual etymology of מִקְשָׁה may be, it is eminently plausible that the translator chose to use the word because of its similarity to קָשֶׁה [qāšē] ("heavy"), the most obvious equivalent of Ovid's *grauis*. This, in turn, inspired him to make a biblical allusion that was sure to please his learned readers and whose dendrological connotations appropriately if implicitly herald the incipient metamorphosis. The chosen phrase is all the more effective since the palm tree, the probable etymological origin of תֹּמֶר, is endowed with similarly mighty symbolism in the Hebrew Bible as is the laurel tree, Daphne's namesake and destiny, in Greek and Latin literature. What is more, in the Bible the "source noun" תָּמָר [tāmār] does not appear only generically, but also as the given name of a heroine who, like Daphne, unwillingly becomes the protagonist of a highly problematic and even slightly scandalous intimate relation (see Gen 38, 12–30). Although Tamar's story ultimately has much happier ending than Daphne's, the parallel between the two women and their names is remarkable.[56] If my interpretation of Friedman's choice is correct, it is an excellent example of his erudition and highly sophisticated work with both the classics and the Hebrew Bible.

תַּעֲטֶה [ta'ªtē] (v. 549) – ENVELOPE 3 sg. fem. impf.

The imperfect here denotes a completed action in the past, even without the *waw consecutivum*. Since it is the first verb to occur after the explicitly marked וַתְּהִי [wa-tᵉhī], it follows its mode in a manner typical for biblical narrative. In the following verses, the finite verbal forms are again in the perfect, the tense most typically used for past actions.

עֶדְנַת עֲלוּמֵי חָזֶהָ ['ednat 'ªlūmē ḥāzēhā] (v. 549)

Daphne's *mollia praecordia* ("tender bosom") are rendered here by a slightly augmented phrase, whose meaning I gave above as "delightfully youthful chest". What makes this phrase noteworthy is its distinctly biblical syntax: translated word by word, it would read "delight of the youthfulness of the chest". Syntactically, it is a double genitive construction, with עֲלוּמֵי ['ªlūmē] (the construct state of the *plurale tantum* עֲלוּמִים* ['ªlūmīm], "young age") being both the *nomen rectum* of the first construction and the *nomen regens* of the second. The semantical core of the phrase, חָזֶה [ḥāzē] ("chest"), thus appears at the hierarchically lowest syntactical level, drawing attention to itself through this striking incongruence between content and form.

עָלֶיהָ ['ālēhā] (v. 552) – UPON + obj. 3 sg. fem.

The use of this semantically redundant preposition, referring to Daphne herself, as her head turns into the tree's crown, is clearly an intentional play on words. The word

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56 I am very grateful to the participants of the Kleines Kolloquium at the Institut für Jüdische Studien at the University of Potsdam with whom I discussed this paper in January 2022 and who suggested this parallel to me.

that occurs here, עֲלֶיהָ [ʿālēhā], enables a double interpretation and only the context can determine whether the 3 sg. fem. possessive suffix הָ- [-hā] is attached to the preposition עַל [ʿal] ("upon"), or to its near homonym עֲלֵי [ʿālē], the plural construct state of the noun עָלֶה [ʿālē] ("leaf"). עֲלֶיהָ could therefore mean both "upon her" and "her leaves". In this case, the first interpretation is correct, but it cannot possibly be a coincidence that the alternative meaning would be semantically fitting in this situation as well. What is more, the very word עָלִים [ʿālīm] ("leaves") does occur only a few lines before this place, in v. 550. Such carefully designed vicinity of two different word roots that bear a strong external resemblance to each other, offering an opportunity for an intelligent play with double meanings, is a typical feature of the classical Judeo-Spanish poetry of the high Middle Ages (and was frequently imitated by later medieval and early modern Hebrew poets as well).

Friedman's Ovidian Hebrew: an original creation

A cursory glance at Friedman's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* could lead a casual observer to the uncomplicated conclusion that it is written in free verse and a broadly biblical idiom. However, a closer look reveals the he was actually writing in flawless accentual hexameters in the Ashkenazi mode that show the work of an erudite scholar and talented poet. At the same time, we would be doing Friedman less than justice if we considered him simply a minor contemporary and follower of Shaul Tchernichovsky. As Shlomo Dykman pointed out, it was he who first systematically engaged in translating Latin rather than Greek poetry and whose command of the language was at that stage unparalleled among translators into Hebrew.

Considering the character of Friedman's poetical language is key to our appreciation of his significance. There is also no doubt that his Hebrew is far closer to the biblical language, when compared to that of the prosaists of his day, let alone to the everyday language used by the growing community of native speakers at that time. However, Friedman did not content himself with adopting a ready-made linguistic register already suited to his artistic needs. Instead, he went to great lengths to create an autonomous poetic language that is more than the sum of its constitutive elements.

To do this, he combined two approaches. On the one hand, his language is indeed based on biblical Hebrew and is characterised by the consistent use of certain of its typical linguistic features, most prominently the attachment of pronominal suffixes directly to nouns and verbs and the very flexible use of verbal tenses. Both phenomena can be considered standard in Friedman's poetic language and confirm its firm foundation in the biblical linguistic milieu. On the other hand, several other typical biblicisms, such as sentences with the V-S-O word order, nouns in pausal forms, consecutive verbal tenses and many more linguistic and stylistic elements typical of the biblical language occur rather rarely in his translation, and when they are used this is with a clear intention of drawing attention to that particular place and highlighting its significance. The best example of this strategy is Friedman's use of pausal forms to mark especially dramatic situations and emotionally charged verbal exchanges, as well as the well-thought-through augmentation

of some verses to make space for a display of typically biblical parallelisms (applied with particular creativity in vv. 463–464).

Moreover, some of the stylistic tools Friedman uses are apparently meant to build a connection between the aesthetic worlds of the biblical and classical literary discourses: several linguistic features and stylistic figures in Friedman's Hebrew translation seem to intentionally echo their more or less direct counterparts in Ovid's Latin, such as the occasional inner rhyme reminiscent of Latin assonances. By using stylistic techniques typical for medieval Hebrew poetry (see the play on words in the last commented verse), Friedman shows that he is prepared to go beyond biblical inspiration to create lively Hebrew verse capable of emulating the greatness of the original, imaginative yet faithful to its content and spirit.

Still, it is when exploiting the great riches of biblical language and using it to its fullest potential that Friedman reveals the best of his abilities. His ingenious decision to quote Prophet Jeremiah when describing Daphne's fateful metamorphosis, and the clever interplay between the Latin and Hebrew versions of the corresponding line, is a case in point. Here, Friedman shows that before becoming a fine classicist, he was already an accomplished alumnus of a Talmudic academy. His traditional orthodox education equipped him with a profound knowledge of the biblical texts and allowed him to show off his lasting ability to quote the Scripture with lightness and acumen in a vast range of situations. This case, together with the many others we saw in the case studies, demonstrates that Friedman's verses are built on solid scholarly foundations and imbued with real literary talent.

Conclusion

In 1910, fourteen years after Theodor Herzl coolly declared that Hebrew could never become the national language of the future Jewish state, the newest edition of the authoritative Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar claimed that the North Semitic languages, to which Hebrew belongs, "are now either wholly extinct […], or preserved only in a debased form, as […] Hebrew among *some modern Jews*, except in so far as they attempt a purely literary reproduction of the language of the Old Testament."[57] Leaving aside the question of how true those words were when first published, we have seen that less than 25 years later, at the time of Yehoshua Friedman's death, the situation was already dramatically different. His translation of one of the most revered (and arguably most exciting) works of Western literature bears witness to the successes of the young neo-Hebrew literature and to its creators' uncommon talents and skills.

It would be foolish to claim that translating the Graeco-Roman classics into modern Hebrew was a central event on the cultural and scholarly stage in the nascent Hebrew-speaking (proto-)national community. Even when we do consider the early translators, Yehoshua Friedman cuts a rather modest figure in comparison to Shaul Tchernichovsky, lastingly revered and eagerly adopted *ex post* as one of Israel's national poets. But even if his translation is not widely known and read today, his contribution

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[57] Gesenius, Kautzsch (1910: 3), my emphasis.

to the field is of lasting significance. Friedman's work also illustrate two phenomena of wider consequence: Firstly, even in its earlier stages, neo-Hebrew classical philology had remarkably sound foundations in its practitioners' fine humanist education and, consequently, in their appreciation for "high culture", as it was canonised by Western intellectual tradition. Secondly, even though the advocates and creators of modern Hebrew literature were, as a rule, not religiously observant Orthodox Jews, on Friedman's case we observe that having fine traditionally religious as well as secular humanist education and thus being equally at home in both Jewish and Gentile spiritual worlds could be a significant benefit to them as scholars and writers.

In this paper, I have attempted to show that the competence and imagination with which Friedman created his Ovidian Hebrew resulted in a rich, complex poetical language, equally learned and witty, a language that by no means deserves to be dismissed as a mere "literal reproduction" of an older, ready-made linguistic register and literary style, less still as a "debased form" of biblical Hebrew. Considering the context of Friedman's day and the subsequent development of modern Hebrew literature, we may safely state his translation was one piece in a mosaic of works that tested Hebrew's stylistic potential on its way to becoming a new, original and naturally evolving language. All these observations considered, Friedman's translation provides an excellent case study of the ways in which a small, newly emancipated national community rose to high standards in adopting the great heritage of Western literary canon and integrating it as a part of a sophisticated literary culture of its own.

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HLEDÁNÍ OVIDIOVSKÉ HEBREJŠTINY. FILOLOGICKÁ STUDIE K MÉNĚ ZNÁMÉMU NOVOHEBREJSKÉMU PŘEKLADU OVIDIOVÝCH *PROMĚN*

Studie se zabývá prvním rozsáhlejším překladem Ovidiových *Proměn* do moderní hebrejštiny, jehož autorem je Jehošua Friedman (1885–1934). V úvodu zasazuji Friedmana do kontextu rodící se novohebrejské klasické filologie a zabývám se charakterem jeho verše. Hlavní část studie tvoří detailní jazyková a stylistická analýza tří úryvků z Ovidiova podání báje o Apollónovi a Dafné (*Met.* I, 456–465; 481–482; 545–552). Studie na základě tohoto rozboru hájí argument, že Friedman ve svém překladu nepřevzal jednoduše žádný v hebrejštině již existující jazykový rejstřík, ale vytvořil svůj vlastní ovidiovský jazyk, jenž přispěl k tomu, že jeho verze *Proměn* má v dějinách hebrejského klasického překladu trvalý význam.

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