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IsraPulp: The Israeli Popular Literature Collection at Arizona State University

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OUR COLLECTIONS

IsraPulp: The Israeli Popular Literature Collection at Arizona State University

RACHEL LEKET-MOR

ABSTRACT

Based on research literature, the article reviews the history of Hebrew non-canonized literature since the 1930s, its contacts with Yiddish *shund* literature and its effects on the development of Modern Hebrew literature and Israeli identity, especially in light of the New Hebrew ethos. The article features the research collection of Hebrew pulps at Arizona State University, demonstrates the significance of collecting popular materials in research libraries, and suggests possible new directions for research. An appendix lists some of the materials available at the IsraPulp Collection.

INTRODUCTION

It is easy, when telling the story of a young national literature such as the revived Modern Hebrew literature, to ignore the position held by texts created exclusively for secular leisure reading. After all, owing to the momentous efforts to revive the language, original fiction was granted a superior status within Hebrew culture and it became a key instrument in this ideological campaign. Therefore, whereas trivial texts are discounted from the historiographies of other national literatures on simple aesthetic grounds, the case of Modern Hebrew literature makes for a more intriguing account, as it involves added political considerations.

Written, published, and distributed on the outskirts of Hebrew belles-lettres since the early 1930s, the content of fiction intended for leisure reading diverged immensely from the prescribed, nation-building values of normative works. In contrast to the latter, texts produced for the purposes of entertainment usually focused on the personal, the melodramatic, and the sensational—and at times the erotic; they employed distinct language and recycled story lines; they were neither planned by central literary publishing houses nor

signed by recognized authors; and they were not listed or individually reviewed in official channels—such as literary periodicals, magazines, newspapers, educational bulletins, or library guides.¹ These mass-produced texts, distributed in kiosks and newspaper stands, were perceived as lowbrow products. As such, they did not play any historical role in the creation of the established national narrative about the New Hebrew culture, and hence they were neither intentionally collected nor properly preserved in libraries.

Such texts are sometimes conveniently referred to as “popular” in the course of this article, yet this is not to indicate their wide acceptance by readers (although they were eagerly read by many), but to convey that the contemporary literary establishment did not approve them. “Popular” in this sense is equivalent to “non-canonized,” an adjective used throughout this article. Much like the religious term, the concept of literary canon signifies a corpus of texts established and/or endorsed by the cultural establishment as the prevailing, representative one. Texts included in a literary canon are those that are taught in schools, included in anthologies, reprinted by succeeding generations, and transmitted to other cultures via translation; in short, canonized texts are those chosen by cultural establishments and their agents to represent the culture. On the spectrum of texts accepted into the Hebrew literary canon, it is those texts on the ostracized fringe that constitute the IsraPulp Collection at Arizona State University.

The collection was founded on the notion that no judgment should be made with regard to the literary value of these texts. That is why the discussion in this article is not concerned with definitions of non-canonized literature or the type of leisure reading it provides to its readers, but considers physical features, production practices, and distribution strategies of the materials as criteria for inclusion in the collection.

The history of Hebrew popular literature is neither linear nor continuous. There is no direct line, for example, from nineteenth-century bestsellers of historical fiction translated from German (Ben-Ari 1997), or the Old Yishuv translations of French romance (Neiger 2008), to mid-twentieth-century pulps. However, Hebrew popular literature did not materialize *ex nihilo*. This literature was rooted in more immediate textual traditions, ones with which most of the adult readers at the time were quite familiar: the Yiddish “*shund*” (trash, or pulp) literature, on the one hand, and contemporary European popular literature, on the other.

Published in Eastern Europe as early as the 1870s, Yiddish popular literature flourished well into the late 1930s thanks to its avid readership throughout Eastern Europe and North America. From there, it “made *‘aliyah*” to Eretz Israel and was distributed at first in the original Yiddish and then was adapted into

¹ Some titles are listed in *Kiryat sefer*, the bibliographical quarterly issued by the National Library of Israel. See, for example, the records under the pseudonyms Balmer, A. and Berman, A. (vol. 45 [1969–1970]), pp. 634–635.

Hebrew and sold as original work. At the same time, the canonized young Hebrew literature relied heavily upon borrowed models from translated texts of foreign literatures in an attempt to establish itself as a modern, relevant culture for the “New Hebrew.” It is no wonder that non-canonized models were also adopted in the process of creating popular fiction. Owing to these dual ancestors, local detective stories in Hebrew first emerged in the newly established literary center of Tel Aviv as soon as indications of urban culture evolved around key literary figures during the 1930s, and these were followed by crime and espionage stories throughout the 1940s. Some of them were distributed in serialized booklets, while others were published in dailies until the late 1940s. The succeeding wave of non-canonized Hebrew fiction, this time influenced mainly by American traditions—most notably the Western genre and superhero or war adventures—was initiated in the 1950s and continued until the early 1970s, reaching its peak in the mid-1960s.

Yiddish *shund* was openly and quite widely discussed—albeit typically scorned—in the contemporary public sphere (Shmeruk 1982, 1983; Cammy 2008). However, Hebrew non-canonized fiction was hardly mentioned,² let alone systematically recorded or examined in scholarship as a genuine literary, linguistic, or even sociological phenomenon, until the mid-1970s—mainly by descriptive accounts and socio-historical studies, and by the theoretical framework of the Tel Aviv School of Poetics and Semiotics. Scholars in this school established non-canonized texts as an inherent part of the Hebrew literature and provided its literary and cultural *raison d’être*. It also provided a rationale for compiling popular materials for the IsraPulp Collection at Arizona State University. It is for this reason that the main principles of the school are summarized here.

Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar 1990; also see the reviews by Feldman 1985; Weissbrod 1998; Codde 2003), which is closely related to Russian Formalism, considers literature as a dynamic cultural system of interrelated systems. The literary repertoire, according to this theory, is a collection of rules and materials governing production and consumption of products, whereas a “product” is defined as a concrete cultural artifact (a text), or a model derived from such artifacts (a genre). Certain texts gain higher status and may become canonized because “someone has the political-cultural power to grant the text the status they believe it deserves” (Shavit 1991, p. 233). An example for that would be the Russified models borrowed for establishing Modern Hebrew poetry (see Feldman 1986, pp. 18–31; Even-Zohar 1990, pp. 97–120).

Canonized texts dominate the literary center of the polysystem and dictate norms of writing and literary acceptability to the other subsystems, while countering those subsystems in the periphery. Polysystems include original and

² Historical accounts of Modern Hebrew literature, even recent ones such as Hever (1999), did not include any information about this literature.

translated subsystems that cut through complex social and cultural relationships between producers (authors, translators, publishers), institutions (elements that affect the acceptance or rejection of norms and models and are the keepers of culture: critics, literary scholars, educators, librarians), consumers (readers), and other literary subsystems and polysystems. As a result, literary subsystems maintain ever-evolving contacts, as they occupy different positions in the polysystem during different historical periods and altered literary generations.

Unlike its position in established national literatures, the subsystem of translated literature occupied a central position in the evolving Modern Hebrew polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990, pp. 165–173). That anomaly was due to the fact that Hebrew was dormant for centuries and lacked not only words and appropriate expressions for denoting and representing modern life, but it also had a shortage of literary models. The latter were inevitably borrowed from other, then-prestigious literatures, such as German, Russian, and French, and subsequently American, to create a disproportionately big repertoire of translated texts, which were used as a sandbox for author-translators before they attempted to write original literature in Hebrew (Toury 1977). In fact, it was not until the 1980s that the Israeli literary polysystem became fully developed; until then it was incomplete, lacking certain strata that are necessary for the natural development of any national literature, especially in the area of original popular texts for leisure reading and pure entertainment (Even-Zohar 1990; Ben-Ari 2000, 2006).

From the beginning of Modern Hebrew literature and for many years thereafter, the subsystem of translated literature included many anonymously published texts, translated texts published as originals, and even pseudo-translations—original texts whose status as translations was concealed, so that they were perceived and read as original texts by Hebrew readers. By including pseudo-translations in the systematic study of these translated texts, Gideon Toury (1995) laid the foundations for a polysystem-based, universal translation studies theory. According to this theory (see summary in Weissbrod 1998), translated texts are studied from the viewpoint of the target language—the language into which the texts are translated (Hebrew, in this case). The focus of the study is those “dos and don’ts” governing the translated subsystem, or translational norms dictated by the dominant literary subsystem. Based on the anomalous status of the translated literature subsystem within the Modern Hebrew polysystem, Toury demonstrated the crucial role of translational norms in the making of the *original* Modern Hebrew literature, thus supplying the needed explanation for the absence of this natural stratum in the Israeli literary polysystem.

This theoretical framework proves to be applicable to the study of Hebrew non-canonized literature, since many texts in this literary subsystem were in fact pseudo-translations. The reason for that is grounded in the very nature of the canonized Modern Hebrew literature. Since its inception Modern Hebrew literature was published by and for the elite Jewish population in Eastern

Europe who initiated the *haskalah* movement and maintained its values. By contrast, popular literature was associated with Yiddish, and Yiddish was associated with Diaspora Jews, especially women readers (Parush 2004), from which the Zionist movement attempted to break away later on by creating the image of the New Hebrew Man. The literary norms dictated by the Zionist literary establishment—composed of those institutional forces who managed to occupy the literary center—rejected the introduction of original Hebrew popular texts into the polysystem, thus forcing the producers of this literature to masquerade their works as translated texts. However, these original Hebrew texts, including their plots, characters, language, and illustrations, provide a wealth of primary source materials for undocumented aspects of the social and cultural life of Hebrew readers in Israel.

The rationale for collecting Hebrew non-canonized materials is grounded then in the objective of collecting any national literature in order to portray that culture: popular literature is an inherent part of any literary polysystem, including the Hebrew and Israeli ones. Studying only parts of these textual traditions, based on incomplete collections of elite-only texts, inevitably results in a distorted picture of the culture. Furthermore, popular literature is produced and distributed off the beaten path, namely away from the watchful eyes of trained editors and publishers, critics and censors, librarians and teachers—those cultural brokers who build, represent, and enforce literary norms in canonized literary systems. Therefore, popular literature tends to be subversive in more ways than one, representing social conditions and political views typically suppressed in the dominant literary center.

The IsraPulp Collection represents a conscious effort to bring back into discussion those non-canonized but authentic Hebrew texts, without making any value judgments. Collecting, preserving, and enabling access to these materials are the responsibility of librarians and stewards of cultural memory, as demonstrated in cultural historian Robert Darnton's essay "The Library in the New Age" (2008):

The criteria of importance change from generation to generation, so we cannot know what will matter to our descendants. They may learn a lot from studying our Harlequin novels or computer manuals or telephone books. Literary scholars and historians today depend heavily on research in almanacs, chapbooks, and other kinds of "popular" literature, yet few of those works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have survived. They were printed on cheap paper, sold in flimsy covers, read to pieces, and ignored by collectors and librarians who did not consider them "literature."

Based on available research literature, the article will review the history of non-canonized literature in Yiddish and Hebrew. A detailed description of the IsraPulp Collection will follow, with possible research topics and concluding notes regarding collection development policies and future plans for the collection.

NON-CANONIZED FICTION IN HEBREW: A PREHISTORY

A complete history of non-canonized publishing in Jewish languages does not exist³ nor do research collections of such literature. In this section I attempt to sketch a chronological outline of the Hebrew subsystem; however, the account starts with the Yiddish literary subsystem due to its contacts with the Hebrew one. My review is based on published studies and on information gathered from knowledgeable Israeli collectors, notably Eli Eshed and Haim Kano, who kindly shared with me unpublished bibliographies and memorable readings. Not all aspects of this literary subsystem have been studied, while others may never be reconstructed due to incomplete inventories and loss of primary sources such as publisher records. Since some of the studies are not available in English, I regard this short summary as a vital part of my curatorial work and scholarly efforts to raise awareness of the history of popular literature in Hebrew.

Yiddish popular literature was initiated in the late 1870s by the prolific bilingual author Naḥum-Me'ir Shayḳevyiṣh ("Shomer," 1849–1905), a *maskil* who in addition to his fifteen published Hebrew novels, as well as several poems and translations, also published numerous poems and humoresques, and no fewer than fifty plays and 205 novels in Yiddish. The latter, some of them adapted from French novels, featured melodramatic accounts set in the contemporary Jewish *shtetl* or historical Jewish settings, relating the stories of multiple characters who after endless quandaries involving *yichus*-based matchmaking, misunderstandings due to generational differences, separations and reunions, always reached the guaranteed happy ending. Shomer's bestselling Yiddish books, usually issued with descriptive subtitles ("a most interesting novel"), were reprinted in many editions to the dismay of his harsh critics, first and foremost Sholem Aleichem in his 1888 *Shomer's mishpet* (Shmeruk 1982; Grace-Pollack 1994, 1999; Cammy 2008). Nonetheless, titles by Shomer and his followers—some of whom plagiarized his novels and reprinted them under his name—dominated the book market, as revealed by catalogs distributed by contemporary Yiddish booksellers (Cohen H. 2006, 2010).

Shomer and those who plagiarized him were accused for being nothing but "paper-rag makers" (*funpapiershmaṭemakhers*) who replicated sentimental French romance in a dreadful, Germanized Yiddish, and thus not only littered the Yiddish literary landscape but also corrupted their readers' ability to appreciate good literature. Nonetheless, they generated secular texts for leisure reading that integrated educational content with social criticism and had far-reaching effects on Yiddish literacy rates, especially among women, and on the

³ The Jewish-American popular culture in English and its influence on the comic book industry, for example, has been studied. For recent, interesting articles about Ladino publications, see Borovaya 2003; Scolnik 2010; plus the article by Rachel Simon, "The Contribution of Hebrew Printing Houses and Printers in Istanbul to Ladino Culture and Scholarship," elsewhere in this issue.

modernization of East-European Jewish communities (Parush 2004; Quint 2005; Grace-Pollack 2006).⁴

None of the contemporary Hebrew periodicals in Eastern Europe, where the actual formation of Modern Hebrew literature occurred, were involved in printing comparable fiction. From its very inception, Modern Hebrew literature was pretentiously destined to serve as a cultural instrument for national and, later on, Zionist ideology, fiercely negating those aspects of Yiddish cultural life considered lowbrow, such as the *hamon-literatur* (vulgar literature).⁵ It follows that the readership of the original Hebrew literature was small, and there should be no wonder then that the first genuine Hebrew bestseller of the nineteenth century was in fact a translated text of a popular French novel (Miron 1975).

It was the *maskil* Kalman Schulman, who in the late 1850s adapted into Hebrew the French novel of Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris* (*Mistere Pariz*), in an attempt to provide Hebrew readers with entertaining, secular reading. This much-loved first Hebrew translation of a contemporary picaresque novel, issued in many reprints and sold in thousands of copies, introduced the novel genre into Hebrew literature.

The next wave of translated Hebrew novels appeared in the 1860s, with the publication of adapted, Jewish-themed historical novels from Germany. These novels were written by a small group of notable Jewish intellectuals and rabbis, including Phobus Philippon and his brother Ludwig, Markus Lehmann, Moses Wassermann, and Herman Reckendorf, who were mostly known for their scholarly writings. Some of the original German texts were published in Jewish-German periodicals as early as the 1830s, following the immense popularity of the genre in Germany, and reprinted as books later on. The Hebrew translations—some books had as many as four distinct versions—were issued in numerous reprints that were distributed all over Europe.

The Jewish-German historical novel of the nineteenth century was based on a mishmash of adventures in medieval Spain or Germany, or during biblical times, persecutions involving *kidush ha-shem*, and melodramatic accounts of lost brothers and established loves. The novels represented events in Jewish history based on neo-Orthodox and Reform approaches, and their authors' principal motivation was to educate the masses (Miron 1975; Ben-Ari 1997). The first non-canonical historical novels that were written originally in Hebrew were by the now-forgotten authors Israel Wiesberm and Avraham Zinger (Miron 1975; Patterson 1988), plus Shomer himself; their books came out during the 1880s and 1890s.

⁴ For example, Yiddish literacy rates among forty- to fifty-five-year-old Jewish women in the Ukraine rose from ten percent in 1846 to fifty percent in 1906, and to over sixty percent in 1926 (Cohen H. 2006, p. 139, Table 8).

⁵ See, for example, how Eliezer Raphael Malachi explained why Yiddish newspapers did not prosper in Erets-Israel until 1934, saying it was because "there are no vulgar readers" there (cited in Pilowsky 1979, p. 100).

About the same time in the late 1880s, Yiddish *shund* spread to New York, reappearing in a new format as serialized novels in such newspapers as the weekly *Yidisher zhurnal* (1889–1906). In 1892, another format was launched when mystery stories were adapted into Yiddish from German booklets, which in turn were adapted from similar contemporary American serials. Few were originally written in Yiddish (Goldberg 2000). The mystery series and their successors, with dozens to hundreds of sequel booklets in each one, created a reading fad known as the “booklets epidemic” (*heftn-epidemye*). Each installment of the estimated 150 novels was distributed in tens of thousands of booklets.

The *shund* publishing business in America was driven by a group of about fifteen Yiddish writers, among them Avner Tanenboym, Mosheh Zeyfert, Menaḥem Mendel Dolitzky, and Getsl Zeliḳoyitsh, by the more respected writers Yitskhak Rabinoyitsh and Morris Rosenfeld—and by Shomer himself, who had immigrated to America. The booklet trend became so popular that American Yiddish dailies had to publish two or three serialized stories of mystery and suspense daily in order to reclaim the readers and eradicate the “epidemic.” Once it subsided, leftover booklets were bound by Hebrew Publishing Company and shipped to eager readers in Eastern Europe at the turn of the century (Shmeruk 1982; Cohen N. 2008).⁶

In Warsaw, the Yiddish press thrived in the first decades of the twentieth century, with as many as eleven dailies and a circulation of about 180,000 by 1937. Serving as the main forum for all Yiddish literary cliques at the time, newspapers competed for readers as well as for authors. It was Shemuel Yosef Yatskan (Jackan), the dynamic entrepreneur who published *Haynt*⁷ as well as short-lived Yiddish and Polish sensational newspapers that, in an effort to promote sales, introduced serialized novels translated from Russian and German. Typically, the first installment of each such novel was issued as a booklet and distributed free of charge in tens of thousands of copies; the captivated readers then become devoted consumers of *Haynt*.

As a result of this successful campaign, serialized sensational novels became an inseparable part of the Yiddish press; in fact, a 1932 survey of fifty Yiddish dailies revealed that sixty percent of them published such serialized novels, and about 300 such novels were printed in one year. Adapted for a Jewish readership in their geographical settings, social milieus, and “kosher” characters, and “improved” by journalists or by some of the more respectable authors of the time—including Iehoshua Perle, Israel Rabon, A.L. Yaḳabovits, and Isaac Bashevis Singer (before he immigrated to America)—these anonymously published novels were condemned by the intelligentsia and Orthodox circles alike as “pornography” (Shmeruk 1982; Cohen N. 2003a, 2008).

⁶ Based on catalogs issued by Yiddish booksellers, Hagit Cohen (2010) shows that the percentage of American Yiddish books in East-European bookstores increased from two percent in the early 1890s to 65% in the mid-1930s. See also circulation figures for Hebrew and Yiddish books at the New York Public Library, as well as Chicago and Cleveland Public Libraries (Shavit Z. 1988).

⁷ One of the two major dailies throughout this period (1908–1939).

While the language of these texts was quite far from explicit, critics kept accusing the “bourgeois press” of nurturing morally corrupted literature, even though the same newspapers published serious literary texts, including those written by the most renowned authors. A similar identification of Yiddish *shund* with the conservative middle class occurred in America; while the leftist radical and semi-assimilated writers were engaged in writing Yiddish belles-lettres and significant non-fiction, those involved with Yiddish *shund* were mediocre, between-jobs Hebrew writers (Shmeruk 1982) who were still employing outmoded literary norms in their original Hebrew writing (Shavit Z. 1988).

The next chapter in the history of Yiddish *shund*, the one that left clear footprints on the evolving Hebrew literature in Erets-Israel (Shavit J. 1984, 1986), entails another “booklets epidemic,” this time in Poland. In 1937, the two major Yiddish dailies in Warsaw, *Haynt* and *Der Moment*, started to publish sensational novels in booklets. The first installment was distributed with the Friday newspaper edition, and the rest of the series was sold separately, as a side business for the publishers. These novels, epitomized by the serialized *Sabine* and *Regine*, were usually titled after their female protagonists, featuring urban romance stories with a dash of erotic intricacies. By 1938, the distribution of these Damsel-in-Distress booklets outnumbered any Jewish newspaper in Warsaw (Shmeruk 1982; Cohen N. 2003b, 2008).

These serialized Yiddish novels were also exported to Erets-Israel, “boxes upon boxes of ‘Sabines’ and ‘Regines,’”⁸ by Jewish journalists who emigrated from Poland with the *Fifth Aliyah* (1929–1939). Inspired by their popularity, similar series came out in Hebrew during the 1930s and 1940s, even as the formal literary center took root in Erets-Israel. These novels included Hebrew adaptations of Yiddish titles, such as *Avivah: Life Story of a Young Ma’apilah* [illegal female immigrant]: *A Serialized Novel of Love and Adventures* (adaptation of *Sabrina*, 50 booklets, more than 800 pages: see Shavit J. 1986); *The Captive from Tel Aviv: A Novel* (1939); or *Tamarah: A Novel about Current Life in Erets-Israel* (1938). They soon became widely read by young Sabras who fancied that they were reading original texts, representing the language and urban setting of “the first Hebrew city” (Eshed 2002; Ben-Ari 2010).

YISHUV DAYS: IS IT TIME FOR ORIGINAL HEBREW PULPS YET?

Indeed, by the end of the 1930s, with an added population of more than 67,000 *Fourth Aliyah* (1924–1928) and 280,000 *Fifth Aliyah* (1929–1939) immigrants, a vivid urban hub evolved in Tel Aviv. It offered elaborate consumer choices and diverse entertainment options, including dance halls, cafes and restaurants, movie theaters, musical performances, sports activities, and outdoor recreation opportunities at the beach (Fireberg 2006; Helman 2007). It was the nature of these immigration waves that contributed to the emergence of the urbanized

⁸ Cited from a 1938 critique in *Davar* newspaper (Shmeruk 1982, p. 341, fn. 40).

culture in Erets-Israel under the British Mandate: many of the immigrants were not devoted young Zionists, but married, middle-class merchants who arrived in Erets-Israel due to economic difficulties in Poland or the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany after the Nazis came to power in 1933. Along with aspirations to industrialize the *Yishuv*, the newcomers brought with them reading habits that differed from what Modern Hebrew literature (associated as it was with Labor circles) could offer them. For leisure reading they continued to read imported fiction in European languages,⁹ including Yiddish *shund*. In fact, Yiddish serialized novels such as *Ḳlara, di naye 'olah* [Klara, the New Immigrant] or the novel *Der Tseykhn fun neḳome: detekṭiv roman* [The Mark of Revenge: A Detective Novel] were still published in Tel Aviv in the late 1950s and early 1960s, respectively, to provide leisure reading for Yiddish speakers, as was a new edition of *Sabine: roman fun a ḳranḳn-shvęster* (Tikvah Press, 1960).¹⁰

At the same time, the number of Hebrew speakers and readers grew steadily through the 1930s: 42% of the Jewish population in 1931 was native-born; from 22,000 students in 1931, the Hebrew education system grew to accommodate 53,000 students in 1936 (cited in Shavit Z. 2008).¹¹ It was these young adults who constituted the predominant readership of the young Modern Hebrew literature—both canonized by the political and literary establishment, and non-canonized.

⁹ Monthly circulation figures for 1926 from Sha'are Zion library in Tel Aviv (reproduced in Shavit Z. 1982, p. 216) indicate that at least half of the books checked out were in languages other than Hebrew (Russian, German, English, French, and Yiddish). In the month of Kislev (December) that year, 952 non-Hebrew books were checked out, versus 1,098 books in Hebrew. Baruch Stupinker reported in *Ketuvim* (1928) that of the 850 copies of foreign dailies sold in Tel Aviv 450 were in Yiddish, and of the 985 copies of foreign weeklies 700 were in Yiddish (cited in Pilowsky 1979, p. 29). According to Shelomo Gelfer (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974), Israelis originating in Thessaloniki continued reading popular literature in Greek long after immigrating to Erets-Israel in the late 1920s.

¹⁰ Based on a census of population and housing from 1961, of those Israelis whose principal language was not Hebrew, 22.6% spoke Yiddish (Schmelz and Bachi 1975, p. 761, Table 7). The Farago Brothers, according to their own report, also published non-Hebrew materials. They republished their successful Hungarian chapbooks from 1950 to 1972 in Tel Aviv and distributed them locally, and also exported them to Hungarian diasporic communities in Switzerland, the U.S., Canada, and Venezuela. They also published books in Romanian (1950s) and Polish (1943)—the latter, for soldiers of the Anders Army who passed through Erets-Israel (Rosenbaum 1999).

¹¹ According to a 1928 survey published in the literary magazine *Ketuvim*, the spoken language of 75% of the children was Hebrew (Shavit Z. 1982, p. 203, Table 2). According to a report submitted to Ben-Gurion in April 1936, 66% of the Jewish population in Erets-Israel knew Hebrew to some degree, and in November 1948, 75% employed Hebrew as their main or only language (Shavit Z. 2008, p. 59). Information about the acquisition and actual usage of Hebrew in this period should be considered carefully in light of the ideological promotion of Hebrew as the sole national language in Israel. Another important distinction should be made between speaking and reading the language, and mastering these functions at different levels. A recent article points to the *Hebrew Hour*, a radio program brought by Kol Yerushalayim, the Hebrew Service of British Mandatory Radio (1936–1948), and its role in “enriching the vocabulary and cultivating proper [Sephardic] pronunciation” (Liebes and Kampf 2010, p. 149), thus creating a public sphere for listeners to learn the language.

The expansion of Hebrew readership went hand in hand with the evolution of the Hebrew cultural center in Erets-Israel, which grew from a handful of newspapers in the last decades of the nineteenth century to a fully functioning base in the mid-1930s, including five Hebrew dailies (Neiger 2004). It embraced active literary periodicals and cliques, literary critics, and dozens of publishing houses, most of them associated with Labor-oriented political parties (Shavit Z. 1982, 1998A). Key figures such as Joseph Ḥayyim Brenner, who arrived in 1909, and Ḥayyim Naḥman Bialik and his circle, who arrived in 1924, were crucial in the relocation project from Europe to Erets-Israel. A critical mass of 83 authors immigrated to Erets-Israel between 1907 and 1938 (see Shavit Z. 1982, pp. 434–436 for the list), of whom seventy joined the lively Tel Aviv cultural hub (Schidorsky 2008, p. 113). By the end of the 1930s, Tel Aviv provided its residents with seven municipal libraries: six of them opened between 1928 and 1939, and an additional three opened by 1946 (Schidorsky 2008, p. 74).

It was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda who was one of the first advocates for secular Hebrew texts for the sake of leisure reading. Translated stories, mainly from the French (Émile Zola, Jules Verne, Victor Hugo, but also William Thackeray), were published in Hebrew newspapers initiated by him starting at the end of the nineteenth century (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974; Naor 2004; Neiger 2008). The Sephardic independent publisher Salomon Israel Cherezli (“Shayish,” 1879–1938), who purchased Ben-Yehuda’s publishing business, issued similar translated stories in chapbooks, alongside Ladino fiction (see Alboher 1985, for a complete listing; Neiger 2008). Considered lowbrow literature at the time, these translations were harshly criticized by intellectuals such as Aḥad ha-‘Am and Joseph Klausner (see citations in Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974; Shavit Z. 1998a; Halevi 1996, p. 29, f. 51).

Serialized stories in translation were also issued in *Do’ar ha-yom* (1919–1936), published by Ben-Yehuda’s son, Ithamar Ben-Avi. This newspaper, considered to be the first Hebrew tabloid (Graur 2002; Benziman 2008), was modeled after *The Daily Mail*, a sensational British publication. After Ben-Avi temporarily transferred the newspaper’s ownership to Ze’ev Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Party in 1928, *Do’ar ha-yom* published more conservative, although still non-canonized popular materials, such as translated stories of Edgar Allan Poe and the very first Hebrew crosswords. Other newspapers of the mandatory *Yishuv* who were associated with the civil (*ezraḥi*) camp, including *ha-Arets* (1918–) and the Revisionists’ *ha-Yarden* (1934–1939) and *ha-Mashḳif* (1939–1949), published translated serialized stories to attract readers as well.

These sporadic initiatives originating in the *Yishuv* days were not further developed. Denunciations of non-canonized fiction in Hebrew translation continued throughout this period, but they eventually subsided. However, with the growth of Hebrew readership—especially of native speakers—during the 1930s, serialized stories of a new kind started to appear in Tel Aviv. The new booklets were originally written in Hebrew. They featured local characters that operated in Erets-Israel under the Mandate, though their breathtaking activities took place also in the international scene (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974, 1983; Shavit Z. 1998a; Eshed 2002, 2004). The fad started in 1931, when Alexander Moses pub-

lished original detective stories. (Moses reported that he published them as early as 1928, but copies of them have not been located.) The principal author of these stories was Shelomo Gelfer (1908–1989),¹² who also wrote under the pseudonyms Shelomo Ben-Israel, David Ya‘akobi, A. Hashunami (as well as the feminized version, H. Shunamit), B. Havaḳuḳ, A. Ben-Sheva‘, Dr. T. Shats, and



FIGURE 1. *Shodede ha-ḳavarim* [The Grave Robbers], volume 14 of *Sifriyat ha-balash* [The Detective Library]. Tel Aviv: ha-Balash Press [1931].

¹² Gelfer moved to America in 1939 and worked for the *Forverts* for many years thereafter (Mohrer and Web 1998). In a letter sent to Jacob Shavit in 1973 (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974), Gelfer reported that his detective stories were bought by, and published in *Haynt* in 1938, and after the Second World War started, the *Forverts* published his stories featuring Tidhar. This is an unusual route for an author to move from Hebrew to Yiddish.

others. Others took part in the venture as well, for example, the journalist Ouri Kessary—coiner of the term “Sabra.”

The booklets of *Sifriyat ha-balash* (The Detective Library; twenty-three titles in irregularly numbered booklets, sixteen or thirty-two pages each) featured a protagonist who was identical in name and occupation with the first practicing private detective in Erets-Israel under the Mandate, David Tidhar (1897–1970; editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel*). That arrangement boosted Tidhar’s business and at the same time added realistic flare to the stories; by the end of that year, however, Tidhar withdrew from the project and his assistant Almog became the leading character, helped by Se’adyah “the Yemenite.”

Gelfer wrote for, and edited, additional series, such as *Sifriyah balashit* [Detective Library; 1932–1933], *Sifriyat ha-balash* [The Detective Library; 1932, not to be confused with the first project under this title], besides further developing the Damsel-in-Distress genre for the young Hebrew popular literature: he authored two of the contemporary bestsellers: *ha-Shevuyah mi-Tel Aviv* [The Captive from Tel Aviv, 1930s] and *ha-Ṭeme’ah, roman me-ḥaye Tel Aviv* [The Abominable Woman, a Novel about Life in Tel Aviv, 1939].

A competing undertaking, *Hotsa’at ha-me’ah ha-’ešrim* [The Twentieth Century Publishing], was initiated by a group of journalists and translators including David Karasik, Ya’akov Rabi, Eliezer Carmi, and Aviezer Golan in 1932. Karasik employed a number of pseudonyms (Betsal’el Hagil’adi, the feminized name Shulamit ‘Efroni), as did Carmi (A. Ben-Dan, Y.A. Ben-Dan, ‘Ezer Carmiel/i) and so many others in the business. Their serials included titles such as *Sifriyat ha-kerakh* [The Metropolis Library], *Sifriyat ha-rigul* [The Espionage Library; 1932–1939], or *Sifriyat ha-balash mispar 1* [The Number One Detective Library; 1938]. They initiated their project with a detective theme, but soon modified their profile and published adventure and espionage stories that took place outside of Erets-Israel. The authors attested that their style was inferior to that of Gelfer and his colleagues.

These two ventures have been studied in an indispensable source for non-canonized fiction for this period, the pioneering fieldwork of Zohar and Jacob Shavit (1974; summarized with some edits in Shavit 1998a). The couple also reissued an anthology of detective stories from the Mandate days (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1983). Their seminal article, based on interviews with key individuals, includes a sparse inventory of non-canonized works (1974, Appendix A; 1998a, Appendix 8). Other serials listed in their inventory were not reviewed as closely as the two above mentioned, probably due to the difficulty of locating, let alone interviewing, those who were actively involved with this trade. This is quite natural, as many of these young men became legitimate writers who wished to distance themselves from their adolescent experiences in the publishing world and would not identify themselves.

While very helpful, the inventory is based on an actual private collection, not library records, and this is why it is far from complete. A search in the National Library of Israel (NLI) catalog reveals additional titles published by authors

mentioned in the list.¹³ While not all NLI records represent existing volumes, due to wear and tear or regrettable thefts, I believe that such records should be used to fill out gaps in bibliographical information. The same is true for serials available



FIGURE 2. *Ḳitsah ha-ṭragi shel Rut* [The Tragic End of Ruth]. Tel Aviv: ha-Me'ah ha-'Esrin Press [1946?]. *Sifriyat ha-balash he-ḥadash* [The New Detective Library], series C, issue no. 4.

¹³ For example, Y. Mifراس (probably a pseudonym), who was involved with *Sifriyat ha-masveh* [The Disguise Library; Tel Aviv, 1939], also published humorous, single-issue newsletters for Hanukkah and Passover in 1938 (which are not listed), as well as a story in *Sifriyah balashit* [The Detective Library; ha-Arets Press, 1938; not to be confused with the earlier *Sifriyah balashit*, 1932–1933], of which only one title is listed in the inventory as a stand-alone story (Sh. 'Aṭalef, *Mistere ha-etsba' ha-metah* [The Mystery of the Dead Finger], Tel Aviv 1938). Other examples include the series *Rolly Rif melekh ha-balashim* [Rolly Rif, King of Detectives; Jerusalem: [no publisher], 1933; 21 booklets], edited by Max Schechter, or the many titles in *Sifriyat ha-balash ha-meratek* [The Fascinating Detective Library]; Tel Aviv: ha-Tsel Publishing, 1950s; 71 booklets, of which Shavit lists only booklet no. 42.

at the IsraPulp Collection (not recorded in the list), such as *Sifriyat ha-dor* [The Generation Library], Tel Aviv: ha-Arets, 1938; or *Sifriyat ha-olam* [The World Library], another project of "A. Ben-Dan" (Eliezer Carmi); or *Sifriyat ha-balash he-ḥadash* [The New Detective Library], Tel Aviv: The Twentieth Century Press, 1940s.

The IsraPulp Collection can also fill gaps of missing booklets in listed serials, such as booklet no. 7 of *Sifriyat ha-harpatḥan* [The Library of the Adventure-Seeker], Tel Aviv: ha-Mizraḥ, 1935, by Avraham Berachah: *Ḥadar ha-emim* [The Chamber of Horrors]. On the whole, publication of a new, comprehensive bibliography of pre-State, non-canonized fiction in Hebrew would certainly be of use for anyone interested in the field.



FIGURE 3. Avraham Berachah, *Ḥadar ha-emim* [The Chamber of Horrors]. Tel Aviv: ha-Mizraḥ Press, distributed by Palas Agency [1935]. *Sifriyat ha-harpatḥan* [The Adventurer Library], issue no. 7.

Another interesting, albeit not typical example of non-canonized Hebrew fiction from the Mandate period, is a full-length novel published in 1932 by Shoshana Shababo, a native Hebrew speaker from a Sephardic family of five generations in Erets-Israel. The novel, *Mariyah: roman me-ḥaye ha-nezirot ba-arets* [Maria: A Novel about Nuns in Erets-Israel], was published by Mitspeh, a reputable publisher in Tel Aviv, but was condemned due to its topic: an Arab-Christian woman who follows her love. The critics focused on the erotic aspects of the work while ignoring Shababo's criticism of contemporary social conditions of women. The well-respected writer Yehuda Burla reviewed the novel in *Moznayim*, noting, "For the first time, we find that sort of cheap *boulevard* [French pulp] novel in our literature" (Halevi 1996, p. 15, footnote 5; my translation). Shababo's second novel (1942), *Ahavah bi-Tsefat: roman me-ḥaye ha-Sefaradim bi-Tsefat* [Love in Safed: a Novel of the Sephardim in Safed] was also condemned as inappropriate fiction. As a result, her name was omitted from literary histories and lexicons, and none of her short stories were included in any anthologies until her rediscovery in the 1990s (Halevi 1996; Berlovitz 2001; Shababo and Refael 2000; Shababo and Levin 2000–2002). This is indeed an unrepresentative case, since Shababo's serious fiction was clearly not *shund*; her critics used the derogative term to exclude her writings from the canon because of her choice of topics.

It is worthwhile to note here that the overwhelming majority of non-canonized texts in Hebrew literature through its different periods were written by men, even when the targeted audience was clearly women, as in the case of romance novels issued by ha-Roman ha-Za'ir press (see below). This fact is quite surprising when considering, for example, the American subsystem of romance fiction, dominated by female authors (Radway 1991). The far-reaching consequences of this on the writing style, representation of women, and assumed readers of Israeli popular literature are demonstrated in the terminology of erotic literature: according to Ben-Ari (2006), those erotic and pornographic texts that were written by women are not essentially different than those written by men, as the former adapted the norms prevailing in this genre. This is the only study that touches on this issue.

While Sabra readers were definitely ready for entertaining reading written originally in Hebrew, critics such as Y. Yeshurun were not willing to let the "poisonous capsules" soil the prospects of the evolving Hebrew literature (*Davar*, May 19, 1932; cited in Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974, Appendix 3). Responding to Yeshurun's review later that month, another contemporary commentator, writing under the initial "R.," wrote in *Moznayim*:

We don't have yet an artistic-cultural tradition in Erets-Israel, nor do we have yet a complete education [system], and this is why "adult" readers of both genders read whatever they can, without making any attempt to tell the good apart from the bad. The most important thing is not to get "bored," not to read any book that carries a serious idea or theme; the most important thing is just to be entertained [. . .] And who poisons our children's souls with such "literature"—who

evokes inferior, uncultivated emotions in them? [. . .] In the Diaspora, everybody sings the praises of the pure children of Erets-Israel, but who violates their holiness and purity? Why isn't such a crime punished publicly? (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974, pp. 39–40)

A forthright advocate for original popular literature in Hebrew was Avigdor Hameiri (1890–1970), a poet, novelist, and playwright who was instrumental in the formation of satirical theater in Erets-Israel (awarded the Israel Prize for belles-lettres, 1968). A support letter that he wrote to Shelomo Gelfer was published as sort of “*haskamah*” (approbation) in the first volume of *Sifriyat ha-balash*. Tidhar cited that same letter in his autobiography (1961), in an attempt to justify his involvement with *Sifriyat ha-balash*. In the letter, Hameiri explained that reading detective stories would teach young Sabras to protect themselves, while teaching them national values. Hameiri also believed that the linguistic register used in popular fiction would help to develop a more natural, appropriate register for original literature, closer to spoken Hebrew (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974). Needless to say, these literary recommendations were far from the accepted view of mainstream publishers.

Hameiri was never affiliated with the *Yishuv* cultural establishment, nor was Ze'ev Jabotinsky, whom he followed politically for awhile. In fact, Hameiri's suggestions ensued from Jabotinsky's endorsement of popular literature. In a 1919 review of a Hebrew translation of Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel *With Fire and Sword*, in *Hadshot ha-arets*, Jabotinsky related the “national disease” of the *Yishuv*—manifested according to him in excessive argumentativeness—to the lack of original Hebrew “action literature.” He asserted that the contemplative texts constituting contemporary Hebrew literature did not meet the needs of those historic times; translated action fiction, however, could fill the gaps in the national literature until the original system would catch up. Therefore, Jabotinsky not only translated stories of Arthur Conan Doyle while in jail (1920), but also planned to establish a publishing house for detective stories in translation, for young adults. His plan was realized a few years later through a joint project with his publisher Shelomo Zaltzman (1872–1946). Their venture, a publishing house named ha-Sefer (The Book, 1922), was active for a few years, publishing translated novels by Anthony Hope and Conan Doyle in Paris and London (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974).¹⁴

By the late 1930s, Hameiri's name was also associated with ha-Roman ha-Za'ir publishing house of the Farago Brothers, which was the steadiest enterprise in the non-canonized domain, and which therefore epitomized the concept of pulp fiction in colloquial Hebrew. According to the thorough study of Gavriel Rosenbaum (1999), the firm operated from 1939 to 1961, first under the name of ha-Roman ha-Za'ir [The Tiny Novel], and since 1952 as ha-Ḳulmos

¹⁴ Searching OCLC, I was unable to find additional records aside from the two titles mentioned in Jabotinsky's letter to Zaltzman (cited in Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974, p. 33).

[The Quill].¹⁵ The Farago Brothers brought their printing apparatus with them to Erets-Israel from Hungary, where they played a major role in the popular literature industry since the early 1930s. Considered as one of “their own” on account of coming from Hungary (1921), Hameiri was asked by the Faragos to serve as their general editor in 1939. Hameiri was indeed involved at first in the translation and editing operation of the 64-page chapbooks and contributed another “*haskamah*” letter that was published in the first volume;¹⁶ later, he merely lent his celebrated name to the Faragos, as “literary advisor,” “proofreader,” or “editor.” He published one original Hebrew story with ha-Roman ha-Za’ir, “‘Akhbre yam” [Sea Mice], but the other chapbooks were translated to Hebrew from Hungarian. During the Second World War, due to communication difficulties, the Faragos translated stories from English, and had to cut back the number of pages due to paper shortage from sixty-four to forty-eight, and then to thirty-two pages. Many of the authors were Hungarian Jews, but their names were often changed to reflect an American or French origin, as were the stories’ backgrounds and the characters’ names. The translators from Hungarian included Avigdor Hameiri himself, journalists Yehuda Edelstein and Mordekhai Barḳa’i, poet Zvi Barmeir, and publisher Israel Farago; those who translated from English included Avraham Gelber, author and poet Aharon Amir (under the pseudonym of A. ‘Uzrad), journalists Arye Hashavia, Yaakov Rabi, and author Benjamin Tammuz. Some of the translators involved were active in the canonized Hebrew literary systems—both original and translated (Rosenbaum 1999).

All in all, ha-Roman ha-Za’ir and ha-Ḳulmos published about 700 chapbooks during their twenty-two years of continuous activity. Some of the titles were retranslated from Hungarian and republished because the publishers believed that the Hebrew register used in the first editions was too elevated. The scope of their output covered romance stories, along with crime and adventure stories spiced with romance, in urban settings. Erotic elements were moderate, and these never turned into pornography. According to Rosenbaum (1999), the Farago brothers took their publishing business seriously and insisted on well-translated, proofread, entertaining texts that attempted to “exterminate *shund*.”¹⁷ It is therefore quite ironic that ha-Roman ha-Za’ir grew to epitomize

¹⁵ The name change resulted from the paper shortage during the austerity period of the early 1950s: the Faragos decided to market their chapbooks as weeklies in order to obtain better supplies of paper from the government, and they were required to choose a more appropriate title for it and add recurring sections. However, the publishers used the same graphical logos and the name ha-Roman ha-Za’ir for the publishing house, to let readers know that the two operations were identical.

¹⁶ Hameiri defined the texts to be published by ha-Roman ha-Za’ir as “small-scale novels [. . .] A dramatic story with fascinating plot, belles-lettres in a European sense. Ha-Roman ha-Za’ir demonstrates that fascinating novels should not necessarily consist of abominations, shund, and not all crime or adventure stories are indeed shund.” (Cited in Rosenbaum 1999, p. 92; my translation.)

¹⁷ See their letter to the Writers’ Association, dated June 1949, cited in Rosenbaum (1999, pp. 104–105).

pulp fiction in Israel: its recognized bourgeois, “Hungarian” style, mocked by Dan Ben-Amotz in his humorous book *Ve-zeh ha-sefer Ekh la-’asot mah shemo* (Tel-Aviv: ‘Amiḳam, 1962; cited in Rosenbaum 1999, p. 102), was far from representing pulp industry norms. In fact, the Faragos’ refusal to lower their standards was probably the reason for their downfall in the early 1960s, when new publishers joined the popular literature scene. Even their attempts to publish Westerns in *ha-Sidrah ha-ḥadashah* [The New Series], during the late 1950s, came late in the game.

Rosenbaum (1999) states that the Farago brothers were eager to feature original Hebrew novels; however, they rejected all manuscripts sent to them by loyal readers. Instead, the publisher brothers made up an Israeli author, “Itshak Schnitzer” (after the family’s original last name), and produced pseudo-original



FIGURE 4. Aharon Abádi, *‘Alilot Rafi Tsur: sidrat ḳeravot sport* [The Actions of Rafi Tsur, Sports Fights Series]. Tel-Aviv, Hotsa’at “‘Alilot Rafi Tsur” [Farago Brothers], [1962]. Sub-series: *11 giborim* [11 Heroes], vol. 1, issue no. 2.

chapbooks that in fact were adapted from Hungarian.¹⁸ These were not the only pseudo-original texts they issued: in 1961, in an attempt to regain their centrality, they published the sports adventures series *'Alilot Rafi Tsur* [The Actions of Rafi Tsur]. It was the Israeli Aharon (Ervin) Abádi, one of the graphic artists who illustrated many of the covers in the industry, who wrote the series in Hungarian; the series was then translated into Hebrew and masqueraded as original work (Rosenbaum 1999).

Experimenting with original or pseudo-original Hebrew fiction did not prove successful for the Faragos in the 1950s and early 1960s—just as publishing original Hebrew detective stories in the 1930s did not last long, either. It seems that Hebrew readers were not interested in entertaining texts representing their own, familiar milieu. The surroundings portrayed in the early original detective stories, as described by Zohar Shavit (1998a), were of two types: an Erets-Israel where smart Jewish detectives fought corrupted Arab hoodlums and/or communist agents, while fully collaborating with the British constabulary (a far-fetched description of the contemporary political situation); or a cosmopolitan Erets-Israel, fully integrated in the Middle Eastern region, where Jewish, Greek, Armenian, or American characters moved freely between Tel Aviv to Alexandria or Beirut while confronting Comintern or Nazi agents (another non-realistic portrayal of the contemporary geopolitical conditions). In both settings, Erets-Israel was depicted as an urban, highly civilized hub of European culture;¹⁹ neither *kibbutzim* nor moshavim existed in this imaginary world, nor did socialist values motivate the protagonists or play any part in the plot.²⁰

The removal of plots, backgrounds, and characters to remote settings has primarily reflected a reaction on the part of the producers of popular literature against the dictates of the dominant literary system and against the prevailing intellectual atmosphere. This has, to my mind, been the case practically from the beginnings of the Hebrew cultural center in Erets-Israel. Since readers' pref-

¹⁸ In a personal communication, Gavriel Rosenbaum (2011) added the following details: two titles authored by "Itshak Schnitzer" are available in a private collection: *Kulanu la-hupah* (ha-Roman ha-Za'ir, no. 342), and *ha-Bahurah she-mi-neged* (ha-Roman ha-Za'ir, no. 401).

¹⁹ See Ben-Ari (2010, p. 116) for textual citations representing European urban culture in *The Captive of Tel Aviv*.

²⁰ I find a certain subgroup of the latter type especially interesting. The texts in this subgroup were published by more obscure writers and dealt explicitly with confronting the British. Titles in this category include *80000 Mil mi-tahat la-mavet* [80,000 Miles under Death], a novel of eleven installments by Y. Ma'oz (1940s), published by The Hevraya press [The Guys] and describing an illegal immigration operation; or *Ya'el, harpatka'oteha ve-ahavotehah shel yefefiyah mas'irah havrat mahteret 'Ivrit bi-yeme ha-mandaḥi ha-Briti* [Yael, the Adventures and Love Affairs of a Tantalizing Beautiful Underground Member during the Period of the British Mandate], authored by A. Dor 'Onn (Shiloh 1949).

erences were the only driving force for commercial publishers,²¹ it was the market and not party ideology that regulated trends in the pulp industry. The political link is quite clear, since most of the individuals active in that trade were not associated with the socialist movement, as recognized by Shavit (1998a) and as confirmed by interviews conducted by Ben-Ari with many subsequent publishers and authors (2008). For historical reasons, the dominant, canonical literary system was not only associated with the Labor party (*Mapai*) but also supported by its political structure through agents (authors, editors, translators) in publishing houses (Shavit 1998b; Ben-Ari 2009) and newspapers such as *Davar* (1925–1996). The products of the dominant literary system were produced in professional publishing houses that included editing and proofreading services and provided reasonable packaging (printing paper, binding). They were distributed through bookstores, home-delivered subscription projects, public libraries, and schools.

Those who were involved in the non-canonized literary system had no such means at their disposal; they had to employ alternative production practices, distribution strategies, and customer-service procedures. The production operation was based on the profit motive; packaging did not include any preservation considerations as far as quality of paper and binding. Publishers communicated with customers by directly addressing them on the front and/or back covers of booklets (posting information about future titles or binding options), by including crossword puzzles (*ha-Ḳulmos*) or detective riddles (early Hebrew detective stories), and by publishing commercial advertisements for targeted readers (in the 1960s: men's shaving products and IDF ads). The major distribution mechanism of non-canonized fiction relied on serialized booklets marketed in newsstands or kiosks—but certainly not in bookstores. These booklets were often shared by many readers and exchanged among them.

When checking the inventory compiled by Shavit (1998a) and searching the NLI database, it seems that 1939 was quite a prolific year for the industry, with many stand-alone titles and humorous provisional publications²² being issued along with the serialized booklets. However, during the Second World War, the output dwindled due to paper shortages and the loss of contacts in Europe. This is when Hebrew dailies came into play. They were not involved in the production of popular literature until the early 1940s and their involvement in the industry did not extend beyond that decade. In December 1939 a new

²¹ Not much is known about readers' preferences in this period, except for information gathered from publishers and anecdotal references by readers in contemporary literature and the press; however, the number of copies printed speaks for itself.

²² For example, the humorous provisional publication *Tesh'a ba-gerev* [Nine O'Clock] was issued by Eliezer Carmi in 1938/1939, parodying the weekly *Tesh'a ba-'Erev* [Nine O'Clock] issued by Ouri Kessary (1937–1946). Y. Mifراسi, together with Y. Armon, issued a humorous provisional pamphlet for Hanukkah, *ha-Tsarot ha-lalu* (Yafo: Hoshen Press, 1939).

daily was established, *Yedi'ot aḥaronot*, and by the early 1940s, when it issued its evening edition, it also featured sensational stories originally written in Hebrew.

The trend started with *Mistere ha-Balkān eḥsres: roman rigul ve-ahavim meḳori, mevusas 'al 'uvdot* [Mysteries of the Balkan Express: Fact-Based Espionage and Love Novel], running from November 4, 1940, to October 5, 1941, and continued with other “factual” novels written by the prolific journalist and editor Shalom Gutlib (Yedidyah) under the pseudonym “Sh. Ṿarshai” (Naor 2004).²³ It was thanks to these months-long suspense stories, and a unique combination of political and economic news together with its literary and art supplements, that *Yedi'ot aḥaronot* gained its status as the most read Hebrew newspaper by 1948,²⁴ and triumphed over the ideological, party-issued newspapers (Limor and Gabel 2010). One such newspaper published by *Mapai* (Workers' Party of Erets-Israel), *Ḥadshot ha-'erev*, even tried to run its own serialized novel in the second half of 1946, but it still did not pass the readers' bar; whereas *Ma'ariv* published only few short-lived stories during its first two years (Naor 2004). According to Naor (there), the plots of most of these novels were based on current events in occupied Europe, including collusions with Nazis, while other stories involved international intrigues in contemporary Erets-Israel. All stories featured a high level of sympathy with the Zionist movement and the Jewish *Yishuv* in Erets-Israel.

The serialized, original fiction published in Hebrew dailies during the 1940s was not fully discussed in the studies that examined non-canonized literature in Erets-Israel under the Mandate. It seems that this channel proved as

²³ According to Naor (2004), the following titles by Shalom Gutlib appeared in *Yedi'ot aḥaronot*: *Ṭayeset ha-Volgaḥ eḥarah la-shuv: roman ha-mevusas 'al 'uvdot mi-ḳerav ha-eitanim be-Rusiah* [The Volga Squadron Did Not Return: A Novel Based on Facts from the Fierce Battle in Russia], October 1941–October 1942; *Mi-pelugat ha-ḳomando ḥaser eḥad: roman ha-meta'er et ḥaye ha-maḥteret shel artsot ha-kibush* [Commando Company is Missing One Person: A Novel Describing the Underground in the Occupied Lands], October 1942–October 1943; *Yidvegah Kohēn* [Jadviga Cohen], October 1943–July 1944; *ha-Generalim* [the Generals], July 1944–April 1945; *ha-Gayis ha-shevi'i* [The Seventh Regiment], April 1945–January 1946; *Shaliaḥ Ba le-armon Hordus* [A Messenger at Herod's Palace], January 1946–April 1946; *Yare'aḥ be-'emek Ayalon* [Ayalon Valley Moon], April 1946–January 1947; *'Alilot Lukas melekh Ḳirena* [Adventures of Lukas, King of Kirena], January 1947–July 1947; *Yuliyah yotset me-ha-maḥaneh: bi-netiv ha-yesurim shel ha-'aḳurim be-Eropah—A Novel Based on Facts* [Yulia Leaves the Camp: the Way of Suffering of the Displaced in Europe], July 1947–February 14, 1948; *Amnon Ṭerem ḥazar li-vesiso: roman me-ḥaye Yehudim ba-arets uva-golah* [a Novel of Jews' Life in Israel and in the Diaspora], February 15, 1948–November 1948; and *ha-Derekh la-nitsaḥon* [The Path to Victory], 1949.

²⁴ In 1948, during what became to be known as the “big putsch” (Naor 2004), rebellious *Yedi'ot aḥaronot* journalists, led by their editor, took the latest novel with them, *Yuliyah*, and established the competing *Ma'ariv*. The new daily indeed became the most popular newspaper in Israel shortly after its establishment (Limor and Gabel 2010, p. 297, footnote 22), but that title was re-conquered by *Yedi'ot aḥaronot* later on. The last installment of *Yuliyah* to be published appeared in *Ma'ariv* (February 14, 1948), but the story never received its formal ending in either newspaper.

accessible to readers as the non-canonized, translated chapbooks, which were also produced by privately owned, for-profit entrepreneurs. The newspaper format was more viable as a platform for publishing original novels in the 1940s, since their plots revolved around current events covered in the press, but once the Second World War and the War of Independence were over, readers lost interest in original popular fiction in Hebrew.²⁵ Although original Hebrew titles popped up in the market occasionally, they were marginalized even in the non-canonized literary system. It was not time yet for original Hebrew pulp.

HEYDAY OF THE ISRAELI PULP CULTURE

Following the establishment of the State of Israel and the influx of immigration masses, the young state enforced austerity measures to cope with its growing needs. Production of popular literature slowed down during the austerity years (1949–1959), but regained vitality around 1957. The themes featured were now moving further away from any realistic representation of daily life in Israel or of the contemporary social issues triggered by the big waves of immigration. By the end of the 1950s, the non-canonized literary system featured more international crime plots or secret agents involved in Cold War conflicts, spiced up with erotic elements.²⁶ Romance stories made their debut, too, targeting female readers (*ha-Ma'agal* series [The Circle], ha-Roman ha-Za'ir press), and suspense stories were still eagerly read,²⁷ as well as translated detective stories of well-known American, English, or French authors (*Sifre mistorin* [Mystery Books], M. Mizrahi press). Nevertheless, the American Western was by all means the genre on the rise.

The non-canonized texts of the late 1950s differed from the ones published during the pre-State period not only in the variation of themes but also, and mainly, by the culture after which they were modeled. While the early popular titles took after Yiddish and European models, it was the American culture that gained a prestigious status by the late 1950s. This natural process was evident first and foremost in the canonized, dominant cultural system: Hebrew

²⁵ While the detective model disappeared from original Hebrew popular literature until its reactivation in the late 1980s, it was canonized or semi-canonized in children's literature that celebrated Zionist values, such as *Shemonah be-ikvot ehad* (Yemimah Tchernowitz-Avidar, Tyerski, 1945; and following editions) or the *Hasambah* series (1950–, Yigal Mossinsohn, Tyerski, 1950–; and following editions).

²⁶ There are several 1950s titles of this genre in the IsraPulp collection: *Roman ha-shavu'a* [Novel of the Week], 32-page chapbooks, including a weekly drawing for a movie: *Nashim ba-'olam ha-tahton!* no. 27 [Women in Gangland!] by Peter Cheyney, translated by A. Ben-Dan (Eliezer Carmi); *Al pish'e ha-kerakh* [Of City Crimes], By Y.P. MacGibern, translated by Elhanan Lahav (Asimon press, 1957).

²⁷ For example, *ha-Ason* [The Disaster; Margaret Millar's *An Air that Kills*], translated by M. Rogalsky, ha-Masekhah press [The Mask], 1957.

literature went through a few phases, first borrowing models from Russian, German, or Polish, and since the 1940s from British, then American English (Toury 1977). The process was demonstrated in the source culture of the texts chosen for translation, or the culture represented in translated texts, and in grammatical and phraseological effects. As a matter of fact, the Hebrew that was used in translated texts was quite distinct from the Hebrew of original literature, as translators were preoccupied with creating equivalent, literal translations, instead of adequate ones that read as natural Hebrew texts (Toury 1995). This variant of Hebrew, dubbed “Tirgumit” (Translationese; Ben-Ari 1999), epitomizes popular literature in Israel: the texts, never edited or proofread, were rapidly translated by amateurs who were paid peanuts, and therefore contained typos, sub-standardized transliterations and inconsistent spellings.

A core group of publishers and translators-adapters-writers was active in this trade during the peak period: ‘Ezra Narkis, owner of ha-Pil press (also known as Hermon, Yanshuf, Yam-Suf, Olimpiyah, Eros, and others); Uri Shalgi (Ramdor press, named after his children; Shalgi press); Aharon Amir (ha-Ḳarnaf press, also known as MaLaN, and ha-Namer press); Meir Mizrahi (Sifre Mistorin; M. Mizrahi press); the Farago Brothers; and authors who contracted with a number of publishers and at times initiated their own publishing projects, like Miron Uriel or Eli Ḳedar (Ben-Ari 2008). The readership also expanded and changed, from the initial group of Sabra adolescents to a mass of new immigrants who did not master Hebrew, many of them of Mizrahi descent.²⁸

It’s not clear when exactly the Westerns began to appear, as some titles in this genre do not bear any imprint and may only be dated by the stated price in *peruṭot* (a *peruṭah* was an Israeli coin used between 1950–1960).²⁹ Yet, starting sometime in the 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s, hundreds of booklets fiercely competed, week after week, for eager teenagers who were fascinated by the American West and its courageous heroes. According to independent researcher Eli Eshed (2002), the foundation for the immense popularity of the genre was laid by the *Yishuv* admiration for Western movies beginning in the 1930s, based on similarities between Jewish *ḥalutsim* and nineteenth-century American settlers facing the original Indian landowners. Some Westerns, to be

²⁸ This is what came up in an interview that Nitsa Ben-Ari conducted with ‘Ezra Narkis (2009, p. 191): “His sharp business sense identified a new reading public. As he put it: for young men who came from Arabic-speaking countries, the mere thought of a woman’s bare leg was enough to arouse excitement. [. . .] He realized there were a lot of new immigrants who would read smut, and decided to give them well-written books [. . .].”

²⁹ Such titles in the IsraPulp Collection include the 34-page *ha-Ḳa’uboi ha-paḥdan* [The Coward Cowboy], issue no. 2 in *Sifriyat ha-boḳer* series [The Cowboy Library], published by MaLaN without any additional details (300 *peruṭot*); or the 36-page *ha-Kol ‘al ḳelaḳ eḥad* [Everything on One Card], “a fascinating, exciting novel of the Wild West,” issue no. 17 in the *Mi-sipure ha-ma’arav ha-paru’a* series [Stories of the Wild West], published by “*Mi-Sipure ha-ma’arav ha-paru’a*” (275 *peruṭot*).

sure, were published as early as the 1930s in detective series (Eshed 2002); however the newly-created Hebrew word for a Western (*ma'aravon*) was not recorded in dictionaries until much later, in the 1990s.

By 1957, even the Farago brothers had to give in and publish Westerns to stay in business. Some booklets in their New Series (1957–1961) are represented in the IsraPulp Collection, including booklet no. 7, *ha-Tamah ve-ha-ra'ah* [The Modest and the Wicked], which promises that “this novel will transfer the reader from everyday life to the unrestrained domain of those provisional, lawless cattle-towns which yielded to the adventurers of the West.” Although the plot of this 34-page story takes place in the American West, and all protagonists bear American names, this text like many other ones published by the Faragos was translated from Hungarian. This practice was not exceptional. Many of the other Westerns were translated from British English, Italian, or German (the German author Karl May was a favorite), while very few were indeed authentic American Westerns (Eshed 2002). It was the prestige associated with the American culture that drove the original authors to write the stories; and it was for that same reason, that Israeli publishers preferred to mask the authors’ true identities and Americanize them.

Yet, the majority of Hebrew Westerns were not by Europeans or Americans. They were written by Israeli authors in Hebraized Translationese, and distributed using Americanized pseudonyms, complete with the names of Hebrew “translators,” occasionally with made-up titles that stood for the “original” ones.³⁰ In other words, these texts not only presented themselves as translations, but they also utilized a writing style that fooled readers into believing that they were indeed translated from English. The reason was simple: these texts could not have been sold as genuine Hebrew fiction because the established literary system did not have space for popular literature. The linguistic means used in the Hebraized Translationese consisted of many Americanisms (transliterated expressions such as “all right”), literal translations of single words or longer phrases, and elevated language alongside with contemporary Hebrew slang (for textual examples see Weissbrod 1992; Ben-Ari 1999, 2010).

To be sure, the late 1950s and early 1960s were the glory days of the Israeli popular literature and its publishers. Though very much in the periphery—in fact operating in the surrounding areas of the central bus station in underdeveloped south Tel Aviv—these entrepreneurs were very successful in terms of the book market, as they toyed with their names and printers to evade taxes as well as censorship (Ben-Ari 2008). According to interviews carried out by Nitsa Ben-Ari (2008, pp. 5–9), it turns out that many of the publishers and pseudo-translators

³⁰ For example, from the IsraPulp Collection: *Tsefonit le-Loredo* [North of Loredo], by Jordan Scott (Jordon instead of Gordon; there is an apostrophe above the Hebrew *Gimel*), translated by M. Bashan, Tel Aviv, Defus Lidor: 1963. On the insert, in English: *North of Loyado* by Gordon Scott.

shared similar biographical profiles, even though they did not necessarily know one another. Some of these similarities included:

- ◇ for-profit, non-ideological motives for getting involved in the publishing business;
- ◇ producing according to readers' demands and not some dictated notion of official "popular" culture (such as those imposed by the New Hebrew culture planners and followed by *Mapai* cultural agents; see Shavit J. 1996, 2004);
- ◇ a liking for American culture;
- ◇ political association with the right wing, in some cases stemming from active participation in the pre-State underground movements;
- ◇ working as editorial staff of non-socialist newspapers (*Yedi'ot aḥaronot*) or magazines in the entertainment industry (*la-Ishah*, *'Olam ha-ḳolno'a*); and
- ◇ not manifesting much pride in taking part in the pulp industry.

Proud of themselves or not, the list of Western series and stand-alone paperback books produced by Israeli authors during this period is lengthy.³¹ Based on the testimony of an avid collector (Kano 2009) and on Eshed's survey (2002), one of the most successful series was named after Buck Jones (pronounced "Book"), a protagonist of popular Western movies (1930s–1940s), although that character had nothing to do with its Israeli counterpart. All of the titles of Sidrat "Buḳ G'ons" [The "Buck Jones" Series] were written by the prolific pseudo-translator Miron Uriel, who mostly used the pseudonym "Archie(bald) Berman" but was also active as "Kim Rockman," "Mike Longshot," "Jack Martel," and more. Published by 'Ezra Narḳis, one of the driving forces behind the pulp industry in Israel, the 1960s series became so successful that Narḳis himself issued another competing series, authored by "Cliff Jones," to fight the pirated serials issued by his rivals, such as *Buḳ G'ons ha-Amity* [The Real Buck Jones], by Eli Ḳedar; *Harpatḳa'ot Buḳ G'ons* [The Adventures of Buck Jones]; *'Alilot Buḳ G'ons: Mo'adon Arts'i Berman* [Actions of Buck Jones: the Archie Berman Club]; and even Marshal "Boog Jones." As a side project, Narḳis published yet another series telling the story of Marshal Shiping, Buḳ Jones' commander. All in all, about 80 stories about Buḳ Jones were published in Hebrew. The IsraPulp Collection has a selection of titles from all of the Buḳ Jones series, along with some stand-alone titles.

³¹ To name just a few: *Sidrat ma'arvone 'anak* [The Enormous Westerns Series], *Kokhav ha-ma'arav* [Star of the West], *ha-Ma'arvon ha-kaful* [The Double Western], *Ringo*, and *Mats'istah*—the last two were modeled after Spaghetti Western movies originating in Italy and published by Ramdor press (Shalgi). A wide selection of titles in the Western genre is available in the IsraPulp Collection.



FIGURE 5. Kliff G'ons and Eli Kedar, *ha-Ḳerav shel Buḳ G'ons ha-amiti be-'ir ha-zahav yeha-resha'* [Buḳ G'ons' Fight]. [Tel-Aviv]: Hotsa'at Buḳ G'ons ha-amiti [1960].

As documented by Eshed (2002), another beloved series modeled after a Western movie star was in fact one of the earliest and longest running ones. Featuring the character of “Bil Ḳarter” (Bill Carter), it was created in 1959 by Uri Shalgi under the pseudonym of A. Balmer,³² was still published by 1973 and reissued in 1981. The last attempt to revive it was made in 1994, with the reissuing of *ha-Sholef ha-mahir*. Shalgi, owner of Ramdor publishing house, one of the most active publishers in the field of Israeli popular literature, was helped by a team of writers (Ḥayyim Gibori, Pinḥas and Yaakov Danziger, and others) to produce almost one thousand stand-alone and serialized titles about Bil Ḳarter. Some of the titles were adapted from German and American Westerns, while others were pseudo-translations; a listing of them is available online on one of Eshed's pages (Eshed 2011).

Unlike the persona of Bil Ḳarter, who was constantly surrounded by long-ing and beautiful women but never connected with them, the short-lived Edi Bulah Western series (1963) featured a protagonist who experienced and shared his love affairs with his readers (Eshed 2002). Indeed, the proportion of erotic elements in Hebrew pulps grew fast during the 1950s, with serials such as *Ta'avat ha-ṣatan* [Satanic Lust] (The 10-Installment Novel press, unsigned, 1950s). By the mid-1960s, with the successful arrival of James Bond movies to Israel, all of the James Bond books were translated into Hebrew³³ (see Eshed 2006 for summary and listing). Thus started an espionage rush of erotic stories involving combative figures. They consisted of several translated series featur-

³² A. Balmer was an acronym for “Aḥare ha-balash ha-merateḳ” [After the Fascinating Detective], a series Shalgi published in the 1950s.

³³ Alongside the translations, pseudo-translations such as *FBI Agent* by “Gims Flemin” (in the IsraPulp Collection) were also issued.

ing Niķ arter (Nick Carter), along with lif Moris (Cliff Morris), and the pseudo-translated *Sidrat ha-balash ha-mistori* [The Mysterious Detective Series], by “Gaston Piro,” featuring the “Spider” or “Agent 001”; or the chapbooks featuring special agents “ed Mar,” “Edi arson,” or “Roi Sil” (titles from all above-mentioned series are available in the IsraPulp Collection). However, the most celebrated of all pseudo-translated series was the one featuring Pari im, a mighty Korean CIA agent whose “roughened arms” were usually wrapped around one or another woman, when not practicing karate to defeat his enemies. Over 300 Pari im booklets and chapbooks were authored by “Bert Whitford”³⁴ and published by Uri Shalgi (Ramdor press) from 1964 to the early 1980s (Sagiv 1994; see Eshed 2007 for listing).

Plain pornographic literature was also thriving in several sub-genres, including translated banned books that were unacceptable to the canonized system—not necessarily for obscenity (Ben-Ari 2006)—pseudo-medical guides, gay literature, the weeklies Gamad and la-Gever, or “authentic” accounts of the legendary *Casanova*. Pornography publishers were not as numerous as the different names suggest; many of the publishing firms were in fact names under which ‘Ezra Naris (Olympiyah, anan, Yam-Suf), Uri Shalgi (Ramdor, ha-Te’omim), and others hid to evade censorship and taxes. Their fears were quite justified: according to a 1960 article published in *Panim el panim*, the first popular magazine for the religious sector in Israel (1952–1973, edited by Rabbi Shemu’el Avidor ha-Cohen): “Last July, the police raided kiosks and newspapers stands in Tel Aviv and vicinity. In 150 of them, the police found, seized, and confiscated almost 18,000 booklets, about a hundred printing plates, and numerous pornographic postcards.”³⁵ The article reported the phenomenon on a double-page spread, accompanied by six photos of teens reading “*Sifrut ha-to’evah*” [“Obscene literature”]. According to Nitsa Ben-Ari’s thorough research about erotic Hebrew literature (2006), these texts in fact were self-censored by the authors and publishers, who refrained from explicit language and preferred metaphorical language whenever possible (for textual examples and discussion, see Ben-Ari 2006). In the twenty-first century, these texts may seem quite naive.

Yet the most notorious pornographic sub-genre of the 1960s was undoubtedly the Salags. Initiated by Eli edar and ‘Ezra Naris in 1961 (see interview, Libsker and Ben-Mayor 2007) and continued until the mid-1960s by many other pseudo-translators, including Miron Uriel, the Salags brought together sadistic SS female guards, American soldiers imprisoned in German POW camps during World War II, and a lot of imagination. The plots, loosely based on horror stories about Nazi female guards such as Ilse Koch or Irma Grese, were modeled after post-war American pulps and took place in base camps (the German Stamm-lager was shortened for Salags). Dozens of Salags were published from 1961 to

³⁴ Among those who confessed for being involved with writing the Pari im series were Gile’ad Morag, Pinhas Danziger, Shelomo Frankel, Asher Dori, Eyal Meged, Itamar Levy, ‘Amos Arikha, and Aryeh Mekel (Eshed 2002, 2007).

³⁵ *Panim el panim* vol. 65 (July 29, 1960), pp. 10–11.

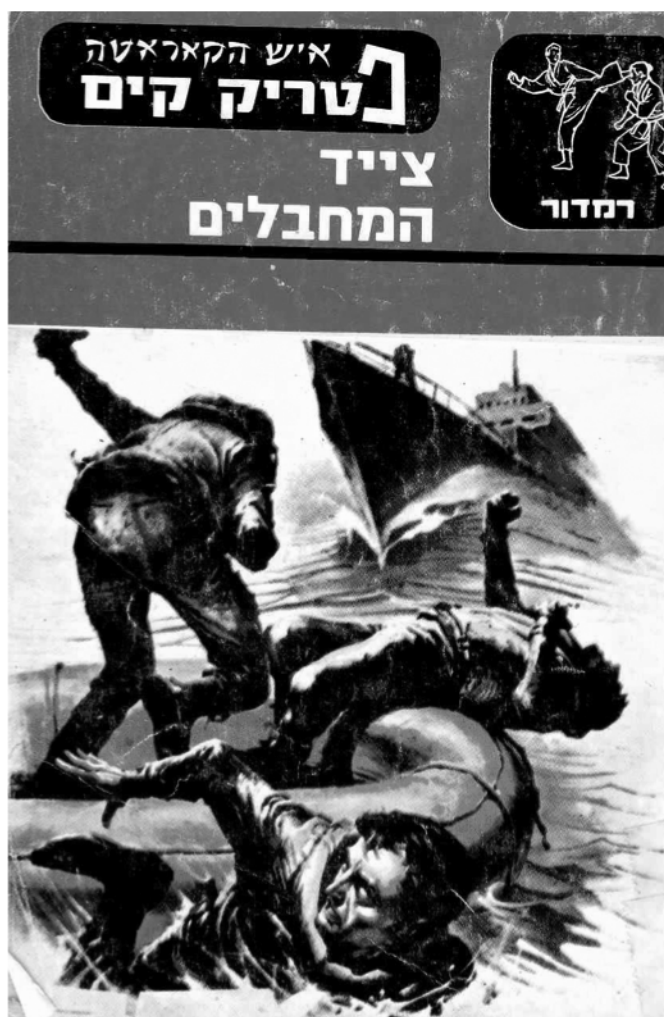


FIGURE 6. Bert Whiteford and Elisha Ben Mordechai, *Ish ha-ḳarateh Paṭriḳ Ḳim: tsayad ha-meḥablim* [The Karate Man Patrick Kim: The Terrorist Hunter]. [Tel-Aviv]: Ramdor [1973].

1965, while the Eichmann Trial was held in Jerusalem (Bartov 1997; Eshed 2002; Ben-Ari 2006), and when the Nazi motif was exhausted, authors moved on to describe similar sadistic plots in Asia or North Africa.

The *Ṣtalags* gained immense success among teenagers, many of them the offspring of Holocaust survivors. In fact, since some survivors did not talk about their experiences, and since the canonized literature did not allow yet for a real discussion about the topic, the *Ṣtalags* may well be regarded as a result of processing the Holocaust by the second generation (Bartov 1997). Furthermore, Pinchevski and Brand (2010, p. 393) assert, “In supplying an outlet to the public imagination, the *Ṣtalags* functioned as the fantasy companion to the trial. As such [. . .] the *Ṣtalags* combined pulp heroism, folk-psychology explanation to Nazism, and displaced repetitions from the trial [. . .]”



FIGURE 7. Kim Rockman and M. Oryan, *Ştalag ha-shedim* [The Demons' Stalag]. Yafo: Yam Suf [1962].

Following the oft-cited trial testimony of Ka-Tzetnik (Yeḥiel Di-Nur), as well as his fiction books (*Bet ha-bubot, Dvir*, 1953; *Kar'u lo Pipl, 'Am ha-Sefer*, 1961), the need of young Israelis to imagine the other “planet” was so desperate that violent descriptions of Nazi brutality became quite extreme in the competitive Ştalag industry. In fact, publishers used Ştalags' covers to proclaim that the plots were “untempered realistic,” “more fascinating,” “bolder,” and “crueler” (*Ştalag 217*), so as to catch the attention of potential readers.

In two particular Ştalag-like titles, *Hayiti kalbato ha-peraṭit shel ḳolonel Shults* [I was Captain Schulz's Private Bitch] (‘Eshet press, 1962; authored by a number of students and probably Eli Ḳedar, under the pseudonym Moniḳ Ḳorno) and *Hineh ba ha-ḳavran ha-matoḳa* [Here Comes the Sweet Undertaker] (‘Eshet press, 1963; authored by Eli Ḳedar under the pseudonym of Mike Baden), a red line was crossed as far as the court was concerned. The two books were considered obscene literature due to detailed descriptions of the ruthless rape of a French woman (as portrayed in the former title) and a story line that pushed sensitive buttons by including a half-Jewish character and mentioning Israelis (as in the latter). The books were removed from the market and publisher Yitshak Gutman, together with distributor Nathan Lotan, printer Pinḥas Dagan, and author Eli Ḳedar, were prosecuted. At the end of the first pornography trial in Israel (June 1962–February 1963), Judge Shlomo Rosenfeld concluded that the first book was indeed obscene and therefore it was censored, while the other one was erotic in nature but not harmful (Eshed 2002, 2007b; Ben-Ari 2006). That was one of the very few times that government intervention was

called for; usually the book industry not only regulated itself, but also censored itself (for the history of “moral enforcement in Erets-Israel” see Ben-Ari 2006, pp. 42–62). However, the trial only sparked more curiosity on the part of readers: *Hineh ba ha-ḳavran ha-matoḳ* was re-issued, announcing “Confiscated and absolved by the Court” (the second edition is in the collection), while *Hayiti kalbato ha-peraṭit shel ḳolonel Shults* became a rare collectible. Shortly after the incident, Narḳis managed to replicate the cover of the banned book and profit from his own version, *Kalbato shel Shults* [Schulz’s Bitch], although the text was quite subtle (Eshed 2002, 2007b; Ben-Ari 2006). The IsraPulp Collection includes most of published Ṣtalags, as well as the film documenting the phenomenon (Libsker and Ben-Mayor 2007).

An openly pornographic sub-genre was the Damsel-in-Distress type of serialized novel, continuing the translation tradition started with *Regine* and *Sabine* in the 1930s. Examples of this sub-genre include *Smadar, harpatḳaotehah shel na’arat kibuts* [Smadar, The Adventures of a Kibbutz Girl], Smadar Press, 1961 (authored by Miron Uriel and published by Narḳis; Eshed 2002); *Raḳel, ha-roman ha-Yiṣre’eli ha-merateḳ ve-ha-aḳtu’ali* [Rachel: the Actual, Fascinating Israeli Novel], ha-Roman be-Hemshekhim Press, 1962; and *Anitah, toldotehah shel na’arah “temimah”* [Anitah, an Account of a “Naïve” Girl], Ramdor 1963 (Part I in collection). Similarly, some espionage stories featured agents bearing typical Israeli names, as though to reveal authentic operations (*Guy Shamir, Sokhen Sh.b. 01, and ‘Emeḳ Golan Shin.Bet*). A few original Israeli detective stories were also published in the late 1960s (for example, Y. Yahel’s four-title series featuring the “suspense couple,” Ramdor 1969–1970; and Eliezer Berkman’s books, Renesans Press, 1967–1969), but they remained marginalized.

The fact that even during the heyday of popular literature in Israel there was no legitimate place for original Hebrew pulp fiction is not trivial. Due to the writing norms that governed the non-canonized subsystem (based on pseudo-translations), the subsystem itself became identified with translated literature from English. In 1964, English was the original language of forty percent of translated texts, and most of them represented popular literature (Tourey 1987, pp. 115–117, cited in Ben-Ari 2006, p. 143). As the impact of the popular literature grew stronger, the dominant system became more determined to fight back Americanization and enforce socialist values. Ben-Ari (2006) demonstrates this tendency in the creation of the government authority (1964) that forbade the Beatles from arriving in Israel for rock’n’roll performances. The process of stratification and normalization of the literary polysystem in Israel, in an attempt to fill the void of original popular literature, took many years, at least as far as the adult literary subsystem was concerned. Since children’s literary subsystems usually occupy a marginalized position in the polysystem, it was acceptable for the Israeli children’s literature to use marginalized literary models for original texts.

Such was the now-canonized *Ḥasambah* series, the most successful kids’ series in Israeli history, written by Yigal Mossinsohn starting in 1950. The series tells the adventures of a mythological group of teens made up of stereotyped characters, including beautiful Tamar, courageous Yaron, Fat Ehud, Yemenite

Menasheh, and more. The young detectives fought Arabs and corrupt crooks with the same zeal that they confronted international spies or the infamous Saddam Hussein—all from their base in the electric cave on a Tel Aviv beach. While not considered good literature for children, the forty-four books in the series (1950–1994) were available in public and school libraries due to their vast popularity.

In fact, the *Hasambah* series was so popular that others imitated it. One of the most prolific writers in this genre was Shraga Gafni, who started his writing career in the early 1950s, and used several pseudonyms for his serialized books: Yigal Golan, Eitan Dror, Avner Karmeli, Onn Sarig, Eitan Notev. The IsraPulp Collection includes many titles of his book series: *ha-Sporta'im ha-tse'irim* [The Young Athletes], *ha-Amitsim* [The Brave Ones], *ha-Yama'im* [The Mariners], *ha-Balashim ha-tse'irim* [The Young Detectives], *Harpatkotav shel Kepten Yuno* [Captain Yuno's Adventures], and *Harpatka'ot Danidin ha-ro'eh ve-eno nir'eh* [The Adventures of the Invisible Danidin].

The well-loved Israeli special agent 'Oz Ya'oz starred in another children's series (1963–1966), written by “Iddo Seter” (pseudonym of Yehezkel Laufbahn). This series was influenced by Peter Cheyney's books, and was quite violent and prejudiced, as was *Hasambah*.

Tarzan was probably the most admired character in the heyday of Hebrew non-canonized literature for children, with nearly one thousand Tarzan stories originally written in Hebrew (for detailed review, see Eshed 2002, 2004). The superhero's popularity, dated to the 1930s, was partially related to the false anecdote about the Jewishness of Johnny Weissmuller (the film actor who played Tarzan). The decade starting in 1954 was the most prolific in terms of Tarzan stories, interestingly issued anonymously or under pseudonymous Hebrew names, but not necessarily presented as translated fiction. One of the most popular series was *Alilot Tarzan* [Tarzan's Actions], authored by “Yovav” (a pseudonym used by multiple authors: 'Amos Kenan, Yesha'ayahu Levit, Shimeon Tsabar, Hayyim Gibori, and many others) and published by ha-Ḳarnaf press [The Rhinoceros], or MalaN, owned and operated by the “Canaanite” Aharon Amir.

During the early 1960s, a number of competing series were issued: *Ta'alule Tarzan* [Tarzan's Tricks] authored by Miron Uriel, ha-Pil press [The Elephant], owned by 'Ezra Narkis; *Tarzan u-veno* [Tarzan and his Son] published by ha-Pil press; *Harpatka'ot Tarzan* [Tarzan's Adventures], ha-Ḳarnaf press under the mock publisher name ha-Namer [The Leopard]; *Tarzan ha-lohem* [Tarzan the Fighter], by the same publisher; and *Dan-Tarzan, ha-Tarzan ha-Yisre'eli* [Dan-Tarzan, the Israeli Tarzan], authored by Amnon Shpak and Ze'ev Galili, who claimed to incorporate patriotic values into their stories (Eshed 2002). The admiration for Tarzan died out in the second half of the 1960s, and all efforts to revive it were to no avail. (These included Sh. Orr's translated comic books and reprints of ha-Ḳarnaf press stories in the 1970s; translated comic books issued by Mizraḥi in the 1970s.)

Two other series published by ha-Ḳarnaf press featured maritime superheroes: *Harpatka'ot Kaprikorn* [The Adventures of Capricorn; 1955 and 1959] and *Harpatka'ot Kapiṭan Blad* [The Adventures of Captain Blood, 1960], follow-



FIGURE 8. Edgar Rice Burroughs and Miron Uriel, *Ṭarzan bi-te'alat ha-Suets* [sic!] [Tarzan in the Gulf of Suez]. Tel-Aviv: ha-Pil [1960]. *Ta'alule Ṭarzan* [Tarzan's Tricks], volume 1, issue no. 13. From the cover: "Something is wrong with the ship's papers," said the Egyptian officer to Tarzan. "I have to ask you to stop the ship for another checkup before entering the Gulf. I am sure that this is just a technical problem."

ing the great success of Rafael Sabatini's adventure novel *Captain Blood* and the 1935 movie by the same name starring Errol Flynn. Other successful 1960s superhero series for children were *Shazam*, and its successor *Ḳaḫiṭan Marvel*, adapted from a 1940s film series, not the comic book series (ha-Pil press); and the Greco-Roman *Mats'isṭah, gibor ha-'olam* [Machista, the World's Hero] series, issued by Ramdor (Eshed 2002).

Two genres that began to be published during this period but did not fully develop until later were comic books and science fiction. While early attempts to publish comic books did not translate into commercial success, the weekly

Buḳi (1967–1971; see Eshed and Itchkovitch 2011) inspired other comics projects and contributed to the popularity of the genre past the heyday of the Israeli popular literature (Kichka 1990; Yas'ur 2001). Dubbed “*Mad'a dimiyoni*” (Imaginative Science) in the late 1950s, Hebrew science fiction (*Mad'a bidyoni*) came a long way from the outskirts of the publishing world into the safety of the mainstream as an accepted genre, with an active association that publishes book reviews and arranges conferences (The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy, 1996). By the end of the 1990s, there had been some 850 science-fiction titles published in Hebrew, with peak production occurring in the decade starting in 1974 (for a comprehensive bibliography, see Sagiv-Naḳdimon 1999).

All in all, thousands of serialized and stand-alone titles must have been published during the peak years of Israeli popular literature in the 1960s. This post-austerity and pre-1967 era is regarded by many as the last days of Israeli innocence—before television was part of everyday life, before the borders were massively expanded, before Israelis could afford to travel abroad, and before anyone had thought that Post-Zionism was a viable term. As outlined by Ben-



FIGURE 9. ‘*Ayn ra’ah* [Evil Eye] [Tel Aviv]: ha-Ḳarnaf Press (MaLaN) “Science Fiction,” [1959]. *Mada’ dimiyoni* [Imaginary Science], volume 1, issue no. 1.

Ari (2009), the New Hebrew was celebrated by the dominant culture in many ways (“folk dances,” “folk songs,” politically-supported publishing houses), while the subsystems provided for the “other” needs of the population. Or alternatively, as Ben-Ari puts it (2009, p. 181):

[. . .] two parallel systems developed, one deferring to ideological indoctrination, the second (paradoxically, the subversive one) deferring to “normal” laws of the market, with, eventually, the second forcing the other to “normalize” and cater to multiple needs. When the change had occurred, there was no longer any need for the subversive system, and the two systems merged. Symbolically [. . .] this may have been the moment when the New Hebrew or Sabra ideology began to die out.

The “other” that the non-canonized literary system stood for was subversive, anti-Sabra, and in some ways pro-Diaspora culture. This very culture was typified by the Yiddish *shund* that the purist, elitist Zionists resisted when they “fought against turning Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, into a Mediterranean Warsaw” (Shavit J. 1986, p. 209; cited in Ben-Ari 2009, p. 188). For this reason, it is clear why reading original Hebrew detective stories in the 1930s and 1940s was regarded almost as a rite of initiation in the writings of those who grew up during the Mandate years (examples include Haim Be’er, Hanokh Bartov, or Amos Oz),³⁶ while reading 1960s-era pseudo-translations is a matter that Israelis feel reluctant to acknowledge.

That ambivalence may best be illustrated in the words of Zalman Aranne (Aharonovits), Mapai MK, educator, and Secretary of Education and Culture (1955–1960; 1963–1969), when talking about “the Problems of the Emerging Israeli Society” at the ninth convention of the Erets-Israel Workers Party (October 15, 1963):

The educational level of many Hebrew speaking adults is not sufficient for reading a newspaper; a great many adults have to employ their first language, which is not Hebrew, for reading newspapers or books; daily newspapers in foreign languages are distributed massively; the streets are flooded with *shund* chapbooks; extended numbers of young adults don’t consume serious literature at all, be it in Hebrew or in any other language; a considerable part of the entertainment is nothing but rubbish; if an authoritative group were to sift through the Israeli literary corpus, it would certainly find a fair amount of graphomania as well as traces of child disease and acne. (Aranne 1972, p. 175; my translation.)

³⁶ Page numbers refer to the original Hebrew editions: Haim Be’er, *Havalim* (1998: pp. 253–254; *The Pure Elements of Time*); Hanokh Bartov, *Shel mi atah yeled* (1970: 156, 195–197, cited in Z. Shavit and J. Shavit 1974), Amos Oz, *Sipur ‘al ahavah ve-‘al ḥoshekh* (2002: 436–437; *A Tale of Love and Darkness*).

However, in his autobiography Aranne takes pleasure in describing his own reading habits and their benefits:

My acquaintance with non-Jewish literature started with reading a detective booklet, *The Body in the Box*, seemingly telling the adventures of a detective named Nat Pinkerton [. . .] The colorful, illustrated envelopes of the detective “literature” were stimulating and very attractive for me. The “detectives” were always foreigners—young, shaved and handsome, brave *goyim* who always beat the crooks. [. . .] The detective and adventure fiction infused the children with contempt for cowardice. At teenage, that feeling would sometimes develop into a contempt for lies, as lies represented cowardice. (Aranne 1971, pp. 34–35; my translation.)

1970s AND ON: NORMALIZATION OF THE LITERARY SYSTEM

The activity of the pulp industry subsided during the seventies and by the end of that decade was practically gone. Among the genres that were still being printed were Westerns, Patrick Kim titles, children’s titles (including comic books), romance, mystery, and pornography, which became more explicit in nature. Unlike the previous periods, many of the covers featured photos on a glossy, colorful paper.

A number of factors played a role in the fall of the pulp industry: the Israel Broadcast Authority started to operate the State’s first television service in 1968 and a growing portion of entertainment needs were fulfilled by TV shows; people no longer read pulps but watched soap operas (Eshed 2002). On the other hand, toward the end of the 1970s, the subsidized publishing houses (Sifriyat Po’alim, ‘Am ‘Oved, ha-Ḳibuts ha-Me’uḥad) realized that they too might have to take readership preferences into account in order to stay profitable (Ben-Ari 2009). That realization was probably connected to the dwindling financial sources after the dramatic political change in 1977, when the Likud party rose to power. The 1970s marked a turning point for the literary system, which started then to stratify and “normalize.”

The Israeli publishing scene nowadays is more diverse than ever, with large and small publishers offering separate series to match every taste. While some of the past non-canonized genres disappeared, others have been incorporated into the standard repertoire of mainstream publishers, or are offered through specialized series of conventional publishers, or by niche publishers.

New, original Hebrew detective stories, for example, did not appear until 1988, when Batyah Gur published her *Retsaḥ be-Shabat ba-boḳer: roman balashi* (The Saturday Morning Murder: A Psychoanalytic Case), featuring the Mizraḥi detective Michael Ohayon. The book was published by the established Keter publishing house, translated into many languages, and followed by additional detective novels by Gur. The following year, Shulamit Lapid published her own detective novel *Meḳomon* [Local Paper] through the same publishing house, featuring

the female detective Lizi Badihi. Since then, the genre has become so popular that Ram Oren, one of its leading authors, decided he should not let Keter profit from his work and started his own publishing house in the mid-1990s (Keshet).

It is not accidental that Keter, publisher of the 1980s original detective novels, also supported the publication of fiction written in the “slim language” style that made its debut that decade. This literary style promoted, among other things, the use of everyday language in written dialogue, which in its turn sprang from new insights in the field of sociolinguistics as well as the publication of the innovative *World Dictionary of Hebrew Slang* by Dan Ben-Amotz and Netiva Ben-Yehuda (Levin-Epsh̄tain 1972). The same Ben-Amotz, a Polish-born self-made “authentic” Sabra and well-known bohemian, also authored the first original Hebrew pornographic novel (1979), *Ziyunim zeh lo ha-kol* (*Screwing Isn't Everything*, published by Metsi'ut, a sister-publisher of Zemorah-Bitan Modan). Ben-Ari (2006) demonstrated how this novel—whose innovation is evident not in its language but in the way that it blends Sabra qualities with sex references—influenced the next generations of writers.

Other genres that found their way from the periphery to the center are comic books and graphic novels, following current international trends. Nowadays, there are a number of comic-book stores in Israel, offering a wide selection of titles. One of the indicators for the canonization of comic books in Israel is the interesting fact that *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) comic books use the same format to promote their values. Fanzines are still more peripheral, but some titles are available for downloading via the Israeli Fanzine Archive site (BZ 2011).

A side project is the collection of *Haredi* movies on CD-ROMs. These films, produced by and for the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, are not featured in movie theaters but are intended to be watched in a supervised environment at home. They are not reviewed in professional outlets or even in dailies, and they are not collected in libraries. The films do not feature any “adult” content, and they do not feature female characters. Among the several available genres, the most interesting one is the action movies. Filmed on location all over Israel and even in Europe, they feature complex story lines with flashbacks and surprising turns. They touch on conflicts between ultra-Orthodox and secular communities within Israeli society while presenting non-Jews (Arabs particularly) in a bad light. This collection is related to the IsraPulp Collection as it features a subculture in Israel that operates on the periphery but follows major trends in the mainstream culture.

The fascination with the subversive culture of the Jewish and Israeli past has been on the rise for a few years now due to the expanding interest in gender, women, and queer studies. The nostalgic guide *Efoh hayinu u-mah 'asinu: otsar shenot ha-ḥamishim v'eha-shishim* [Where We Were and What We Did, an Israeli Lexicon of the Fifties and the Sixties] (Dankner and Tartakover 1996) could not have been published until the mid-1990s, nor would the *Nostalgiyah Online* website and Facebook group, offering images and media files, in an attempt “to preserve the collective memory of history, culture, and nostalgia of the Jewish People in its land” (Sela' 2011), have existed.

By the same token, a book like Matan Ḥermoni's *Hibru Poblising Kōmpani* (*Hebrew Publishing Company*, Kineret: Zemorah-Bitan 2011), about a

fictional Yiddish shund author and his life, could not have been published before the documentary film *Ştalags* was made (Libsker and Ben-Mayor 2007). This cultural trend is also apparent in the opening of the Israeli Cartoon Museum in Hōlon (2007), which archives Israeli caricatures and comic works, organizes exhibits, offers workshops, sponsors children's clubs, and publishes its exhibition catalogs. The IsraPulp Collection is, no doubt, part of this movement. It is my hope that my own interest in the subject and my activities as curator will contribute to the research of Israeli popular literature.

ISRAPULP: A COLLECTION IS BORN

When the collection was established in 2004, with the preliminary acquisition of some 1960s-era booklets, the intention was to focus on that prolific period in the history of Israeli popular culture. However, soon enough it became clear that such a historic collection would not be complete unless it represented all periods and genres. With this purpose in mind, with the help of collectors in this field I made an effort to locate and amass a wide array of materials. At present, the IsraPulp Collection is the only planned research collection of its kind, offering scholars hundreds of titles spanning all periods and genres of Israeli non-canonized literature.

Any historical research must depend on reliable records of, and access to, primary source collections. In the case of the Hebrew popular literature, this basic need is hard to fulfill due to the limited availability of such materials in public collections. The fieldwork and studies made by Zohar and Jacob Shavit, Eli Eshed, and Nitsa Ben-Ari owe their existence to whatever sources were available to them in the National Library of Israel (NLI) or in private collections; in some cases no print titles were located and the only proof of their existence was traced via publisher advertisements inside the covers of other titles (this was quite a standard practice) or in records of lost items from the NLI collections.

Unfortunately, it is not surprising that portions of the NLI collection disappeared over the years and were not replaced by other copies; greedy collectors in the private sector, on the one hand, and unawareness of the significance of these materials, on the other—combined with the initial rarity of the items—brought about this regrettable outcome. At the outset, the scarcity of pulp items is a direct result of their physical features: printed on the cheapest paper possible (which may not be well preserved even under the best conditions) and customarily passed among a number of readers, their physical survival was only occasionally guaranteed. In addition, the scarcity of these materials is due to their marginality in the dominant literary system, which forced them out of “respectable” collections; Hebrew pulps were not likely to be recommended by teachers or collected by librarians due to their low profile in the mainstream culture. The only library that kept them was the NLI's predecessor, the Jewish National and University Library, functioning *de facto* as national library and repository for all printed matter in the State of Israel. Items considered pulp fiction were most probably not intentionally acquired, but were received as gifts or

deposited according to the requirements of the Book Law.³⁷ However, since the Book Law was not enforced until recently, it is hard to believe that pulp publishers who attempted to avoid paying their taxes would have donated their merchandise to a semi-official entity. These past practices left holes in the NLI's Israeliana collection.

It follows that most of the materials in the IsraPulp Collection are quite rare; some of them are not available anywhere else, and there were no library records at all for a few of them prior to their cataloging for Arizona State University Libraries, which is currently the only institution with holdings for them. Physically, most of the items in the collection exhibit the following features: they are printed on cheap, acidified paper; their covers feature sensational images in bright colors of yellow, red, and green—some illegally reproduced from American men's magazines or pulps; some covers feature photographs, mainly from movie Westerns (this is true for titles printed in the 1960s and 1970s); original images were typically drawn by hand by artists belonging to a small, identified group; the texts include many typos and grammatically substandard phrases alongside elevated language plagiarizing canonized belles-lettres; the back cover and last few pages are used to advertise other titles or commercial goods such as shaving products; and many of the titles, if not the majority of them, are in fact pseudo-translations.

The collection may be accessed through the ASU Libraries' online catalog, by searching the keywords "popular literature Israel 20th century"; other access points include series, titles, and authors. Since the ASU Libraries contribute their records to OCLC, all items can be searched in Hebrew via WorldCat. At present (Summer 2011), about 350 items are cataloged, while hundreds of additional materials are in queue. The collection is housed in the Special Collections area and materials may be made available for research at the Luhrs Reading Room, Hayden Library. No materials from this collection are available for check out due to their fragility and value as collectibles.

A few secondary items are available in support of the collection, including Eli Eshed's book featuring "the story of Israeli pop fiction" (2002), Nitsa Ben-Ari's book about erotic Hebrew literature (2006), Ari Libsker's documentary film *Ştalags* (2007) about this 1960s cultural phenomenon, and the curator's podcast *Israeli Popular Literature*, available on ASU's *Library Channel* (Leket-Mor 2008), as well as some newspaper clippings.

Some aspects of Hebrew non-canonized literature have been studied, as is evident from the sources used for the review in this article. Jacob and Zohar Shavit surveyed the inventory of non-canonized titles during the *Yishuv* period and analyzed, individually and jointly, their origins, history, and political associations. Gavriel Rosenbaum studied the "Hungarian Link" as it was displayed through the publishing projects of the Fargo brothers. Mordechai Naor stud-

³⁷ The Book Law was legislated by the Mandate authorities in 1933 and was amended in 1953, 2001, and 2005. The law required every publisher to deposit two copies of each publication in the library.

ied sensational stories in the Hebrew press during the 1940s. Major recent contributions were made by Nitsa Ben-Ari, a translator, editor and Translation Studies scholar who expanded upon the history of erotic literature in Modern Hebrew, and examined the political connections between the pulp culture and the publishing world, as well as the effect of the pulp culture on Israeli identity in large. The *Ştalags* phenomenon was studied by ‘Omer Barţov (1997), Eli Eshed (2002), Ari Libsker and Morris Ben-Mayor (2007), and ‘Amit Pinchevski and Roy Brand (2007, 2010). The instructive books and blog articles by independent researcher Eli Eshed mapped the field of Israeli popular literature and added valuable, detailed information about it,³⁸ and collector Haim Kano’s extensive knowledge contributed an added personal flavor to my insights into popular culture in Israel during the 1960s.

- ◇ Comprehensive, annotated bibliographies are desperately needed in order to conduct research in the field. A collaboration between institutions and individual collectors may result in scholarly bibliographies and/or catalogs similar to Collins, Hagenaur, and Heller 2004; Haining 2001; Inge 1988; or Daley and Gertz 2005; or ALA’s *Readers’ Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction* (Saricks 2009).³⁹
- ◇ Fighting the Nazis seems to be a popular topic in Hebrew and Yiddish popular fiction as early as the 1930s. A comprehensive study of the texts involved in both languages, including self-translated works⁴⁰ and original stories published in dailies during the 1940s, should be revealing. As suggested by Jacob Shavit (1984, 1986), the contacts between the popular systems of the two literatures should be further studied.
- ◇ The *Yishuv* struggle for independence as portrayed in pre-State titles may suggest a different narrative than the normative one, as many of the authors and publishers involved in the pulp industry did not belong to the mainstream political organiza-

³⁸ I would like to thank Eli Eshed for kindly sharing his unpublished bibliographies with me in the early stages of my research.

³⁹ The current bibliographic tools available for scholars are limited to the listing of *Yishuv* non-canonized literature (Shavit Z. and Shavit J. 1974; Shavit 1998a); Eli Eshed’s partial Web bibliographies of Bil Karter’s 972 stories in different series, 1959–1973 (Eshed 2011) and Buki booklets (all 170 scanned booklets, published 1967–1971, are also available on two CD-ROMs; Itchkovitch and Eshed 2011), as well as his unpublished bibliographies for *Ştalags*, etc.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Y. ‘Elyon’s *‘Ikvot ha-dam* [The Blood Traces; seven booklets, probably published in the 1940s; Shavit 1998a, p. 491]. This title was self-translated from the Yiddish version, *Oyf di shpurn fun blut: roman bazirt oyf der natsisher untergrunt un di Yidishe pleytim lagern in Eyrope* (Tel Aviv: ‘Atid, 1940s). Another example is Shelomo Gelfer’s *Ot ha-naqam*, and in *Yiddish Der Tseykhen fun neqome: detektiiv roman* [The Mark of Revenge: A Detective Novel].

tions. Since this political conflict was not widely depicted in the canonized literary system, I wonder what traces it left in the non-canonized one.

- ◇ The Arab-Israeli conflict as portrayed in non-canonized children's books is another interesting topic. A number of titles in this subsystem feature refer to the Six Day War as early as 1968.
- ◇ While some textual aspects of the Israeli pulp industry have been studied, there have not been serious attempts to correlate these aspects with the predominance of males involved in the industry. The effects of this fact in terms of textual elements, representation of women, or the alluded readers should be interesting. Commercial advertisements placed in booklets, as well as in newspapers and magazines that published popular literature, should be revealing in this socio-historical context.
- ◇ The serialized, original fiction published in Hebrew dailies in the 1940s was not fully discussed in studies that examined non-canonized literature in Erets-Israel under the Mandate. While the IsraPulp collection does not include period newspapers, a comparison study of these novels and the novels published in booklets should be interesting.

Over the next few years we will continue to augment the wealth of materials that have been collected for the IsraPulp Collection until now, depending on the availability of funds for purchasing and processing. My collection development guidelines cover non-canonized materials issued in Hebrew and Yiddish in Israel from 1930s to the present. In spite of the close ties between Yiddish *shund* and the Hebrew popular literature system, I do not collect at the moment Yiddish materials published outside the geographical borders of Israel. Most such materials are in the public domain; consequently they are available digitally via the National Yiddish Book Center (Internet Archive) or Google Books.

It is my hope that in the future the ASU Libraries will digitize the collection in order to preserve it. Enabling public access to the collection via the Internet may have to wait until copyright issues are resolved: although most of the items have been published anonymously or under pseudonyms, they are protected by the Israeli copyright law for seventy years after the death of the author.

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⁴¹ Editor's note: An asterisk (*) means that the author of this article supplied the English translation of the Hebrew citation; an English title that appears within a work proper is indicated as such by the phrase "added t.p."

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APPENDIX

Precious Pulp: A Close Look

The common way to systematically describe popular literature is by defined genres. "Genre literature" in Hebrew proceeds along these lines, too, by offering detective, espionage, war, superhero, and horror fiction, together with science fiction, Westerns, comic books, romance, and erotic/pornographic literature. In some cases, it is harder to distinguish between genres; for example, many Hebrew science fiction and horror stories in the 1960s were actually published under the superhero genre featuring the character of Tarzan. Still, it is more convenient to keep all Tarzan stories together under the label of superhero stories.

The following list is arranged according to broad genres, and within them I list series and specific titles with some bibliographic information based on materials at hand, as well as records of the National Library of Israel, surveys

(Shavit 1998a; Eshed 2002), and oral communication with collectors. The list also includes non-canonized children's literature, due to the ideological role of canonized texts in bringing up the next Sabra generation. Nevertheless, this is not a list of popular Hebrew literature, and it is also not a comprehensive catalog of the IsraPulp collection holdings; rather, the list is a sample of materials available in the collection as of July 2011.

DETECTIVE STORIES

As described above, detective stories were among the first popular texts to be published in Hebrew, starting in the early 1930s. Today, these materials are very rare, with a low "survival rate" over so many decades; and bibliographical information about them is not complete or fully accurate, as not all items were available when the 1998 list was compiled. For example, *Sifriyat ha-balash he-ḥadash* (1946) is not mentioned there, and *Sifriyat ha-balash ha-meratek* was dated to the *Yishuv* period—whereas it was actually published after 1950.

The IsraPulp Collection includes titles from the following series:

1930s–1940s:

- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-balash* [The Detective Library], 1931–1932: series b, ten booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-balash* [The Detective Library], 1932–1933: one volume;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-harpatkan* [The Adventurer Library], ha-Mizraḥ printer, 1935: four booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-balash* [The Detective Library], by Dr. B. Alexander, ha-Sefer printer, 1935: three booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat kis* [Pocket Library], ha-Ḥevrah ha-Erets-Yiśre'eli t le-Hotsa'at Sefarim, 1936: two booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-dor* [The Generation Library], Arets printer, 1938: three booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyah balashit* [Detective Library], Arets printer, [1938?]: one booklet;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-me'ah ha-'eśrim* [The Twentieth Century Library], Moses printer, 1939: series c, nine booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-balash he-ḥadash* [The New Detective Library], ha-Me'ah ha-'Eśrim press, [1946?]: series c, ten booklets in one volume.

1950s–1970s:

- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-balash ha-meratek* [The Fascinating Detective Library], ha-Tsel press, 1950s: six booklets;
- ◇ *'Olam ha-balash* [The Detective World], 'Olam ha-Balash press, late 1950s–early 1960s: four volumes;

- ◇ *Rififi, sidrat romanim ķetsarim* [Rififi, Short Novels Series], 1960: six booklets;
- ◇ *Sidrat balashe ha-Ef.Bi.Ai.* [FBI Detectives Series], 1962: one booklet;
- ◇ *Sidrat balashe ha-tsameret be.'e.m.* [Top Detectives, Inc. Series], 1969: one booklet;
- ◇ *Sidrat tsemed ha-metaḥ* [The Suspense Couple Series], 1969: three booklets;
- ◇ *Sidrat ha-balash ha-mistori* [The Mysterious Detective Series], two series, 1960s: ten books;
- ◇ *Sidrat ha-metaḥ* [The Suspense Series], early 1960s: five books;
- ◇ *Sifre mistorin* [Mystery Books], Mizraḥi press, 1960–1985: five books;
- ◇ *Mivtse'e Roḳi Stil: beḥir balashe ha-Interpol* [The Operations of Rocky Still, Interpol Best Detective], 1960s: a full set;
- ◇ *Sidrat ha-masekhah ha-sheḥorah* [The Black Mask Series], two volumes, five translated detective stories in each.

ESPIONAGE AND CRIME

During the *Yishuv* period, fiction in this genre focused on international affairs, as illustrated by titles such as *ha-Nets mi-Shenḥai* [The Hawk from Shanghai], *ha-Meragelet ha-adumah* [The Red Lady Spy], or *Milḥemet ha-rigul ben Rusiyah ha-sovyetit u-ven Angliyah be-Sin* [The Espionage War between the Soviet Union and England in China]. These and similar titles were featured in booklets in the following 1930s series:

1930s–1940s:

- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-rigul* [The Espionage Library], Aḥdut printer, 1932: one volume, ten booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-rigul (meḥudeshet)* [The Espionage Library (Renewed)], ha-Me'ah ha-'Esrin press, 1939: one volume, ten booklets;
- ◇ *Sifriyat ha-'olam* [The World Library], 'Olam ha-Balash press, 1940s: booklet no. 6.

1960s:

- ◇ All James Bond stories published in Hebrew, in a custom-made binding for a collector;
- ◇ *Gaston Piro*; some books are subtitled *me-'Alilot ha-sherut ha-ḥasha'i be-milḥamto ba-rigul veḥa-rigul ha-negdi* [Actions of the Secret Service Fighting Espionage and Counter-Espionage], mid-1960s: four books;

- ◇ *Sidrat sokhen hashai Edi Karson* [Secret Agent Eddi Karson Series], 1965: a full set;
- ◇ *Klif Moris, behir sokhne ha-neged* [Cliff Morris, Best Counter Agent], late 1960s: two books;
- ◇ *Ish ha-ḳarateh Paṛiḳ Kim* [Ḳarate Man Patrick Kim] / *Sidrat Paṛiḳ Kim* [Patrick Kim Series], Ramdor/Shalgi: stand-alone chapbooks and series booklets;
- ◇ Berman, Archie G., and A. Rodan. *Al-Ḳaponeh: roman*. Tel-Aviv: 'E. Narkis, 1961. Pseudonyms; authored by Miron Uriel.

Israeli secret agents:

- ◇ *ha-Maṭarah Tel Aviv* [The Target: Tel Aviv], by Mosheh Hadar, Hotsa'at 75, 1967.
- ◇ *Enkha yakhol li-zekot pa'amayim; the Guy Shamir Secret Agent Series* [You Can't Win Twice], by P. Ben Abrams, Sifre Mistorin, 1967.
- ◇ *Sokhen Sh.B. 01 bi-sheliḥut maṕet* [Shin-Bet Agent 01 in a Death Mission], by A. 'A. Up, Ramdor, 1965.
- ◇ *'Emek Golan Shin.Bet* series, by Mor Adam Braḳ, Sifre Panter (Ramdor), 1968.

WAR STORIES

- ◇ *Sidrat "Ivo G'imah"* [Iwo Jima Series], by Arts'i Berman; ['Ivrit A. Rodan], Narkis press, early 1960s: five volumes in one;
- ◇ *Ligyon ha-zarim, sipure ḳeravot meratḳim* [Foreign Legion, Fascinating Battle Stories], by Ḳing Ḳuper, Narkis press, 1962: Mivtsar ha-maṕet, no. 2.
- ◇ *Sidrat sipure milḥamah* [War Stories Series], Ramdor press, 1964:
 - *ha-Namer ha-me'ofe: roman milḥamti so'er u-merateḳ*, by Gilbert Ṳiṭ (no. 2);
 - *ha-Gehinom shel Salerno: roman milḥamah so'er*, by Layonel Hills (no. 4).
- ◇ *Mivts'a sodi, lo le-vitsu'a* [A Secret Operation, Not for Execution]: *Mivtsa mifrats ha-ḥazirim*, by Ṳinsent Braun; 'Ivrit, Musha [sic] Rosini. Ramdor press, 1970.

SUPERHEROES

The collection covers titles from some of the favorite series featuring Ṭarzan:

- ◇ *Ṭarzan ha-noḳem* [Tarzan the Avenger], published as a booklet in the 1939 *Sifriyat ha-me'ah ha-'esrim* [The Twentieth Century Library];

- ◇ *ʿAlilot Ṭarzan* [Tarzan's Actions], ha-Ḳarnaf press: two bound volumes containing 16 and 32 booklets;
- ◇ *Ta'alule Ṭarzan* [Tarzan's Tricks], ha-Pil press: a bound volume (booklets 14–32) and additional booklets;
- ◇ *Harpatḳa'ot Ṭarzan* [Tarzan's Adventures], ha-Ḳarnaf press (ha-Namer): a bound volume of eleven booklets and six additional booklets;
- ◇ *Ṭarzan ha-loḥem* [Tarzan the Fighter]: a bound volume of eleven booklets;
- ◇ The 1960 *Ṭarzan u-veno* [Tarzan and his Son], ha-Pil press: first volume in two parts;
- ◇ *Dan-Ṭarzan, ha-Ṭarzan ha-Yiśre'eli* [Dan-Ṭarzan, the Israeli Ṭarzan]: 6 booklets;
- ◇ Sh. Orr comic books of Ṭarzan;
- ◇ *ha-Na'ar boy ha-amits* [The Brave Boy "Boy"]: twelve booklets;
- ◇ *Harpatḳa'ot Ḳapriḳorn* [The Adventures of Capricorn; 1955 and 1959]: a full set;
- ◇ *Harpatḳa'ot Ḳapiṭan Blad* [The Adventures of Captain Blood, 1960]: almost a complete set;
- ◇ *Shazam, or Captain Marvel* stories: one volume;
- ◇ *Herḳles* [Hercules]: some booklets;
- ◇ *Mats'iṣṭah, gibor ha-'olam* [Machista, the World's Hero]: some booklets.

HORROR

1960s–1970s:

- ◇ *Mivḥar sipure paḥad* [Selected Stories of Fear], Ramdor, 1963: a collection of eight stories, probably pseudo-translated, of "suspense and tremor" (on the spine).
- ◇ *Sidrat ha-emim* [The Series of Horrors], Ramdor, 1971–1982: six booklets.

SCIENCE FICTION/ SUPERNATURAL

The collection includes few science fiction titles; however some of them are among the very first ever to be published in Hebrew, such as *The Blue Atom* (Ramdor 1964); the first issue (1978) of the comic book series *Milḥemet ha-kokhavim* [Star Trek Enterprise]; "*Perry Rhodan: Conqueror of Outer Space*" (1965); *ʿAyn ra'ah*, early science fiction stories, ha-Ḳarnaf press (MaLaN); *Mad'a dimyoni*: a bound volume of ten booklets; and almost a full set (three issues) of *Ḳosmos: sipure mad'a*

dimyoni, 1958. The collection also houses a few issues of *'Olam ha-mistorin* [Mysterious World: A Journal of Parapsychology], edited by Margot Klousner.

WESTERNS

The collection includes Western titles representing many series, as well as stand-alone books. They are accessible also under the subject heading: Westerns.

Buḳ G'ons (pronounced "Book Jones") series:

Sidrat "Buḳ G'ons" [The "Buck Jones" Series];

Buḳ G'ons ha-amiti [The Real Buck Jones];

Harpatḳa'ot "Buḳ G'ons" [The Adventures of Buck Jones];

'Alilot Buḳ G'ons: Mo'adon Arts'i Berman [Actions of Buck Jones: the Archie Berman Club];

Marshal "Boog Jones" series.

Other series:

◇ *ha-Sidrah ha-ḥadashah* [The New Series; ha-Roman ha-Za'ir], 1957–1960;

◇ *G'esi G'ams* [Jesse James], 1959;

◇ *ha-Ḳa'u-boi ha-no'az* [The Daring Cowboy], 1959–1960;

◇ *Sidrat "ma'aravone 'anak"* [The Great Westerns Series], 1959–1960;

◇ *Sidrat "Marshal Shiping"* [The Marshal Shiping Series], 1960;

◇ *Sidrat Bil Ḳarter* [The Bill Carter Series], 1960–1969;

◇ *Red Boshard* series, 1962;

◇ *Bufalo Bil, ha-lohem ha-ḳashu'ah* [Buffalo Bill, the Tough Fighter], 1963;

◇ *Sidrat Bil Hiḳoḳ* [Bill Hickock Series], 1963;

◇ *Sidrat "Tom Miks"* [Tom Mix Series], 1963–1965;

◇ *Sidrat kokhav ha-ma'arav* [The Star of the West Series], 1965;

◇ *Triniti*, Sh. Orr, 1965;

◇ *Sidrat ha-ma'arav ha-paru'a* [The Wild West Series], 1972.

COMIC BOOKS

The collection includes several titles, also accessible under the subject heading: Comic Books, Strips, etc.—Israel:

Sifrut Zolah, Buḳi, Milhemet Ir(a)n-'Irak, Pitsah Morganah, Sḳuṭerman, ha-Rabanit ve-Sambusḳ ba-Ḥalal, Zbeng!, Hepi end: Shishah Sipurim Metsuyarim.

ROMANCE

The collection includes several novels published by Mizrahi, 1970s.

EROTIC/PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE

The collection includes almost a complete run of all published *Ştalags*, as well as other erotic and pornographic titles, some of them represent the gay culture. Publishers include Ramdor, ha-Sifriyah ha-Şetanah, Mor, Reno, Narķis, Ħermesh, Yam-Suf, ha-Te'omim, ha-Sha'ashu'a ha-Şal, Orr, ha-Roman ha-Romanti ha-Refu'i [the Medical Romance].

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The collection includes several titles in series authored by Shraga Gafni under several pseudonyms:

- ◊ *ha-Sporta'im ha-tse'irim* [The Young Athletes];
- ◊ *ha-Amitsim* [The Brave Ones];
- ◊ *ha-Yama'im* [The Mariners];
- ◊ *ha-Balashim ha-tse'irim* [The Young Detectives];
- ◊ *Harpatķotav shel Kepten Yuno* [Captain Yuno's Adventures];
- ◊ *Harpatķa'ot Danidin ha-ro'eh ve-'eno nir'eh* [The Adventures of the Invisible Danidin];
- ◊ *Ħasambah* series;
- ◊ *Harpatķa'ot Uri ba-Ma'adim* [Uri's Adventures on Mars];
- ◊ *ha-No'azim be-ta'alumat ha-rua'h ha-mistori* [The Fearless in the Mystery of the Mystifying Ghost].