

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

This issue of *Al Atar*, no. 12, focuses on the subject of animals in Jewish sources. In earlier issues the subject did not come up frequently and we regard these articles as a basis for a discussion on animals in Jewish sources that will expand and deepen a topic that for various reasons has been neglected.

This collection of articles on animals in Jewish sources includes Abraham Ofir Shemesh's article on the hyena in Eretz Israel sources. The hyena is an unusual animal and in Middle Eastern society it has held a special and demonic place since ancient times. Shemesh analyzes how the legendary dimension is reflected in the image of the hyena and the relation to its genuine characteristics.

Zohar Amar clarifies the identity of the *bat ya'ana* - the impure fowl mentioned in the Torah and its relation to the *na'amit* and to the bird known today as *ya'en* (ostrich).

Joshua Schwartz discusses the interesting status of "man's best friend" - the dog, in Jewish sources from the time of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud.

In addition to animals - a subject to which we hope to return in the future - this issue also includes an article on a geographical-geological topic and its ramifications for understanding age-old exegetical problems. This subject is the changing level of the Dead Sea, which can be estimated using geomorphological and archeological data, and which can help to explain the different names of the area in the Bible and several Biblical events related to it. Joel Elizur and Amos Frumkin discuss this matter in their article.

A topic that comes up time and again in *Al Atar* is the status of historical memories related to Eretz Israel in various texts. Rafael Kitron examines the possibility that recollections of ancient Egyptian battles found their way into books of the Apocrypha.

The concluding article in the issue returns to the subject of animal life. Zohar Amar describes the "halakhic banquet" - a banquet comprised of the meat of animals that are not normally eaten by people who keep kosher, but that do have the signs of kosher animals and regarding which some Jewish communities have traditions of eating.

The Editorial Board