

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 75 (2009)  
**Heft:** [10]

**Artikel:** Shepherds in biblical times  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-944547>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 25.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# Shepherds in biblical times

Shepherding is one of the oldest professions, beginning some 6,000 years ago in Asia Minor. Sheep were kept for their milk, meat and especially their wool. Over the next millennia sheep and shepherding spread throughout Eurasia.

Some sheep were integrated in the family farm along with other animals such as chickens and

to be recruited externally. Shepherds were most often the younger sons of farming peasants who did not inherit any land. Still in other societies, each family would have a family member to shepherd its flock, often a child or an elder who couldn't help much with harder work.

Shepherds would normally work in groups either looking



goats. To maintain a large herd, however, the sheep must be able to move from pasture to pasture; this required the development of a profession separate from that of the farmer. The duty of shepherds was to keep their flock intact and protect it from wolves and other predators. The shepherd had to supervise the migration of the flock and to ensure they made it to market areas in time for shearing. In ancient times shepherds also commonly milked their sheep, and made cheese from this milk.

In many societies shepherds were an important part of the economy. Unlike farmers, shepherds were often wage earners, being paid to watch the sheep of others. Shepherds also lived apart from society, being largely nomadic. It was mainly a job of solitary males without children, and new shepherds thus needed

after one large flock, or each bringing their own and merging their responsibilities. They would live in small cabins, often shared with their sheep and would buy food from local communities.

Shepherding developed only in certain areas. In the lowlands and river valleys, it was far more efficient to grow grains and cereals than to allow sheep to graze, thus the raising of sheep was confined to rugged and mountainous areas.

*from the internet*

Gäll Chlaus,  
mit mir bisch zfride gsy?  
I wottt no besser mache,  
u freue tät i mi vil meh  
A dyne feine Sache.

Phone: 09 307 1600  
Fax: 09 307 1601

7 Victoria Street East  
Auckland CBD

**Sail City Mart**

Your convenience Store  
with a difference in Auckland CBD!

**European Delicatessen  
and Specialities**  
**Fresh Bread**  
**Meat and Sausages from Swiss Deli**  
**Fondue and lots more...**

Hours:  
Monday - Friday 6.45am - 8.00pm  
Saturday 8.00am - 7.00pm  
Sunday 8.30am - 7.00pm



Incorporating Domestic & Commercial Work  
Specialists in Fabric & Leather  
Upholstery  
Also Deep Diamond Buttoning  
All Furniture Re-Upholstery

**Swisscraft Ltd**

Manager: **Herbert Staheli**  
Showroom: 33-39 Colombo St  
Frankton-Hamilton  
Call us  
Phone 07 8477 220  
Fax 07 8473 039

**Ψ Dr Veronika Isler**  
Psychological Services

**REGISTERED CLINICAL  
PSYCHOLOGIST**

PhD, PGD (clin) Psych NZPS and NZICP  
Children; adolescents and their families;  
adults and couples; work-related issues

Services available in English, Swiss  
or German language

Ph. (07) 834 1200 or 021 457 944

Offices in Hamilton and Te Awamutu  
P O Box 6057, Hamilton