Rabbi Benzion Frizzi (1756-1844) And How Do You Say In Talmudic Hebrew "Bacteria"?

Portrait of Rabbi Benzion Frizzi

Rabbi Benedetto Frizzi (1756-1844) or Benzion Rafael haKohen Frizzi was a Rabbi and a prominent scientists and physician in Italy.
Due to his brilliant mind he was encouraged by his parents to study Tora, Talmud and Hebrew Grammar at the school of rabbinic studies in Fiorenzuola. He completed his rabbinical training at Mantua, where he moved in 1769, at the rabbinical academy established by Rabbi Jacob Saraval. In Mantua he also completed his academic studies in Philosophy, Latin and Mathematics. Previously, he had studied engineering and he was qualified as an expert land surveyor at the age of 16. He also had a passion for the medical sciences. He enrolled at the faculty of Medicine at the University of Pavia and graduated in 1787. In 1789, he accepted the invitation of the imperial government and moved to Trieste where he practiced medicine. In 1816, in this city he founded a Jewish hospital where indigent patients were attended for free.
He wrote several books in Italian showing to Jews and gentiles the code of public health of the Pentateuch (= Tora). For example: *"Dissertation on medical policies in the Pentateuch in regard to cleaning of streets and houses, and priestly laws of agriculture"* (Cremona 1790). The precepts given in the Torah, rabbi Frizzi said are a "True Health Code" applied to the spiritual and moral elevation of man.
One of his most important books was "*petach 'enayim*" a scientific explanation of the Talmud's hagadot and halakhot, in seven volumes. In this book, written in Hebrew, Rabbi Frizzi shows the vast and advance knowledge of our Rabbis. One thing I remember from his book is how he identifies the *maziqin*, which the Rabbis of the Talmud portrayed as

“invisible damaging creatures”, with the newly discovered “bacterias”.

PETACH ‘ENAYIM

This unfortunately unknown book is accesible to all of us now, BH, thanks to Hebrewbooks.org
Click **here** to read or download the book.
His book was described as:
“Philosophical, mathematical and physical analysis of those subjects contained in the Talmud collected in a special book called *Israelitici populi Oculus*“.
Rabbi Frizzi’s credentials were presented in the 1880 edition.
“Benedetto Frizzi, Rabbi, Engineer, and doctor of Philosophy and Medicine, from Ostiano, Province of Cremona, associate in various academies.”