On Yiddish, in Yiddish and for Yiddish: 500 Years of Yiddish Scholarship

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For roughly five hundred years, Yiddish has attracted far more than sober scholarly interest and popular study. It has persistently drawn an almost obsessive angle-oriented and ax-grinding scrutiny from highly diverse groups of investigators, each of which was driven by its own peculiar ulterior motive. Indeed, an account of the history of literature *on* Yiddish will have to delve deeply into the sociolinguistic phenomena of love and hate of the language, both of which have been (and continue to be) rather intense. To the modern Yiddish linguist, virtually everything written about the language is of value at least as "corpus," that is to say, as a primary source providing data for analysis that might not otherwise be available, even from contemporary Yiddish documents *per se*. Still, the gist of much of the earlier literature on Yiddish often strikes modern Yiddish scholars as quaint or embarrassing. To the historian of Yiddish literature, however, these sources represent an important and understudied chapter in the history of that literature. Only in the early twentieth century, when societal, literary, and political forces converged in certain segments of East European Jewry to elevate the social and linguistic roles of the language to quasi-official national language status, did there develop an extensive scientific literature written in the language itself, rather than in Latin, German, and (to a much lesser extent) Hebrew. Only in the twentieth century do the two literatures – the literature *on* Yiddish and the literature *in* Yiddish – merge by way of the rise of a new literature on *and* in Yiddish.

While Yiddish glosses and wordlists may well go back much further, the first known thinkers on the subject of Yiddish are Christian Semitists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose researches into Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and other Semitic languages, in the spirit and traditions of European Humanism, led to a serious interest in Yiddish. To some, Yiddish represented a sideline to

Hebrew studies or a bridge to Hebrew. To others, the language seemed an exotic curiosity combining elements of Germanic, in a unique and distinct form, with elements and a writing system emanating from the ancient Near East. The oldest known monument of this type, which does have strong Christian overtones, is Johann Boeschenstain's *Elementale introductorium in hebreas literas teutonice & hebraice legendas*, an elementary handbook on Hebrew and Yiddish published in Augsburg in May, 1514. Boeschenstain (1472-1540), a pupil of the luminous pioneer of Hebraic studies among Christian German scholars, Johann Reuchlin (1455-1533), achieved a certain immortality in the history of Yiddish language studies, when, some four years later, he posted an advertisement on the door of a Regensburg inn offering to teach Yiddish in six days and for a most reasonable fee. Infinitely more sophisticated was Johann Buxtorf's (1564-1629) elaborate chapter on the Yiddish language, appended to his famed *Thesaurus grammaticus linguae sanctae hebraeae* (Basel, 1609). The chapter comprises a mini-bibliography of contemporary Yiddish literature (spanning religious works, secular romances, and translations from the Hebrew), the Yiddish alphabet and its spelling conventions, and a discussion of the fusion character of Yiddish morphology. Among the examples cited are analytic verb *tfíle ton* ('pray'), synthetic verb *gegánvet* ('stole'), and abstract noun *ázeskayt* ('insolence'). Although he did not get very far as a Yiddish dialectologist, Buxtorf did take note of certain lexical differences between Western and Eastern Yiddish. His chapter on Yiddish became the basis for comments on Yiddish in the works of later Christian Hebraists, including Sennert's *Rabbinismus* (Wittenberg, 1666), and Pfeiffer's *Critica sacra* (Dresden, 1680). Buxtorf's traditional crown in Yiddish Studies as the "father of Yiddish grammar" has been shaken recently by the spectacular discovery by Hermann Süss of Fürstenfeldbruck, West Germany, of a previously unknown section on Yiddish contained in Johann Meelführer's *Grammaticae hebraeae compendiosa institutio* (Ansbach, 1607). The possibility of a hitherto lost prior source upon which both Buxtorf and Meelführer may have drawn remains a question open to future research by historians of the literature on Yiddish.

A second body of literature on Yiddish was produced by Christian authors of "teach yourself Yiddish" handbooks of many descriptions. Written in German for a popular audience, rather than in Latin for a scholarly clientele, these works catered to a diverse Christian audience. The most prominent group of customers seems to have consisted of businessmen in need of a working knowledge of the language for their interaction with Jewish colleagues and customers. The earliest book of this type now known is Paul Helicz's *Elemental / oder lesebüchlen* (Hundesfeld, 1543). It concentrates on aspects of Yiddish most important to the businessman – the numeric system of the Jewish alphabet, names of coins and currency, and parts of the calendrical cycle. It concludes with the Lord's prayer (an old favorite language-teaching text) in Yiddish and a formal letter of debt – an early sixteenth century Yiddish I.O.U. A noteworthy eighteenth century sample of this literature is Eberhard Carl Friedrich Oppenheimer's *Hodegus ebraeo-rabbinicus*, which is, despite its bombastic title, a popular businessman's handbook of Yiddish, with the usual apparatus of letters, numbers, and dates. A special feature of this little book is its list of place names and of Jewish and Christian personal names, a sort of shortcut to "business Yiddish" sparing the learner the need to master the whole of the language. Not all of this "business literature" is of the general handbook genre. Some of its products are highly specialized. Suffice it here to mention the Yiddish section of the *Vol-eingerichtete Buchdruckerey* (Nurnberg, 1733), a manual for multilingual typesetters and printers, and Wolf Ehrenfried von Reizenstein's *Vollkommene Pferde-Kenner* (Uffenheim, 1764), a horsedealers' manual comprising an invaluable section on the special variety of Yiddish employed by Jewish members of the trade. A similar variety was found by Florence Guggenheim-Grünberg of Geneva in the Swiss villages of Endingen and Lengnau in the 1950s, in what is one of the century's most splendid discoveries in the field of Yiddish dialectology. The finest practical manual of Yiddish and the culmination of the business-oriented interest in Yiddish is Carl Wilhelm Friedrich's *Unterricht in der Judensprache und Schrift* (Prenzlau, 1784). Far too talented a linguist to content himself with the basics of the language, Friedrich provided an outstanding description of the now-lost Yiddish of East Prussia and

proposed the first known classification of Yiddish dialects. He is considered the father of Yiddish dialectology.

Another major branch of premodern Yiddish scholarship is the literature on the language produced by missionaries and teachers of missionaries. Their precise motivations still need to be studied in detail, but they do comprise the notion that the Jews' language is an excellent medium for reaching their hearts and minds, and the idea that the successful missionary needs to become intimate with the daily language of his target group. The founding figure of this school was archmissionary Elias Schadeus, whose *Mysterium* (Strassburg, 1592) comprises an important chapter on Yiddish which includes fascinating, if scanty, remarks on phonology, lexicography, and morphology. Besides describing fusion morphology, Schadeus notes Yiddish specificities within the Germanic component of the language, e.g. the special Yiddish mechanism for diminutivization. The missionary school reached its zenith in 1729 when Johann Heinrich Callenberg (1694-1760) established the first known university course in Yiddish at Halle. Just as Friedrich produced a great work of linguistic description vastly transcending the initial motives of his book, so did one of Callenberg's star pupils. He is Wilhelm Christian Justus Chrysander (1718-1788) whose *Jüdisch-Teutsche Grammatick* (Leipzig and Wolfenbüttel, 1750) and *Unterricht vom Nutzen des Juden-Teutschen* (Wolfenbüttel, 1750), both written in a concise and relatively modern style, contain a huge amount of invaluable data. His approach is that of a linguist, not that of the author of handbooks, and his interest is therefore directed to the linguistically most interesting parts of Yiddish, rather than to the apparently most practical. In addition to an excellent description of the fusion machinery of Yiddish, Chrysander takes note of the specificities within each component of the language, e.g. *gevînen* ('give birth'), *mème* (Western Yiddish – 'mother'), and *nàyert* ('only') from *within* the Germanic component. Chrysander's most quoted line is that Jews boast that one can travel the world with Yiddish.

The eighteenth century produced dozens of anti-Semitic works on the Yiddish language. The intentions were to make fun of Yiddish, while at the same time sensationalizing it by 'exposing' supposed Jewish 'secrets' and satisfying the most lowly obsessions of a

readership seeking to discover Jewish views of Christians and Christianity. One of the earliest, and lowliest, of these authors is a certain "J.W." whose *Jüdischer Sprach-Meister* appeared around 1714. It "teaches" Yiddish by way of a bilingual book-length dialogue, in (Western) Yiddish and German on facing pages, between *Joune* (modern Yiddish *Yoyne* = Jonah), a simple Jew, and his corrupt rabbi, *Rebbe Jtzick* (modern Yiddish *Itsik* from *Yitskhok* = Isaac). It is replete with samples of early eighteenth century Yiddish slang, including sexual terminology. Most of the authors in this group, like "J.W.," hid behind pseudonyms, and most seem to have been apostate Jews. The works of "Christoph Gustav Christian" (1727), "Philoglottus" (Freiberg, 1733), and "Bibliophilus" (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1742) contain a rich selection of eighteenth century spoken Western Yiddish, and, despite their evil motives, they provide the modern linguist with a vast corpus unobtainable from any other known sources. One curious "hybrid" book, combining the traditions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Hebrew and Aramaic grammars, written in Latin and containing sections on Yiddish, on the one hand, with the base nature of eighteenth century "exposés of Yiddish," on the other, is Franciscus Haselbauer's *Fundamenta grammatica duarum praecipuarum linguarum orientalium, scilicet: Hebraicae et Chaldaicae* (Prague, 1742). The physical composition of this volume, like its content and its Latin text, are reminiscent of earlier generations of true Christian humanists who studied Yiddish alongside Hebrew and Aramaic. But the anti-Semitic spirit of eighteenth century works is evident from the author's claim, at the beginning of his Yiddish section, that "any Christian who is present cannot understand what they are talking about, and is consequently more liable to vilification and fraud." The last major anti-Semitic writer on Yiddish was Itzig Feitel Stern (an obvious pseudonym whose identity is now being debated by scholars). His German-letter early nineteenth century works were renditions of plays and narratives, written in a Southern Western Yiddish dialect. Stern produced a two volume dictionary and grammar of Yiddish, *Lexicon der jüdischen Geschäfts- und Umgangs-Sprache* (Munich, 1833).

Probably more voluminous than any of these is the criminological research into Yiddish as a by-product of inquiries into Rotwelsch,

the secret German underworld language. The classic work is the *Liber vagatorum* (c. 1510 and numerous subsequent editions), the famed book of false beggars and vagabonds which concludes with a vocabulary containing a number of derivatives from the Yiddish. Its best known edition was published in Wittemberg in 1528, and features Martin Luther's assertion that the underworld language emanates from the Jews. Indeed, a good part, but by no means all, of the *Gaunersprache*-literature has anti-Semitic overtones. Much of this most esoteric branch of literature on Yiddish was sponsored by local German police departments for practical reasons. Thus, for example, the second edition of von Train's *Chochemer Loschen. Wörterbuch der Gauner und Diebs – vulgo Jenischen Sprache* (Regensburg, 1832) contains a note on the title page explaining that the first edition went wholly to the Bavarian *Gendarmerie*. Ernst Rabben, police chief in Hamm (Westphalia), goes out of his way to distinguish between Yiddish and the Yiddish component in Rotwelsch in the introduction to his *Die Gaunersprache* (Hamm, 1906). This branch of Yiddish language studies also produced a great scholar who transcended by light years his original motives of research – German police chief and criminologist Friedrich Christian Benedict Avé-Lallemant (1809-1892), whose magnum opus, *Das deutsche Gaunerthum* (Leipzig, 1858-1862), in four massive volumes, contained what was up until that time the most comprehensive treatment of Yiddish. Although replete with amateurish philological shortcomings, Avé-Lallemant nevertheless compiled a vast amount of material on Yiddish, its literature, and the philological literature on the language. He came to acquire a profound respect for the language and had no problem in distinguishing it from the Yiddish component in Rotwelsch. Indeed, he was the first scholar to argue that the history of Yiddish begins with the settlement of Jews on Germanic speaking territory, a view no contemporaneous Jewish scholar would have dared to take.

Jewish scholarly interest in Yiddish before the nineteenth century concentrated upon practical lexicography in a colorful array of forms and genres. The earliest manuscript glosses and lists of glosses to classical Hebrew and Aramaic texts probably date back to the thirteenth century in a continuous tradition later codified in the *taytsh* literature. This comprised a set Yiddish rendition for each

lexical item or sentence unit in the original, a formula which gave rise to a number of classical works of older Yiddish lexicography, such as Moyshe ben Yisokher Shertl's *Beéyr Móyshe* (Prague, 1605). Other genres include the Bible concordance (e.g. Reb Anshel's *Mirkéves hamíshne* [Cracow, 1534]); the Hebrew-Yiddish thesaurus arranged by semantic categories (e.g. the *Khínekh kótn,* [Prague, 1640]); and such multilingual dictionaries as Elye Bokher's *Shmóys dvórim* (Isny, 1542), offering Yiddish-Hebrew-Latin-German; Mordkhe Shmuel Yankev ben Yekusiel's *Dîber tóv* (Cracow, 1590), giving Hebrew-Yiddish-Italian, and Nosn-Note Hanover's *Sófe brúre* (Prague, 1660) with Hebrew-Yiddish-Italian-Latin (to which Yankev ben Zeeyv added French in the Amsterdam, 1701, edition, after Hanover's death). More specialized works are limited to specific components of the Yiddish vocabulary. These include the dictionary of internationalisms in the *Khánekh lanáar* (Amsterdam, 1713), and of Semitic component vocabulary in Khayem ben Menakhem Mansh's *Máre haksáv* (c. 1717), a fascinating manual on and in Yiddish.

Yet, little is known of Jewish scholarly attention to the structure, history, or dialectology of Yiddish in previous centuries. The most linguistically sophisticated comments were provided by the luminous Hebrew and Aramaic grammarian, Elijah Levita (1468/9-1549), who alone amongst Ashkenazim attained the philological heights characteristic of Golden Age Spanish Jewry. Besides his prolific philological output, Levita, known in Yiddish as Elye Bokher, was of course the leading Yiddish poet of the sixteenth century, best known for his *Bovo d'Antona* (Isny, 1541) in *ottava rima.* It was in one of his Hebrew philological classics, however, that his enduring status as the father of Yiddish etymology was established. In his *Tishbi* (Isny, 1541), he proposed etymologies for such everyday Yiddish words as *katóves* ('fooling around, kidding'), and *mékn* ('erase') that remain classic, even if disputed. His scanty comments on dialectology and phonology remain indispensable.

It was not until the nineteenth century that the three schools of Yiddish linguistic scholarship which we know in our time truly came into being. It has been known that the first two – Yiddish as part of Hebraic Studies and Yiddish as part of Germanic Studies – have their roots in the early and late nineteenth century respectively. It is the

just rediscovered "missing link" that changes the chronology of the rise of the third (and most successful) branch of Yiddish linguistic scholarship – Yiddish as part of Yiddish Studies, a field of scientific literature in and of itself rather than a satellite of another discipline. When Leopold Zunz (1794-1886) cofounded the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* in 1819, thereby initiating the Science of Judaism movement, Yiddish could not very well have been accorded a position on the agenda. Conditioned by the late eighteenth century German-Jewish Enlightenment, Zunz and his colleagues disparaged the Yiddish language, which they regarded with shame and contempt. Nevertheless, as scientists trained in university methodology, they could barely ignore a language and literature of such vast magnitude, and leaving aside their ideologically biased conclusions, they made a number of permanent contributions to Yiddish philology and literary history. Zunz's classification of the several components in Yiddish, with reference to their functions within the language, while inevitably flawed, has nonetheless remained the point of departure on the subject to this day. It is contained in the section on Yiddish in his *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin, 1832). The bibliographic spadework for the historian of Yiddish literature was brilliantly executed by Zunz's follower, the father of modern Jewish bibliography, Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907).

In the arena of general linguistics, the nineteenth century gave rise to the comparative method by which the genetic interrelationships between related languages and language varieties could be determined with an exactness never before possible. The comparative method enables the skilled practitioner to reconstruct phases of language going back much further than the earliest surviving documents. By its inherent nature, it placed new emphasis on the importance of living, and therefore empirically real, language varieties as the raw material for reconstruction. Thus, it dealt a mortal blow to prenineteenth century linguistics, a schoolmasterly and normative discipline seeking to distinguish the "correct" from the "corrupt" on extralinguistic, socially and nationally motivated grounds. As it happens, the greatest part of this work was carried out in Germany by such masters as Franz Bopp (1791-1867), Jacob Grimm (1785-1863), and August Schleicher (1821-1868).

It was two Jews who, inspired by the comparative studies in the field of Germanic languages, brought Yiddish into the orbit of Germanics. They were Lazar Saineanu (1859-1934), a great Rumanian philologist whose four-volume Rumanian dictionary has been through nearly a hundred editions, and Alfred Landau (1850-1935), a native of Brody, Galicia, who settled in Vienna in his teens and, after giving up his law practice, spent the rest of his life in Vienna working on the history, lexicography, and dialectology of Yiddish. Most of his life's work was transferred upon his death to Vilna, where it perished at the hands of the Nazis. Saineanu, in his 1889 monograph *Studiu dialectologic asupra graiului evreo-german*, demonstrated that Yiddish could in no way derive from some general (modern) German, as its detractors had long insisted. Rather than deviating from modern German, both Yiddish (or, more exactly, the Germanic component in Yiddish) and modern German derive from the period designated as Middle High German. Landau's 1896 study on the Yiddish diminutive went a stage further by demonstrating the need to study Yiddish dialect phenomena in terms of medieval German dialect phenomena, rather than in terms of the standardized variant of Middle High German epic poetry. Partly in consequence of these efforts, doctoral theses in Yiddish philology became popular in some German universities. The most influential of these was probably Jacob Gerzon's 1902 Heidelberg dissertation, which systematically compared the phonology of a selected Yiddish dialect with medieval German. But unlike Saineanu and Landau, Gerzon and a number of those who were to follow did not know Yiddish first hand. Their distance from the language, its speakers, and its culture, was often exacerbated by an overdependence on classical Middle High German that could at its worst be intellectually crippling by precluding the discovery, systematization, and explanation of the internal creativity inherent in the history of Yiddish. They often had little inclination, moreover, to study the Semitic, Slavic, and other non-Germanic parts of Yiddish, as well as the vital interrelationships between Yiddish and the other two Jewish languages – Hebrew and Aramaic – with which it constituted the unique internal Jewish trilingualism characteristic of Ashkenazic Jewry. Still, the *germanistn* (Germanists), as they are called in Yiddish scholarly circles, did much to bring the science of Yiddish into the orbit of European linguistics.

Yiddish scholarship could only be liberated by scholars hailing from Eastern Europe, where a linguistically thriving Yiddish speaking civilization was in the midst of cultural renaissance, and was producing a major world literature. Part of that renaissance entailed the conscious elevation of Yiddish from vernacular status to national language status. Putting one and one together, the *a priori* child of linguistic scholarship and living Yiddish culture would be a literature that would, in the first place, be written *in* Yiddish, viewing Yiddish Studies as a discipline in its own right, a planet with its own satellites (phonology, dialectology, folklore, literary history, etc.), and would in the second, be founded upon the highest achievements of European linguistics. Needless to say, this approach would be infinitely distant from the field's stepchild status in areas of business vocabulary, horsedealers' manuals, and criminology. There is, moreover, an interesting metascientific issue here. Unlike the physical sciences, where the passion for discovery need not be coupled with a positive attitude toward the object of research, no science of a language can be adequate if the object language is, put quite simply, disliked by the investigator. All natural languages have their innermost stores of what might be called conscious and unconscious stores of collective human genius, and while a neutral view may be adequate, a positive view is invaluable. While the term *yidishistn* (Yiddishists, supporters of Yiddish) is most often thought of in a cultural-political context, where it may be opposed to *hebreistn* (Hebraists, supporters of Hebrew), it has another, somewhat less known meaning in Yiddish scholarly circles. Here it refers to Yiddish linguists dedicated to the field of Yiddish *per se* and is opposed to *germanistn* (scholars of German who have an interest in Yiddish). Be that as it may, historical forces dictated that the Yiddishists in the scholarly sense would *ipso facto* be Yiddishists in the popular sense.

The modern literature *in, on,* and *for* Yiddish can be traced to the floor of the celebrated Tshernovits (Chernowitz) Language Conference of 1908, organized by Nathan Birnbaum (1864-1937) and attended by a number of giants of Yiddish literature, the most luminous of whom was Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz (1852-1915). At the end of the morning session on the third day of the Conference, Tuesday, September 1, 1908, a relatively unknown twenty-three year old

named Matisyohu Mieses (1885-1945) delivered the first linguistic paper describing Yiddish as a unique linguistic structure and delving into the history and sociology of the language from this perspective. The first paper of its kind in Yiddish, it presaged the rise of twentieth century Yiddish scientific literature, which is as massive in volume as it is inspiring in quality. Mieses's paper, despite its shortcomings, touched on numerous issues of history, dialectology, sociology, and linguistic theory, especially the debunking of the "pure" vs. "hybrid" dichotomy in language classification. For its time, it was no less than brilliant. Contemporary press reports recount that some listeners, upset at some of Mieses's views on the then heated national language issue, broke into fistfights with his supporters. The best known report on the Mieses confrontation tells of a distraught Hebraist (in the political-cultural sense), who burst into tears upon hearing Mieses's barrage of scientific evidence on the age, structure, and societal role of Yiddish, and of two girls who looked at him and broke into tears as well. On the tumultuous floor of the Tshernovits Conference was born, or almost born, a new science of Yiddish, combining progress in linguistic theory of the west with the Jewish cultural renaissance in Eastern Europe.

The simple reason why Mieses's pioneering paper failed to establish a new branch of Yiddish literature is that it was not published soon after the Conference, as Peretz had recommended it be. It was not published until 1931 when it was included in the reconstructed proceedings of the Conference published in Vilna by the Yivo. It remained for Ber Borokhov (1881-1917) to write the declaration of independence for Yiddish Studies. Although better remembered for his philosophical treatises on Zionism and socialism, Borokhov devoted a huge portion of the last decade of his short life to an odyssey through the great Western European libraries in search of the building blocks of the history of Yiddish language and literature. The results were astounding. The first major academic volume in and on Yiddish linguistics and literary history was Sh. Niger's *Pinkes* (Vilna, 1913). It begins with Borokhov's *Di úfgabn fun der yídisher filológye (The Aims of Yiddish Philology),* a farsighted essay on the urgent tasks of Yiddish philology, including the need for authoritative dictionaries and grammars, a history of the language,

and the establishment of a central scientific academy dedicated to Yiddish language and literature. On the structure of Yiddish, Borokhov introduced the concept of synchronic unity in the face of historical diversity, pointing out that once indrawn elements become part of the system of Yiddish, "they cease to be German, Hebrew and Slavic. They shed their erstwhile guise and assume a new one: they become Yiddish." The underlying notion here is that of language as a synchronic structure functioning as a system at any given point of time, to be conceptually disentangled from diachrony, the historical evolution of language on the axis of time. Here are, of course, the classic Saussurian dichotomy (synchrony vs. diachrony), and the classic Saussurian basis of modern linguistics (structuralism in its broad sense), both of which led to the rise of twentieth century general linguistics, largely thanks to the posthumous publication of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique gėnėrale* (Lausanne, 1916). Borokhov, putting these ideas forward a few years beforehand, correctly gauged the conceptual pathways of twentieth century linguistic theory. He called for the establishment of Yiddish philology both academically (research, teaching, publishing) and as a national Jewish science, whose goal would be to codify, preserve, and enhance Yiddish language and literature.

Soon after Borokhov's untimely death, a great many of his dreams were fulfilled to the letter. A number of highly talented young Yiddish scholars dedicated to Yiddishism in the double Borokhovian sense, began to explore both the historical treasurehouses of older Yiddish language and literature, as well as the theoretical issues of Yiddish grammar, dialectology, metrics, and more. Among the most prominent of these are Solomon A. Birnbaum (born 1891), Zelik-Hirsh Kalmanovitsh (1881/5-1944), Zalmen Reyzen (1887- c. 1940), Nokhem Shtif (1879-1933), and Max Weinreich (1894-1969), most of whom wrote largely or entirely in Yiddish. Reyzen and Weinreich settled in Vilna in the early nineteen twenties, and it was there that the headquarters of the Yiddish Scientific Institute (known as Yivo from its Yiddish acronym for *Yidisher visnshaftlekher institút*) was established in 1925 by Shtif, Weinreich, Reyzen, and others, fulfilling Borokhov's dream of a Yiddish academy. In his inspired paper which was the direct impetus to the organi-

zation of the Yivo, Shtif put forward the notion that the science of Yiddish has a contribution to make to general science, a prediction that has long since been recognized as reality by leaders in the field of general linguistics. Most of modern Yiddish scholarship in interbellum Eastern Europe was brutally destroyed along with the bulk of East European Jewry during the Holocaust. Parallel scientific institutions in the Soviet Union were arbitrarily and cruelly closed by Stalin's regime. Despite these catastrophic climaxes to the feverish and prolific output of dozens upon dozens of top quality works in Yiddish in the field of Yiddish linguistics in the interwar period, the field of Yiddish continues to thrive and grow today. More than any other single event, its survival may be attributed to the coinciding of the Fifth International Congress of Linguists in Brussels with Hitler's invasion of Poland. Weinreich attended that conference, where he read a paper on the history of Yiddish, and thus was able to escape to America where he, and his prodigious son, Uriel Weinreich (1926-1967), established Yiddish linguistics in the west in the finest traditions of the East European Borokhovian paradigm.

For a number of decades now, Yiddish linguists have lamented the "loss" of the missing link in the modern history of the science of Yiddish. That link is a crucial study of Yiddish, written in the late 1880s in German and therefore akin to the work of the *germanistn*, but conceived in the spirit of developing a science of Yiddish centered upon the language itself and approaching its object with love and respect in the spirit of the later *yidishistn*. It is to the author of that study, Philipp Mansch (1838-1890), that Borokhov dedicated his *Ufgabn*: "gehéylikt dem líkhtikn zikórn funem fórsher fun yídish, dem éydeln farérer fun dem yídishn folk un shprakh, dem frítsaytik geshtórbenem un úmgerekht fargésenem Dr. Filip Mansh in Lemberg." Mansch, a Lemberg attorney who played a leading role in its organized Jewish community and edited its newspaper, *Der Israelit*, published his study in serial form in that paper from 1888 until his death in 1890. Mansch's study was without doubt the most profound descriptive study of Yiddish until that time, and it was the first grammar in any language of a dialect of Eastern Yiddish, which is tantamount geographically to the temporal concept of *modern* Yiddish. All previous studies of Yiddish had dealt with one or more

varieties of Western Yiddish, which survived only in vestigial form past the eighteenth century, in consequence of the linguistic acculturation of its speakers to German and other languages in Central and Western Europe. By contrast Eastern Yiddish blossomed and strengthened in leaps and bounds – demographically, literarily, and politically – that were scarcely conceivable. Mansch's study was thus the first future-oriented monograph on Yiddish. In it, he deals with broad philosophical issues including the status of fusion languages and national languages, as well as with fine points of the phonology, morphology, and grammar of his native Galician Yiddish. His comments on the interrelationships between Yiddish and German dialects are the weakest part of his study, but even here he never failed to make highly original suggestions, some of which will undoubtedly prove fertile to further research. Suffice it here to say that the range of topics which Mansch included in the monograph – among them the role of Yiddish in Jewish history, the nature of Jewish languages in general, and the genetic ties between languages – have been and continue to be counted as the prime research targets of modern Jewish language science. If Borokhov is the father of modern Yiddish linguistics, it is fair enough to consider Mansch its grandfather.

In his 1923 Marburg University dissertation, Max Weinreich noted that the issues of *Der Israelit* containing Mansch's study had become so rare that he could not gain access to more than a small part of the study. By the 1970s, Yiddish linguists were going so far as to reconstruct what Mansch probably said about this or that point based on the early twentieth century descriptions of the study. A full typescript of the study was rediscovered in late 1984 by Christopher Hutton, among Max Weinreich's archives held by the Yivo in New York. Christopher Hutton, a doctoral candidate in Yiddish Linguistics at the University of Oxford, where the subject is taught in the Borokhovian tradition, thus achieved the breakthrough which will enable the history of Yiddish Studies to be compiled and written in its entirety. In its twentieth century phase, it is a magnificent branch of modern Yiddish literature.

Identity and Ethos

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Sol Lipzin

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