

**Introduction
to Hebrew Linguistics**
(‘Inleiding Hebreeuwse Taalkunde’)
UvA, Week 7, March 17, 2011

Haskala,
Modern Hebrew, Israeli [Hebrew]

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Hebrew: prehistory and four periods

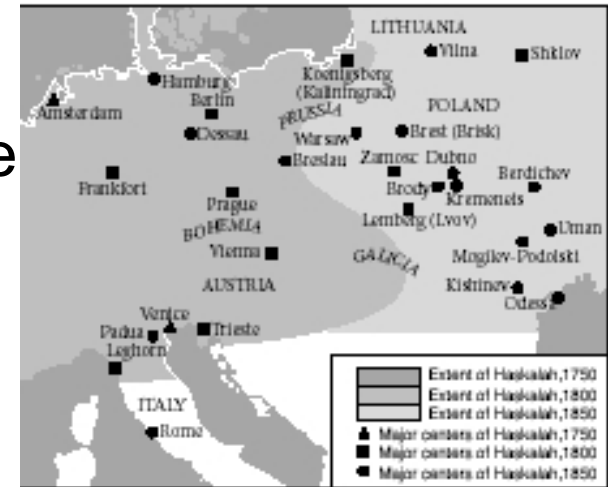
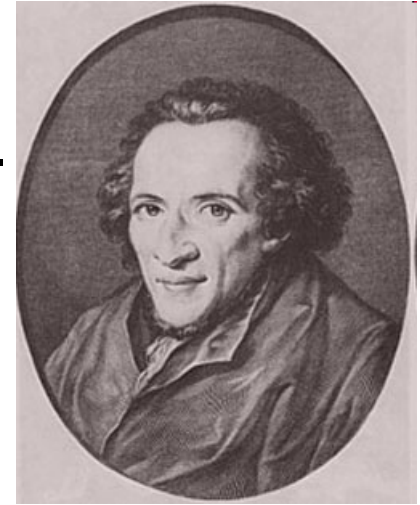
0. Proto-Semitic, proto-NW-Semitic
proto-Canaanite, “proto-Hebrew”
1. Biblical Hebrew
Pre-classical BH, classical BH, post-exilic BH; Qumran
Masoretic Hebrew = Tiberian Hebrew
2. Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew
3. Medieval Hebrew – dead or alive?
4. Modern Hebrew, Israeli Hebrew (Israeli language)
Haskalah, language revival, contemporary IH

An imaginary bet

- We are in 1881, in Amsterdam.
A prophet reveals to us that in 100 years, there will be a national language of the Jewish people.
- What is your bet, which language it is going to be?
 - (a) Yiddish
 - (b) German
 - (c) Biblical Hebrew
 - (d) Rabbinic Hebrew

Haskalah

- Concepts: embourgeoisement, acculturation, assimilation, emancipation, “out of the ghetto”.
- Haskalah = Jewish Enlightenment
 - (Wave 0: Italy, England, Netherlands)
 - Wave 1 (1750-1800): Germany
 - Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786)
 - Ha-Me'assef (1783-1790)
 - Wave 2 (1800-1850): Central Europe
 - Reform Judaism
 - Orthodoxy
 - Wave 3 (1850-1900): Russia
 - *Yiddishistn un hebraistn*



Zionism and return to Israel

- The rise of the Jewish national idea:
 - Russian Haskalah: much more Jews + feudal environment. Assimilation to what?
 - 19th century: modern notion of “nation”, nationalism across Europe.
 - Feeling that emancipation has not led to assimilation of Jews → 1870’s: modern political anti-Semitism: based on racial concepts (vs. pre-modern anti-Judaism: based on religion).
 - Wave of anti-Semitism (Russian pogroms: 1881-82 and 1905; 1894-1906: Dreyfus-affair; 1882: Tiszaeszlár; Karl Lueger in Vienna...)
- Early Zionists since the 1860s, mainly in Russia.
 - 1882: First Aliyah; Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.
- Political Zionism: Theodor Herzl
 - 1897: First Zionist Congress in Basel; 1948: State of Israel.

Hebrew during the early Haskalah

- Despising Yiddish: “jargon”, “bad German without a grammar”, “the language of the ghetto”.
- Assimilation to German culture: adopt *Hochdeutsch*
Biur: translation to and commentary in literary German of the Pentateuch, an educational project initiated by M. Mendelssohn.
- Hebrew
 - Bible = main contribution of Jews to Humanity, source of ethics, etc. (unlike “superstitious rabbinic culture”).
 - Enlightened Jewish culture must be in *Biblical* Hebrew:
 - Secular poems, novels, textbooks for schools, journals...
 - Haskalah literature in Biblical Hebrew only (purism), ...as long as they can. Turn around the 1870s.

Hebrew revival in Palestine/Israel

- The mystical fanatic figure: Eliezer Ben-Yehuda
(1858-1922) 1879: *A Burning Question*. 1881: moving to Palestine.
1882: Itamar Ben-Zion born (1st native speaker). 1908-: dictionary.
- Institutionalization: language planning
 - 1890: Va'ad ha-Lashon (Ben-Yehuda and others)
 - 1953: Academy of the Hebrew Language
- Gradually displacing its rivals: “language wars”
 - 1908, Czernowitz: Yiddish a national language of the Jewish people.
(*Yiddishistn*: Hb as lang. of past & prayers; *Hebraistn*: Yd as lg. of *galut*.)
 - 1913: Technion in Haifa: German or Hebrew as teaching language?
 - 1922: One of the three official languages of British Mandate.
 - Educational system in Hb in Palestine, incl. Hebrew University (1925).
 - After 1948: Ulpanim. Hostility toward Judeo-languages.



Contemporary Hebrew: varieties

- Early experimentations and varieties:
 - Ashkenazi or Sephardi pronunciation? (1885: both?)
Today: in fact none.
 - Early 20th c.: Galilee pronunciation (following Sephardic tradition): no distinction א and א (cf. Portuguese synagogue).
 - Begad-kefat: decided by Va'ad ha-Lashon only in 1923!
- Language planning vs. natural development:
 - Language planning and normative lg. by Academy
 - Standard language
 - Substandard language



Contemporary Hebrew: varieties

- Army as a social and linguistic melting pot
- Foreign influences: [yala bay!]
 - Much influence of English
 - Slang from Arabic
- Sociolects in contemporary Israeli Hebrew:
 - Colloquial Hebrew, “speech language” (e.g., [h] disappearing; *yes li et ha-sefer*)
 - Very official pronunciation (rolling ר).
 - Jews of Oriental origin: Sephardic pronunciation (distinction between ם and ן, as well as ן and ן).
 - Arab speakers: Arabic-Hebrew code switching

Orthography

- Use of punctuations is rare:
 - A few genres: children's book, poetry.
 - Religious books (Bible, siddurim, etc.).
 - A single sign to disambiguate text. Some brand names.
- *Matres lecionis* in unpunctuated text:
 - [u]: always ו. [o]: always ו, except a few cases (,פה , שלמה , ראש , לא , ... חכמה , אמנם , כה).
 - [i]: י in open syllables, nothing in closed syllables.
 - [y]: usually יי. [v]: usually וו.
- Rules of the Academy to transcribe foreign words:
 - T > ט, TH > ת, K > ק, KH > כ V and W > וו, X > קס
 - 'צ [č], 'ז [ž], 'ג [dž]

Enriching vocabulary 1: recycling existing material

- New meanings to Biblical words, expressions:
 - דַּעַת הַקְּהָל ‘public opinion’
- New meanings to *hapax legomena* and rare words in BH:
 - חשמל ‘electricity’ (Cf. LXX: *ilektron*, Vulgata: *electrum* ‘amber’).
- If BH and RH (or Aramaic) have different words for the same meanings, then
 - Assigning different stylistic values in IH: זְמַן and עֵת for ‘time’.
 - Assigning slightly different meaning:
 - מִסְפָּר ‘number’ and מִנְיָן ‘minyan [10 Jewish men]’
- Medieval Hebrew, for instance Arabic words from the translations of the Ibn-Tibbon: הַנְּדָסָה ‘engineering’
- ‘Secularization’ of word meanings:
 - מוֹסַף ‘mussaf prayer’ > ‘journal supplement’; ישיבה ‘meeting’

Enriching vocabulary 2: borrowing words

- Borrowing from Arabic and Aramaic
 - “to strengthen the Semitic character” of the language
 - Arabic: from Arabic neighbors.
 - Aramaic: originally purists wanted to get rid of Aramaic component. Then, re-entering IH as high registers.
- Borrowing from European languages, especially English.
 - Names of the letters in the Latin (‘English’) alphabet.
 - *fiktivi*:
 - suffix *-i* guarantees fitting into morphology (cf. *problemati*)
 - Note the initial [f] (cf. *falafel*)
 - Words related to cultural goods: *falafel*, *šnitseľ*.
 - Language purists can hardly displace them.

Enriching vocabulary 2: borrowing words

- Loan translations from “Standard Average European”
 - נְמַל תְּעוּפָה , שְׂדֵה תְּעוּפָה : ‘airport’, cf. vliegveld vs. vluchthaven’
 - בֵּין לְאוֹמֵי ‘international’; תַּפּוּחַ אֲדָמָה ‘aardappel, pomme de terre’
- Copying the semantic field, including all meanings:
 - *tnua* = *movement*, *xevra* = *maatschappij*
 - *atar* (Aramaic for ‘place’) = *site*
- Borrowing to lower registers:
 - Arabic words to slang.
 - Judeo-languages to the family language register:
 - BH *av* ~ Aramaic *aba* ~ Aramaic + Yiddish *abale*
 - Sarale*, *Xanale*: Yiddish suffix to IH (cf. Yiddish: *Sorele*, *Khanele*).

Enriching vocabulary 3: inner word formation

- Ancient Semitic techniques:
 - Mishkalim:
 - *adom* ‘red’ → *adamdam* ‘reddish’
 - Suffixes: *tanax* ‘Bible’ → *tanaxi* ‘biblical’
 - *eix* → *eixut* ‘quality’ *kama* → *kamut* ‘quantity’
 - *ze* → *zehut* ‘identity’ (why [h]?) → *lezahot*, *ziha* ‘to identify’
 - Smichut, as word compounding:
 - תַּפּוּחַ אֲדָמָה ‘potato’
- Traditional techniques: e.g., abbreviations.
- Novel techniques:
 - Smichut turned into compound: *yošev ha-roš* > *ha-yoševroš*
 - Collapsing compounds: *remez* + *or* = *ramzor* ‘traffic light’, *tapuax zahav* > *tapuz* ‘orange’.

Enriching vocabulary 3: inner word formation

- Denominative verb formation:
 - *notsri* > *lehitnatser*, *islam* > *lehitaslem*
- What is a root?
 - *letalfen*, *lekatleg*,
 - *pisztur*, *kirtusz*
 - *lefasbek*
- *transfer* > *letransfer*: 6 consonants!
- *kategor* 'prosecutor' → *lekatreg* 'to accuse' (metathesis!)
- *rum* 'to lift' → *truma* 'donation' → *litrom* 'to donate'
- *ed* 'witness' → *teuda* 'document' → *letaed* 'to document'
- *din ve-xešbon* > *duax* 'report' → *ledaveax* 'to report'

Enriching vocabulary

- Borrowing prefixes, suffixes:
 - תְּלִיט מְמֻדֵּי 'three-dimensional', דוּ מְשֻׁמָּעִי 'ambiguous'
 - *i-tsedek* 'injustice', *bilti-muvan* 'incomprehensible'
 - *-izatsiya*, *-nik*: *kibutsnik*, *irnik*, *džobnik*...
- Creative combination of inner techniques and external factors:
 - *mivreshet* 'brush'
 - 'airplane': *matos*, *aviron* (cf. French *avion*)
 - תִּירָס 'corn' (from Turkey's old name)
 - ייצוא 'export' vs. יבוא 'import'
 - 'organization': *irgen*, *leargen* > *irgun*

Enriching vocabulary

- My favorite:

tlat-itsurizatsiya

End of period-by-period linguistics.

Next week: field-by-field linguistics.

- **Assignment and reading:**
See on separate sheet.

See you next week!