

**Introduction
to Hebrew Linguistics**
(‘Inleiding Hebreeuwse Taalkunde’)
UvA, Week 9, April 27, 2012

From the Haskala to Modern Hebrew

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Code switching: What language(s) are they speaking?

- Football:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwvbJSnf_AE
- Parashat ha-shavua:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnTUGoEmhhA>
- Munkatcher rebbe:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucL9pM0G7wU>
- Rosh hashana:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2vNRJ2HZ3g>

*What is in Hebrew? What sounds like Hebrew?
Similarities and differences between the speakers?*

Hebrew: prehistory and four periods

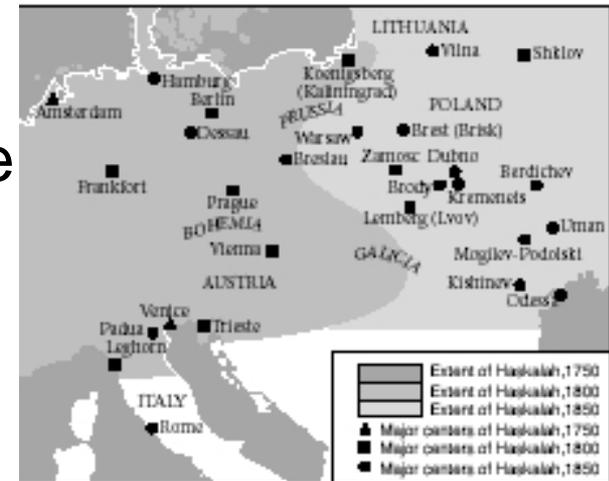
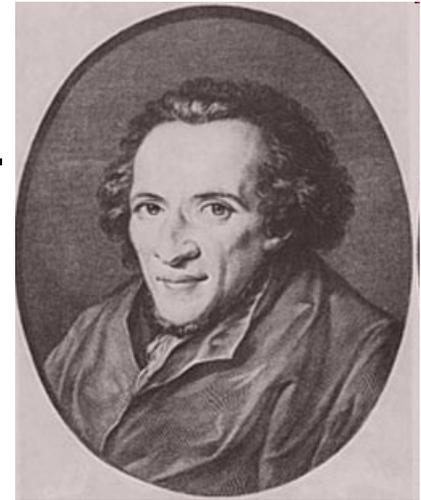
0. Proto-Semitic, proto-NW-Semitic, proto-Canaanite, and proto-Hbrw: *“The family tree: ancestors and relatives.”*
1. Biblical Hebrew: *“Did King David speak like the Bible?”*
Pre-classical BH, classical BH, post-exilic BH; Qumran Masoretic Hebrew = Tiberian Hebrew
2. Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew:
“A spoken language written”.
3. Medieval Hebrew: *“Dead or alive?”*
4. Modern Hebrew, Israeli Hebrew (Israeli language)
Haskala, language revival, contemporary I(H)
“Is it obvious that Hebrew is the language of Israel?”

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 ן and ך, as well as נ 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 (לא, ראש, שלמה, פה, כה, אמנם, חכמה...).
 - [i]: ם in open syllables, nothing in closed syllables.
 - [y]: usually ם. [v]: usually ם.
- Rules of the Academy to transcribe foreign words:
 - T > ט, TH > ת, K > ק, KH > כ V and W > ם, X > סק
 - 'צ [č], 'ז [ž], 'ג [dž]

End of period-by-period linguistics.

Next week: field-by-field linguistics.

- **Assignment and reading:**

Last chapter of Rabin and article by G. Zuckermann.

Suggested: Y. Tobin's criticism of Zuckermann.

Assignment: compare the two views.

See you next week!