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Ewa Geller, Michał Gajek and Agata Reibach, with a contribution by Anna Pilarski, *Yiddish as a Mixed Language: Yiddish-Slavic Language Contact and Its Linguistic Outcome*, vol. 3 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2023), 286 pp.

This volume comprises (i) Gajek, "Max Weinreich and the Slavic component of Yiddish"; (ii) Geller and Gajek, "Yiddish in the framework of the mixed language debate"; (iii) Geller, "Role of Slavic matter borrowings in new pattern grammaticalization"; (iv) Reibach, "De-Construction of German-type compounds"; (v) Reibach, "Core vocabulary borrowability restrictions: case of semantic field 'body'; (vi) Pilarski, "Convergence of syntactic structures of Yiddish and Polish direct interrogative sentences: Remarks on parametric structure of CP and *wh*-movement"; (vii) Geller, "Yiddish as donor language for Polish."

Max Weinreich was the founder of Yiddish linguistics. His seminal *The History of the Yiddish Language* appeared in Yiddish 1973, in English 2008. However, he was preoccupied with the prominent Germanic component of Yiddish, with far less attention to its other major components—Hebrew-Aramaic and Slavic. Now, after over half a century, the present book of 286 pages is the first to appear that focuses exclusively on the integration of the Slavic component in Yiddish, in both synchronic and diachronic contexts. The book is extremely rich in examples and ideas. However, Weinreich's English version reached 2,061 pages, so much work remains to catch up!

The present book is for the most part a grand achievement and points the way to many further topics. Hopefully the book signals a speedier output in the field of Yiddish for the future.

Aside from expanding our understanding of one of the major components of Yiddish, this book will help resolve the debate between two diametrically opposed theories: that Yiddish arose when French and Italian Jews entered the Rhineland and Franconia around the 10th century or that Judeo-Slavic speakers entered the German or Czech lands from the East (from Iran, China?) at about the same time. (See the next-to-last paragraph below).

However, the authors fail to discuss a number of important topics, that are very relevant to Yiddish-Slavic linguistic contacts. The list of neglected topics includes:

(i) V. I. Lamanskij's *O slavjanax v Maloj Azii, Afrike i Ispanii* (St. Petersburg 1859). He was the first to study Slavic slave diasporas in Africa and Eurasia.

(ii) The large Slavic slave diasporas stretching from Germany to Andalusia and China, noted by the Persian statesman, Abū'l Qāsim 'Ubajdallah ibn 'Abdallah ibn Khordādhbeh (9th century), in his Arabic-language *Kitāb al-masālik wa-'al-mamālik* (Leiden 1889/1967). He also spoke of meeting (a) Eurasian Jewish merchants, speaking Slavic, "German" (= Yiddish?), Arabic, "Andalusian" (Ibero-Romance, Berber?), etc. and (b) Rus' merchants from Kiev trading in Baghdad. The great importance of Baghdad to Yiddish and Judeo-Slavic merchants should have been mentioned; this would have stressed how Arabic (directly from Arabs and indirectly via Perso-Arabic) became a primary component of all Old Jewish languages. Persian also plays an indispensable role in the history of Yiddish even in the absence of many pure Persian loanwords. I would greatly welcome separate volumes on the role of Yiddish by Persian and Arabic components, and another separate volume just on Chinese (see also [vi] below) and other East Asian languages. The three latter components—so crucial in the history of Yiddish—have gone totally unnoticed in the hyper-European (i.e. German) framework

of Yiddish linguistics. It is no accident that the present book was conceived by Polish students of Yiddish. Hopefully, this book will inspire competent Arab, Iranian and Chinese linguists to study aspects of Yiddish history relevant to them.

(iii) Why Yiddishists must seek collaboration with historians of the Jews, Slavs, Iranians and Chinese—and especially with historians of Chinese art.

(iv) The bibiliogaphy of this book is extremely detailed, but a full bibliography of Slavo-Yiddish contacts still remains a major *desideratum*.

(v) It is crucial to correct Weinreich's errors after half a century.

(vi) The book fails to note that Yiddish loans from its main components—German, Slavic and Hebrew-Aramaic—are often accompanied by newly created Yiddish "Slavoid"/"Germanoid"/"Hebroid" *copies*, e.g. Yiddish borrows Ukrainian *paskudnyk* 'scoundrel' as is (see also synonymous Yiddish *pakostnik* 'scoundrel'), but also coins a new synonymous Slavoidism *paskudnjak*, unknown to monolingual Slavic speakers.

Mirabile dictu, but Yiddish speakers' decision to accept a term from Slavic, etc. is frequently licensed by Chinese (usually via similar forms, but also semantic functions)—a practice I believe must date from the use of Slavicized-Sinicized Yiddish on the Eurasian Silk Roads between the 10–13th centuries. For example, among the countless Hebraisms in Yiddish I can cite a Hebroidism which was passed on to German slang with a meaning unavailable to the Yiddish Hebraism—also with signs of Chinese influence, see e.g. Hebrew *knas* 'penalty' > Yiddish *knas* > German (slang) *knast* 'jail (sentence)'. I suspect that German *-t* probably < Chinese *d-* in *shou*(4) *dao*(4) 'get punishment' (< 'receive' + 'go to'), *dian*(3) *shi*(4) *ting*(1) 'hall where convicts are counted and verified' (< 'degree' + 'inspect' + 'hall; central room') and several other synonyms (numbers indicate tones); also relevant is Yiddish (< Hebrew) *tfise* 'prison, imprisonment'. Other influences may be Chinese *ke*(1) 'punishment', *guan*(1) *ya*(1) 'lock up in jail' (< 'to close' + 'to arrest') and/or Slavic *kara* 'penalty, punishment'. The Yiddish decision to take *paskudnyk* (cited above) cannot be independent of Chinese *pian*(4) *tu*(2) 'swindler' (< 'swindle' + 'disciple').

I believe this behavior makes the Old Jewish languages unique in the typology of language contact: Yiddish is often involved in almost each individual contact with the genesis and development of no less than eight languges: German(oid), Slavic-Slavoid, Hebrew-Hebroid and Chinese-Sinoid. In fact, Yiddish often "Judaizes" (or even creates) German slang—like Yiddish, a language also in need of secrecy. Yiddish even has a few Judeo-Sinocisms, see e.g. Yiddish *mase-matn* 'buying and selling; seek a compromise' (< 'burden' + 'giving'), based on the form of Chinese *mai*(3) *mai*(4) with the same two meanings. Many of these innovations are shared with other Jewish languages.

In other words, Yiddish commits component (along with lexical) expansion in most of its acts of borrowing—which must surely be a unique feature in the annals of language contact. These facts convince me that Yiddish-Slavic contacts must not be studied in isolation of all the components of Yiddish and always in comparison with the other Old Jewish Silk Road languages.

(vii) The book fails to recognize that Jews probably learned Slavic outside the historical Slavic(ized) lands—in Spain, Central Asia and maybe even China, centuries before settling in the historic Slavic lands. This is because many Slavic (and other) slaves in China were eager to work on Jewish caravans. Since parts of Asia were open only to Jewish Silk Road traders (e.g. Kashmir in the 9th century), the non-Jewish ex-slaves had to be "Judaized" (by Jewish merchants).

I submit that now we see clearly that Yiddish and Ashkenazic (Hebrew for 'Scythian', i.e. Iranian) culture and religion—all heavily Iranianized, Sinicized, and moderately Mongolianized, Manchuized and Turkicized (and maybe also Tibetanized, Tocharianized and Tungusized)—could enter the German lands only from the East. Hence, the study of Yiddish-Judeo-Slavic and Yiddish-Slavic contacts must go together (the former language is duly mentioned in the book).

Sadly, the senior author, Ewa Geller, died the year of publication. May this fine volume stand as a fitting tribute to her numerous cogent contributions to Yiddish.

Paul Wexler