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Ambiguities in the Romanization of Yiddish*

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Abstract: Romanization of Yiddish is one of the most complex activities in Hebraica cataloging, especially for publications that do not use Standard Yiddish Orthography. The Library of Congress has adopted the YIVO table for vowels, but uses its own Hebrew table for consonants. LC's publication *Hebraica Cataloging* provides little guidance on Yiddish Romanization, and MARC records contain many errors and inconsistencies in the application of the table. YIVO's linguistic reference works, notably Uriel Weinreich's *Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary* and the translation of Max Weinreich's *History of the Yiddish Language*, often contradict each other in the Romanization of Hebraisms, while LC's rules for Romanizing Hebraisms seem to have changed recently.

Hebrew titles for Yiddish works are particularly problematic, as there are two possible pronunciations. LC appears to be moving in the direction of providing two Romanized title entries in such cases.

Several transliterated Yiddish dictionaries have been published in the last decade. Some use the YIVO system; others do not. The extent to which these tools can provide assistance to Hebraica catalogers is assessed.

Introduction

Romanization is a primary activity of American Hebraica catalogers, but within the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), Romanization *policies*, rather than practice, have been the focus over the past few years because of the requirement to do

parallel Romanization on the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), i.e., to input Romanization for core fields of bibliographic records in Hebrew script. Fully Romanized records had formerly been input by libraries that were committed to the OCLC bibliographic utility (Zipin, 1984), but RLIN's requirement posed a challenge to libraries that had always provided bibliographic description in the original script. RLIN's clustering mechanism is based on Romanized title information, as input of the original script is optional (Aliprand, 1990, pp. 15–16). For that reason, consistency of Romanization is important.

To minimize the complexity of Hebraica cataloging on RLIN, first there was the proposal to use reversible Romanization (transliteration) instead of ALA/LC (American Library Association/Library of Congress) Romanization (transcription), as the former does not require the cataloger to determine pronunciation, only to transliterate Hebrew letters (the reasons for rejection of the proposal are in Aliprand, 1990, p. 15).

Then there was the proposal initiated by Rosalie Katchen (1990) that catalogers Romanize only the short title, as had been done on LC printed Hebraica cards. That was not approved either, although some Hebraica catalogers working on RLIN (e.g., Malamud, 1994) limit their Romanization to the short title, as was revealed at the RLIN modifications workshop (Lerner, 1994) held at the 1993 AJL Convention. A panelist at that workshop, Rabbi Clifford Miller (1994), made some observations about LC's Romanization practices that ignore fine points of Hebrew grammar, but there really has not been an AJL convention program devoted to the "how" of Romanization for some time.

The American librarian's Bible for Hebrew Romanization practice is *Hebraica Cataloging* (Maher, 1987), published by the Library of Congress. Hebrew Romanization à la LC is admittedly complex because

it requires extensive knowledge of grammar, but I believe that it is less difficult than Yiddish Romanization for several reasons:

1. Hebrew has only two orthographic systems: *ketiv haser* and *ketiv male*. While there has been substantial variation in the latter, as documented by Werner Weinberg (1985), Yiddish has had a bewildering array of spelling systems in its thousand-year history (YIVO, 1966).
2. The classic Hebrew defective orthography (*ketiv haser*) and vowel pointing are well standardized, and we have numerous published authorities to determine the correct form for a given word. In contrast, Standard Yiddish Orthography, developed only six decades ago (*Guide*, 1961, verso English t.p.), has not been widely implemented (Gold, 1977), and there are no comprehensive reference works for this language. The *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language* (1961–1980) was not completed, and even the four volumes that did appear deviate from Standard Yiddish Orthography.
3. Guidance by LC on Hebrew Romanization is far more extensive than it is for Yiddish. A mere three pages in *Hebraica Cataloging* (Maher, 1987, pp. 22–24) are devoted to rules for Romanizing Yiddish.

As part of the Great Collections Microfilming Project, YIVO librarians—who never employed Romanization in the card environment (because YIVO's Yiddish catalog has all access points in Hebrew script)—input Romanized Yiddish records into RLIN for preserved rare books. Interesting questions arose in the course of the project, and those are the focus of this paper.

The presentation here is tutorial to some extent, in that it begins with the basics. Thus I hope that this article will be useful to those who are new to Yiddish Romanization. The paper proceeds quickly, however,

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HEBREW AND YIDDISH ROMANIZATION

א	' or disregarded; cf. below	ל	l
ב	b	מ, ם	m
בּ	v	נ, ן	n
ג	g	ס	s
ד	d	ץ	'
ה	h	פ, ף	p
ו	v̄ (only if a consonant)	פ, ף	f
וּ	y (only if a consonant)	צ, ץ	ts
ז	z	ק	k̄
ח	ḥ	ר	r
ט	ṭ	שׁ	sh
י	y (only if a consonant)	שׂ	ś
כ, ך	k	ת	t
כּ, ךּ	kh	תּ	t (in Yiddish, ṣ)

VOWELS USED IN YIDDISH

אַ	a	אי, אײ	i
אָ	o	ע	e
אױ, אײ	u	אײ, אײ	ay
אױ, אײ	oy	אײ, אײ	ey; ay if pronounced as ai in aisle

Figure 1. ALA/LC Romanization table for Yiddish (Maher, 1987, pp. 8, 9).

to the thorny problems of transcribing Yiddish, and I trust that this component will be of interest to more experienced Hebraica catalogers. Finally, I discuss published reference sources that may be of assistance in Yiddish Romanization, and I hope that all readers will benefit from that. Works cited are limited to those which are germane to Anglo-American catalogers. Additional publications on Romanization of Yiddish are listed in Uriel and Beatrice Weinreich's bibliography (1959, p. 21) and its supplement, by Bratkowsky (1988, pp. 346-347).

Basic Tables

The first basic fact for the Romanizer is that LC has a single table for both Hebrew and Yiddish consonants (see Figure 1). There is only one difference in Romanizing the consonants of the two Hebraic languages: the letter *sof* is Romanized in Yiddish as an *s* with an accent grave, but in Hebrew as a *t*, in accordance with Sephardic pronunciation. For the Romanization of Yiddish vowels, however, LC enumerates a different list from that for Hebrew. The vowel list for Yiddish matches the val-

ues in the Romanization scheme established by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. The YIVO table (with variant annotations) is published both in the late Uriel Weinreich's textbook *College Yiddish* (1949, p. 26; reprinted often) and in his *Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary* (1968, p. xxi). The one from the *Dictionary* is reproduced in Figure 2.

LETTER OR COMBINATION	SOUND EQUIVALENT	REMARKS
א	<i>silent</i>	Written at the beginning of words or stems that would otherwise begin with ו, ו, וי, י, י, י, or װ
אָ	[A]	Similar to <i>a</i> in <i>father</i> , but shorter
אױ	[O]	Phonetically between the <i>aw</i> of <i>dawn</i> and the <i>o</i> of <i>done</i>
ב	[B]	
בּ	[V]	
בֿ	[G]	
ד	[D]	On the phonetic value [dy] of the sequence יד, see § 4e
ה	[H]	
ו	[U]	
ױ	[U]	So spelled in the combinations װ [-uv-], װ [-vu-], and ױ [-uy-]
ױ	[V]	
ױ	[OY]	Shorter than <i>oy</i> in <i>boy</i>
ז	[Z]	On the phonetic value [zy] of the sequence זי, see § 4e
זײן	[zh]*	Like <i>s</i> in <i>measure</i>
ח	[kh]	Like <i>ch</i> in German <i>ach</i>
ט	[T]	On the phonetic value [ry] of the sequence טר, see § 4e
י	[I]	Medium in length and tenseness between the <i>i</i> of <i>fit</i> and the <i>ee</i> of <i>feet</i>
י	[Y]	Like <i>y</i> in <i>yes</i> ; before or after another vowel
ײ	[I]	So spelled following a stressed vowel, or — under stress — adjoining a vowel. See §§ 5a5 and 5c7
ײ	[EY]	Similar to <i>ey</i> in <i>grey</i>
ײ	[AY]	Similar to <i>i</i> in <i>fine</i>
כ	[K]	
כּ	[kh]	Like <i>ch</i> in German <i>ach</i>
ך	[kh]	Word-final form of the preceding
ל	[L]	On the phonetic value [ly] of the sequence לי, see § 4e
לֿ	[LY]	For explanation see § 4e5 (ii)
מ	[M]	
מ	[M]	Word-final form of the preceding
נ	[N]	On the phonetic value [ny] of the sequence ני, see § 4e
ן	[N]	Word-final form of the preceding
ס	[S]	On the phonetic value [sy] of the sequence סי, see § 4e
ע	[E]	Similar to the <i>e</i> of <i>bet</i>
עֿ	[E]	For explanation see §§ 5b6 and 5c6
פ	[P]	
פּ	[F]	
ף	[F]	Word-final form of the preceding
צ	[TS]	
ץ	[TS]	Word-final form of the preceding
ק	[K]	
ר	[R]	Produced by trilling either the tip of the tongue or the uvula
ש	[sh]	Similar to <i>sh</i> of <i>shoot</i>
שׂ	[S]	
ת	[T]	
תּ	[S]	

* To be distinguished from [ZH], which represents a sequence of sounds — [z] followed by [H].

Figure 2. YIVO system for transcription of Yiddish. From: Uriel Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary* (New York: YIVO, 1990, c1968). Reprinted with permission of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

There are two differences between the LC table for Yiddish consonants and YIVO's table (see Figure 3). First, the letter *het* is Romanized as "h period" by LC, and as *kh* by YIVO. Second, the consonant cluster *zayin-shin* is Romanized by LC as *zsh*—the combination of the values for the two separate letters—but by YIVO as *zh*. YIVO does not claim that its Romanization scheme is reversible: *het* and *khaf* are pronounced identically by Ashkenazic Jews, and so they are Romanized the same way. Common examples of these two differences are found in the transcriptions of the word *ḥsidish* (RLIN DCLH88-B1128), the name *Rozshanski* (DCLH94-B3027), and the toponym *Birobidzshan* (DCLH87-B94). The Romanizations here are according to the ALA/LC system; the YIVO forms are in the figure.

There are several Hebrew letters that fall into the categories of both vowel and consonant in the LC table; *alef*, *vav*, and *yud* have qualifiers to this effect. One letter that belongs in both categories does not have such a qualifier: *ayin*. In contrast to its Hebrew Romanization practice, in which *ayin* is always transliterated, LC does not use the *ayn* symbol (·) to represent the letter when it functions as a vowel in Yiddish. From recent feedback on authority records contributed by YIVO to NACO (National Coordinated Cataloging Operations), it was learned, however, that the symbol should be used in Yiddish when *ayin* functions as a consonant, as in the word *aguneh*. This rule probably applies only to Hebraisms, which are discussed further below.

LC Romanization of Yiddish has changed over time. Before 1948, as reported by Maher (1987, p. 10), LC used a Romanization system that emulated German orthography (see Figure 4). Libraries working with LC copy dating from this period must convert *ei* to *ay*, *sch* for *shin* to *sh*, *ch* for *khaf* to *kh*, *w* for *vav* to *v*, and *z* for *tsadi* to *ts*. Catalogers who maintain a depository file of Yiddish LC cards—filed by title in Hebrew script—will note the variations over time in the Romanization of the same word. (Many of the examples in this paper are drawn from YIVO's depository file of Yiddish LC cards.)

Letter/ Digraph	LC Table	YIVO Table
ח	ḥ	kh
זש	zsh	zh

Examples

Word/ Name	LC	YIVO
חסידיש	ḥsidish	khsidish
רױזשאַנסקי	Rozshanski	Rozhanski
ביראָבידזשאַן	Birobidzshan	Birobidzhan

Figure 3. Differences between the LC Romanization table for Yiddish consonants (pre-1976) and the YIVO table.

Word	Pre-1948 LC Romanization	Post-1948 LC Romanization
מײַנע	meine (1949)	mayne (1953)
געשיכטע	geschichte (1947)	geshikhte (1953)
וואָס	wos (1946)	vos (1960)
אינטערנאַציאָנאַל	internazional (1946)	internatsional (1953)

Figure 4. Changes in LC Romanization of Yiddish between 1948 and 1976. The earlier system was based on German orthography.

Another change in the LC Romanization table occurred in 1976, under the influence of the American National Standard for the Romanization of Hebrew (ANSI, 1975). Whereas formerly LC had distinguished only *het* and *khaf* among letters pronounced alike, it now added diacritics to the Romanized equivalents of *vav*, *tes*, *kuf*, *sin*, and *sof* to distinguish them from *veyz*, *tof*, *kof*, and *samekh* for the latter two (see Figure 5). The ANSI standard actually enumerated different letters for some of these pairs, e.g., *q* for *kuf*, but in order to maintain compatibility with its earlier Romanization, LC added the diacritics, resulting in what I call "peppery Romanization." These diacritics were applied by LC to the Romanization of Yiddish, resulting in five more differences from the YIVO table.

Incidentally, the ANSI standard for the Romanization of Hebrew, one of the pioneering projects of AJL [described in Weinberg (1991, p. 167)], was withdrawn a few years ago by the National Information Standards Organization, despite the fact that AJL members had volunteered to revise it. A draft standard for the Romanization of Yiddish had been developed shortly after the Hebrew one but was never published, apparently because of the difficulty of achieving consensus. The Hebrew ANSI standard featured four separate tables for different purposes, and the Yiddish one was also supposed to have multiple tables, with YIVO's system serving as the one to be used in cataloging.

Gold (1985, p. 96) gives the impression that the ANSI standard for Romanization of Yiddish was adopted, but that is incorrect. His account is repeated in Steinmetz's *Yiddish and English* (1986), which states explicitly that "the YIVO system . . . is also known as the American National Standard Romanization of Yiddish" (p. 106).

YIVO developed its Romanization scheme in the 1940s, but in the decade prior to that published the Standard Yiddish Orthography (YIVO, 1937). All the characters required for Standard Yiddish Orthography are present in RLIN's Hebrew character set (Aliprand, 1990, p. 12)—sometimes precombined, and in other cases requiring separate input of a vowel point or diacritic and a letter—but LC has elected not to input any vowel points, diacritics, or digraphs. This contrasts with LC's early Hebraica cataloging, in which all diacritics found on a title page were transcribed, whether standard or not (Weinberg, 1992, p. 14).

Letter	YIVO Table	LC Table	Example
ו	v	v̇	וו v̇u
ט	t	ṫ	טאַטע ṫate
ק	k	k̇	קײען k̇ayen
ש	s	ṡ	מעשה maysė
ת	s	ṡ	שבת Shabeṡ

Figure 5. Diacritics added by the Library of Congress in 1976 to distinguish Hebrew consonants pronounced alike.

Yiddish publications that employ the standard orthography make Romanization simple, essentially automatic except for Hebraisms (see Figure 6). If LC or another library deletes the special characters, however, the Romanization becomes ambiguous, just as transcription of unpointed Hebrew is.

David L. Gold's "Guide to the Standardized Yiddish Romanization" (1985) features a table, including many letter-vowel combinations, which is more detailed than the tables found in Uriel Weinreich's textbook (1949) and dictionary (1968). Gold's guide is useful because it deals with numerous special situations in Yiddish Romanization, but many of its recommendations would probably not be accepted by LC, which gives reversibility of consonants a higher value than that of representing pronunciation—the primary purpose of the YIVO system.

Ambiguities

Having established the basic facts regarding LC's table for the Romanization of Yiddish and its differences from YIVO's, we now proceed to a discussion of the thorny problems. The first one I term the "Galitsyaner/Litvak" (Galician/Lithuanian) dialect problem. [What is popularly called "Galitsyaner" actually refers to Central (Polish) Yiddish. Much of Galicia was in Southeastern (Ukrainian) Yiddish territory.] LC states explicitly that it employs Lithuanian pronunciation for Yiddish, but "Galitsyaner" errors creep through. (The focus of this paper is complexity, not error. When it comes to Romanization, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone" [N. T. John 8:7].) Figure 7 shows an error in the Romanization of the word *hey**m*, found on a 1985 LC card; the error is preserved in the MARC (machine-readable cataloging) record on RLIN (DCLH90-B170). I am a purebred Galitsyaner and tend to say *haym*. But in Romanizing, I know that it is essential to check Weinreich's dictionary to see whether there is a *pasekh* under the double *yud*. If not, the Romanization is *ey*; if yes, the value is *ay*.

Character	Romanization
א	a
אָ	o
ב	b
בּ	v
ײַ	ey
ײִ	ay
כ	k
כּ	kh
פ	p
פּ	f
שװ	sh
שׂ	s
ת	t
תּ	s

Figure 6. Elements of Standard Yiddish Orthography and corresponding YIVO Romanization.

Word	LC error	Weinreich
היים	haym	hey
	(85-125201)	
Standard Yiddish Orthography		
ײַ	=	ey
ײִ	=	ay

Figure 7. The "Galitsyaner/Litvak" problem in Yiddish Romanization is largely eliminated by the use of Standard Yiddish Orthography.

The next feature to be examined is *syllabic n*, a final *nun* without a preceding *ayin*, i.e., two consonants juxtaposed (see Figure 8). An error crept in to a 1989 LC record with the initial title word *Regn*—an *e* was added to represent a vowel before the final consonant; the error is preserved in the machine-readable record (DCLH89-B825). *Regen* would, however, be the correct LC Romanization for a Yiddish word that replicates German orthography and inserts an *ayin* before the final *nun*.

Word	LC error	YIVO Romanization
רעגן	Regen	regn
	(89-142242)	

Figure 8. Syllabic *n* may be a source of error in Yiddish Romanization, as it results in the juxtaposition of consonants.

A common case of nonstandard orthography is variant spelling of the word *yidische* (see Figure 9); the last one in the figure is in Standard Yiddish Orthography; the first one is found often in Orthodox publications, such as the cover of singer Avraham Fried's audiocassettes, *Yiddish Gems = Idische Oytzres* (1992–1994). The middle spelling in the figure mimics German orthography—*jüdische*—but no one ever pronounced the word as *yudische* (Dina Abramowicz, personal communication). American rules which require transcription of bibliographic data exactly as spelled, and Romanization of the graphic form—regardless of pronunciation—result in the scatter of the same words.

Word	LC Romanization
אידישע	Idishe
יודישע	Yudische
יִידישע	Yidishe (standard)

Figure 9. Three different Yiddish spellings of the word for Jewish/Yiddish are commonly found. The last is standard.

In Israeli catalogs, in contrast, an attempt is made to unify variant Hebrew orthography in access points, while preserving original spelling in title-page transcription (Adler, 1988, p. 24). A detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of unifying variant orthography is in Weinberg (1980). In a nutshell, the unification serves the user who is working with an oral reference; retaining the original orthography serves the user/librarian who has precise bibliographic data.

Throughout the history of Yiddish writing, a wide variety of spelling patterns can be observed (see Figure 10), all posing challenges to the Romanizer who is working with a synchronic transcription scheme to represent diachronic orthography, that is, spelling that varies over time.

Old Spelling	Romanization	Modern Spelling	Romanization
פֿאָן	fon	פֿון	fun
ערציעהונג	ertsiehung	דערציונג	dertsjung
געהייסן	geheysin	געהייסן	geheysn
טהייערע	thayere	טײערע	tayere

Figure 10. Examples of Germanized Yiddish orthography compared with modern Yiddish orthography, and corresponding Romanizations.

The modern Yiddish word *fun* has often been spelled *fon*, to mimic the German spelling *von*. Similarly in *daytshmerish* [Germanized] orthography, an *ayin* was inserted into the middle of the word *ertsiehung*, as was a *hey*, and these letters are carried over into the Romanization, even though they are not pronounced. Dalia Kaufman (1970), in her article about editing the Yiddish catalog at the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL), described the interfiling of *ertsiehung* and *dertsjung*, but I consider that going too far. (Additional corrections to the JNUL Yiddish catalog are discussed in Weinberg [1980, p. 329].)

Other variant orthographies illustrated in Figure 10 include *yud nun* for syllabic *n* (cf. Figure 8), and the conversion of German *th* into the Hebrew letters *tes-hey*.

Returning to modern Yiddish orthography, one of the major traps for the Romanizer is *dieresis*: two distinct vowels juxtaposed (see Figure 11). An example of dieresis in Latin script is Noël; the two dots on top of the *e* mark a distinct vowel. Standard Yiddish Orthography often features the character *khirek-yud* to indicate dieresis. LC not infrequently interprets the *yud* as a consonant and inserts the letter *y* between the two vowels in Romanizing words such as *batsiung* and *ruinen*. Both of these errors found on recent LC cards are preserved in the RLIN database (DCLH90-B2351 and DCLH89-B1469, respectively) and are emulated by many catalogers who derive records.

Word	YIVO Romanization	LC error
באַציונג	batsiung	batsiyung (90-827713)
רויניען	ruinen	ruyinen (89-20917)

Figure 11. Dieresis, the juxtaposition of two distinct vowels, may result in Romanization errors if Standard Yiddish Orthography is not employed.

From feedback on Yiddish name authority records contributed by YIVO to NACO in 1995, it was learned that insertion of the *y* is done deliberately by LC, following an internal rule which states that two vowels cannot be juxtaposed in Hebrew without an intervening consonant. LC grants, however, that exceptions are found in its database. Two exceptions are found in one of the final vernacular Hebraica cards printed by the Library of Congress in December 1995: *Zeung* (the title proper) and *Hebreish* (in a note)—LCCN 91-827980 (see Figure 12). [A subsequent communication from the Library of Congress explained that a *y* is now inserted only when the initial vowel is *i*, that is *khirek-yud*, in combinations such as *ia* and *ie*.]

Ka-tzetnik 135633, 1917-
(Zeung)
די זעונג / פון ק. צעטניק. — תל-אביב : פארלאג י.ל. פרץ,
1990.

174 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.
Title on t.p. verso: Revelation.
"Zaytn 40-143 ibergezetst fun Hebreish: Aleksander Shpiglbat; zaytn 7-39 un 145-174 geshribn fun mehaber in Yidish"—2nd prelim. p.

1. Auschwitz (Poland : Concentration camp) 2. Ka-tzetnik 135633, 1917- 3. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Personal narratives.
I. Title. II. Title: Revelation.

D805.P7K3 1990 91-827980
Library of Congress 95 MARC AACR 2 HE

Figure 12. Yiddish LC card featuring two examples of dieresis: *Zeung* (title proper) and *Hebreish* (in the note). This comes from the final batch of Hebraica cards using original script, distributed December 27, 1995.

Treating Yiddish as a variant of the Hebrew language is inappropriate, as the Hebrew component of Yiddish is smaller than the Germanic and Slavic components. Zachary Baker prepared a table demonstrating that it is ludicrous to attempt to implement LC's "anti-dieresis" rule in Romanizing Yiddish. In response, Joan Biella of the Hebraica Team at LC charted the Library's practices with respect to vowel combinations in Yiddish (see Figure 13).

Dieresis is relatively rare, but the more common dualism in Yiddish is vocalic vs. consonantal *yud* (see Figure 14). Uriel Weinreich's rule in *College Yiddish* (1949, p. 27) is that a *yud* between two consonants is always a vowel, as in the first syllable of *bibliografye* (common Romanization). "Before or after another vowel," Weinreich says (*ibid.*), a *yud* is a consonant, which suggests that the letter after the *l* in *bibliografye* should be a *y*, not an *i* (except in Romanizing the word from Soviet Yiddish orthography, which places a *hiriq* under the *yud*). Brisman (1977, p. 237) has an example of the application of Weinreich's rule in his reference to *Biblyografishe yorbikher fun YIVO*. [That spelling is not replicated in the index to the book, however (p. 324).] Following LC's rule regarding juxtaposition of vowels would call for the Romanization *bibliyografye*.

There is one RLIN record in which the Yiddish word for "bibliography" is Romanized as *biblyografye*, but there are 65 clusters in which it is Romanized as it is in Figure 14. There is a Yiddish proverb, "*Az tsen zogn shiker, leygt men zikh shlofn*" (If ten people say you are drunk, go sleep it off). Or we may cite the Hebrew proverb from *Pirke Avot* (Chapter 2, Mishnah 5): "*Al tifrosh min ha-tsibur*" (Don't separate yourself from the community). If just about everyone is Romanizing this word incorrectly, there is no point in deviating.

My colleague Sharona Wachs has pointed out that the Romanization *bibliografye* may be explained by the fact that this is a loanword from Latin. LC has published special rules for Romanizing loanwords in Hebrew, but none for Yiddish. Analysis of the components of Yiddish words would require a higher level of knowledge than supplying vowels for Hebrew. And because Yiddish is a fusion language (Weinreich, M., 1980), separating the components would be impossible in many cases.

This chart is not an official statement of LC cataloging policy. The "YIVO" column was provided by Zachary Baker. The "LC" column derives from the Yiddish romanization schedule presented in *ALA-LC Romanization Tables* (Washington : Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, 1991) and LC cataloging practice.

YIDDISH SPELLING	YIVO	LC
alef-pataḥ alef-pataḥ	aa	aa
alef-pataḥ ʿayin	ae	ae
alef-pataḥ yod-ḥireḳ	ai	ai
alef-pataḥ alef-ḳamets	ao	ao
alef-pataḥ vav	au	au
ʿayin alef-pataḥ	ea	ea
ʿayin ʿayin	ee	ee
ʿayin yod-ḥireḳ	ei	ei
ʿayin alef-ḳamets	eo	eo
ʿayin vav	eu	eu
yod-ḥireḳ alef-pataḥ	ia	iya*
yod-ḥireḳ ʿayin	ie	ie*
yod-ḥireḳ yod-ḥireḳ	ii	iyi*
yod-ḥireḳ alef-ḳamets	io	io*
yod-ḥireḳ vav	iu	iyu*
alef-ḳamets alef-pataḥ	oa	oa
alef-ḳamets ʿayin	oe	oe
alef-ḳamets yod-ḥireḳ	oi	oi
alef-ḳamets alef-ḳamets	oo	oo
alef-ḳamets vav	ou	ou
vav alef-pataḥ	ua	ua
vav ʿayin	ue	ue
vav yod-ḥireḳ	ui	ui
vav alef-ḳamets	uo	uo
vav vav	uu	uu

*Vowel combinations beginning with yod-ḥireḳ are romanized without initial "i" in some personal and geographic names of Slavic origin (e.g., Byaliḳ). In names of German origin, yod-ḥireḳ ʿayin is romanized as "ie" corresponding to German "ie" (e.g., Friedman).

Figure 13. Table prepared by Joan Biella, Hebraica Team, Library of Congress, documenting LC policy on Romanization of dieresis and dual vowel combinations in Yiddish.

LC has moved in the direction of following the YIVO rule for consonantal *yud*, as is evident in the Romanizations *pyane* (LCCN HE75-950374) and *shtudyesh* (DCLH90-B2351). The older forms are found in RLIN records, in numerous words in the transliterated texts published in *Rodale's Yiddish Lingo* (e.g., *Niu Yorker, lektsies*—1970, p. 12), and even in some YIVO publications. (A YIVO brochure announcing a conference to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Max Weinreich's birth [Dec. 4, 1994] featured the error *revizie* in the Romanized title of a paper.) The LC Romanization *tsiyonistisher* (LCCN 57-54489; OCLC 11081263) does not match that of the Weinreich dictionary, which indicates the Romanization *tsienistish* for the base word. The last example leads to the subject of Hebraisms.

LC defers to Weinreich's dictionary for the pronunciation and hence the Romanization of Hebrew words incorporated in Yiddish. A clash occurs because LC is more loyal to reversibility of consonants than to pronunciation (see Figure 15). Thus for the compound word *moyshev-skeynim*, YIVO's linguists recognized that in the environment of the voiceless consonant /k/, a z is pronounced /s/. LC preserves the z in Romanization, however. The Romanization in the figure, found on an LC card (73-951308/HE), is replicated in the RLIN record of the primary cluster member (ILSH95-B7611). If LC were Romanizing the term today, the vowels in Weinreich's *moyshev* would no doubt be copied.

Yiddish pronunciation of Hebraisms is characterized by vowel reduction. *Yisker* is an example of this. In Hebrew, the last syllable of the word is stressed and includes a long vowel; in Yiddish, the stress is on the first syllable, and the vowel in the second one is short. Older LC records feature the Hebrew Romanization *yizkor* in a Yiddish context; more recent ones have *yizker*.

LC's guide to Hebraica cataloging (Maher, 1987, p. 24) mentions a rule for Yiddish hyphenation: if the base word is a dictionary entry, a hyphen separates it from the particle. The rule seems to be applied inconsistently (see Figure 15, lower half): *zikhroyne li-vrokheh* (LCCN 73-952736), is hyphenated; *lekoved* is not (DCLC 87-128960-B), although *koved* is a separate entry in Weinreich's dictionary. Contributed records to the RLIN database do feature hyphenation of this word. Consistency of hyphenation is important because the bibliographic utilities have special ways of handling this character. A search argument with a hyphen may fail to match one without it, and vice versa.

Word	LC Romanization
ביבליאָגראַפיע	bibliografye
פּיאַנע	pyane
שטודיעס	shtudyesh
ציוניסטיש	tsiyonistish

Figure 14. Distinguishing vocalic from consonantal *yud* is a major source of difficulty in Yiddish Romanization.

Word	YIVO	LC
מושב-זקנים	moyshev-skeynim	moshav-zkeynim (73-951308)
יזכור	yisker	yizkor / yizker
Hyphenation		
זיל	zikhroyne-livrokhe	zikhroyne-li-vrokheh (73-952736)
לכבוד	lekoved	lekoved (78-952154)

Figure 15. LC vs. YIVO Romanization of Hebraisms. In dealing with Hebraisms, the Library of Congress transliterates consonants according to its table, regardless of their pronunciation in Yiddish. Lower half: Hyphenation of particles in Hebraisms is done inconsistently by LC.

Another problem with Yiddish Romanization is that YIVO authorities sometimes conflict with each other (see Figure 16). I encountered this in indexing the translation of Max Weinreich's *History of the Yiddish Language* (1980). An indexer is in an ideal position to catch inconsistencies in spelling or Romanization. When finding these, I listed the two forms as well as the form in Weinreich's *Dictionary*. The translator (the late Shlomo Noble) said, "I will not accept *goish* because I pronounce it *goyish*; I will not accept *talmetyre* because it garbles the original two Hebrew words, *talmud torah*." The 100-page index to Max Weinreich's *History* can be a source for Yiddish Romanization, but the cataloger must keep in mind that it sometimes differs from Uriel Weinreich's dictionary (1968).

Changes in LC's handling of Hebraisms may be observed over time (see Figure 17). An older card with the word *bereshis* (LCCN 74-950554) shows recognition of Ashkenazic pronunciation. A newer record shows more vowel reduction, as well as the addition of diacritics (DCLC 86-208952-B). It also demonstrates that it would be impossible to hyphenate the particle *be-* because it is not pronounced separately from the base word.

Older LC records for devotional prayers featured Hebrew Romanization for the word *tehinah*. More recently, Weinreich's vocalization was adopted, with the substitution of *h* for *kh* to represent *het*. In the '90s, however, LC seems to be applying its rule for Hebrew Romanization—to represent final *hey*—in Yiddish (DCLH 91-B4058). The same record Romanizes the plural form as *thinos*—without the vowel lowering to *es*. This is Ashkenazic Hebrew, not Yiddish, pronunciation. The former has never had official status in American library Romanization practice.

Word	Uriel Weinreich <i>Dictionary</i>	Max Weinreich <i>History</i>
גוי'יש	goish	goyish
תלמוד-תורה	talmetyre	talmud toyre

Figure 16. Conflicting Romanization of Hebraisms in YIVO's linguistic publications.

Word	Older LC Romanization	Recent LC Romanization	Current LC Romanization
בראשית	bereshis	breysheš (86-208952)	
תחינה	tehinah	thine	thineh (RLN DCLH 91-B4058)

Figure 17. Examples of changes over time in LC Romanization of Hebraisms in Yiddish.

Soviet Yiddish orthography (Figure 18) does not preserve Hebrew spelling as standard Yiddish does and is thus easier to Romanize, although we may do a double take upon seeing the way the words *emes* (truth) and *milkhome* (war) are rendered in Hebrew characters. Recent LC Romanization distinguishes the two orthographies through the use of diacritics.

There are many records that lack the final *h* in representing Hebrew spelling in Yiddish Romanization. Also, it is important to note that Harvard records frequently transcribe the YIVO Romanization of Hebraisms without making substitutions à la LC. Thus many of Harvard's Yiddish records feature *milkhome*—in what seems to be Romanization of Soviet orthography—for American imprints that preserve Hebrew orthography in Yiddish. (The Romanizations for some of these titles may have been supplied by YIVO staff members.)

Many works that are entirely in Yiddish have Hebrew titles, perhaps to enhance their image. In the past, LC tended to Romanize these as pronounced in Sephardic Hebrew; more recently, there is a tendency to use Yiddish Romanization for a work entirely in Yiddish. Those who follow *Cataloging Service Bulletins*, which report on changes in LC policy, will note an increasing trend to provide two title entries when there are two possible pronunciations, e.g., for a title that contains numbers.

The first example in Figure 19 is taken from a record for a book whose title is Romanized by LC as *Kodesh ve-hol in der Yidisher muzik*; There is an added title entry for the Yiddish pronunciation, *Koydesh vekhol . . .*; LC did not create this Romanization, which is in the YIVO system; the entry emanates from Romanization on an added title page in the work.

It is often difficult to distinguish a Romanized title provided by the cataloging agency from one in the work. I have previously expressed the opinion that notes in a Hebraica record should be in the original script (Weinberg, 1992, p. 14), but Maher (1987, p. 42) reports that since 1983 "notes are usually given in romanized form only." Each note in which Romanization is used should be identified, e.g., "title on added t.p. (Romanized)." Maher (1987, p. 59) states that this used to be done, but currently, "if the entire MARC bibliographic record is romanized, then no bracketing is needed to indicate romanization." The reverse is done in LC authority records: nonstandard Romanization found in a work is followed by the note "(in rom.)."

Hebraism	LC Romanization	Soviet	LC Romanization
אמת	emes	עמעס	emes
מלחמה	milhomeh	מילכאָמע	milkhome

Figure 18. Contrast between traditional Hebrew orthography and Soviet Yiddish orthography, along with corresponding Romanizations.

Example	LC Romanization	T.p. verso
קודש וחול	Kodesh ve-hol	Koydesh vekhol (RLIN DCLH 89-B788)
מסעות בנימין הרביעי	Mas'ot Binyamin ha-revi'i (89-219293)	[not supplied]

Figure 19. Examples of Hebrew titles for Yiddish works and the resulting indeterminacy of Romanization.

An OCLC record (20068406) for the aforementioned work Romanized the title proper in its Yiddish pronunciation: *Koydesh vèhol* [no hyphen] *in der Yidisher muzik*. This record failed to cluster with the LC record (OCLC 22228724).

The second example in Figure 19 is of a Yiddish book that is a takeoff on Mendele Moykher Sforim's "The travels of Benjamin the Third"; the Romanization of the title is given by LC only in Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation, *Mas'ot Binyamin ha-revi'i* [The travels of Benjamin the Fourth] (DCLH89-B1833), which is highly counterintuitive.

Barry Walfish (1985) has protested the LC policy of Romanizing Biblical forenames in their modern Hebrew pronunciation within a Yiddish context. (Zachary Baker of YIVO revived the protest a decade later in NACO communications and at the 1995 AJL Convention.) Recent records provide several examples of the Romanization of Yiddish names according to their Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation (see Figure 20). The record with the Romanized title main entry *Vegn Mordekhai Shekhter* (DCLH90-B605) is amusing, given that it notes "Title on added t.p.: *Mordkhe . . .*," i.e., the standard Yiddish pronunciation of the forename of this Yiddish linguist. Name *headings* are not under discussion here, only the systematic Romanization of title and statement of responsibility in Yiddish. Despite LC's policy, there are many examples of RLIN records with Biblical names in Yiddish pronunciation. AJL activism may legitimize them.

Having outlined the major subtleties, ambiguities, and difficulties of Yiddish Romanization, I now proceed to a discussion of reference works that may be helpful to the cataloger in this regard.

Romanized Yiddish Dictionaries

An amazing number of Romanized Yiddish dictionaries have been published in the past few decades. A variety of sociolinguistic explanations could be given for this phenomenon, but I shall limit myself to the cataloger's perspective. First I describe the dictionaries that do not use a standard Romanization system, and then those that do.

Olsvanger's *Royte Pomerantsen* (1947), a transliterated collection of Jewish humor, includes a substantial glossary (pp. 183–201) which deviates from the YIVO Romanization system in several respects: doubling of consonants, use of *ch* for *het* (both illustrated by the entry *yachssn*), and in the use of apostrophe rather than *e* for *sheva na'*, as in *y'ole*. (Olsvanger's double *s* for *samekh* may be explained by his German background: single *s* is pronounced /z/ in that language.)

The first full Romanized Yiddish dictionary appeared two decades later (Kogos, 1967). Figure 21 contains examples showing that his and several other Romanized dictionaries do not follow either LC's or YIVO's scheme. In the following paragraphs, the dictionaries are discussed in chronological order.

Examples	YIVO Romanization	LC Romanization
יעקב	Yankev	Ya`akov (89-145546)
מרדכי	Mordkhe	Mordekhai (88-80064)
יצחק	Yitskhok	Yitshak (79-950043)

Figure 20. Hebrew forenames in a Yiddish context, Romanized by YIVO according to their Yiddish pronunciation, and by LC according to their Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation.

Author	Example	Yiddish Spelling
Olsvanger (1947)	yachssn	יחסן
Kogos (1967)	choyzik machen	חוזק מאַכן
Rosten (1968)	baleboosteh	בעל-הביחטע
Jacobs (1982)	far-kawchn	פאַרקאַכן
Harduf (1987)	parshoin	פאַרשוין
Gross (1992)	laidik	ליידיק

Figure 21. Transliterated Yiddish dictionaries using a nonstandard system of Romanization.

Kogos' *A Dictionary of Yiddish Slang & Idioms* was published in 1967. The entry in the figure, *choyzik machen*, should have *kh* for *khaf* and either *kh* or *h* for *het*. That entry also inserts an extra *e* before syllabic *n*. Sample entries from the letter *t* reveal many deviations from both YIVO's and LC's Romanization, as well as internal inconsistencies: *Tallis* with a double *l*; *talis koten* with a single *l*.

The Joys of Yiddish, by Leo Rosten, appeared in 1968 and is still in print. The entry in the figure features double *o* instead of *u* in *baleboosteh*. There is no final *hey* in the Yiddish word, and so the *h* is unnecessary. The entries *chmallyeh* and *cholera* reveal immediately that this is not a tool for the Hebraica cataloger, although it is a fun book. *The Jewish Word Book* (Jacobs, 1982) is a similar work with briefer entries than those of Rosten. The example in the figure suffices to illustrate the nonstandard nature of Jacobs' Romanization scheme: *far-kawchn a ka-she* (to make a mess).

David Mendel Harduf's *Transliterated Yiddish-English Dictionary* was published in Canada in 1987. This work is arranged in a Hebrew-character sequence. The dictionary features several variations from the standard Yiddish Romanization. The example in Figure 21, *parshoin*, would be Romanized as *parshoyn* by YIVO and LC. Figure 22, a page from the dictionary, displays other nonstandard Romanizations, such as *ei* in *chaveirim* (instead of *ey*) and, of course, the *ch* for *het*.

The *zayin-shin* entries in Harduf are all in consonance with the YIVO system, and could readily be converted to LC Romanization by inserting an *s* after the *z*. I would label this work "nonstandard, but useful." A paperback edition of this work, including an English-Yiddish dictionary, was published in 1991. Harduf (1992) has since published a Yiddish dictionary with headwords in a Romanized sequence, which is presumably designed for those who do not know the Hebrew alphabet.

In 1992, David Gross's Romanized Yiddish dictionary appeared. The sample entry in Figure 21 has *laidik* for *leydik*. I am not sure what Gross's native language is, but he employs *gu* for *gimel*, as in *gue'shank* (gift), not to mention *ch* for *khaf*, as in *gue'shichteh* (history), and *ei* for *ey*, as in *gueshrei* (scream). The same Romanization scheme is used in the Expanded Edition (1995). This work is not recommended for catalogers, whether they be Galitsyaners or Litvaks.

חזן	73	זשומזשע
journalist	זשורנאליסט (ן) ז <i>zhurnalist</i>	bumblebee זשומזשע (ס) <i>zhumzhe</i>
breathe heavily	זשיפען (געזשיפעט) <i>zhipen</i>	frock זשופיצע (ס) <i>zhupitse</i> (worn by Chasidim)
giraffe	זשיראף (ן) <i>zhiraf</i>	beetle זשוק (עס) <i>zhuk</i>
boor	זשלאָב (עס) <i>zhlob</i>	journal זשורנאַל (ן) <i>zhurnal</i>
so, then	זשע זשע <i>zhe</i>	gesture זשעסט (ן) <i>zhest</i>

ח			
Chumash, Pentateuch	חומש (ים) <i>chumesh-chumoshim</i>	the 8th letter of the Hebrew alphabet	ח חג <i>ches</i>
wedding canopy	חופה (ן) <i>chupe-chupes</i>	חאַלווע, כאַלווע (ס) <i>halvah</i>	<i>chalve</i>
except	חוק <i>chuts</i>	חאַמסין (ען) <i>chamsin</i>	(א חאַמסין)
impudence, nerve	חוצפה (ן) <i>chutspe</i>	(a hot wind that reaches Israel from the desert)	
destruction, ruin	חורבן (ים) <i>churben-churbones</i>	friend; comrade	חבר (ים) <i>chaver-chaveirim</i>
sense	חוש (ים) <i>chushim</i>	Christian holiday	חגא (ים) <i>choge-choges</i>
suspect	חושד זיין		

Figure 22. Page from David Mendel Harduf's *Transliterated Yiddish-English Dictionary* (1987). The *zayin* entries on the top half of the page follow the YIVO system of Romanization. The *het* entries are inconsistent with both the YIVO Romanization scheme and that of the Library of Congress. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Dictionaries Employing the YIVO System

We now examine Romanized Yiddish dictionaries that use the YIVO system and which can be useful in cataloging. First it is important to note that the Weinreich dictionary transcribes only Hebraisms. It is assumed that Yiddish words from the Germanic and Slavic components can be Romanized unambiguously by consulting the table in Figure 2. The errors in YIVO publications—as well as others claiming to use the YIVO system—noted above show that this assumption is incorrect; Romanization of all Yiddish headwords would be helpful to catalogers, authors, editors, etc. The sample entries in Figure 23 would require LC substitutions and additions: *h* for *hes*, *zsh* for *zayin-shin*, and a diacritic for *sof*.

Reviewing the dictionaries in chronological sequence, the first one is Rosenbaum's *A Yiddish Word Book for English-Speaking People* (1978). The subject headings in the Cataloging in Publication Data, "Yiddish language—Dictionaries—English" and "English language—Dictionaries—Yiddish" unfortunately fail to capture the fact that the dictionary is Romanized. The LC subject heading "Yiddish language—Transliteration into English" has been assigned to other works in the language that use Roman script, and that subheading (which can apply to any language), is found in the 1975 edition of *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. Rosenbaum's work has some very nice features: syllabification, Hebrew etymology, stress, gender, and even cross-references to related terms. These are all found in the entry "**kho-s'n toy-re**, (Heb., *hatan torah*)," with a link to **simkhes toyre** (p. 39).

1986 witnessed the publication of the *Yiddish Dictionary Sourcebook*, by Galvin and Tamarkin. This dictionary lacks some of the features in Rosenbaum's work, but gives Yiddish headwords in Hebrew script, using YIVO orthography. There are differences in Romanization between the two sources; whereas Galvin has "khoyzek makhn" (p. 206) Rosenbaum has "khoyzik makhn."

Coldoff's *Yiddish Dictionary in Transliteration* appeared in 1988. It is similar to Rosenbaum's in that it indicates component (e.g., *H* for Hebrew), stress, and gender.

The most useful tool for Yiddish Romanization may be within an English dictionary.

Author	Example	Yiddish Spelling
Rosenbaum (1978)	khaloshes	חלשות
Galvin (1986)	pasazhir	פאַסאַזיר
Coldoff (1988)	khutspe	חוצפּה

Figure 23. Romanized Yiddish dictionaries employing the YIVO system of transcription.

The *Britannica World Language Dictionary* includes Yiddish among the seven languages spoken by the greatest number of people throughout the world. This work is found in volume two of *Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of the English Language*. The edition in the reference collection of YIVO is dated 1959. At home, I have the 1954 edition, which does not use the YIVO system. Somewhere within that five-year period (the verso of the title page shows that copyrights were secured in 1955, 1956, and 1958, in addition to 1954 and 1959), the Yiddish section of the dictionary was revised, and it can serve as a useful supplement to Uriel Weinreich's dictionary.

The thirty-five page glossary in Steinmetz's monograph on *Yiddish and English* (1986, pp. 114–148) employs the YIVO system and can be helpful for Romanizing Yiddish expressions used in American English.

Summary and Conclusions

Yiddish Romanization practices of the Library of Congress have undergone several changes within the past few decades. The LC scheme is largely, but not completely, compatible with that of YIVO. Several dictionaries using the YIVO scheme have been published recently, and they can serve as aids to the cataloger.

At present, little guidance on the thorny problems of Yiddish Romanization is available from LC's manual, *Hebraica Cataloging* (Maher, 1987). A second edition has

been reported to be in preparation, and it is hoped that the new edition will make explicit the policies that can only be inferred today from an examination of LC printed Hebraica cards and MARC records. Some "rule interpretations" are currently being transmitted by LC staff members to individual catalogers via e-mail, but it would be nice to have these systematized in a printed guide.

Those who derive Yiddish catalog records from the bibliographic utilities must be aware that there is great variation in Yiddish Romanization in both LC and contributed records. (We might characterize the situation by using the Yiddish expression *hefker p[er]yjetrishke*, translated by Harkavy [1928, p. 197] as "lawlessness" and by Rosenbaum [1978, p. 30]: "lit. undisciplined parsley; anything goes.") Some libraries doing retrospective conversion have copied Romanized Yiddish titles from printed LC cards; others have looked up Hebraisms in Weinreich's dictionary without making the requisite substitutions from LC's table. RILIN's Hebraic word search capability facilitates identification of the Romanization variants, but as long as clustering in that utility is based on Romanized title information rather than the original script, we should work towards better documentation of the rules and greater consistency in their application. Clearer rules for Romanization of Yiddish would also benefit OCLC catalogers and those working with any other bibliographic utility that requires following LC practices for script conversion.

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