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**Guidelines for Yiddish in Bibliographies:
A Supplement to YIVO Transliteration**

by Isaac L. Bleaman

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Guidelines for Yiddish in Bibliographies: A Supplement to YIVO Transliteration

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Virtually every researcher in the field of Yiddish today uses what is known as “YIVO transliteration” when rendering Yiddish titles in bibliographies for non-Yiddish-language publications. Despite its name, the YIVO system of transliteration (or romanization) is not “transliteration” in its strict sense—an unambiguous mapping between Hebrew and Latin characters. Instead, the YIVO system attempts to strike a balance between *transliteration*, which is faithful to orthography, and *transcription*, which is faithful to pronunciation. For example, a single Latin letter *s* is used to represent a *samekh* (ס), a *sin* (שׁ), and a *sof* (תּ), and it is also found in the transliterations for *shin* (שׁ; *sh*) and *tsadek* (צ; *ts*). Readers simply need to know that *mentsh* ‘person’ corresponds to the Yiddish מענטש and not to one of several other possible but invalid spellings (including מענצה, מענטסה, and מענתש). Conversely, a single Yiddish letter can have multiple transliterations depending on context, e.g., *shin* by itself is *sh* (as in שאַ *ash* ‘ash’) but the letter combination *zayen shin* is *zh* rather than *zsh* (אַז *azh* ‘literally, actually’).¹ In cases of homophony, a single transliteration can correspond to multiple Yiddish words (e.g., *farshemt* is either פאַרשעמט ‘embarrassed’ or, less commonly, פאַרשמט ‘renowned’). In cases of homography, a single Yiddish form may be transliterated in multiple ways (e.g., אין can be read *in* ‘in’ or *eyn* ‘there isn’t,’ as in Hebrew-origin phrases like *eyn mazl leylisroel* ‘Jews have no luck’). Such cases can only be disambiguated in context by readers who are familiar with the language.

To make matters more complicated, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research actually does not prescribe a standard for representing Yiddish in bibliographies. Although Yiddish-to-Latin transliteration tables and example bibliographies are readily found in YIVO publications,² the

¹ While this holds true of the YIVO system, the Library of Congress has issued guidelines for both Yiddish and Hebrew whereby otherwise homophonous consonants are transliterated using different sets of diacritics: <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/roman.html>. For example, in the LOC-style title *Di geshikhte fun hazones* ‘the history of cantorial music,’ the dots in *t* and *h* indicate that the Yiddish characters are *tes* (not *tof* = unmarked *t*) and *khes* (not *khof* = *kh*), and the grave accent in *ṣ* indicates that the Yiddish character is a *sof* (not *samekh* = *s* or *sin* = *ś*). For additional background on the challenges of Yiddish transliteration for library cataloging, see Bella Hass Weinberg, “Ambiguities in the Romanization of Yiddish,” *Judaica Librarianship* 9, no. 1–2 (Spring–Winter 1995), 58–74.

The LOC guidelines have informed the cataloging practices of university libraries throughout the country, and the distinctive LOC diacritics can also be seen in the Yiddish Book Center’s online archive. However, LOC transliteration is not typically encountered in bibliographies, and its use is not recommended. For this reason, scholars interested in using the YIVO system should be warned against automatically importing or copy-pasting bibliographic information from library catalogs. An online tool (beta) is available to assist scholars in converting LOC-style titles to the YIVO system: <https://ibleaman.github.io/LOC-to-YIVO>.

² Transliteration tables are found in Uriel Weinreich’s textbook and dictionary: Uriel Weinreich, *College Yiddish: An Introduction to the Yiddish Language and to Jewish Life and Culture* (New York: Yiddish Scientific Institute – YIVO, 1949), 26; Uriel Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary* (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research & McGraw-Hill, 1968), xxi. A table is also available on the

organization has never produced a definitive set of transliteration guidelines specifically for scholars to use in English or other languages with Latin alphabets. Some of the open questions for transliteration include whether to use capitalization (and if so, when) and how to transliterate words whose standard pronunciations are not reflected in their Yiddish alphabetic forms.³

In the absence of such guidelines, scholars have had to use their discretion when providing bibliographic information for Yiddish source materials. This has contributed to a great deal of inconsistency across publications in the field. Consider, for example, the many ways that scholars working in English have listed the author and title of the following source (Figure 1), all of which can be roughly characterized as “YIVO transliterations”:

1. Chone Shmeruk. *Peretses yiesh-vizye: Interpretatsye fun Y.L. Peretses Bay nakht afn altn mark un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame*.⁴
2. Chone Shmeruk. *Peretses yiesh-vizye* [Peretz’s Vision of Despair: Interpretation of I. L. Peretz’s *Bay nakht oyfn altn mark* and Critical Edition of the Play].⁵
3. Chone Shmeruk. *Peretz’s yiyesh vizye*.⁶
4. Khone Shmeruk. *Peretses yiesh-vizye. Interpretatsye fun Y. L. Peretses Bay nakht afn altn mark un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame* [Peretz’s Vision of Despair. An Interpretation of I. L. Peretz’s *Bay nakht afn altn mark* and Critical Edition of the Play].⁷
5. Khone Shmeruk. *Peretses yeush-vizye: interpretatsye fun Y. L. Peretses “Bay nakht oyfn altn mark”* [sic.] *un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame*.⁸
6. Khone Shmeruk. *Peretz’s yi’esh vizye: Interpretatsye fun Y. L. Peretzes ‘Bay nakht oyfn altn mark*.⁹

YIVO’s website, <https://yivo.org/yiddish-alphabet>. Example bibliographies are available in any issue of the journal *YIVO Annual*.

³ For a different treatment of these issues, see David L. Gold, “A Guide to the Standardized Yiddish Romanization,” *Jewish Language Review* 5 (1985), 96–103. Gold’s article is concerned more with the transcription of Yiddish than with the discoverability of textual sources for research. For this reason, a number of his recommendations (e.g., the optional placement of marks indicating where stress falls in a word; the acceptability of *ken*, *ka*, and *ke* for the word קיי; the placement of hyphens, which follows the Standard Yiddish orthography rather than the source) are not adopted here.

⁴ Amelia M. Glaser, *Jews and Ukrainians in Russia’s Literary Borderlands: From the Shtetl Fair to the Petersburg Bookshop* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 225, footnote 81.

⁵ Abraham Novershtern, “Between Dust and Dance: Peretz’s Drama and the Rise of Yiddish Modernism,” trans. Sharon Neeman, *Prooftexts* 12, no. 1 (January 1992): 89, footnote 3.

⁶ David Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 162, footnote 14.

⁷ David G. Roskies, “The Emancipation of Yiddish,” *Prooftexts* 1, no. 1 (January 1981): 41, footnote 16.

⁸ Mikhail Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity, 1905–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 218, footnote 17.

⁹ Dan Miron, *From Continuity to Contiguity: Toward a New Jewish Literary Thinking* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 507, footnote 48.

7. Khone Shmeruk. *Peretzes Yeush-Vizie: Interpretatsie fun Y. L. Peretzes Bay Nakht oyfn Altn Mark un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame* [Peretz's Vision of Despair: Interpretation of *Night in the Old Marketplace*, and critical edition of the drama].¹⁰

Differences include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, the presence or absence of a subtitle, and the presence or absence of a translation.

The purpose of this document is to fill some of the gaps in the YIVO system of transliteration for bibliographies. The recommendations are based on an informal synthesis of examples taken from the English-language bibliographies of authoritative YIVO-affiliated scholars.¹¹ These recommendations are meant to supplement, rather than replace, the style guidelines required by editors and publishers. For example, although there are recommendations for the capitalization of Yiddish titles, bibliographic entries should otherwise follow established formatting guidelines (e.g., the ordering of elements within an entry, when to use quotation marks and italics in titles, etc.). This document is also not meant to prescribe the transliteration of Yiddish *outside* a bibliography. When transliterating textual quotations—and certainly when transcribing speech—it may be appropriate to diverge from these guidelines or even from the YIVO system entirely. Finally, these recommendations are meant to yield more consistency across bibliographies, first and foremost with the hope of increasing the *searchability* and *discoverability* of source texts. Where ambiguities in transliteration continue to arise, researchers should strive to make informed decisions and check that they are internally consistent within their own bibliographies.

I would like to acknowledge Zachary Baker, a leading Yiddish specialist in the field of library science, for his thoughtful comments on an earlier draft. These recommendations have been endorsed by the Max Weinreich Center at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (Eddy Portnoy) and by the editorial board of *In geveb*, which will incorporate them into its style guidelines. I am grateful for any additional comments or corrections. To the extent possible this document will be updated with revisions.

¹⁰ Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars: A World History of Yiddish Theater* (1977; repr., Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 424.

¹¹ E.g., Uriel Weinreich and Beatrice Weinreich, *Yiddish Language and Folklore: A Selective Bibliography for Research* (The Hague: Mouton, 1959); Max Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language*, trans. Shlomo Noble (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008); Mordkhe Schaechter, *Di geviksn-velt in yidish* [Plant Names in Yiddish] (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2005), xxxiii–xxxvi.

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Capitalization

The Yiddish alphabet has no capital letters. One might assume that capitalization, if used at all in transliterated Yiddish, would be purely aesthetic rather than functional. However, capitalization does play a role in many modern reference books, where it is used to add clarity to transcriptions. Consonants that are transliterated with a single Latin letter are given in uppercase (e.g., K, H, T, S), while those that are transliterated with multiple Latin letters are given in mixed case (e.g., Kh, Ts, Sh). This can help to distinguish between what would otherwise be ambiguous strings. For example, the word for ‘woodpecker’ is PIKHOLTs (פיקהאָלץ), not PIKHOLTS (פיקהאַלטס) or PIKhOLTs (פּיכאַלץ); the word for ‘rhinoceros’ is NOZHORN (נאָזאַרן), not NOZhORN (נאָזאַרן). Writing these words in lowercase (*pikholtz*; *nozhorn*) eliminates this helpful distinction. While this capitalization convention has been used by lexicographers, it is not the norm for transliterating Yiddish in bibliographies. (It also does not address the problem of many-to-one character mappings, like *samekh*, *sin*, and *sof* to S.)

A survey of English-language bibliographies reveals that authors and publishers exhibit a tremendous amount of variation when it comes to the capitalization of Yiddish titles. However, there are several general trends in capitalization practices, which can be organized into a rough implicational hierarchy:

1. Almost everyone capitalizes the first letter of titles: e.g., *Zekhtsik yoriker yubiley fun dr. khaim zhitlovski* [Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky’s Sixty-Year Jubilee].
2. A subset of these scholars also capitalize the names and titles of individuals: *Zekhtsik yoriker yubiley fun Dr. Khaim Zhitlovski*.
3. A subset of the scholars in category 2 also capitalize place names: *Vilne, mayn Vilne* [Vilnius, my Vilnius].
4. A subset of the scholars in category 3 also capitalize the names of languages and national or ethnic groups: *Dos gerangl far Yidish* [The struggle for Yiddish]; *Vilne unter di Daytshn* [Vilnius under the Germans].
5. A subset of the scholars in category 4 capitalize other words whose English equivalents would be capitalized, including names of holidays: *Der Purim-shpiler* [The Purim player].
6. Finally, some scholars capitalize all major content words, following rules similar to those governing English title case: *Groyser Verterbukh fun der Yidisher Shprakh* [Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language].

There is additional inconsistency within each of these categories. For example, some of the authors who capitalize place names in nominal form (category 3) also capitalize them in adjectival form (e.g., *Fun Vilner geto* ‘from the Vilnius ghetto’), but many do not. Some will capitalize all parts of hyphenated place names (*Dorem-Amerike* ‘South America’; *Sovetn-Farband* ‘Soviet Union’), while others will capitalize only the “proper” parts (*dorem-Amerike*; *Sovetn-farband*); others capitalize only the initial part (*Nyu-york, Buenos-ayres*). Of those who capitalize the names of languages and national or ethnic groups (category 4), some also

capitalize them when they appear as adjectives with endings (*di Yidishe shprakh* ‘the Yiddish language’; *farn Yidishn folk* ‘for the Jewish people’).

To avoid these sorts of inconsistencies, and to follow the trend set by *most* scholars working in English, the recommendation is to capitalize the first word of a title—which is likely to satisfy requirements of editors and publishers—as well as the names and titles of individuals (category 2). One should refer to the style guidelines of individual publications to determine whether the first word of a subtitle needs to be capitalized.

If a title contains the title of a different work, as in the example from Shmeruk cited in the introduction, then the first letter of the embedded title should also be capitalized. If a person’s name is made up of multiple parts, the first letter of each part should be capitalized (e.g., *Dov-Ber*). Relatedly, the names of organizations should also be provided in uppercase, and if they are acronyms, they should be entirely in capital letters (e.g., *YIVO*, not *Yivo* or *yivo*). Otherwise, all words should be rendered in lowercase.

Punctuation in abbreviations and acronyms

Unlike English, which often uses periods in abbreviations and acronyms, standard written Yiddish usually uses a *geresh* or *gershayim*, similar in appearance to an apostrophe/single prime and a quotation mark/double prime, respectively. For example, פֿרוי *froy* ‘Mrs.’; אַזױַ אַזױַטער *un azoy vayter* ‘etc.’; ימאָך־שמױַ/שמױַ *yemakh-shmoy/shmom* ‘may his/their name be erased (said after mentioning an evil person or enemy).’ In some cases, abbreviations and acronyms are pronounced as words, as though they are not shortened from longer phrases: e.g., גאַמאָ *g(e)makh* ‘interest-free loan fund’; שליט *shlite* ‘may he live a long life (appended to the name of a prominent rabbi).’ Finally, some especially common acronyms are not only pronounced as words, but also optionally spelled without any abbreviating symbols, e.g., תַּנַּךְ or תַּנְךְ *tanakh* ‘Bible’; ייוו or ייווֹ *YIVO*.

In order to aid readers in tracking down source texts, the recommendation is to transliterate the acronym rather than transcribe the full word or phrase (e.g., *fr*’ not *froy*), and also to use apostrophes, quotation marks, or (more rarely) periods, depending on the abbreviation convention used in the source: e.g., *fss*’*r*, *f.s.s.r.*, *fssr*, etc., ‘(the) USSR.’ If the acronym is based on a Hebrew- or Aramaic-origin phrase, each letter should be transliterated according to the standard pronunciation of the full phrase. For example, הַעֲוֹה *o”h* ‘may he/she rest in peace’ (for *olev/ole-hasholem*).¹² A *shtumer alef* should be represented by the corresponding vowel pronounced in the relevant word of the phrase: *uaz*’*v*.

Relatedly, any punctuation within a title should be retained. For example, if a title contains a word in quotation marks and a comma appears outside the closing quotation mark, this should be retained in the transliteration.

¹² Or in the plural, if the context calls for it: *a”h* for *aleyem-hasholem* ‘may they rest in peace.’

Translation of titles

To improve searchability, the titles of Yiddish-language books and articles should always be provided in transliteration, not only in translation.¹³ However, to benefit readers outside Yiddish studies, researchers should also strive to provide English translations (in square brackets or parentheses). Many Yiddish-language books and periodicals printed in the United States have a title page or a table of contents in both Yiddish and English. If the translation is inaccurate or incomplete (e.g., missing a subtitle), the researcher may want to provide an original translation of the title. Otherwise, the translation printed in English should be used, since that is the one most likely to be included in library catalogs and databases. It is generally not considered necessary to translate the titles of periodicals.

If a source provides a translated title in a language other than English (e.g., Spanish, Polish, Russian), scholars are encouraged to provide that information, as well. Doing so may help readers find sources in catalogs that, for whatever reason, have not indexed the original Yiddish titles (a problem especially in libraries outside the United States). Non-Latin alphabets, such as Cyrillic, will likely need to be transliterated, and scholars should adopt the conventions for the particular language in question.

Transliteration of authors' names

The spelling of authors' names is arguably the most contentious issue in Yiddish transliteration. In most cases, the transliteration of an author's Yiddish name will differ from the author's published name in English. For example, Judah A. Joffe and Yudel Mark are listed as the compilers of the *Groyser verterbukh fun der yidisher shprakh* [Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language] on the English title page, but their names listed on the Yiddish title page would be transliterated "Yuda A. Yofe" and "Yudl Mark." This inconsistency can make it difficult for readers to track down the original sources, especially for lesser-cited authors. Occasionally an author's names in English and in transliterated Yiddish are close enough in alphabetical order that their works will be listed together in a bibliography (e.g., Sutzkever, Abraham and *Sutskever, Avrom*); however, this is not guaranteed (e.g., Chagall, Bella and *Shagal, Bela*).

The recommendation is to use just one name per author, rather than—as has been the practice in some bibliographies—using multiple spellings depending on the language of the source document. If the author has a commonly accepted spelling in English or other Latin-based orthography, that should be used (e.g., Max Weinreich). Researchers should consult authoritative encyclopedias, such as the *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, to

¹³ For examples of bibliographies that cite (at least some) titles only in translation, see U. Weinreich and B. Weinreich, *Yiddish Language and Folklore*; Gitl Schaechter-Viswanath and Paul Glasser, eds., *Comprehensive English-Yiddish Dictionary: Based on the Lexical Research of Mordkhe Schaechter* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), x.

determine whether such a spelling exists. Otherwise, a transliterated Yiddish name should be used.¹⁴ The same rule applies for the names of publishers (and theoretically for the publisher locations, although usually the English spelling is obvious, e.g., Chicago or New York rather than *shikage* or *nyu-york*).

For example, the spelling Sholem Aleichem is recommended rather than *Sholem-Aleykhem*, the YIVO transliteration, or Sholom Aleichem, a less common variant sometimes seen in English.¹⁵ However, the Yiddish language planner Mordkhe Veynger should be listed under that spelling, rather than one of the possible English spellings (Mordecai Weinger, etc.). Where an author has more than one common alias, researchers should use a single authoritative form for the heading of the bibliographic entry but are encouraged to list alternative transliterations elsewhere in the reference (in brackets or parentheses).

Finally, these recommendations are only for names of *authors*. If a Yiddish-language title contains a person's name, the entire title should be transliterated according to YIVO conventions. For example, a bibliography might have an entry for Max Weinreich's *Geshikhte fun der yidisher shprakh* [History of the Yiddish Language], but also for an article entitled "*Maks Vaynraykhs verk*" [Max Weinreich's works].

Transliteration of words not pronounced as written

Loshn-koydesh (Hebrew- and Aramaic-origin words)

These words should be transliterated based on their transcriptions in Weinreich's dictionary or in one of the more recent authoritative dictionaries.¹⁶ Very rarely, the transcription given in one dictionary will not agree with the transcription in another (e.g., לחיים '(a) toast' is transcribed as *lekhaïm* by Weinreich but *lekhayem* by Schaechter-Viswanath and Glasser). Because Weinreich's dictionary is older and has had more influence on cataloging practices, it is recommended to follow Weinreich's transcriptions where available.

Occasionally a word will be transcribed as having both a "full" and "reduced" form (e.g., חריפות *kh(a)rifēs* 'insight'; יישר־כוח (*ya*)*sh(er)-koyekh* 'thanks'); in these cases, always provide the full form in transliteration. Similarly, if a word is made up of multiple hyphenated parts and some of its elements have been reduced as a result, it should be transliterated based on the full pronunciation of its subparts (e.g., בית־מדרש, transcribed *besmedresh*, should be

¹⁴ A recommended resource for the transliteration of common Hebrew-origin names is Yitskhok Niborski, *Verterbukh fun loshn-koydesh-shtamike verter in yidish* [Dictionnaire des mots d'origine hébraïque et araméenne en usage dans la langue yiddish; Dictionary of Hebrew- and Aramaic-Origin Words in Yiddish], 3rd ed. (Paris: Bibliothèque Medem, 2012). See, however, the separate section on transliterating these words.

¹⁵ Incidentally, the two parts of this pen name are always pronounced together in order. For this reason, the name is not to be alphabetized "Aleichem, Sholem," and quotes should not be attributed just to "Aleichem."

¹⁶ U. Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary*; Solon Beinfeld and Harry Bochner, *Comprehensive Yiddish-English Dictionary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013); Schaechter-Viswanath and Glasser, *Comprehensive English-Yiddish Dictionary*.

transliterated *beys-medresh*, which also preserves the punctuation; בית־הקברות, transcribed *beysakvores*, should be transliterated *beys-hakvores*). If a word is transcribed with two distinct pronunciation variants (e.g., כהנים *koyenim/kehanim* ‘descendants of the ancient priests’), either may be used.

In comparison to Ashkenazic Hebrew, Yiddish often reduces unstressed vowels to *e* (approximating a schwa) or deletes them completely. Certain consonants, including *h*, are also eliminated in the standard transcription. For example, the Hebrew *oylom* ‘world,’ *minhog* ‘custom,’ and *Avrohom* ‘Abraham’ become in Yiddish *oylem*, *mineg*, and *Avrom*. These dictionary transcriptions should also be used in bibliographic transliterations, with the caveat for multipart words mentioned in the previous paragraph. Similarly, the unstressed sequence transcribed in dictionaries as *-ekh* should be transliterated as such, not as *-akh* (e.g., *koyekh* ‘strength,’ not *koyakh*; the same holds for non-Hebraic words like *kinderlekh* ‘kids,’ not *kinderlakh*).

There are several cases when adopting the transcription of a dictionary is *not* advisable in a bibliography. This is because the transcription of Hebrew- and Aramaic-origin words in dictionaries also includes some “pre-processing” by dictionary authors in order to apply regular rules of standard Yiddish phonology. There are two rules in particular that affect a large number of transcriptions:

1. Syllabic *nun* (i.e., when there is a “consonant + *nun*” syllable without any intervening vowel) undergoes assimilation to the place of the preceding consonant. This is seen in words like חורבן ‘destruction,’ which would ordinarily be transliterated as *khurbn* but because the syllabic *nun* appears right after a *beys*, the *nun* is pronounced (and transcribed in dictionaries) as though it were a *mem*: *khurbm*. Additional examples are provided in the table below. This rule also affects the syllabic *nun* in Germanic-origin words like *shraybn* ‘to write’ (pronounced *shraybm*) and *lipn* ‘lips’ (pronounced *lipm*),¹⁷ but such words are never transliterated with an *m*. For this reason, the recommendation for transliteration is to *modify* the transcriptions given in dictionaries, so as not to obscure the original spelling.
2. Sequences of consonants within a syllable must agree in their voicing—either all voiced or all voiceless, depending on the voicing of the sequence’s final consonant. For example, the word בשורה ‘announcement’ begins with the sequence [bs]; because the /b/ is voiced and the /s/ is voiceless, the /b/ is devoiced to a [p]: *psure* (the form listed given in dictionaries). The same rule also renders voiceless consonants voiced, as in סגולה ‘remedy,’ which would ordinarily be transliterated *sgule* but is transcribed in dictionaries as *zgule* due to the voicing of /s/ to [z] when preceding the voiced /g/. As with the rule affecting syllabic *nun*, this voicing rule is not restricted to Hebrew- or Aramaic-origin items: Katz’s standard Yiddish grammar lists the pronunciation of שרייבסט *shraybst* ‘(you) write’ as *shraypst* and זיסוואַרג *zisvarg* ‘candy products’ as *zizvarg*,¹⁸ though these words are never transliterated that way. Again, in order not to obscure

¹⁷ Dovid Katz, *Grammar of the Yiddish Language* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 33.

¹⁸ Katz, *Grammar of the Yiddish Language*, 29–30.

the original spelling, the recommendation here is to provide a transliteration as if the voicing agreement rule had not taken place.

Table 1

A sampling of words from the Hebrew and Aramaic component of Yiddish, showing their dictionary transcription and recommended transliteration for bibliographies

Yiddish orthographic form	Definition	Dictionary transcription	Recommended transliteration
שדכן	'matchmaker'	<i>shatkhn</i>	<i>shadkhn</i>
קבצן	'pauper'	<i>kaptsn</i>	<i>kabtsn</i>
זקנים	'old people'	<i>skeynim</i>	<i>zkeynim</i>
הסברה	'explanation'	<i>hazbore</i>	<i>hasbore</i>
משגיח	'supervisor'	<i>mazhgiekh</i>	<i>mashgiekh</i>
מלופן	'the diacritic in ו'	<i>melupm</i>	<i>melupn</i>
חשבון	'bill'	<i>khezhbm</i>	<i>kheshbn</i>
בית־דין	'rabbinical court'	<i>bez(d)n</i>	<i>beys-din</i>
יוצא־מן־הכלל	'exception'	<i>yoytse-minaklal</i> (Weinreich); <i>yoytse-min-haklal</i> (Niborski)	<i>yoytse-min-haklal</i>
דרך־ארץ	'respect'	<i>derkherets</i> (Weinreich); <i>derekherets</i> (Niborski) ¹⁹	<i>derekh-erets</i>

Other words

There are a number of exceptional cases in which a non-Hebrew / Aramaic word, prefix, or suffix is not pronounced the way it is written in the standard Yiddish orthography. These elements should be transliterated so as to reflect their written forms (e.g., פֿאַרלומטקייט 'dreaminess,' pronounced *farkholemtkayt*, should be transliterated *farkholemtkeyt*; אויפֿקום 'origin,' pronounced *ufkum*, should be transliterated *oyfkum*). However, if the original source

¹⁹ The word has also been transcribed *de(re)kherets*; Mordkhe Schaechter, *Yidish tsvey: a lernbukh far mitndike un vaythalters* [Yiddish II: An Intermediate and Advanced Textbook], rev. ed. (New York: League for Yiddish, 1995), 492.

title is written with nonstandard diacritics or spellings, as in Soviet publications, those differences should be reflected in the bibliography whenever possible (e.g., פארכאָלעמטקייט should be transliterated *farkholemtkayt*; אופקום/אופקום should be transliterated *ufkum*). Although this introduces a distinction that is normally leveled off in speech, it contributes to the searchability and discoverability of source materials.

Table 2

A sampling of words and affixes from the Germanic component of Yiddish, which are nevertheless not spelled as pronounced in Standard Yiddish

Yiddish orthographic form	Definition	Standard pronunciation	Recommended transliteration
אויף, אויפֿן	'on,' 'on the'	<i>af, afn</i>	<i>oyf, oyfn</i>
אויף, אויפֿ-	verbal particle (as in אויפֿגעקלערט 'enlightened,' איך אייב אויף 'I lift up')	<i>uf</i>	<i>oyf</i>
דערויף	'on that'	<i>deruf</i>	<i>deroyf</i>
ביי, ביים	'at,' 'at the'	<i>ba, bam</i>	<i>bay, baym</i>
־קייט, ־הייט	'-ness' (noun ending)	<i>-kayt, -hayt</i>	<i>-keyt, -heyt</i>
נאַרישקייט	'silliness'	<i>narishkayt</i>	<i>narishkeyt</i>
איינהייטלעך	'unified'	<i>eynhaytlekh</i>	<i>eynheytlekh</i>
־ין	feminine noun ending	<i>-n</i>	<i>-in</i>
רביצין	'rabbi's wife'	<i>rebetsn</i>	<i>rebetsin</i>

Nonstandard orthographies

The guidelines presented above for non-Hebrew / Aramaic words that are not pronounced as written also apply, more generally, to texts written in nonstandard orthographies. Consider, for example, the simple case of a title that is written in the YIVO orthography but with none of the diacritics. In that case, one should assume that the standard diacritics are present (e.g., to distinguish *p* and *f*, *a* and *o*, *ey* and *ay*, etc.). If the text also has silent letters װ and ן, as in many publications that attempt to mirror German spellings, those should be preserved in the transliteration. For example, if the title is written מענשען און

געשעהנישען 'people and events,' it should be transliterated: *menshen un geshehnishen*. A transliteration that has been standardized to *mentshn un gesheenishn* is arguably "easier on the eyes" to somebody who is used to reading YIVO transliterations, but it makes it more difficult to find the original source in an archive or database. For this very reason, nonstandard orthographies have even been included in the bibliographies of Yiddish-language works that are otherwise fully compliant with the standard YIVO orthography (Figure 2).

Similarly, one might wish to represent the silent *alef* that appears in certain German-oriented texts, e.g., in דײ 'the,' perhaps by adding an *a* or an apostrophe. However, doing so would introduce an inconsistency with the *shtumer alef* that appears at the beginning of certain vowel-initial words and roots (איינס, פֿאַראיין) which is not normally transcribed or transliterated. For this reason, it is not recommended.

When representing nonstandard spellings, one does not need to append "sic." to the end of the title, as has sometimes been done by YIVO-affiliated scholars.²⁰ It should be assumed that any nonstandard entry in a bibliography has been rendered that way on purpose.

i and y

The normal rule for deciding whether to transcribe the Yiddish letter *yud* as an *i* or *y*—*i* if a vowel, *y* if a consonant—can be challenging to implement in practice. This is because a *yud* can also indicate that a preceding consonant is pronounced with palatalization. The introduction to Weinreich's dictionary²¹ states that after the dental consonants /t, d, s, z, n, l/ (which, incidentally, are not dental for all Yiddish speakers), the letter *yud* followed by a vowel indicates that the dental consonant is palatalized, and this should be transcribed with a lowercase *y*: e.g., מעדיום *MEDyUM* 'medium (*noun*)' and סטודיאָ *STUDyO* 'studio.' However, Weinreich notes that there are exceptions, where in this exact same context a *yud* represents either a separate consonant (uppercase *Y*) or even a vowel (*I*). For example, the word דיאַלעקט 'dialect' contains a *yud* that represents a vowel *i* (so *DIALEKT*, not *DyALEKT* or *DYALEKT*) even though it is not written with a *khirek* (not דיאַלעקט). These exceptional words are listed in the dictionary as having either a [DI] or [DY] sequence: e.g., דיאַבעט *DIABET* 'diabetes' and דיאָצעז *DIOTsEZ* 'diocese,' but אינגרעדיענט *INGREDYENT* 'ingredient' and אידיאָמאַטיש *IDYOMATISH* 'idiomatic.' Finally, there is apparently further variation in the standard pronunciation, e.g., Weinreich's example of אַזיע 'Asia' which he states can be pronounced [AZ-YE] or [A-ZI-E].

To make matters simple and more easily implementable in bibliographies, it is recommended that any time an unmarked *yud* (י) appears before another vowel, it should be transliterated *y*. If there is a *khirek* (יִ), it should be transliterated *i*. Otherwise, consonantal *yud* is transliterated *y* and vocalic *yud* (one that comes between consonants) is transliterated *i*.

For example, ביבליאָטעק 'library' should be transliterated *biblyotek* because there is an unmarked *yud* appearing before the vowel *o*. However, ביבליאָטעק (a non-YIVO spelling in some Soviet Yiddish sources) would be transliterated *bibliotek*, due to the *khirek* under the *yud*.

²⁰ Schaechter, *Di geviksn-velt in yidish*, xxxiii: "gegenwart [sic!]."

²¹ U. Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary*, xxiii–xxiv.

The same is true for דיאַלעקטאָלאָגיע 'dialectology': *dyalektologye*. If there were a *khirek* under the first and last *yud*, it would be transliterated *dialektologie*.

Example transliterations

This table provides examples of authors, titles, and (where applicable) journal names written in transliteration. Other common elements of a bibliographic entry are not normally affected by the above recommendations and have not been included in the table.

Table 3

A sampling of sources listed in their original orthography alongside transliterations that comply with the recommendations included in this document

In Yiddish (and translation, if provided in source)	In transliteration for an English-language bibliography
<p>חנא שמערוק. פרצעס ייִאוש־וויזיע: אינטערפרעטאַציע פֿון י. ל. פרצעס ביי נאַכט אויפֿן אַלטן מאַרק און קריטישע אויסגאַבע פֿון דער דראַמע. Chone Shmeruk. Peretz's Vision of Despair: Interpretation of Y. L. Peretz's <i>Bay nakht oyfn altn mark</i> and Critical Edition of the Play.</p>	<p>Chone Shmeruk. <i>Peretses yiesh-vizye: interpretatsye fun Y. L. Peretses Bay nakht oyfn altn mark un kritishe oysgabe fun der drame</i> [Peretz's Vision of Despair: Interpretation of Y. L. Peretz's <i>Bay nakht oyfn altn mark</i> and Critical Edition of the Play].</p>
<p>הערשל גלעזער. „דאָס לשון פֿון עמנואל אָלשוואַנגער.“ ייִדישע שפּראַך. Paul Glasser. “Immanuel Olšvanger's Yiddish.”</p>	<p>Paul Glasser. “Dos loshn fun Imonuel Olshvanger” [Immanuel Olšvanger's Yiddish]. <i>Yidishe shprakh</i>.</p>
<p>א. פעטשאַרסקי. דער אופשטאנד אין סאביבור. А. Печорский. Восстание в Сабибуре.</p>	<p>Alexander Pechersky [A. Petshorski]. <i>Der ufshtand in sabibur</i> [The Sobibor Uprising]. Russian: <i>Vosstanie v Sabibure</i>.</p>
<p>ב. קאַוונער. פרעהליכע מינוטען: געקליבענע הומאָריסטישע ערצעהלונגען. B. Kovner. <i>Cheerful Minutes: Selected Humorous Stories</i>.</p>	<p>B. Kovner [Jacob Adler]. <i>Frehlikhe minuten: geklibene humoristische ertsehlungen</i> [Cheerful Minutes: Selected Humorous Stories].</p>
<p>י. מ. בעַרמאַן. די טישלער-אַרבייט: וויכטיגע יִדיעות פֿאַר יודישע סטאָליאַרעס. Y. M. [Yisroel-Moyshe] Berman. <i>Di tishler-arbeyt: viktige yedies far yudishe stolyares</i> [Woodworking: Important</p>	<p>Y. M. [Yisroel-Moyshe] Berman. <i>Di tishler-arbeyt: viktige yedies far yudishe stolyares</i> [Woodworking: Important</p>

	Information for Jewish Carpenters].
<p>א. ראטה. אידיש ווערטער אוצר: א זאמלונג פון איבער 6150 ווערטער און זייערע סינאנימען.</p>	<p>A. Roth. <i>Idish verter oytser: a zamlung fun iber 6150 verter un zeyere sinonimen</i> [Yiddish Thesaurus: A Collection of Over 6,150 Words and Their Synonyms].</p>

Figure 1

The title pages accompanying Shmeruk’s study and critical edition of Peretz’s *Bay nakht oyfn altn mark*. The English page includes not only a translation of the title, but also a partial transliteration (*Peretses yiesh-vizye; Bay nakht oyfn altn mark*) and an implicit recommendation that the author’s first name be rendered *Chone* (though the letter *c* is not used in the YIVO system).

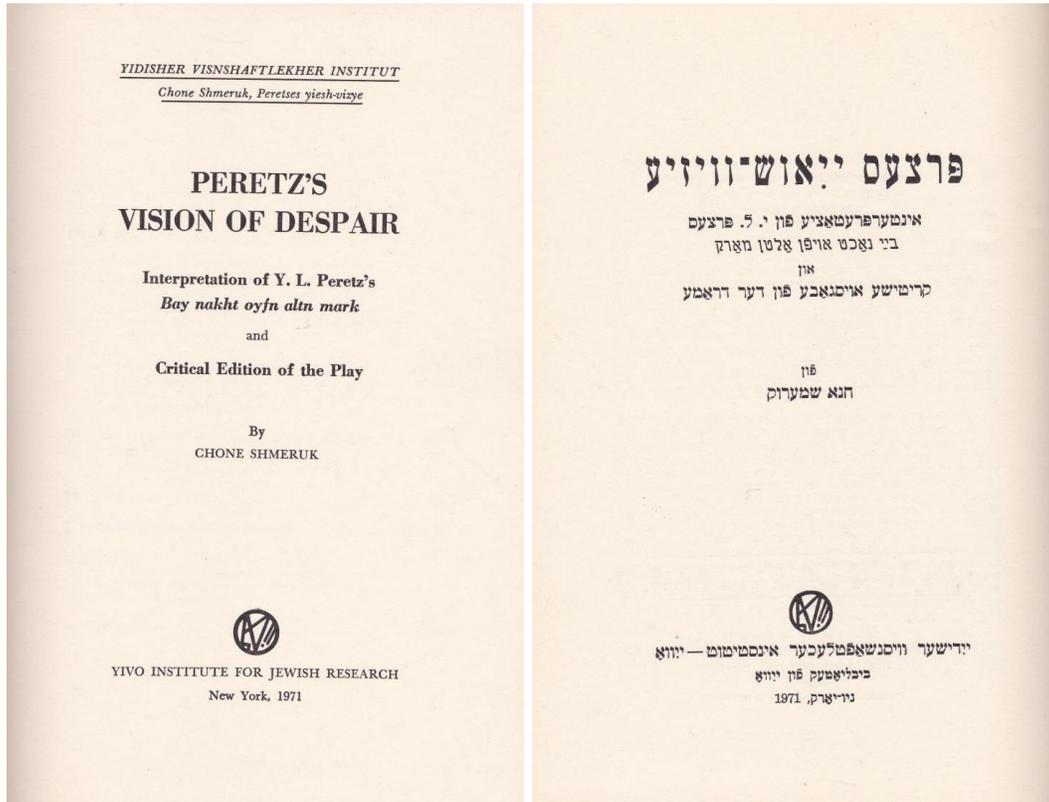


Figure 2

The bibliography from Yitskhok Niborski, *Verterbukh fun loshn-koydesh-shtamike verter in yidish* [*Dictionnaire des mots d'origine hébraïque et araméenne en usage dans la langue yiddish; Dictionary of Hebrew- and Aramaic-Origin Words in Yiddish*], 3rd ed. (Paris: Bibliothèque Medem, 2012), xviii. The bibliography preserves a number of features of the source texts’ nonstandard orthographies, including the last two sources which have different spellings for *hebreizmen* ‘Hebraisms’ and *yidish* ‘Yiddish.’

ביבליאָגראַפֿיע

- צבֿיניסן גאַלאַמב, מלים בלשוני, ווילנע 1910.
- אַלפסנדר האַרקאָווי, ייִדיש־ענגליש־העברעאישער ווערטערבוך, ניו־יאָרק 1928,
איבערדרוק 1988.
- אוריאַל ווינרינד, מאָדערן ייִדיש־ענגליש ענגליש־ייִדיש ווערטערבוך, ניו־יאָרק
1968.
- יהואש – חיים ספיוואַק, אידיש ווערטערבוך, ניו־יאָרק 1911, איבערדרוק 1929.
יודל מאַרק – י.א. יאַפֿע (רעדאַקציע), גרויסער ווערטערבוך פֿון דער ייִדישער
שפראַך, בענד 1–4, ניו־יאָרק – ירושלים 1961–1980.
- יצחק ניבאַרסקי – בערל וויסבראַנט, ייִדיש־פֿראַנצייזיש ווערטערבוך, פֿאַריז 2002.
נחום סטוטשקאָוו, דער אוצר פֿון דער ייִדישער שפראַך, ניו־יאָרק 1950.
נחמיה פֿערעפֿערקאָוויטש, העברייאזמען אין אידיש, ריגע 1931.
ישׂראל שטיינבערג, העברעיזמען אין דער ייִדישער שפראַך, וואַצלאָוו 1949.