THE LATEST IN YIDDISH STUDIES

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This bibliography features scholarly works in French published over the last two years (2014-2015) that speak to the concerns of Yiddish Studies, widely defined. We have included here books, book chapters, articles, and special issues of journals that in some way encounter Yiddish—as the language of primary documents when investigating Ashkenazi histories in their transnational dispersion, as an identifying marker of Jewish communities and cultures from the early modern period to the present, or as a cultural artifact whose location and affiliation are constantly shifting. In this way we include studies that would not necessarily be called or call themselves “Yiddishist” or be firmly aligned with “Yiddish Studies” as such, but that make arguments and present scholarly research that form a contiguous relationship with Yiddish and Yiddish culture.

We only featured scholarly studies, and have therefore omitted important new translations and critical editions such as Jean Spector’s, Nathan Weinstock’s, and Micheline Weinstock’s translation of Yehoshue Perle’s Yidn fun a gants yor, Khurbn Varshe, and 4580 (Juifs ordinaires, Garnier 2015), Batia Baum’s translation of Avrom Sutzkever’s Griner akvarium (Aquarium vert: brefs récits, Medem Library, 2013), or the anthology “Yiddish Voices from Montreal” (“Voix yiddish de Montréal,” Moebius 139, 2013). We also left out book reviews and exhibition reviews.

We were struck by the quality and diversity of recent Yiddish scholarship in French. We feature works that range from an interdisciplinary analysis of the archival collection “Dos poylishe yidntum” to psychoanalytical interpretations of contemporary Yiddish-language interviews, from a monographic study of the
work of I.J. Singer to a historical account of the founding of a Yiddish theater troupe in 1912 Montreal.

This list is focused on scholarship from the last two years but we have also included a few works from 2013 that we felt were particularly important or deserved more attention. Each entry is followed by an English translation of the original French title of the book, chapter, article, or special issue, a short English-language summary, and available links to online material.

The aim of this bibliography is to foster dialogue, intellectual exchange, and academic cooperation in Yiddish studies across national and linguistic boundaries. Our French-language bibliography complements “The Latest in Yiddish Studies in English: 2014-2015,” published by In geveb in February 2016. We understand that there is a plurality of languages of scholarship related to Yiddish Studies. Check back for further posts in this space that list recent works in Yiddish Studies in Yiddish, Polish, German, Hebrew, Spanish, Russian, and other languages.

For better or worse, this list features a majority of works from the fields of history and literature, a reflection perhaps of the interests of the editorial board and contributors of In geveb or more likely an indication of the dominance that these fields have over Yiddish Studies and its appearance in academic forums. We also anticipate that we have missed certain publications in the wide distribution of Yiddish Studies among the various disciplines of the academy. We are committed to trying to change this state of affairs. Please send additional references to new and important work that are not listed here to info@ingeveb.org and we will add them to the list.

You can download a PDF of this bibliography here.

We wish to thank Tal Hever-Chybowski and the whole team of the Paris Yiddish Center-Medem Library for their useful suggestions and comments.

BOOKS

This edited volume offers a comprehensive history of the Jewish community of Quebec City since 1738, detailing the socio-historical and legal aspects of the community’s integration and contribution to Québécois society, including both an overview of the community’s most prominent and influential figures and a
detailed account of occasionally violent manifestations of anti-Semitism. The sixth chapter, entitled “The Great Eastern European Jewish Migration at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” deals more specifically with Yiddish culture and Yiddish-language materials.

This edited volume offers a comprehensive analysis of the various private and institutional actors (both academic and non-academic) that spearheaded the study of Jewish popular traditions in Europe from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the Second World War, highlighting the role played by ethnographic studies and expeditions, private collectors, specialized museums, literati, and political parties and ideologies.

This edited volume, based on a symposium held at Paris IV Sorbonne in 2010, offers a wide range of essays dealing with the personal and institutional mechanisms of “memorial tourism” in Central and Eastern Europe as a means for various communities to come to terms with the dramatic upheavals of twentieth-century Central and Eastern European history.

This book analyzes a broad range of literary works that fall into the category of “khurbn” narratives (i.e. related to concentration camps and the Holocaust). According to Coquio, these works are characterized by a form of symbolic and anthropological “break,” which she calls “désappartenance” (“unbelonging”), a notion that she relates to the concept of “suspended literature” as defined by Imre Kertész in his Nobel Prize reception speech. The second chapter of the book, entitled “Khurbn: Reactions to the Catastrophe,” deals more specifically with Yiddish-language material.

This book offers a comprehensive historical study of the sociopolitical mechanisms of racism and anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union after 1953. At the crossroads of history and political science, this book is based on a thorough study of archival materials in Russia, Israel, France, and the United States, including primary sources in Yiddish from the Medem Library in Paris and YIVO in New York.

http://www.mahj.org/fr/3_expositions/expo-Maryan-La-menagerie-humaine-catalogue.php
This exhibition catalog, based on an exhibition held at the Paris Museum of Jewish Art and History in 2013, offers a monographic survey of the work of the Polish Jewish painter Maryan (Pinchas Burstein, 1927-1977), with a specific focus on the autobiographical dimension of his work, exemplified by his 1971 notebooks, entitled Ecce homo, featuring China ink drawings and writings in English, French, Yiddish, and Polish.

http://www.mjw-fedition.com/?ref=9#42
Featuring partial French translations of some of the three hundred interviews conducted in Yiddish by Max Kohn since 2006, this book attempts to define a “psychoanalytic event” specifically linked to the act of speaking Yiddish today. Summarizing Max Kohn’s earlier work on the specific links between Yiddish and psychoanalysis, it includes numerous individual case studies, ranging from prominent international Jewish writers from the twentieth century (Franz Kafka, Cynthia Ozick) to contemporary French Yiddishists (Charles Dobzynski, Rachel Ertel, Yitskhok Niborski).

http://www.mjw-fedition.com/?ref=9#35
Third, revised edition of Max Kohn’s treatise on Freud’s early writings from his “pre-analytical” period (1877-1897), first published in 1982; Max Kohn formulates the hypothesis that Freud’s notion of Witz developed in his 1905 essay Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious is key to understanding his earlier writings, and that Yiddish constitutes a “repressed” element that deeply influenced this aspect of Freud’s work.

A monographic study of the work of I.J. Singer, with a specific focus on the notions of Yiddish Modernism, the “rise of the subject”, and the symbolic crisis affecting the relationship between the individual and the collective, as Singer feels compelled to find new ways to relate to the Jewish community and the Jewish past.

Fleur Kuhn-Kennedy analyzes four Jewish novels written in different languages—Joseph Opatoshu’s *In poylishe velder*, I.B. Singer’s *Der sotn in Goray*, André Schwarz-Bart’s *Le Dernier des Justes* and David Grossman’s *See Under: Love*—specifically the ways in which they imitate and subvert Jewish tradition, intertextuality becoming a mirror for identification or projection.

This dictionary offers a wealth of information about Jewish life and culture in France since 1944; a number of entries cover Yiddish culture and Yiddish-related topics; the “Yiddish” entry itself was written by Gilles Rozier.

This edited volume offers a selection of papers initially presented at a symposium at the Paris Museum of Jewish Art and History (Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme) in June 2014, analyzing the genre of the “khurbn” narratives (mostly but not exclusively in Yiddish) after 1945 in a broad sense, i.e. bearing witness both to the Shoah itself and to pre-war Polish Jewish culture.

This exhibition catalog includes a detailed account of the life and work of Sutzkever, reproductions of archival documents, and an essay by Yitskhok Niborski, “Avrom Sutzkever, un poète pour la vie” (“Avrom Sutzkever, A Poet for Life”). Niborski’s essay is published in both French and Yiddish.


Second, updated trilingual edition (French-Russian-English) of this comprehensive volume about Jewish artists (many of them native Yiddish speakers) of the school of Paris, including Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Chil Aronson (1898-1966), and Hersch Fenster (1892-1964), author of *Undzere farpaynike kinstler* (Our Martyred Artists, 1951), the first work published on this topic. This volume includes biographical notes, bibliographies of each artist, and reproductions of important works.


A detailed historical analysis of the activities of the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation (now known as Centre de Documentation du Mémorial de la Shoah, or Documentary Center of the Paris Shoah Memorial) since its foundation by Isaac Schneersohn in Grenoble in 1943 as part of the underground resistance movement to the present day.


A monographic study of the life and work of Michel Werber’s father, Abusz Werber: born in Poland, Abusz Werber became the leader of the Linke Poalei Sion in Belgium, and one of the founders of the Committee for the Defense of the Jews of Belgium during the Second World War, a resistance organization that helped several thousands Jewish children and adults escape deportation. As part of its resistance activities, Werber was also the chief editor of the underground Yiddish-language journal *Undzer vort.*
BOOK CHAPTERS

This article offers an in-depth historical analysis of the publication of the Montreal-based Yiddish-language daily newspaper Keneder Odler, a window into Yiddish life and culture in Montreal in the beginning of the twentieth century.

This article covers a lesser-known aspect of early Yiddish cultural life in Montreal, and of the geographical extension of Yiddish theater, by documenting the founding of a permanent Yiddish theater troupe in Montreal in 1912.

In this article, Anctil offers a summary of his ongoing research about the history Yiddish life and culture in Montreal, from the specific perspective of migration studies.

This article provides a comprehensive philological analysis of Old Yiddish glosses in the margins of sacred texts in Hebrew, a subject first studied by Baumgarten in the context of his *Introduction à la littérature yiddish ancienne* (*Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature*, 1993, English transl. 2005).


This article offers an historical analysis of the importance of the collection of the testimonies of survivor children in Poland in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, with a specific focus on the work of the Central Jewish Historical Commission.


The result of an international research project, focusing specifically on Polish Jewish immigration to France and Israel, from the end of the nineteenth century to 1968, in its demographic and sociological aspects, questioning reasons for departure, assimilation, and ties with the homeland.


A conversation on Batia Baum’s experience as a translator of Yiddish into French, on rediscovering the mother tongue, and on the Yiddish language as a language “which contains translation.”


A study of three novels—Joseph Opatoshu’s *In Polish Woods*, Isaac Bashevis Singer’s *Satan in Goray* and David Grossman’s *See Under: Love*—highlighting
the ways in which they repeat in the act of writing a past apocalypse, and respond to the messianic void by creating a deceitful Messiah. Kuhn-Kennedy argues that in response to disenchanted modern messianism, these Yiddish writers betray and “usurp” the authority of the Jewish Law, turning history into an eternal return of catastrophe, creating multiples figures of false messiahs with which they identify.


This article analyzes the ambiguous status of Yiddish in the writings of Louis Wolfson (born in 1931), a schizophrenic New York Jewish writer who cut himself off from his English-speaking environment and invented a new personal language based on a mixture of French, German, Russian, and Hebrew, an experience related in his French-language autobiographical work Le Schizo et les langues, published by Gallimard in 1970. Wolfson was a heritage speaker of Yiddish and, as a result of his total rejection of English, resorted to Yiddish to communicate with his parents.

ARTICLES


http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/39640/35915

This article examines the creation of the Jewish Public Library of Montreal, founded in 1914, at a time when Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe was at its peak, showing how a distinctive Yiddish-speaking Jewish identity emerged in Montreal.


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The article recounts the fifty years (1989-1939) during which the Gimpel Theater, founded by Jakob Ber Gimpel (1840-1906), was a central institution of Yiddish culture in Galicia. The Gimpel Theater attracted important figures of American Yiddish theater and became a breeding ground for artists who then left for Berlin, Vienna, New York, or even Hollywood. The article also recalls the three generations of the Gimpel family (actors, musicians), who played a role of mediation between scholarly and popular culture, between Polish, Austrian, Jewish, and American spheres, between various traditions and identities.


Elsky, Julia. “Informations juives (1941-1942) ou les ambiguïtés d’un périodique français/yiddish pendant l’Occupation.” [“Jewish News (1941-1942), or the Ambiguities of a French-Yiddish Periodical in Occupied France”]. Archives Juives 46, 2 (2013): 116-130. http://www.cfaj.fr/AJ/Sommaire_462.htm This article studies the weekly circular Informations juives (1941-1942), published by the Association consistoriale israélite of Paris, bringing to light the tensions posed by its French-Yiddish bilingualism, juxtaposing articles on Jewish literature, culture and history and Nazi laws, the voice of both the authorities and the community.


Fefer. Ertel examines the poetic representation of the *khurbn* under the Stalinist regime, elaborating a difference between a “poetic of the cry” and a “poetic of silence”.

A brief presentation of Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever, followed by a translation into French of a selection of ghetto poems, in celebration of the centennial of his birth.

An essay on the Yiddish cultural center on Guy Patin Street in Paris, originally a home for Jewish girls founded by baroness Edmond de Rothschild, and which hosted refugees starting in 1946, including many writers, poets, artists, and performers.

Building on a verse by Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein, Ertel poses the question of the poetic, collective “we” in response to the Catastrophe. Jewish memory and its durability are addressed through a reading of Yiddish Holocaust poetry.

http://larhra.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/node/2469
A study of postwar Poland, which lost its ethnic and religious minorities during the war, resulting in an overwhelming Catholic majority (over 90%). The author
shows how the promises of reconstruction and of a new regime were in fact rooted in the spirit of Christianity and the values it carried.

This article focuses on the history of the traumas of the war and their effects, covering the anti-Jewish violence in post-war Poland, the reasons why Poland was a “bloodland” at the end of the war. It traces the reactions of the various actors present at the time, including reference to Yiddish theater and newspapers.

This article exposes the work of Brichah, a Polish organization which helped 120,000 Jews leave the country in the aftermath of the Second World War, based on Polish administrative archives and testimonies.

Jewish humor is explored in this article from both an anthropological and psychoanalytical stance, along with the role of Yiddish witticisms and their connection with linguistics and psychoanalysis.

This article considers the last work of Soviet Yiddish writer Natan Zabare, a historical novel first published in *Sovetish heymland* in the 1970s, arguing for its uniqueness in the Jewish Soviet literary canon of the time.

An account of the author’s relationship to Yiddish language and culture and her work as a translator of Yiddish literature into French.

This article reflects on heritage and the recreation of one’s own (hi)story through an examination of the novel *Le Dernier des Justes (The Last of the Just)*, by André Schwarz-Bart, which creates an account out of a Jewish legacy which was never entirely inherited, and can therefore be voiced only through literary reconstruction and transference. Schwarz-Bart, whose native language was Yiddish (though a language he never learned to read or write), wrote his novels in what can be described as a French “haunted” by Yiddish.

This article reflects the work of a few young scholars in Yiddish Studies in Paris on the “Dos poylishe yidntum” collection published by Mark Turkow in Buenos Aires between the years 1946 and 1966. The authors evoke the important and unusual role played by Turkow, not strictly editorial.

Robert Bober, documentary filmmaker (*Sholem Aleichem, a Yiddish Writer*) and writer (*Quoi de neuf sur la guerre*), won in 2013 the Max Cukierman Prize for the promotion of Yiddish language and culture. In this interview he discusses his
involvement with a language and culture lost and found again.

This study tells the story of journalist B. Waldak’s trip to Mandate Palestine in the summer of 1936, commissioned by the *Forverts* to report on Zionist activity. Waldak’s article ultimately informs its readers of the number of suicides amongst pioneers and of the difficulties and hardships they had to confront. Historian Gour Alroui, professor at the University of Haïfa, recently found the article in the YIVO archives.

This article presents the life and actions of Fajwel Schrager, a key figure in the French bundist movement. After arriving in France from Poland in 1927, he was involved with the Kultur-lige and was an editor for *Naye Presse*, the communist Yiddish daily. He joined the French army during the war and eventually went on to create in 1944, with others, the CRIF (the French Jewish umbrella organization).

Created under the German occupation in Grenoble in 1943, the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (“Center for Contemporary Jewish documentation”) was renamed Centre de documentation du Mémorial de la Shoah in 2013. An essential institution for researchers specialized in German and French anti-Semitic persecutions in France between 1940 and 1944 and in the study of the Holocaust, its resources have been used in many ways in the course of the last seven decades. The Centre de documentation is the home to an important collection of *yizker-bikher* as well as Yiddish language newspapers such as *Naye prese*.
An article discussing the act of translation from Yiddish in the “postvernacular era” (Jeffrey Shandler). Ringuet evokes the links between translation, transmission, and memory (Paul Ricoeur), focusing on the specificities of translating Yiddish into French in Montreal.

http://www.ajhl.org/plurielles/PL18.PDF
Marc Sagnol returns to the former towns of Kossow, Kuty and Wyjnitz, in the Carpathian Mountains, birthplace of writers and poets such as Josef Burg (Wyjnitz 1912- Czernowitz 2009), regular contributor to Tshernovitser bleter and Sovetish heymland.

https://www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-germaniques-2014-3-p-423.htm
A study of Joseph Roth’s novel The Leviathan and the theme of the Ostjuden.

This article focuses on two collections by Itsik Manger published in 1935 and 1936: Di humesh-lider (The Pentateuch Songs) and Di megile-lider (The Megillah Songs), arguing that as a heir of the Jewish tradition, Manger invites the Biblical times into early twentieth-century Eastern Europe.

http://itineraires.revues.org/2848
A comparative analysis of Jamaican-born writer Claude McKay and Polish Yiddish-speaking writer Oser Warszawski, which reads Homi Bhabha in order to evidence a desire to create a new space in their works of fiction—a “third-space”
or an “in-between space.”

This article analyzes the public perception of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Belgium in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.

SPECIAL ISSUES

Langues et cité, Bulletin de l’observatoire des pratiques linguistiques [Languages and City, Bulletin of the Observatory of Linguistic Practices], 27 (December 2015)  
http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Politiques-ministerielles/Langue-francaise-et-langues-de-France/Observation-des-pratiques-linguistiques/Langues-et-cite/Langues-et-cite-n-27-le-yiddish
Le yiddish [Yiddish].  
This special issue of the Bulletin of the Observatory of Linguistic Practices (a government organization that is part of the French Ministry of Culture) provides a summary of the history of Yiddish language and culture with a special focus on the history of Yiddish culture in France, with contributions by Yistkhok Niborski (“Yiddish Culture in France”), Tal Hever-Chybowsk (“Sholem-Aleykhem in Paris” and “What is Yiddishism?”), Arnaud Bikard (“Majors Trends and Texts of Old Yiddish Literature”), Natalia Krynicka (“A Chronology of Yiddish Literature”), and Gilles Rozier (“A Thousand Doors Leading to Yiddish Culture”).