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Spectra and Corpora of a New Mother Tongue
The Eliezer Ben-Yehuda Library

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"The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language. [...] In like manner, the beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he assimilates the spirit of the new language and expresses himself freely in it only when he moves in it without recalling the old and when he forgets his native tongue."

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.*

1   How is a new mother tongue formed? Are there, in this specific language of verbal transmission between generations, versions, attempts, explorations or experiments, which could trace this process? What are its fundamental components and how can a hierarchy be found? How can it be structured?

2   Linguistic science has of course looked at Hebrew as a case study. According to Saussure, this field of study tends "not to include any theoretical or historical presupposition to its

portrayal and to analyze the language in its proper formal basis." Thus, "descriptively, linguistic science attaches equal interest to all types of written or non-written languages and it must adapt its methods to it."[1] In the positive sciences, the answer that the linguistics offer to the questions concerning the beginnings of a language is a methodical approach that answers the imperative of the famous sentence that ends Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* where basically, the analysis of the language is inevitably reflexive: "*linguistic science has as its sole and true aim the language in itself and for itself.*"[2]

3   Several approaches analyze the elements and the origin of Hebrew through morphological, syntactical, phonetical and lexical characteristics, which vary with the typological study. There is quite a hodgepodge within the terms that are used in the scientific field and in the field of linguistic science, especially: *modern* Hebrew, *new* Hebrew, *living* Hebrew, *contemporary* Hebrew, Hebrew *today*, *Israeli* Hebrew, *Sabra* Hebrew, *our* Hebrew, Hebrew *spoken today* or just plain the "*Israeli*"[3] (that has the advantage of having gotten out of this qualificative deadlock). This absence of consensus regarding the nomenclature of Hebrew shows that this language must still be identified and that it is still difficult to characterize it: is this the language that was spoken in the past by the ancestors of the land of Israel, before their exile? Or rather, is it on the contrary, a perfectly new language? Is this a matter of a birth, strictly speaking, or rather a "revival", such as the Hebrew designers perceived it, in the sense of a "resurrection," as a "messianic" one, of a bygone age?

4   Essentially, it seems to be possible to classify the different linguistic approaches according to three paradigmatic models. The first model, *Hebrew – Semitic language*, which has been adopted by the majority of linguists, extending the Zionist ideology, considers Hebrew in its historical and linguistic unity. It grants the Hebrew constituent, which would be the principal source of the language, a paramount place.[4] The second model that reflects the hybridity of the Hebrew language, in particular regarding the theories on *Pidgin*, *Koine* or the creolization of the language, concentrates on a hexarchy of synchronic and diachronic aspects of the language. This approach of *Hebrew – Semitic-European language*[5] emphasizes in particular the influence of the native speakers' mother tongues – and specifically, the unconscious substrate of Yiddish.[6] According to this theory, Hebrew would be a genetically Semitic and typologically European language. Finally, the third model, which is considered radical[7], categorically rejects the connection of Hebrew with Semitic languages by asserting that it is a Yiddish dialect.

5   Although they have offered fundamental explanations, the linguists confined themselves to describing the composition of the language. The metaphoric use of terms evolve from other disciplines, i.e., archeology ("adstratum" – that for Rosen[8] represents Yiddish in Hebrew), psychology ("subconscious"[9]) or even more strikingly, psychiatry ("schizoid"[10]), thus asserting the intuition that extra-linguistic phenomena might occur as a mental event – yet, this is still vague and rather non-conclusive. Furthermore, the purpose of linguistic science is not to analyze the individual or collective phenomena, the mental mechanisms that occur with the historical development of a mother tongue. Therefore, it doesn't appear improper to broaden the scope of research in this context.

6   Generally speaking, there is no language without words and in the case of Hebrew, *there would be no language without text.* When a mother tongue descends from texts, why should we then study the language beyond these texts and beyond their common existence? Why should we avoid the textual source, the *primary* source in the creation of the mother tongue?

7   A short study of the different faces of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the key figure of the "resurrection" of Hebrew as well as of the particular corpus of his personal library, will allow us to explore the role of the text in the emergence of the Hebrew mother tongue.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the resurrection of Hebrew? Do the "non-fools err"[11]?

8   To "revive", to "rekindle", a "dead" language, a language that has started "living": so many terms used in order to refer to the "miracle" of the "resurrection" of the Hebrew language. They are the identity of the spectrum's "appearance", of the paradox revival of the *here and now* of yore. By becoming reality, the language will belong to another world, to the next world, a scission and collision of two temporal dimensions. By not dealing anymore with the question of a rejected language, these terms will then raise another question, i.e., the attribution of this historical development to a person or to a group of individuals.

9   There are numerous portraits of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda[12] and they often take the shape of the "founding father", his son being the "first speaker" of the Hebrew mother tongue. Amongst those who are considered to be the "restorers" of the Hebrew language[13], he is regarded as the prominent figure of the History of Hebrew. More precisely, his name is attached to what is being called the "rebirth" of Hebrew and its appearance as the new mother tongue of the 19th century.

10   The name Eliezer Ben-Yehuda evokes spectral illustrations. Born Perlman, it is only at the moment of the publication of his article *The Burning Question* in 1879 that he uses for the first time the pseudonym Ben-Yehuda, which will become his patronym. The explanations of this name's origin differ quite a bit. First, this name calls to mind the last territory on which the Jews lived and where the Hebrew language had still been a living language: the kingdom of Judea ("Yehuda"). Further, Ben-Yehuda literally means in Hebrew "son of Yehuda." Ben-Yehuda's father, whose name was Yehuda, died when the son was not even 5 years old. In his introduction to the translation of Ben-Yehuda's memoirs, the psychoanalyst Gerard Haddad allocates a psychoanalytical meaning to repeating the name of his father by remarking that Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's acrostic is *avi* (in Hebrew "my father") and by bringing about an anamnesis of the Hebrew mother tongue. Yet, we will still make a few reservations on the over-determination of the phenomena of the name change to the "father's name" in terms of symptoms, describing the so-called "reverse psychosis," meaning that the *a priori* mechanisms characterize the psychosis – the creation of neologism, the transformation of sense and use of the divine's language into the secular one – and thus allowing a healing. With its precarious foundations, Hebrew would have avoided its debarment. According to Haddad "before Ben-Yehuda, Hebrew resembled the collective *Grundsprache* of the entire Jewish people who had been living in a collective encysted psychosis for centuries."[14] The analogy and the comparison between Hebrew and the psychotic language of President Schreber do not seem to give a plausible explanation on the mechanism of this supposedly underlying psychosis, of which the entire Jewish people would be attained and of which Ben-Yehuda would be the liberator.

11   The above-mentioned hypotheses aim at explaining the choice of Ben-Yehuda's patronym. Yet, even though he was born Eliezer Isaac Elianov Perlman and he had thus

kept his original first name, there could be another meaning to the name, which he had chosen. The name Eliezer Ben-Yehuda is indeed also the name of a homonymous rabbi and this name was probably framed by Ben-Yehuda himself in his own Talmud.

12 This rabbi – who is often recognized as Elazar Ben-Yehuda – is hardly ever cited in the texts and only a few things are known about him, mainly that he belonged to the Tannaim. This group of rabbis, who participated in the compilation of legal texts and in the establishment of an ethical code during the first two centuries of our era, was deeply marked by two major historical events, of which the first is the loss of the religious center and the second the loss of the political entity: the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AC and the capitulation of Bar Kokhba's revolt in the year 135. The Tannaim, as their name shows (literally "teaching" and "oral passing on"), tried to pass on the teachers' words that had been conveyed orally after this profound shakeup in the Jewish society. This codification of customs and laws would last until the 2nd century and would be called the Mishna.

13 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's substantial lexicographical work of the dictionary of the Hebrew language aimed to list all the *revived* words in the entire textual Hebrew corpus through quoting texts; this perfectly coincidences with the aim to reiterate and transmit the teachers' words. The connection to this Tanna allows us to discover another facet of Ben-Yehuda, thus granting him a place in the lineage of great authors of Hebrew texts, i.e., of a scriptural interpreter.
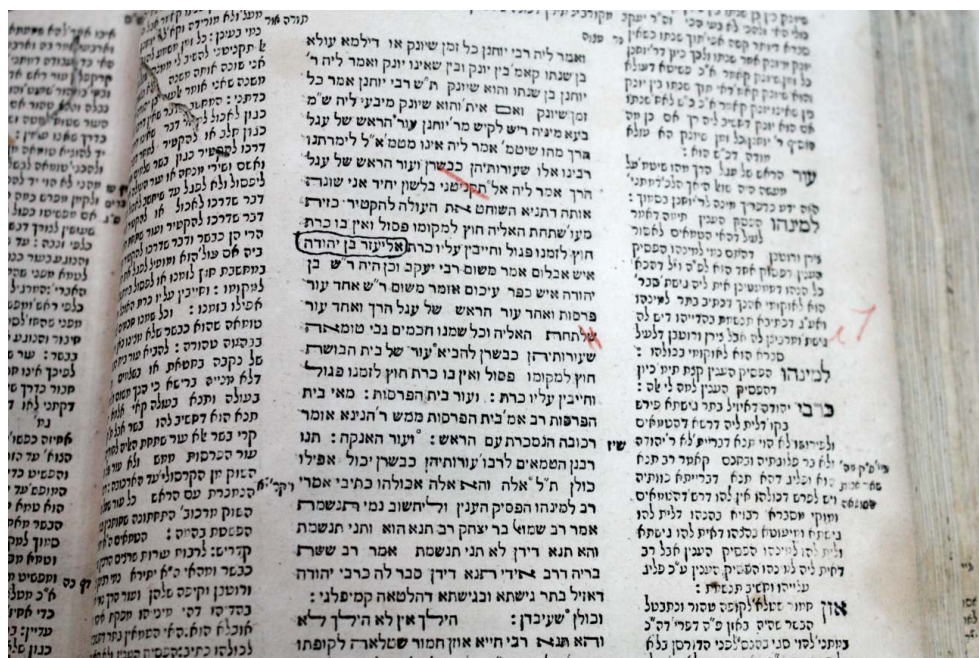
Eliezer Ben-Yehuda usually used black ink. This document formed a part of his personal library and thus, it is likely that it was the author himself who had framed the quote of his homonym in the text (Talmud of Babylon, Treaty of Hullin, 55,2).

The Academy of the Hebrew Language of Jerusalem

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's library: The archeology of a mother tongue

14 To compose his *Dictionary of the Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language*[15], Ben-Yehuda had to collate and collect almost 40,000 books and 500,000 quotations.[16]

15 Today, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's personal library is kept among the walls of the Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem. This library includes almost 1,000 pieces of work, whose origins and dates of arrival can hardly be listed. Generally speaking and as far as we are aware, this library has never been the subject of a study and only a very few works refer to this corpus.[17] This research study represents a preliminary analysis.

16 The selection of this library covers the entire literary stratum of Hebrew: biblical, Talmudic, medieval and modern. Yet, works concerning Semitic languages, as for example Armenian, Arabic, etc., or European languages, like German, French, English, are also found there. Yiddish and Russian are rather excluded (although they are the languages that Ben-Yehuda had spoken in his youth).

17 While looking for information on the dictionary, I started researching this library. Out of curiosity, I was leafing through one of the works when, almost by chance, I discovered original colored distinguishing marks. In the beginning I thought they were only simple scrabbles but then, I noticed that the work appeared in the dictionary's bibliography. After checking the matter, I found out that it was not an isolated phenomenon and an important number of these words, which were marked in the pieces of works, appeared in the dictionary.

18 This allows me to maintain more conclusively that these distinguishing marks were possibly made by Ben-Yehuda himself – a hypothesis supported by a passage in the memoirs of his second wife, Hemda, which have not been published yet and which relate to the dictionary's make-up: "Our four hands do not suffice anymore to copy out the essentials and the old librarian Cohen started to holler that Ben-Yehuda impaired all books of his library with his markings and notes in all colors on each page."[18] This gives us information on the methodology, which was used by her husband, in order to isolate and organize the elements of this corpus. This part of Ben-Yehuda's work resembles archeological excavations. With blue, red and purple pencils, yet also with black ink, Ben-Yehuda extracted from the texts the words that would constitute his dictionary, thus gathering the entire stratum of the Hebrew language. For, "the teachers and lecturers need words, the writers too, the winemakers and the peasants, the artisans, the small shopkeepers, the cooks (...) and if they have none available, they will not speak Hebrew!" [19] But on which criteria is the choice of considered words and their classification completed? Which place does the interpretation of the texts occupy in order to "revive" a word in the language?

The method: the language's analysis

19 Ben-Yehuda's method answers an archeological logic of the language. The language's corpus is firstly material, textual. The summa of all these language layers generates Hebrew that becomes the meeting place among the various literary styles, which maintain the productive intertextual relationships, a permanent contact with the cultures of the Diaspora and the precedent texts that become the substratum of a spoken language. The incorporation of a different textual corpus allows the "implementation of the language."

20 Anastylosis is an archeological term, referring to the reconstruction of an edifice in ruins, primarily with elements that were found on the location. It corresponds exactly with Ben-Yehuda's work. He states the following in his introduction to the *Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*: "I had been working for many years on my research of the Hebrew

language and I collected materials and bricks in order to put together a general dictionary"[20]. Ben-Yehuda did thus find bricks on the location: the words. How will he organize them?

21 Let us take the example of an excerpt of the *Covenant of Easter* (Talmud of Babylon[21]) that was studied by Ben-Yehuda (see below picture). Ben-Yehuda distinguishes between two groups of words: some are marked in blue, some in red. Let us continue with the hypothesis that these colors have a meaning. The first explanation that seems plausible to me for the organization of these "bricks" is the classification according to their grammatical nature. Yet, after verifying the matter (by comparing the books of the library and the dictionary), I noticed that the words marked with different colored pencils do not distinguish the verbs from the nouns, articles, etc. and that Ben-Yehuda did not carry out any grammatical analysis. He categorized the words only into their source and chose his lexical material by marking the words in a particular manner: the colored diagonal mark in red is used for words from the Bible, in blue for the sources of the Mishna and Talmud, and in black for the period after Hazal. This range of colors is called the chromatic spectrum.

The chromatic spectrum

22 In the dictionary each word is preceded by a symbol that designates its textual source. Before defining each word in Hebrew, Ben-Yehuda indicates its nature. It is then translated most of the time into three languages: German, French, and English. Finally, Ben-Yehuda quotes the occurrences in chronological order.

23 Ben-Yehuda identifies four periods or stratums that he distinguishes by specific symbols. In fact, these symbols will even appear before the words and their word definitions in the dictionary:

- The Bible: considered as the language's natural source because it doesn't have to be designated by a symbol;
- The Mishna and the Talmud: marked by a star *****;
- The era after the Sages (*Hazal*[22]), which includes the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, the modern era until the 19th century: marked by a *Segol* ֺ[23];
- The novelties or neologisms: marked by the paragraph symbol § after a 90° rotation – in order to mark the words that weren't available to represent everyday life (for example, words like "doll", "envelop", "socks" or even "politeness", "boredom", "identity" were absent from the language).

24 In the following excerpts, the words in italic are the translation of the words marked in blue, red and black in the source.

25 Even if it can be noticed that Ben-Yehuda's successors at the editorial offices of the dictionary[24] follow his impulse, we have chosen to discuss only the words that were published during the lifetime of Ben-Yehuda.[25]

26 I shall proceed to a brief analysis of this chromatic system.

The red color

27 In the extract cited in the *Covenant of Easter*[26] (III, 7), the word "*non* pronounced) לאו "*lav*) gives some light on the classification of the red marked words; in particular, why certain

words marked in red in Ben-Yehuda's books appear in the dictionary with the star symbol, which is usually reserved for the blue color. In the dictionary, at the bottom of the page, referring to the word *"non"*) לאו *lav*) that stems from the second archeological layer of the Hebrew language (the Mishna and the Talmud), it is specified that this word originated from the first biblical layer לא (pronounced *lo*). Thenceforth, the red color indicates not only the purely biblical words but also those that have a biblical root.

28 Let us take now an extract from the *Covenant of the Fathers*[27] (see picture below). The words in italic are those marked in red by Ben-Yehuda in an extract of the second chapter of this covenant:

29 Verse 6: "[...] those who trade a lot will not all *become sages* חכמים [...]"

30 "When seeing a *skull* גלגלת *float* on the water surface, he tells (him): Since you שצפה have drowned, you were drowned and whoever drowns you will himself be drowned."

31 Verse 7: "[...] to acquire the words of the Torah means to acquire *life* of the חיי *world* העולם to come".

32 Verse 8: "Rabbi Eliezer, son of Hourkenos: "A *closed* cistern סיד that doesn't loose one *drop* Rabbi Joshua, son of Hannia: "Happy is she who has טיפה;" *mothered*her." [...] They יולדתו said: "If all *sages* of Israel would be put on one of the חכמי *pans*of the scales and כף Eliezer, son of Hourkenos, on the other, they would make them *topple over* מכריע. Aba Saul says on his behalf: If all the sages of Israel, including Rabbi Eliezer, son of Hourkenos, would be put on one of the *pans*of the scales and Rabbi Elazar, son of Arakh, on the כף *other* [pan] כף, they would make them *topple over* מכריע.

33 Certain words are marked in order to refer them to related words in the text. Even though the word "float" is marked in the text, it is only in order to support the definition of the word "skull", which is not; moreover, with a somewhat different spelling compared to the one of the text. The same applies to the word "life" that appears only in the definition of the word "world".[28]

34 Other words that are pointed out in this covenant show the author's choices in the classification of the words.

35 The words "[become] wise" (in the dictionary under "sage"), "pan [of the scales]" (in the dictionary under "palm") and "topple over" (in the dictionary under "to kneel") are marked several times in the text even if all the instances are not used in the dictionary. Thus, all the words that are pointed out by Ben-Yehuda in the texts do not appear in the dictionary. There is a selection of marked words whose sources are included in the dictionary. A work on the analysis and reflection is carried out on a second level in order to find the most relevant and thus, the most appropriate source.

36 If words are marked in red despite first appearing posterior to the Bible, it shows that Ben-Yehuda considered them to be only a derived meaning of their primitive Biblical variant, considered as Biblical variant words.

37 The same applies to the word "drip" that is specified with the star symbol, even though it is marked in red. Its root is Biblical.

The review of the sources
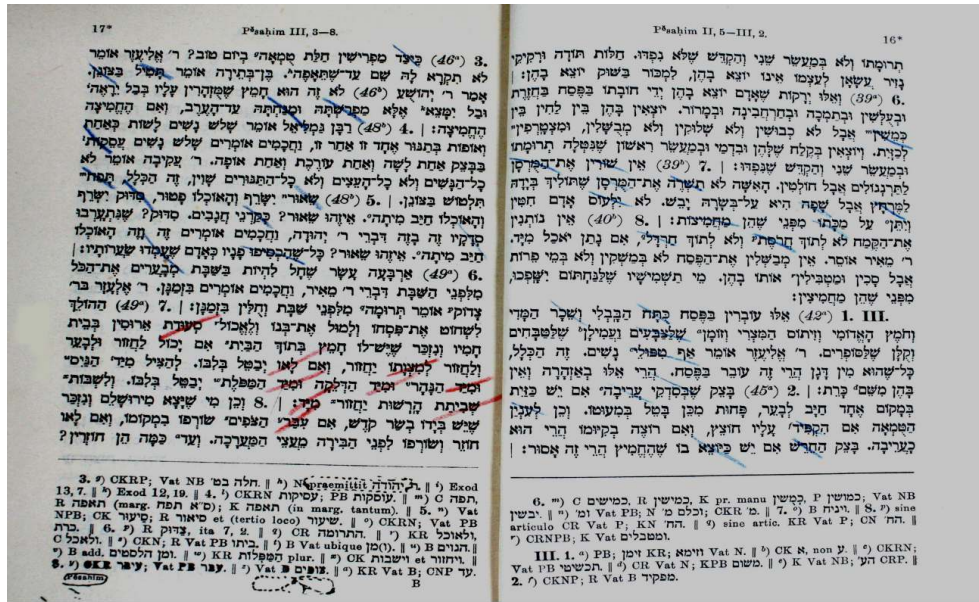
The analysis of the notes, drawn up by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the books of his personal library (almost 1,000), has allowed us to decipher the code or the chromatic spectrum of entire pages of books that are filled with remarks made with blue or red pencils but also with black ink, only in order to identify the etymological origin of words and to distinguish the different strata of the Hebrew language. Cf. H.L. Strack, *Pesahim - Der Misnatraktat Passafest*, Schriften des Institutum Judaicum zu Berlin, Nr.40, Leipzig, 1911.

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The blue color

38 The extract of the *Covenant of Easter* II 6-8, III 1-7 (picture below) addresses the laws on the interdiction of *hametz* (cereals that can be fermented) during the Easter holiday. The words marked in blue are shown with the star symbol in the dictionary, thus referring to, as we might remember, a Mishnaic or Talmudic source.

Extracts from Chapter 2

39 Verse 6: "Here are the variety of herbs, with which a person can fulfill his religious obligation [to consume bitter herbs] during Easter: hazeret[29], tamha[30], harhavina, olashin [31] and maror[32]. A person fulfills his obligation either with fresh herbs or with *dried* ones but not pickled ones [with vinegar] nor blanched or normally boiled, כמשין.".

40 Verse 7: "It is not allowed to *mash* grains of wheat and apply them on a plague וסילע because they will turn hametz."

41 Verse 8: "It is not allowed to put flour in a hot sauce – *harosset* or in – חרסת *mustard* חרדל, and if this is done, it must be eaten later."

Extract from Chapter 3

42 Verse 1: "Here are [the accepted products] which are allowed during Easter: Babylonian *koutah*[33] mead liquor, Idumean vinegar, Egyptian Zitom, a preparation that is כתח,

prepared by the dyers, cooks' starch, and the glue, which the scribes use [in order to glue the sheets]. Rabbi Eliezer says: also women's *beauty accessories* "טפולי."

43 Verse 2: "A "deaf" dough שחר, if someone has another *similar* בו כיוצא dough [that was kneaded at the same time] and that has become impure, is forbidden."

44 Verse 3: "*How* can one remove a piece of the hallah from the dough that has become כיצד impure during the Easter holiday?"

45 Verse 5: "Well, what is then the Siour? It is a dough whose surface [has only] the *paleness* of a person's face whose hair שהכסיפו*stands up* [because of fear]."

46 The word "how" in the chosen extract is a prime example. In the dictionary, it is preceded by a star because its first listed occurrence is in the Mishna. Other words in this treatise present the same characteristic though they share common roots with other Semitic languages, which are contemporaneous with the end of the writing of the (Armenian) Bible or posterior (Arab). The etymology of the Hebrew words "withered" and "mustard" is comparable with the ones that are equivalent in Arabic. The same applies to the word "mash" that has a common root in Arabic but also in Aramaic. The origin of the word *harosset* is exclusively Hebrew, according to Ben-Yehuda, and no other source has been identified.

47 The words "beauty accessories" and "similar" are marked with the star symbol in the dictionary. The quotation would however not be the one used in the dictionary because it didn't sufficiently illustrate their use.

48 In addition, even though marked in blue and shown with a star, "similar", "deaf" and "paleness" seem to be a later acceptation of the words "leave" and "deaf" and "desire", which originally have a Biblical source, like a second archeological layer. Once again, Ben-Yehuda notes how the initial Biblical meaning is broaden.

Notes on the sources
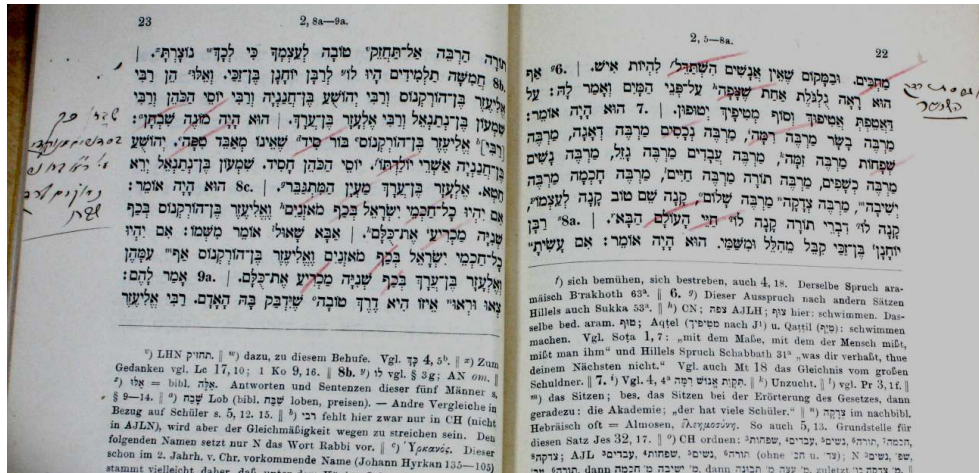
The systematic study of the library has allowed us to establish that Ben-Yehuda's method consisted of interpreting. These annotations allow us to reconstruct the intertextuality. Above, in the Covenant of Easter, on the top right side of the page, there is a note on the verb hishtadel (make an effort) where Ben-Yehuda refers to the commentator and grammarian Radak (1160-1235), while on the following page it concerns a reference to the verb shivehan (be praised) and to its spelling in the Siddur of Rabbi Eliyahu Bachur (1472-1549). It should be mentioned that this word does not appear in Ben-Yehuda's dictionary. We can also see German and Greek notes on the bottom of the page of the current edition, which remind us of the importance of the author's multilingualism in his research of the Hebrew language. Cf. H.L Strack, Die Sprüche der Väter, Schriften des Institutum Judaicum zu Berlin, Nr.6, Leipzig, 1901.

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The black color

49   According to my present work, it seems that Ben-Yehuda uses the black color in order to indicate the words or the new meanings after *Hazal.* However, this color requires more in-depth research.

50   In a brief extract from the famous ethical Jewish book by the judge and philosopher Bahyia Ibn Paquda, *The duties of the heart* (that came out in Arabic in 1040), the word "solitude" or "quality of being unique" יחידות is marked in black. The dictionary shows the *Segol* symbol, thus referring to the third archeological stratum of the Hebrew vocabulary.
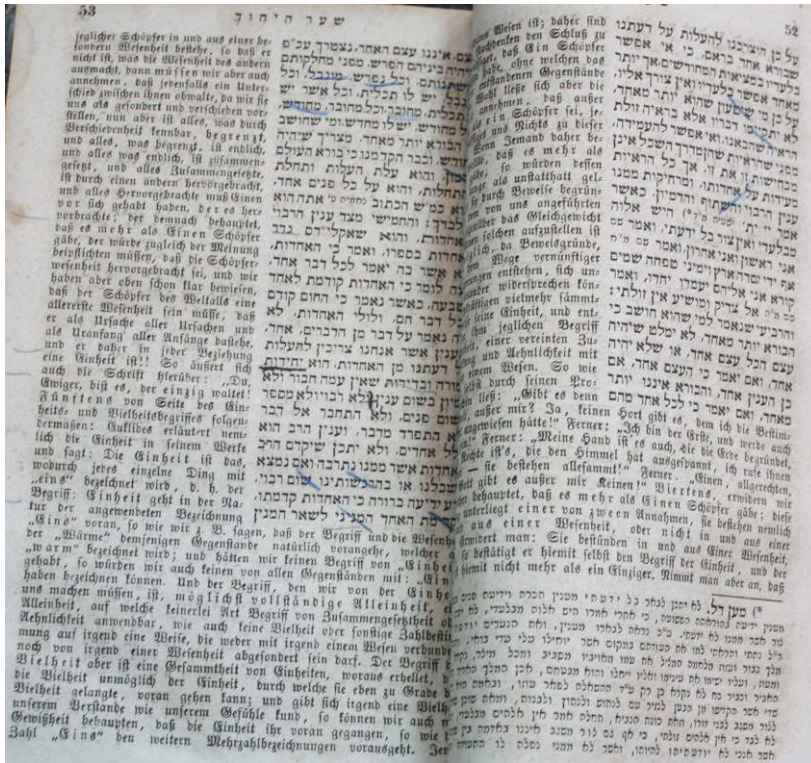
This work is a bilingual Hebrew-German edition, published in Vienna in 1856. The Hebrew version is a translation by Judah Ibn Tibbon (1120-1190).

🔡 Academy of the Hebrew Language

The direction and the menaing of the line?

51 In Ben-Yehuda's library books, the words are not only marked with a color but also, as can be seen in the chosen extract of the *Covenant of Easter*, the words are marked with a diagonal line that is in some cases drawn from right to left and in other cases from left to right. Currently, I have not yet been able to identify if and how the line's direction affects Ben-Yehuda's selection and classification system. Nevertheless, there is often a repetitiveness of the direction in his numerous works. In the chosen extract, we can clearly see that the blue color represents a group whose line's direction is traced from left to right and that the red color represents another where the lines' direction is from right to left. Having said that, this construction of block of colors, where the line is traced in the same direction, is not a permanent feature throughout the works of his library. The colors' chromatic spectrum, obtained by the prism's refraction of Ben-Yehuda, is a method that is based on the decomposition or deconstruction of the textual language by allocating colors to the words according to their archeological-linguistic affiliation. Each color refers to a linguistic stratum, to a textual context, to a quotation. It is possible to see in the above pictures that, besides the marking, Ben-Yehuda annotated the text and commented on it. These notes constitute a dialog with the text to search for a genealogy in order to create a meaning through the text's archeology in the literary corpus. If the words are systematically marked in one or several books, only a few occurrences are cited. Thus, there exists a "loss" of text, whole parts that are in fact not integrated.

52 In conclusion, the first step of Ben-Yehuda's work method will consist of reading, finding the occurrences in the texts, quoting and recording the references in notebooks and then,

on index cards, in particular by copyists. The second step is synchronic, when the material is collected, thus allowing him to write and format the work. Certain words are omitted for others, adapted, and thus, the cited examples throw light on the author's direction and choices. The language's connection with the public will thus certainly have some repercussions on possible revisions. If there exists a principle of preservation of original texts, new meanings will infiltrate the nascent mother tongue.

Conclusion: How to unearth a language?

53 For Ben-Yehuda, the spectral figures develop and merge in the condensation of his father's names: the dead father, the spectrum of a lost Jewish territorial entity – last trace of the living Hebrew – and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda the Tanna. This person embodies the revival of the Hebrew language also because the textual Hebrew corpus manifests itself like a spectrum in the spoken language.

54 The linguist Claude Hagège mentions lexicographical works, of which Ben-Yehuda's one has an impact that is not insignificant to languages: "The treasures of the language, although they have a clear political and cultural impact, are monuments of the established authority, a powerful guarantee for the existing ones, not a founding enterprise. The more they don't break with practices, the more they consolidate the past, thus tracing the outlines of a norm. The great dictionary, especially when it is panchronic (when it describes the language by all its known epochs), reflects the discourses of dead societies as well as those of living societies. It is a discourse that haunts the conscience and traces a destiny, so that the dictionary appears like a socio-political tool that represents the history according to the view that one wishes to accredit, much more than an innovative piece of work."[34]

55 The analysis of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's library shows quite a referential authority, hidden in the Hebrew language, through the chromatic spectrum. Furthermore, by moving an enunciation system to another (from the sacred rigidity of the Bible to the exegesis and then to literature), we can observe how this leads to the enunciative permutation and to the emancipation of speech. Thus, the mother tongue emerges in between the text, its sacredness, and the enunciation. The gradual receding of the original meaning of the text allows its transmission into the mother tongue. But the text returns into the language, it concentrates there. In order to be spoken, the language moves finally further apart from the text. It is not made up from an agglomerate of words or quotes. For the group of "the language's restorators", of which Ben-Yehuda was a member, it does not concern a meticulous and scientific study of the language itself but the creation of a linguistic area that is close to the sources of the linguistic Hebrew strata. The choices between the quotes, which will allow to describe all the occurrences and meanings of a word in the Hebrew language, place Hebrew into a dialect relationship with its original texts. Thus, as the meanings of the words in modern Hebrew are rather not monolithic, it does not concern a simple repetition of ancient Hebrew but a perpetual dialogue with its sources that engages a critical relationship regarding the traditional Hebrew writings.

56 The notion of anastylosis expresses this quite well because this method appeals to the interpretation of the archeological site and does not put up with a simple reconstruction or restoration. It induces the collision between the past and contemporaneity. By indicating not only the rupture between two moments in history but also by underlining a process of the edifice's structuring, the anastylosis aims at using only the elements

found on the site and borrows others only with the objective of consolidating the structure. In this case, the identical reconstruction is not wanted because the objective is not only to federate a common past around the text but also to create a future mother tongue to be used by its contemporaries.

57 If the creation of this mother tongue develops in a specific historical conjuncture – of which the native soil is the defeat of the assimilation after the emancipation of the Jews in Europe, which will reach its peak with the horror of the Shoah, the rise of nationalism and the escalation of the need of auto-determination of the Jewish people – it constitutes itself on an existential gap, on the study of identity research. The Hebrew text, material in the anastylosis of the mother tongue, allows a non-religious yet cultural integration of the sedimental, linguistic, literary and geographical history of the "wandering people". We are witness to the eternity of a language, of its updated poetics in terms of its spoken language.

NOTES

1. E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, t. 1, Paris, Gallimard, 1966, p. 20-21.

2. F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot, (1913) 1995, p. 317.

3. One can clearly see that these terms are problematic. The term "spoken Hebrew" for example, ignores the other aspects of the language, as literature. H. Rosen, who has invented the term "Israeli Hebrew" throttles today's spoken Hebrew or limits it to the State of Israel and in fact, to a vernacular kind of Hebrew. "Our Hebrew" is still too personal. "Hebrew today" or "contemporary Hebrew" are nomenclatures that are still too vague.

4. The first thesis relates to the discourse of philology or historical comparative linguistics of the 19th century. As such, the linguist Zeev Ben-Hayim claims that Hebrew results from a mixture of two historical phases, which are essential to Hebrew: the Biblical phase and the Mishnaic phase. He underlines the "fusional" characteristic of the levels of Hebrew, which is impregnated with foreign linguistic systems. For Ben-Hayim, the "resurrection" of Hebrew consists in the transformation of a dead language into a spoken language. However, he notes that if the form or the morphology of words is maintained, the signification itself will change with modern times. The language's stratification will explain the difficulty in creating a unified linguistic language. See: Zeev Ben-Hayim, "An ancient language in a new reality", *Leshonenu La'am*, 2001, p. 36-83, 1992.

5. The linguist A. Bar Adon is one of the first to compare Hebrew to Creole languages, which emerged from Pidgin during the 70's. In this theoretical line, the linguist Shlomo Izreel contemplates that the *Lingua Franca* of Hebrew, which was spoken by Jews, was a kind of source language or Pidgin that participated in the process of the language's Creolization at the end of the 19th century. For this author, the impulse of Creolization begins with the ideological pressure of parents so that their children will be able to receive an education in Hebrew. Thus, by speaking to them only in Hebrew, they allow this language to become the mother tongue of their children. Despite the fact that this linguistic system had not yet been quite stable, a language

began to emerge. (See: "The process of the historical development of spoken Hebrew", *Teuda*, No. 18, Tel Aviv University, p. 217-238). H. Blanc developed in his text *The Israeli Koine as an Emergent National Standard*, the idea that Hebrew is a kind of Koine, encountered between two kinds of the same language.

6. According to Y. Kutscher: "The Hebrew writers were sometimes unconsciously influenced in the use of prepositions by Yiddish or by another substrate". (See: *A History of the Hebrew Language*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1982, p. 215). For R. Kuzar, Yiddish is seen as the base, the infrastructure, in the "subconscious" of the Hebrew language. The use of this psychoanalytical term has not been really clarified. (See: R. Kuzar, *Hebrew and Zionism*, New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 2001).

7. Since the 20's, voices have been raised in order to question the Semitic characteristic of Hebrew by underlining its close relationship with Yiddish. Today, the principal advocate of this position is P. Wexler, author of the controversial monograph *The Schizoid Nature of Modern Hebrew: A Slavic Language in Search of a Semitic Past*. The author views Hebrew as a "schizoid" language, in particular because of the fact that it is made up by Hebrew words, modeled on a syntax of a European language, Yiddish. As the language is not specified by the morphology of words, it is defined in this text as a dialect of Yiddish.

8. Cf. H. Rosen, "Unconscious Innovations in the Language", *Leshonenu La'am*, t. 11, p. 17-21.

9. See above footnote 5.

10. The term "schizoid" appears in particular in the psychopathological fields of schizophrenia and autism, created by the Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939). Characterized *inter alia* by symptoms of withdrawal, isolation, refuge into an imaginary life, aversion from the exterior world and difficulty in expressing emotions, the schizoid personality can change into schizophrenia if these symptoms persist and intensify.

11. After having theorized on the concept of the *Name of the Father* in 1953, at the beginning of the 70s, Lacan makes puns with this concept by devoting a seminar on *non-fools err*. For the psychoanalyst, the psychotics are not *fooled* by the significant (paternal metaphor), which causes mental wandering.

12. Eliezer Isaac Perlman Elianov (1858 Luzhky, Lithuania – 1922 Jerusalem) is considered the main figure of the Hebrew advent of the spoken language. He received a classical education, consisting of the learning of sacred texts. Yet, during his adolescence, he adopted the Russian nihilistic ideas, thus abandoning his links to his community. In spite of his support for these ideas, he nevertheless persisted in his fascination for the Hebrew language. He became one of the pioneers of the *Committee of the Hebrew Language* that would become the Academy of the Hebrew Language in 1953.

13. In Hebrew, it concerns people participating mainly in the literary field (writers, poets, journalists, etc.) who take part in the "revival" of Hebrew.

14. G. Haddad, *La renaissance de l'hébreu*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1998, p. 44.

15. The first volume of the dictionary appeared in 1908 in Berlin. Only five volumes were published during Ben-Yehuda's lifetime – up to the letter *lamed*.

16. Jack Fellman, *The Revival of a Classical Tongue: Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the Modern Hebrew Language*, The Hague, Mouton, 1973, Ch. 4.

17. Reuven Mirkin briefly alludes to it in his article "La lexicographie hébraïque au XXe siècle. Premier volet : 1900-1920", *Leshonenu La'am*, t. 57/3, Jerusalem, 1998, p. 152.

18. My translation of the memoirs of Hemda Ben-Yehuda, *The War with Satan*, manuscript kept in the Zionist Archives of Jerusalem, document classified in A43/73.

19. *Op. cit.*, my translation.

20. My translation.

21. The Talmud of Babylon was written between the 3rd century and the middle of the 7th century.

22. The *Hazal* era spreads from the end of the Second Temple to the 9th century.

23. The Even Shoshan dictionary identifies these sources according to the same principle: no symbol is put next to words from the Bible, the words from the Mishna and the Talmud have a star. The Segol, that describes the period after *Hazal* for Ben-Yehuda, is reversed in Even Shoshan's dictionary. On the other hand, the lexicographer adds two new symbols: a circle for the words from the Haskala period, newspapers and the spoken language of our days, and a square for the words that are used in the literature of our days and where the source is a foreign idiom.

24. Primarily his second wife Hemda, his son Ehud and the first two presidents of the Academy of the Hebrew Language: M Z. Segal and N. H. Tur Sinai.

25. Cf. supra, note 15.

26. This covenant forms a part of the Talmud of Babylon. As it belongs to the order of the holidays (*Seder Moed*), it tackles the rituals and the prohibited rules that are linked to the Jewish Easter holiday. Cf. *The Talmud - Pessahim Covenant*, Paris, Gallimard.

27. Covenant that forms a part of the *Nezikin* order of the Mishna. Written in the second century by Rabbi Juda Hanassi, it recounts the teachings of the sages from the 5th century BC. For the translation: *Commentaries of the Covenant of the Fathers (Pirqe Avot)*, Paris, Verbier, 1990.

28. It was completed by the successors of Ben-Yehuda when the dictionary was written.

29. "Rabbi Shimon, son of Lakish, says that this is a plant that climbs by wrapping itself around the palm tree." cf. *The Talmud – Pessahim Covenant*, Paris, Gallimard, p. 246.

30. According to Rashi: marrubio.

31. According to the Gemara: endive.

32. According to the Gemara: bitter herb.

33. "A spice made of milk, salt and croutons." Op. cit., p. 265. This word does not appear in the dictionary.

34. C. Hagège, *L'homme de paroles* - Contribution linguistique aux sciences humaines, Fayard, Paris, 1996, pp.196-197.

ABSTRACTS

An everyday secular language whose basis is spiritual, cultural and religious, Hebrew, assesses the genesis of a contemporary mother tongue. How is a new mother tongue formed? Are there, in this specific language of verbal transmission between generations, versions, attempts, explorations or experiments, which could trace this process? The study of multifaceted Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, figure of the "resurrection" of Hebrew, as well as the study of the corpus of his personal library, allow us to explore the essential place of the text in the Hebraic mother tongue.

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