why the Jews, who were one component of the region’s ethnic mosaic, did not identify with this language. Moreover, in the sovereign state of Romania Jews were granted citizenship only in 1923, an indication of their marginal status in the Romanian nation-state. The traditional languages of Romanian Jews were Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish. In Transylvania and in Banat the Jews underwent a process of Magyarization, as a result of their identification with the Hungarian ruling class in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

There were thus two possible ways for Hebrew words to enter Romanian: via the language of the Bible and by mediation of the Jewish languages in contact with Romanian (Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish).

The Bible was translated into Romanian from the Church Slavonic Bible, itself a translation from the Greek Septuagint, and from the Latin Vulgate Bible (under the influence of Hungarian Calvinists or Austrian Catholics). Because the translations were not made from the Hebrew original, there are far fewer Hebraisms in the registers of the Romanian language that are influenced by the Bible than in English, for instance, where the highly influential King James Version has exposed the speakers of the language to some elements of Hebrew.

Nevertheless, a number of learned Kulturwörter have penetrated the scientific/academic registers of Romanian, for instance sabat ‘sabbath’ (< השבת sabbāt). However, the common word used both in the Bible translation and in daily life is sămbăta, ‘Saturday’, which entered Romanian through the mediation of Church Slavonic. Likewise, the term Tora (< תורת torāh) is nowadays part of learned Romanian, although the corresponding term in the various translations of the Bible into Romanian is leage ‘law’, a calque-translation of Greek νόμος nomos ‘law’ through the mediation of Church Slavonic zakon zakon ‘law’.

As for Hebrew words mediated by Jewish languages, Yiddish words of Hebrew origin were occasionally introduced into Romanian, for example jadíc ‘Hasidic leader’, from Yiddish tsadik (< Hebrew צדיק zaddiq ‘righteous, pious’).

In the 1970s, after the mass emigration of Romanian Jews to Israel between 1948 and 1960 (approximately 200,000 people, almost half of the local Jewry at the time), a special variety of Romanian developed among Israelis of Romanian origin, a variety which manifests considerable Hebrew relexification. This type of ‘Israelized’ Romanian can be found in the columns of Viata noastră, a Romanian-language Israeli newspaper. In this and other Israeli media in the Romanian language (for instance, the Israel Broadcast Authority’s news bulletin in Romanian), whatever is connected to Israel or to Jewish concepts is borrowed directly from Hebrew.

In 2004, the Israeli dairy company Tnuva (from the Hebrew word תועבה tnuvaḥ ‘produce, yield’) opened a branch in Romania. Subsequently, the word tnuva has become a generic term for dairy products in Romanian. Most Romanians remain unaware of the word’s Hebrew/Israeli origin.

As for the influence of Romanian on Modern Hebrew, it is worth noting that the name of the well-known dance the Hora (חורה hora) comes from Romanian hora, itself an avatar of Greek χορός xoros ‘dance’. The interjection heyde ‘let’s go’, though its source is ultimately Turkish, may have entered Hebrew via Romanian, although Judeo-Spanish cannot be ruled out as the intermediary.

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Romanization of Hebrew Script

Romanization describes a specific form of writing reform whereby a Roman-based alphabet is provided for a speech community, which has traditionally employed either a non-alphabetic script or a non-Roman alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet, or the so-called square script, is a non-Roman alphabet and has been the traditional writing system for Jewish communities since the 6th century B.C.E. Romanization of the Hebrew script entails replacing the characters of the square alphabet with Roman characters and inventing new characters where necessary to meet the requirements of the phonemic repertoire of the Hebrew language.

Romanization of the Hebrew script was first proposed by Isaak Rosenberg in 1898 (Raizen 1987:16–19), but the idea became popular through the efforts of Itamar Ben-Avi, son of the celebrated Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (Aytürk
tarian regimes that could silence opposition by fiat. However, neither the semi-autonomous quasi-state of the Yishuv, nor the democratic, participatory political system of the State of Israel created an environment conducive for the successful implementation of a political plan to romanize the Hebrew script.

Sample of romanized Hebrew:

Awiron Nafal be Ramallah: Ha awiron ha tzvai ‘Victoria’ asher boh tasu 18 (shemona asar) bhayalim, nafal be Ramallah. Kul lam nitzelu, be derekh nes, mih mawet, ahk 6 (shisha) me-hem niftzeu kashé. Deror, No. 1 (17 November 1933), p. 3.

‘Awoi mell canma’elá: awoi mell canma’elá. Awoi mell canma’elá: Ha awiron ha nafal be Ramallah: Ha awiron ha nafal be Ramallah. Miraculously, all (on board) were survived (lit. ‘were saved from death), but 6 (six) of them were severely injured.’

References


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Root: Medieval Karaite Notions

According to the medieval Karaite grammarians the base of the process of the deriva-