



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
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September 18, 1984

Professor David G. Roskies
244 West 74th Street (6D)
New York, New York 10023

Dear David,

You will be pleased to learn that the Sholem Aleykhem Edition Project is on the verge of receiving final approval by the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington. No public announcement is permissible until "official" notice is in hand and this is expected within the next few weeks. I will keep you informed as soon as the letter arrives and is in my hands. It is my expectation that we will be given an official starting date of October 1, 1984, for the two-year duration of our work.

You are free, of course, and encouraged to begin work on your volume immediately. As soon as it can be accomplished, you will be sent from Israel all relevant materials pertaining to your volume from the Bet Shalom Aleykhem Archive in Tel Aviv. A considerable amount of effort at xeroxing these materials has already been exerted these past months and the work is continuing.

When I was in Jerusalem in mid-August, I talked over various planning details with Professor Shmeruk. We are suggesting that you examine the various printed versions of your text(s) in order to determine which one you will use as the base text. Please then send us your decision and the reasons for your choice.

In preparing your work of annotation, we suggest that you keep in mind the following: 1) Any point of history, geography, Jewish religious or cultural custom that is not easily explained in a source such as the Encyclopaedia Judaica should be annotated. 2) As in the example of Dos meserl that you received with the project proposal last autumn, give full reference to variants in the text from the available printed versions (or manuscript, if that is extant). You need not cover every orthographic variant, since most if not all of these are insignificant for the text itself. 3) Try to gloss any Yiddish words or expressions that are not found in either the Harkavy or Weinreich dictionaries. 4) Pay special attention to Russian and Ukrainian items. Many of these are already glossed in footnotes in the printed versions.

You should keep in mind that your final manuscript must contain the text in modern YIVO orthography (except for special instances where Sholem Aleykhem is

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trying, for example, to render a German word or phrase). In the final printed version the vast majority of footnotes and annotations will appear at the back of the text. No footnote numbers will be printed in the body of the text. They will all be referenced by the page-and-line-numbers of the final printed text. In your manuscript, however, it might make sense to insert a raised footnote number to indicate the precise point where an annotation will be found at the back. These footnote numbers might be counted serially from 1 to n within each chapter or episode.

When I send you the news that the project is 'officially' approved, I will provide the details concerning the method of payment of your editorial fee which was set in the project proposal. In addition, since I will be obliged to submit to Washington a detailed progress report every six months, I would ask you to be prepared to send me your own statement of progress somewhat in advance of my own schedule of reports. I will send you a list of the dates later on.

If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to write to either Professor Shmeruk or to me. From mid-January 1985 till the end of August 1985, I expect to be in Jerusalem on sabbatical leave working full-time on this project. Letters addressed to me there c/o Hebrew Union College, 13 King David Street, Jerusalem 94101, will surely reach me. In the summer of '86, as the project comes to a close, I will again be in Jerusalem.

It is my hope that by October 1, 1985, we will have made sufficient progress so that I will be able to submit a follow-up proposal to carry out the work necessary to continue the editing until the entire set of volumes is completed. You can well appreciate, therefore, the fact that we must all turn to our work on this exciting venture with diligence.

The news that our proposal for funding this project in this initial two-year phase passed all of the refereeing hurdles of the NEH procedure inspires Shmeruk and me to even greater heights of enthusiasm for this edition. I hope that you are equally infected by the good news.

All good wishes.

Sincerely yours,



Herbert H. Paper

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