

November 8, 1979

Dear Prof. Cohen,

I have just had occasion to listen to the tape of your lecture on the Crusader Chronicles in the liturgical tradition of Ashkenaz. Let me share with you some reactions both personal and professional. I was most struck by your candor in assessing why this chapter has been neglected for so long and by the remarkable confluence of your revision with Max Weinreich's megesterial History of the Yiddish Language. Despite its title, Weinreich's History focuses on the very same period, places and sources as does your paper in order to define the unique and unbroken religious legacy of Ashkenaz. This, from a man born in Kurland, trained in Marburg, the leading spokesman of secular Yiddishism for half a century! Though you may take issue with some of Weinreich's formulations, I think you will agree that the Yiddish language belongs somewhere on that list of lasting cultural innovations of early Ashkenaz and that Weinreich has heralded the reintegration of Jewish studies which is really the order of the day.

On other fronts, I hope to be able to inform you in the near future of two happy developments, one concerning the journal Prooftexts, the other concerning my own research on Jewish literary responses to catastrophe.

Yours truly,

David G. Roskies