

CAN THE CAMBRIDGE MANUSCRIPT SUPPORT THE SPIELMANN
THEORY IN YIDDISH LITERATURE?

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My negative attitude towards the Spielmann theory is no secret. I have already written a number of times about the place of this theory in the history of Yiddish literature.¹ In writing about the Hebrew acrostic in the "Yosef hatsadik lid", I hinted that I would return in more detail to this matter in connection with the Cambridge Geniza-Codex.² I do so now at the Oxford Conference in the hope of a substantive exchange of views as well on the wider implications of this theory in Yiddish literary research.

The Spielmann theory ought above all to be regarded as a problem of attribution. The theory emerged from the study of Old Yiddish literature, because a considerable portion of the epic material which has come to us from the beginning of Yiddish literature and almost up to the end of the sixteenth century is either completely anonymous or the names of the possible authors tell us little about their occupations. It was thought important and necessary to discover who were the creators, as well as the transmitters of this epic literature. It was perhaps natural to try to explain, at least in part, this anonymity of large sections of a literature by means of a hypothesis which was thought capable of pointing to a 'class'³ of 'professionals',⁴ who created and disseminated this literature.

However, the specific problem of attribution became closely bound up with a desire to generalize and define the character of this literature according to a single criterion and principle. The Spielmann theory was thus transformed from a problematic solution to a number of isolated cases of attribution into an overall theory. The Spielmann -- a figure or a 'class' borrowed from a far from identical situation in German literature of the Middle Ages (primarily of the second half of the twelfth century)⁵ -- served Erik as the prime characteristic of a quite lengthy period in the history of Yiddish literature: a 'Spielmann period' which lasted, according to his periodization, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.⁶ In this way, what was originally a problem of attribution of only some of the epics of the period came to be applied also to works whose authorship presented no problem whatsoever. The Spielmann mantle was thus wrapped around Old Yiddish lyric poetry without good reason, although its authors are in many cases known to us. This happened although there exists no doubt that from its origins, so far as they are known to us, this lyric poetry was basically religious.⁷

The Spielmann theory in the study of Yiddish literature thus originated with the problem of attribution of epic works.⁸ L. Landau tried to solve the authorship of the anonymous "Hebrew-German rhymed version of the legend of King Arthur"⁹ by means of an unknown Spielmann who allegedly reworked the popular "Jewish" version based on Wirnt von Grafenberg's German knightly romance Wigalois of the thirteenth century. But Landau was cautious enough not to go into too many details about this possible Spielmann-adapter; nor did he explicitly postulate that he was a "Jewish" Spielmann.¹⁰ From the point of view of the history of Yiddish literature the whole matter

was not, it appears, of primary importance to Landau, for in the preface to his book he considers the "so-called Hebrew-German literature" to be a part of "German literature" but "in Hebrew letters".¹¹ All the same, he thought it necessary in his Introduction to reserve a separate chapter for the Yiddish language and its literature. There he mentions the figure of the thirteenth century Süsskind of Trimberg, a problematic one for Yiddish literature,¹² and he writes:

Süsskind is by no means an isolated example. We learn indirectly that there must have been quite a host of ['Jewish' -- Ch. Sh.] Spielleute who shared the same characteristics with their German colleagues.¹³

Following this "indirect" deduction, still more indirect pieces of evidence appear in Landau's book. There is not one source among them with a clear reference to a Jewish Spielmann in connection with Yiddish literature, either from Jewish or from non-Jewish sources.¹⁴ The original version of the "Hebrew-German" romance of King Arthur dates, according to L. Landau, from the fourteenth century. His dubious pieces of "Spielmann" evidence, however, all date from later periods and clearly concern badkhonim and musicians. There is not one case among them that could even suggest a "Jewish" Spielmann as an author or disseminator of epic poetry in Yiddish before the sixteenth century, or even later. But thanks to L. Landau the term "Spielmann" has thus been transferred to the "Jewish" domain, parallel to the role which was attributed before the First World War to the Spielmann in the history of German literature, but without any evidence of his actual existence or his possible role in the literary history of the Jews.

When Erik took over Landau's hypothesis and developed it

into the very general Spielmann theory, he knew very well that the term 'Spielmann' sounds alien in the context of Old Yiddish literature. In the sources of Yiddish literature which were known when he wrote his two books and with which he was thoroughly familiar, he did not come across the word 'Spielmann'. Indeed, he himself writes explicitly that "we derive the term 'Spielmann' from the history of German literature...On the Jewish side, probably, they were simply called 'zingers', (singers)".¹⁵ Here, too, Erik hardly had more than a single piece of evidence for a 'zinger', from a later period: Reb Shloyme Zinger of Prague, at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Reb Shloyme Zinger may also have been a badkhen. But it appears that his name derives from a time when he was a khazn, 'cantor', or a khazns meshoyrer, 'a choir singer'. Several nigunim, 'tunes, songs', bear his name. We know absolutely nothing of his possible links with Yiddish epic literature.¹⁶

From Landau's book until the present day, after the discovery of so many new sources in the study of Old Yiddish literature, not one single contemporaneous reference has been found, clear or unclear, to a Jewish 'Spielmann', nor even to a 'singer' of epics, which could support and substantiate Erik's theory and his system of periodization. I have underlined the word contemporaneous, because Erik's crowning of Eliah Levita with the title 'the last Spielmann'¹⁷ is quite anachronistic and can have no value as historical evidence. Eliah Levita would certainly not have thought of himself as a Spielmann and it is hard to believe that he would readily have accepted the title 'zinger'.

It thus becomes clear that lacking any evidence of the existence of an actual Jewish Spielmann, Yiddish literary

scholarship availed itself of a borrowed and anachronistic concept which was supposed to characterize a whole epoch with a pseudo-contemporary term. For, as I have already shown, the original German Spielmann-epic dates mainly from the second half of the twelfth century, and in the Jewish field the quite dubious Spielmann has been brought far forward, well into the sixteenth century.

As far as I know, the word 'Spielmann' has up to now been found in only one context which is relevant to Yiddish literature. We find the word 'Spielmann' three times on page 80 of the Cambridge Geniza manuscript of 1382, in "Dukus Horant".¹⁸ It refers here to the figure of a poor wandering Spielmann in the story, upon whom expensive presents are lavished by one party in the action in order to make a great impression on another party. There is not a word about the Spielmann's occupation or about his possible connection with literature in general. The Spielmann here is certainly not a Jew, because the characters in "Dukus Horant" are not Jews. In order to thoroughly clarify the matter of the Spielmann also in this context, it is necessary to resolve the cardinal question of the attribution of "Dukus Horant" and its relevance to Yiddish literature. It seems that "Dukus Horant", together with the other epic works in the Geniza manuscript, can also serve as an excellent starting-point for a fresh treatment of the Spielmann theory in the history of Yiddish literature. For after all, Erik also founded his theory on the epic.

In the section of his book which deals with the 'Spielmann period', Erik divided the epic literature into two 'areas', as follows:

- "1) Adaptations of Christian material, German and Italian: poems based upon the German heroic saga and the German

and Italian knightly romance.

2) Adaptations of Jewish material (Bible and Midrash)".¹⁹

In the first area, Erik gave separate treatment in special chapters to the following works of German origin: Herzog Ernst, Dietrich von Bern and Meister Hildebrand, the Hildebrandslied and the Yiddish Artur-roman. We can now enlarge this list and add here, following recent discoveries, the "Dukus Horant" from the Cambridge manuscript and the mention of a lost manuscript of "Wolf Dietrich beloshn ashkenaz" (i.e., in Yiddish).²⁰ Let us consider all this material in the order used by Erik:

Not a single Yiddish text of Herzog Ernst has come down to us. We know only that a whole group of original Yiddish poems in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were composed in the stanza-form of the fifteenth-century German Herzog Ernst Lied. There is a title on some of the poems declaring that the poem is "to the tune of Herzog Ernst". The stanza in question has a rhyme-scheme AABCCBDEDEFFF or AABCCBDEDEFMF. But all the Yiddish poems in this stanza or with this 'tune' are actually of an obvious religious content. They are zmires, 'songs', designated for the Sabbath and Holidays, or homiletic poems. All the poems in this stanza are bilingual: they also have parallel Hebrew texts. We also know the authors of most of these poems: two well-known rabbis of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and a soyfer ('scribe'), also apparently from the sixteenth century. There also exist Hebrew poems composed in this rhyme-scheme, a Sabbath poem and a 'scholarly-didactic' poem.²¹

Can it be inferred from this that we once had a specifically Yiddish text of the Herzog Ernst Lied? Since no such text has come down to us, it is possible to arrive at the most varied conjectures, but not to prove them. There is no doubt whatever,

however, that none of the authors known to us of the original Yiddish poems with a parallel Hebrew text in the 'Herzog Ernst scheme' was a Spielmann or 'zinger'. Where the authorship has been proved, we certainly should not make rabbis and sofrim, or author-copyists into Spilleute. All that is certain is that the German stanza-forms and their melodies were very popular among Jews, so popular that even rabbis and sofrim adopted them for their poems. Whether they themselves had actually read a text of the German Herzog Ernst Lied or only heard such a text and from hearing it adopted the stanza-form and the melody is now difficult to know and certainly impossible to prove. Adaptations of foreign melodies are well-known in the Jewish world up to the present day. When we find tunes borrowed from opera arias used by khazonim or among the hasidim, we do not have to assume proficiency in the libretto of the opera or that there exists a Jewish version of such an aria. It is, therefore, a baseless supposition that we once had a Yiddish text of Herzog Ernst.

The Herzog Ernst Lied takes first place in Erik's survey of the 'Yiddish Spielmann Repertoire'. It is thus particularly important to emphasize here that of all the works of German origin that have been mentioned above, Herzog Ernst is the only one considered by students of German literature to be the possible work of a Spielmann. But the form of the work in question is in rhymed couplets, apparently from the twelfth century. The thirteen-line stanza of our poems "to the tune of Herzog Ernst", however, belongs to a later version from the fifteenth century, which is designated as a Bänkelsängerlied.²² Thus even this single work in Erik's 'repertoire' cannot be directly linked with the older, possibly Spielmannesque style of Herzog Ernst in German.

German literary scholarship limits the concept of 'Spielmannsepik' -- which it is often careful to put in quotation marks, in order to emphasize its reservations about this term -- to a total of five works: König Rother, Herzog Ernst, St. Oswald, Orendel and Salman und Morolf.²³ We could thus stop at this point and simply dismiss the Spielmann attribution of all the other above-mentioned works of German origin in the 'Yiddish Spielmann repertoire', since they are absent even from the German 'repertoire' of Spielleute. However, since one of the scholars deals also with Dukus Horant²⁴ in the context of the German 'Spielmann Epic', and as this subject is more complicated than that of the Spielmann attributions in the 'area' of German origin, it is also worthwhile to consider the whole of the Yiddish 'repertoire' that has been mentioned.

Dietrich von Bern and Meister Hildebrand are quite often mentioned in Yiddish sources of the sixteenth century. Among Jews, Dietrich von Bern became the paradigm of a great hero, both in Eliah Levita's Bove d'Antone and in the Yehoshua-bukh. Poems were also composed "to the tune of Dietrich von Bern". Dietrich von Bern and Meister Hildebrand also appear almost always together, in a number of negative references intended to deter the Jewish reader from alien, "frivolous" works in order that he should read only traditional Jewish literature.²⁵ The allusions are mainly from the sixteenth century and some of them date from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Even if these negative references are also no more than conventions adopted from a foreign source,²⁶ they confirm that in the sixteenth century at least Jews knew the German narratives about the two heroes. How they became acquainted with these heroes is, again, difficult to determine. As in the case of

the Herzog Ernst Lied, it can be assumed here too that they had heard them at sometime in a non-Jewish setting. Later on they were read in Jewish transcriptions from galkhes -- i.e., Latin characters -- which were generally unfamiliar to Jews. Transcriptions of this kind about both heroes have in fact come down to us, but from a very late period: Herr Dietrich, printed in Cracow (1597)²⁷ and the Hildebrandslied in a manuscript later than 1602.²⁸

J. Perles, who was the first to describe the Cracow edition of Herr Dietrich, also made a comparison of that text with its German source. This comparison may actually be regarded as a key to all the literature of German origin that is treated here. It appears that the Jewish transcriber was quite faithful to his printed German source. He only removed, here and there, direct or indirect Christian references and replaced them with neutral equivalents.²⁹ His task was thus in fact limited to a transcription from "galkhes into yidish": that is, from Roman into Hebrew characters, as is indeed clearly indicated in the colophon. The person in question was therefore a transcriber and there is no reason at all to think of him as a Spielmann or 'zinger'. The book was intended to be sold to readers.

The Cracow Herr Dietrich of 1597 is the only text up to the end of the sixteenth century where the specific German source has been preserved together with the Jewish transcription. It is therefore hard to overestimate its very great value in determining the character of all the epic poetry of German origin which is treated here. For no Jewish texts of Herzog Ernst or Wolf Dietrich have survived. Neither do we have the specific German source of the Hildebrandslied. Of Dukus Horant and the Artur-roman only texts in Hebrew characters survive

and the German originals have been lost (see below). Thus the only possible interpretation of all these texts should be sought not in theories, however attractive, but in the quite clear situation implied by the Cracow Herr Dietrich and by a whole series of later texts transcribed from German sources since the beginning of the seventeenth century. For it appears that in the later texts as well, when we have the German source before us, that just as in the case of Herr Dietrich the Jewish text is in fact no more than a transcription from the German, with or without the above-mentioned alterations with respect to Christian names, references and allusions.³⁰

That this was also the case in earlier periods is obvious from Dukus Horant. We find on page 61 of the manuscript two references: "to the tifle [a contemptuous expression for a church -- Translator's note]" and then "to the kirkhe [church]". Both refer to the same place. In the first instance the transcriber noticed the Christian 'church' and replaced it with tifle; but then, in the second case, he mechanically wrote down what he found in his source.³¹

It appears that this was also the original situation with the Jewish Artur-roman. L. Landau himself, without looking at the chart on p. XLI of his book, believed it possible that between the German knightly romance of Wirnt von Grafenberg and what was, according to him, the first, now lost, 'Hebrew-German version', there could have been another intermediate version.³² It was not necessarily Jewish. The changes which Erik entered into his 'genealogical chart' do not take such a possibility into consideration.³³ I. Tsinberg, on the other hand, very justly remarked: "Dr. Leo Landau ... and, following him, M. Erik, reach the conclusion that the original Yiddish version was made directly from Wirnt's romance. But

we are dubious about this, and reckon that the connecting link in the creation of the Jewish Artur-roman was in fact yet another work, which was published later than Wigalois. Only thus can we account for the difference in plot, and the confusion and unintelligible contradictions in the Yiddish adaptation".³⁴

That there was indeed such a connecting link is shown clearly by the Christian references which survive only in a later text of the Artur-roman. They are still quite evident in the lost Prague edition of 1680, which has been preserved for us only in the reprint in Wagenseil's book.³⁵ Nor can there be any doubt that the text of this version stems from a manuscript (and perhaps from another earlier, lost edition), which should be placed in the "family tree" before the Hamburg manuscript which Landau reprinted in his book. For in Wagenseil's book we find Christian references of the kind that were deleted from the manuscript:

- Wagenseil, p. 180: אויף איין אושטר טאג [=one Easter day]
 Ms. Hamburg, p. 24,1:³⁶ an einem feier tag³⁷ [=on a holiday]
Wagenseil, p. 88: ביז דז דא קאמן דיא ליכטי פפינגסטן צייטן
 [=until there came bright Whitsuntide]
 Ms. Hamburg, p. 32,6: bis do kam ein hochi zeit
 [=until there came a festival]
Wagenseil, p. 192: איין שטארק ריז לוציפר גינאנט
 [=a strong giant named Lucifer]
 Ms. Hamburg, p. 34,31: starker ris is er ginant
 [=strong giant is he named]
Wagenseil, p. 251: לעזין³⁸ מעטין
 [=now I will teach him Matins properly]
 Ms. Hamburg, p. 89,2: ich wil erst recht mit im lesen
 [=now I will teach him properly]

This kind of alteration and omission is well-known to us both from Herr Dietrich as well as from later transcriptions from galkhes. It can be inferred from this not only that Tsinberg's reasoning was right, that there must have been an intermediate text of the Artur-roman, but that the text in question was certainly a non-Jewish one. Only from such a source can one derive the above-cited examples of Christian references, which were later removed by the transcriber or transcribers of the Hamburg manuscripts. This means that even the Artur-roman, on which Erik -- following Landau's book -- constructed the Spielmann theory, was initially a transcription of a German version of Wirnt von Grafenberg's knightly romance. Thus the Artur-roman also belongs to the variety of transcribed epic that was adopted ready-made from German literature. In the version which has, thanks to Wagenseil, survived, there even remain -- as has been proved above -- definite signs of mechanical transcription from galkhes, as in the tifle-'church' example from Dukus Horant.

But it must be added that the Jewish versions of the Artur-roman constitute the most complicated case of borrowing from a German source. We possess three manuscripts, a number of reprints from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and also a version in ottava rima. The latter was made by a Jew in the second half of the sixteenth or in the seventeenth century, although it has already been proved that Eliah Levita was not the author of this labored version.³⁹ In order to establish a new genealogic chart which would take account of what has been said above, it would therefore be necessary to re-investigate with greater accuracy all existing texts of this Jewish Artur-roman. But there can be no doubt now that the original version of the Jewish Artur-roman was no more than a transcription from

a German source which has not survived, just as the German source of Dukus Horant has been lost. The transcribers of these works were dealing with already fixed literary texts. And when one relies on a fixed text transcribing it from galkhes, either with or without alterations of Christian references, the cardinal question has again to be asked as to the real importance of this entire literature taken from German, in the context of Old Yiddish literature as a whole. This question is especially meaningful for the period which Erik designated as the Spielmann period, basing his theory on these transcribed epics. Apart from the single case of the ottava rima version of the Artur-roman -- which has, moreover, nothing to do with any Spielmann -- the transcribers of the German epic into texts with Hebrew characters performed no creative work. It is not even a question of translation from one language into another. There are, moreover, frequent indications in these texts that we are dealing with the quite mechanical task of transcription. The mechanical nature of this work is confirmed very clearly by all the cases where the transcriber in some places retained Christian references, which in other places he himself or another transcriber removed or altered. Therefore we can by no means subscribe to that school of thought which wished, by means of the Spielmann theory, to assign a central place to this clearly German epic literature in the context of Yiddish literature.

What we do have is very important evidence of literary contacts with the non-Jewish world from the fourteenth century on. These contacts are more than natural when we consider that Yiddish speakers in German-language territory could always easily understand their non-Jewish neighbors. In the earliest original Yiddish literature we constantly encounter clear

examples of how fruitful these contacts were. But their true scope and precise nature require further investigation. It is also necessary to establish what the Jews did take over from their German-speaking neighbors, and what they did not. An attempt should be made, moreover, to explain why there are large strata of German literature, from the Middle Ages up to the mid-eighteenth century, of which we find no trace at all among Jews. Is this because these literary contacts were mainly limited to popular works for non-learned readers? For we find among the Jews no evidence of German 'canonical' literature. In the long period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, were there periods when the contacts were less intensive? Was the so-called 'Spielmann Period' in fact the age of the greatest intensity of such contacts?

This is not the place to solve these and other problems which arise from the definite fact that certain sections of German literature were familiar to the Jews. But important though this phenomenon may have been in the formation of the earliest Yiddish literature, it is still a far cry from all these facts taken together to the doctrine which is willing, by means of the so-called 'Spielmann theory', to see in the oral or transcribed German epic Jewish qualities and an integral part of Yiddish literature.⁴⁰

If this alien German epic remained, for reasons which are now intelligible, anonymous throughout, there is no attribution problem for the "Italian knightly romance" -- the second component of the first 'area' dealt with by Erik in his above-mentioned presentation of the 'Spielmann Period'. Thanks to Eliah Levita, two romances of Italian origin have been preserved. And if Erik's designation of the 'Christian German materials' as 'adaptations' goes too far when applied to

what are quite often mechanical transcriptions, then it seems that to designate Eliah Levita's poetic translations from Italian as "adaptations" is to undervalue his achievements in Bovo d'Antona and Pariz un Viene.

Although we know that Eliah Levita constructed his knightly romances on Italian sources, we find in them, and especially in Pariz un Viene, a clear indication of a poetically creative mind. This is far more than a translation. Eliah Levita refashioned the Italian ottava rima and adapted it most skillfully to the Yiddish language, thus introducing regular iambs into Yiddish for the first time.⁴¹ He handled his sources very freely and so created a fine interplay between the knightly ethos and Jewish customs. Humor and a keen intellect, employed by a great master, are among the outstanding features of these romances. The openings of the different cantos in Pariz un Viene are, throughout, digressions of his own with a markedly individual stamp. Digressions of this kind are also present to a lesser extent in Bovo d'Antona.⁴²

There is indeed a still wider gap between the transcriptions from German and Eliah Levita's romances, even though these romances were based on Italian sources. Due to the outstanding creative achievement of Eliah Levita they are an integral component of Yiddish literature and can by no means be treated on the same level as the transcriptions from German. It is surely superfluous and biographically false to regard Eliah Levita -- the great scholar, the researcher of the Hebrew language and of the Masora, the translator of the Psalms into Yiddish, and the highly talented and creative Yiddish poet -- as a Spielmann. If there really existed in that age, as Erik believed, bands of wandering magicians, minstrels and clowns, cheats and beggars, it is still very doubtful whether they had anything to do with literature in

general and with creative literature in particular. And leaving aside all sorts of supposed liberties which emerge from Eliah Levita's biography and from his Yiddish lampoons, he certainly did not belong to such a 'class'. To regard him as a member of this rabble is to dishonor the greatest poetic personality of Old Yiddish literature.

The other 'area' which Erik ascribed to the Jewish Spielmann comprises the "adaptations of Jewish material (the Bible and Midrash)". We are dealing here with the original Yiddish epic which should be regarded as by far the most important achievement of Old Yiddish literature before the seventeenth century. In this 'area' there is the problem of dating the various works. Thanks to the Cambridge manuscript, however, in which we find four poems of this sort, we now know that the epic in question was composed at least from the fourteenth century on. There was probably a considerable lapse of time before it reached its apex in the weighty volumes of the Shmuel- and Mlokhim-books, with their style and stanza form. From the time of the shorter Biblical poems of the Cambridge Geniza Codex and the poem of Isaac's sacrifice and the Esther poems, it is possible to see an attempt, lasting well into the late sixteenth century, to re-fashion in Yiddish all the narrative elements of the Bible in one grand collective poetic endeavor.⁴³ But the authors of this epic poetry, with certain exceptions, remained anonymous as regards their 'profession' or 'class'. For if we do happen to know an author's name -- for example "Yankev tsu der kanen" (Shoyftim) or "the Rabbi R. Moyshe Shtendl" of Hanover (Tilim)⁴⁵ -- the names tell us too little. Therefore, the attribution of the Biblical and Midrashic epic -- attribution in the widest sense of the term -- is one of the most difficult problems in Old

Yiddish literature.

From the beginnings of this epic literature (as substantiated by the Cambridge manuscript), the genre is distinguished by the great familiarity of its authors not only with the Bible but also with the very extensive Midrashic literature in Hebrew, which was woven around the Biblical narratives and their characters in the course of many generations. This deep familiarity requires adequate explanation when one attempts to assign attribution. If we also take into account that this was also a period before Midrashic literature had appeared in print, then this knowledge is by no means in keeping with Spielmannesque 'professionals' whose very existence among the Jews is in fact unproved. This was already felt earlier, and an attempt was made to single out from among the assumed Jewish Spielleute a special type of Spielmann who would bridge the gap between the very term 'Spielmann' and the very specific Jewish nature of the Biblical and Midrashic epic. Tsinberg formulated his explanation of this paradox in this cautious manner:

But it may be asked: what relation was there between the Spielleute who composed the Biblical epic and those who adapted knightly romances such as Artushof and the like. It is difficult now to give a definitive answer. There were apparently two types of Spielmann...But those who were more rooted in the Jewish way of life, and whose imaginations were dominated by Jewish concepts and legends, chose national Jewish themes for their literary creations.

And Tsinberg added in a footnote to the above: "It is possible too that such a Spielmann would at times fulfil the

functions of a khazn and firzoger in the Synagogue".⁴⁶

First of all, according to what we know of non-Jewish Spielleute: if we did at one time have Jewish Spielleute, this would bar them completely from fulfilling the functions of a "khazn and firzoger in the synagogue".⁴⁷ Second, if the authors of the Biblical epic were khazonim and prayer-leaders, why is it necessary to ascribe to them an additional occupation which can in no way be corroborated by any source? Above all, there is not a shred of evidence that among the authors of the Biblical epic there was even one khazn. It is also hard to imagine that it was khazonim, in particular, who were the great experts in Midrashic literature. And Tsinberg is postulating here yet another Spielmann with the cantorial art as a side-line.

In the 'area' of Biblical and Midrashic epic a serious attempt is made in one case to identify an author. At the end of the Paris manuscript of the Shmuel-bukh there are two names: "Zanvl the scribe" and after him in a following stanza we find:

משה עשרים וארבע בין איך גינאנט.
איך הון דש בוך גימאכט מיט מיינר האנט.
[=My name is Moyshe esrim ve'arba.
I made this book with my (own) hand.]⁴⁸

It may be that Zanvl was only a copyist who, perhaps later, inserted his name in the colophon, when he had transcribed the book from another manuscript. That would mean that it was really Moyshe esrim ve'arba who actually 'made' the book. Zalman Shazar suggested in 1927 that Moyshe esrim ve'arba, the author of the Shmuel-bukh, could be identified with Reb Moyshe esrim ve'arba, who was known as an emissary from Jerusalem in the last

quarter of the fifteenth century. There is a Hebrew source that says of him:

רב אשכנזי, שמו ר' משה עשרים וארבע, כי לא היה לו יד ושם
זולה בעשרים וארבע

[=an Ashkenazi rabbi, named R. Moyshe esrim ve'arba,
for he was expert in the twenty-four books alone.]

This means that his strange as well as rare nickname derives from his great expertise in the Bible. Shazar's identification can also determine the approximate period of the origin of the Shmuel-bukh: about the end of the fifteenth century.⁴⁹ Shazar's identification sparked off quite a widespread debate. There were some who held that the Moyshe esrim ve'arba who is mentioned at the end of the Paris manuscript was no more than a copyist, and if so then the identification was really of no importance. Acceptance of the identification was also hindered by the generally received opinion that the Shmuel-bukh dates from an earlier age, from the fourteenth century.⁵⁰ Felix Falk, who prepared the critical edition of the Shmuel-bukh, made a point of maintaining that Moyshe esrim ve'arba was indeed the author of the Shmuel-bukh. But he rejected Shazar's identification. His one proof against the identification is apparently based on an error. He thought that the Ashkenazic emissary from Jerusalem was 'not educated enough' to be regarded as the author of the Shmuel-bukh.⁵¹ As a direct consequence of this conclusion, Falk rejected quite categorically the possibility of a Spielmann being the author of the Shmuel-bukh. Supporting his case with H. Naumann's famous paper against the romantic notion of the Spielmann in German literary studies,⁵² Falk held that the author of the Shmuel-bukh should be sought among learned men who were not only versed in esrim ve'arba, but had also

mastered 'rabbinic literature': this agreed with what he had said earlier in connection with Shazar's identification.⁵³

Falk's conjectures about the possible author of the Shmuel-bukh were fully justified. For that very reason we should now certainly not reject the possibility that the emissary from Jerusalem is identical with Moyshe esrim ve'arba, the author of the Shmuel-bukh. I am, in fact, inclined to accept the identification for a number of reasons: First, the above quotation about Moyshe esrim ve'arba and his presumed limitations should be viewed with caution and not taken literally as it was by Falk. It is a quotation from a hostile context. To be proficient in esrim ve'arba meant not to be versed in Halakhah, but this did not exclude proficiency in Midrash. For if it was desired, in the fifteenth century and also later, to make a sarcastic insinuation and undermine an authority -- and that is the meaning here -- then it made no difference whether he knew or did not know the Midrashic passages which deal with the esrim ve'arba. For a rabbi or a scholar, proficiency in Halakhah was already at that time considered more important. This is the rule by which we should measure the insinuation in what is said against the emissary from Jerusalem. But Reb Moyshe esrim ve'arba himself was proud of his title, for he himself used it. If, then, Moyshe esrim ve'arba was indeed the author of the Shmuel-bukh, there seems to be no reason not to accept Shazar's identification, taking into account the rarity of the strange nickname and the exact correspondence of the proper name. As we have said, the identification does not really contradict Falk's reservations about the author of the Shmuel-bukh. Most significantly, all the scholars who have been mentioned here were as yet unaware of the Midrashic poems in the Cambridge manuscript. The problem of dating also hindered the

acceptance of Shazar's identification. The Shmuel-bukh has generally been attributed to the fourteenth century. It is now obvious that if the poems in the Geniza manuscript reflect the literary conventions of the fourteenth century -- and by this I mean, for example, the avoidance of the Hebrew component in the Yiddish texts -- then the style of the Shmuel-bukh is a great step forward. Here the convention has already been cast off. There is now good reason to conjecture that the date of the Shmuel-bukh lies within the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

We have here, therefore, one possible solution to the attribution of a work of Biblical and Midrashic epic.

But it appears that the Cambridge Geniza manuscript, with its Biblical and Midrashic poems, can suggest more detailed and more general solutions for the problem of attribution. The Yoysef-hatsadik lid was written by an anonymous nakdan ('punctator'). The poems about the Death of Aaron and about Paradise are signed Ayzik der shrayber. The poem about Avrom Ovinu has the same signature at the end, but it is possible that the author was one Avrom, who may be the same as the shrayber Avrom whose signature appears at the end of the Fable of the Sick Lion.⁵⁴ This means that we are dealing here with at least two Avroms, a nakdan and a shrayber ('writer'). If the two Avroms and three Ayziks represent different people, the number of shraybers may be greater. A nakdan generally added vowel points to Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible, prayers, etc. The term shrayber is identical with soyfer, that is, copyist. There were certainly no copyists in the Middle Ages who only copied Yiddish manuscripts. It is very doubtful if one could make a living from this. They earned their main income by copying Hebrew manuscripts.⁵⁵ In fact, punctators and scribe-copyists

came in close and frequent contact with manuscripts of all kinds, also of the Bible and Midrashic writings in their various forms. Their "professional" work -- as it were -- made them proficient in this field as well. So it is perfectly natural not only that the authors of the Biblical and Midrashic poems in the Geniza manuscript were a shrayber or shraybers and a nakdan, but that we should also look to this 'class' for the authors of the other works of this kind, which justifies the expectations which we have already formulated. We do indeed find other copyists among the authors of the Yiddish epics.⁵⁶ This does not mean that nakdanim and shraybers alone were the authors of the epic. Among them we find also a melamed ('teacher') from Venice⁵⁷ and an author of scholarly works in Hebrew.⁵⁸ It seems that the authors of the anonymous epics of this kind should be sought in the contemporary Jewish middle-level 'intelligentsia', which included copyists, nakdanim, melamdim and the like -- a stratum in which proficiency in Hebrew and the Midrashic literature might be expected. Among them there could also be an emissary from Jerusalem who was derided for only knowing the esrim ve'arba.

As for the Spielmann attribution of the Biblical and Midrashic epics, we still have to dispose of the very last argument of the adherents of the theory. In this epic there are frequently found stylistic usages and turns of phrase that are, in German literature, considered Spielmannesque. I think it would be superfluous to repeat here what I have already written in connection with the edition of the Melokhim-bukh,⁵⁹ about the conventional nature of these stylistic usages. We may be sure that they were already so widespread in German literature of the fourteenth century that it was altogether unnecessary for the authors of the Yiddish epic to borrow them directly from Spielleute. These elements had earlier been introduced even

into the speech of the Christian clergy.⁶⁰ Their introduction into Yiddish epic definitely should not lead to any conclusions about direct Spielmannesque origins and influences.

It appears that from what has been said above only one conclusion is possible: the Spielmann theory in Yiddish literature came to us as an adaptation from outside. It is a theory which did not even try to come to terms with the state of German scholarship since 1924, since the publication of H. Naumann's paper which limited the Spielmann attribution in German literature in a realistic way and threw light on its non-scholarly romantic origin.⁶¹ In Yiddish literature we find no evidence for the existence of a Spielmann or a Spielmannesque epic. And it is precisely in the Cambridge manuscript, where the expression Spielmann does appear, that there is evidence in the Jewish section that the solution of the attribution should not be sought among the unproven Spielleute-authors. Moreover, the attribution of the Biblical and Midrashic poems in the Geniza manuscript excludes completely both the necessity and the possibility of the Spielmann explanation in our literature.

We have limited ourselves here to problems of attribution. Closely linked to the Spielmann theory, however, is the attempt to determine the predominantly 'secular' nature of Yiddish literature in that period which has been considered Spielmannesque. The removal of the German epics in Jewish transcriptions outside the proper bounds of original Yiddish literature⁶² takes away the principal basis of this 'secularity'. For without the Spielmann attribution there was never any substance to this 'secularity' with regard to the Biblical and Midrashic epics.

This postulate of 'secularity' in Old Yiddish literature is a matter worth treating separately, as a problem in the history

of modern Yiddish literary research. In doing so, it will also be necessary to bear in mind the socio-ideological atmosphere from which this scholarship emanated in the twenties in Eastern Europe. This very important notion, together with investigation into the wide reverberations of the Spielmann theory and the image of the Spielmann among Yiddish writers in the twenties,⁶³ deserves a separate treatment which has no direct connection with Old Yiddish literature.

FOOTNOTES

1. See "Di naye editsye funem altyidishn 'Melokhim-bukh'", Di goldene keyt, 59 (1967), pp. 209-211; also the article "Yiddish Literature" in Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jerusalem 1971, vol. 16, col. 828 and also my book Sifrut Yidish, prakim letoldoteha, Tel-Aviv 1978, pp. 31-32 and footnote 31 (referred to hereafter as Shmeruk) (see also the Yiddish translation of this chapter of the book in Pinkes far der forschung fun der yidisher literatur un prese, vol. 3, New York 1975, p. 168, n. 38a).
2. Chone Shmeruk, "The Hebrew Acrostic in the Yosef Hatsadik Poem of the Cambridge Yiddish Codex", Michigan Germanic Studies, 3.2 (1977), p. 80.
3. "Class" -- according to the statement: "For me, the existence of a Spielmann class is as certain as a fact", by M. Weinreich, Bilder fun der yidisher literaturgeshikhte (Vilna 1928), p. 60, n. 1 (referred to hereafter as Weinreich).
4. "Professionals" -- according to M. Erik, Di geshikhte fun der yidisher literatur fun di eltste tsaytn biz der haskoletkufe (Warsaw 1928), p. 91 et passim (hereafter referred to as Erik).
5. See for example W.J. Schröder, Spielmannsepik, 2.Auflage (Stuttgart 1967), p. 1.
6. Erik, pp. 202-225.
7. Erik, pp. 131-175 and Shmeruk, pp. 40-71.
8. Weinreich has pointed out in his "Hoysofes un tikunim", Weinreich, p. 352, that Elazer Shulman "is the real father of the so-called 'Spielmann theory' in our literary research".

But in the cited page of Shulman's Sfat yehudit ashkenazit vesifruta (Riga 1913), p VIII, the term "Spielmann" does not appear. Shulman enumerates there a list of adapted foreign melodies which were spread על ידי להקות הנוגנים הנודדים הליצנים "by bands of roving musicians, jesters and entertainers). See also below.

9. L. Landau, Arthurian Romances or the Hebrew-German Rhymed Version of the Legend of King Arthur (Leipzig 1912) (hereafter referred to as Landau).

10. Landau, pp. LXXXIV, XLIII-XLV. In the chart on p. XLI the adaptations are, however, designated "Original Hebrew-German versions". See also below on this subject.

11. Landau, p. VII.

12. Was Süsskind of Trimberg really a Jew? Süsskind of Trimberg wrote in German and, even if he was indeed a Jew, he certainly has no connection with Yiddish literature. See Erik, p. 75.

13. Landau, p. XXIV.

14. The only reference in which we find Juden-Spielleute emphasized is taken from J.J. Schudt's book Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the meaning there is strictly restricted to Jewish musicians (Landau, p. XXV).

15. Erik, p. 69.

16. On R. Shloyme Zinger see Erik, pp. 154-158, 264. A tune of his is mentioned in No. 3650 of Steinschneider's Bodleian Catalogue. See also "זמר נאה מרבי שלמה זינגר" [a nice song by R. Shloyme Zinger], I Davidson, Otzar

hashira vehapiyyut, Letter ו, No. 373.

17. Erik, pp. 177ff.

18. According to the pagination of the manuscript, fol. 40; L. Fuks, The Oldest Known Literary Documents of Yiddish Literature (c. 1382) (Leiden 1957), 1, pp. 160-161; Dukus Horant, Herausgegeben von P.F. Ganz, F. Norman, W. Schwarz (Tübingen 1964), pp. 210-211; H.J. Hakkarainen, Studien zum Cambridger Codex T-S.10.K.22, I.Text (Turku 1967), p. 116.

19. Erik, p. 98. A third "area" is also introduced there: "3) The Spielmannesque lyric". I omit this area deliberately because, as already shown, the Yiddish lyric in the period under consideration was fundamentally religious. If we can indeed, also find in the lyrics elements which may be regarded as "Spielmannesque", this has nothing to do with any possibility of attributing to the Spielmann poems which we know to have been composed by rabbis, dayonim [judges], melamdin [teachers in elementary schools], etc. On this, see also below.

20. An entry in a book-list made by a Jew in Mantua in 1595; see Ch. Shmeruk, "Reyshita shel haproza hasipurit beyidish umerkaza be'italia", Scritti in memoria di Leone Carpi (Jerusalem 1967), p. 130.

21. Erik, pp. 99-103, and Shmeruk, pp. 48-50, 60-61. For details about bilingual poems written in the Herzog Ernst-stanza, their sources and publications, see Ch. Turnainsky, ed., Alexander ben Yizhak Pfaffenhofen, Sefer Massah U'Merivah, 1627, Edited from the Original Manuscript with Introduction and Annotations by Chava Turniansky (Jerusalem 1985), pp. 107-108, No. 1, 2,4,5,12. See also ibid., No. 1, written in this same rhyme-scheme but

mentioning another tune (בניגון צימירש קנאמא).

22. On Herzog Ernst in German see the works of C. Heselhaus, H. Neumann, H.F. Rosenfeld and M. Wehrli in the collection Spielmannsepik, Herausgegeben von W.J. Schröder (Darmstadt 1977) and the surveys: W.J. Schröder, Spielmannsepik, 2.Auflage (Stuttgart 1967), pp. 37-50; M. Curschmann, "Spielmannsepik". Wege und Ergebnisse der Forschung von 1907-1965 (Stuttgart 1968), pp. 34-41, 76-78.

23. See all the works cited in n. 22.

24. Curschmann (n. 22 above), pp. 41-45.

25. Erik and Shmeruk, cf. indices.

26. Shmeruk, p. 34.

27. The most important material concerning this book is still J. Perles, "Bibliographische Mittheilungen aus München", MGWJ, 25 (1876), pp. 351-361.

28. In Oxford MS Opp. Add. 4^o-136 in the so-called "Valakh-collection". See F. Rosenberg, "Über eine Sammlung deutscher Volks- und Gesellschaftslieder in hebräischen Lettern", Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, 2 (1888), pp. 291-292.

There is also a small fragment in Oxford MS Mich. 154, from the second half of the sixteenth century. Both texts were published in German transcription: W.B. Lockwood, "Die Textgestalt des jüngeren Hildebrandsliedes in jüdisch-deutscher Sprache", Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur, vol. 85 (1963), pp. 433-447.

29. Shmeruk, p. 30.

30. Very rich material of this kind is found in Rosenberg's work (see above, n. 28) and in the articles of Arnold Paucker, "Di yidische nuskhoes fun 'Schildburger bukh'", Yivo-bleter, 44 (1973), pp. 59-77; "Yiddish Versions of Early German Prose Novels", Journal of Jewish Studies, vol. 10 (1959), pp. 151-167; "Das deutsche Volksbuch bei den Juden", Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, vol. 8 (1961), pp. 302-317; "Das Volksbuch von den Sieben Weisen Meistern in der jiddischen Literatur", Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, 57 (1961), pp. 177-194.

There are yet other German poems of this kind in Hebrew characters, which have not yet been published. A trained eye will find them easily in Steinschneider's Bodleian Catalogue under the heading Lied. Let us note here that also in the Hildebrandslied, Rosenberg found in a German source "ich trawe Christ von himmel wol" [=I trust Christ in heaven], while in the Jewish transcription we have אין טרויא און גאט פון הימל [=I trust God in heaven] (quoted here according to the MS).

31. See all the publications cited in n. 18. Max Weinreich has indicated several other possible changes of the same nature in Dukus Horant. See his work "Old Yiddish Poetry in Linuistic Research", Word, 16 (1960), pp. 107, 111.

32. Landau, pp. LXXI, LXXXIV.

33. Erik, p. 109.

34. I. Tsinberg, Di qeshikhte fun der literatur bay yidn, vol. 6 (Vilna 1935), pp. 66-67. In the Hebrew translation of this volume, Toldot sifrut Israel, vol. 4 (Tel-Aviv 1958), p. 32, part of the quotation has been transferred to p. 181, n. 10. See also below, n. 37.

35. J.C. Wagenseil, Belehrung der Judisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart (Königsberg 1699), pp. 157-302.
36. Hamburg MS according to Landau, hence in the transcription. The first number is the number of the page in Landau, the number after the comma is the line.
37. The term "אָסטערן צייט" (ostern tsayt = Eastertide) in the quotation of the Artur-roman that Tsinberg included in his book (p. 67) became in the Hebrew translation of this book (n. 34 above), p. 32: "עַת חֹדֶשׁ אֲבִיב" [=the month of spring]!, and the same was repeated on p. 33.
38. In the original clearly "metin"; Landau in his transcription from Wagenseil has "mesin", but also in Wagenseil's transcription, p. 261: "Metten" (=Christian morning service). "Die Metten lesen" is an idiomatic expression.
39. B. Hrushovski, "The Creation of Accentual Iambs in European Poetry and their First Employment in a Yiddish Romance in Italy (1508-1509)", For Max Weinreich on his Seventieth Birthday (London-The Hague-Paris 1964), pp. 127-128.
40. In German research into Yiddish literature, also, can be seen a critical attitude to the Spielmann attribution in general, and in particular to the Spielmann attribution of the Jewish Artur-roman. The direct link between the latter work and the works of Wirnt von Grafenberg has been very nicely refuted by W.O. Dreessen in "Zur Rezeption deutscher epischer Literature im altjüdischen. Das Beispiel 'Wigalois' - 'Artushof'", Deutsche Literatur des späten Mittelalters, Hamburger Colloquium 1973 (Berlin 1975), pp. 116-128. Although the hypothesis that Jews could have been oral distributors of German epic is not proved here, Dreessen poses in his work a number of

pertinent questions touching on the nature and quality of the epic of German origin among Jews in comparison with the original Yiddish Biblical and Midrashic epics. Similar reservations and conjectures a propos the Cambridge Geniza Codex had been previously expressed by H. Neumann, "Sprache und Reim in den judendeutschen Gedichten des Cambridge Codex T-S.10.K.22", Indogermanica, Festschrift für Wolfgang Krause (Heidelberg 1960), pp. 145-165. Neumann's linguistic and metrical analysis creates a sharp distinction between the clearly higher standard of the Jewish part of the Genizah manuscript and that of Dukus Horant, which he calls a "Trivialform der Heldenepik" and which did not survive in written form in the German literary tradition. His conclusions about Dukus Horant are in fact also valid for the Jewish Artur-roman.

41. See Hrushovski's excellent work, cited in n. 39.
42. Erik, pp. 177-202; Shmeruk, pp. 89-104.
43. Erik, pp. 112-129; Shmeruk, pp. 117-136.
44. Erik, pp. 122-123. For lists of this epic and its possible authors see Shmeruk, p. 28 (the Cambridge MS) and pp. 122-123 (other works). See also n. 56 below.
45. Ch. Shmeruk, "Reshima bibliografit shel defusey yidish bepolin", in his Sifrut yidish bepolin (Jerusalem 1981), p. 87, No. 20.
46. Tsinberg, vol. 6, p. 137. On the basis of Erik's division into "areas", but perhaps directly from Tsinberg's own above-cited words, his cautious remarks were reformulated in a much too simple but most confident way in Algemeyne Entsiklopedie, Yidn 3, columns 9-27. There no less than three

'Spielmann-schools' are introduced! From there it was only one step to the full vulgarization of the Spielmann concept into a kind of 'Spielmannism' (see the introduction to Elye Bokher, Bove-bukh, Buenos Aires 1962).

47. Twelfth century Christian homiletic literature sharply condemned the Spielleute for their licentiousness and religious indifference. They were seen as "servants of the Devil" for whom there was no "hope". See the quotations in H. Naumann, "Versuch einer Einschränkung des romantischen Begriffs Spielmannsdichtung", Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, 2 (1924), p. 794. This article was reprinted in the collection cited in n. 22. In this collection the quotation is on p. 144. If there were Spielleute among the Jews, and they were, as Landau and Erik believed, similar to their non-Jewish colleagues, they would certainly not have been allowed to approach the omed (pulpit). A separate matter is that in Jewish homiletic literature there is not even one parallel piece of negative evidence for the existence of Spielleute in the "Jewish" world. Would such a "class" of "servants of the Devil" have been totally ignored by our homiletic literature, if we had possessed such a "class"?

48. Das Schemuelbuch des Mosche Eshim Wearba, Ein biblisches Epos aus dem 15. Jahrhundert, Einleitung und textkritischer Apparat von Feliks Falk, Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von L. Fuks (Assen 1961), 2, pp. 102-103 (referred to hereafter as Falk). "Eshim ve'arba" = twenty four, meaning the 24 books of the Old Testament.

49. Zalman Rubashov (=Shneyur-Zalman Shazar), "R. Moyshe eshim wearba (bamerkung tsu M. Weinreichs forshung 'Dos Shmuel-bukh')", Di tsukunft, July 1927, pp. 428-429; in

Hebrew translation: "R. Moshe eshim wearba -- heara lemehtar 'Dos Shmuel-bukh'", in Shneyur-Zalman Shazar, Orey dorot (Jerusalem 1971), pp. 235-238.

50. Erik, pp. 116-117; Weinreich, pp. 107-111; Tsinberg, 6, pp. 126-127.

51. Falk, 1, p. 5.

52. See above, n. 47.

53. Falk, 1, 5-6. Similar speculations a propos the author of the Old Yiddish anonymous Doniel can also be found in Doniel, Das alt-jiddische Danielbukh nach dem Basler Druck von 1577, Herausgegeben von Wulf-Otto Dreessen und Hermann-Josef Müller (Göppingen 1978), 1, pp. 4-5, 9-10.

54. See my article on the Hebrew acrostic in the Yosef-Hatsadik poem (n. 2 above).

55. Manakhem Oldendorf, from the second half of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, will serve here as a good example. In 1517 he transcribed a manuscript which contained Yiddish songs with parallel Hebrew texts, and songs with only Hebrew texts. This is the well-known manuscript from the Merzbacher collection, which was published in L. Löwenstein, "Judische und jüdisch-deutsche Lieder", Jubelschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstag des Dr. Israel Hildesheimer (Berlin 1890), pp. 126-144. He was himself the author of two poems with parallel Yiddish-Hebrew texts and one Hebrew poem, all three copied in the above-cited manuscript. Menakhem Oldendorf was indeed a copyist of both Yiddish and Hebrew manuscripts. About him see Ephraim Kupfer, "Menakhem Oldendorfs oytobiografische fartseykhenungen", Di goldene keyt 58 (1967), pp. 212-223. See especially p. 214: "oft khasmet er zikh : Menakhem

Oldendorf Hasoyfer" [=he often signs himself 'Menakhem Oldendorf the scribe'], and see also p. 215ff.

56. Here and below I will limit myself to the authors of the Esther poems, which I have described in my book about Yiddish biblical plays, Mahazot mikra'ium beyidish 1697-1750 (Jerusalem 1979), pp. 131-137. The author of No. 2 is probably הטופר אברהם בר אליהו (the scribe Abraham ben Eliyahu), of No. 3 - אײזיק דער שרייבער (Ayzik the Scribe); another copyist, a transcriber from galkhes (Latin characters) into Jewish characters was אפרים בר יהודה לוי המכונה גומפרכט לוי (Ephraim bar Yehuda Levi, called Gumprekht Levi), the author of No. 9. About him see Shmeruk, pp. 33-34.

57. See No. 5 of the Esther poems mentioned above (n. 56): "גומפריכט פון שעברשין...אין מלמד פון פנידיג" [Gumprekht of Shebreshin...a melamed from Venice]. About him see Ch. Shmeruk, "Kavim lidmutah shel sifrut yidish bepulin uvelita ad gezerot tah vetat", in Sifrut yidish bepulin (Jerusalem 1981), pp. 28-31.

58. See No. 7 of the above-mentioned Esther poems (n. 56): "מה"ר יעקב ב"ר בונים...המכונה רבי קופלמן" -- "איש בריסק דקויא". Concerning him, see my article in Tarbiz, pp. 277-279.

59. See above, n. 1.

60. Erik Auerbach, Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und Mittelalter (Bern 1958), pp. 216-217 (referring to the eleventh century). It must be noted here that the term 'Spielmann' can in many of its applications be very misleading, if taken literally. M. Weinreich believed that the expression "zingen un zogn" [=to sing and to recite] which according to him is preserved in Yiddish until the present in connection with khazonim, is actually a remnant of the

Spielmann tradition (see his article "Old Yiddish Poetry in Linguistic Research", Word 16 (1960), p. 106, n. 16). But in this sense the phrase is in fact derived from Latin, from the usage of Christian clergy, from cantare et dicere (psalmum) and was adopted by both Spielleute and Minnesingers (cf. F. Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (Berlin 1967), p. 709, s.v. singen). We must also ask when the idiomatic expression "ikh hob fun im tsu zingen un tsu zogn" acquired its current meaning (Weinrich, loc. cit.), and when the expression was still no more than a conventional formula which could conveniently be rhymed with zingere and zogn. For most the instances of the formula in Old Yiddish literature are found only in the rhyme-position with no direct bearing on the course of the narrative. The formula is used in this way in the Cambridge Manuscript (see p. 17, lines 102-104) and in exactly the same way, with the same rhyme, in the Shmuel-bukh (see Falk, 1, stanzas 4 and 700). Concerning the Shmuel-bukh and the Melokhim-bukh it is clear that they were intended to be read and not to be sung or recited (zingen or zogn). So by what date had the formulas lost their direct meaning? (See my review of the Yiddish edition of the Melokhim-bukh, cited above in n. 1.)

61. See also the above-cited collection of 1977 and all the works listed in n. 22. We should also mention P. Wareman's fine dissertation, Spielmannsdichtung, Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung (Amsterdam 1951).

62. As a parallel on the Germanic side to the attempt to see Yiddish works in the transcribed German epics, it is worth mentioning here as a curiosity the attempt to see the Yiddish Biblical and Midrashic epics as an area of German literature. J. Marchand began this in connection with the Cambridge Geniza

Codex (cf. Shmeruk, pp. 38, 42), and continued by J.A. Howard, "Bemerkungen zu einem Aspekt altjüdischer Literaturgeschichte", Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, 215 (1978), pp. 1-20.

63. On this subject see Ch. Shmeruk, "'Medresh Itzik' uva'ayat meserotav ha-sifrutiyot", Hasifrut 2 (1970), pp. 347-354; in German translation, "Itzik Mangers 'Medresh Itzik' und seine literarischen traditionen", Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, Band 100, Sonderheft Jiddish, Berlin 1981, pp. 195-212; and in English: "Medresh Itzik and the Problem of its Literary Traditions", in I Manger, Medresh Itzik (Jerusalem 1984), pp. V-XXIX.

P.S.: After the paper was finished a copy of the Bove bukh was discovered in Wagenseil's library now at the University Library in Erlangen, W. Germany.