Eyshe Beirich—*Sin valor comercial, or A Worthless Yiddish Library*


English translation of Sholem Aleykhem’s collection, Fun kasrilevke (also in the collection!).


One of the first books I ever read in Yiddish, with notes for students.


A collection of some of Sholem Aleykhem’s most classic stories: Fun kasrilevke, or “From Kasrilevke.”


———. *Maż z Nazaretu.* Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1990

A Polish translation of Yiddish author Sholem Ash’s novel “Der man fun natsres” (1939). This book was owned by my Polish literature professor, who graciously gifted it to me.


Comprehensive Yiddish-English Dictionary, Condition: Worn, from extensive use.


This book was gifted to me by one of my advisors/mentors, with the inscription: “To Eyshe, looking forward to readings yours.”


German translation of murdered Soviet Yiddish writer, Dovid Hofshteyn. Just as I have Yiddish translations of German books, it feels important that I should also have German translations of Yiddish. Albeit reluctantly. Condition: Good, with water damage.


English translation of Bella Chagall’s Yiddish memoir, Brenendike likht, with illustrations by her husband, Marc Chagall.


I have been told by various Yiddishists that this volume is exceedingly rare and have had offers to buy it from me. I refuse because the book is special to me — I purchased this book, lying behind a bookshelf, at the Strand, in New York City, during the first week of my first job as a Yiddish teacher. It is a 100 year old collection of Hasidic folklore, memories, and daily life of Hasidic communities in Eastern Europe.


This is a Yiddish translation of Anatole France’s French novel, Le lys rouge.

Perhaps my absolute favorite book in my collection — a translation of Goethe’s Faust into the Yiddish language, with a wonderful introduction on the language politics between Yiddish and German. It belongs to a generation where if many people wanted to access Goethe, they had to read him in Yiddish. I also prefer to read him in Yiddish.


One of my favorite books in my collection, this is one of the first English-Yiddish textbooks to be published. It is noteworthy that this textbook, published pre-genocide, is evidence of a drive to learn Yiddish in New York before the ethnic cleansing of the majority of its speakers abroad.


A collection of Hasidic texts translated from Hebrew and Yiddish.


This illustrated Yiddish children’s book about the socialist bundist Yiddishist leader Vladimir Medem is signed by its author, Naftali Gross, in the following dedication: “To one wonderful friend, L. Arkin, a gift. Naftali Gross, 1938.”


This volume of Hirshbeyn’s travelogues across the world opens with a handwritten signature from its previous owner: “Dear Dad, Happy Father’s Day! with much love, Chaim & Anne.” I am grateful to have received this book second-hand.


This black and red illustrated travelogue describes the travels of Perets Hirshbeyn in Brazil and Argentina in 1916.


The collected works of writer Perets Hirshbeyn — I have been able to find 5 copies, specifically of his collected dramas. Condition: Worn.


Two volume novel about an Ashkenazi family that arrives in Palestine during the Third Aliyah. The first volume has a gift message written in Yiddish: “A gift, from Fanye Bulkin,” and a stamp that reads: “COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO,” from the library of J. B. Tafelov. The second volume has a stamp on the first page: sin valor comercial.


Condition: Good, needs rebinding.


This book has a gorgeous outer cover, which is rare for these older volumes from Dos poylishe yudntum [Polish Jewry]. The back has a dedication to where it was printed; “Este libro se terminó de imprimir el 28 Febrero de 1948, en los Talleres Grá’icos Julio Kaufman,
call Corrientes N. 76.” The back cover has a price listed, with the amount crossed out with black pen: “Price — Pesos.” Condition: Worn, with a particularly delicate cover.

This is a contemporary translation of Harry Potter into the Yiddish language, to be read by Yiddish enthusiasts and Yiddish speaking children alike. This book is, excitingly, not second-hand. Condition: Like New.

English translation of Miriam Karpilove. The inscription is written in Yiddish by my Yiddish professor, wishing me success and love, unlike the protagonist of the novel.

English translation of Yiddish writer Anna Margolin.

My most complete and most beautifully illustrated collected works—these are 15 volumes of Guy de Maupassant’s stories and dramas translated into Yiddish. There is something particularly important about these translations in relation to my collection’s theme of “Worthlessness”: Gone is the generation that would have wanted to read Maupassant in Yiddish translation. But I am reading them, in Yiddish, before I read them in French. They have value to me, and that experience alone is worth it.

This collection of stories and drawings of animals and “God’s creatures,” is signed in what looks like childish handwriting, by a “Khane Feygl.”

Another volume of collected works of Mendele Moykher Sforim, attesting to his importance to Yiddish literature and to my collection. The binding is coming apart. This may be one of the oldest books in the collection—based on its orthography and paratext, it likely comes from the turn of the century in the Russian Empire.

These volumes are the collected works of one of the most important Yiddish writers of the 19th and 20th centuries: Mendele Moykher Sforim or Sholem Yankev Abramovitch. These were published by the Yidisher kultur-farband, YKUF, in the 1940s, for children and adults alike to enjoy. I was able to take these books from the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Condition: Generally good, with some wear and tear on the spine.

The only English-language history of the town my family comes from, Ludmir, now found in Ukraine.
This is an art book gifted to me by my Polish literature professor, which feels deeply thematically connected to my lost and “worthless” library. Condition: Great.

This is a dictionary of all Hebrew-derived words in the Yiddish language, with definitions given in Yiddish. The dictionary is published in France at the Medem bibliothèque, named after the Bundist leader and Yiddishist.

English translation of Hersh Dovid Nomberg

This volume is a memoir written by influential Yiddish speaking communist writer, Moyshe Olgin, about his experiences in the Jewish Labour Bund during the 1905 revolution in Imperial Russia. It is decked in blue and gold, and published in memory of the writer.

This anthology is dedicated to the deceased Yiddish writer Y. L. Peretz, the “father” of Yiddish literature and the first Yiddish modernist. It is nearly 500 pages of poetry, dramas, short stories, and much more. It is very worn and shows signs of being read many times, which makes me smile.

An edition of some of Y. L. Peretz’s earlier “Folk-minded stories,” which become classics in Yiddish literature. This edition is undated but appears to come from Imperial Russian Poland or early after WWI.

An English anthology of Yiddish works by writer Y. L. Peretz. This volume used to belong to a “Julie,” as evidenced by her signature on the first page. Condition: Good.

This edition has two library stamps from its previous owners: “D. Sohn Library,” written in Yiddish, and “Library Bialystoker Center,” also written in Yiddish, referring to a library for Bialystoker Landsmanshaftn.


This textbook was one of the first texts I read that revealed to me the daily life of Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe. Condition: Like New.

This volume has a small stamp: “For personal use, without commercial purposes.”


One of 100 volumes, this one has two stamps: “Bialik High School Library, Montreal, Quebec, H4W 3B8,” and a smaller stamp, in Spanish: “para uso personal, sin fines comerciales.” [for personal use, without commercial purpose]. Condition: Worn.


This volume has a small stamp: “For personal use, without commercial purposes.”


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The Yiddish textbook is called “Yiddish 2,” or a ‘sequel’ of sorts to Uriel Weinreich’s textbook, College Yiddish. Both texts belong to the postwar generation’s desire to rebuild and testify to the past generations and their language, Yiddish.


English translation of Zusman Segalowitch.

Shafir, M. M. *Bay der kholem mutiler [At the trough of dreams]*. Montreal: Self-Published, 1983.

A paperback copy of a collection of Yiddish poems by M. M. Shafir, signed by the author, with Yiddish inscription.


Condition: Good.

One of my favorite books, a small, innocuous volume of poetry by writer Lamed Shapiro. It’s title means “From a woman’s prayer book,” and is a collection of Holocaust Poetry.

This book bears the inscription: “This book, once owned by a South African reader, has been preserved by the Cape Town Yiddish Cultural Federation and returned to circulation by the National Yiddish Book Centre of South Hadley, Mass. USA. May it thus inspire us to keep alight the flame of Jewish life and learning.” Condition: Good.

This is an old volume of some of the best short stories of Lamed Shapiro, and on its inside cover it has a blue Imperial Russian commerce stamp, which is around 114 years old. Perhaps back in Imperial Russia this book had more commercial value—although its author never made a living from his writing and died in poverty.


A book of Yiddish humor and folklore. Undated, but worn from visible use and I like to think, enjoyment.


I have two copies of this revolutionary Thesaurus of the Yiddish Language, both with different covers. The blue covered edition proclaims that it comes from the library of G. Bielasiak, in Brooklyn.

A volume on the works of H. Leyvick by the Yiddish critic Shmuel Tsharni on the yortsayt of Leyvick’s death. It has a worn but Yiddish styled paper jacket, and the Yiddish inscription inside reads: “A gift, to our beloved, Dvoyre Faynbinder, 1956.”

There is a Yiddish inscription within the cover of these psychadelic Yiddish poems: “To the honorable Shmuel Weber, publisher and editor of the Forverts, fighting for the survival of Yiddish — Frid Vayninger, July 29, 1974.”

One of the most important works of Yiddish historical linguistics, these 4 volumes are the life’s work of the Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich. I acquired these volumes from the Yiddish Book Center. Condition: Like New.

This is the ninth edition of the most popular and most influential Yiddish textbook in the Anglophone world: College Yiddish. I have been unable to find a first edition, although I would jump at the chance to see one in person.


This translation of the Tanakh by Yiddish writer Yehoyesh is a large and ornately decorated book, with an inscription inside, in English: “January 6, 1945 — To Albert, with best wishes on your Bar Mitzvah, may you continue to make good use of these. Chaim Serecski.”


This seminal ethnographic work on the Yiddish-speaking “Shtetl,” despite its inaccuracies, remains a charming and important addition to my collection. This 1952 is among its first printings, and bears an ex libris from “Pearl and Sam Horwitz.” I am grateful to receive the book they passed down. Condition: Good.


I arrived to own this book as a gift after a donation to the last non-Hasidic Yiddish bookstore in New York City, CYCO. Reyzl Zhikhlinski is a too-often forgotten and amazing Yiddish poet of the pre- and post-war generation.


This hardcover edition of the famous Yiddish novel 'The Brother’s Ashkenazi," was written and published by Isaac Bashevis Singer’s brother. I. I. Singer.


Sheva Zucker’s Yiddish textbook, the first textbook I used to learn Yidish. Condition: Good, although slightly worn from a year of use.