How Yiddish Polonisms may uncover Iranian, Turkic and other Asian speech in the White Croat State in Galicia

(A chapter in the new field of »Silk Road Linguistics«)

Paul Wexler

Tel-Aviv University, IL 69978 Tel-Aviv, wexlerpaul7@gmail.com

Govorci jidiša so kot trgovci na Svilni poti med 9. in 13. stoletjem prevzeli kakšnih pet tisoč afrazijskih, zlasti perzijskih jezikovnih posebnosti. Na Poljskem so se judovski govorci, ki so bili predvsem iranskega izvora, najprej naselili blizu ali znotraj galicijske Bele Hrvaške, ki je razpadla do 10. stoletja. Veliko nezapisanih iranskih in turkotatarskih vplivov v poljskem jidišu so nato prekrili polonizmi, ki v obliki in pomenu spominjajo na prvotno iransko in turkotatarsko izrazje. Članek se trudi raziskati, koliko polonizmov v poljskem in ukrajinskem jidišu (pravzaprav 'prikritih irano-turcizmov') lahko obnovi podobo izumrle iranščine in turkotatarščine, govorjene na slovanskih in germanskih tleh. Druge možnosti za zdaj ni.

As traders on the Silk Roads from the 9–13th centuries, Yiddish speakers acquired about 5,000 Afro-Asian, mainly Persian, linguistic components. In Poland, these Jews, largely of Iranian origin themselves, first settled in or near the Galician White Croat State, which disappeared by the 10th century. As unwritten Iranian and Turkic became obsolete, many such influences, also found in Polish Yiddish, came to be replaced by Polonisms, that resembled the original Iranian and Turkic terms in form and meaning. The present paper will explore how many Polonisms in Polish and Ukrainian Yiddish (essentially "covert Irano-Turkisms") can reconstruct aspects of the extinct Iranian and Turkic once spoken in Slavic and German territories. So far, there is no other means available to us to accomplish this task.

Ključne besede: poljski jidiš, iranščina, turkotatarščina, kitajščina, stari judovski jeziki, 'lingvistika Svilne poti'

Key words: Polish Yiddish; Iranian; Turkic; Chinese; old Jewish languages; "Silk Road linguistics"

1 Competing views of the origin of Yiddish

It has long been suggested that Yiddish is a form of Middle High German that arose when Jews speaking Judaised variants of French and Italian emigrated

to the Rhineland and Bavaria in the 9–10th centuries, adopting and adapting regional German dialects that came to be known as Yiddish. Yiddish became marginally Slavicised in eastern Germany (probably more so than the coterritorial Christian dialects of German, as, apparently, some Sorbs, Polabians and other German Slavs converted to Judaism in order to participate in the Silk Road trade, largely in Jewish hands). After the 13th century, Yiddish became increasingly Slavicised in the monolingual Western and Eastern Slavic lands where most Yiddish speakers came to reside. Hence, Yiddish should prove to be an exceptional laboratory for the study of Slavo-German linguistic and cultural contacts that began over a millennium ago—first with Polabian and Sorbian, and lastly with Russian in the late 18th century. Yiddish has also been expected to provide unique insights into the histories of Middle High and early Modern German.

I do not share these assumptions, mainly because I do not think that Yiddish is a Germanic language (for the "old" and "new" views, see Weinreich 2008 and Wexler 2002, 2021, respectively). Its German component, limited almost entirely to the lexicon, is highly idiosyncratic, while Yiddish syntax and phonology are overwhelmingly Slavic. Hence, Yiddish can only be defined as a Slavic language, relexified to German and other superstratal lexicon (on relexification, see Wexler 1997 and other articles in the same volume). Impressionistically speaking, about a little over one third of the Yiddish vocabulary is German, but a similar proportion is artificial "Germanoidisms", created by Yiddish speakers, which either do not exist at all in German, or exist in German with different meanings. Approximately half of the so-called Hebraisms are "Hebroidisms" created by Yiddish speakers—on the model of the inventory of Arabic cognates used in Persian (which renders Yiddish more Arabicised than the Judeo-Ibero-Romance languages spoken in Spain and Portugal, which are famous for being far poorer in Arabisms than any dialect of Christian Ibero-Romance!). Yiddish is, pointedly, almost entirely free of idiosyncratic Slavoidisms. These facts mean that Yiddish is a uniquely merged Eastern and Western Slavic language (Upper Sorbian and pre-Ukrainian, i.e. Kiev-Polissian-Galician), where most of the lexicon has been "relexified" to German(oid) elements, according to Slavic and Iranian, and, to a lesser extent, also Turkic patterns of discourse. Recently, I have uncovered a massive overt and covert Asian (mainly Iranian, Turkic, Chinese, and even a tiny Tokharian and Mongolian element), and a minor overt African impact on Yiddish (see Wexler 2021), reflecting the routes of peripatetic Jewish merchants along the Silk Roads. Yiddish was invented (along with other Jewish languages) probably by the 9–10th centuries to be a secretive language for Jewish merchants operating on the Afro-Eurasian Silk Roads from the 9–13th centuries. It therefore goes without saying that the idosyncratic nature of Yiddish Germanoidisms makes it very dangerous to extrapolate from Yiddish to German.

Still, Yiddish will continue to be of major interest to Germanists, as well as to Slavists, but in entirely new ways: *As a heavily Iranianised and mildly*

Turkicised and Sinicised Slavic language. As such, Yiddish may assist in identifying hitherto unrecognised (i) Iranianisms (mainly Persianisms?) and Turkicisms (probably from the closely related Khazar and Chuvash), and even Sinicisms and a few Mongolianisms, in Slavic languages, and the same components, along with Slavisms, in German, and (ii) The Slavic and German locales where Iranian and Turkic (and Chinese and Romani?) were probably spoken, by mixed Slavo-Turkic and Slavo-Iranian confederations (some involving Mongolians), at the time of the Jewish settlement in these lands by the 9th century. Iranian and Turkic probably became obsolete in Europe about two centuries later. Romani, an Iranianised Indic language, apparently spoken by staff working on Jewish caravans along the Silk Roads, can also assist in identifying overt and covert Iranianisms in Slavic languages and German. The Silk Road may account for the geographical spread of Roma throughout Eurasia. These topics have yet to be raised and explored by Romanologists.

2 The goals of the present paper

The present paper will try to reconstruct the Iranian, Turkic and other Asian elements very likely spoken in the Irano- and Turco-Slavic confederations in the White Croat State in Polono-Ukrainian Galicia.

There is also the possibility that Chinese, Romani and Mongolian merchants were also active in Polish and Ukrainian Galicia, and, possibly, also resided in Irano- and Turco-Slavic confederations. Mongolian skeletons have been found in an Avar cemetery in northern Serbia, thought to date from the 8–9th centuries (at Čelarevo, in the Vojvodina, to the north of Novi Sad; Avars were a Turkic people probably speaking Iranian); stones with rudimentary Hebrew inscriptions and religious decorations and inscriptions have also been found at the same site (they can be viewed in the historical museum in Novi Sad). The Mongolians may have been long-distance merchants who had converted to Judaism. Chinese merchants were encountered less frequently on the Silk Roads a millennium ago than Iranians (Zoroastrians, Muslims, Jews), but my recent discovery of a wealth of likely Chinese influences in Yiddish (less so in other cryptic Old Jewish mercantile languages) means that the possible presence of (Judaised?) Chinese merchants in Galicia requires further study—by historians and linguists alike. In many of the files presented below, I have cited Chinese terms with strong formal and semantic resemblance to Iranian, Turkic and/or Arabic (synonyms, or semantically close terms). I have always assumed that China was the most likely venue for the diffusion of such terms to Old Jewish languages. However, I should not rule out the possibility that the Sinicisms were acquired by Yiddish on Slavic territory. A Chinese, and possibly also Romani presence in Slavic or German territories, could most likely come from converts to Judaism who were partners of Iranian Jews who also worked on the caravans that plied the Silk Roads. In file #13 below in the discussion of a

Yiddish bread term (*xale*) with Chinese, Iranian, and/or Arabic connections, I emphasised that the Yiddish term (believed erroneously by speakers of Yiddish to be of Hebrew origin), as well as possible surface cognates in Arabic and Persian, has, historically, never appeared, to the best of my knowledge, with a diminutive suffix—but such a suffix is possible in some dialects of Mandarin (e.g. in Běijíng), and is required in the Polish loan, *chałka*. This crucial fact suggests that Polish may have acquired the term (attested from Chinese all the way to German!) directly either from Jewish or non-Jewish merchants active in Przemyśl/Peremyšl (the earliest known Jewish mercantile settlement in Galicia in the 10th century). If Yiddish never had a diminutive option, the reason could be that Yiddish speakers received the term in its non-Chinese form. For Romani loans of Hebrew origin, see Wexler 2021. An examination of Polonisms in Romani might reveal whether Romani merchants may have settled in Galicia in this earlier period (I discussed detailed parallels in the Polish components shared by Yiddish and Romani in Wexler 1986). If so, then some Roma may have left India and Iran earlier than is usually presumed.

In recent years, I have discovered that Yiddish has over 4,500 Afro-Asian components, both overt and covert, on all levels of the language, though primarily in the lexicon. The main Asian contributor to Yiddish is Persian. The two main reasons for this fact are: (i) Until c.1200, the overwhelming majority of Jews in the world (consisting mainly of converts of diverse ethnicities) resided in the Iranian Empire (where the Iranian Talmud, composed largely in Judeo-Eastern Aramaic—also the administrative language of the Iranian Empire for centuries—was compiled by the 5–6th centuries). (ii) Jews acquired special trading privileges in the late 9th century from the Holy Roman Empire and the Táng Dynasty, that allowed them to circulate freely on the Silk Roads connecting Mainz and Xī'ān, Andalusia, Africa, the Near East and India (and, marginally, Indonesia). The Jews rose to prominence as peripatetic merchants because they were neutral in the religious conflicts that developed by the 9–10th centuries between Islam and Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, and they lacked a proselytising or political agenda. The prominent role of the Jews on the Silk Roads required the invention of cryptic colloquial languages, which were invented by the process of relexification (a technique originally used hitherto by them, but only in the production of literal Hebrew Bible "translations"; in practising widespread colloquial relexification they were probably following Iranians and Arabs; a primary reason for the massive disparities among contemporary Arabic dialects is that the original local languages, e.g. Coptic, Berber and Aramaic, were first relexified to Arabic lexicon; technically, the results would not have been Arabic, but "relexified Coptic", etc.). Non-Jews could understand relexified Old Jewish languages with great difficulty. Without the Silk Roads, the Jewish languages would not have been invented, and widespread conversion to Judaism by mainly pagans interested in participating in the lucrative Silk Road trade would not have taken place. The very survival of the Jews would have been unlikely after 1200 without the Silk Roads.

The evidence that the Jews arose as a commercial guild with a unique religion in Iran is diverse. Aside from the plethora of Iranian legal concepts and terminology in the Talmud, and Iranian customs practised by the Jews worldwide, I should point out that the two Hebrew ethnonyms, *Ashkenaz(ic)* and *Sefard(ic)*, which are used by almost 90% of the world's Jews, are themselves of Iranian(ised) origin and mean, respectively, 'Scythian', a geographically widespread Iranian tribe, and Sardes, the name of a Greco-Irano-Lydian city in western Anatolia, near Izmir. The remaining Jews in the world do not have unique ethnonyms. Moreover, Ashkenaz(ic), originally cited in the Bible as an Iranian Scythian territory near Armenia, in the late first millennium A.D. first came to denote Iranian-, and then, Slavic-speaking Jews, in the Near East and Western Europe. Since the late 11th century in Europe, the term Ashkenazic has denoted Yiddish speakers in the German lands. Ashkenaz(ic) was still being used natively to denote Iranian-speaking Jews in Uzbekistan in the 14th century, and in the Caucasus and Crimea as recently as the early 20th century. The Ashkenazic Jews historically spoke Iranian, Slavic and Slavic relexified to German, Hebrew and other lexicon—in that order—which came to be known as Yiddish; the Sefardic Jews, who abandoned Sardes after its destruction in the early 7th century in a war between the Byzantine and Iranian Empires, settled in Andalusia and North Africa, where they invented Judaised variants of Arabic, Berber and, eventually, Ibero-Romance.

The first international Jewish trading guild known to have operated on the Silk Roads was from Rādhān, in southeastern Iraq, in the Iranian Empire, by the 9th century, and was known as the Radhanites. The Iranians played a major role on the Silk Roads, due to their central geographical location. Southeastern Poland (Małopolska) and the neighbouring Western Ukrainian lands were on the Silk Roads, and it was in this part of Poland that Jewish merchants first settled in the 9–10th-centuries. The first international cryptic Jewish merchant language was Persian, which was known in the 10th century as Lotera'i (interpreted by Jews as Hebrew 'not the Torah [language]', due to the plethora of Hebraisms and artificial Hebroidisms). The glottonym, however, also used by non-Jewish Iranian merchants (who shared the secret language with Jews), is probably ultimately of Indic origin. More likely etyma are Hi/Ur *lutrā*[1] 'exiled, dumped, driven away, rejected; sycophant; babbler, tell-tale,

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[1] The following abbreviations are used with examples: ag.—agentive, Ar—Aramaic, Arab—Arabic, Arm—Armenian, Ashk—Ashkenazic, Aves—Avestan (the language of Zoroastrian scripture), Balk—Balkan, Bojk—Bojkian (a Ukrainian ethnographic group in the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland), Br—Belarusian, Bulg—Bulgarian, c.—century; circa, C—Common, Cant—Cantonese, Carp—Carpathian, Ce—Central, ch.—chapter, Chin—Chinese, Chr—Christian, Chuv—Chuvash (a Turkic language, closely related to Khazar and proto-Bolgar), Cl—Classical, Cri—Crimean, Cz—Czech, d.—died, D—Digor dialect of Ossete, dial.—dialectal, dim.—diminutive, Džud—Džudezmo (Judeo-Spanish), Džuh—Džuhuri (a Judeo-Iranian language spoken in Daghestan and Azerbajdzan), E—Eastern, ed.—edited,

blab; silly person; backbiter, slanderer; mischief-maker', possibly related to Skt *lótra* 'booty, loot' (see Platts 1960: 951; Mayrhofer 1967, fasc. 19: 114). Turner cites **luṭṭati* 'plunders'; *loptra-* 'stolen property' (1966: 644, #11078; 649, #11145). Bailey (1979: 24) also suggests Hi *lūṭ* 'robbery, plundering' (< Skt *lótra* 'booty'; this is the source of Anglo-Ind *loot* 'booty' [1788]); see also Hi/Ur *luṭnā* 'to become entangled/lean/weak/poor; degenerate; to deteriorate', *lūṭijā* 'robber'.

There are formally and semantically similar words in Chinese that could either be sources of (J)Pe *lotera'i* or derivatives of the Indo-Iranian glottonym, thus creating an isogloss that links Persian with Chinese and German, see e.g. OCantChin *lau* 'to chatter', *lo* 'to prattle; dribble', *lö'* 'to confuse', *löt* 'to ramble'; see also the first component of ShangChin *lóe gāw* 'to talk nonsense, prattle on' (with 'to talk'). See also MandChin *láo* 'to chatter', *lào* 'to gossip', (dial.) 'to chat' (the latter two terms share a common character), *lán* 'confused chatter, incomprehensible babble', *fèi liào* 'good-for-nothing' (lit. 'waste products'), *wú lài* 'rascal, rogue, scoundrel' (lit. 'not a rascal'), *liú làng zhě* 'vagrant, vagabond' (lit. 'degenerate' + 'unrestrained' + 'person involved in'), *lüè* 'to rob, plunder', *lĭ yŭ* 'slang' (lit. 'vulgar, unrefined' + 'language, dialect, speech'), *lŭ lüè* 'to loot, pillage' (with *lŭ* 'to capture, seize').

In my view, the "Indo-Sino-Iranian" glottonym is also the basis of G *Lotter(bube)* 'sluggard', Uk *lotr* 'scoundrel', Pol *lotr* 'scoundrel; thief' (see further details in Wexler 2021, ch. 2, sect. #264). In the German lands, Jews used the term He *lwtjr* /loter/ to denote the areas where Judeo-Persian was

Egyp—Egyptian, Eng—English, f—feminine, fasc.—fascicle, fl.—flourished, fn.—footnote, Fr—French, G—German, Geor—Georgian, Gk—Greek, G'oid—Germanoid (i.e. artifical German), H—High, He—Hebrew, Hi—Hindi, Hung—Hungarian, I—Iron dialect of Ossete, Ind—Indic, Iran—Iranian, J—Judeo-, Jagh—Jaghnobi (an Eastern Iranian language spoken in Tadjikistan, the sole survivor of Soghdian), Jap—Japanese, Jazgh—Jazghulami (a Southeastern Iranian language, spoken in Tadjikistan), Kar—Karaite, Khot—Khotan (a major oasis town in southwestern Xīnjiāng, China), Kor—Korean, Kurd—Kurdish, L—Low(er), Lat—Latin, Latv—Latvian, Lemk—Lemkian (an ethnic group in the Transcarpathian Ukraine, southeastern Poland and northeastern Slovakia, on and near the location of the White Croat State), lit.—literally, Lith—Lithuanian, m—masculine, M—Middle, Mand—Mandarin, Mod—Modern, Mong—Mongolian, N—North(ern), O—Old, Oss—Ossete (an Eastern Iranian language, spoken in the Caucasus), Ott—Ottoman, Pal—Palestinian, Part—Parthian (an extinct Northwestern Iranian language, spoken in Iran and Turkmenistan), Pe—Persian, pl.—plural, plt.—plurale tantum, Pol—Polish, R—Russian, Rom—Romani, Rtw—Rotwelsch (German slang), S—Southern, Se—Serbian, sect.—section, Shang—Shanghai, Skt—Sanskrit, Sl—Slavic, Sogh—Soghdian (an Eastern Iranian language, spoken in Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and China until the 8c A.D. and the major lingua franca of the Eastern Silk Roads until the arrival of Persian), st—standard, Syrc—Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic), Talm—Talmudic, Tat—Tatar, Tc—Turkic, trsl. —translated, Tu—Turkish, Uk—Ukrainian, Ur—Urdu, USo—Upper Sorbian, V—Vulgar, W—Western, Y—Yiddish, Yem—Yemeni, ZoroPahl—Zoroastrian Pahlavi (Middle Persian spoken up until the 7c. A.D.). My transcription of Modern Persian follows Rubinčik 1970.

spoken, though all scholars mistakenly believe that it denoted G *Lothringen*, Fr *Lorraine*. This is unlikely, since the Hebraism denoted various areas that did not overlap with the non-Jewish named areas. The Radhanite guild must have been multiethnic and multilingual almost from its very inception. As such, the Radhanites resembled the many Irano-Turkic professional confederations that migrated from Asia to Europe in the course of the first millennium A.D. and intermarried with Slavs. In the non-Judaic confederations, the Iranians or Turks were the minority elite, while Slavs were the subject majority; eventually, the minority assimilated to the Slavic majority. Very likely the Irano-Turkic elites imparted linguistic, religious and cultural influences to the pagan Slavs before assimilating. *This is a new topic for Slavic linguistics, which Yiddish helps to explore.* The only members of the mixed confederations to survive to our day with a unique language are the Jews and the Roma.

The ethnically and linguistically varied Jewish confederations that settled in the Slavic and German lands probably retained Irano-Turkic speech longer than the coterritorial non-Jewish confederations—for purposes of secrecy and professional group closure, and because they alone, as international merchants, travelled back and forth to their ancestral lands in Asia. In addition to creating the first unique Jewish languages towards the end of the first millennium A.D., the Radhanites also created a unique written and partly spoken Hebroid norm for common use by all the linguistically diverse merchants, by relexifying their native languages to Hebrew lexicon and by inventing Hebroidisms, on the model of various languages. In the case of Yiddish, the models for Germanoidisms were mainly Slavic, but also included Iranian and Perso-Arabic, Turkic and even Chinese patterns of discourse; the models for the invented Hebroidisms in Yiddish and the selection of genuine Semitic Hebraisms were determined mainly by the cognate Arabisms embedded in Persian. Much of this Hebrew/Hebroid corpus of spoken and written Yiddish has also been accepted by Modern Israeli Hebrew, though modern-day language planners were, officially, reluctant to do so. The rather large Hebrew/Hebroid component of Yiddish had to be engineered in common with the Hebrew/Hebroid component of other Old Jewish cryptic trade laguages. Hence, it is not surprising that patterns of discourse for the use of secretive components could be licensed simultaneously by a number of the native languages of the merchants. An open question is whether caravans tended to be manned primarily by speakers of the same language, or by merchants fluent in different languages. The latter alternative is more inviting, since, if merchants made the full trip between Germany and China (as I believe they did), there would have been a need for considerable linguistic competence. According to the eye-witness account of the Jewish merchants in Baghdad made in the late 9th century by a local Persian official (ibn Khordadhbeh, d.c.912; see details in my 2021, ch. 1.7), the merchants could converse in about six major Silk Road languages. Since some of the glottonyms are ambiguous, I presume ibn Khordadhbeh subsumed several languages under some glottonyms—thus giving us about 12 languages in all.

3 Probable Irano-Turkic settlements in the German and Slavic lands

There are altogether nine means for uncovering the locations of Irano-Turkic settlements in the German and Slavic lands: (i) Archaeological data. (ii) The use of a surviving non-Slavic ethno-glottonym (e.g. Sorb, Serb, Croat, Czech, Obodrite, etc.). (iii) Historical descriptions of confederations (e.g. the Irano-Slavic "White Croat State"; see details below). (iv) Slavic ethnographic practices of Irano-Turkic origin (e.g. wedding customs). (v) Toponyms denoting the presence of Jewish traders' way stations. (vi) Evidence of linguistic geography (e.g. the Eastern Slavic "pseudo-dual" has parallels in Bulgarian and Iranian). (vii) Slavic beliefs in Iranian forebears (e.g. Sorbian slaves in 11th-century Spain claimed they were descended from Persians—suggesting that they came from still extant Irano-Slavic confederations in their German homeland). (viii) The relative volume of Iranianisms in the coterritorial Slavic languages and German (e.g. Polish has a particularly large Iranian inventory, possibly because of the presence of the White Croat State). (ix) Known mass conversions (probably conducted superficially by merchants) of pagans to Judaism, in order to avoid slavery being imposed by German and Turkic slavers, and in order to participate in the lucrative Silk Road trade, which was a quasi-monopoly of peripatetic Jewish merchants.

To the best of my knowledge, the White Croat State and similar states have never been examined by historians of the Jews or Slavic languages; yet, the White Croat State is especially important for Jewish, Slavic and Iranian linguistics and ethnologies. It is mentioned by (i) The Byzantine ruler, Constantine Porphyrogenitus (b.905–d.959, who writes that White Croatia consisted of parts of Bohemia, Poland and Lusatia). (ii) King Alfred the Great of England (fl. 897–901) writes of the (Lat) *Horithi* 'Croats' in the Bohemian mountains. (iii) The so-called *Bavarian Geographer* (9th c.). (iv) Arabic sources (e.g. ibn Rusta, 10th c., using data from 842–847; Gardizi and al-Mas'udi, 10th c.: see Labuda 1949: 194–262; Czekanowski 1957: 194, 205, 239, 252, 319, 338, 360–363). Pivtorak (1993: 87) believes the Carpathian and Bojkian dialects of Ukrainian developed on a substratal Iranian White Croat dialect. In future, a detailed comparison of these Ukrainian dialects and Yiddish would be very much welcome. Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'qūb, a 10th-century Catalan Jewish merchant and diplomat from Tortosa, visited the White Croats in Galicia, and knew the Iranian name of the White Croats. He may have been of Iranian origin who knew their name from his homeland (Tortosa, the Near East?), or learned it from the White Croats, some of whom apparently still spoke Iranian at the time of his visit to White Croatia (see Łowmiański 1963, 2: 61–62, 117). An Andalusian Hebroid source of the 10th century shows that Jewish emissaries from the White Croat State had visited Andalusia. I propose to follow the etymology suggested by Vasmer (1923: 118ff; 1958, 3: 261) and Shevelov (1965: 483): OIran *(fšu)haurvatā* 'herdsman'. A form closest to the Vasmer-Shevelov reconstruction is found only in the Arabic writings of Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'qūb: *ḥ'jrw's* /ḥirwās, ḥajrawās/.

The name 'Croat' appears in a variety of forms in Arabic-language reports, see *ḥ(u)ruās(i)ja* in the writings of the North African al-Idrīsī 12c. (Lewicki 1954, 2: 56; see also Dvorník 1949: 271, fn. 15, who supports an Iranian origin of the name Croat, see ibid.: 279–286, 309–311; Kmietowicz 1978: 24–5 gives variant spellings). See also item #15 below.

The importance of the White Croat State for Slavic (including Yiddish) studies stems from my belief that it may have been one of the remaining enclaves of Iranian speech in Europe towards the end of the first millennium, and that it was located along the Irano-Arab Trade Roads. The Radhanite merchants, who settled in this part of Poland first, would have resembled the White Croats by being bilingual in Slavic and Iranian (though not necessarily in the same Iranian and Slavic languages), in addition to speaking other, unshared, languages.

It is a striking fact that the dialects of Yiddish spoken in Ukraine reveal the largest Slavic component of all the Yiddish dialects, primarily from local Eastern Slavic dialects, while Polish Yiddish has more Eastern Slavic than Polish components. Though Yiddish may well have been first invented in the Khazar Empire (where pre-Eastern Slavic was also very widespread), and, subsequently, became concentrated in the Slavic and German lands to the west, and obsolete in the Caucasus, it would be imprecise to ascribe the large Eastern Slavic component of Polish Yiddish to original westward migrations of Iranian Jewish merchants involved in the Silk Road trade. This is because, for several centuries, Jewish Silk Road merchants were travelling back and forth across Eurasia, and not just migrating to the west, and there is also a small Polish component in Ukrainian Yiddish, especially in dialects neighbouring Poland. There are several plausible explanations for the presence of a relatively small quantity of shared Polonisms in Polish and Ukrainian Yiddish dialects: (i) Some Polonisms could have spread to Ukrainian Jews in the wake of the political and cultural Polonisation of the Belarusian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian lands; however, these influences would date from several centuries after the demise of a quasi-Jewish monopoly on the Silk Roads. (ii) In order to reduce to a minimum regional variants of Yiddish that might arise from differences in form and meaning characterising cognates within disintegrating Western and Eastern Common Slavic (e.g. between pre-Sorbian and pre-Ukrainian), the two original Slavic languages of Jewish merchants, there is some indication that merchants took Polonisms as a neutral choice—possibly given the central position of Polish speech. (iii) *I find that a number of the (new?) Polonisms embedded in Polish and neighbouring Galician Yiddish, may have replaced Yiddish Iranianisms and Turkicisms with which they shared form and meaning. I suspect that such Polonisms were intended to be (cryptic?) replacements for Iranianisms that were either poorly or no longer understood by many peripatetic Jewish Silk Road merchants, speaking languages other than Turkic and Iranian.* If my assumption is correct, then the largely unexpected Polonisms in Polish and

Ukrainian Yiddish could give us clues to the nature of the Iranian and Turkic speech used in the Irano-Slavic confederations established on the Slavic and German lands. Obviously, we cannot know with any precision which Iranian languages were spoken in the White Croat and other confederations; possible candidates could have been Western Iranian dialects such as Persian and Median, or Eastern Iranian Ossete. Once we have an exhaustive collection of Yiddish Iranianisms and Turkisms (and maybe Sinisms) reconstructed from Polish, we will need to make similar investigations of overt and covert Iranian and Turkic influences in the coterritorial non-Jewish Slavic speech and in the other Old Jewish Silk Road languages.

I believe that Polonisms adopted by the local Yiddish speakers in Polish Galicia as replacements for the local obsolescent (Judeo-)Iranian and Turkic, could have been circulated among non-Galician Polish (and Ukrainian) Yiddish dialects by the Radhanite merchants. Most of the pan-Yiddish Polonisms were most likely motivated by underlying Iranian (and other Asian) semantic, lexical and/or phonological consideratons, and definitely did not need to have been cognates of Polonisms. The new Yiddish Polonisms would have retained some cryptic quality in the Yiddish of Ukraine and Belarus'.

There is a serious methodological problem confronting us. In addition to White Croat Iranianisms, Yiddish dialects have a much larger Iranian and other Asian component (e.g. from Turkic languages, Mongolian, Tokharian, Indian languages, Chinese, and even some Africanisms—both overt and covert), collected by the peripatetic Jewish merchants. Furthermore, not all Iranianisms in Galicia would have been replaced by similar-sounding Polonisms in the local Yiddish speech. Some of the obsolescent Iranianisms could have been retained outright by Galician Yiddish. In the near future, we will need to look for ways of distinguishing between Asianisms acquired on the territory of Polono-Ukrainian Galicia and those brought to the latter territories by the peripatetic Jewish merchants from points much further east.

4 The term 'Bird's milk' in Afro-Eurasian languages

Before we look at Iranianisms that may well have triggered the adoption of similar, mainly non-cognate, Polonisms in Galician Yiddish (and which may have spread marginally to Ukrainian dialects to the east), it would be useful to explore an example of a Eurasian isogloss shared by a very large variety of languages, both Jewish and non-Jewish, e.g. Slavic, Turkic, Iranian, Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, Latin, Greek, Rumanian, Hungarian, Hindi/Urdu, Finno-Ugric, Chinese, and some Caucasian languages: 'Bird's milk'. In this example, all target languages use native elements. The reader will quickly see that the Yiddish form could, thus, have been licensed by various individual languages, and maybe even by a set of languages. The etymological and methodological problems are compounded by the absence of historical documentation in most

languages. However, the expanse of the isogloss suggests that the term developed in a cryptic mercantile, possibly Jewish, language.

'Bird's milk' is an expression found in most Slavic languages (but not, at present, in Upper Sorbian). Some scholars have suggested that the componentially identical (i) Y *fojglmilx* is an exact parallel of the Gk *tōu pouliōu to gála* that, in both languages, has the metaphorical meanings 'unimaginable wealth, something fantastic, very rare', replacing an older synonymous ClGk *ȯrniθōn gála* 'any marvellous dainty; good fortune', which is found in Aristophanes (5–4ᵗʰc. B.C.: for the relevant passage in his play *Wasps*, see MacDowell 1971: 202) and (ii) That Greek-speaking Judaists may have been the carriers of the expression to non-Mediterranean European languages (Dieterich 1931: 337, fn. 3; M. Weinreich 1956: 629; 1973, 3: 72, 4: 261; Gerhardt 1974–1977; Wexler 1992: 93–94). (iii) Also in support of a Greek source for the nearly pan-Slavic and Yiddish terms is the fact that languages exposed to Greek cultural and linguistic influence, or to Hellenised Old Church Slavonic, also have the expression, see e.g. Bulg *ptiče mleko*, Se *ptičje mleko*, Tu *kuş sütü* in the Balkans, and Br *ptušynae malako*, Uk *ptaše/ptašyne/ptyče moloko* (and *ptašynoho moloka jomu lyš brakuje* 'there is nothing more he can desire', lit. 'bird's milk to him only is lacking'). It is unclear why there are three semantically equivalent adjectives in Ukrainian; perhaps they were once not synonymous. For sources of the Ukrainian expression 'bird's milk', see Ivčenko (1998: 114); for further discussion of the expression in Polabian and other Slavic languages, see Benveniste (1970: 23); Kostov (1971); Hinze (1974: 510–511); Buyaner (2005). The presence of the term in Finno-Ugric languages may be due either to Russian and/or to direct Radhanite contacts. Aside from Yiddish (also 'something very delicious'), a sole unique food meaning for 'bird's milk' is found only in Hung *madártej*, Rum *lapte de pasăre* 'dessert'. The designation of a dessert perhaps developed in Hungarian and Rumanian due to their physical contiguity in Eastern Europe, but Hungarian might have acquired the expression and this meaning prior to the migration from southern Russia to Hungary. Neighbouring Pol *ptasie mleczko* (with 'milk' dim.), in addition to the meanings 'something rare/delicious/unobtainable' can also mean 'chocolate-covered marshmallow' (since the 1930s at least), which goes together with Hungarian and Rumanian where the meaning is only 'dessert'.

The Persians and Greeks could have become familiar with one another's culture and language from the exploits of Alexander the Great in Asia and the familiarity of Persians with the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides (see Götze 1923; Ettinghausen 1972: 7; Miller 1997: 24).

However, there are four reasons to oppose a Greek source for the ubiquitous expression 'bird's milk': (i) Aristophanes could well have acquired the expression from the Persians. (ii) The term may have reached the Slavs not via Greek or Old Church Slavonic, but via Radhanite Judaic merchants or Irano-Slavo(-Turkic?) White Croats in southeastern Poland or elsewhere. (iii) The concept is particularly popular in Yiddish, which also has synonymous Y

kačkemilx 'balm, balsam; incredible foods', and antonymous 'tasteless dishes; idle story, nonsense; ineptitude' (lit. 'duck's milk' with Y *kačke* < Uk *kačka* 'duck' and *milx* 'milk' < G *Milch*). (iv) A Greek source becomes even more dubious since we find the term in Afro-Asian languages, like Iranian, Hindi/Urdu, Neo-Eastern Aramaic, Palestinian/Iraqi/Egyptian Arabic; see e.g. Neo-ChrEAr *xulwid sippurta* (Urmi dialect, Iranian Kurdestan), Arm *terčuni kat* and Pe *širè morġ*—presumably the source of the Hindi/Urdu, Aramaic, Arabic and Caucasian terms 'bird's milk' (the Persian term also meant 'bat'). It is unclear if the Chinese use of 'unicorn' or 'phoenix feather' to express the meaning of Y *fojglmilx* is part of the same Eurasian isogloss, but it should be noted that the unicorn and feather motifs in Chinese parallel the bird motif of Iranian and other languages. In ancient Chinese, the phoenix was known as the king of the birds, with the head of a bird, neck of a snake, throat of a swallow, back of a tortoise and tail of a fish; it had five colours, and was very tall. The Chinese phrases are *fèng máo lín jiǎo* 'something rare; rare as phoenix feathers and unicon horns' (lit. 'phoenix' + 'feather' + 'female unicorn' + 'horn') and *lín jiǎo fèng zuì* (lit. 'female unicorn' [spelt with no less than three characters; *qí* 'male unicorn' is not used in the phrase] + 'horn' + 'phoenix' [of either sex] + 'mouth'). G *Vogelmilch* is known at present only in the meaning 'Star of Bethlehem; ornithogalum (herbaceous perennial flowering plant)'. See also VLat *lacte gallīnāceum* 'something uncommonly pleasant or sweet' (lit. 'chicken's milk'), which surfaces in the writings of Petronius (1ˢᵗ c. A.D.). The many influences shared by Chinese and Persian and the length of mercantile contacts of several centuries due to the presence of Iranians (including multilingual Iranian Jews) in several Chinese cities, makes Chinese an attractive licensing source for Yiddish. Note that the Chinese and Yiddish terms for 'bird's milk' both share initial /f/ and /m/, in *fojgl + milx* and *fèng máo*. A coincidence?

A geography that suggests an Iranian imput which spread both eastwards and westwards clearly spotlights Radhanite merchants as the carriers. No target languages use Iranian morphemes in their common phrase, only native morphemes. Since the expression in Persian was formerly ambiguous, the second meaning being (now archaic) 'the mammal bat', we would have expected Judaists to have relexified both terms; alternatively, the Judaists may have been exposed only to the former meaning, if we can extrapolate from Persian, which also disambiguated *širè morġ* 'bird's milk; bat', by acquiring *xuffaš* 'bat' (< Arab *xuffāš*). The link between the 'bat' and 'milk' deserves further study, since the motif of the bird *simurġ*, a creature with a mammalian head and the body of a large benevolent female bird, originated in Sassanid Iran, with the bird commonly found in Byzantine silk textiles in the centuries following the 6ᵗʰ century. Hence, it seems reasonable to claim that either the term began in Iranian territory and was subsequently diffused, at least westward, by Radhanite merchants, or else began in Greek territory and then spread to Iran, where it could have been taken up and diffused in various directions by Radhanite merchants. A similar-sounding term, but with a dissimilar meaning

is Arm *sira-marg* 'peacock', with the second term < Oss *marġ* 'bird' (Bailey 1979: 403; Martirosyan 2010: 318); the Armenianism might have strengthened the popularity for Radhanite merchants.

An important clue to the origin of Y *fojglmilx* could come from the existence of *morġ* in the meaning 'hen' in the Median dialect of Ramändi, Iran (Yarshater 2002: 442), but more geographical details about this meaning are needed, since this meaning is not unknown in Persian. This could be significant, since both the territory of the ancient Medes and the White Croat State were called '(land of the) mountains' in a variety of sources. If the phrase 'hen's milk' was typical of Median speech a millennium ago, then it might have been taken by (Judaic?) Median migrants to the White Croat State in southeastern (Little) Poland. Of course, we cannot determine if Median Judaic merchants brought the term to the White Croats, or vice versa, or whether the term was known to both groups independently. Significantly, the only non-Iranian example of the expression 'hens' milk' known to me is G *Hühnermilch* (lit. 'hen's milk', of unknown age; of Persian origin?); see also related(?) Eng *hen's teeth.* Might the German term be the source of the English phrase? This would be a rare case of putative Iranian (or Chinese) influence extending as far west as Germany and England.

If the German expression is old, then it too may be of White Croat origin, though the Sorbs themselves may have been another Irano-Slavic confederation. Moreover, the suspected Iranian Germanism uses 'hens' in the plural. Gerzon (1902: 87) also cites the variant Y *fejglmilx* with 'birds' pl.; an Arabic dialect also uses the plural. The expression 'bird's milk' is also found in Mediterranean Arabic dialects, but not always with the Yiddish-Greek-Slavic meaning, e.g. urban EgypArab *laban 'ōṣfūr*, *laban 'aṣfūr* (the latter lit. 'milk of a bird') has the Greek, Yiddish, Slavic, etc. meaning, in addition to 'that's impossible' (cited by Hary 2009: 97), but urban PalArab *laban 'aṣāfīr* means 'exaggeration' (lit. 'milk of birds').

It is significant that the Hellenised Balkan Slavic languages in the 7–9th centuries became separated from the Eastern and Western Slavic languages by Hungarian and Rumanian (present-day Rumania was not originally the main location of Balkan Romance speakers: See Wexler 1997)—in which the expression (at least now) only seems to designate 'vanilla pudding'. The Hungarian-Rumanian-Polish innovation is an intrusion into the larger Slavic zone of 'bird's milk' between the c. 6–9th centuries, and raises the possibility that Slavic languages north and south of the Hungarian-Rumanian-Polish speech territories could have received the expression from different sources—including from local Iranian confederations.

Interestingly, more expressions and meanings are found in Y *fojglmilx*, *kačkemilx* than in any of the coterritorial European non-Judaic and Eurasian Judaic languages. Unfortunately, we cannot determine the age of the culinary term in Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian—or whether these languages ever had the original Greek meaning. Moreover, there is some evidence that the use of the expression in the Eastern Slavic languages is (at least now) restricted

geographically; e.g. some Belarusian speakers (e.g. in the Njasviž area) claim not to have heard the expression at all (Nosovič 1870 cites it for Mahilëw, and informants cite it for Polissja and Homel'). If the absence of the expression in at least some Belarusian dialects proves to be old, it would support the hypothesis of different sources for Southern and Eastern Slavic.

5 Reconstructing Iranian and Turkic speech in Polish and Ukrainian Galicia

The following 23 files contain examples of Irano-Turkisms that may have once circulated in the Yiddish, Iranian and Turkic speech of the Western Slavic lands, to judge from Polish (and sometimes also German and Hebrew/Hebroid) replacements in Galician (or, more broadly, Polish and Ukrainian) Yiddish; occasionally, the Yiddish forms of Slavic (Polish or Ukrainian) morphemes may themselves manifest Persian or Turkic influence. On rare occasions, a Yiddish Polonism appears to have replaced a Chinese term of similar form and meaning to an Iranianism. It is impossible, given the present state of our knowledge, to determine whether Chinese merchants were present in Irano-Turko-Slavic settlements in the Slavic or German lands, but this is a distinct possibility—in view of the well-known settlements of Arab and Iranian merchants in various Chinese trading centres. In fact, descendants of the Jewish merchants who settled in China at the end of the first millennium still exist there in small numbers, and are familiar with the origins of their Near Eastern ancestors..

In the files below I have also given some examples of Asianisms in Polono-Ukrainian Yiddish that have not been replaced by Polonisms, in order to establish my claim that Yiddish has acquired a wealth of Asianisms and Africanisms (amply documented in my 2021) along the Silk Roads and/or from other Old Jewish Silk Road languages (e.g. possibly from the largely extinct Khazar, or from Karaite; Iranian languages such as Judeo-Soghdian[?] and Džuhuri, from Judeo-Georgian, Judeo-Berber, Judeo-Kwara and other Ethiopic languages).

A major question of interest is why Galician Yiddish (in Poland and neighbouring Ukraine, in the territory of the White Croat State) has maintained (along with all other dialects of Yiddish in Eastern Europe) such a large corpus of Asianisms, without Polish replacements. I can think of five possible answers:

(a) There were no matching Polonisms available (i.e., with similar form and meaning to the retained Asianisms).

(b) Galician Yiddish was influenced by the non-Galician Yiddish dialects.

(c) Many Yiddish speakers may have ceased to understand Judaised versions of Iranian and Turkic by the end of the first millennium, and, thus, had difficulty in identifying Asian candidates in Yiddish for possible replacement by Polonisms.

(d) Presumably, Africanisms and Asianisms in the semantic field of Jewish religion or culture would not have been candidates for replacement by

Polonisms, since they would have already been Hebraised (a confirming example would be Y *xale* 'festive Sabbath bread', most likely of Chinese and/or Iranian and/or Arabic origin, but assumed to be from Biblical Hebrew).

(e) The unreplaced Asianisms in Galician Yiddish did not circulate in the Asian languages of the Slavo-Iranian and Slavo-Turkic confederations located on the Slavic lands, but only in the Judaised dialects of Iranian and Turkic. (Above, I noted that Sorbian slaves in 11th-century Spain claimed they were descended from Persians—suggesting that they came from still extant Irano-Slavic confederations in their German homeland. A topic awaiting study is the relative chronology of Asian language obsolescence in different parts of Europe and North Africa, among Jews and non-Jews.)

The examples follow below:

1. Y *pente* 'chain, fetter', *penten* 'to chain' < Pol *pęto, pętać*; cognate Uk *putaty* 'to clog, hobble, fetter' is also retained as Y *puten* 'to confuse, (en)tangle'. The Yiddish Polonisms may have replaced the formally and semantically similar (but unrelated?) Pe *bänd* 'band, fastening, tie, chain' or *pabänd* 'fetters; knot; belt' (with 'foot, leg').

Pan-Yiddish has also acquired a second Polonism: Y *culončen* 'to connect, join to, bind, tie' < Pol *łączyć, połączyć się* 'to join, unite', possibly borrowed because of partial formal and semantical similarity to *l-h-ġ* of Pe *molhäġ kärdän* 'to join' (< Arab *mulḥaq* 'joined; additional' and Pe 'to make').

2. Y *farblondžen* 'to go astray' and *farplonte(r)n* 'to confuse (things)' < Pol *zabłądzić* 'to go astray' (see also item #11 below), *(za)plątać* 'to entangle, muddle (up)'. Yiddish also utilises cognate Uk *bludyty* 'to err, mistake; go astray, lose the way, ramble about', as Y *bludne* 'stray, lost' (< Uk *bludnyj* 'wandering, roaming; burdened with sin'). The first Yiddish Polonism could have replaced an unrelated but similar Pe *bärhudän, birah šodän* 'to wander, stray' (with *šodän* 'to become'). Y *plonte(r)n* 'to confuse' probably gained /r/ from Y *plonter* 'confusion, muddle', but lost it optionally if the Polonism was intended to replace Arab *falaṭa* 'to overlook, be inattentive to', *falaṭ* 'unexpected event', *filāṭ* 'surprise' which lack /r/ (> Pe *filat* 'anything sudden and unexpected').

3. Yiddish posssibly preferred Pol *łąka* over cognate Uk *luka* 'meadow, field deluged by spring waters' because of its similarity with Y *lan* 'glade, meadow, field' (< Uk *lan* 'large piece of tilled land, grainfields', itself < Pol *łan* 'unit of cultivated land', and assumed to be from MHG *lê[he]n, lêhn* 'loaned property; measure of field; land given to a vassal by lords for military service or as payment'). Alternatively, Y *lan* and *lonke* 'lawn, meadow' could have been acquired in the White Croat State from Oss (I) *lænk*, (D) *læncœ* 'hollow, cavity, depression; low field; valley; ravine' and/or Tu *alan* 'field, area; sphere, domain, public square', respectively.

Y *senezenc*, *sjenoženc*, *sanozenc*, *šanozenc* 'meadow' have the form of Pol *sianožęcie* 'haymaking' (lit. 'hay' + 'cutting') but the meaning of cognate Uk *sinožat'*, Br *senažac'* 'meadow'; were the Yiddishisms licensed by the formal similarity with unrelated Pe *čämän* 'meadow'?

4. Y *štam* has the meanings 'trunk, stem' of (MH)G *Stamm*, also 'race, clan, pedigree; tree', but the additional meanings of 'race, clan, pedigree' are mainly available to Yiddish only as later post-relexificational Germanisms. The meaning 'tree' is not available to Y *štam*. For G 'pedigree', see also Y *jixes* 'descent, pedigree, lineage, parentage, Judaic aristocracy' (< He *jḥws* /jixus/) and Y *šalšeles-hajoxsn* 'chain of geneology, aristocratic pedigree, dynasty' (< He *šlšlt hjḥsjn* /šalšelet hajuxasin/, lit. 'the chain of lineages').

The German practice of expressing 'tree' and 'family tree, descent' by a common term finds a parallel in Pe *šädžär* 'tree'/*šädžärè* 'pedigree', *šädžärät (onnäsäb)* 'family tree' (lit. 'trees of' + the family' < Arab *šadžara* 'tree', *šadžar* 'trees, shrubs', *an-* 'the', *nasab* 'lineage'). If Persian licensed the two sets of meanings of the Germanism in Yiddish, then the semantics of the German loan in USo *štom*, *štóm* 'tree, trunk; flock', may also reflect Iranian influence—which could support the hypothesis that Iranian was spoken in the Irano-Sorbian community. Interestingly, the optional use of 'letter' in Y *jixes-briv* 'pedigree' (< G *Brief* 'letter') parallels Pe *näsäbnamè* 'geneology, pedigree' with *namè* 'book; letter'. An open question is why the meaning 'tree' is not available to Y *štam* (see instead *bojm* < G *Baum*). In Steingass's compendious dictionary of contemporary and archaic Persian (1892), there is a very large number of terms for both generic and specific trees that begin with /b/, which could have prompted Yiddish speakers to accept G *Baum*. Similarly, Steingass lists a very large list of Persian terms for 'tree' that begin with /d/, as in Slavic, but Yiddish has no such forms. Yiddish also has cryptic *ejc* 'tree' (< He *'c* /ec/) in the meanings 'tree of life, knowledge'; we may assume Yiddish once had the Hebraism with the simple meaning 'tree', since the latter was used in German Rotwelsch (professional slang) variants, from the early 19th century. Yiddish shows no trace of G *Stammbaum* 'family tree'.

5. Y *jar* 'dale; gulch, ravine' may be a direct loan < Uk *jar* 'ravine, ditch; cliff; steep bank of a river', Pol *jar* 'canyon, ravine' or < the ultimate source language, Tc **jār*. The geography of the term is significant: Carpathian Ukrainian and Slovak have the unique form *jarok* 'ditch, channel, groove; creek' < Hung *árok* 'irrigation ditch' < Tc *jār(ok)*. Yiddish, Hungarian, Slovak and Carpathian Ukrainian may all have acquired Tc *jār(ok)* directly from Central/Eastern European White Croat or some other Slavo-Asian confederation.

6. Y *jatke* 'butchery' < Uk *jatka* 'butcher's stall, booth at a market' or from the Polish etymon, *jatka*, directly (though a synonymous dim. *-kè* is also native to Persian dialects; see the next entry). Alternatively, Yiddish may have replaced

an earlier Sogh *jātē* 'meat; flesh' or Jagh *jōta* 'meat' (not found in Persian) by the similar (cognate?) Ukrainianism or Polonism. The possibility that the Slavism is itself of Iranian origin needs study.

7. Yiddish uses two Ukrainian variants of the native root for 'flower': *kvejt* and *cvit* 'flower'. In Eastern Slavic, *kv* can alternate with *cv* before CSl **ě* in a small number of roots: see Uk *kvit* 'flower' and *cvit* 'flower; blossom'. *Kv* appears mostly in northern and eastern Ukrainian; *cv* prevails in southwestern Ukrainian. Shevelov (1979, 56–57) suggests that UkWLemk *kvitka* probably < Slovak, but it appears to be common in the area formerly occupied by the White Croats (dim. *-kè* is also dialectal Persian, including Median). See also Pol *kwiat* 'flower'. Note also the partial similarity of both Yiddishisms with Pe *oškufè*, *šekufè*, *šokufè* 'flower(ing), blossoming', *išguft* 'expanding (blossoming) of a flower', *šekuftän*, *šekoftän*, *šekofidän*, *šegoftän* 'to open (flower)'.

Pe *-kä* is also used in Chuvash and Persian Romani, see e.g. Chuv dim. *kača(ka)* 'goat' (Benzing 1959: 716). On the Persian Romani use of Pe dim. *-kä* and *-čä*, see Ivanov (1922: 378) and Matras (2002: 24). On the Tc dim. *-Vk*, see Clauson (1972: 183); see also Chuv *-ke*, and its possible appearance in Yiddish. The diminutive infix with *-k-* is also available in Armenian and Sanskrit. On Arm *-ik* dim. in Romani, see Bläsing (2002: 107).

Persian dialects also have diminutive suffixes which are identical to Y *-ele*, *-l(e)*: e.g. the dialect of Hamadan (also in Media!) uses *-lä*, as in *ähmädlä* 'little Ahmad' (Fück 1955: 171 and fns. 51–52). Thus, while Y *-l*, *-(e)le* dims. appear to < G *-l*, see Y *mejdl*, (S)G *Mädel* 'girl' (vs. N, stG *Mädchen* 'girl'), they might also be < Iranian and/or Turkic, which (later) predisposed Yiddish to follow South German norms. The dialect of Rajj (the political and cultural base of the Medes!) uses *-kä*, see e.g. *häkä* dim. 'little Hasan' vs. stPe *häsänäk* (< Arab *ḥasan*); see also (Rajj) *hämäkä* dim. 'little Ahmad' (< Arab *aḥmad*). See also KhotSaka dim. *-ka*, as in *pūrä* 'son' > *pūrakä* dim.

If Yiddish acquired the diminutive suffix from Median Persian, we might assume that some of the Jewish Radhanite merchants joined fellow Median communities in establishing Irano-Slavic confederations in Galicia.

8. Uk *hubka* 'sponge; tree fungus' > Y *hubke*, *gubke* dim. 'fungus on a tree', while cognate Pol *gąbka* is the immediate source of Y *gom(b)ke* 'sponge'. Denasalisation appears to have taken place in Eastern Slavic in approximately the 9th century, but before that, the Eastern Slavism > Tat *gömba* 'mushroom', perhaps via Volga proto-Bulgar, which may be the source of Chuv *kămpa* 'mushroom'. Thus, Y *gom(b)ke* 'sponge', despite its Polish form, may actually be a loan from Chuvash, which, subsequently, attached a Perso-Turko-Slavic diminutive suffix; in the latter case, the etymon may have also been used in the Iranian and/or Turkic speech of the White Croat State. Chuvash is the only surviving language in the small Turkic subgroup of which the extinct Khazar is also a member, and was also spoken in the Khazar Empire. Some Chuvash speakers

may have joined the Khazars in converting to Judaism in the 9th century for the purposes of working with Jewish traders on the Silk Roads.

Tat *gömba* and Chuv *kămpa* 'mushroom' could both account for the mid front vowel of Y *gembe* 'mouth; chin' (alongside *gombe* 'chin'), if not Pol *gęba*, *gąbka* '(animal's) mouth; sponge'. Note also the use of two German variants in Yiddish: Y *švom*, *švojm* 'mushroom; sponge; fungus' (the latter suggest two distinct German lexifier dialects and/or two chronologies of acquisition; see MHG *swam*, *swamp*, *swamme*). The Polish, Yiddish and German doublets for 'mushroom' may all be imitating the variety of forms in Turkic languages.

9. Uk *xlop* 'peasant, rustic; man, male', *xlopec'* 'boy, lad; jack in cards; apprentice; bachelor' < Pol *chłop* 'peasant; boor'. Of this set, Yiddish has *xlop* 'peasant; rustic', but shows no trace of Uk *xolop* 'serf'. The etymology of these Slavisms is uncertain, but possible etyma are Pe *xäläf* 'deputy, vice-regent, successor, heir; prodigy, generation; son; deserving', surface congeners, Tc *xalfa* 'apprentice, servant', Tu *halef* 'surrogate, replacement' (all ultimately < Arab *xalaf* 'substitute; good son', a cognate of *xalafa* 'to supplant, follow; be stupid [young man]'—the latter [Iranian?] meaning is found in Polish but not in Yiddish). The Persian meanings all have non-German expression in Yiddish, see e.g. G'oid *noxkumer* 'successor' (vs. G *Nachkömmling*), alongside Y *jaršenen* 'to inherit', *memale-mokem* 'successor', *ile* 'wonder child, prodigy', *dor* 'generation', *bonim* 'sons', *ben* 'the son of', *zojxe zajn* 'to be worthy of' (< He *jrš* /jaraš/ 'he inherited', *mml'-mqwm* /memale-makom/, lit. 'he fills' + 'place', *'lwj* /ilui/, *dwr* /dor/, *bnjm* /banim/, *bn* /ben/, *zwxh* /zoxe/ 'he is worthy of').

Y *xiluke-dejes* (lit. 'divisions, parts of views') and *maxlojkes* 'quarrel', are two variants of the common Hebrew root *x-l-q*, close formally to Uk-Pol *x-l-p*. He *x-l-q* is semantically identical to Arab *xalaf*, cited above, which also expresses the meaning 'quarrel': Arab *xilāf* 'discord', *ixtilāf* 'difference of opinion' > Pe *xilaf* 'contradicting, rebelling against', *èxtilaf* 'disagreement, discord'. The two Yiddish variants of He *x-l-q* may additionally have been licensed by the doublets Arab *nizā'*, *munāza'a* and *xiṣām*, *ixtiṣām*, *xuṣūma* 'dispute' (> Pe *niza*, *monazèät*, *èxtisam*, *xusumät*). He /xelek/ 'part', a cognate of Y *xiluke-dejes* and *maxlojkes* 'quarrel', is also used in Yiddish as *xejlek* 'section, part, share, division; portion'. The pair of Y *xejlek* and *xiluke-dejes* may have been licensed by the near-minimal pairs of Arab *qism* 'part, share, allotment; division, section' and *qisṭ* 'part, share, allotment; measure, extent' (> Pe *ġism* 'part, portion; division', *ġist* 'division, portion, share'). Iranian could have licensed the use of the Hebraisms in Yiddish in the White Croat State or other Irano-Slavic confederation in Europe—but we cannot exclude acquisition in the Persian homeland either.

10. Y *xitre* 'crafty', *xitrak* 'sly person', *xitrekejt*, *xitrost* 'cunning; craft', *xitreven* 'to use cunning' < Pol *chytrek*, Uk *xytrun* 'sly person', *xytryj*, *xytrist'*, *xytruvaty*. The semantic gaps between Uk *xytryj* 'complicated; clever' and USo

chĕtry 'agile, quick, nimble, skillful; quite, considerable' could have licensed the retention of a Polish Slavism in Yiddish, along with Y *pike(je)x* 'clever man', *bistre* 'agile', *luftik* 'nimble' (the latter two have original meanings), *bekies* 'skill', *boke* 'skilled', *berje* m, f 'skilled person' (there is no gender in Persian except in some Arabisms), *niškošedik* 'considerable' < He *pjqḥ* /pikeax/, Uk *bystryj*, G *luftig* 'breezy', He *bqjwt* /bkiut/, *bqj* /baki/, *brjh* /berja/, Pol *niezgorszy* 'fair, tolerable' and/or Uk *nezhiršyj* 'not bad, good enough, tolerable, passable'. Y *xitre*, etc. may originally have been replacements for the formerly similar Chuv *xitre* 'pretty; good, luxurious, magnificent, splendid; pompous; costly, rich'. I doubt that Y *niškošedik* 'considerable' ~ Pol *niezgorszy* 'fair, tolerable' and Uk *nezhiršyj* 'not bad'. The second syllable -*koše*- perhaps < He *qšh* /kaše/ 'hard; difficult'—a cognate of synonymous Arab *qāsin* (> Pe *ġäsi* 'hard [in feeling]').

Y *boke* 'skilled (person)' may have been licensed by a formally and semantically similar Pe-Tc *bakši* 'learned doctor; Buddhist priest', which is the source of Chin *bó-shì* 'learned doctor; expert, erudite' (written with the characters for native *bó* 'to be well-informed' + *shì* 'scholar'). See also Chin *bó-qià* 'well-informed' (with 'extensive') and *bó-yǎ* 'erudite' (with 'refined'), borrowed as Jap *bokushi* 'pastor, cleric, chaplain'. I note that the original meaning of the source Mong *bakši*, *baxši* was 'Mongol shaman', which later came to denote 'religious Buddhists, Buddhist doctors', possibly during the Mongol period in Iran (13th c.). The Hebroidism, Y *boke*, might actually have been licensed by an original Mongolianism. The latter might also have been an epithet of Rašīd ad-Dīn (b.c.1247–d.1318), the Jewish vizier of the Ilkhan ruler of Iran, and author of the most important source for the history of the Mongol Ilkhanate period and the Mongol empire; if so, this could well have made the term popular in so many languages, including Yiddish.

But are Y *xitre*, etc., really Slavic? After all, they also share form and meaning with Arab *xaṭara* 'to remember something', *xaṭura* 'to be eminent, high in rank, important', *axṭara* 'to be in danger (due to illness); be the equal or rival of; warn; lay a bet, risk', *xaṭar* 'danger', *xaṭir* 'dangerous', *xāṭir* 'occurrence of a thought; pleasure, fancy, sake', which surface as Pe *xätär* 'danger, threat; risk; alarm', *xatèr* 'thought, idea; remembrance', etc. The negative connotations of Pe *xätär* may have prompted the Yiddish acquisition of Polonisms like Y *mondrak*, etc. 'wiseguy' < Pol *mądry* 'wise' in the White Croat State. The latter now surfaces in Yiddish beyond the borders of Poland. The cognate Pol *mędrek* 'wiseguy' may be the basis of Y *šmendrik* 'smart-aleck', with a pejorative *š*- (< Turkic), possibly reinforced by Pol *męda* 'creep'. Pol *mądry* has Iranian cognates, see Aves *mązdra*- 'wise; sensible', *mąz-dā-*, *maz-da* 'to keep in one's memory', and a formally and semantically close (but not cognate) Pe *modärräb* 'experienced' (< Arab *mudarrab*). Indeed, the Slavism has Iranian cognates, see e.g. Aves *mązdra*- 'wise; sensible', *mąz-dā-*, *maz-da* 'to keep in one's memory', which support the hypothesis that the Yiddish Polonism replaced an earlier Iranian cognate, and maybe even two, in the White Croat State.

11. The etymology of Y *grajz* 'error, mistake', etc. has puzzled scholars for over a century. Suggested etyma are He *grj'h* /gri'a/ 'subtraction, diminution' and Uk *hrix* 'sin; error', which are plausible, given Uk *pohrišyty* 'to sin (a little); err', *ohrix* 'error'. Baltic also offers a plausible semantic shift in Latv *grèizs* 'crooked, curved' > 'bad, unjust, false' (the final *-zs* might explain Y *-z*). Alternatively, the meaning 'sin' frequently develops the meaning 'false' via an intermediary stage of 'error', see Chuv *sue*, *suja* 'lie; untruthful, pretended', *suj* 'to lie', maybe < Chin *tsùi* 'sin; vice, defect, flaw; guilt, blame'. Besides Uk *hrix*, see also Pe *xäta* 'error; transgression', *xäta kärdän* 'to err; sin' (< Arab *xaṭā'* [and Pe 'to do'] with a Hebrew cognate in Yiddish).

However, the above analyses are phonologically not entirely convincing, and Baltic association with Yiddish is relatively late and minor (though an Estonian *lingua franca* was in use in the Judaised Khazar empire). In rejecting the Hebrew and Slavic sources cited above, I would derive Y *grajz* 'error' < *grajzl* 'curl' and *krajzl* 'ripple, ruffle', etc., created from the solitary G *kraus* 'curly, frizzy'; (newer) 'muddled, confused', *Kraus, Krause* 'ruff, frill', *krausen* 'to pleat; knit (brow)', *kräuseln* 'to curl (hair), ruffle; pleat' (16th c.). While the root is already attested in Middle High German, the meanings 'muddled, confused' are too recent to have influenced Yiddish, and MLG *krūs* 'curled; dishevelled; convoluted' comes from a dialect to which Yiddish speakers were never exposed directly. There does not appear to be a German match for the Yiddish variant with *gr-*, and certainly no precedent in German for the specific meaning 'to err'.

However, there are doublets in Slavic and Iranian that could motivate the Yiddish minimal pair. A Ukrainian model for the coexistence of 'err(or)' and '(to) curl' exists in Uk (i) *mylaty* 'to wind, reel; shake; twist, twirl, roll up; embroil, entangle' and cognate (ii) *mylytysja* 'to err, be mistaken', or in (iii) *krutyty* 'to twist; turn; twirl, wind'/*perekrutyty* 'to twist; turn, twirl, whirl; overwind; corrupt, distort, misinterpret, misconstrue; garble, confuse'. Still, the Y *kr-* and *gr-* variants may reflect different chronologies of diverse German source dialects. Yiddish may also have created doublets to distinguish between 'curl of smoke' and 'curl of hair', see Y *krajzlen (zix)* 'to curl, ruffle', *krajzl* 'ripple, ruffle', *grajzl* 'curl', *grajzlen (zix)* 'to curl (hair)', respectively.

Persian also provides not only a model that parallels the two Ukrainian roots cited above, but even a precise mirror image of the two Yiddish "Germanisms", *grajz(l)* and *krajzl*. Consider the minimal pair of Pe *ġält* 'rolling' < *ġältidän* 'to roll (from place to place); trill (in music), warbling', spelled either with the Arabic letter /t/ ت or pharyngealised /ṭ/ ط vs. *ġälät* (spelt only with pharyngealised /ṭ/ = Pe [t]) 'error, mistake; going astray; guilt; erroneous, incorrect'. The first root appears to be native Persian, but the second term < Arab *ġalaṭ* 'error'; /ṭ/ appears only in the spelling of Persian Arabisms, and always has the phonetic value of Pe /t/. Yiddish speakers fluent in Persian might have copied the spelling and pronunciation of the Persian pair onto a single German root.

See also the minimal pair of Jazgh *ġalat* 'error'/*ġələt* 'to sink (in sand, mud, snow)'—a kind of "error".

Other links with Iranian come to mind, such as consonant metathesis, typical of Eastern Iranian languages. For example, if Pe *läġzèš* 'slip; error; going astray', *läġzidän* 'to err, take a false step; slip, slide, glide' had become via metathesis *ġälzèš or *ġärzèš, then we could anticipate a parallel shift in Y *krajz-* > *grajz*: See also Džuh *gərəz* 'evil thought, secret intention, hidden spite/malice/anger/hostility'. Pe *läġzèš* might also have been the motivation for using Y *b(e)laz* 'in a foreign (usually Romance) language (used as vernacular equivalents of written Hebrew or Aramaic words); otherwise known as' (maybe < BiblHe b- /be-/ 'in' + *l'z* /la'az/ 'Egyptian').

The possibility that Y *grajz*, etc. was coined in Galicia is supported by the retention of the semantically similar Polonism in non-Polish Yiddish: *blondžen* 'to stray, ramble (having lost one's way)', cited in example #2 above.

Finally, the link between 'error' + 'to curl, twist' can be motivated by the possibly cognate Chin *miù* 'lie, error' and *jiǔ*, *jiū*, *jiǎo* 'to twist'. The latter pair in Japanese is pronounced *byū* 'mistake' and *kyū* 'to twist thread (rope); put all in one place'. Thus, Yiddish 'error'/'to twist' would be the western-most member of an isogloss extending from Yiddish in the Slavic and German lands (but not in Slavic and German!) to Japanese. This is a good example of the huge benefit for Slavic and German linguistics that follows from the innovative comparative Yiddish research within a Silk Road framework that I am proposing in the present study.

12. For 'dull', Yiddish retains a Polish root, see e.g. Y *temp(ik)* 'dull, blunt; obtuse, dense' < Pol *tępy* 'dull' (unrelated to G *stumpf* 'dull, blunt'). There is no trace of the root vowel of the cognate USo *tupy*, Uk *tupyj* 'dull'. I assume that the pan-Yiddish use of Pol *temp(ik)* may have begun in the White Croat State during the obsolescence of (Judeo-)Iranian there. An Iranian homophonous pair, such as Džuh *kut*[1] 'lump, clog, ingot, bar (of metal)'/*kut*[2] 'dull, blunt; dullard, blockhead, dolt, dunce, slow-witted person' could have licensed the use of the relexified Pol *tępy* as Y *temp* 'dull, blunt; obtuse, dense' (relexification is mandatory when the substratal language has minimal or near-minimal pairs, because they can almost never be imitated in the superstratal lexifier language).

13. Yiddish expresses 'cabbage/lettuce stalk' by *glomp*/*b* (also 'dummy') (see Pol *głąb* 'depth; stump/stalk') in Southeastern Poland and at locales in Western and Carpathian Ukraine. In addition, there is also pan-Y *kačn*, *kačen*[1], *kačan* 'cob, cabbage stump' (< Pol *kaczan* < Tu *koçan*). The Yiddish of the former White Croat State appears to have also licensed the Polonism, because it resembled Pe *käläm* 'cabbage'. I would also speculate that Pe *ġäläm* 'pen; reed' (< Arab *qalam*) also licensed the acquisition of Pol *głąb* because of its similarity in form and meaning to G *Halm* 'blade; stalk; straw'.

The meaning of Y *glomp/b* 'dummy' was possibly also supported by the formally similar Uk *hlupyj* 'stupid', *hlupak* 'stupid fellow', *nehlup* 'very stupid fellow' (perhaps before the lenition of the Uk **g > h*), Pol *głupawy* 'foolish', *głupi* 'stupid', with an attempt to "Polonise" the Yiddishism. Other possibilities are that Y *glomp/b* (i) Became the sarcastic opposite of the similar Pol *głęboki* 'deep' in the sense of 'intellectual, profound' and/or (ii) May have crossed with Y *gojlem* 'dummy; golem, an artificial man' (thought to be < He *gwlm* /golem/ 'larva, pupa, embryo; shapeless matter; awkward person, robot, ignoramus; legendary automaton made of clay'). However, the source of Y *gojlem* is possibly the Pol *golemy* 'large' or Cz *holomek* 'unmarried youth, servant'—or, better, the Pe *ġulam* 'boy; adolescent; servant, slave' < Arabic.

Curiously, Russian Romani reveals a Polonised term *golumbo* 'pigeon', which is either < Pol *gołąb* [gówomp] or is a blend of the Polonism with the cognate R *golub'*. Hence, there is the possibility that Romani was also Polonised in the White Croat State just like Yiddish (though many Roma resided in Iran for several centuries upon leaving India), and also replaced an earlier Iranian term, see e.g. similar Pe *kaludž* 'pigeon' (the Roma probably worked with Jewish merchants on the caravans; the Rom *gadžo* 'non-Rom' may be < He/Y *goj* 'non-Jew', originally 'nation'; *j > dž* in Iranian, Romance, etc.). Consider also the RRom *dlèngo* 'long' with a pseudo-Polish shape (vs. Pol *długi* ~ Uk *dovhyj*), pointing to the White Croat State; see Pe *ludžija* 'long'. Finally, Y *kačen*[2] 'to roll' (< Uk *kačaty* 'to roll, spread by rolling') may have been retained in Yiddish, unrelexified to the G *sich wälzen* 'to roll', because of the near-homonymous *kačen*[1] 'cob, cabbage stump' (which lacked a parallel pair in German), and/or by Indo-Iranianisms, such as Rom *katel* 'to spin', Hi *kāt* 'to spin'.

On the matter of 'to roll', there is another interesting Yiddish link with Chinese, Polish and the White Croat State. The Y *xale* 'braided festive bread' is regarded by Jews and non-Jews alike as a quintessential Jewish holiday and Sabbath bread (see also item #23 below). All linguists regard the etymon as He *ḥllh* /xala/, but this is unconvincing, since the latter denotes something inedible! It means solely the 'tithe of unbaked dough presented to the priests in the Temple in Jerusalem' (see BalkDžud *xala* 'unbaked bread given as a tithe').

There are a host of semantically and formally similar terms in Arabic (*ġallah* 'grain; bread' > Pe *gälle* 'grains'), but the most attractive one is the Pe *āl* 'a dangerous goddess who had the potential to cause various types of damage and destruction to the harvest'. In European contexts, the goddess could offer protection to girls reaching the age of puberty; she then had to be given the locks of hair of the girls as an offering. The offering was symbolised by the baking of a plaited bread which was consumed only on holidays or special occasions, such as weddings, funerals, etc. The knowledge of the bread term and of the goddess and her functions with girls who have reached puberty has reached German, where the goddess is known as *Frau Holle* 'Madame Holle'. It could have been introduced into the German lands either by Radhanite Jewish or non-Jewish merchants. There is a plausible Chinese link in the formally and semantically

similar Chin *huā juǎn* 'bread roll', i.e., 'a steamed twisted bread roll!' (with *huā* [xwa] 'flower, blossom; florid, fancy pattern' + *juǎn* [džuen] 'to roll [up]; roll; scroll; volume'; classifier for small rolled objects); in Běijíng Mandarin, the term would be *huā juǎr*, with Chin /-x-/ and dim. /-r/ licensing Y /x-/ and /-l-/ (/r/ ~ /l/ is a widespread correspondence). Persians of all religious persuasions resided and operated in China for several centuries (evidently to a far greater degree than was the case in the Holy Roman Empire in Germany), and a braided bread is also known in Iran. The Chinese expression could have inspired Jews to seek a Hebraism of similar form and meaning for Jewish languages (it is exceptionally rare in other Jewish languages), or else the Hebroidism was the source of the Chinese expression—first coined by Chinese Jews. Also, it is entirely possible that the Chinese bread term entered Yiddish in the White Croat State for the first time via the Pol *chałka*. What makes the latter an attractive source of Y *xale* is the absence of *chała without the diminutive suffix/infix. The Beijing -*r* also has a diminutive function! There is no diminutive suffix possible with the Yiddish Hebroidism to the best of my knowledge.

14. Y *drong*, *prent* 'bar' < Pol *drąg*, *pręt* 'rod, bar, stick'. Yiddish lacks synonymous Uk *prut*. The Y *drong* could very likely be connected to the White Croat state, since Persian has the formally and semantically similar *diräk* 'pole, mast'. Y *drong* 'pole; tall man' allows two plurals: *drongen* and *drenger*, but I cannot determine their geography. Persian has pl. -*an* ~ Y pl. -*en*, but lacks a parallel of Y -*er* pl. A possible support for the Polonism could also come from the Chin *zhàng*[1] 'stick, staff (for a specific purpose)' < OChin **draŋ[?]*, ONWChin *daŋ (c. 400 A.D.). Y *prent* resembles Pe *bärn* 'a bundle of rods'.

15. Tarnów PolY *krātiš* 'strange, incomprehensible' might come from G *Krautwelsch* (lit. *Kraut* 'weed' + *Welsch* 'incomprehensible Romance speech'), an expression still used in the 1920s in the Tyrol, and synonymous with G *Kauderwelsch*, *Kinderwelsch* 'incomprehensible language' (< *kaudern* 'to speak unclearly' [of uncertain origin] and *Kinder-* 'children'). But I could also imagine the reverse derivation, i.e. G *Krautwelsch* < PolY *krātiš*, theoretically 'Croat language' (now the name of a not entirely comprehensible Slavic language, or formerly the name of an incomprehensible Iranian language)—since Tarnów is located just to the west of the former White Croat State. Slavic- and Yiddish-speaking Jews in the Irano-Slavic area could have turned "Croat" into 'strange, incomprehensible' once Iranian speech had become obsolescent, just as G *Welsch* 'Welsh' > 'incomprehensible *Romance* speech'. (See the discussion of the original Iranian term for 'Croat' found only in the Arabic writings of Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'qūb cited before the data). The Pol Y *krātiš* itself may have replaced the original Iranian form of the ethno-glottonym.

16. Y *pečatek*, *pečatik*, *počatek*, *počatik* 'beginning (of business), first sale of the day' < Uk *počatok* 'beginning', but Y *počontik* < Pol *początek* 'beginning,

opening; origin'. The Polonism may be a local replacement of the Pe *däšt*[1] 'initiative (in trade); a monetary gift at a holiday' in the former White Croat State, which is homophonous with Pe *däšt*[2] 'desert; plain, field' (expressed by many non-Germanisms in Yiddish). In relexification, it is usually impossible to find (near-)minimal pairs of Germanisms or Slavisms for the Persian minimal pair, hence lexical items are blocked from the superstratal German or Slavic "lexifier language". Another source for the Yiddishisms could be Pe *èstèftah* 'opening; beginning; capture; asking assistance' < Arab *istiftāḥ* 'opening of a market; first sale of the day' < the root *f-t-ḥ* 'to open', partially similar to Sl *p-č-t-k* (OHe pharyngeal *ḥ* merged with velar *x* in Yiddish and Ashkenazic Hebrew/Hebroid, perhaps on the model of Perso-Arab *ḥ*, which merged with *h*). If Pe *èstèftah* never meant 'market opening' (it means 'opening; beginning' in general), then the Jews could have been exposed directly to Arabic.

17. Y *cere* 'complexion' either < Uk *cera* (< Pol *cera* with sibilant confusion < Ital *cera* [č]), or Pe *čehrè* 'face; cheek; appearance'; girl's name. A synonymous Y *cure* 'face' (affective and pejorative in Northeastern Yiddish), appears to be derived < He *cwrh* /cura/ 'form; picture; countenance; majestic appearance; expression; physiognomy'—but never *'face', to judge from the etymological Hebrew spelling. The WY *cure* (spoken in the German-speaking lands, Holland, Alsace, Switzerland, Hungary, western Czech and Slovak lands), and Rtw *cure* can only mean 'form'. The meaning He *cwrh* /cura/ 'form' is found in Yiddish only in a few prepositional phrases, such as *becures-odem* 'in the form of a man' (< He *bcwrt 'dm* /becurat adam/). Perhaps Western Yiddish dialects in Germany had less or no contact with Iranian settlements.

I believe the Y *cure* 'face' reflects a unique meaning of the cognate Arabism *in Iranian languages*. In contrast, the double meanings of 'face; form' are divided between two allomorphs in Uk *tvar* 'creature, being; face, visage'/ *tvoryty* 'to compose, form; create, produce' and Pol *twarz* 'face'/*tworzyć* 'to form'. Still Pol *twarz* and Uk *tvar* in the meaning 'face' may also reflect a Persian influence.

Y *cure* 'face' < Pe *surät* 'face; portrait; form; list', *sär-o-surät* 'face' (lit. 'head; beginning; end' + 'and' + 'face') < Arab *ṣūra* 'form, picture' (*'face'). Jews speaking the Borudžerd dialect of Judeo-Persian use *surät* for 'face', but in their secretive trade lexicon (Lotera'i), they prefer *punim* (< He *pnjm* /panim/— the source of the Yiddish pronunciation, [ponem]), which would be unknown to non-Jewish Persians.

Like Persian, Turkish has both the meanings of the original and the Irani-anised Arabism, but they are formally distinct in Tu *suret* 'form, shape, picture; copy' (< Persian < Arabic) vs. *surat* 'face; mien' (< Persian); thus, the origin of Y 'face' could also be ascribed to Turkic. There is also a Chinese link in the Y *parcef-ponem* 'mug' (< He *prcwf-pnjm* /parcuf-panim/, lit. 'mug' + 'face'). Most of the Chinese terms for 'face' are bimorphemic, and some involve morphemes that begin with one or two bilabial consonants, see e.g. Chin *bíao-miàn* (lit.

'surface' + 'appearance'), *miàn mào* (with 'face'), *miàn duì* (with 'opposite'; see also *duì miàn* 'opposite; to be face to face'), *miàn bù* 'face' (with 'part').

At present, Džuh *sirot*, *surot*, *surèt* and *sürèt* have only the meanings 'picture, portrait, drawing, representation, portrayal, image; form, appearance', but not 'face'. This is valuable evidence that Džuhuri may not ever have been spoken in the White Croat State. However, the progression of 'form' > 'face' took place in another root, to judge from Džuh *sir-sifèt* 'face, physiognomy' (< *sir/sər* 'face', normally 'head', and *sifet* 'description, quality, attribute; form; like, resembling' < Arab *ṣifa*).

The meanings 'face' and 'form' can coexist in many languages, not necessarily in contact with Yiddish, but the original underlying term is not 'form', as in Turkish, Iranian and Yiddish, see e.g. Kurd *rang* 'face; appearance; form' < 'colour, paint; shine'. The semantic shift of Eng *mug* from 'cup' > 'face' supposedly took place because of the custom of decorating cups with a human face. Might the coexistence of the two meanings in English be, alternatively, a reflection of Iranian influence?

18. There is a possible Iranian motivation (in the White Croat state?) for a Slavic near-minimal pair, e.g. Pe *därd* 'pain; sickness, illness, suffering'/*ard* 'flour' ~ Pol *mąka* 'flour'/*męka* 'torment, pain', Uk, Br *múka* 'pain, torment, torture'/*muká* 'flour' (under Iranian influence?). CePolY *menčen* 'to torment' (< Pol *męczyć*) may have replaced the synonymous Pe *därd*, but pan-Yiddish (at least now) lacks Pol *mąka* 'flour' and *męka* 'torment, pain'. Nor does Eastern Yiddish preserve the Uk *múka* 'pain, torment, torture' and *muká* 'flour'. Curiously, Polish Yiddish—except for the centre of the country—does not use the Polish root for 'to torment' with a historically nasalised vowel, but rather uses the Eastern Slavic/Upper Sorbian cognate with /u/: *mučen*. Hence, it is possible that Polish or Upper Sorbian Yiddish could have originally copied the near-minimal pair of Pe *därd* 'pain; sickness; suffering'/*ard* 'flour'. If the Sorbs were, like the White Croats, partly of Iranian origin, then the local Yiddish dialects might also have retained Iranianisms there for a longer period of time than in Eastern Slavic Yiddish not spoken on an Iranian substratum. But the end result in all dialects of Yiddish would be the same—initial blockage of the German equivalents.

A Sorbian source for the Y *mučen* 'to torment', found in all dialects of Yiddish except Central Polish Yiddish, is more attractive than the Uk *mučyty*, because the Y *mučen* is also found in Poland to the west of CePolY *menčen*, in an area which once had a Sorbian population. In Sorbian Yiddish, we would expect the same reflex of the Common Slavic nasal vowels as in Eastern Slavic Yiddish.

Perhaps future research can help to determine whether Iranian speech prevailed longer in the White Croat State in Polish Galica or in the Sorb lands. *In any event, the existence of pan-Yiddish Polonisms, and possibly also of pan-Yiddish Sorbianisms, could corroborate the presence of Irano-(Turco-?)Slavic*

confederations, such as the White Croats and "White Serbs". On possible Sorbianisms in Yiddish, see my 1991.

A Polish term is also found in Northwestern Belarusian, among Catholic speakers, see, e.g., *zmenčycca* 'to get tired' (< Pol *zmęczyć się*). Thus, theoretically, the Polonism may have reached Yiddish not directly from Polish but from Polonised Belarusian—in either case, to replace a prior Iranianism.

A formally similar pair of morphemes for 'flour' and 'exhaustion' (i.e. 'pain') is also found in Chin *fén* 'flour'/*fá* 'to exhaust', which shows the potential extent of this isogloss.

19. It is instructive to examine one example which shows how Polish and Belarusian have retained an original meaning of an Iranian or Judeo-Aramaic term, even though the coterritorial Yiddish dialects have become formally Slavicised. The Y *paskudnik* and *paskudnjak* m 'scoundrel' (with a non-Slavic use of the agentive suffix; see below), *paskude* m, f 'nasty action/thing; scoundrel' may < Uk *paskudnyk* 'scoundrel', Pol *paskudnik* 'scoundrel; fright'. Perhaps a common form for both animate genders reflects the fact that Persian lacks gender in native and many Arabic words, even though Arabic has gender? The ultimate source of the Yiddish and other Slavic terms is either Aramaic or Iranian, see e.g. OIran *pškwč* 'griffin', as in Oss *p'ak'undzä* via Geor *p'ask'undzi*, Arm *paskouč* and ZoroPahl *bškwč* < *pati-škuvači-* 'swooping down upon'—an epithet of a raptor bird; see also MPe *baškuč* 'winged monster', Syrc *psjnq'* 'bird of heaven' and TalmEJAr *pjšqnc'*, *pwšqnc'* /pišqancā/, /pušqancā/, *pšqc'* /puškaca, puškuca/(?) 'female raven'. The Yiddish terms may well have undergone formal Ukrainianization, to match Uk *paskudnyk* m 'foul/nasty thing/person, scoundrel, loathsome person', *paskuda* m, f 'foul thing; scoundrel'.

The prevailing view among Slavists is that the Slavic terms are native < Uk *paskúdnyj* < *pá-* + *skúdnyj* 'scant, parsimonious; indigent, insufficient' and a cognate of *ščadyty* 'to spare, save, economise; have mercy on', with *pa-* marking spatial or temporal nearness, similarity, identity; insufficiency of a quality/property (Reczek 1991, 55–56).

Uk *paskúdnyj* is unlikely to < *pá-* + *skúdnyj*, since the stress does not fall on the first syllable, characteristic of CSl *pá*-compounds, like the Uk *pásynok* 'stepson' < *syn* 'son'. Significantly, Polish lacks a cognate of the Uk *skudnyj* in this meaning; see, however, OPol *(p)oskundzić* 'to blame, censure; dishonour, disgrace' (the Pol *-n-* resembles the forms of Ossete, Aramaic and Georgian). I know of only one Slavic example with initial stress, but with /o/ in the first syllable: Br *póskudz'* 'good-for-nothing', dial. *póškudz'* (Stawbcy, west of Minsk) 'blood-sucking insect; evil person' (with Persian-like meanings), alongside the Br *paskudnik*. There is one further curious point: The Uk *skudnyj* may be a cognate of ZoroPart *škand*, *škast* and Pe *šekän* 'break', *šekästän* 'to break'. If Yiddish speakers thought that the notion of '(to) break' was sufficiently close to the meaning of 'raptor bird, griffin', i.e. 'a bird that commits evil', they might have been inclined to Ukrainianise the form of the Persianism after the

relexification process of Judeo-Slavic to German had ended (thus forming "Yiddish"). It is highly significant that the Pol *paskuda* 'revulsion; monster; creep' and *paskudnik* 'fear; scoundrel' (like the Belarusian cited above) retain meanings closer to the original Irano-Aramaic meanings than the current Yiddish or Eastern Slavic forms. Might this fact reflect the presence of Iranian speakers in White Croatia a millennium ago, who could have preserved the original Iranian meanings? Unfortunately, we have no information on whether the Judeo-Aramaism ever survived in Yiddish, only to be Slavicised subsequently. The Irano-Aramaic term could have become Ukrainianised for two reasons: (i) The idiosyncratic use of a Slavo-Turkic agentive suffix, Y *-njak* (see details below). (ii) The presence of the term in Persian and contiguous Persianised languages would have reduced the element of secrecy—at least in Iran.

Sl *-nik* m ag. appears often in Yiddish, mainly with Slavic roots, but occasionally with German and Hebrew components as well. However, the distribution of the suffix with Slavic roots in Yiddish differs not infrequently from that of the suffix in other Slavic languages, see e.g. Y *nudnik* 'pest, bore' vs. Pol *nudziarz*, Uk *nudjar*, which employ a cognate of Eng, G *-er*. This fact can be explained in two ways: (i) Yiddish makes independent use of shared Slavic suffixes in order to maintain distance from the coterritorial Slavic languages. (ii) The Yiddish suffix did not enter from a Slavic language. The second point is suggested by *-nik* and by a second rare Yiddish agentive suffix, also of Slavic origin, *-njak* m ag., which differs from Slavic distributional norms. This suffix clearly entered Yiddish from a Turkic intermediary. Consider the example of Y *paskudnjak* 'scoundrel', which coexists with the genuine Slavic synonym with Uk *-nyk*: *paskudnik*. Y *-njak*, along with *-nik*, could have been acquired < Chuv *-n'ăk* ag., as in Chuv *robotn'ăk* 'worker' < R *rabotnik*, Uk *robitnyk* (R **robotnjak*, Uk **robitnjak*). This would account for the idiosyncratic distribution in Yiddish of both the Tc-ESl *-njak* and *-nik*, in violation of non-Judeo-Slavic. Hence, while the suffixes are of Slavic origin, they may not have been received by Yiddish directly from a Slavic source. (Research is required to explore the possibility that some instances of Sl *-njak* in other Slavic languages are motivated by Chuvash or another Old Turkic language.) If Eastern Slavic agentive nouns entered Chuvash at a very early date, they could have been acquired by Old Jewish languages either from Chuvash, or even from the now largely extinct Khazar. I cannot say whether Yiddish originally used the Chuvash variant of the Slavic suffix productively, since after contact with Chuvash was lost, Yiddish could have undergone broad Ukrainianisation, which could have eliminated all but a handful of Y *-njak* forms.

The Y *nudnik* m, *nudnice* f 'bore', along with *nudne* 'boring', very likely have an Iranian link. Besides having been motivated by the similar He *nm's* /nim'as/ 'boring; tiring', there is a still closer resemblance with other formally and semantically similar Persian roots: (i) Pe *nädžes* 'unclean; defiled, defamed; ugly; bad (name); poor (play); low (spirits), vile (people)', *nèdžasät* 'lack of cleanliness; impurity; dirt, excrement' (< Arab *nadžasa* 'impurity') may also

offer a surface congener to Yiddish. (ii) Semantically related Y *negišes* 'vexation, persecution' looks like it derives, on formal grounds, from He *ngjšwt* /negišut/ 'accessability', but, on semantic grounds, it probably derives rather from He *ngś* /nagas/ 'he pressed, oppressed; urged' (with sibilant confusion in Yiddish, which could be a feature acquired < some Iranian and Turkic languages, as well as Polish and Belarusian dialects). Note also YemJArab *(ši) nigeš*, lit. 'something' + 'that disturbs (me)' and the formal and semantic parallels between Perso-Arabic and Chin *náo* 'to trouble, disturb'—another reason to use a Slavism with an idiosyncratic use of a Slavic agentive suffix in Yiddish.

20. Ashk and ModHe *paxot o joter* 'more or less' displays the rare word order of 'less or more'. There is presently no trace of this expression in Yiddish itself (but see BalkRom *majčəř majbut* 'more or less', lit. 'less-more'). The Hebrew (and Romani?) expression could have been coined on the model of the Pol *mniej więcej* or USo *mjenje (albo) bóle*, lit. 'less (or) more', the only two Northern Slavic languages with this rare word order. The absence of the term 'or' points to a rule productive in Iranian and Chinese, *inter alia*. Spoken Modern Yiddish has *mer-vejniker*, *mer vincik*, *fil-venik* with German components (~ G *mehr oder weniger*, with obligatory 'or', also possible in Yiddish as *mer oder vejniker*). Curiously, the initial consonants of both components in *mer-vejniker*, *mer vincik* match those of the componentially opposite Pol *m(niej) w(ięcej)*. The original pattern of discourse behind 'less-more' might have been Iranian, see e.g. Džuh *kəm-ambar* (lit. 'little' + 'a lot'), Pe *kämabiš* (lit. 'little' + 'more') 'more or less'. Also, the Polish and Upper Sorbian word order of 'less-more' may derive from the Iranian languages once spoken on those two Slavic territories (in addition, the ethno-glottonym Sorb may be of Iranian origin). The Hebroid order of 'less or more' was either brought directly from an Iranian language in the Near East, or acquired in Polish or Sorbian lands. It may have survived in Mediaeval Hebrew, because Hebrew was then still an unspoken language, less affected by Slavic considerations than colloquial Yiddish. Finally, see Chin *chà bù duō*, lit. 'lacking not more' and Uk *menš(e)-bil'š(e)*, lit. 'less more'—following Persian norms?

21. Y *a majontek mit gelt* 'large fortune, possessions' < G *ein* 'a', *mit* 'with', *Geld* 'money', Pol *majątek* 'property, fortune'. The Pol *majątek* itself might have replaced Pe *mal* 'riches, money; property' (< Arab *mal* 'wealth, personal property').

22. The Y *nextn* 'yesterday' < *naxt* 'night' is componentially similar to the synonymous 'yesterday' < 'evening', found in USo *wčera* < *wječor*, Uk *učora* < *večir*, Br *zawčora* < *večar*, and identical to Uk *nič* 'night'/Bojk(Carp)Uk *snočy* 'yesterday evening', because of the latter's use of 'night', rather than the standard Ukrainian use of 'evening'. The Carpathian facts have a parallel in Serbian and Croat. It is also not out of the question that Bojkian Ukrainian was influenced by the Iranian speech of the White Croats in nearby Galicia (see the map of Western Ukrainian ethnic groups in Kuzela 1963, 1: 281).

Turkic languages also provide an appropriate model for Yiddish: See OTc *tün* 'night', and in some modern Turkic languages, also 'yesterday', as well as OttTu *dün* 'night' (14th c.)/*düne gün* 'yesterday' (with 'day') (16th c.); CriKar *tün* 'night'/*tune gin*, *tune gün*, *tünèn* 'yesterday'. See also the near minimal pair of Chin *yè* 'night'/(O) *yoh* 'yesterday'.

23. The Y (Lith-Br) *kitke* 'plaited bread' could be an original borrowing from Slavic, or a later Slavic replacement for a similar pre-existing Pe *gis(u)* 'tress, braid, tail of the hair, woman's long hair, curls'. I make this suggestion tentatively, since I cannot determine whether the Persianism ever denoted a 'plaited bread product', but at least the latter 'hair'-term could have inspired the Y 'plaited bread'. The bread meaning is absent in both Pol *kitka* 'ponytail' and Uk *kytký* plt. 'braided strands of hair over the ear' (see the minimal pair with *kýtky* pl. 'tufts, crests, plumes'). Hence, 'plaited bread' could be a Yiddish innovation, stimulated by the Y *xale*, also not originally a bread term (see item 13 above). A link between the /-t-/ of the Yiddishism and /-s-/ of the Persianism might have been created by the facultative change of postvocalic He /t/ > /s/ in the Yiddish pronunciation of Hebrew/Hebroid. However, a White Croat source is put in doubt by two facts: (i) The Pol *kitka* means 'ponytail' and (ii) No Irano-Slavic confederation is known to have existed in Lithuania or Belarus', which is where we find the sole example of Y (Lith-Br) *kitke* as a bread term.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope to have shown that, despite its exclusively European geography at present, Yiddish has maintained the form and function of its Asianisms (and Africanisms) with amazing fidelity. For example, all the Asian languages spoken by a Muslim majority have created a periphrastic verbal conjugation for the integration of Arabic loans (under Persian and possibly also Aramaic influence), using native auxiliary verbs (no parallel rule exists in German for foreign components). While Yiddish has not followed the Islamic languages in incorporating a very large overt Arabic component, it has, nonetheless, joined the Islamic linguistic *Sprachbund* in developing a periphrastic verbal conjugation in Yiddish for the integration of large numbers of pre-eminently Hebrew and Hebroid elements, which almost always have the Arabic surface congeners used in Persian; these periphrastic verbs usually require auxiliary verbs of German origin (though German lacks a rule parallel to the Persian and Yiddish periphrastic conjugations). It is unclear if Yiddish originally accepted the original Persian Arabisms which it later replaced by Hebrew and Hebroid cognates, or whether the speakers of Yiddish only used Perso-Arabisms as a guide for determining their own Hebrew inventory, but never actually used the Perso-Arabisms overtly in spoken Yiddish. In any event, Yiddish underwent largescale (covert) Arabicisation, without requiring much direct contact with

Arabic speakers or literature. The same may be true of Romani. Most students of Romani are fond of asserting that the relative paucity of Arabisms in Near Eastern Romani is a sign that the Roma exited Iranian-Iraqi speech territory prior to the Arabic/Islamic invasion—i.e. by the 9th century. The experience of Yiddish suggests that this assertion is dubious.

It may come as a surprise to learn that Yiddish is far more Arabicised (though almost entirely covertly) than Judezmo (Judeo-Spanish, with mainly overt Arabic loans)—spoken in the Iberian Peninsula until the end of the 15th century, and in Morocco and the successor states of the Ottoman Empire until the present. Thus, Yiddish (with its Slavic grammar and phonology) may be a "peripheral language" *vis-à-vis* Persian, Perso-Arabic, Turkic and Chinese in terms of its geography, but it is a fellow "Irano-Arabo-Turko-Chinese core language" in terms of its abiding respect for the form and meaning of its Iranianisms, Turkicisms, Arabisms and Sinicisms. In contrast, Iranian languages spoken in proximity to Persian often alter the form and/or meaning of their Persian loans. Thus, Slavic Yiddish is a "core language" *vis-à-vis* Persian,, while numerous Iranian languages reveal serious formal and semantic alterations in their Persian component—in tandem with German and the Slavic languages which inherited but largely distorted Iranianisms received from the Jewish merchants and their neighbouring Irano-Slavic confederations.

The new merger of "Yiddish (or, more broadly, comparative Jewish) linguistics" with "Silk Road Linguistics" that I have propounded here will require not only a close look at all the Afro-Asian languages in contact with Yiddish across the Afro-Eurasian Silk Roads, but also a comparison of Yiddish with its Iranian and Iranianised cousins: Džudezmo, Judeo-Berber, Džuhuri, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Georgian, Judeo-Chinese and Karaite (a kind of "Judeo"-Crimean Turkic; Karaism began as a Jewish sect in the 8th century in Iraq-Iran that rejects the authority of the Talmud; Iranian Karaites were also active on the Silk Roads)—almost all of which developed in the shadow of Iranian. The uniqueness of Yiddish is not only that (i) It (alone or together with Romani) can identify with varying degrees of certainty the locations of Irano-Turko-Slavic confederations in Europe, or that (ii) It has a mass of largely unique Asian influences and a modest number of Africanisms, but that (iii) It appears to be the most faithful to Iranian norms, even after being physically removed from Irano-Turkophone communities for centuries. While Iranian (and other Asian) norms were often lost after the host languages became extinct in the Slavic and German lands, the unusual acceptance of Polonisms in Galician Yiddish is a clue to the missing Asian corpus.

The loyalty of Yiddish to its Irano-Turko-Slavic purveyors of linguistic (and even cultural) enrichment can be shown dramatically in the term Y *cimes* 'fruit/vegetable stew', which I would derive < Chuv *şiměş* 'fruit, vegetables; various foods'; the term was never lost in Yiddish and, in fact, has spread to Polish and Ukrainian. Its survival in Yiddish may depend on the fact that it is not attested in Persian. (This fact raises the question of whether Turkic languages

were becoming extinct along with Iranian, or survived longer in Galicia. Alternatively, Asian food and dress terms have enjoyed a striking longevity in Yiddish up to the present.) Surface congeners in other target languages have undergone extreme mutilation, as in Tu *yemiš*, Damascus, Cairo Arab *jamiš*, Hung *gyümölcs* 'fresh fruit', Jap *ume* 'apricot-like plum (tree)', Chin *méi(zi)*, Kor *mejshe* 'plum' only, Uk *cymes*, *cimes*, *cimys* 'tasty food; something very good', Br *cymus* 'the most interesting, essence; sweet food made from carrots; something very tasty'. Brzezina (1979: 87–88) defines JPol *cymes* (< Yiddish), as 'a Judaic tasty tidbit; something great/wonderful' (but derives it < MHG *zuomüese* or *zimbiss* > G *zum Imbiss*). Karłowicz, et al. (1900, 1) gloss the Polish surface cognate as 'something that is the best; choice; tasty; sour cream; flower; rarity; suitable, worthy'; the Rtw *cimes* has developed the meanings 'turnips, carrots, beans' out of the meaning 'stewed fruits and vegetables'.

Another example of Yiddish "core" behaviour, is the pair of Y *šabaš* 'a tip given to musicians at a wedding by guests who dance at the wedding' + *šibeš* 'trifle; small coin' < Pe *šabaš* 'a tip given to musicians at a wedding by guests who participate in the dancing; bravo!' + (unrelated) *sèpas* 'gratitude, thanks'. In contrast, see the semantically and/or formally distorted Neo-KurdJAr *šābāše* 'wedding gifts; money for musicians'; Geor *šabaš* 'wedding tip to the musicians––both minus the condition that only guests who dance at the wedding party need give the tip; Se *džäba* 'hospitality; for free' (with a Turkish form and meaning); R *šabáš* 'rest time; enough!', R, Br, Uk *šabáški* 'wood cuttings taken home by carpenters from work (for kindling)' (with a Slavo-Iranian diminutive suffix), R dial. *baš(li)* 'money; a two-kopeck coin' (with a possibly Iranian diminutive suffix), *bašljat'* 'to earn money', *bašlëvyj* 'having a lot of money; financial'; Pol *szabas(z)* 'finished; enough!'; truncated Hung *sáp* [šap] 'pimp's or brothel owner's profit; hush money; metal or wood cuttings'. All the languages except Yiddish lack a reflex of the Pe *sèpas* 'gratitude, thanks'. A second term is possible in European target languages, but only in truncated form (as in the Russian and Hungarian examples).

It remains to be seen whether the Asian Islamic languages, like Yiddish, largely imitate the Arabic inventory of Persian, despite independent access to Islamic literature in Arabic. For example, unlike Persian, Dari and Tadjik are much poorer in Arabic components.

It is important to remember that citing parallels between Yiddish and Asian languages, such as Iranian and Chinese, has a strong and weak interpretation: In the stronger case, Asian Silk Road languages are quite likely the sources of Yiddish features—many of which were further passed on to Slavic languages and German; in the weaker case, Yiddish and the other Asian languages are at the very least members of common Eurasian isogloss bundles.

Chinese Jews still recall their Iranian roots; Ashkenazic Jews do not. It is time for the latter to recognise that the popular narrative that Yiddish developed in Germany as a variant of Middle High German in the 9–10th centuries is unsupported by facts. Yiddish began as a cryptic trade language, in tandem with a

number of other Old Jewish languages, exploiting the process of relexification. It probably began when Judeo-Persian became obsolete in the Khazar Empire, and was replaced by a newly emerging merged Judeo-Slavic language (specifically, Sorbian and pre-Ukrainian and pre-Belarusian). In the Khazar Empire, Judeo-Slavic acquired a mass of Iranian and other Asian components—including a smattering of Mongolian and Tokharian elements (see examples in my 2021), probably when Judeo-Turkic and Judeo-Iranian became obsolete there. Judeo-Slavic, in turn, became relexified to German mainly in the Southern German lands (and possibly through an intermediary stage of Gothic enrichment in the Khazar Empire, though some isolated Judeo-Slavic dialects survived roughly up to the 13th century in Czech territories, and up to the early 17th century in Belarusian territories) to become the Iranianised Slavic language called Yiddish 'Jewish' since the 16th century. The chain of three Jewish mercantile languages is matched by an identical chain of semantic changes that affected the ethnonym Ashkenaz(ic) that I mentioned at the beginning of this article: From the meaning of 'Iranian-speaking Jews' to, and overlapping with 'Slavic-speaking Jews' to, and overlapping with 'Yiddish-speaking Jews'.

The White Croat State appears to have disappeared by the end of the 10th century, when some Iranian Croats migrated to the northwestern Balkans to found a new Croatian State, and others remained in Galicia as speakers of Polish and Ukrainian. It was at that point—shortly after the demise of the White Croat State—that some Polish Jews, speaking either unrelexified "Judeo-Slavic" or "Judeo-Slavic, newly relexified to the German lexicon (i.e. Yiddish)" would have begun to incorporate a small but not trivial number of Polonisms (some of which spread to neighbouring Ukrainian Galician Yiddish) to replace the dwindling corpus of obsolescent Iranian speech—probably consisting of Judeo-Iranian and other Asianisms brought to Galicia from the Near East a few centuries earlier, by both Jewish and non-Jewish Iranians.

I hope that, in the near future, other scholars will join me in seeking to expand our knowledge of (i) The Afro-Asian corpus of Yiddish and other Old Jewish languages developed for use on the Silk Roads, (ii) The mutual influences between Jewish languages and the Iranianised Indic speech of the Roma (among the presumed partners of the Radhanite merchants on the Silk Road caravans) and (iii) The locations of all non-Jewish trading confederations that were active in the White Croat State.

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KAKO LAHKO POLONIZMI JIDIŠA RAZKRIJEJO IRANSKO, TURKOTATARSKO IN DRUGO AZIJSKO GOVORICO V GALICIJSKI BELI HRVAŠKI (POGLAVJE NA NOVEM PODROČJU 'LINGVISTIKE SVILENE POTI')

Narečja poljskega in vzhodnoslovanskega jidiša imajo skromen delež polonizmov in znaten delež vzhodnoslovanskih posebnosti. Izjema je galicijska Bela Hrvaška (mešana slovansko-iransko-turkotatarska zveza, ki je razpadla do 10. stoletja). Tam ima jidiš precej več poljskih posebnosti, saj so veliko nezapisanih iranskih in turkotatarskih izrazov tamkajšnjega jidiša zamenjali polonizmi podobne oblike in pomena. Ti 'prikriti irano-turcizmi' pomagajo obnoviti izumrlo iransko in turkotatarsko izrazje judovskih in nejudovskih govorcev. Primer za to je jid. *pente* 'veriga', *penten* 'ukleniti', *culončen* 'prikleniti' < polj. *pęto*, *pętać*, *łączyć*, *połączyć* za perz. *pabänd* 'okovi', *molhäg* 'zvezan'. Tu pa tam se poljske zamenjave pokažejo za perzijske, turkotatarske in druge azijske. Nekaj sorabizmov in germanizmov v jidišu vrh tega kaže oblikovne in pomenske zveze z azijskimi posebnostmi (prim. mnenje, da so Lužiški Srbi delno iranskega izvora). Naštel sem tudi nekaj nezamenjanih azianizmov v poljsko-ukrajinskem jidišu. Ti prikažejo obogatitev jidiša z azianizmi in afrikanizmi na Svilni poti. Možni vzroki, zakaj je galicijski jidiš (ob vseh drugih narečjih jidiša v Vzhodni Evropi) ohranil toliko azianizmov, ki jih poljščina ni zamenjala, so naslednji: (a) vedno ni bilo primernih polonizmov; (b) na poljski jidiš so vplivala negalicijska narečja; (c) veliko govorcev jidiša je opustilo iranščino in turkotatarščino preden so galicijski Turkotatari in Iranci izginili in zato niso videli potrebe za zamenjavo; (d) nekateri azianizmi v okviru judovske vere in kulture so se že hebraizirali, prim. jid. *xale* 'praznični sobotni kruh', zelo verjetno kitajskega oziroma iranskega oziroma arabskega izvora, pripisoval pa se je biblični hebrejščini; (e) nezamenjani azianizmi so krožili med nejudovskimi govorci. Če zadnja razlaga drži, bi bilo razvidno, katere azijske jezike so govorili pripadniki slovansko-iranske in slovansko-turkotatarske zveze na slovanskih tleh. Nadaljnje raziskave naj določijo, ali ima poljščina azianizme, ki jih jidiš ne pozna.