Non-Canonical Use of Articles in Maskilic Hebrew
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In this presentation we will discuss a specific aspect of our current research project, a descriptive reference grammar of Maskilic Hebrew. The Maskilim strove to modernize Jewish society using the language of the Hebrew Bible as their preferred model. However, examination of Maskilic writing reveals a much more complex picture composed of diverse elements – including Biblical, Rabbinic, Medieval, and later Hebrew, as well as Yiddish, German and the Slavic languages – that reflect the authors' vast linguistic heritage and combine to form a cohesive structure.

This presentation will examine the intriguing ways in which these different elements manifest themselves in the Maskilic Hebrew use of definite and indefinite articles. Investigation of this aspect of Maskilic Hebrew can contribute to the literature on Hebrew definiteness and indefiniteness in diachronic perspective, as examined by e.g. Pat-El (2009), Rubin (2013a, 2013b), Doron and Meir (2015), Reshef (2015, 2016), and Stern (2018).

We shall present and analyse a number of central features in this area with examples from prominent Maskilic Hebrew texts. These features are significant because many of them lack clear precedent in the canonical forms of Hebrew, and can be regarded as elements of a specifically Maskilic form of the language. Features to be examined include the use of noun phrases consisting of an indefinite noun appearing in conjunction with an adjective prefixed by the definite article, e.g. אזי נצטרך ל**איזה כח הגדול** גם יקראו לו **קוקס הטבעי** (Syrkin 1869: 153), **דת הקאטהאליקית** (N. Shapiro 1862: 63), **איים המאושרים** בכמותו מן כח המושך (Porjes 1875: 431), בעיר לבוב (Brock 1877: 126); the phenomenon of definite articles prefixed to a finite verb, e.g. שמה ישראל בני אחינו בין המריבה אש כבתה **ההיתה** (*HaMaggid* 1 [28], 1857: 111); different ways of forming the superlative with definite articles; and the widespread use of the numeral 'one' as an indefinite article, e.g. עלמה **אחת** בת ישראל נתנה אהבתה לנוצרי (Lippe 1869: 271).