

Plaut's article, cited by D.L.G.) said that the Yiddish word was directly attestable for the eighteenth century, but he did not indicate the spelling(s?) he had found.

Modern Eastern Yiddish shows stress retraction (see R1982/1, in JLR 5: 422–423) and syncope in a posttonic syllable, thus initially stressed *yarmlke* (cf. M. Mieses, *Die jiddische Sprache*, Berlin and Vienna, 1924, p. 57, on syncope), but in the nineteenth century a vowel before *l* in this word was still pronounced: /o/ in Northeastern Yiddish (Alexander Harkavy, *Complete English-Yiddish dictionary*, New York 1891, s.v. *cap*) and /I/ in Central Yiddish (I. Drejzin, *Polnyj russko-jevrejskij slovar'*, Warsaw 1892, s.v. *ermolka*), the latter of which goes back to an older **yarmulka*. Northeastern Yiddish *yarmolka* has its model in the Lithuanian Polish form *jarmolka* (attested for 1582 in M. Strykowski, who lived in Lithuania); this Lithuanian Polish form is also the etymon of White Ruthenian *jarmolka*.

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COMMENT BY D.L.G.²

I do not think that B.A.S. (in his last paragraph) is justified in reading so much into Harkavy's and Drejzin's dictionaries. The Yiddish spelling of "educated" people at the end of the nineteenth century was notoriously etymological. The fact that Harkavy wrote a komets-alef after the mem in his 1891 dictionary does not necessarily mean that Yiddish-speakers were pronouncing /o/ here (this spelling is repeated in his 1898 dictionary, where the English gloss is 'cap, skull-cap'). I am certain (but have no direct evidence) that there was no vowel between the /m/ and the /l/ in this word at the time (the /l/ being syllabic). As for Drejzin's spelling, it was long common in Yiddish to indicate the syllabicity of a consonant by writing a yud before it, e.g., *tepl* 'cup' with a yud between the pey and the lamed (later, under New High German spelling influence, the convention was to write an ayen, thus "tepel"). My guess is that by the mid nineteenth century at the latest Yiddish *yarmlke* already had a syllabic /l/ (in those varieties where the /l/ was present; where it was not, there was a vowel between the /m/ and the /k/). Incidentally, Harkavy's 1898 dictionary (English-Yiddish and

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Yiddish-English) omits skull-cap on the English-Yiddish side); countless entries on either side are not reversed on the other.

B.A.S. is also setting too much store by these dictionaries with respect to their possible value for the study of spatial variation in Yiddish. Harkavy, being a native speaker of Northeastern Yiddish, probably gave NEY variants in certain cases and omitted SY ones (thus, his 1898 dictionary does not have *kapl*), but this does not mean that one can automatically take every form in his dictionaries to be NEY (by the same token, the fact that all of his dictionaries were written and published in New York City does not mean that he recorded only “New York City Yiddish”). The only pronunciation of *yarmilke* which I have heard from speakers of Northeastern Yiddish (e.g., Navahrudak and Anykšćiai) is with /r/ and a syllabic /l/ (thus, no vowel between the /m/ and the /l/). Two native speakers of the Yiddish of Navahrudak (where Harkavy was born) tell me that this is the only pronunciation they recall (Norma Kozlovsky (see „JLR” [= „Jewish Language Review”] 4: 7–12 and 3: 13–14) and Moshe Ginzburg (see „JLR” 4: 408–409), both born in the first decade of the twentieth century).

I do not know what kind of Yiddish Drejzin spoke, but am certain that his dictionary is not necessarily one of Warsaw, Central, or Southern Yiddish. Bernshteyn’s 1908 publication, cited in Section 3, contains the Yiddish spelling “yarmulke”. It would be unwise to conclude that between 1892 (cf. Drejzin) and 1908 (cf. Bernshteyn) Warsaw Yiddish pronunciation changed in the two ways which these spellings might suggest. The same would be true of a similar conclusion drawn from Harkavy’s 1891, 1925, and 1928 dictionaries (namely “from /o/ to sheva to zero”) – this change may well have taken place in Yiddish, but certainly much earlier and not between 1891 and 1928. The relationship between the place where a dictionary was published and the language of that place varies from zero (if the dictionary does not reflect the local language at all) to one hundred percent (if the dictionary deals only with that language). Only a comparison of the dictionary with the local language can tell us what that percentage is.

Would a non-Jewish prince buy Jewish skullcaps? I asked this question Bohdan A. Struminsky and he answered yes: because they were considered a type of headgear for everyone.

The pertinent Latin words need clarification. Plaut mentions *almucia* and Struminsky mentions *almunicum* and *armutia*. There is a Medieval Latin word *almutia* ‘cowl, hood’, which is from Arabic *almustaka* ‘fur-lined cloak with long sleeves’ (see Webster’s New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, 1982, at *almuce*). Is it relevant?