

Introduction

Aaron Demsky

בוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַם ה' נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְכַנֵּס.
הֲרֹפֵא לְשִׁבוּרֵי לֵב וּמְחַבֵּשׁ לְעַצְבוֹתָם.
מוֹנֵה מִסְפָּר לְכּוֹכְבֵים לְכֹלֵם שְׁמוֹת יְקָרָא.

The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; He gathers in the exiles of Israel. He heals their broken hearts, and binds up their wounds. He reckoned the number of the stars; to each He gave its name.

(Psalms 147:24)

This collection of sixteen essays — nine in English and seven in Hebrew — on Jewish onomastics evolved out of the Seventh Conference on Jewish Onomastics that was held as part of the World Congress of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem, 2005). Some of the papers were later submitted independently.

The papers can be divided into two main chronological groups: the first reflecting onomastics in antiquity, particularly with Bible-related themes, and the second group dealing with more modern issues. There is one exception, a paper that illuminates the use of names in the Hebrew poetry of medieval Spain.

The wide range of topics, even within each group, is indicative of the interdisciplinary nature of Jewish onomastics emanating from various disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, linguistics, literary criticism, Jewish art, and history.

In brief, Yael Avrahami looks at naming customs in the Bible from an anthropological and a literary point of view. Joel Burnett studies an unusual form of certain biblical names, while David Calabro clarifies Egyptian influence — particularly during the period of the Monarchy as seen through names found in Hebrew

epigrapha. My own piece presents the so-called "ghost-names", a category in its own right, largely shaped by later understanding or misunderstanding of the received canonized text. Two other papers look at how later generations viewed biblical names. Yaacov Kaduri (James Kugel) examines how the late Second Temple period sectarians saw themselves as part of the biblical literary tradition in regard to names and their meanings. Hananel Mack presents an in-depth study of how the later commentaries dealt with etymology and gender issues of the strange and unusual names of three Edomite royals recorded in the Bible.

Those papers dealing with more modern issues include a paper by the late Juliette Hassine, who studied the various names and literary traditions of the famous nineteenth-century Moroccan Jewish martyr, Solica Hatuel. Unfortunately, Prof Hassine passed away this year. Yosef Rivlin studies the subject of double birth names characteristic of Ashkenazic naming practices, and examines the different suggested approaches in explaining this onomastic phenomenon. Bracha Yaniv presents several Ashkenazic surnames evidence of a high degree of specialization among those working in the textile industry. Michael Falk comes back to an onomastic topic that he has developed — surnames based on the days of the week, particularly the Sabbath.

Three papers examine names in countries that were part of the former Czarist Empire and Soviet Union. As part of his comprehensive studies of East European surnames, Alexander Beider contributes a paper on the creation of family names among Latvian Jewry in the nineteenth century. Edwin Lawson, Farid Alakbarli, and Richard Sheil join forces in illuminating the changing naming patterns of the Jews of Azerbaijan (Gorskij or Mountain Jews) in the course of the twentieth century. Reuven Enoch brings his intimate knowledge of the phonetics in the Georgian dialects to illuminate Bukharan Jewish names. Each of these papers explores the nature of a single Jewish community that no longer exists — disappearing through *aliyah* to Israel and assimilating into the melting pot of modern Israeli society. It is therefore noteworthy

that we can present studies that capture the specific onomastic complexion of these disappearing communities.

Developments in modern Israel are not missing. The late Ofra M. Birnboim contributed significantly to the study of modern trends in name-giving practices in Israel. She made her mark through her studies of the religious Zionists living in Samaria, showing the tension they experience in finding the median between modernity and tradition. Her untimely death cut short a promising career in onomastic research. We thank her mentor, Prof. Ora Schwarzwald, for editing Ofra's paper for publication. In addition, Reuven Gafni, having created his own niche of research, clarifies trends in the novel field of Jerusalem synagogue names, a subject that encompasses geography, religion, and sociology. The single representative of the medieval period is Ephraim Hazan's paper illuminating the use of names as a literary device in Spanish poetry.

In addition to the scholarly essays, the renowned contemporary American poet Samuel Menashe has contributed a poem, "Whose Name I Know".¹ Menashe has been described as "a poet of entirely Jewish consciousness".² I feel it is important to listen especially to poets and literati, not only to scholars, in order to hear what is new and novel in names.

It is of interest to note that even though a wide range of topics is covered in these studies, there is some overlap or cross-referencing to the same texts or to similar practices — although from different perspectives. This is to be expected in scholarly dialogue dealing with onomastics. For instance, both Yael Avrahami, looking at name-giving practices in the biblical context from a literary and anthropological view, is complemented by Yosef Rivlin's study of double names in Ashkenazic Jewry from historic, halakhic, and mystical perspectives. Similarly, both Reuven Enoch and Michael Falk examine the name Shabtai. The midrashic names of Moses, based on I Chron. 4: 18, are referred to in three different papers: Yaacov Kaduri's paper on late Second Temple literature, Ephraim

1 C. Ricks (ed.), *Samuel Menashe — New and Selected Poems* (2005), p. 167.

2 *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

Hazan's study of medieval poetry, and my paper on biblical "ghost-names".

Following the format of earlier volumes in this series, the book is organized in two alphabetized sections — one in English and the other in Hebrew. Each article is abstracted in the other language. There are indices of the names (given names, surnames and place-names) studied in the articles. These indices are organized according to the scripts in which they appear, e.g., Hebrew, Latin, Cyrillic and transliterated names.

Many people have been instrumental in bringing this volume to press. First, I wish to thank my colleagues on the editorial board, Prof. Gershon Bacon, Prof. Judy Baumel-Schwartz, Dr. Boris Kotlerman and Dr. Yigal Levin for her help and sound advice. Ms. Aviva Levine, the editorial coordinator, has been most helpful in dealing with the administrative aspects of this publication, and Ms. Yael Teichman has helped in technical matters. My thanks go out to all the peer reviewers who have improved the academic quality of these essays. The design of the book cover is the inspiration of the talented Arik Weiss. The staff of the Bar Ilan University Press under the supervision of Ms. Margalit Avisar and especially Ms. Anne Lamdan must be commended for their professionalism in bringing this volume to press.

We thank Mr Harvey M. Kreuger, Prof. Edwin D. Lawson and Dr. Toby Turkel for their encouragement and financial support.

It is a particular privilege to be able to honor two friends — Hila and Saul Rosen of New York City — who have supported the Project for the Study of Jewish Names over the years. They recognized that the study of Jewish names is an important aspect of academic studies, which enhances our knowledge of how the Jewish people perceived their individual and collective identities throughout the generations and in different geographic communities. As an expression of our appreciation, we are happy to dedicate this volume to them.

Aaron Demsky

Whose Name I Know

Samuel Menashe

You whose name I know
As well as my own
You whose name I know
But not to tell
You whose name I know
Yet do not say
Even to myself
You whose name I know
Know that I came
Here to name you
Whose name I know

