

Abstracts of Hebrew Articles

Hebrew Names in the Speech of Georgian Jews

Reuven Enoch

Save for the period under Soviet rule, Georgian Jews tended to use Hebrew given names. These names may be grouped into two categories: (a) those used by Jews alone (*Shalom, Shabata, Penina*, etc.); and (b) names used by Georgian gentiles as well, owing to the influence of the Bible (*Solomon*, etc.).

Regarding the first category, this paper analyzes the phonetic changes of the names (*Avigail* — *Abéya*, etc.). Special attention is paid to the traditional Georgian pronunciation of certain letters and signs: א — b (*Iaqob*), שׁוּוּ — e, (Š*emuel*), צ — s (*I_sxak*). In the case of the second group, however, the relation to the Georgian versions is analyzed in addition to the phonetic changes. Thus, two contradicting trends are presented: a) distinct attempts by the Jews to preserve forms distinct from those used by Georgians (Š*elomo* instead of *Solomon*); and b) the influence of Georgian forms on the Jewish names. This must be the reason for formation of Š*amuel* parallel to Š*emuel* under the influence of the Georgian "Samuel".

The intriguing phenomenon of subject-dependent (Bible character vs. regular person) usage of names is reviewed — *Iaqob* and *Iakob*, Š*elomo* and Š*elemo*, etc.

The tendency toward differentiating the names from the common Georgian usage is demonstrated in the case of nicknames as well. For example, *Dato* and *Data* are conventional nicknames for *Davit*, while Jews tend to use *Davitia*. The structure of this form is also interesting: *Davit* (the stem) + *i* (nominative) + *a* (typical nickname suffix). The study will contribute to the understanding of Hebrew name usage in the Jewish languages, as well as to the research of the speech of Georgian Jewry.

Jewish and Israeli Identity According to the Personal Names of Certain Communities in Samaria

Ofra Malka Birnboim

The study focuses on the factors that determine the choice of names by parents in the religious-nationalistic communities in Samaria. The purpose of the study is to examine what the name signifies and what is its attributed value in this society. The paper starts with a short review of traditional customs of name assignment to newly born children, and continues with a survey of previous studies about name-giving trends in Israel. Parents from religious-nationalistic towns in Samaria were asked to give reasons for choosing the names of about 1000 children born between 1982 and 2002. The reasons were classified into five groups that are not mutually exclusive: (a) event-oriented names, e.g. holidays, national or private events, etc.; (b) person-oriented names, e.g. names after relatives, after biblical personalities, after modern national or religious figures; (c) religiously-oriented names, e.g. words from the Bible or the prayers, theophoric names; (d) positive features and names from nature; (e) names that sound pleasant.

Contrary to some claims made by sociologists that the modern Israeli tendencies in name choices in Israel override the Jewish identity, this study shows that these religious communities maintain the traditional approach to name assignment, yet are influenced by current Israeli trends as well. In this fashion, they shape contemporary society with a new Jewish and Israeli identity. Many of the names are shared with the secular Israeli society, but the meaning attributed to them by the parents interviewed in this study is religiously oriented. Hence, the traditional Jewish identity is kept intact, but with it there are strong ties to contemporary fashions in naming children.

Memory, Economy and Ideology: On the Names of Synagogues in Jerusalem

Reuven Gafni

Wherever they exist, synagogues are communal institutions. Consequently, the details that make up a specific synagogue reflect, in a large degree and in various ways, the character and image of the communities that founded it and worship in it.

This article examines one significant detail regarding synagogues — their names — in an attempt to see what may be discerned from an analysis of the names of a group of synagogues in a particular area — Jerusalem in the last 150 years.

The analysis of synagogue names, classifying them into various groups and categories, reveals a complex and fascinating system of communal obligations, which the members of the community try to express by giving a name to the religious institution to which they belong: a financial obligation to individuals or organizations that funded the construction of the synagogue, a religious obligation to a public leader or an halakhic authority whose rulings guide their practice in the synagogue, a political obligation to a movement or party to which they belong, etc. Some of the names express these commitments explicitly, and others merely hint at them.

The last part of the article compares the various kinds of synagogue names in Jerusalem that were discussed in the article with the names of other groups of synagogues in other areas and time frames: early twentieth-century Eastern European and mid-twentieth century America. From the comparison we learn — not surprisingly — that, on the one hand, there is a great similarity between the names in various times and places, and on the other hand, some differences, which derive from different commitments in different places, or obligations, which apply only at a given time.

The Proper Name as a Linguistic and Stylistic Factor in Spanish Poetry

Ephraim Hazan

The tradition of name exegesis in biblical and rabbinic literature passed through classical *piyyut* into Spanish poetry, where it found new directions. Some of the Spanish developments have received partial treatment, while others have escaped attention, save in short discussions clarifying specific poems. This paper will examine the full range of linguistic and stylistic methods and social meanings through which the individual name was used to shape Hebrew poetry in medieval Spain.

We will look at the use of canonical sources in which the particular name appears, and how intertextual links were formed to effect clever word play in regard to a specific proper name. In addition, we consider the influence of Arabic poetry in the use of the name, a literary device that excelled in the exploitation of the root meanings of individual names; this technique was used successfully by Ibn Gabirol in his wine poems.

The songs of praise (*shirei shevah*) take the proper name in a different direction. Whether personal or communal, they address with a natural air specific recipients with words of admiration and ultimately with a request. For the poets of Spain, who imbibed the Bible from their youth, the name's primary context was biblical; thus, *shirei shevah* addressed to Samuel HaNagid form a link to the biblical Samuel. Ibn Gabirol excels in the use of this technique in his poem "*mi zot k'mo shahar 'olah v'nishk'fa*", in which the woman seeks out no less a personage than Samuel the prophet.

Sol Hatsadiqah — Onomastic Characteristics in the Creation of a Cultural Heroine

Juliette Hassine

This paper discusses the literary legacy of the martyr Sol Hachuel, a young Jewess from the north Moroccan city of Tangier who was martyred for her beliefs in 1834, in the city of Fez. The study illuminates how her personal and family names underwent changes over a period of seventy years as reflected in Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, as well as in the rabbinic lists recording the spelling of the names Sol, Solica, and Soliqa.

The focus of this study is the onomastic strategies reflected in the above manuscripts, and their scribal traditions as precise cultural indicators, the final result of which was a form of hagiography from which an apologetic tradition was constructed around the figure of Sol Hachuel.

Mehetabel, the Daughter of Matred, the Daughter of Me'zahab: Three Biblical Names in Light of the Classical Jewish Commentaries

Hananel Mack

Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me'zahab was the wife of the last of the early Edomite Kings (Gen. 36:39, I Chron. 1:50). The combination of the names Mehetabel, Matred, and Me'zahab in her genealogy is unusual, unique, and interesting. The names in this list are worthy of note, and can perhaps be identified with other biblical characters like Balaam ben Be'or, Job, and Hadad the enemy of King Solomon. These names are part of the northwest Semitic culture shared by the peoples in the area as well as by ancient Israel.

Mehetabel is without doubt the name of a female. However, the names Matred, and Me'zahab are of uncertain gender. Me'zahab may be etymologically associated with rain or snow. The gender of this person raised the historic question of whether there were famous queens or matriarchs in Edom. An inspection of the ancient *targumim* of the Bible, the midrashic literature, and the medieval commentaries reveals that all of these alternatives as well as other exegetical possibilities have been discussed — such as whether the name Matred is a profession, or whether the name Me'zahab is a place-name. Some commentators interpret the name Me'zahab as referring to gold in mineral waters, a natural phenomenon with which they were familiar. Yet another approach appears in the writings of the kabbalists and mystics, who find different facets of God's attributes in these names. In short, this paper surveys the traditional Jewish commentaries on the names Mehetabel, Matred, and Me'zahab, revealing a wide variety and depth of meaning attributed to this passage.

The Practice of Giving Two Birth Names

Yosef Rivlin

The article discusses the practice of giving two names at birth. In the case of a son, the names are given after the circumcision, whereas the daughter receives the names as part of a special prayer in the synagogue soon after her birth. The subject of this paper is the practice of giving two names simultaneously by the parents close to the time of birth — either a primary name along with a nickname, or two names, each of which was given independently by a single parent.

This phenomenon has developed considerably in recent generations, especially among Ashkenazic Jews. In order to understand the historic and social motivation of this naming phenomenon, the following questions are asked: Was this the

result of external factors, such as the influence of printing and the subsequent widespread availability of the Bible? Was it influenced by the introduction of surnames? Was this an internal practice peculiar to the East European Jewish communities?

We suggest several possible reasons, including: a connection with the practice among Ashkenazic Jewry to give a vernacular (Yiddish) name, or the influence of Rabbi Yehudah he-Hassid's ethical will regarding name restrictions of couples about to be married. Giving two names could be related also to the practice of adding an additional name to a sick person, or to the belief in special qualities inherent in different names.

There is no one satisfactory answer to the questions raised, but the various suggestions may provide partial answers to our questions, and new directions for further research.

