

The Hebraization of Names in Modern Israel

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NAMES ARE THE UNIVERSAL LINGUISTIC unit of human identity. Onomastics, the study of names, touches upon history, religion, politics, social structure, fashion, linguistics, and geography and is a treasure trove for the social and cultural historian.¹

Jewish onomastics covers over 3,000 years of documented history and is made up of two main periods of onomastic creativity. The first is the formative biblical period lasting from the Iron Age (circa 1200–586 B.C.E.) through the Babylonian Exile and Return to Zion in the Persian Period.² The second period is the modern age, which stretches from the end of the nineteenth century to the present—a period of political, linguistic, and cultural renewal, defined by the national movement of Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel.³ Zionism gave political structure to the cultural and linguistic renaissance of the Jewish people. The revitalization of the Hebrew language generated the renewal of Hebrew names.

In this paper, I will focus on the phenomenon of the Hebraization of family and given names and how it reflects political and social trends in modern Israel, specifically secularization, egalitarianism, and personal identification with the revival of the national language and culture in a Jewish homeland. In so doing, I will note how names and naming often express the tension between preserving personal and communal memory and creative innovation. For a

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short period in the 1950s, this led to a conflict between government directives and individual choice.

BEN-YEHUDAH AND THE REVIVAL OF HEBREW

In 1897, Theodore Herzl (1860–1904) founded political Zionism, which promoted Jewish immigration to Ottoman Palestine. However, the cultural renaissance of the Jewish people required a common language. Fortuitously, some 15 years earlier, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1858–1922) began almost single-handedly to revive and modernize Hebrew, a language that was used mostly for prayer, the study of sacred texts, and correspondence between Jewish communities speaking different dialects. Ben-Yehudah conceived the first modern Hebrew dictionary and, in 1890, he founded the Hebrew Language Committee, which in 1953 became the Academy of the Hebrew Language, the official mechanism for creating new words as needed. His goal was for Hebrew to become a means of full expression. This goal was achieved—by the time of the British Mandate for Palestine after World War I, Hebrew had become the medium of daily communication, schooling, and literature in Palestine and the bond that defined the collective Israeli identity.⁴

68 Ben-Yehudah set a personal example by raising his family speaking only Hebrew. Highlighting the closeness between language and onomastics, upon arrival in Jerusalem from Belarus in 1882, he changed his surname Perlmann to the Hebrew patronymic Ben-Yehudah.⁵ By doing so, he expressed the idea that surnames that are related linguistically can potentially become a collective expression of national aspirations and ideological messages.

Ben-Yehudah's name change set a precedent for future leaders. In the early twentieth century, it became a choice favored by the intelligentsia who left Europe with the goal of building a new national home in Palestine. It was not a means of forgetting the past; often the new Hebrew name was a translation or phonetically similar to the old one. As such, the Hebrew form could have historic and cultural echoes in the collective memory. Still, it symbolized one's commitment to the contemporary and future struggle for the revitalization of the Hebrew language. It was fundamental to the process of nation-building.

JEWISH SURNAMES: A RECENT DEVELOPMENT

The modern history of Jewish surnames begins with the tolerant policies of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Joseph II, who in 1787 ordered the Jewish masses

to take family names. Other eastern European sovereignties followed: the Polish Kingdom in 1797, the Russian Empire in 1804 and 1835, and, finally, the German principalities.⁶ By the early nineteenth century, Jews throughout Europe had adopted family names. This was necessary for imperial states to have an official means of registering their Jewish minority. Although many names were chosen by the Jews themselves, others were imposed by the government. Some name types were recognizably Jewish, especially those found in Slavic, Hungarian, or Romanian speaking countries. However, for Jews, this development was a positive step toward their recognition as citizens.

In the mid-nineteenth century, emerging national identities, especially in eastern European countries such as Hungary and Romania, encouraged the use of family and given names in their native tongues.⁷ Interestingly, Jewish citizens of these lands

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who identified with this development took the opportunity to translate their Ashkenazic names into local calques or morphology; for example, Woolf became Farkas or Lupo, respectively.

There are a wide variety of categories of European Jewish surnames: patronymics, matronymics, place names, personal or physical traits, occupations, and heritage.⁸ Certain categories are particularly Jewish. For one, the so-called “artificial names,” based on some 30 basic Yiddish words or their combinations (e.g., gold: Gold, Goldberg, Goldstein), make up a large percentage of Ashkenazic surnames.

In another category are Hebrew surnames based on lineage (such as Cohen and Levi), as well as the terms for traditional communal leaders such as Chazan (cantor), Melamed (teacher), or religious terms such as Tehillim (Psalms), Kaddish (man). There were names that expressed a noteworthy personal characteristic, such as Hassid (saintly) and Navon (clever). Others were based on Hebrew acronyms, some of them indicating lineage, like Katz (*kohen tzedeck*, “an authentic priestly family”) or Segal (*sgan lekehunah*, “second to the priest”) which is a Levitical name.

These traditional surnames should not be confused with the modern phenomenon of Hebraization. For instance, the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1922–95) and the noted general Moshe Dayan (1915–81) had these

traditional Hebrew family names that did not reflect the new national secular goal of nation-building, but were still acceptable.

Common language is a unifying force needed for communication as well as an instrument in the formation of statehood and a mainstay for preserving cultural values and common history. At times, the bearers of what would be the official language followed a policy of putting down sectional rival dialects. For Ben-Yehudah, it was choosing the Sephardic pronunciation over the Ashkenazic (eastern European) one. In the formative period of early statehood in Israel, there were no rival Hebrew dialects, only the non-Hebrew Jewish languages like Yiddish, spoken by Ashkenazi Jews, and Ladino, spoken by Sephardic Jews. Yet, these languages were often officially and sometimes culturally suppressed being a reminder of the diaspora and seemingly a threat to the new order. These developments influenced the pronunciation, popularity, and reasons for the Hebraization of many names.

EARLY ZIONIST LEADERS

The fact that the idealistic, young elite—many from the Labor Zionist movement—would assume leadership roles and gain political and social influence, made their early name changes a model for the masses. The choice of some names, particularly those that have strong connotations of power, indicated aspirations for a role of future leadership. In 1910, future Prime Minister of Israel, David Grin (1886–1973), Hebraicized his surname to the phonetically similar Ben-Gurion, “Son of Gurion,” meaning the offspring of a lion cub. Ben-Gurion is also a historic family name, possessed by several leading political figures at the time of the Destruction of the Second Commonwealth (Temple) in 70 C.E.⁹ David Ben-Gurion was likely sending the message that he saw himself as a potential leader in the modern restoration of the Jewish state and formation of the Third Commonwealth.¹⁰

Golda Lishinsky (1886–1979) was a moving force in the early Labor Zionist movement. Her husband Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963) (originally Shimshelévitch and later Shimshi) would become the second president of the State of Israel in 1952. Lishinsky had changed her name some forty years earlier to Rachel Yannait, after the Hasmonean King Alexander Yannai (126–76 B.C.E.). Note that her chosen name based on a male given name has a feminine ending *-it*, expressing her independence and giving this name an added feminist touch. Furthermore, she abandoned her Yiddish given name Golda for Rachel, the favorite matriarch of the Jewish people. Her choice of names thus conveyed

clear ideological messages.

The Hebraization of family names, and sometimes even first names, was a way in which many would personalize the Zionist goal of establishing a national state for the Jewish people speaking their own language. The above four names—Ben-Yehudah, Ben-Zvi, Ben-Gurion, and Yannait—while in form patronymics, are symbolic names reflecting personal and collective identities.

THE BRITISH MANDATE

From 1920–48, an estimated 28,000 name changes by Jews were published in the *Palestine Gazette*, the official journal of the British Mandate Administration.¹¹ After World War I and the Balfour Declaration, which brought with it the promise of “a national home for the Jewish people,” there was a noticeable increase in Hebrew surnames. Most of these names reflected the traditional name categories mentioned above. For example, some 40 percent chose surnames coined from Hebrew given names by adding the prefix *Ben*, “son,” or the genitive suffix *-i* (e.g., Ben-Aharon, Aharoni).

Among these new names we find the need to identify with the land, its cities, and nature.

Names like Artzy and Admati (“my land”) or geographic names, like Golan and Sharon, were subjective choices that occasionally related to the person’s prior name, but usually did not in-

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indicate that the name bearer had an actual connection to that geographic site.¹² Taken together, these names reflect the Zionist ideology of reconnecting with the Land and its clime.

Two developments illustrate how Hebraization was encouraged over the early-mid twentieth century; both were attempts to give direction to a popular process. First, in the spring of 1933, at a time when the clouds of viral anti-Semitism in Europe were emerging, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi wrote a strong programmatic article in the *Davar* newspaper entitled “Remove the Foreign Names from among You.” He claimed that the Hebrew language was the only political national treasure that had survived from the Jewish past.¹³ The ubiquitous foreign surnames, he argued, were a stumbling block to acquiring the national tongue.

These foreign names testified that the Jews were still strangers in their own land. He called upon all the leaders of the Zionist movement and its institutions to abandon their foreign names, citing specifically the German-sounding ones (though Yiddish was also likely an intended target).¹⁴

Second, in 1944, Mordechai Nimtsa-Bi (originally Netsabitski), an official of the public advisory body known as the Jewish Agency, proposed to Ben-Gurion a detailed working plan to Hebraicize the names of large sections of the Jewish population. The idea was to encourage name changes not as individual or family choices, but rather with centralized sponsorship of the Zionist collective. This proposal would include educational gatherings and help in overcoming bureau-

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cratic problems. One of the suggestions to make the choice simpler, and thus increase the number of people Hebraicizing their name, was to have all the people with the same surname—like

Goldberg and its variants—agree to change that name to a Hebrew equivalent like Harpaz.¹⁵ This plan did not materialize, but it indicated government encouragement on what was considered, until then, a personal matter.

Changing one's surname is not an easy task, especially when siblings disagree or want to keep the family name. It may entail minor adjustments like shortening (Meyerson > Meir; Persky > Peres); or interchanging letters (Wechsler > Kislev; Feigin > Gafni); or finding a close Hebrew equivalent in meaning or phonetic similarity (Shertok > Sharett; Lampel > Lapid); or creating one with initials (an acrosticon): Shazar (*S*/neur *Z*alman *R*ubashov).

ESTABLISHING THE STATE

With the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948 and the influx of Jewish refugees from Europe and the Arabic-speaking countries, Ben-Zvi renewed the call to speak the Hebrew language and to Hebraicize both given and family names. Again, he implored the national and party leaders to be models for name changes. There was a general feeling that this was a historic moment, a new beginning for a reborn, independent people; many who identified with these feelings chose new names. Ben-Zvi, looking at the social issues, believed that Hebrew names would bind the various communities, removing social and ethnic

barriers to make newcomers and *Sabras* (Jews born in Israel) indistinguishable, at least on paper. To promote this policy, guidebooks on how to Hebraicize one's name were published. Even in the fervor of the times between 1953 and 1956, Ben-Zvi attempted to legislate the Hebraization of names. An opportune moment occurred in 1956 when the government proposed the Law of Names, which stipulated that everyone should have a first and second name and that one may have more than one given name and joined family names. This was an important law since many immigrants, especially Middle Eastern Jews, did not have hereditary surnames prior to their immigration to Israel, as in the case of sections of Yemenite and Kurdish Jewries.¹⁶ However, the attempt to attach an amendment regarding the need to Hebraicize names did not pass in the *Knesset* (Israeli Parliament).

At the same time, government agencies supporting international sports and musical events felt that Israelis representing the country should have recognizably Hebrew surnames. This was now more than ideology and personal choice—it was a function of national diplomacy and pride. Normative administrative pressure as well as a personal appeal by Ben-Zvi and Ben-Gurion proved influential. Ben-Gurion's view on the necessity of Hebrew surnames took on political and social dimensions in the mid-1950s when he became prime minister and minister of defense. At that time, he strongly encouraged Hebraicizing family names for those representing the young state in the diplomatic corps and for those officers serving in the military, especially when seeking advancement.¹⁷ This became the unwritten custom in each of these government branches, though it did not go unchallenged. Ezer Weizman (1924–2005) and Chaim Herzog (1918–1997), prominent military figures in the War of Independence and future presidents of the country resisted official pressure because their older namesakes were founding fathers of the state. By the 1980s the military had abandoned this demand and, after 1997, it was no longer applicable to the foreign service. In the central government, ideology did not overcome conservatism and many Zionist leaders retained their old surnames.¹⁸

There were extenuating circumstances in favor of preserving the old surname for survivors of the Holocaust, who were the last remaining members of their family.¹⁹ On another level, the question of Israel's relationship with the Jewish Diaspora community continues to be a relevant issue. Some see the Hebraization of the family name as an unnecessary act of detachment in the cosmopolitan life of modern Israel. Perhaps in answer to this dilemma, there are those who have adopted a hyphenated surname preserving the old family name along with a new one, as did the late Hebrew linguist Moshe Goshen-Gottstein

and the general Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.²⁰

Today there is no pressure from elite groups to create their idea of a political and ideological common identity by Hebraicizing one's name. The country has been transformed from a melting pot ideology to a multicultural society with diverse views. In general, the tendency has been against coercion in such a personal matter as one's name. Furthermore, the Hebrew language, the basis for Hebrew names, is flowering and spoken by almost all of Israel's citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as taught abroad. Hebrew poets and authors have received world-wide acclaim. With a growing population and general prosperity after 70 years, there is no lack of national self-confidence. A reflection of these positive tendencies is the creativity and variety of contemporary given names.

GIVEN NAMES

The subject of Hebrew given names in modern Israel matters because Hebrew given names often preceded the Hebraization of surnames. There were probably fewer who were willing to change their personal name than change their surname, which touches intimately on one's identity. Notable exceptions come from several literary figures who in their youth immigrated to Israel and emerged on the literary scene writing in their adopted Hebrew language. For example, Dahn Ben-Amotz (1923–89), born in Poland, created his “Sabra name” to fit his new persona, a far cry from his original name Moshe Tehilimzeiger (psalm-sayer). Having assumed different identities as a vagrant child survivor, the multilingual Ervin Appelfeld (1932–2018) adopted his maternal family name and accepted Rachel Yannait's suggestion to call himself by the similar sounding biblical name Aharon (Aaron). Efraim Kishon (1924–2005) was born Hoffman Ferenc and, because of anti-German sentiment in Hungary after World War II, changed his surname to Kishont. Upon arrival in Israel in 1949 with no knowledge of Hebrew, an immigration clerk suggested the similar-sounding Hebraicized first name Ephraim. Moreover, by just removing the final “t” in his surname, he had the name of the local Kishon river. Kishon became the most popular satirist in the emerging Israeli society of the 1950–1970s. He aptly noted that Israel “is a country where mothers learn the mother tongue from their children.”

Giving a Hebrew name to one's child is an act of cultural identification. For many open societies that do not have an official limited list (or ecclesiastic list) of recognized first names, the choice of a personal name indicates changing fashions, family and political values and affiliations, as well as aesthetics.²¹ Since the 1880s, Hebrew first names have been recorded in a register that forms a basis

for comparison of changing trends in name-giving patterns in modern Israel.²²

When analyzing these names, one must consider that there are several different types of Jewish communities living in Israel. For instance, there is the ultra-Orthodox *Haredi* eastern European (Ashkenazic) community, which tends to be more conservative socially and choose traditional Jewish names, which may include or add Yiddish forms (*kinnuyim*) as well (e.g., Yaacov Koppel, Yehudah Leib, Esther Itta). Customarily, these names recall deceased members of the family, so they tend to be less innovative. There is a sub-group of Hasidic Jews whose first choice of names may be a commemoration of their sect's founders, (e.g., Shneur Zalman of the *Chabbad* sect, Nahman of the *Breslav* sect). Then there are so-called "eastern Jews," some of whom, the Sephardim, are descendants of Iberian Jewry, exiled in 1492–96. Their custom is to name first children after their paternal and maternal grandparents. Most Israeli Jews today identify either as secular—and vary regarding tradition as part of their national identity—or as Religious Zionist and practice a more modern religious lifestyle. It is in the name-giving practices of these two groups that we find recognizable societal trends.²³

NEW NAMES

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During the 1920s, there was a notable immigration of idealistic young Jews, mainly from eastern Europe, who were inspired by socialism as well as the Zionist ideal of creating a new and progressive society. Many were breaking away from the traditional lifestyle and religion which they termed "Exilic."²⁴ However, unlike their secular compatriots who chose to remain in Europe and enact societal change through socialism or communism, or those who chose to join the great immigration to the New World with the hope of a better life, these motivated, mostly secular Zionists chose the hardships of provincial Mandatory Palestine. They became willing partners in a cultural and national renaissance reviving the ancient Hebrew language and building a national home for the Jewish people. The Bible was the source of the historic connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. The heroic acts of the biblical characters took on new meaning and relevancy. In many ways, this generation felt the tension and need to balance past and present inherent in Theodore Herzl's vision of the Jewish State in his play *Die Altneuland* (The Old New Land).²⁵

This period was a turning point for Jewish onomastics. Parents began to abandon the traditional pool of Jewish names. They restored the biblical names of Judges Yiftah (Jephthah), Gideon, and Ehud as well as David's warriors, like

the brothers Avishai, Asael, and Joab. Jerusalem was also remembered by Isaiah's name, Ariel.²⁶

EGALITARIANISM AND GENDER

The less conservative Jewish female names are an excellent gauge of social and linguistic change throughout Jewish history. For example, from the first quarter of the twentieth century, we find the overall tendency to Hebraicize the vernacular Yiddish names: Rosa/Reizl became Shoshana, and then Vered. Not only were they undergoing Hebraization but they were also creating new forms: Perl became Peninah, and then Pe'erli; Eidl became Adele.

For the sake of modesty, Jewish naming practices have traditionally been gender-conscious.²⁷ However, at this time, we find the new winds of an egalitarianism current in Western societies echoed in Labor Zionist circles, as noted above regarding Rachel Yannait. One onomastic development was the popular-

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ity of feminine forms of masculine names like Arielah (Ariel), Rafaelah (Rephael), and Gabri-elah (Gabriel). It did not seem to disturb many

that the male element *el* ("god") became *elah* ("goddess"). Ultimately, the sound of the name more than its meaning made it acceptable. Gentile female names from the Bible like Hagar, Anat, and Asnath came into vogue. The tragic daughters of King Saul, Michal and Meirav became very popular. Heroic women like Jael projected a new image of prowess. So too, Nili, the code-name for the underground resistance to the Ottoman empire, took hold.

SECULARIZATION IN MODERN ISRAEL

Secularization is an aspect of modern Israeli culture and is mirrored in the choice of names by giving new meaning to the venerable. For instance, in 1930, the national poet Haim Nahman Bialik was asked to suggest "a new Hebrew name" for a newborn. He suggested the biblical Yoram. Although Yoram means literally "God is great," it was the name of two biblical kings who were not known for their piety. Bialik's suggestion became an iconic "Sabra name" indicating upward mobility, only to lose its popularity by the 1960s when it became associated with the archetypal "nerd."²⁸ On the other hand, Nimrod (Gen 10: 8–9), literally "We

will revolt,” considered in Jewish tradition to have been an evil gentile king who wanted to rebel against Heaven by building the Tower of Babel, continues to be popular in secular circles. Until the 1920s, it was never used by Jews, but then came to symbolize a break from traditional Judaism as well as an expression of political resistance against the occupying British government.²⁹

The same vein of secularizing Jewish tradition is found in names that celebrate a man-made redemption not a divine one. Note the masculine Yigal (“He will redeem”), Yigael (“He will be redeemed”), and the feminine noun Geulah (“redemption”). Three bearers of these names (Yigal Allon, Yigael Yadin, and Geulah Cohen) became leading figures in the War for Independence in 1948. All three went on to leave their mark on Israeli politics.

One of the more interesting aspects of a modern secularized biblical name is how the divine subject is subtly changed. For instance, in many biblical names God is called *‘am*, that is, “a [divine] Patron.” This epithet was common among the ancient Israelites such as Moses’ father Amram which means “the divine Patron is great.” The term *‘am* in this sense is not used in modern Hebrew; however it sounds like *‘ammi*, “my people.” Now substituting peoplehood for the divinity, the popular names Ammi-kam or Ammi-hai deliver a strong message—“My People lives!”

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POLITICS AND NAMES

The 1970s were a period of change in Israeli society. They followed the exhilaration of the victorious 1967 Six Day War against several of Israel’s neighbors; the disappointment in the military in the wake of early Arab successes in the 1973 Yom Kippur War; the subsequent change in the 1977 elections from the socialist labor government to the advocates of a more liberal western economy; as well as the activist movement to settle the historic heartland of Ancient Israel in the West Bank and the Golan Heights.³⁰ All these developments in the political, economic, and social spheres affected name-giving patterns.

New neutral personal names without religious or political connections emphasizing the individual came into fashion, like Li-hi “she is mine”; Li-at “you are mine”; and Li-Or or Orr-li (m/f) “my light.” Judging from the choice of names in the secular sections of Israeli society—usually the style setters—there is a post-Zionist trend away from historic, traditional, and patriotic names. Furthermore, for the last 20 years or more, a popular development has been the creation of one-syllable or short names that are not gender defined, such as Tom (perfect, innocent), Tal (dew), and Bar (pure). While these names have a

foreign ring and same-sounding English equivalents, they are Hebrew and testify to the capacity to continue to create novel names that express cosmopolitan and egalitarian ideas and fashions. One of the latest developments is creating names from common nouns. Most popular are hydrous names which relate to water: Yam (sea), Gal (wave), and Nofar (water lily). In sum, this modern onomastic collection has exceeded that of the biblical period.

No survey would be complete without considering that modern Israeli society—with over eight million citizens, of whom some three-fourths identify as Jewish—remains multi-faceted. Since the early 1990s, there have been waves of immigration, notably from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, and, currently, western Europe. For the most part, the first generation of these new citizens retained their original given and family names with no official attempt to induce them to give up their former identity. In this way, the country became more cosmopolitan and tolerant of non-Hebrew names.

Another significant section of the populace, which identifies itself as Religious Zionist, is of interest. While practicing a religious lifestyle (e.g., keeping a kosher diet and observing the Sabbath), this community is involved in all aspects of civic life—arts, professions, and academia, as well as military and national service. They form a cultural and demographic bridge between the non-religious and the more insular Haredi communities. Significantly, they tend to give their children two names, the first a modern name and the second a traditional one, usually following the custom of naming for a parent, grandparent, or a deceased person.

Many of the more modern names, shared by large sections of the populace, reflect a positive attitude of hope and joy. Note the prominence of such terms as “light” in the names Orr and Ori; as well as those derived from “song” such as Shir and Shirah; and some with a religious message such as Hallel (praise the Lord, or thanksgiving), Odeliah (I thank God), and Yedidyah (Friend of God).

Even so, for the Jewish sector, which accounts for some 78 percent of the total population living in Israel, the most popular boy’s names this year include traditional biblical names (T), renewed biblical names (R), and a few new names (N) reflecting the multi-faceted nature of modern Israel.³¹

CONCLUSION

The modern history of the Jewish people, especially after World War II, has been shaped by the Zionist movement with its political goal of restoring a sovereign Jewish state on the historic territory of the Land of Israel. From its very inception

at the end of the nineteenth century, the political aspect has been augmented by cultural Zionism, which heralds a national renaissance, foremost through the revival of the Hebrew language. In this paper we have looked at both aspects through the prism of onomastics, particularly the Hebraization of given names and surnames. These names testify to the popular identification with the goals of nationhood as well as cultural independence. Tracking some 140 years of name-giving trends in modern Israel, I note that many contemporary names echo the biblical foundation text yet adapt to new trends of secularization. Many of these names are non-traditional, substitute peoplehood for divinity, and implement egalitarianism. Attempts in the 1950s to legislate the Hebraization of surnames and given names were rejected. We have found that the very personal act of name-giving was a means of determining one's individual and national identity and reflected, sometimes unwittingly, a balance between past and present as well as tradition and modernity. 

NOTES

1. Aaron Demsky et. al., *These are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Press, 1997), Vol. 1, 7–12.

2. H.L. Ginsberg, “Names in the Bible,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Keter Publishing, 1972), Vol.12, no. 803–807; A. Demsky, “Biblical Names,” *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. C. Hough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 170–71; “New Hebrew Names in the Second Temple Period: A By-product of Biblical Exegesis,” in *Names and Their Environment Vol. 3: Anthroponomastics, Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, ed. Carole Hough and Daria Izdebska (Glasgow, Scotland: University of Glasgow, 2016), 41–51.

3. Arthur Hertzberg, et al., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960).

4. Shalom Spiegel, *Hebrew Reborn* (The Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1962), 393–402.

5. Gideon Toury suggested that the phenomenon of widespread Hebraization had its roots in Ottoman Palestine in the 1880s with the early settlers called the *Biluim* and the First Aliyah: G., Toury, “The Hebraization of Surnames in *Eretz Israel* as a ‘Cultural Translation’: A Skeletal Exercise in Cultural Semiotics,” in *Nequdot Tazpit ‘al Tarbut ve Hevra b’Eretz Yisrael [Perspectives on Culture and Society in Israel]*, ed. Nurit Gertz (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1988), 152–71; Perlmann is a matronymic meaning “Perel’s man (i.e., husband).” His new name Ben-Yehudah, is a Hebrew patronymic usually explained, as in this case, as a translation of or even based on the individual’s father actual name (Yehudah Leib). However, among the early Zionist elite, often the surname was symbolic and had historic and cultural associations. Ben-Yehudah, literally, “a descendant of Judah,” the eponym of the Jewish people, was an appropriate choice (instead of translating Perlmann to Margalioth or Pnini referring to “pearls”) for a person who planned a Jewish national movement. Furthermore, as a linguist called “the father of the Hebrew language,” he was probably aware of the Rabbinic source that said: “*Judeans* (as opposed to Galileans) were meticulous in their use of language” (Babylonian Talmud, Erubbin 53b).

6. For a comprehensive and masterful survey of hereditary Jewish surnames in the Russian Empire, see Alexander Beider et. al., *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, Revised Edition* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2008), 1–162.

7. Péter Maitz and Tamás Farkas, “Der Familienname als Nationalsymbol. Über den Untergang deutscher Familiennamen im Ungarn des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 36, no. 2 (2008): 163–96 (German); Tamás Farkas, “Creating a national given-name stock: A chapter from the modern-day

history of Hungarian personal names,” *Proceedings of ICONN 4* (2017): 137–46.

8. See my discussion of types of Jewish surnames, especially from eastern Europe, that were adopted at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth centuries, “The Memi De-Shalit Database of Jewish Family Names at Beit Hatfutsot – An Introduction” at <https://www.bh.org.il/databases/family-names/jewish-family-names-introduction/>.

9. Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* (2009), Chapters 3 and 9.

10. Adar Cohen, *Public Figures and Hebraicizing Family names: The Formation of Collective Identity, Personal identity and the Public forum by Linguistic Means* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004).

11. Jean-Pierre Stroweis gathered and analyzed the name changes during the pre-State period (1920–48), presented on August 1, 2005, in a paper “Name Changes during the British Mandate” at The Seventh International Conference on Jewish Names, and summarized in a brief Hebrew article in *Et-Mol* 190 (2007), 32; *Et-Mol* 191 (2007), 30–1; available at https://www.ybz.org.il/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/190.12.pdf and https://www.ybz.org.il/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/191.11.pdf.

12. It is of interest to note that by the 1990s, the Hebraicized surname Golan (Golani), with some 7,500 name bearers, was ranked number 30 among the 200 most popular family names in Israel, Avraham Ariel, *The Book of Names – The 200 Most Popular Surnames in Israel* (Ministry of Defense, Israel, 1997), 37.

13. *The Writings of Yitzhak Ben-Zvi* (Tel Aviv: Mizpah Publishing, 1936), 4:42.

14. It is ironic that in Germany the newly elected National Socialist party was also concerned with Jewish names. To carry out their policy of removing the Jews from Germany, they faced the problem that for about a hundred years, Jews could and did adopt German names, so it was impossible to determine from one’s names whether a “Gustav Stern,” for instance, was Jewish or German. In 1935, the head of the Ministry of Interior began discussing what sort of labeling should be used to identify and stigmatize Jews. In August 1938, they passed the *Gesetzes über die Änderung von Familiennamen und Vornamen*, that decreed that all male and female German Jewish citizens would have to add the name “Israel” or “Sara,” respectively, to all official documents. This was implemented in January 1939. See Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names: Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812–1933*, trans. Neville Plaice (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Ina Lorenz and Jorg Berkemann, *Die Hamburger Juden im NS-Staat 1933 bis 1938/39, Band I* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016), 610–13; Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: Volume 1: The Years of Persecution 1933–1939* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 254.

15. According to Ariel, *Book of Names*, 56, there are some 204 surnames derived from “Gold” as the first element. The new name Harpaz does not make this list.

16. Aharon Gaimani, *The Names of Yemenite Jewry – A Social and Cultural History* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2017), 204–11.

17. See the unpublished MA thesis of Mataniah Weinberger, *Hebraization of Family Names in the Public Sphere of the State of Israel: Legislation, the Military and Government Services* (Ariel University, 2016).

18. Adar Cohen, *Public Figures*, 32.

19. The author Aharon Megged (1920–2016) wrote a short story that he called “*Yad Vashem*,” (“A monument and a Name”) (Isaiah 56, 5), which dealt with the complex emotional issue and intergenerational conflict after the Holocaust over how to both forget the past and learn how to remember it.

20. This should not be confused with the modern custom for women and some men who use both partners’ family surnames or sometimes create a new joint name.

21. Stanley Lieberman, *A Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions and Culture Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

22. Sasha Whitman, “Personal Names as Cultural Markers: Trends in the National Identity of Israelis, 1882–1980,” *Emdat Tatspit* (1988): 141.

23. Aharon Megged, “Names with Meaning,” in *These are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics*, ed. Aaron Demsky (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Press, 2002), 3:111–15.

24. “Exile” is a translation of Hebrew *galut*, a negative value concept that implies a state of being of political servitude and national weakness, persecution and dispersion, and the longing for liberation.

25. Illustrating this tension between old and new, between past and present, was the toponym Tel Aviv, the first all-Jewish city built in 1909–10. Its name is taken from Ezekiel 3:15, citing a small exilic com-

munity in southern Babylon. The toponym is usually translated “The Hill of Spring.” The first element *tel* is a desolate artificial hill over an ancient archeological site, a remnant of the past, while *aviv* means spring, the blossoming of a new year.

26. Cf. the late Prime Minister and general Ariel Sharon [Sheinerman] (1928–2014).

27. Omi (Naomi) Morgenstern Leissner, “A Jewish Rose by Any Other Name: Thoughts on the Regulation of Jewish Women’s Personal Names,” *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 14, no. 1 (2017): 1–60.

28. Harvey Goldberg, “Names in their Social Contexts: An Anthropological Perspective,” in *These are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics*, ed. Aaron Demsky et al. (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1997), 1:53–64.

29. In addition, Isaac Danziger’s sculpture of a nomadic hunter (1930), which he called Nimrod, became the icon of the small literary group called Canaanites, who in the early 1940s proposed a cultural connection to the indigenous pagan Canaanites who preceded the biblical Israelites. Their text was the recently deciphered Ugaritic mythology.

30. Ofra Malka Birnboim, “Jewish and Israeli Identity According to the Personal Names of Certain Communities in Samaria,” in *These are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics* 5, ed., Aaron Demsky (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2011), 33–47.

31. When considering the 20 percent of the total population living in Israel who are Muslim, we find that the top position of the list, as has been the case for several years, is taken by the name Muhammad. In Muslim tradition, everyone is obliged to have at least one person in the household by the name of their prophet. This onomastic development now characterizes many western European countries which have Muslim immigration as well. See the recent report published in September 2018, issued by Israel’s Population and Immigrations Department, listing the ten most popular names for this year’s newborn: Ariel (R), David (T), Lavie (N), Ori (N), Yosef (T), Eytan (R), Noam (N), Daniel (T), Itai (R) and Judah (T) ; and for the girls : Tamar (T), Avigail (T), Yael (R), Adele (N), Noa (R), Sara (T), Shira (N), Noyah (N), Esther (T) and Taliah (N).