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Reviews

Pleasant Are Their Names: Jewish Names in the Sephardi Diaspora. Edited by AARON DEMSKY. Pp. 329. Bethesda: University Press of Maryland. 2009. $35.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781934309247

Following the introduction by editor Aaron Demsky, Moisés Orfali gives an historical and cultural overview of the Sephardim. He explains that there were three periods of Sephardi history: the first the pre-expulsion period when Jews lived and thrived in the Iberian peninsula, the second that began with the expulsion in 1492 and the creation of the far flung Sephardi diaspora, and the third period from the second half of the Nineteenth Century to the present which witnessed the destabilization of those communities in the eastern Mediterranean lands. He describes their places of settlement, Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, southern France, Holland, Italy, India, and the New World, and how some of the communities flourished. There is a listing of Jewish surnames in Brazil. Orfali goes on to give a description of the functions of the different languages used in the diaspora, Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, and Spanish and Portuguese. The Judeo-Spanish literature is rich in many aspects.

Alexander Beider, well known for work on Ashkenazi names, has turned his attention to the etymology of Sephardi surnames. He first critically describes and analyzes six recent books by Maurice Eisenbeth, Abraham Isaac Laredo, Joseph Tolédano, Paul Sebag, Jacques Taïeb, and one co-authored by Guilherme Faiguenboim, Paulo Valadares, and Anna Rosa Compagnano. He points out their strengths and weaknesses. He points out errors and possible alternate interpretations. For example, for the name *Ben Hassun*, "Laredo gives 'son of fortresses' in Arabic. Taïeb says that *Hassoun* means 'beautiful' in Arabic. Tolédano writes that it is either an augmentative form of *Hassan* or means 'goldfinch.' Eisenbeth mentions the existence of the Arabic Muslim masculine given name. Historical sources show that the given name *Hasson* (*Hassun*) was also borne by Jews. Only Sebag explicitly states the patronymic origin of the surname in question" (42). About twenty names are discussed, including *Barzilai*, *Benvenisti*, *Marzouk*, *Mercado*, and *Naim*. Beider concludes by calling for etymological research to have more rigorous methodology, including references, type, etymon, source language, and whether the name was shared with Christian or Muslim bearers of the same name.

Following the two selections by Orfali and Beider on general topics, there is a shift to more specific Jewish communities. The first of these is the study of Bulgarian Jewish surnames by Mathilde Tagger. Drawing from the 1967 work of Isaac Moskona, she presents a classification of surnames. These are of two major categories, those of Hebrew origin and those of Jews who arrived from foreign countries and settled in Bulgaria. Lists are given. Forty-three are of Arabic origin (ex., *Bassat*, *Danon*, *Katan*); 104 of Spanish origin (ex., *Corona*, *Pardo*, *Trapero*); thirty-six of Italian origin (ex., *Benito*, *Laron*, *Meseres*); and fifty-nine of Turkish origin (ex., *Karakash*, *Shaban*, *Tshitchek*). There is even a list of eleven unexplained surnames (ex., *Bekhshet*, *Pili*, and *Sadni*). A dictionary developed by Tagger of almost eight hundred surnames is at: <http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/BulgarianSurnamesSrchFrm.html>.

The next contribution, by Shlomo Alboher, focuses on the names of the Jews of Monastir, Macedonia. Monastir (known primarily today as Bitola) is in a valley that has been an important crossroads linking the Aegean Sea to the Adriatic. It was founded in 359 BCE and prospered in the Roman and Byzantine periods. Jews were there from earliest times. Some came from Germany, France, Hungary, and Italy in the fifteenth century. More came from the Iberian peninsula after the Inquisition. Around 1890 and for ten or more years after, they were about 12 percent of the population. World War I and World War II brought turmoil to the

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community: "It was at this time in February 1943, that the Bulgarian regime, under German supervision, carried out a census of the 106 families before sending them to the gas chambers of Treblinka" (109). This census became one of the main sources for Alboher to analyze naming in Macedonia.

Naming of children followed traditional patterns of naming after their parents, first the names of the father's parents and then the names of the mother's parents. Each child had two names. The first name was the child's given; the second, the name of the father. Male names were mostly Hebrew. Female names were more likely to be non-Jewish, mostly Spanish. For family names there are entries for 180 family names, 106 from the German census, plus another seventy-four from community records. The entries are in the Roman alphabet and in Hebrew. The entries show a typology: toponyms, patronyms, occupations, characteristics both physical and personal, objects, colors, and lineage. Here are two entries as samples:

> **Calderon, Caldera** (קלדרון) BC
> *Toponym*: Site names in the principalities of Albacete and Seville, Spain [Laredo, *Noms*, 1041]: Caille de Calderon, a street in Muslim Toledo [Ashtor, *Korot*, vol. 2, map 10, pp. 22–23].
> *Object*: Spanish — calderon, "cauldron"
> Still a common Christian surname. In 1371 Spanish courts forbade Jews from using Christian names [Immanuel. *Matzevot*, I:68].
> **Hasid** חסד BC
> *Personality trait*: Hebrew word meaning one who is pious.

BC = Bulgarian Census. It is not clear why the Hebrew for *Calderon* is in parentheses.

Editor Demsky has done a refined analysis of the names listing them by type and also by language.

The next contribution, by Victor Hayoun, is on Jewish names, surnames, and nicknames of Nabeul, Tunisia. Nabeul is sixty-five kilometers south of Tunis on the Mediterranean coast. The Jewish community at its peak composed 25–30 percent of the total population of twelve thousand. After 1948, the Jewish community began to decline with emigration to France and Israel. It disappeared by 1970. Although the database had more than four thousand individuals, there were only forty surnames. Most of these are probably unfamiliar to those who are used to Ashkenazi names. Among the names included are *Berrebi* or *Berreby*, *Bonan*, *Chaouat*, *Haddad*, and *Taïeb*. The entries give a great deal of information on the etymology of the name, its frequency, and presence in Nabeul. Here is an entry:

> **Soufir**
> This occupational name comes from the Hebrew word *sofer* meaning "scribe," "writer," "secretary," or "notary of the rabbinic courts," and later became the surname *Soufir* in Judeo-Arabic.
> The surname is mostly borne by Jews from the Constantine area in northeast Algeria but also in Libya and in Tunisia, where it is found in the south, especially in Djerba.
> The Soufirs of Nabeul are a small family that descends from a single ancestor who originated in Libya, where Baida Soufir was born. Baida moved to Nabeul probably between 1855 and 1860 and his son Shmouel was born there in 1865.
> The first Soufir I am aware of settled in Nabeul in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In addition to the work on surnames, there are tables of male and female first names.

The lists show the name in Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew, and French. For example, *Brakha, Barouk*, and *Benoit*, all mean "blessed." There is also a listing of nicknames, for example, *Bouraka'a* (clothing). This nickname, meaning "the one with the patches," was given to a man wearing patched clothing.

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald brings in the next focus of interest with her work on first names in Sephardic communities. Her focus is on Hebrew first names and is drawn from oral interviews and written sources. Among her topics for both male and female, with many examples, are biblical names, post-biblical names, common nouns or adjectives, and the use of names in proverbs and idioms. Also discussed are names that were not used because of negative associations but appear in literary associations. For example:

Iyov: "miserable man, suffering from catastrophe and tragedy," based on the biblical story in the Book of Job. This name is common in idioms such as *los males de Iyov*, "Job's tragedies": *povre komo Iyov*, "miserable as Job."

Additional attention is paid to Hebrew names in proverbs and idioms. Schwarzwald has made a significant contribution to our understanding of Sephardi names by going beyond the discussion and enumeration of names into literature and proverbs for analysis.

"*Bienvenida* 'Blessed be her who comes' and *Azebuena* 'Does good deeds': Name-giving patterns for girls and women in the Judeo-Spanish Diaspora (Salonika 1492–1943)" is the title of the selection by Gila Hadar. The Jewish community of Salonika, Greece, was founded in 1492 as a result of the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian peninsula; it ended with the Nazis in 1943. For a period the Jewish community was the largest ethnic group in Salonika. Hadar traces the various influences on the naming of women, pointing out that during the early period in Salonika names chosen showed love and longing for Spain and Portugal. In the later part of the period in Salonika, there were new names that came into the community reflecting Jewish identification, modern ideas, Greek, French, and Italian culture. The most popular name during the entire period in Salonika was Esther.

Izmir, Turkey, is the site of the research of Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky. Izmir, the second largest port of Turkey, is on the Gulf of Izmir on the Aegean Sea. The data for the investigation came from divorce registers and tombstones over a more than two-hundred-year period. There were three thousand male names and one thousand female names in the list. Makovetsky discusses the background of the names, their frequency, and major categories for men and for women. For men, she lists, with examples, names of prominent figures in the Torah, names of former and latter prophets, names of biblical kings and other biblical figures, other Hebrew names, and names denoting a positive characteristic and values. For women, the pattern was somewhat different, reflecting the lack of a need for a woman to have a Hebrew name to participate in the religious ceremonies that men did. Ninety-nine percent of the male names on tombstone were non-Hebrew. The situation with women's names was different, being nineteen percent at the beginning of the eighteenth century and rising to about fifty percent in the period 1911–1933. Other aspects of naming in Izmir discussed include apotropaic names, nicknames, changing names, and diminutive names.

Names in proverbs have been studied a bit, but there are only a handful of studies in English. Names in Judeo-Spanish are even fewer. Tamar Alexander and Yaakov Bentolila have brought us an unusual subject with their examination of names in Judeo-Spanish proverbs from northern Morocco in the Hakitia dialect. Hakitia is a dialect of Judeo-Spanish. Alexander and Bentolila have created the term *provnames* to demonstrate the fusion of *personal names* and *proverbs*. They go on to define the model of a proverb in three phases: (1) creation; (2) status in the repertoire period; (3) implementation. The data on which the investigation of provnames was based were derived from 1400 proverbs in Hakitia, 9600 proverbs in Ladino, and 3000 proverbs in Moroccan Judeo-Arabic. From this large corpus, the authors located 270 provnames, 82 in Hakitia, 163 in Ladino, and Judeo-Arabic. (It is not clear how the authors define the difference between Ladino and Judeo-Arabic.)

There is a major classification system in two categories, personal names and fictitious names. Each of these has subcategories. Among examples of historical names in proverbs are *Moshe*, *Menahem*, *Rahel*, and *Tamar*. Among examples of historical names with community reference are *Aisha* and *Jamila*. For example, "*Aisha no tiene que senar y a huéspedes convida*" (*Aisha* does not have [food] to eat [dinner] yet she invites guests); "*Ni tan largo Jamila ni tan corta como su hija*" (She is not so tall as *Jamila* and not so short as her daughter). There is also an analysis of fictional names, including common nouns. Many names are listed. There is extensive discussion of proverbs involving *Menahem* and *Rahel* separately and one proverb *Juró Rahel por Menahem (Rahel* swore by/for *Menahem)* where both are included. There is extensive discussion of both names at different levels and with different interpretations.

The final article, by Henry Abramovich and Yoram Bilu, discusses visitational dreams, a somewhat unique practice associated with Moroccan Jews. First, they describe traditional naming practices among Moroccan Jews, where children are named after living relatives (in contrast with Ashkenazi Jews who do not name a child after a living relative). In some cases where there are Sephardi-Ashkenazi marriages, there are conflicts over naming a child. Along with a cross-cultural type of conflict, there is the current trend in modern Israel to get away from traditional Bible names. Some of the most popular current names are *Lior*, *Yael*, *Asaph*, and *Noah*. Traditional names like *Solomon*, *David*, *Miriam*, and *Rachel* have greatly declined. Thus, there are two types of pressure on naming, intergenerational and religious/secular. Jewish Moroccans have had a traditional belief in saints that had special spiritual power. These saints have appeared to individuals in dreams. Abramovich and Bilu collected over one hundred dreams from pilgrims of Moroccan extraction. They present three to show how the dream gave a solution to a naming problem for a newborn. In the dreams a saint appears to give the name to the child. (Jewish Moroccan saints were believed to possess special spiritual power.) "These 'naming dreams' help to preserve the close relationship between saint and devotee, just as the traditional Ashkenazi practice was to name a child after an esteemed relative or a famous biblical personality so that by that association the child would grow up to resemble the individual after whom he was named" (304). Apparently these special dreams which solved the problem of naming the child were had by the child's mother or another female relative.

An attractive feature of the book is the indexes. There are three, for male names, for female names, and for family names. They will be most helpful to readers.

The articles presented in this book give added depth and understanding to the life, customs, and culture of the Jews from Spain and Portugal. Much of the material presented will be new to most readers and will give new insights to the rich life of Sephardi Jews. The book is recommended for Judaica collections, advanced undergraduates, graduate students, scholars, and general readers.

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Native American Place-names of Indiana. By Michael McCafferty. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2008. $55.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0-252-03268-4. xvii + 299 pp.

Native American Place-names of Indiana (hereafter *NAPN*) carries readers on a three-century journey through Indiana's waterways, uncovering in the process layers of descriptive toponyms left by people who lived on Indiana's land before (and during) the coming of Europeans, especially before the coming of Americans. It brings us into the twentieth century with anthropologists recording in notebooks the speech of the last surviving speakers of languages like Miami-Illinois.

Rather than the alphabetical, encyclopedic arrangements of items common to placenames books, McCafferty's book is arranged geographically and chronologically. Each chapter treats a major body of water and its tributaries, discussing the variety of Native American names which are recorded historically. Strikingly, while works like Virgil Vogel's examine Indian placenames brought to the Midwest (or invented) by settlers of European ancestry, McCafferty's book deals with names actually given by Indians to the land they lived on and to the waters that sustained them.

NAPN draws upon both history and linguistics. Crucial to the historical record for the bulk of these names are the histories of the seventeenth-century French explorers and their maps, especially those of Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. It is fortunate that we have the information La Salle collected, but it is unfortunate that his personal traits mar the record. While La Salle was not the first Frenchman to visit the interior of North America-Marquette and Jolliet preceded him on the Mississippi by a decade, he was perhaps the most egotistical and

sometimes dishonest. He got himself assigned to an expedition to the upper Great Lakes as an interpreter, although he knew no Indian languages whatsoever, and later hired an eastern Algonquian of dubious value as interpreter for many of the Miami-Illinois names appearing in this book. But La Salle had promoters in France and took lots of notes as best he could, sharing them with Jean-Batiste Franquelin, who published what became authoritative maps of French North America in 1681 and 1684. And although LaSalle did not know any Indian languages, he tried to record names as best he could and gave them to Franquelin, who often misspelled what he got from La Salle.

Problems of French recording of Indian names occur with all early sources, though not all these sources are as controversial as La Salle. In order to untangle this history, McCafferty's first job is to scour the archives for primary materials, which are amply documented (76 pages of the text are notes, another 23 bibliography). Then his second job, as a linguist, is to try to decipher what the real names were from the tangle of often not quite reliable sources. To this work he brings knowledge of Indian languages (especially Miami-Illinois), which comes sometimes from records, sometimes from interviews linguists have done with surviving speakers during the last half century.

A major example of these challenges is the history of "Wabash." The earliest version of the name was what Marquette recorded at the mouth of the Ohio on his voyage down the Mississippi, *8AB8SKIG8*, which McCafferty deciphers by examining seventeenth-century French use of the digraph *8*, which he demonstrates to represent something like the diphthong *ou* or else lengthened *u:*. So the mapmakers thought Marquette was trying to record *Ouabouskigou*. And here arise more problems. First, a geographic problem arises since both the French and the Indians considered the lower Ohio to be an extension of the modern Wabash, rather than an extension of the river that flows from Pennsylvania. So we have a major discrepancy with modern maps.

But still more problems arise when La Salle enters the picture. He sometimes recorded the name of the Wabash (which, by the way, he never saw, although he sketched maps of it from hearsay), as *Ouabaché*, other times as *Oubanchi*, sometimes *Aramoni*. McCafferty argues that the second spelling with the /n/ is a mistake of La Salle's, since that sequence would not occur in the Miami-Illinois language. Although La Salle also recorded the earlier, more accurate *Oubaché*, Franquelin blundered by not recording the French acute accent over the final /e/. With the accent, the name would be pronounced with a final stressed *e:*, but without it, the final vowel is silent. For this reason modern maps have "Wabash" rather than something like "Wabashay."

But even with this knowledge the original name still eludes us. We finally learn that Jacob Dunn, who wrote about Indiana history and interviewed surviving native speakers of Miami-Illinois over a hundred years ago, determined the original was more like *wá:pa:š_k_*. (The word would connote the shining whiteness of the river's limestone bed.)

The first chapter deals with *Michigan*, the big lake on Indiana's north shore. The name is at best a garbled version of the original Native American name. More than a century's worth of French maps reveal Europeans' gradual acquaintance with this lake, starting with a mention on Champlain's 1616 map. It is named *Lac des Eaux de Mer* on a 1640 map, *Michihiganing* on Allouez's map of 1669, but *Michigané* on de Gallineé's map of the same year. After Marquette and Jolliet's expedition to the Mississippi comes Franquelin's 1675 map with *Missihiganin*, while a more accurate 1681 map records *meshigami*, whose /m/, McCafferty argues, must be closer to the truth. The Ojibwa-Ottowa word *mešigami* "big water" is likely the authentic Native American name, but due to so many French mistranscriptions and careless copying (especially with Franquelin's maps, which became dominant), the /n/ of the modern word *Michigan* prevailed.

Indiana's streams which flow into Lake Michigan are treated in the remainder of Chapter 1 (along with the Indiana Dunes). These streams are the St Joseph River, Trail Creek, Pigeon Run, Elkhart River, the Little Calumet, and Grand Calumet. Some names that appear on these

waterways include Mishawaka, which appears on modern maps as a suburb of South Bend. Names of Indiana villages on this river are also discussed.

Another major chapter treats the big river on Indiana's southern boundary. A personal interest arose for me when I first drove through New York State's "southern tier" in 2005. Entrance to Seneca nation territory on Interstate 84, east of Jamestown, New York, is marked by a green interstate sign which includes this phonetic rendering in Seneca: [o:notowa' ke:ono' ohiyo:no']. Anyone (like me) not knowing anything of Native American Languages might still guess that "ohiyo" might be a source for the name *Ohio*. But for that you would likely need to know that you were entering the flood plain for the Allegheny River, which is a tributary of the Ohio. So I (ignorant at the time of Wallace Chafe's work among the Seneca) turned to Chapter 3 of McCafferty's book right away, to see that I had guessed right.

Versions of *Ohio* appeared on various French maps appearing throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. But the history of the term is not that simple. There were as many names for the Ohio as there were different communities. Wyandot *uhì_uh* meant "big river"; *oheyandewa* is another Wyandot name, possibly a misspelling of the first. La Salle also recorded *mosopelea*, an Algonquian name. Four Miami-Illinois names for parts of the river were *waapahkihkwa (siipiiwii)*, *waapaahši(i)ki siipiiwi, mooswapiliasiipi*, and *pileewa siipiiwi*. Again, it is uncertain which parts of the river pertain. On some French maps *Ouabache* includes not only the modern Wabash River, but all of the Ohio from the mouth of the contemporary Wabash to the Mississippi. Some French maps call the contemporary Wabash *le petit Ouabache* and the lower part of the Ohio *le grand Ouabache*. Some version of *Ohio* was given only to that part of the river upstream from the Wabash's mouth. In any case, the persistence of this name seems to owe much to La Salle's choice of terms, although it is doubtful that he ever saw any part of the Ohio himself.

Chapters 4 through 8 treat the Kankakee and its tributaries, the streams connected to Lake Erie, the White River Valley, and the Wabash Valley tributaries. "The Driftwood and its branches" are treated in chapter 9, while chapter 10 examines the names of lakes in northern Indiana. The book concludes with chapter 11's discussion of the streams which flow directly into the Ohio.

While McCafferty's work will especially interest native Hoosiers, it will serve as well a wider readership interested the complexities of the historical scholarship on names and also those interested in some of the details of the pronunciation, morphology, and grammar of Native American languages which once flourished in central North America.

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