**Abstracts**

**Jewish Surnames in the Ottoman Empire**

**Alexander Beider**

During the 14th-17th centuries, Ottoman Turks conquered large parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans, and the Middle East. In these territories, some Jewish communities existed since Antiquity while others had settled in the Middle Ages, each with a variety of cultural and linguistic traditions. Moreover, starting with the 15th century, numerous Sephardic Jews (expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the 1490s or returning to the religion of their ancestors in the 16th-17th centuries) and, to a lesser extent, Ashkenazic and North African Jews migrated to the Ottoman Empire. They either founded new congregations or joined existing ones. The proposed analysis of linguistic and onomastic characteristics of these various communities in the Ottoman Empire reveals the spectrum of their varied cultural traditions. This lecture focuses on surnames used in that area.

**Bio**

**Alexander Beider** has written a series of important reference books dealing with the etymology of Ashkenazic and Sephardic surnames and Ashkenazic given names, all published by Avotaynu Inc. (1993-2019). His book *Origins of Yiddish Dialects*, published by Oxford University Press (2015), sheds light on the early stages of the development of Yiddish. Beider was born in Moscow (Russia) and currently lives in Paris (France).

**Survey of American Jewish Personal Names**

**Sarah Bunin Benor and Alicia Blumenfeld Chandler**

This talk presents the results of a recent survey of American Jewish Personal Names, using a snowball sample (i.e., invitation sent to a diverse group of respondents with a request to send the invitation to others) with 11,000+ responses. Respondents' names, as well as the names they selected for their children, are coded for name type, including distinctly Jewish (Hebrew and Yiddish words, Hebrew, and Yiddish versions of biblical characters’ names) or not distinctly Jewish (English and ambiguous Hebrew/English versions of biblical characters’ names and other names). These categories correlate strongly with personal characteristics, such as decade of birth, religiosity, ancestry, and time spent in Israel. We present quantitative analysis of whether respondents give their pets names that they consider Jewish, whether they and their children have separate secular and Jewish/Hebrew names, and the phenomenon of an alternative first name used for select service encounters, especially by people with rare names. Finally, Jewish and non-Jewish respondents rated 26 personal names, such as Eliana, Lila, Rebecca, Irving, Liam, and Rafi, on the likelihood that someone with that name is Jewish; these results are analyzed according to name type and respondent characteristics. The sample is compared to random samples of American Jews, limitations of the sample are addressed, and the results are discussed in historical and cultural context.

**Bio**

**Sarah Bunin Benor** is Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (Los Angeles) and Adjunct Professor in the University of Southern California Linguistics Department. Her books include *Becoming Frum: How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism* (Rutgers University Press, 2012) and *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps*(Rutgers University Press, 2020). Dr. Benor is founding co-editor of the *Journal of Jewish Languages* and creator of the [Jewish Language Website](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jewishlanguages.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7CAaron.Demsky%40biu.ac.il%7C93c011f1291546e00d3308d95eab6bc9%7C61234e145b874b67ac198feaa8ba8f12%7C1%7C0%7C637644912628001292%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=DSIpRXdSJem1PguD87UyDu%2FrJnSJ4IZXhdEqCJyIwKE%3D&reserved=0) and the [Jewish English Lexicon](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fjel.jewish-languages.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7CAaron.Demsky%40biu.ac.il%7C93c011f1291546e00d3308d95eab6bc9%7C61234e145b874b67ac198feaa8ba8f12%7C1%7C0%7C637644912628001292%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=yU8dgnWFI9iWKFVAZ8V58UXMbb42RNd4R1IBjY9IlUw%3D&reserved=0).

**Alicia Blumenfeld Chandler** is a doctoral student in Wayne State University’s Department of Sociology. Her research interests include intermarriage in the American Jewish community. She is the recipient of the Mary Cay Sengstock Diversity Scholarship. Prior to coming to Wayne State, she received her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 2004. She served as General Counsel for the Continuing Care Division of Trinity Health. She is also the co-founder of *Nu? Detroit* and the founder of Multifaith Life, LLC.

**Jerusalem – A Multi-cultural Toponym**

**Aaron Demsky**

Judaism, Christianity. and Islam share the belief that Jerusalem is holy space. In this paper I will review the various canonic and epigraphic spellings of this significant toponym tracing it from its Canaanite origin into its Hebrew, Greek and Arabic forms, considering how each culture and religion defined its holiness. This fundamental religious idea is rooted in the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint (230 BCE) transliterates Hebrew: *Yerushalayim* as ‘Ierousalem. Greek speaking Jews, like Josephus and New Testament authors explained the first element *‘Ierou* by the Greek *hieros, i.e., “holy”,* and produceda second Greek form `Hierosoluma, i.e., “Holy Salem”. The Hebrew name *Yerushalayim Haqqedoshah*, “Jerusalem the Holy” was stamped on Jewish coins, during the Great Revolt against Rome (66-70CE). After the Bar Cochba Revolt (132-35CE), Hadrian plowed over the city and changed its name to Aelia Capitolina. Christian Byzantine (ca. 600 CE) celebrated the city as *He Hagia Polis ‘Ierousalem,* i.e. “The Holy City of ‘Ierousalem”. After the Muslim conquest of the city (638 CE), and echoing the older names, it was called by the composite Arabic toponym *Īliyāʾ Medīnat bayt al-maqdis*, “Aelia, The City of the Temple”, which was shortened to *Al Quds* “The Holy”.

**Bio**

**Aaron Demsky** taught biblical history in the Israel and Golda Koschitsky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry, Bar Ilan University (1968-2007). He is the founder and director of the **Project for the Study of Jewish Onomastics** and edited the 5-volume series *These are the Names - Studies in Jewish Onomastics,* published by Bar-Ilan University Press and the 3-volume monograph series Studies in Jewish Onomastics, published by the University Press of Maryland and Penn State University Press.

**Suddenly, Out of the Text, a Pair of Eyes Looks out at Me**

**Ori Elon**

One of the most exciting moments in creating a literary character is when that person changes from a something to a somebody. When this exhilarating moment happens, a door opens and there is intimacy in meeting the other. Coming face to face with one’s creation. This is what happened when a character in a movie series ceases to be “an ultra-Orthodox adult who smokes and likes to eat” and becomes Shulem Shtisel. Giving him a name was the key in creating a literary character. For me, giving a name is one of the first steps in my writing a story even before developing the setting, or the story line or finding an actor for the part.

Why do I seek a name even before the character takes shape? Because when you have a name that character becomes a person one that engages with you. He or she becomes a living personality. I look at the page or at the screen and suddenly I see another person looking out at me who wants to tell his story.

**Bio**

**Ori Elon** is a noted Israeli author and filmmaker. He is the co-creator and writer (with Yehonatan Indursky) of the acclaimed television drama series Shtisel that is featured worldwide on Netflix. Shtisel has received the Israeli Television Academy Award for the Best Series and Best Screen play. This semester, Ori Elon is an invited guest lecturer at the University of California in San Diego.

**Understanding** **Name** **Lists in the Hebrew Bible**

**Shira J. Golani**

The Hebrew Bible contains hundreds of personal names~~,~~ most of which are found in lists, rather than in the biblical narrative. These lists are a literary genre in their own right, often supplementing the story. Sometimes, they are the story. Why are there so many lists of names scattered throughout the Bible? How do they enhance the narrative?

In this paper, I will discuss several examples of name lists,pointing out their literary functions, scribal use, social message and especially their affinity to list making in the ancient Near East. The paper will conclude with some insights on the contribution of these lists to modern studies of the world of the Bible, especially in understanding the history of ancient Israel and Judah.

**Bio**

**Shira J. Golani** teaches at the Department of Biblical Studies at Gordon Academic College of Education in Haifa, is a researcher at the Hebrew University Bible Project, and a teaching fellow at Bar-Ilan University International MA Program in Biblical Studies. She holds a PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has conducted postdoctoral research jointly at KU Leuven and the Orion Center of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her published articles focus on biblical historiography of the First Temple Period, the Bible in light of its ancient Near Eastern background, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. She co-edited a volume of *Dead Sea Discoveries* focusing on the Damascus Document, published in 2018.

**In the Name of Yiddish: Sholem Aleichem as Generator of New Meanings**

**Ber Kotlerman**

In May 1905, a short humoristic story named “Rasl” by the Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem was published in the Vilna Hebrew newspaper *Ha-Zeman*. A half year later, in December 1905, its original Yiddish version “*Die naygeboyrene* – The Newborn” was published in the Warsaw Yiddish newspaper *Der Veg*. The editors of *Der Veg* explained that the story was delayed for months because of the Tsar’s censorship. The official censor in Warsaw discerned in the name of the story’s protagonist, the young woman in labor Rasl, a hint at the Tsar’s “Russia”, and in the name of the midwife Rivah-Leah (spelled in Yiddish Rive-Leytse that sounds similar to *revolutsye,* “revolution”) – the failed 1905 Russian revolution, and in the names of the two aunts Anzy and Franzy – “England” and “France”, and finally in the name of the newborn baby K – an allusion to “Constitution”. Actually, the story illustrates Sholem Aleichem’s choice of humorous and meaningful names for his protagonists. Another example is the famous stockbroker Yaknehoz who’s name incorporates the order of the traditional Passover Kiddush-Havdalah ceremony, or the name Yaakov David, pronounced in Yiddish Yankev-Duvidl, which alludes to the American “Yankee Doodle”. We find in Sholem Aleichem’s writings, a certain number of Yiddish names created to mirror the domestic and world politics of the beginning of the 20th century. This paper will examine several such cases.

**Bio**

**Ber Kotlerman** is Professor in the Department of Literature of the Jewish People and holds the Sznajderman Chair in Yiddish Culture and Hasidism, Bar Ilan University. He is the author of a number of monographs in the field of Yiddish studies, among them *Broken Heart / Broken Wholeness: The Post-Holocaust Plea for Jewish Reconstruction of the Soviet Yiddish Writer Der Nister* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2017) and *Disenchanted Tailor in 'Illusion': Sholem Aleichem behind the Scenes of Early Jewish Cinema, 1913-16* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2014).

**In the Name of Sara(h) and Israel: The Lethal Role of Onomastic Legislation in Realizing the Holocaust**

**Iman M. Nick**

Even before the edict requiring the wearing of the infamous Yellow Star, the Nazis singled out their intended victims with a marker carried by each and every Jewish person born into the Reich: a personal name.  Using original clandestine National Socialist records buried in Germany’s archives, this lecture recounts how the Nazi utilized naming legislation to identify, isolate, deport, torture, and annihilate during the Shoah.  Sharing first-hand account of Holocaust survivors, this lecture also shares the inspiring stories of Jewish families who managed to escape this genocidal system through onomastic camouflage.  The talk concludes with a discussion of modern-day dangers posed by the recent resurgence of onomastic policies introduced by right-extremist political parties.

**Bio**

**I. M. Nick** is a US American sociolinguist and former lecturer in the English Department at the University of Cologne. She holds a PhD in English Linguistics (University of Freiburg: Germany), a MA in German Linguistics (University of Washington-Seattle: USA), a BA in German Language and Literature (University of Maryland: USA), a BSc in Clinical and Social Psychology (University of Maryland: USA), and a MSc in Forensic and Investigative Psychology (University of Liverpool: UK). In the Summer of 2010, she was awarded the German post-doctoral degree, the Habilitation, for her research in English Linguistics. She is the President of the Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics (GSFL), the Past President of the American Name Society (ANS), and the current Editor-in-Chief of NAMES, one of the world’s oldest and foremost scholarly journals for onomastic research.  Her most recent publication examines the naming policies of the Nazis during and after the Holocaust: *Personal Names, Hitler, and the Holocaust: A Socio-Onomastic Study of Genocide and Nazi Germany* (ISBN: 978-1498525978).

**Indexing Jewish Surnames in Cairo–The Facebook Tool**

**Jacob Rosen-Koenigsbuch**

Analyzing surnames is essential in any attempt or project to describe and

characterize a Jewish community. While in Europe and in North and South America vital records are accessible, this is not the case for the Levant, e.g., Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. The Jewish community in Egypt was expelled or fled after 1956 leaving behind documentation which is not available at the present time. The Jewish weeklies published between the 1920-1940s reported the communal life

and provided lists of donors and students in Jewish schools. But not everyone donated, and many did not attend Jewish schools. The various Egypt business directories list surnames of Jews in commerce and the free professions, but most local Jews did not belong to these categories.

Thus, one has to look for ways to overcome this challenging void. The social media, mainly Facebook offers a new and rapid way for crowd sourcing. The Jewish community in Cairo is a good example of how this new tool is instrumental in locating surnames which are not to be found in any other available source. Nowadays, most Jews with Egyptian roots are members of one of the seven Facebook groups, where they share documents and photos bringing to light surnames not mentioned in other venues. Such is the case for those Jewish children

who studied in non-Jewish schools; alumni lists appearing on Facebook disclose many Jewish surnames until the mid-1960s. One of the most important uses of the index for the social historian is determining the origin of the members of the Egyptian Jewish community before its forced departure. Since Jewish surnames are quite distinctive, it is easy to understand who is from North Africa, Baghdad, or Aleppo, or from the more expansive Ashkenazi or Sephardic lands. In this paper, I will illustrate this method.

**Bio**

**Jacob Rosen** was born in Poland in 1948 and immigrated to Israel at the age of 9. He served in the IDF between 1966-1969 and earned his B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies and Arabic from The Hebrew University. He was a career diplomat for 42 years and his last posting was Ambassador to Jordan between 2006-2009. He is the author of *Crossing the Jordan River: The Journeys of an Israeli Diplomat* (Atlanta, 2004). He is fluent in Polish, Dutch, English, Hebrew, and Arabic. At present he is an independent consultant on demographic mapping and a member of the executive committee of the "International Institute for Jewish Genealogy".