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# THESE ARE THE NAMES

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on his 80th Birthday*

edited by

Aaron Demsky



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## Some Reflections on the Names of the Jews of Kaifeng, China

Aaron Demsky

Ed Lawson's onomastic interests have led him to do research into the names of several non-Western Jewish communities. He has gathered and analyzed onomastic data on the Jews of Georgia, Cochín, and the Mountain Jews of Azerbaijan.<sup>1</sup> However, particular interest has been on how one's self-perceived identity influences the choice of a name during periods of change from a traditional setting to the modern age, with special emphasis on the period of 'aliyah to Israel.

Studies like these, focusing on well-defined communities, will eventually be the building blocks of a name book of the Jewish people. Such a desideratum in the form of a database of Jewish names would enable scholars to trace the religious and social history, including the migrational patterns, of the Jewish people. It is most important, therefore, to locate and document characteristic names in different communities set in particular time frameworks that may encompass several decades (as inscribed on gravestones) or several hundreds of years.<sup>2</sup>

One exotic community that has left us onomastic documentation,

1 See Edwin Lawson's list of publications in this volume. Note also his article with Li Zhonghua, "Generation Names in China: Past, Present and Future", *Names* 50/3 (2002), pp. 163–172.

2 Two recent publications illuminating the shorter and longer periods, respectively, are D. Amit and M.E. Stone, "Report of the Survey of a Medieval Jewish Cemetery in Eghegis, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia", *JJS*, 53/1 (2002), pp. 66–106; A. Beider, *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names — Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation and Migrations* (Bergenfield: NJ, 2001); see also Beider's paper in this volume.

which has not been fully analyzed, is that of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng.<sup>3</sup> With no pretense of being a sinologist, I readily acknowledge my indebtedness to Ronald J. Williams, Rudolph Lowenthal, and especially to Donald Daniel Leslie for their groundbreaking work on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

### Historic and Cultural Overview

There is still a certain amount of deliberation regarding the date of the arrival of Jews in Kaifeng, China. The main historic sources for the Kaifeng community are the legible commemorative stelae that were erected in the synagogue courtyard. These stelae date from 1489, 1512, 1663, and 1679. Two of them (1512 and 1679) mention the Jews arriving during the Han Dynasty (212 BCE–220 CE), which has been taken as alluding to an early migration in the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> My thanks to Prof. Xu Xin, Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University for inviting me to participate in "The International Symposium on the History of Jewish Diaspora in China" held in May 2002 in Nanjing and Kaifeng. My paper analyzed the personal names found in Hebrew script in the Memorial Book, and is the basis of the third part of the present article. For literature on Kaifeng Jewry, see W.C. White, *Chinese Jews — A Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'ai-feng Fu* (2d edn. Toronto, 1966); D.D. Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews — The Jewish Community of Kaifeng* (Leiden, 1972); D.D. Leslie, *The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Jewish Community of Kaifeng* (Belconnen, 1984); M. Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries — The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire* (Philadelphia, 1980); I. Eber, *Chinese and Jews — Encounters between Cultures* (Jerusalem, 2002), pp. 42–61 (Hebrew); Xu Xin, *The Jews of Kaifeng, Chinese History, Culture and Religion* (Jersey City, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> R.J. Williams, "The Hebrew Names of the Codex", in White, *Chinese Jews*, pp. 75–98; R. Lowenthal, "The Nomenclature of Jews in China" (first published 1944), in H. Kublin (ed.), *Studies of the Chinese Jews — Selections from Journals East and West* (New York, 1971), pp. 53–84; Leslie, *Survival*, Ch.12, pp. 119–129.

<sup>5</sup> The 1663 stele places the Jews' arrival during the Chou Dynasty (1122–256 BCE). This seems to be the result of the learned gentile author's confusion as regards the premise found in the other stelae, that Abraham and Moses, the



Another opinion claims that the Kaifeng synagogue was first built in 1163 CE, which establishes its beginnings during the Sung Dynasty (960–1279), which was a period of international commerce. However, the fact that the earliest existing inscription was written in 1489 and reflects the internal policies of the founder of the Ming dynasty might indicate that the Kaifeng community was founded at this later period.<sup>6</sup> Then again, there is a Persian Jewish document that dates Jewish presence in China to the 800s.<sup>7</sup>

The Jews of Kaifeng were cut off very early from the main centers of world Jewry in the Middle East and Europe. They had to rely on their own resources in order to maintain their particular identity in China. These resources included the writing and reading of Torah scrolls, Bible, and liturgy. Among the merchants and traders were also those proficient enough to be rabbis, teachers, Torah scribes, and ritual slaughterers. Isolated as they were, it was these bearers of the tradition who maintained the particular Jewish identity of the group for hundreds of years.

While they adhered to rabbinic practice and had knowledge of aggadic material, especially the religious awakening of the patriarch Abraham, we do not know if they had in their possession rabbinic texts such as the Mishnah and Talmud. They authored or invited documents in the form of commemorative stelae written in Chinese, describing their origins as far back as Adam and the first Patriarch Abraham. These texts were their foundation stories, relating an abbreviated biblical history and describing the semblance between their religious beliefs and those of the Chinese.

Today it is clear that, historically, these Jews were part of a larger migration of Muslim merchants who had originated in Persia<sup>8</sup> or

founding fathers of Judaism, according to their contemporary calculations, lived during the time of the Chou Dynasty. See White, *op. cit.*, Pt. 2, p. 67.

6 Yin Gang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, presented this theory in an unpublished paper, at the above-mentioned Conference held in May 2002.

7 D.S. Margoulioth, "An Early Judaeo-Persian Document from Khotan, in the Stein collection. With other Early Persian Documents", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 55 (1903), pp. 735–760.

8 The latest piece of evidence is the observation, by Prof. Daniel Sperber, that

Bukhara, travelled along the Silk Route across Asia into the Middle Kingdom, ending up in the North Sung dynastic capital of Kaifeng. Over the years these Jews had taken as concubines and converted local Chinese women, which in the long run weakened their Jewish family traditions. By 1605, when the Jesuit missionary Mateo Ricci, the first Westerner to document a meeting with a Kaifeng Jew, met with the scholarly Ai Tien, the Jews had become racially Chinese. The upward mobility of some of these Jews in their pursuance of a career in the Chinese civil service and military may have further increased the process of assimilation — certainly among the more talented scions of Kaifeng Jewry. This career choice demanded a proficiency in Confucianism and a loyalty to its values.<sup>9</sup> The government service and the required deportment and eating habits, as well as the necessity of serving away from one's hometown, further increased assimilation.

From the twelfth century until the early 1800s there seems to have been a viable Jewish community in Kaifeng. One of the major disasters that it incurred was the flooding of the city in 1642, when they probably lost most of their books, including parts of the Bible. The communal records describe the saving of one of the Torah scrolls out of the thirteen that they possessed. In the later period, they could no longer produce religious scholars, teachers, and laymen versed in the Hebrew language and religious practice. The community's Torah scrolls, prayer books, religious artifacts, commemorative stelae, and the synagogue land itself were sold off. They succumbed to the benevolent process of assimilation through intermarriage and upward mobility, so that today we find only the

the Jews in Kaifeng used to read the *haftarah* from the Prophets during the Sabbath *minhah* (afternoon) service, and that Rav Hai Gaon (939–1038) noted that this discontinued custom was still practiced in his day by some peripheral Persian Jewish communities, D. Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael*, Vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 1995), pp. 69–70 (Hebrew).

- 9 W.R. Abraham, *The Role of Confucianism and Jewish Educational Values in the Assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, Supplemented by Western Observer Accounts, 1605–1985*, Doctoral Dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University (New York, 1989).



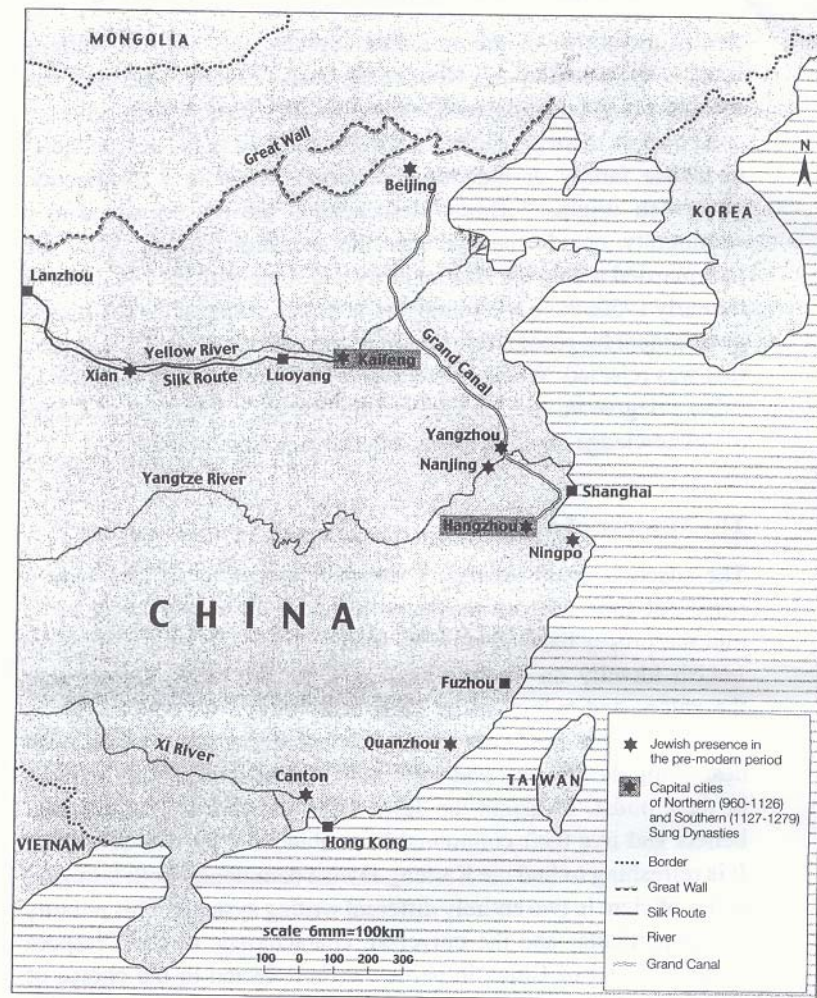
cloudy memories of the so-called "descendants" of the Kaifeng Jews — those individuals who, on the basis of family traditions and specific patrilineal surnames, claim that they have Jewish roots.

At present there are said to be several hundred such "descendants" in whose family or individual memories there is a recollection of Jewish origins.<sup>10</sup> These "descendants" are not organized as a community, nor do they practice the ancestral religion. Most are intermarried within the Han majority and some with the Muslims. In the early 1950s there were supposed attempts to appeal to the Chinese government for recognition as a minority of *Youtai*, i.e. Jews, a plea that was rejected. Whether they will ever be recognized depends to a large degree on the readiness of the People's Republic of China to acknowledge another, albeit minuscule, ethnic minority.

#### **The Message of Names**

The success of any tolerated Jewish Diaspora to survive over a period of time may be measured by the ability of these Jews to find the proper balance between maintaining their own distinctive Jewish identity on the one hand and, on the other, assimilating the values and culture of an alien host culture. Of course, this is true only if the host country is not pursuing a policy directed at destroying the physical and cultural life of the Jewish people living in their midst. In China the Jews were allowed to practice their beliefs and live their communal life unhindered by anti-Semitism. It is refreshing to find the Kaifeng Jewish community both bilingual and proficient in two entirely different writing systems. This polarity of the particular and the universal, characteristic of the Diaspora in general and of China in particular, is reflected in the choice of personal names, in the adoption of family names, and in how the Jews as a collective wish to be called in the host country.

10 The latest up-to-date research on the "descendants" is being conducted by Zhang Quinhong, Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University, Kaifeng. She delivered an unpublished paper entitled "The Descendants of Kaifeng Jews in the 20th Century" at the above-mentioned Conference, May 2002.



Eastern China



The purpose of this paper is to focus on these three onomastic aspects of Kaifeng Jewry. The first is the creation of the unusual and unique communal name "The Sect of the Pluckers of the Sinews". The second is the custom of taking family names and its significance. The third is an analysis of the first names that were written in Hebrew characters, as they impinge upon the historical questions of the origin and cultural makeup of this small Jewish entity.

### **Communal Names**

One of the more interesting facets of this miniscule Diaspora, that may not have numbered at any time more than a few thousand individuals, is the different names by which it was known in Dynastic China.<sup>11</sup> These names, reflecting communal identity, were either proposed by the Jews or given by the Chinese. They are documented in the synagogue stelae written in Chinese between 1489–1679, and especially in the accounts of the early Jesuit missionaries and other visitors from 1605 onward.

The Jews called themselves by different names. There is *Yi-ci-le-ye*, 賜乐业, the Chinese transliteration of "Israelite" found in the stelae. Two frequently repeated names noted by the missionaries are "The Blue Hat Muslims" and *Tiao-Jin-Jiao*, 挑筋教, "The Sect that Plucks out the Sinews". The latter two terms are ethnic markers, one with regard to dress and the other concerning preparation of food. Plucking out the sinews refers to the biblical-based injunction to remove the femoral nerve from slaughtered bovine animals by specially trained butchers (see Gen. 32:33).<sup>12</sup> As is obvious from

11 For a popular presentation of this phenomenon see Xu Xin, *Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng* (Hoboken, 1995), pp. 29–38.

12 It should be mentioned that among Ashkenazic Jews this greater expertise in removing the sciatic nerve is noted in such occupational surnames as Menaq(k)er (Hebrew), Treiber (Yiddish), and the abbreviation Shub (<Hebrew: *shohet ubodeq*, "slaughterer and examiner"), as compared to more common surnames like Shohet and Schechter for a standard ritual slaughterer or butcher.

the latter two names, these religious or social designations were used as a means of distinguishing the Jews from the large *Hui Hui*, 回回, i.e. Muslim, community. The first — "The Blue Hat Muslims" — was an outward sign intended for the Chinese majority. The second — "Pluckers of the Sinews" — was also an attempt to differentiate the Jews from the other non-pork-eating religion. But for whom was this distinction made? It is certainly not a prominent characteristic of Judaism. Nor is it a practice more apparent to the outsider than to the insider. It seems to me that the importance of the choice of this unique communal name was intended more for the Jewish community than for the Chinese. It is clearly a means of emphasizing their own identity as distinct from that of the other monotheistic minority.

Both of these terms indicate that, for purposes of self-identification, Jews had to distinguish themselves from Muslims. This should be obvious from the fact that these Jewish merchants originating from Persia or Bukhara were part of a larger movement and immigration of Muslim traders. Both groups were Western in appearance and race — at least in the first generations. The Jews spoke and wrote some Persian, though in the Hebrew script. The synagogue inscriptions mention Arabic and Persian terms for the Jewish hierarchy like *wu-ssu-ta* < *ustad* ("master") or *man-la* < *mullah*. Furthermore, several personal names seem to be of Arabic origin, e.g. Yen-tu-la < Abdullah, Halfon, and possibly at least one other (Job/Ayyub). Similarly, some female names like Nur, Shams, Qamar, Mubaraki, and Dawlat perhaps indicate the continuing influence of Arabic or Persian speakers on the Jews, or evidence of intermarriage. However, they might also indicate the conservative nature of female names in the vernacular. For the Chinese, it must have been the customs of not eating pork, the main meat staple of the common Chinese diet, and that of circumcision that made it impossible for them to distinguish between the two monotheistic religions. Furthermore, the adherents of both religions prayed several times a day facing the West, and read from scriptures written in an alphabetic script. Of the two names — *Tiao-Jin-Jiao* and *Yi-ci-le-ye* — the Jews chose the more enigmatic and unique

former name, "Pluckers of the Sinews", as a communal marker, I believe — primarily in their own eyes — from the Muslims.<sup>13</sup>

### **Family Names**

Family names are generally a late phenomenon among Western Jews. Taking a recognized family name indicates a formal, perhaps legal, status like citizenship in the host society. In the modern period it is a means of registration for civil purposes of taxation and conscription initiated by the host nation, as was the case for Eastern European Ashkenazic Jewry in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. For Sephardic Jewry, on the other hand, it was a self-initiated means of strengthening communal identification and support along geographic lines in the wake of the expulsions from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 and 1496.

With regard to surnames, Kaifeng Jewry preceded their co-religionists elsewhere by hundreds of years. Their patriarchal Chinese family or clan names followed local practice, and are remembered as an act of a benevolent ruler welcoming the Jews into Chinese society.<sup>14</sup> There seem to have been more clan names over the centuries, but the seven mentioned below are the most famous and long-lasting.<sup>15</sup> These names are still to be found among the descendants of Kaifeng Jewry, who generally recognize each other through these appellations.

It is noteworthy that, in some of the synagogue stelae, family names were deliberately chiseled out — probably in an attempt to conceal the identity of Jewish families during times of political turmoil or threatened danger. The erased names are known from

13 This was clearly stated in the Memoirs of Gabriel Brotier in his 1781 essay based on earlier Jesuit reports: "The Chinese call the Jews who live among them Hui-hui... But among themselves the Jews call themselves T'iao-chin-Chiao, which is the Religion of those who cut out the tendons...", White, *Chinese Jews*, Pt. 1, p. 51.

14 Xu Xin, *Legends*, pp. 18–24.

15 The 1489 Inscription lists 17 surnames and adds "in all, seventy or more clans", White, *Chinese Jews*, Pt. 2, p. 11.



copies of the originals made by the missionaries, probably by Père Gozani, who discovered the inscriptions in 1702. Even in this act we see that the function of the surname is as a means of maintaining administrative contact with the host society.

The following is a list of the seven family or clan names as they are transliterated in modern Chinese Pinyin (phonetic symbols), the old spelling in parentheses, and how six of them were written in Hebrew in the Memorial Book dated to the 1670s, as well as in the Chinese characters.

Li	李	Ai	愛
Shi (Shih) ("Stone")	石	Zhang (Chang)	張
Zhao (Chao)	趙	Gao (Kao) ("Tall")	高
Jin (Chin) ("Gold")	金		

### First Names

A new look at the onomastic data, especially of given names, will surely shed light on historic aspects of Kaifeng Jewry that are not explicit in the written sources. First, it will give us an idea of one means used for maintaining their Jewish identity by the common practice of giving Hebrew names. Second, the names indicate the centrality of the Bible not only in communal ritual but also in its impact on the individual members of the community. Then again the Arabic/Persian names, primarily among the women, and not necessarily those that converted, point to the persistent contact with their Muslim neighbors.

A most important document for the history of this community is a manuscript now called *The Memorial Book of the Dead*, written in Hebrew and Chinese characters, concluded in the 1670s with genealogical records going back to the 15th century.<sup>16</sup> The book

16 W.C. White and R. J. Williams, "Codex in Hebrew and Chinese from the K'aifeng Synagogue", in White, *Chinese Jews*, Pt. 3, pp. 28–98; Leslie, *Survival*, esp. Ch. 14. In February 2003, I examined the manuscript in the Rare Book Room of the Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, Ohio. I wish to thank Ms. Arnona Rudavsky, Public Services Librarian, and her

mentions deceased male and female members of the community known either by their Hebrew or their Chinese names. The Chinese names remain to be studied by someone competent in the language. A small hanging sign that looks like a non-formal Hebrew letter 'ain, unlike the formal 'ain in the names, follows each entry. It may be no more than a dividing mark. If not, I venture a guess that it may stand for a term like *nuho/ah* 'Eden, i.e. ["His/her resting place in] E[den]", by abbreviating the name Eden.<sup>17</sup>

I have analyzed the names written in Hebrew characters into categories of Torah names (40 male; 12 female), biblical names found in the Prophets and Writings (42 male; 6 female), Late Hebrew (10 male; 0 female), Non-Hebrew (4 male; 12 female), and Undeciphered names (25 male; 7 female). Some names seem to have resulted from dialectical corruption (cf. Btl'l for Bezalel or Betuel), or scribal errors (cf. Bynmyn<Bnymyn, p. 47). It is obvious that the Bible has been the dominant influence on the choice of names. So much so that unusual names like that of the chieftain Shedeur (Num. 1:5) were chosen. An example of Torah influence on name-giving practice can be found in the fact that a certain Moses the Physician followed the order of the sons of Jacob in choosing the names Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Judah, Issachar for his five sons.<sup>18</sup> The Chinese lineage of some of the women with Hebrew names, who were probably converted to Judaism, was noted with the addition of the term *bat Adam*, "the daughter of Adam", a term derived from the Bible (Gen. 6: 4).

From this corpus of names we can conclude that the Kaifeng

staff for the many courtesies extended to me at that time. In the addendum I have included selected Hebrew forms of these personal names as they appear in the manuscript. The page numbers in brackets were added to the manuscript by a modern hand.

<sup>17</sup> The abbreviation נע is found on tombstones elsewhere. According to M. Beit-Arie, the abbreviation is first found in Hebrew colophons in a manuscript from Basra, written in 1020 CE, Amit and Stone, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> On: רבי ראובן, שמעון, לוי (!), יהודה, יששכר: משה הרפה (!), p. 43. A certain Buzi of the Gao clan had four sons: Reuven, Simeon, Levi, and Issachar (p. 48); while a Moses of the Chao clan had Reuben, Simeon, and Levi (p. 53).

community derived its inspiration for personal names primarily from the Bible. For the most part they did not create new Hebrew names but, rather, drew upon the weekly Torah reading and their knowledge of the Prophets and Writings. There is some evidence of papponymy, that is, naming a child after a grandparent, a custom that generally limits the reservoir of names.

The female names are always of interest. Since feminine names generally retain the vernacular traditions, they shed light on the history of the community, especially migrational patterns and contact with non-Israelite cultures. I raise the question above, whether these non-Hebrew names indicate an influx of converts and therefore do not describe the original Jewish makeup of the community. I think a means of settling this issue can be found in the variety of names of those women whose lineage is presented as *bat 'Adam*, which is considered a sure sign of conversion. There are also a small number of men with Chinese personal names bearing the notation *ben 'Adam* (cf. lines 240, 259).

A perusal of the *bat 'Adam* group shows that many had been given biblical names. For the most part, women with vernacular names in Arabic, Persian, and Chinese had biblical patronymics. In the Ai clan we can even note that many of the women with vernacular names had fathers with Hebrew names. Some extreme examples are where all the daughters had such names: Dawlat and Dosath daughters of Elijah (p. 71), Naz and Dw'myn daughters of Hananiah (line 434), and a Hillel (line 424) who had four daughters all bearing vernacular names — Dosath, Krtr (perhaps Keturah?), a second Dosath,<sup>19</sup> and Dw'myn. We can only conclude that the Arabic and Persian names were traditional to the Kaifeng community, and further corroborate its Persian origin and continued contact with the Muslims.

Parenthetically, I may add that the Late Hebrew names, like those of the illustrious Akivah and Meir (2nd century CE), would support

<sup>19</sup> There is another example of two children in the same family with the same name: Moses, Aaron, Moses *Smn*, sons of Ezekiel. Perhaps the enigmatic *smn* is an adjective of some sort, even though it was a personal name in the Talmudic period?



a post-Talmudic date for the Kaifeng nomenclature, precluding a Jewish arrival during the Han Dynasty. Furthermore, it is further corroboration of rabbinic traditions which in any case are supported by their religious practice, especially by their liturgy and, among other things, the celebration of such a rabbinically-ordained holiday as *Simhat Torah*.

However, it is the appearance of a few vernacular, Arabic names like Abdullah and Halfon, and especially the Arabic and Persian female names, that corroborates the general assumption that the Kaifeng Jewish community arrived during the Sung Dynasty. With the aid of Dr. Michal Biran, of the Departments of Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies, and East Asian Studies, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, I am able to suggest some new interpretations of several of the undeciphered names. As I have noted above, it is the feminine names that tend to be in the vernacular and to preserve the historic memory of origins that go back hundreds of years.

In conclusion, the study of the onomastic complexion of Kaifeng Jewry is based on varied source material, such as the synagogue stelae engraved in stone, the reports of early Western visitors on fact-finding missions, and the communal *Memorial Book of the Dead*. Onomastic studies shed new light on how the Kaifeng Jewish community regarded itself. In particular, their desire and method of maintaining a distinctive Jewish identity by returning to the Bible for the inspiration and choice of most of their personal names, as well as their collective handle, are clear indications of how this unique Diaspora strove to survive. Moreover, it is the clear voice of the common man and woman speaking of how they identified with their Jewish heritage.

### **Addendum**

The following is a list of personal names as found in the Memorial Book. This list is supplemented, as indicated by the plus sign, by transliterated names that appear in the synagogue inscriptions written in Chinese characters. The list is divided into male and female names, each further categorized into 1) Torah names; 2)

Names found in the Prophets and Writings; 3) Late Hebrew; 4) Non-Hebrew; 5) Undeciphered names.

### *Male Names*<sup>20</sup>

#### 1. Torah

Aaron® + inscription 1512: A-ho-lien; Ho-lien <sup>21</sup> אהרן (p. 89)	Israel + inscriptions 1489, 1512, 1663a: Yi-tz'u-lo-yeh
Abraham® Abram + inscriptions 1489, 1512, 1663a: A-wu-lo-han; 1512, 1679: Lo-han; vertical tablets: A-lo <sup>21</sup>	Issachar®
Adam + inscriptions 1489, 1512, 1663a, 1679: A-tan (=P'an-Ku)	Ithamar אתמר (pp. 27, 82)
Amram	Jacob® + inscription 1512: Ya-ho-chueh-wu; Chueh-wu
Asher	Joseph®
Benjamin בנימין; בנימין (p. 79)	Joshua® + inscription 1512: Yueh-shu-wo; Shu-wo
Bethuel בתואל (p. 25)	Judah®
BTL'L® [I suggest reading Bezalel, though Betuel is also possible.] בתלאל (pp. 27, 28)	Lael
Eber® עבר (p. 72)	Levi + inscription 1489; Lie-wei לוי; לוי (p. 43)
Eldad, Elidad® אלדר (p. 38)	Machir מכיר (p. 34)
Eleazar®	Manasseh
Eliezer®	Moses® + inscriptions 1489, 1512, 1663a, vertical tablets: Mie-she, Mo-she משה (p. 83)
Ephraim יפרים (pp. 27, 58)	Naphtali
Gad אפרים (pp. 66, 73)	Nemuel נמואל (p. 73)
Gershon®	Noah only in inscriptions 1512, 1663a, 1679, vertical tablets: Nu-wo/wa/kua
Hoshea הושע (p. 40)	Phineas פינחס (p. 27)
Isaac® + inscription 1512: Yi-ssu-ho-ko; Ho-ke	Putiel פוטאל (p. 35)
	Reuben
	Reuel

<sup>20</sup> The ® sign indicates that some of the bearers of that name also held the title "Rabbi". Those names that appear in Chinese characters on the synagogue stelae are given with their Chinese transliteration, plus the date of the inscription in which they are found.

<sup>21</sup> Note that when the name is repeated in the same inscription it is abbreviated by leaving off the initial syllable. Compare Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joshua, etc.

Shedeur	שדיאר (p. 25)	Neria	
Simeon	שמועון, שמעון (p. 53)	Nethaniah	
Sinai only in inscription 1489:		Obadiah	עבדיה (pp. 29, 30)
His-na. [The place-name]		Samuel®	
Uziel		Sarshalom	טרשלם (p. 38)
Zebulun		Shaphat	
		Shemaiah	
2. Prophets/Writing		Shobiah	שוכיה (p. 31)
Abdiel Abdiel®	עבדיאל (pp. 33, 34, 77)	Solomon	שלמו (pp. 34, 48, 49, 62)
Adonijah	אדוניה (pp. 33, 77)		שלמה (pp. 61, 62)
Asah	עשה (p. 50)	Tobiah	
Abishai®		Zadok	
Abner	אבנר (pp. 26, 35)	Zedekiah	
Baruch			
Buzi		3. Late Hebrew	
Cyrus (King of Persia)	כוריש (p. 75)	Akibah® (Mishnaic)	עקיבה (p. 25)
Daniel		Berachah	ברכה (pp. 30, 37, 61)
David	דוד (pp. 32, 71)		כרכה (p. 62)
Elijah	אליה (p. 25)	Bethel	
Elisha		Hayyim	
Elkanah	אלקנם (p. 30)	Jeberech	
Ezekiel®		Jinnon®	[This name is based on rabbinic tradition for the name of the Messiah (TB Sanhedrin 98b)] ינון (p. 47)
Ezra® + inscriptions 1489, 1512:		Meir® (Mishnaic)	
Ai-tzu-la		Miphtael	מיפתאל (p. 34)
Hananiah		Simhah®	שמחה (pp. 39, 40, 41, 46)
Heber	חבר (p. 72)	Tashubel	תשובאל (p. 35)
Hezekiah			
Hillel		4. Non Hebrew Arabic/Persian	
Isaiah®	ישעיה (p. 30); אשעיה (p. 47)	Abdullah inscriptions 1489, 1663, 1679:	Yen-tu-la
Jedidiah	אדיריה (pp. 30, 44)	Halfon®	חלפון (pp. 30, 31)
	ידידיה (p. 37)	Hayyal	חיל (p. 76)
Jehiah®	יחיה (p. 44)	Shaddi®	"Happy" [This name was previously identified as the divine name Shaddai! Note the feminine form Shadd (below) and the relative popularity of this name and its Hebrew equivalent Simhah.] שאדי (pp. 31, 33, 43)
Jeremiah®	ירמיה (p. 28)		
	ירמיה (p. 36)		
Jesse	ישי (p. 59)		
Job	איוב (p. 61); יאוב (p. 72)		
Johanan	יוחנן (p. 34)		
Mattithiah	מתיתיהו (pp. 55, 58)		
Mordecai®	מורדכי (pp. 30, 49)		
Nathan®			
Nathanel			



## 5. Undeciphered

Abadim [perhaps Obadiah?]

עבדים (p. 44)  
 Abariah עבריה (pp. 30, 32)  
 Adbr אדבר (p. 53)  
 Adurah עדורה (p. 53)  
 Ahib אהיב (p. 32)  
 DNBYH דנביה (p. 31)  
 Enchael [Perhaps 'Ainka'el i.e.  
 "None like God" (Deut 33:26);  
 cf. Michael, i.e., "Who is like  
 God?"] אין כאל (p. 33)

גירה GYRH  
 חמחני HMMHY (p. 46)  
 Ikkui עיכוי (pp. 30, 31)  
 Izzun עיצון (pp. 30, 31)  
 K'HL [The name is found after that  
 of R. Shmuel כאחל, Shmuel  
 and maybe a descriptive term  
 derived from the Arabic *kakhl*  
 "black", "dark eyes".] כאחל

מזיר MZYR (p. 71)  
 Periah [Perhaps Peliah?]

פריה (pp. 31, 32) Ryhb ריהב (p. 72)  
 ריקנר Ryqnr (p. 36)

Salmuth שגניר SGNYR (p. 26)  
 Shebuthon שבותן (p. 46)

Shlpdym, Shlpwdym שלפודים (p. 82); שלפודים (pp. 27, 44)

Smn (?) [Perhaps an adjective as  
 Williams suggests op. cit.,  
 p. 93] סמן

Wdr יחנאתן [Perhaps Yhwntn?] (p. 44)  
 Yhn'tn

Zedaiah צדיה (pp. 31, 33)  
 Zimmenel

## Female Names

## 1. Torah

Asenath  
 Bilhah בילהה (p. 74)  
 Deborah  
 Jocheved  
 Keturah (קתורה) (!) (p. 74)  
 Leah  
 Miriam  
 Rachel  
 Rebecca  
 Sarah  
 Zilpah זילפה (p. 74)  
 Zipporah צפרה (p. 65)

## 2. Biblical Names

Esther  
 Hannah  
 Peninah פנינה (p. 65)  
 Saraph [A type of angel. Also a male  
 name I Chr. 4:22] שרף (p. 71)  
 Shelomoth [Perhaps a feminine  
 form of Shlomo (Solomon),  
 and compare Shelomith].  
 שלמות, שלמות (pp. 73, 76)

Zeruiah

## 3. Late Hebrew — None

## 4. Non-Hebrew

## Arabic

Mwbrky "Blessed" מוברכי (p. 74)  
 Nur "Light"  
 Qmr "Moon"  
 Salmuth "Dark (complexion)".  
 [While written with a *samekh* it  
 could be derived from the root  
*sade lamed mem*.]

סלמות (pp. 72, 76)  
 Shemesh Hebrew for Shams "Sun"

**Persian**

'rzw Arzu "Hope", "Desire" [Dr.  
Michal Biran = MB]

ארוז (p. 73)

Dwlt Dawlah "Good fortune",  
"Victory" [MB]

Dor Dur "Pearl" [MB] [See TB

Megillah 12a] דור (p. 74)

Dordanah Durdanah "One Pearl"  
[MB] דורדנה (p. 77)

Dosath Dust? "Friend", "Lover"  
[MB]

N'z Naz "Glory" [MB] נאז (p. 73)

Sh'd Shad "Happy" [MB]  
שאד (p. 73)

**5. Undeciphered**

Dw'myn דואמין (p. 72)

Gyra גירה (p. 75)

Krtr [Perhaps misspelled Keturah?]

כרט (p. 72)

Me'ah מאה (p. 78)

Mnywr [Perhaps from Arabic:  
Munira] מניור (p. 75)

Twrkח תורכה (p. 72)

Zhdח זחרה (p. 71)

**Ten most common male names**

Joseph 37 (4@)

Judah 30 (7@)

Moses 30 (4@)

Joshua 29 (2@)

Aaron 22 (2@)

Mordecai 21 (7@)

Issachar 16 (2@)

Jacob 15 (6@)

Samuel 14 (3@)

Simcha 14 (3@)

**Six most common female names:**

Leah 10

Esther 8

Dosath 7

Peninah 4

Sarah 4

Zipporah 4

## תוכן העניינים

### חלק עברי

ט	מבוא
טו	טל אילן: ר' יוסי תלמיד ר' עקיבא ור' יוסי בן חלפתא
כג	לאה בורנשטיין-מקובצקי: השמות הפרטיים של יהודי שאלוניקי בדורות האחרונים (על פי רשימות גטין, חליצות ומצבות)
נא	אלישבע הכהן: מבורך השם ומבורך כבודו – על חידת שם מן המאה השתים-עשרה לכבוד השר מבורך
סא	אדמיאל קוסמן: על השימוש בשם הגיבור כאמצעי ספרותי בסיפור התלמודי בהקשרים מגדריים – הסיפור על מר עוקבא בבבלי כתובות סז ע"ב
צה	יוסף ריבלין: מדרשי שמות בתורת הגר"א
קיג	תקצירים בעברית למאמרים באנגלית
קכא	מפתח השמות



תדפיס מתוך

# ואלה שמות

מחקרים באוצר השמות היהודיים

כרך רביעי

לכבוד פרופ' אדווין ד' לאוסון  
בהגיעו לגבורות

בעריכת

אהרן דמסקי



הוצאת אוניברסיטת בר-אילן, רמת-גן