Perspectives of Jewish Onomastics

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First of all, we should start with terms that define the precise limits of topics considered in this paper. Onomastics is a study of names of persons or places. The paper mainly deals with the former; the place names B a topic different in many aspects B will be considered briefly only in the last section.
In principle, one can study different categories of names of persons such as:

- given names (forenames, first names)
- surnames (family names)
- nicknames (sobriquets)
- names of literary personages.

Only the two first categories are discussed in this paper. Moreover, when speaking about names of persons, one can take their various aspects into consideration. Here we will speak about the etymology only, while symbolic, social, political, religious, and different other aspects are totally ignored. With this narrow scope, onomastics clearly becomes a branch of linguistics because etymological problems for any word generally speaking (and therefore for a name too) are of a linguistic nature and the methods should be linguistic: a researcher proceeds to the analysis of semantics, morphology and phonetics. On the other hand, onomastics is related closely to several other domains of human knowledge. The first is history. The study of Jewish names cannot be separated from the investigations of topics shared with historiography such as migrations, occupations, languages spoken, relations with non-Jewish neighbors, legal situation of Jews etc. Another domain is genealogy. Since a large number of surnames are relatively recent being about two centuries old, the detailed study of genealogical sources can shed light to the etymology of certain categories of surnames. The opposite is also true. The results of etymological research in the domain of Jewish names can help genealogists, providing them with important clues to their family histories.

1. Jewish Given Names

The current scholarly coverage of given names used by Jews in different countries during various time periods is far from homogeneous. Numerous scholarly studies exist that deal with names mentioned in the Bible. Those used on late antiquity are discussed in the dictionary by Tal Ilan (2002). Names used by Oriental Jews during the Middle Ages are discussed by Goitein, without details, in his monumental study of the Mediterranean society based on the materials found in Cairo Geniza (1967-93). A high quality work on names used by Jews in both the northern and southern parts of the medieval France was written by Simon Seror (1989). A detailed description of various aspects of the development of the traditional Ashkenazic corpus of given names, together with a comprehensive dictionary of appellations used in Ashkenazic communities from the Middle Ages until our days, can be found in Beider 2001.

The most striking lack is that of any scholarly book of Sephardic given names. First of all, it is mandatory to compile a comprehensive list of appellations used in Sephardic communities. This list could be in a large extent based on published materials including collections of documents and indexes to comprehensive historical studies concerning Spain, Portugal, Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Numerous first names are also found in the dictionary of Judeo-Spanish by Joseph Nehama (1977). The list of Jewish names mentioned in Arabic literature compiled by Moritz Steinschneider (1897-1900) can also be helpful here. Once the corpus of Sephardic given names is established, one should proceed to the etymological analysis, properly speaking, that is:

- to understand the source words
- to determine the areas where and the time period when these appellations were used by Jews

- to analyze the phonetic changes that various names underwent due to either phonetic shifts on the same territories or to the migrations to new regions
- to establish whether names were taken from Jewish sacred texts, created by Jews or borrowed by them from their Gentile neighbors, and in the last case, to find the most plausible reasons of this borrowing
- to study the morphologic structure of hypocoristic and pet forms of various given names. Here, it would be, for example, necessary to analyze Arabic and Berber patterns of creating such categories of appellations that were also used by Jews in North Africa. Being familiar and expressive, they are rarely mentioned in written sources.

To tell it more briefly, what is really needed is a book somewhat similar in its approach and its scope to Beider 2001 but focused on Sephardic communities.

2. Jewish Surnames

2.1 Ashkenazic Surnames

Much was done during the last thirteen years and the scientific methodology introduced in this scholarly domain allows to anticipate the domains that are to be covered in the future. No systematic study was ever done until now for three major areas.

First, this concerns all the territories B except for Galicia - that during the 19th century belonged to the Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) Empire. This mainly encompasses such important centers of the Jewish culture as Austria properly, Bohemia-Moravia, and Hungary. Surely, numerous family names used during the last two centuries on Czech territories were already used in Prague during the 15th-18th centuries and therefore they were studied already in Beider 1995. Similarly, in many aspects surnames adopted in the aforementioned provinces are similar or even identical to those assigned in Galicia, the province where the Jewish population of the empire was most populous. Nevertheless, surnames limited only to other regions exists as well, as do exist a number of appellations used during the 19th century in Bohemia and Moravia that were unknown in Prague during the three preceding centuries. During the last years, several sources were published that allow to compile a comprehensive list of surnames used by Jewish families in Czech lands at the end of the 18th century. They are described in detail in Müller 2005. The next step would be to establish the etymologies of names that appeared for the first time immediately before that time, that is, just after the general law of 1787. At a great extent, this can be done comparing these names to those used by Czech and German Christians, as well as to those used by Jews in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe.

The most non-trivial task concerns Hungary. In that province, from the mid-19th century onward a large number of formerly German sounding Jewish surnames were *Magyarized* yielding surnames sounding typically Hungarian. That process lasted about one hundred years. Often the new names represented calques (translations) of former German ones: Schwarz became Fekete, Gross turned to Nagy, Metzger to Mészáros, Wolf to Farkas. Several categories of surnames were created. The first encompasses appellations in which the Hungarian suffix *Bi* was added to place names. The second category corresponds to various Hungarian words, mainly occupations and human physical or moral characteristics. As numerous Hungarian Christian surnames are also constructed following these two patterns there is a large overlap between Jewish and Christian surnames. The general historical background of the period when Jews were changing their names following their own will, implies that their principal motivation was to acquire names that would not distinguish them (contrary to the previously used German sounding appellations) from their Christian neighbors. As a result, it is unlikely that their new names always reflected their real characteristics, either the semantics of their former names, or their current occupations, or places of residence. In numerous cases they were just borrowing common Christian surnames. Szabó

and Varga were not necessarily tailors and shoemakers (or translations of Schneider and Schuster), Székely and Szász hardly were Hungarian and German speakers from Transylvania, Somogyi and Szigeti could not be from the counties of Somogy and Sziget, while Laszlo and Balázs are unlikely to identify masculine given names used in families of their first Jewish bearers. We know that in certain cases, only phonetic resemblance existed between the new and the old names: Ferenczi from Fraenkel, Polányi from Polacsek. In other cases, the new appellations were unrelated to former names and any other feature of their first Jewish bearers.

This layer of Ashkenazic surnames was never studied systematically. Only a few examples together with the description of general features of name changes appear, for example, in Panchyk (1998). A more detailed analysis requires a perfect knowledge of the Hungarian language. The purely linguistic approach, can not give here adequate results. The most adequate approach should be genealogical. Indeed, in Hungarian archives one can find name change declarations that would allow to see the cases when the newly adopted surnames were in some way (phonetically or semantically) related to those used before. The genealogical data concerning the first bearers can also help to establish the given names used in his family, his own or his father=s occupation and the place of origin or of residence. All this information can shed light to the most plausible reasons of taking this or that Hungarian surname.

The second region is Alsace-Lorraine. Mainly, the lists of names adopted in these provinces in 1808 can be found in various studies made by French researchers. Those found in the same territories during the centuries that preceded the mass adoption are also mentioned in a number of papers and monographs. No one, however, tried yet to present a systematic study for this area. Here the approach could be similar to that present in Menk 2005, that is:

- to cite references (years, towns, exact spelling) prior to 1808
- to cite all occurrences in the name adoption lists of 1808
- to propose an etymology, that includes a source word, suffix present (if any), type of the surname and, if possible, the fact whether it is shared with non-Jews or not.

Romania represents the third area that awaits a detailed study. Numerous surnames from Moldavia, the northern part of the country, are due to Jewish migrants from Galicia. There are, however, local families whose surnames were unknown in Galicia. Also a number of specific surnames were used in Vallachia, the southern part of the country.

2.2 Sephardic Surnames

The domain of Sephardic surnames is in many aspects very different from that of the Ashkenazic ones. Firstly, a significant number of Sephardic hereditary appellations exist from the Middle Ages and numerous surnames appeared for the first time centuries ago, while a large majority of Ashkenazic surnames were assigned only at the turn of the 18^{th}-19^{th} centuries. Secondly, the geographic distribution of many Sephardic surnames is quite large covering all the Mediterranean area, while until the mass migrations that started during the second half of the 19^{th} century most Ashkenazic surnames were limited to a small territory around the place where they appeared for the first time. Thirdly, contrary to Ashkenazic whose adoption was forced by official laws of various Christian countries, Sephardic names often evolved on a natural basis, exactly as for the Gentile population of the same regions and most other regions of Europe, with gradual transformation of family nicknames or sobriquets to hereditary surnames. This is related to the fact that on the Iberian Peninsula and in numerous Muslim countries, laws making surnames legally mandatory for all their inhabitants were enacted quite recently. Examples: Spain (1870), Portugal (1911), Turkey (1934), Egypt (1970). For Sephardic onomastics these laws are of no importance: Jewish surnames in these countries appeared before these laws. Fourthly, if one considers surnames borne in any large Sephardic community that existed at the beginning of the 20^{th} century in the Ottoman Empire, one distinguishes several historical layers such as:

- Names used in the Iberian Peninsula before the expulsions of 1490s
- Christian names adopted by Marrano families in the Iberian Peninsula at the moment of conversion to Christianity
- Names adopted by Marrano families in the centers of their migrations at the moment of their return to Judaism
- Names created during the last centuries in the Apennine peninsula by Jews of heterogeneous origins who joined Italian Sephardic communities
- Names assigned at various period in North Africa.

In the list above, every layer has its own history being in many aspects quite different from others and thus deserving a separate detailed study.
Finally, in many countries where Sephardic communities existed, during long periods of their history there were neither civil records, nor official population censuses. As a result, for numerous families it is not easy to find documented evidences about the time since when they appeared on the territory in question. This issue is particularly acute for North Africa.

The above features create, one the one hand, numerous difficulties in studying etymologies of Sephardic surnames and, on the other, make the scholarly research in this domain, full of enigma, particularly fascinating.

A very few works in this domain deserve the label of scholarly. Among them certainly are the books written by Abraham Isaac Laredo (1978) and Paul Sebag (2002) on Morocco and Tunisia, respectively. Unfortunately, various authors often suggest new hypotheses for the same names without saying for what reasons they reject those proposed by their predecessors. As a result, readers may feel frustrated, finding it impossible to judge their reliability. The general impression is that most often the etymologies made by their authors are just guesses, sometimes educated guesses. Consider several examples of names from North Africa. Adda is said by different researches to be derived from (a) the identical Arabic masculine given name, (b) feminine given name, (c) place name, or (d) the Arabic word meaning *custom*. For Azulay one proposes the derivation (a) from the Berber place name, (b)-(c) Berber dialectal words meaning *good* or *hairy*, (d) Spanish *azul* (blue), (e) from the abbreviation of a Biblical (Hebrew) expression.
Globally speaking, there are a number of methodological principles of the scientific approach to etymological research B whose theoretical exposal can be found in Beider 2005 - that are not respected in the existing studies of Sephardic surnames.

Types of Surnames

It is obvious that in any domain of scholarship the number of various classifications that can be proposed is, in principle, infinite. The choice of the most helpful one is, however, to a great extent guided by several major criteria: its internal coherence (there should be no overlap between various groups), its comprehensiveness (every element of a corpus should be assignable to some group) and the possibility of explanation it offers. This final criterion is of paramount importance: without it, a classification has no real scientific value. In accordance to this principle, all types can be viewed as generalized answers to the same question, fundamental in etymological research, without a plausible answer to which an etymology is unreliable: *Why was the source word chosen to construct the surname?* In works on Sephardic surnames, the most adequate classification is suggested by Sebag (2002:11-15). He distinguishes the following types:

- derived from given names ; in onomastic literature these names are normally called patronymics [if the given name is masculine] or matronymics [if it is feminine]
- denoting places of origin
- occupational and status names (including those designating people of the Cohen and Levite origin)
- derived from nicknames (that in turn are based on personal characteristics).

To this we would also add several additional types.

Firstly, that of artificial surnames, that is, appellations whose source word has no relationship to any characteristics of the first bearer. These names, extremely common among Ashkenazim, for Sephardim are rare but still they do exist. To this group belong a number of surnames adopted by Marrano families at the moment of their return to Judaism. For example, names having evident Jewish connotations such as Baruch, Ben Israel, Israel, Jesurun, and Zadock seem to be invented in Amsterdam.
The second additional type concerns Ashkenazic names. In last few centuries a small number of Ashkenazic Jews joined Sephardic communities and maintained their surnames. Their descendants became Sephardic. In Ashkenazic communities these surnames can be considered as occupational, patronymic, artificial, etc. Since their creation cannot be related to Sephardic history and culture, in the context of Sephardic onomastics, it would be inappropriate to attach them to the same types. For Sephardic families bearing these names, they should be treated simply as Ashkenazic names.

The third type covers names borrowed by Jews as ready-made forms from Christians or Muslims. Formally speaking, for Jews these names are mainly artificial, unrelated to any characteristics of their first Jewish bearer. Since, however, for Sephardic Jews these names are quite numerous and have a specific history, it would be more appropriate to consider them as a separate type. (In contrast, Sephardic surnames should be called *artificial* only if they were created by or for Jews and not borrowed.). The existing works on Sephardic onomastics generally treat the borrowed surnames incorrectly. First, consider names borrowed from Spanish and Portuguese Christians. Laredo (1978:1093) correctly suggests this origin for Rodriguez. On the other hand, for Perez he suggests its derivations from the Biblical masculine given name 596, despite the fact that among the oldest mentions of this surname in families of Jewish originClisted by Laredo himselfCalmost all its bearers are Christianized Jews (p. 1014-1015). Consequently, it is much more plausible that when borne by Sephardic families, the surname Perez primarily results from borrowing of the identical Spanish Christian name. It is possible that in some other families it could be derived from the Biblical masculine given name. Sebag (2002) provides more appropriate explanations for names from this category, considering them to be derived from masculine given names, with standard patronymic suffixes, Spanish *Bez* or Portuguese *-es*: Mendez from Mendo, Nuñez from Nuño, Perez from Pe(d)ro, Rodriguez from Rodrigo, Enriques/Henriquez from (H)enrique. He does not say, however, explicitly that Sephardic Jews borrowed them from Christians as ready-made forms. Actually, the above patronymic explanations are valid for Christian surnames, not for the Jewish ones. Indeed, if, for example, a Jewish family bears the surname Rodriguez it does not mean that they had a male ancestor called Rodrigo. Only if that were the case it would be appropriate to call this appellation patronymic. The first bearer of Jewish origin was actually a Christianized Jew. We do not know whether he chose this surname himself or it was assigned to him by Spaniards. We do not know either the reason of this choice. Perhaps, Rodriguez was the surname of his godfather. Alternatively, Rodriguez could be a surname selected simply because it was a common Spanish Christian surname. For the person in question, saying ARodriguez is a name borrowed from Christians@ covers both cases. Finally, Rodrigo could be the given name of his godfather and the surname could have been created by adding to this name the patronymic suffix *-ez*. Only in this situation, it would be at some extent appropriate to call this surname *patronymic* even for the family of Jewish origin. We have, however, no evidence that such creations of surnames actually took place. The two other possibilities seem to be more plausible and therefore it is more attractive to call the whole category *borrowed* names.

If little doubt exists about Jewish borrowing of names identical to common Spanish and Portuguese Christian patronymic surnames, the situation is much more complicated with other types of Christian surnames borne by Sephardic families. When borne by Christians, names like Carvalho [oak], Oliveira [olive tree] and Pereira [pear tree] are mainly topographic, taken by or assigned to someone who lived by a corresponding tree. In some cases, they are also derived from identical toponyms. The same explanation

could be valid for Jewish families too. The analysis of the historical documents shows, however, that for their modern Sephardic bearers these surnames were mainly (or even in totality) due to their Christianized ancestors. Moreover, these surnames are common among Gentiles. As a result, it would be more plausible to assign these and similar appellations to the category of names borrowed from Christians.

The most difficult to analyze are numerous Sephardic surnames that coincide with place names from the Iberian Peninsula. The main question is: should they be considered as appellations derived from place names (as it is done in all studies on Sephardic surnames), or as names borrowed from Christians (since numerous Gentile bearers of them do also exist)? To answer this question for a particular name, a detailed analysis should be done of the localization of its oldest references in a Jewish context. If it appears that the name was used by non-converted Jews in Spain or Portugal before the mass expulsions of 1490s, then the name can be treated as derived from a place name. Among the examples are Castro, Murciano, Navarro, Soriano, and Toledano. Its occurrence in the same general region as the place in question, would greatly contribute to the corroboration of this hypothesis. Since often different localities share the same name, it would also help to establish the town that would be the most plausible source for the surname in question. On the other hand, if this name appears to be initially used by Christianized Jews who later returned to Judaism, it would be more plausible that we are dealing with a borrowed name. The more the surname is common among Gentiles, the higher are the odds that the name is borrowed. Another method for analysis could be geographic. Morocco was the only country from North Africa that accepted a large number of Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, this country was rarely home for *Marranos*, and it is not a surprise that typical surnames of Christianized Jews, clearly borrowed from Christians, are rare in Morocco. Enriquez, Rodriguez and Mendez are among these exceptions. On the other hand, we don=t find in that country any Jewish Diaz, Gomes, Lopez, Martinez, Nuñez, Suarez, Carvalho, Oliveira, Pereira, Pissarro, Da Silva, Da Costa, De la Cruz. For that reason, a Jewish surname known in Morocco for several centuries that coincides with Spanish or Portuguese place name is indeed likely to be derived from these toponyms. Examples are Curiel, De Leon, and Laredo. On the other hand, surnames from the same category having Jewish bearers only in communities with a large proportion of *Marranos* who returned to Judaism (Amsterdam, London, Altona, Leghorn, Bordeaux), but unknown in Morocco before the 18th century, are more likely to be borrowed from Christians than to be derived from place names. Cardozo and Spinoza are examples. The former appeared in North Africa after migrations from Leghorn of descendants of Christianized Jews returned to Judaism. The latter was brought to Amsterdam by *Marranos* who did not change it after their return to Judaism.

No author who wrote a major study on Sephardic surnames speaks about surnames borrowed from Muslims. One observes, however, that North African Jews share with their Muslim neighbors a number of surnames derived from typical Arabic masculine given names. Examples: Bencassem and Benjamil. Until we find evidence that during the time these names were acquired by Jews the given names Cassem and Jamil were borne by Jews too, we can not consider these names patronymic. Among numerous other names shared in North Africa by Jews with Arabs and derived from Arabic words uncommon as sources of surnames (Baba, Beida, Belamich, Belkhali, Benbi, Benchahba, Boujenah, Boukhris, Boussetta etc.) some could also actually be borrowed by Jews and not created by them. If a name is common among Muslims and unusual among Jews, the chances are high that we are dealing with borrowing.

Oldest References

For establishing a reliable etymology, it is of paramount importance to understand when and where the surname originated. Unfortunately, for numerous Sephardic surnames this information can not be directly taken from the published studies.

For particular surnames, the age suggested in various books is to be taken with great caution. Laredo (1978) makes no distinction between personal and family names, and therefore the oldest references to

surnames derived from masculine given names he provides often correspond not to surnames but to father's given names of the quoted persons. The list of surnames said by Jacques Taïeb (2004:202-203) to originate prior to 1300 is also more than questionable: the author makes two general confusions that are far from being limited only to his own book but represent errors typical to many existing Sephardic studies. Firstly, in the names of medieval Jews he cites, the last element is normally not a hereditary surname, but either an occupation (Hadayyan, *the judge* in Hebrew), or a nickname designating the town or the region of origin (Alfassi, from the town of Fes), or most often, father=s given name (as in Isaac Ben Barûkh, that is, Isaac the son of Baruch). Secondly, he regularly links a name occurring in a medieval source to a modern surname simply if both appellations are derived from the same root: Ederi and Drai, Farhon and Farhi, Ben Ezra and Azar, Ibn Janah and Boujenah, Tibbon and Taïeb. In these cases, one can say that the etymons (source words) of surnames and those of the medieval names are related. On the other hand, no *genealogical* relationship can be postulated between two sets of appellations, and therefore, in no case these old occurrences help us to establish the age of the surnames in question.

Difference Between Surname and Its Etymon

When a surname and its conjectured etymon are not identical, it is necessary to explain the difference between them. This purely linguistic part of the etymological research deals with (1) morphology (explanation of suffixes and prefixes present as well as of potential root change when one of these elements is added), and/or (2) phonetics. To perform it, at least the etymon must be presented explicitly. Unfortunately, this basic feature does not exist in many published studies. As a result, a reader can not judge the reliability of their etymologies because it is impossible to know whether a surname coincides with its etymon or has several different sounds. The approach by Laredo (1978) and Taïeb (2004) is much better: they often provide the exact Arabic words in question. In this aspect, Sebag (2002) is clearly the most rigorous: for all his etymologies, independently of source language, he always cites the exact etymon. Only Taïeb (for the most part) and Sebag (always) try to explain the surname morphology. In a number of entries in their books, however, we find peculiar differences between surnames and their suggested etymons, left by the authors without any comment and, as a result, making the proposed etymology questionable. But for a few exceptions (mainly in the book by Taïeb), purely phonetic differences between surnames and their etymons are never addressed in works on Sephardic surnames. For a scientifically reliable study of etymologies of Sephardic surnames in the future, it would be important to precede the dictionary portion with a discussion of general phonetic features, mainly Arabic, whose knowledge is necessary to understand the pronunciation differences that exist between surnames and their etymons.

To illustrate a linguistic approach in this domain, combining both the phonetic and morphologic aspects, one of the most famous Sephardic surnames will be taken as example: Abravanel. This family name B spelled in this way in Christian sources of the Iberian Peninsula of the 15th century - is generally believed to be related to Abraham, though no derivational scheme was ever proposed. Actually, the name and its conjectured etymon have three elements that differ:

- The presence of the final element *Bel* in the surname. This could be a diminutive suffix known in Spanish onomastics; cf. the Spanish Christian surname Minguell derived from a diminutive form of the given name Domingo.
- The final /m/ in the given name instead of /n/ in the surname. In medieval Spain, as a result of the nasalization, the final /n/ and /m/ were often interchangeable. For that reason, we find the forms as Abrahan/Abrahen, Efrayn, Hayn, Menahen and Natham, along with more usual Abraham/Abrahem, Efraym, Haym, Menahem and Nathan (cf., for example, Garbell 1954:658, 659)
- The use of /v/ instead of /h/. In medieval documents from northern Spain written in Latin characters, Hebrew names that include the letter % (*he*), are often rendered with *f*: Abrafim (Abraham), Jafuda and Yfuda (Yehuda), Cofen (Cohen) (cf., for example, Garbell 1954:661,

662). The sound /v/ represents the voiced equivalent of /f/. The presence of two resonant consonants around it, /r/ and /n/ or /m/, could contributed to this voicing. In Hebrew spelling used in medieval Spain, the sound /v/ was expressed either by & (*vav*) or by " (*bet*). The phonetic ambiguity (that can express both /b/ and /v/) of Hebrew *bet* could contribute to the arising of the variant form Abrabanel.

In general linguistics, it is a well known fact that in many languages the consonants called *liquid* such as /r/ and /l/ can easily interchange their place with neighboring vowels. The form Abarbanel, also found in the literature, is related to this phenomenon.
The above comments show the way the link between the source word Abraham and the surname Abravanel/Abarbanel can be explained. Without any explanation provided, the etymology would stay speculative.

Etymological Dictionary
Above, main methodological principles in the etymological research of Sephardic surnames were discussed and directions were shown in which progress can be made: by applying a rigorous and more adequate typology; establishing a more precise chronology and geography of the use of various appellations; accurately identifying names brought to Jewish communities by *Marranos*; presenting a more detailed analysis of morphologic and phonetic aspects of surnames. These indications for future research have the same general aim: to avoid an Aatomistic@ approach to Sephardic surnames when the etymology of every appellation is treated as if it were a separate problem. The methods advocated above allow finding solutions for a number of problems that would permit shedding light on numerous surnames at the same time.

Once the general problems discussed in the introductory portion are resolved, a scientific etymological dictionary of Sephardic surnames B to be written in the future B could apply these principles on an individual level, trying to avoid speculative hypotheses ad hoc, valid for specific surnames only. To compile this dictionary, it would be mandatory to prepare a comprehensive list of surnames. This task requires a non-ambiguous definition of the notion of a Sephardic surname. Firstly, such appellation should be hereditary, to distinguish it from given names and personal nicknames. Secondly, it should be borne by a person who professes Judaism. Surnames received after the conversion to Christianity or Islam borne by people who never officially returned to Judaism should be beyond the scope: there is no reason to consider them as facts of Jewish onomastics. All Jewish surnames obey both these criteria and the third criterion should allow distinguishing inside of this group names borne by Sephardic Jews. This covers the hereditary appellations borne by Jews:

- In the Iberian Peninsula before the expulsions of 1492 and 1497.
- In communities constituted by migrants from Spain and Portugal in the Netherlands (Amsterdam), England (London), Germany (Altona), France (Bordeaux and Bayonne), and Latin America
- In areas where descendants of migrants from the Iberian Peninsula merged, totally or partially, with local Jews whose ancestors never passed through Spain or Portugal: North Africa, Italy, Balkan countries, Turkey, and Syria
- Jews from *Eretz Israel* whose ancestors came from one of the areas enumerated above

The list in question can be, to a great extent, extracted from published books. Indeed, works by Taïeb (2004), Sebag (2002) and Laredo (1978) provide almost exhaustive lists of names for Maghreb. Carasso (2000) lists surnames borne in Salonika (Thessaloniki), the most populous Sephardic community in Europe during the last centuries. Besalel (1999) provides a representative list of Jewish surnames used in Istanbul. The book compiled by Faiguenboim, Valadares and Campagnano (2003) includes comprehensive lists for numerous other areas listed above: Latin America, Italy, Altona, Bordeaux, London, Aleppo (Syria).

To summarize the suggested ideas, the structure of a sample entry in a dictionary of this kind is proposed below. It should possess the following sections.

1. **Surname described in the entry**. Its spelling B using Latin characters B is conventional and is one of the spellings present in *References* (see below)

2. **References**. The principal aim of this section is to establish the area and time when this surname appeared for the first time. It would also allow mapping of migrations of its bearers and illustrate spelling and phonetic variations. Spellings of names believed to have the same etymon and having the same morphological structure should be listed in the same entry. On the other hand, references to appellations having either different roots, or distinct suffixes or prefixes are to be listed as independent entries. Every reference has the following structure:

a. Source (published or archival) where this surname appears

b. Exact spelling present in this source (using Latin, Arabic or Hebrew characters). All spellings should be indexed

c. Language of the document (this is important to understand pronunciation of the surname as spelled in Latin characters)

d. Most detailed available information concerning the time and the place of the reference (preferably, year and town; in the worst case, century and country) [that is, exactly the same structure as that applied in Beider 2001 for Ashkenazic given names]

3. **Type**. Choice between surnames indicating the Cohen or the Levite origin; patronymics; matronymics; occupational names; drawn from toponyms; designating personal characteristics; artificially created; borrowed from Christians or Muslims; Ashkenazic names; compound surnames in which two independent surnames were joined (Cohen Haddad, Jessurun Furtado, Levi Civita). Alternatively, compound surnames could not be included in the dictionary as separate entries. They can be referenced to in the entries dealing with their parts

4. **Etymon**. For surnames derived from given names (patronymics and matronymics), it is appropriate to find references to the use of the given names in question by Sephardic Jews. For those drawn from toponyms, the exact spelling that contributed to the surname creation and localization of these place names (province in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Maghreb=s countries etc.) are needed. For places absent from modern maps, a reference to a source mentioning these toponyms has to be present. If data about Jews living in these towns at the time of the surname creation or prior to it is available, its presence would be helpful as well. For borrowed surnames an indication of the source of borrowing (Spanish Christians, Moroccan Berber or Arabic Muslims) suffices. For compound surnames, the etymons are specified only in the entries dealing with their parts. For surnames of other types, this section encompasses (as in the book by Sebag)

a. Indication of the source language

b. Spelling of the source word(s) in the source language. If the source language uses non-Latin characters, either the original spelling, or its transliteration, or both of them should be present. If the author does not want to introduce the Hebrew or Arabic spelling, the transliteration must be present that would allow the non-ambiguous reconstruction of the original spelling.

c. Meaning of this word in this language.

2. **Difference between the etymon and the surname**. If the etymon and the surname are not identical, this section explains the way that led from the former to the latter: morphologic (prefix, suffix, or article added, as in the book by Sebag), phonetic or graphic.

3. **Shared?** If information is available about the existence of Christian or Muslim bearers of the same surname, it would be appropriate to present it inside the entry (as in the book by Taïeb).

Thank to the efforts of the various authors who wrote about Sephardic surnames, for many names a reliable information for some of these sections, or even all of them, is already available. Certain other aspects of surnames addressed by them such as the existence of distinguished bearers, social status of some of branches, family stories, and figures concerning the frequency of use in specific area during a particular time period are certainly of general interest. For North Africa, their best coverage is present in the popular book by Tolédano (1998) in which one can also find a number of accurate etymologies absent from other studies. For specific objectives of a dictionary focused on etymologies only, these aspects can be, in principle, omitted.

2.3 Oriental Surnames

This domain is almost totally unexplored: until now no systematic study of surnames used by Jews who lived in mid-20th century in any of the regions such as Yemen, Iraq, Oriental communities of Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan (*Bukharan Jews*), Dagestan (*Mountain Jews*) and Georgia seems to have been ever published.

2.4 Names of Jewish Immigrants

The study of surname changes by Jewish immigrants is a separate topic that deserves a scholarly coverage. Changes made during the 19^{th}-20^{th} centuries in two regions, Northern America and Eretz Israel, are of particular interest because not only the higher numbers of immigrants in comparison to France, Great Britain, South Africa, Argentina, Australia and some other destinations of émigrés, but also because there the changes took place not on a individual level, but at a very large scale and numerous elements of this process can be generalized and therefore submitted to a scholarly analysis.

One needs to distinguish the following categories of changes:
(1) Previously used names that underwent some graphic, phonetic or morphologic modifications.
For example, in the name Kissinger the German spelling was retained, while the pronunciation of Ag@ changed. On the contrary, if Klein from Germany becomes Kline in US, we can say that the spelling was changed, while the pronunciation was retained. A change of alphabet necessarily produces a new graphic form. As a result, surnames of individuals who migrated from Russia to Northern America where Roman-alphabet names were substituted for names originally written in Cyrillic letters, are new in comparison to their old European names, even if they are pronounced in the same way. Similarly, modern Israeli names written in official documents only in Hebrew necessarily are different from names used by the same families before emigration, originally written in Latin, Cyrillic or Arabic letters. Sometimes when passing from one alphabet to another phonetic changes can also occur. The first example is that of Chaim Weitzman. In its region of origin in western Belorussia, his name was written %,6P<"> (Veytsman) in Cyrillic letters. When it was transliterated to Latin characters following the German graphic rules it became Weitzman. In this form the letter combination Aei@ became read according to German rules as /ay/ instead of the original /ey/. Another example comes from US. When the members of the family whose name was spelled M@<F846 (Khomskiy) in the same area of western Belorussia migrated to Northern America their name was transliterated to Latin characters following the German spelling. The resulting form Chomsky was initially pronounced similar to the original name. Later, however, at some moment the initial ACh@ ceased to be pronounced /kh/ (as in Chaim or the common noun *loch*), but started to be pronounced as in English words and names, that is, /tsh/. In numerous cases, migrants to North America were shortening their original names. Most often it were the Slavic suffixes that were truncated.

(2) Names newly created instead of the previous ones.

(3) Names borrowed from another population group of the same country instead of the previous ones.

An important question that arises when studying name changes of two last categories is what factors determined the choice of the new surname.

In North America in many cases, Jews were adopting common English surnames. At the beginning of the 20th century a number of new immigrants from Eastern Europe also abandoned their surnames in favor of other Jewish surnames already commonly used in US such as Cohen, Epstein, Goldman and Rosenberg. These new names were judged to be typically AAmerican@' and often replaced those that included Slavic elements. In these examples, we are facing the tendency toward assimilation. In Eretz Israel, the assimilation was aimed to the Zionist ideals and, as a result, numerous new names were taken from the Bible or from the Hebrew lexicon. A number of other names were created using Hebrew patronymic patterns, that is, the addition of the prefix *Ben* (son of) or the possessive suffix *i*. For example, a son of Zwi was becoming Ben Zwi, while a son of Aaron started to be called Aaroni.

In a number of cases the creation of a new surname from its source word is due to the existence of an additional, third word, and without taking it into account, any explanation of etymology would be incorrect. An example is the American Jewish surname Black taken from the English adjective black (its etymon) because the surname previously used in Europe was Schwarz (which means black in German). In Israel, some families called Friedman, or Frydman, or Fridman (from Yiddish or German expression meaning *peace man*) chose to be called Ish Shalom (same meaning in Hebrew). Here it is appropriate to speak about the existence of a semantic association between the new and the old surnames. Similarly, the American-Jewish surname Miller may be derived from the common English noun *miller* because the original surname used in Poland such as M»ynarski or M»ynarz had the root meaning *miller* in Polish. When the languages used in two different countries are related, an association can be often both semantic and phonetic, as in such German-English pairs as Feld/Field, Blum/Bloom and Stein/Stone.

Phonetic association also is found in surnames borrowed from the members of another group that lives in the same area. Consider for example the common American Jewish surnames Harris and Davis. These names, borrowed from American Christians of English background, usually were chosen because the surnames used by the same families in Eastern Europe prior to emigration were - for Harris - various names based on the Yiddish masculine given names Hersh and Hirsh such as the Russian ',DT8@&4R (Gershkovich), ',DT,>2@> (Gershenzon), Gershman (',DT<">), and Girsh ('4DT), the Polish Herszkowicz, Herszlikowicz and Herszman and the German Hirsch, Hirschmann and Hersch. In the case of Davis the previous surnames were derived from the given name David, such as the Russian)"&4*@&4R (Davidovich) and its Polish equivalent, Dawidowicz. Typical Israeli examples are Rabin and Peres from Russian-Jewish C"$4R,& (Rabichev) and A,DF846 (Perskiy, respectively). Sometimes, the newly adopted name, borrowed from another population group living in the same country can be related not to the surname used before the emigration, but to the given name. American-Jewish surname Merton is an example. It was taken following the phonetic association of this English surname to Meyer, the given name of its first bearer.

Taking the above information into account, it is clear that an adequate approach to immigrant names can not be limited to purely linguistic analysis. It should necessarily include a detailed study of various documents such as naturalization lists, official name change declarations, and different genealogical sources in order to be able to determine the existence of any link between the new and the old names, to assign new names to correct categories and this way to establish a true etymology.

3. Jewish Place Names

A few words should be told about the domain of Jewish toponymics that still awaits a systematic study. The exact task consists in:

- compiling comprehensive lists of specific names used by Jews in their vernacular languages to designate various countries, towns, mountains, rivers etc.
- providing etymologies of these names.

Among the rare pioneering attempts to approach these questions in a scholarly way are papers by Taglicht (1925) and Stankiewicz (1965) about town names in Czechoslovakia and Poland, respectively. The territory of the former Russian Empire was never covered yet by any specific study. For its northwestern part, known in Jewish tradition as *Lite* and encompassing roughly Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and parts of northern Ukraine and northeastern Poland, one of the most comprehensive lists of Yiddish toponyms can be found on the map enclosed to Katz 2004. For other regions of Ukraine, Bessarabia/Moldova as well to numerous other regions in Europe, North Africa and Asia even the Jewish place names have never been listed.

The results of studies of Jewish toponyms can be helpful to establish reliable etymologies for a number of Jewish surnames that are based on them. The detailed study of Jewish place names can also provide results of great importance to Jewish linguistics. To illustrate this statement one can consider one example. Currently, in Yiddish studies B following the ideas of Max Weinreich - it is generally admitted that on its early stage Yiddish had a proto-vowel conventionally called A_3. In modern times, the words whose ancestors had this vowel in the stressed position, have /a:/ in Western Yiddish, /u:/ in Central Yiddish, /u/ in Southeastern Yiddish and /o/ in Northeastern Yiddish. The three last dialects are all parts of Eastern Yiddish and in all of them the same phonetic realizations in question also characterize the development of another proto-vowel, A_2. If one considers that the stressed vocalism of both Eastern and Western Yiddish is descending from a common ancestor when the introduction of the proto-vowel A_3 is appropriate. There are, however, important factors that let us think that actually no such common ancestor ever existed. In this situation, it is logical to try to answer the question whether in proto-Eastern Yiddish there were indeed two (A_2 and A_3) or just one (A_2) proto-vowel. If A_3 were really existing during the proto-period, then its phonetic realization at that moment would be /a:/ that later, during the Yiddish history, became rounded to /o:/, joining A_2, together with which it finally turned to /u:/ in Central Yiddish. If, on the other hand, A_3 never existed in Eastern Yiddish, it would mean that words from the German component whose Middle High German ancestors had short /a/ - that later in open syllables and some other environments became lengthened to /a:/ - were incorporated into Eastern Yiddish already in the rounded form. In this case, during the proto-Eastern Yiddish period their stressed vowel was A_2. One of rare Yiddish layers whose study could really allow to tell which one of the two scenarios exposed above is more plausible are Yiddish toponyms from Poland. Indeed, we find a number of /u:/-forms in Central Yiddish for places whose Polish name is /a/ and not /o/, namely, Kraków, Radom and Kalisz, called by Jews /kru:ke/, /ru:dem/ and /ku:lesh/, respectively. (It was in a personal communication to me by Alexis Manaster Ramer that the place names in question were mentioned as relevant to the history of Yiddish vocalism.) Their existence seem to corroborate the first scenario because the second one does not allow to explain the shift from Polish /a/ to Yiddish /u:/. Still, there is a possibility that the Yiddish toponyms in question are derived not from the names used in modern standard Polish, but from their phonetic variants, with /o:/, present either in certain Polish dialects or in the dialect(s) spoken by German colonists who lived in early times in Poland. So the question continues to be open and more detailed of the history of the toponyms in question could in the future shed more light on it.

Conclusion

As shown in this paper, one finds in that part of Jewish onomastics that is related to the etymological research, numerous topics that are still awaiting systematic scholarly research to be done. In addition to be important to the domain of name studies itself, the results of this research can be of more general interest for Jewish culture and provide information valuable for Jewish history, demography, linguistics and genealogy. It is my hope that some of these projects could be carried on within the frames of the activities of the newly founded *International Institute for Jewish Genealogy* (Jerusalem).

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