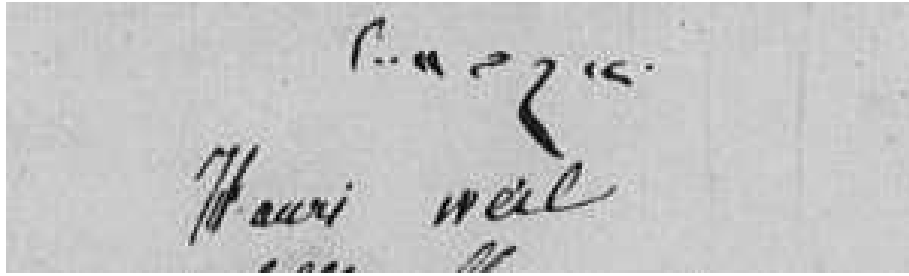


Signatures in Hebrew Characters



1843.02.16: signature of Jacques Weil

The above signatures appeared on the birth certificate of Nathan Weil, the son of Amélie Lévy (112•21) and Jacques Weil (112•22). On the birth certificate “Weil” is spelled with one “l”(unlike some descendants who spelled their name “Weill”). In addition a Henri Weil (relationship unknown) has also signed his name in Latin characters with one “l”.

This knowledge gives us a start as to the signature in Hebrew letters. Since this is the first signature and since the civil name “Jacques” suggests the Hebrew name “Jacob” (in fact this was his first name at birth in 1806; before his name was changed to Jacques in 1808).

Thus we can transcribe the first name as y•’•q•w•v. [y denotes the yod, the apostrophe denotes the aleph, q the qof, w the vaw and v the vet; see the chart for a complete list of transcription symbols].

1. As is the case here the yod (y) is often not more than a dot, and one would not notice it unless one were looking for it.

Turning to the family name, which we know is Weil, we can read the letters as w•w•y•y•l .

2. The use of the double waw (instead of vet = v) and the double yod to represent the sound “ei”, indicates that the system used was that of Yiddish rather than Hebrew (see the chart of Yiddish).

Note the following as regards my attempts at deciphering the names:

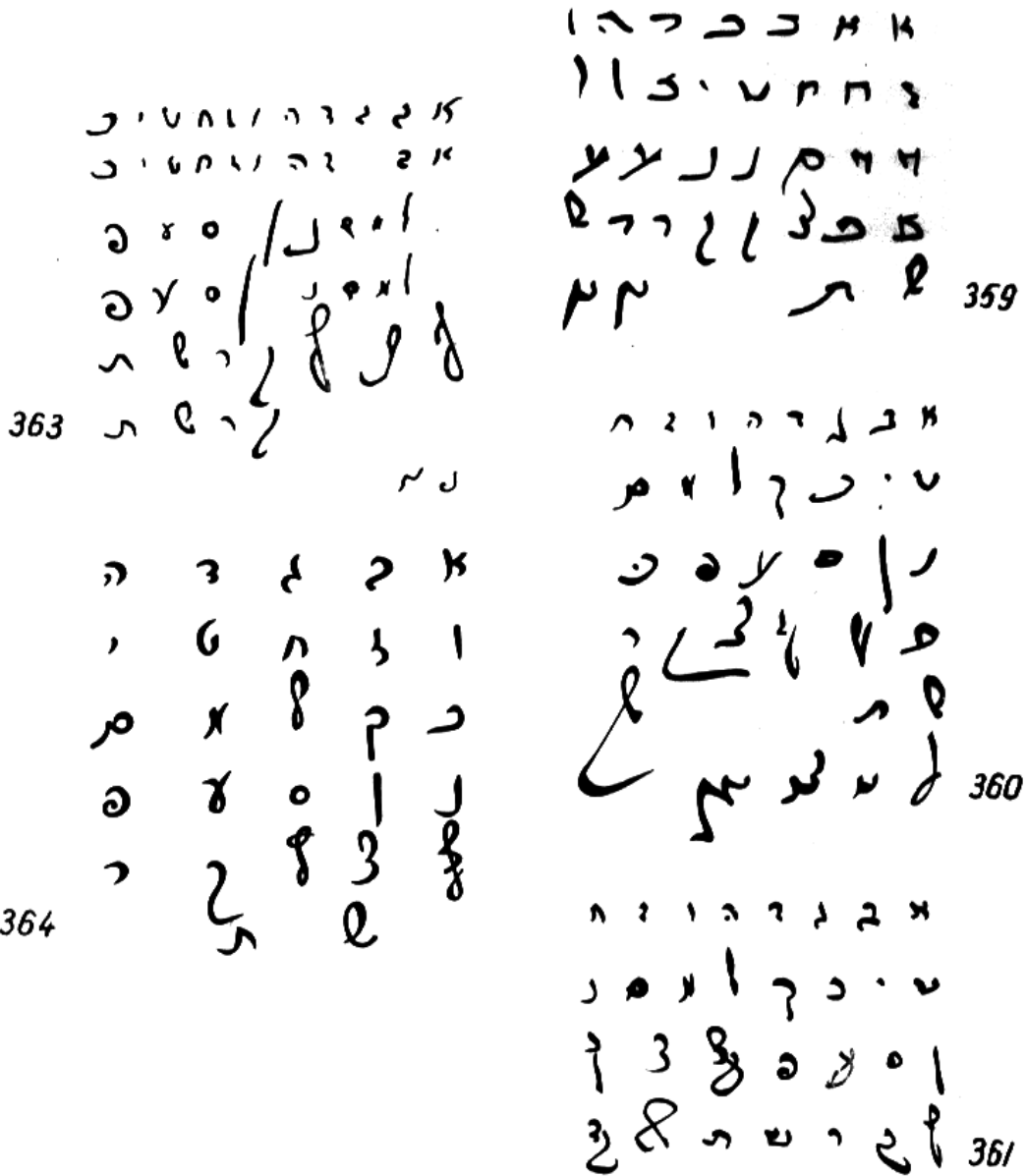
3. The signatures do not differentiate between the pointed and unpointed versions (e.g. bet and vet). I have used the symbol that I think represents the intended sound.
4. If I could not read or guess a symbol I indicate this by [?].
5. If I could make a guess, but was not sure about a symbol I indicate this by [f?].
6. The transcription just shows the consonants. Following this I indicate what I think should be the way the name should be pronounced and if a common English version exists I also give that, e.g. “ykwv” (yakov = Jacob).

Transcription of Hebrew Letters

א	’	ayin = ‘
ב	b	
ב	v	vet = v, wav = w
ג	g	
ד	d	
ה	h	
ו	w	wav = w, vet = v
ז	z	
ח	ch	het = ch, khaf = kh
ט	.t	tet = .t, tav = t
י	y	
כ	k	kaf = k, koof = q
כ	kh	khaf = kh, het = ch
ל	l	
מ	m	
נ	n	
ס	.s	samech = .s, sav = s
ע	’	aleph = ’
פ	p	
פ	f	
צ	ts	NOT st, NOT tz
ק	q	
ר	r	
ש	sh.	
ש	.sh	
ת	t	tav = t, tet = .t
ת	s	sav = s, samech = .s

Some Examples of Askenashi Handwriting

According to Birnbaum (p.300), the "Ashkenazic" type of script became wide spread in central and eastern Europe following the expulsion of the Jews from England (1290) and France (1394). Previously the Jews in central and northern France had written in what Birbaum (p.295) calls the "Zarphatic" type. I have only given examples of "Ashkenazic" type cursive from the late sixteenth century on.



Ashkenashi cursive: 359 = 1574; 360 = 1619; 361 = 1753; 363 = 1825; 364 = 1928

ו	ז	ח	ט	י
כ	ל	מ	נ	ס
ע	פ	צ	ק	ר
ש	ת	י	י	י
י	י	י	י	י

365

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י
 י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר
 ש ת י י י י י י י י
 י י י י י י י י י י
 י י י י י י י י י י
 י י י י י י י י י י
 י י י י י י י י י י
 י י י י י י י י י י

362

Ashkenashi cursive: 362 = 1753; 365 = 1928

Eastern Yiddish and modern cursive

Printed	Cursive	English
א	א	silent
ב	ב	b
בֿ	בֿ	v
ג	ג	g
ד	ד	d
ה	ה	h
ו	ו	u
ז	ז	z
ח	ח	kh
ט	ט	t
י	י	y/i
ש	ש	k
טש	טש	kh
טש	טש	final kh
ל	ל	l

Printed	Cursive	English
מ	מ	m
ם	ם	final m
נ	נ	n
ן	ן	final n
ס	ס	s
ש	ש	e
ש	ש	p
ש	ש	f
ש	ש	final f
ש	ש	ts
ש	ש	final ts
ק	ק	k
ר	ר	r
ש	ש	sh
ש	ש	s

Printed	Cursive	English
ת	ת	t
ת	ת	s

Variants & Combinations

א	א	a
א	א	o
ו	ו	u
ו	ו	v
וי	וי	oy
י	י	i
יי	יי	ey
יי	יי	ay
זש	זש	zh
דזש	דזש	dzh
טש	טש	ch