From Europe to Jerusalem in my ancestral background
Isaiah Halevi Horovitz of Frankfurt & Prague, Uri Feivush of Vilna, and Gelles of Grodno

Edward Gelles

This essay is mainly concerned with my Gelles rabbinical ancestry and links with Jaffe, Shapiro, Helman, and Horowitz, as shown on the appended charts.

My paternal ancestors include Chief Rabbis Mordecai Jaffe of Prague, Grodno, and Posen (1530-1612), Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow (1585-1633) and his grandfather Nathan Nata Shapiro of Grodno (d. 1577), Isaac Halevi Horowitz of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg (d. 1767), who was a direct descendant of Pinchas Halevi Horowitz of Prague and Cracow (1535-1618) and his Horowitz lineage, Shmuel Helman of Mannheim and Metz (d. 1764), and connections with Halpern, Katzenellenbogen, and many others.

Ancestors that are mainly on my mother’s side include Saul Wahl (1545-1617), scion of the Katzenellenbogen Chief Rabbis of Padua and Venice and the Chayyut rabbinical family from Portugal, their descendant Chief Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham Chayes of Prague (d. 1616) and the long and distinguished line of Chajes in central and eastern Europe. Isaac ben Abraham Chayes was a brother-in-law of the famous Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, known as the Maharal (ca. 1520-1609).

Many of these ancient families had recorded inter-marriages, for example the Loew and Chayes or the Horowitz and Wahl – Katzenellenbogen.

The first chart shows some of my ancestral connections over the past few hundred years. I am a 10th generation descendant of Uri Feivush*, who was Chief Rabbi of Vilna. In old age, in the 1650’s, he made his way to Jerusalem where he was called Uri Feivush Ashkenazi and given the title of Nasi, as Head of the Ashkenazi Jewish community.

This title and position was also held in the previous generation by the most prestigious of the ancient Horowitz rabbis, Isaiah Halevi Ish Horowitz. He was Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt and Prague before coming to Jerusalem and subsequently moving to Safed. He was buried in near-by Tiberias around 1630. He is remembered by the name of Holy Shelah that is based on the initial letters of the Hebrew title of his most influential work.

The second appended chart shows the Shelah as a 2nd cousin of my ancestor Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz.

* Jewish first names of Uri, Feivush or Feivel, and Shraga, having similar meanings and often used alone or in combination
In the footsteps of my afore-mentioned 16th century ancestor Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe, the migration of some Jaffe and Gelles families can be followed to Grodno and elsewhere in Lithuania. Around the end of the 17th century some branches of my wider family migrated from Grodno in different directions. One branch went south to Brody in Galicia and subsequently spread widely, some going on to Hungary and Austria and ultimately to Vienna. Other Gelles and Jaffe went westward to the province of Posen and Silesia and continued to Berlin and further into Germany. Another Gelles (Gellis) family left Grodno for Jerusalem at about this time and they have now been established in the Holy Land for 10 generations.

References to web-site < Edward Gelles at Balliol College >

File A4 Migrations of rabbinic families in central and eastern Europe over the past few centuries
File A5 From Europe to Jerusalem in my ancestral background
File A6 Grodno in Lithuania and the migration of some Gelles and Jaffe families
File A10 Millennial descent from Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona
Migration of rabbinic families in central and eastern Europe over the past few centuries.

Connections between Galicia (Brody), Lithuania (Vilna, Grodno), Posen (Graetz, Lissa, Krotoschin), Silesia (Glogau), Austria (Eisenstadt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaac Horowitz</th>
<th>Nathan Nata Shapiro</th>
<th>Mordecai Jaffe (aka Levush)</th>
<th>Samson Wertheimer</th>
<th>Uri Feivush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Rabbi of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg, d. 1767</td>
<td>Chief Rabbi of Cracow, 1585-1633</td>
<td>Chief Rabbi of Prague, Grodno &amp; Posen, d. 1612</td>
<td>Court Jew of Habsburg Vienna, Rabbi of Eisenstadt, Chief Rabbi of Hungary &amp; Moravia, died 1724</td>
<td>Chief Rabbi of Vilna &amp; Nasi in Jerusalem, d. 1657</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jaffe of Graetz (near Posen)</td>
<td>Wertheimer descendants connected with Oppenheim, Mendelssohn, Itzig, Eskinis, Gelles, Loewenstein</td>
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<tr>
<td>line connected with Rabbi D.I. Gelles of Brody and his descendants</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Meir of Horodyczewski</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifsha Shapiro m. Israel Halpern of Krotoschin</td>
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<td>Gershon Vilner of Shklov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uri Feivuch of Glogau</td>
<td>Daniel Jaffe Itzig in Berlin, d. 1799</td>
<td>Shmuel Gelles</td>
<td>daughter married Nathan Nata of Grodno, Chief Rabbi of Brody, d. 1764</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) daughter</td>
<td>Shmuel Helman (Hillman)</td>
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<td>(2) Sarah d. 1774 married</td>
<td>Chief Rabbi of Kremsier Mannheim &amp; Metz, d. 1764</td>
<td>Moshe Mendel Levush</td>
<td>daughter married Moshe M. Levush aka Moses Gelles of Brody, d. ca 1760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbi Uri Feivush of Lissa and other towns, d. 1771</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mordecai Gelles of Brody, father or uncle of</td>
<td>David Tebele, Rabbi of Lissa, d. 1792 (Gelles cousin)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rabbi Moshe of Glogau</td>
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<td>Moshe Gelles of Glima and Brody</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>daughter married Moses Gelles, another daughter, Chana, married son of Asher Lemel, Chief Rabbi of Glogau and Eisenstadt, d. 1789</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>descendant of Rabbi Isaac Horowitz</td>
<td>Rabbi David Isaac Gelles Brody, d. 1868, married Sarah Horowitz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahron Ber Gelles</td>
<td>Nahum Uri Gelles Chief Rabbi of Solotwina, 1852-1934</td>
<td>David Itzig Gelles of Vienna, 1883-1964</td>
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<tr>
<td>19th century community leader in Eisenstadt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a distant Gelles line in Posen coming from Lithuania</td>
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<td>Edward Gelles</td>
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</tbody>
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Horowitz Roots and Branches

Generations of Shem Tov Halevi in Barcelona and Gerona

Isaiah ben Moshe Halevi Horowitz of Provence (ca 1440-1515) bought Arenda of Horovice near Prague where he was also known as Zalman Horovsky

| Shabatai Sheftel Horowitz (d. 1555 in Prague) m Yocheved Katz | Ahron Meshullam Zalman Horowitz (1470-1545) aka Zalman Munka |
| Avraham Horowitz | Israel Horowitz (1500-1572) of Prague |

Isaiah Halevi Ish Horowitz (ca.1565-1630) 2nd cousins Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz (Prague 1535- Cracow 1618)

Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt and Prague President of Council of the Four Lands

Nasi in Jerusalem 1622 then in Safed and Tiberias

2nd cousins

Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz (Prague 1535- Cracow 1618)

President of Council of the Four Lands

Nasi in Jerusalem 1622 then in Safed and Tiberias

Edward Gelles is a 10th generation descendant of Rabbi Uri Feivush of Vilna see the preceding chart and following notes

Edward Gelles is a 7th generation descendant of

Rabbi Isaac Horowitz of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg

and a 13th generation descendant of

Pinchas Halevi Horowitz of Prague and Cracow

see my web page < Edward Gelles at Balliol College >

chart A 10

“Millennial descent from Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona”

Family connections of Rabbi Uri Feivush of Vilna and Jerusalem

Hillel Neach Steinschneider, *Ir Vilna* (Vilna: 1900), pp.3-4, summarizes published data on Rabbi Uri Feivush Ashkenazi of Vilna and Jerusalem.

[i] R' David Tebele of Lissa: 'I heard from my grandfather the famous Rabbi Gershon Vilner of Shklov, grandson of the Gaon Rabbi Feivush of Vilna, that he later left for the Holy Land where he was appointed Nasi, while he [Gershon] studied at the Yeshiva of the Gaon Yisrael Saba, the author of *Or Yisrael*.

[ii] the author of *Kerem Shomo* [see following reference], who was a descendant of Uri Feivush. Lists Rabbis Uri Feivush of Vilna, Isaac of Smeiatycz and David of Yanov and several sisters who were the children of the Gaon Rabbi M, the ABD of Horodetz.

[iii] the author of *Zir Yitzchak*, Vilna 1876, writes that Rabbi Uri Feivush was Nasi in Jerusalem in 1650-53 and was twice mentioned in the Pinkas of the Sefardim of Jerusalem, where he signs as Feivush Ashkenazi, known as Uri Shraga, a disciple of the Maharam of Lublin.

[iv] an old rabbinical pedigree has the son-in-law of Reb Moshe Yurberger, son of Reb Leib Sheitels of Vilna, ABD Horodna (Grodnno), son-in-law of Reb David Chasid, son of Rabbi Feivush, son of Rabbi David of Vilna. It gives the pedigree of Rabbi David Tevele ABD Lissa, son of Rabbi Nathan Nata ABD Brody (son-in-law of the above-mentioned Rabbi Gershon of Vilna), son of Reb Leib Sheitels, son of Rabbi Nathan Nata ABD Belz, son of the Gaon Rabbi Zecharya Mendel author of Be'er Heitev, son of Rabbi Leib [Fischls] ABD of Cracow, son of Rabbi Zecharya Mendel ABD Lvov. This appears to be a very useful source. Steinschneider thinks there are serious errors in *Kerem Shomo* and also in the pedigree of R' Rafael Nathan Nata Rabinowitz, given in his edition of the Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, Steinschneider also quotes *Shehi Tal* (Hanau: 1612). The introduction is by the ‘young, scholarly, and pious Rabbi Feivel, son of the Gaon and Chasid Rabbi David Zecharya, known as Reb Mendels, son-in-law of the great wonder of our generation, the holy flame, ABD and Rosh Yeshiva of Frankfurt, Rabbi Isaiah Segal Horovitz [the Sulzbach]; Steinschneider suggest that this may possibly be the same Rabbi Feivel and that he inherited the title of Nasi in Jerusalem from his illustrious father in law (cf. Pinchas Pesses of Dubno, *Atereth Halevijin* [Warsaw: 1902], p.63).


[vi] According to *Koreh Hadoroth* (Berlin: 1845) Rabbi Feivush Ashkenazi was considered a great halachic authority. He is also mentioned in *Shi'ar Efrayim* (Sulzbach: 1688), pp.63, 67, 68; *Torath Chessed* (Salonika: 1633), pp.32, 33; and *Perush Meir Ahron* (Amsterdam: 1703), Vol.I, p.44.

See also the article on the Rabbis of Vilna in the Jewish Encyclopedia and Berek Kagan’s book on the History of Keidan, which mentions R’ Avigdor as a grandson of R’ Uri Feivush of Vilna and also the scholar and philanthropist R’ Moshe ben R’ Uri Rapaport, who died in Keidan around 1830.