

Wahl and Shapiro ancestral connections

Edward Gelles

The history of Saul Wahl, scion of the Katzenellenbogen rabbis of Padua and Venice is the subject of several chapters in my books, *An Ancient Lineage* (2006) and *The Jewish Journey* (2016) and in a number of entries on the web site (< Edward Gelles Papers at Balliol College Archives & Manuscripts >.

This 16th century Jewish community leader played a significant role in Polish affairs of State and had a distinguished progeny that intermarried with leading Jewish families over several centuries. The line of the Katzenellenbogen rabbis goes back to the Luria family of Italian origin, to the Treves rabbis of medieval France, the Kalonymos of Narbonne, and further back to ancient times.

My descent from Saul Wahl is primarily through my maternal grandmother Chawa Wahl. Close family connections on my father's side include Jaffe and Shapiro, amongst others. There are connections between Wahl and the Jaffe line that descended from my ancestor Mordecai Jaffe, the Chief Rabbi of Prague, Grodno, and Posen. The preceding essays on my web page include "Wahl and Jaffe to Gelles and Griffel"

The connection between the Wahl-Katzenellenbogen and Shapiro lines is shown on the appended chart. It goes back to a common Treves ancestor, who was Chief Rabbi of Paris in the 14th century.

My paternal Gelles rabbis are closely associated with the great Shapiro rabbinic line for over four centuries. My grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles (1852-1934) was a descendant of Nathan Nata Shapiro (1585-1633), the Chief Rabbi of Cracow – known for his mystical work *Megale Amukot* (Revealed Depths). This family connection is confirmed by the standard work on the Galician Rabbinate, by S.N. Gottlieb, *Ohalei Shem* (Pinsk, 1912) pp 261-262, Rabbi Shapiro's eponymous grandfather was Rabbi Nathan Nata Shapiro of Grodno (d. 1577). Some of my Gelles ancestors were in Grodno in the latter's days. This Rabbi Shapiro of Grodno is recorded as a first cousin of the scholar David Gans of Prague whose connections are discussed in my first book.

A 6th generation direct line descendant of Rabbi Shapiro of Cracow was Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (1726-1791), an important leader of the 18th century Chasidic movement. His only daughter married Rabbi Shmuel Gelles, a grandson of my direct ancestor Moses Gelles (ca. 1700-1760) who was a scholar of the *Brody Klaus*.

(see my web page essay entitled “Moses Gelles - the servant of God”)

The 5th generation descendant of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro was Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887–1934). He was a member of the Polish Parliament and the founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshiva. He and my grandfather were close friends, both being adherents of the Chasidic leader Rebbe Israel Friedman of Czortkow, who died in 1933. My grandfather is buried in Vienna next to Rabbi Israel Friedman.

The Gelles and Friedman families were distant relatives

(Edward Gelles, *Family Connections – Gelles – Shapiro – Friedman* (Shaker Publishing, Maastricht, 2009).

My 1st cousin Josef Gelles, who perished in the Holocaust, studied at the Lublin Sages Yeshiva under Yehuda Meir Shapira

(Edward Gelles, *Ephemeral and Eternal* (Shaker Publishing, Maastricht, 2010).

Treves – Shapiro - Luria Descent

