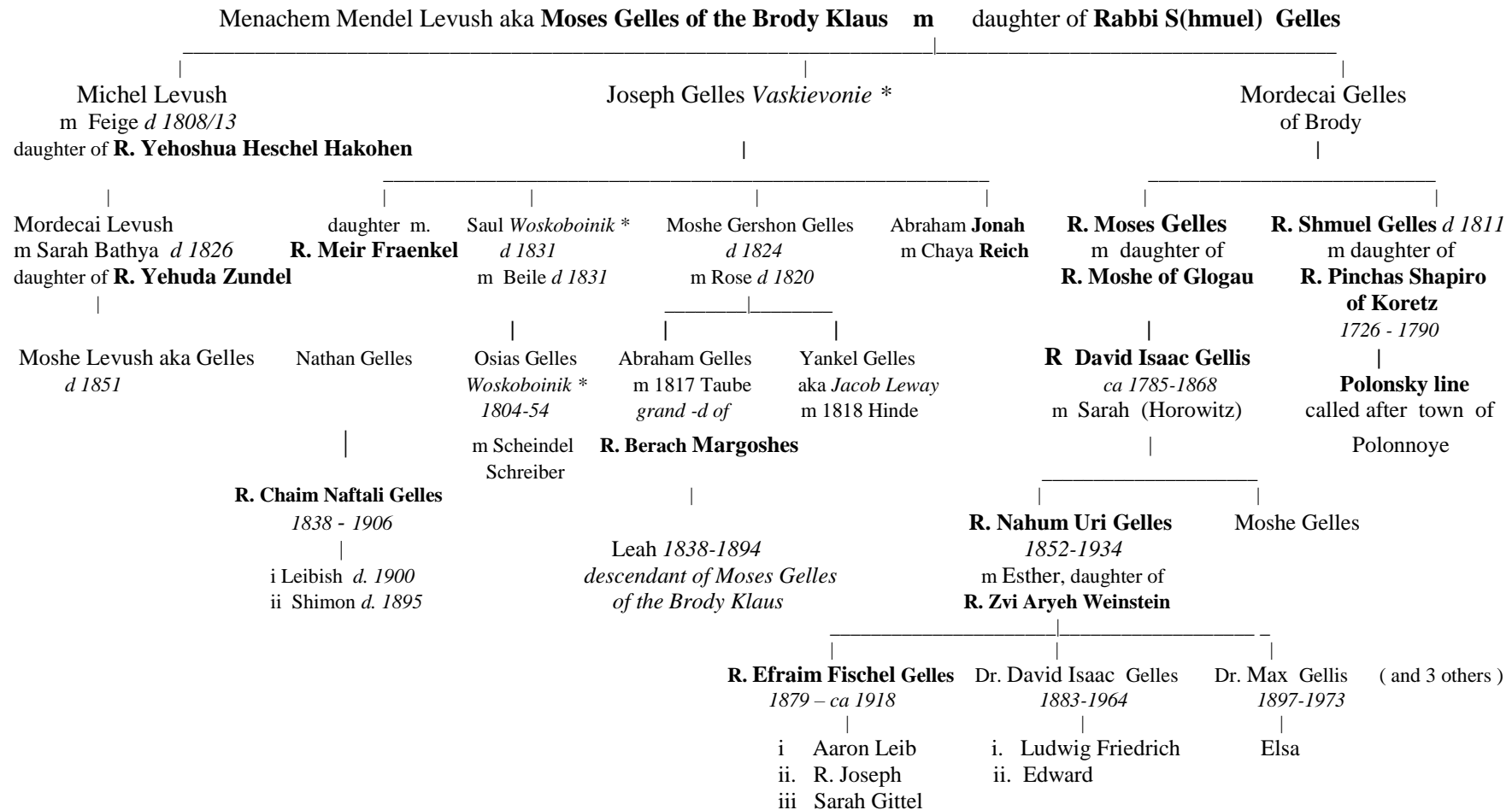


Gelles of Brody

Partial family tree showing some rabbinical connections



* *Vaskievonie* & *Woskoboinik* - occupational epithets meaning "wax chandler" - the family owned wax works held monopoly for selling candles to the community

Footnotes

Moses Menachem Mendel Levush, a scholar of the Brody *Klaus*, was called *Levush* in recognition of his descent from Mordecai Yaffe of Prague (1530-1612) who was known as the *Levush* after the title of his major work. Menachem Mendel Levush married a daughter of Rabbi S. Gelles, who was probably connected with the line of Lithuanian rabbis descending from Uri Feivush Ashkenazi of Vilna and Jerusalem. The latter's great-grandson was Shmuel Gelles, the Chief Rabbi of Siemiatycze.

The name of Yehoshua Heschel Hakohen recurred in the family descended from a son-in-law of Abraham Joshua Heschel of Cracow to whom the Gelles son-in-law of this name may well belong. Moshe Hakohen was the author of a family genealogy *Assifat Hakohen*.

Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz of Brody (died 1804) was a scholar of the Brody *Klaus*, as were his grandfather and Moses Gelles. Yehuda Zundel was the father-in-law of Mordecai Levush (Gelles) and of Eleazar Rokeach, whose son Shalom Rokeach (1779-1855) became the first Rebbe of the Belz Chasidic dynasty. Todros Zundel Ramraz was a nephew of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zundel of Brody. There is a connection with Rabbi Todros Zundel Horowitz, the author of *Shoresh Miyakov* (Lvov 1858).

Meir Shlomo Fraenkel's sister Finkel, wife of Reb Wolf Bolechower, endowed a trust in memory of Feige Heschel Hakohen, underlining the Fraenkel-Gelles connection. A later Finkel, namesake of the afore mentioned, is in the Brody birth records of 1853 as the daughter of Jacob Fraenkel and Chane Gelles.

Margoshes descent from Efraim Fischl of Lvov (died 1653) is recorded by Joseph Margoshes in his *Memoirs of my Life*. This Efraim Fischel was the father-in-law of Aryeh Leib Fischls aka *der Hoiche Rebbe Leib* (died 1671), Chief Rabbi of Cracow and scion of the Kloisner line. His father was Zacharya Mendel Kloisner of Lvov, known as the "prophet", and his grandfather was Benyamin of Posen, known as Beinish Reb Mendels (d. 1626).

One of the Rabbi Aryeh Leib Fischl's sons was Efraim Fischel of Ludmir (d. 1719) who became head of the "Council of the Four Lands".

Abraham, son of Joseph Gelles, was a son-in-law of Jonah Reich who appears to have been a *mechutan* of Jacob Simcha Landau, ABD of Apt and son of Joseph Landau, Head of the Brody *Klaus* (in 1757).

Shmuel, son of Mordecai and grandson of Moses Gelles, married a daughter of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz. He was a direct descendant of the Shapiro line including Chief Rabbi Nathan Nata Spiro of Cracow (1585-1633) and his grandfather Nathan Nata of Grodno (died 1577).

From Pinchas Shapiro there is a line of descent to Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887-1934), founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshivah, who taught my cousin Joseph, son of Rabbi Efraim Fischel and grandson of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles. The progeny of Shmuel Gelles and Sarah Rachel Scheindel Shapiro were rabbis in Podolia for five generations.

We had connection by marriage with the Chasidic Friedman dynasty of Czortkow. My grandfather and Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira were close followers of Rabbi Israel Friedman of Czortkow (1854-1933) who died in Vienna.

My grandfather Nahum Uri was the grandson of Moses Gelles, who was a son-on-law of Moshe of Glogau, eldest son of Chief Rabbi Shmuel Helman of Metz. There are grounds for believing that this Moses Gelles was the brother rather than first cousin of Shmuel Gelles. Rabbi Nahum Uri's eldest son was Efraim Fischel, possibly named after Efraim Fischel Horowitz (ca1800-1860), ABD of Munkacz. Rabbi Nahum Uri's second son was my father, Dr. David Gelles, named after his paternal grandfather.

Data from the Brody Beth Din records, the civil records in the Lviv archives, and from tombstone inscriptions have been augmented (2012) by the new Brody Cemetary Database (Gesher Galicia - Ami Elyasaf).