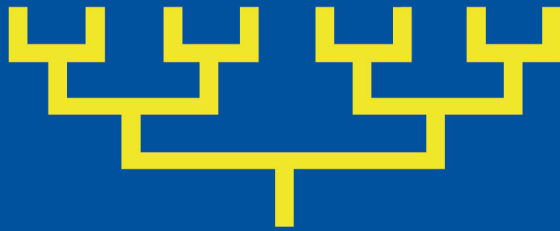


Family Connections

Gelles – Shapiro – Friedman



Edward Gelles

Family Connections

Gelles - Shapiro - Friedman

Edward Gelles

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Printed in The Netherlands.

ISBN 978-90-423-0370-6

Shaker Publishing BV
St. Maartenslaan 26
6221 AX Maastricht
Tel.: 043-3500424
Fax: 043-3255090
[http:// www.shaker.nl](http://www.shaker.nl)

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Contents

List of Documents and Photographs	iv
List of Maps	iv
List of Tables and Charts	v
List of Newspaper and Book extracts	vi
Preface	1
<i>The millennial family background</i>	
Chapter 1. From the Spanish March to the Russian Pale	3
Chapter 2. <i>Shapiro Connections</i>	17
Charts of descent from Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow, the ancestry of Yehuda Meir Shapira of Lublin and Israel Friedman of Czortkow, and Hager family connections	
<i>Gelles – Shapiro</i>	
Chapter 3. Moses Gelles, the servant of God	29
<i>Gelles - Friedman</i>	
Chapter 4. The inner circle of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedman in Vienna	45
<i>Gelles family history</i>	
Chapter 5. End of the Gelles rabbinic line	67
Chapter 6. A Zionist in Vienna	85
Looking Back	103
Index of Names	107
List of the author's publications	117

List of Documents and Photographs

1	Photograph of Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira	22
2	Photograph of Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Czortkow	25
3	Letter of Appointment of Rabbi Samuel Gelles (1793)	40
4	Letter of Appointment of Rabbi Eliyahu Pinchas Gelles (1831)	41
5	Photograph of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles	43
6	Postcard from S. Spiegel to Josef Gelles in Vienna (1934)	76
7	Postcard from Ch. Gelles to Josef Gelles in Boryslaw (1936)	77
8	Boryslaw – Drohobycz Unpaid Water Bills 1941-1942	82
9	Obituary of Dr. David Gelles (with photograph)	94
10	Group photograph of Dr. David Gelles in Jerusalem (1922)	97
11	Dr. David Gelles lecturing in Vienna (1955)	97
12	Tombstone of Dr. David Gelles in Vienna	102

List of Maps

1	From the Spanish March to the Russian Pale	16
2	From Moses Gelles of Brody and Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz	34
3	Background to the Friedman dynasty and other Chasidic rabbis	49
4	Austrian Galicia	83

List of Tables and Charts

1	Benveniste and Shem Tov Halevi in medieval Spain	8
2	Katzenellenbogen of Padua & Venice and Judah Loew of Prague	
	i. From Saul Wahl and Judah Loew with Mirl Chayes-Altschuler	10
	ii. Descent to David Gelles and Regina Griffel	11
3	Rabbis of Solotwina near Stanislau / Katzenellenbogen Descent	12
4	Katzenellenbogen – Heschel - Babad	13
5	Margolies connection	14
6	Shapiro Connections - Descent from Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow	18
7	to Shapiro of Mogielnica – Friedman of Sadagora	20
8	Spira - Treves – Luria and the Shapiro (Spira) rabbinic line	23
9	Descent of the Friedmans of Czortkow	26
10	Shapiro –Friedman connection to the Hagers of Kosov and Vishnitz	27
11	Descendants of Moses Gelles, a scholar of the Brody Klaus	42
12	Graves of Rabbis Nahum Uri Gelles and Israel Friedman in Vienna	64
13	Josef Gelles and the Weinstein Connection	81

List of Newspaper and Book Extracts

1	Rabbi Nahum Gelles on Aid Committee for Galician refugees in Vienna, Neue National-Zeitung ,No.26, p.5. (13 November 1914)	53
2	Obituary of Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Czortkow, Jüdische Presse, No. 48 (8 December 1933)	54
3	The new orphanage opened by <i>Agudas Israel</i> in Baden near Vienna, Jüdische Presse, No.21 (24 June 1921)	55
4	Rabbis attending the ceremonial opening of the orphanage in Baden Jüdische Presse, No. 21 (24 June 1921)	56
5	Rabbis Gelles (Solotwina) and Hager (Tluste) examiners at the Tomche Thora school in Vienna under the patronage of Rabbi Israel Friedman Jüdische Presse, No. 7 (25 February 1921)	57
6	List of donations to the Tomche-Thora foundation . The donors include Rabbi Gelles (Solotwina). Jüdische Presse, No. 7 (25 February 1921)	58
7	Festive opening of an Agudas youth centre in Vienna attended by Chief Rabbi Gelles (Solotwina) who was one of the speakers at the ceremony.Jüdische Presse, No. 19 (11 May 1923)	59
8	Friedman family wedding attended by 600 guests. Rabbi Gelles was seated at the high table with the Grand Rabbis of the Friedman family. Jüdische Presse, No. 22 (1 June 1921)	60
9	A pre-war visit to Czortkow by Rabbis Israel Friedman and Yehuda Meir Shapira - extract from the memoir of holocaust survivor Florence Mayer Lieblich, published on the internet [remember.org/florence]	62
10	Succession to Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles at Solotwina Der Najer Morgen Tagblat , Lvov, p. 4 (26 December 1934)	68
11	List of orphans accepted by the orthodox Jewish home in Baden including Ahron Leib Gelles and Josef Gelles of Boryslaw Jüdische Presse, No. 18 (27 May 1921)	78
12	Leo (Ahron Leib) Gelles organising secretary of Baden orphanage old boys association formed 1932. Jüdische Presse No. 10 (11March 1932)	79
13	Efroim Gelles and Bendet Spiegel named among Austrian soldiers making donations to a Jewish Fund on the Galician front in the first world war Jüdische Zeitung, No. 19 (12 May 1916).	80

14	The holocaust in Boryslaw. Post-war trial of mass murderers in Vienna Die Stimme, No. 98/ 99 (August / September 1956)	84
15	Commemoration of Theodor Herzl at the Herzl Club in Vienna, the address given by the Club President, Dr. David Gelles. Die Stimme, No. 88 / 89 (August / September 1954)	98
16	Commemoration of Desider Friedmann and Robert Stricker by the Herzl Club, chaired by the president, Dr. David Gelles. Die Stimme, No. 90, p. 2 (October / November 1954)	99
17	Under the auspices of the Zionist Federation of Austria – lecture on Maimonides given by Dr. David Gelles Die Stimme, No. 79, p.4 (October 1953)	100
18	Dr. David Gelles, elected vice-president of the Jewish Community Council of Vienna (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde). American Jewish Year Book, 1961, page 278.	101

Preface

The closely woven fabric of the Ashkenazi rabbinate that developed and flourished in Europe for more than a thousand years included a nexus formed by the Treivish or Treves family, who were important rabbis of France in the middle ages, with the Shapiro and Luria families. This nexus goes back to the great 11th century scholar and bible commentator Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes. Known by the acronym of Rashi, this scholar is widely believed to have been of Davidic royal descent. The links between Treves, Shapiro and Luria lead on to other great rabbinic families, in particular, the Katzenellenbogen rabbis of 16th century Padua and Venice, whose scion Saul Wahl (died 1617) played a significant role in Poland – Lithuania and in its Jewish community.

The Shapiro (or Spira), who were in Speyer and other towns in the Rhineland from medieval times and later lived in Poland and elsewhere, produced a line of undiminished intellectual vigour over many centuries. A lineage of twenty generations is adorned by Nathan Nata Spira of Grodno (died 1577), his grandson the great Rabbi Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow (died 1633), his direct descendant Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (died 1791), a Chasidic leader of majestic moral stature, and his descendant, Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira of Lublin (died 1934), community leader, educator, and member of the Polish Parliament. The latter was an adherent of Rabbi Israel Friedman of Czortkow (died 1933), scion of the great Chasidic dynasty founded by Israel of Ruzhin (died 1850). This family has ancient roots that include the Horowitz, Katzenellenbogen, and Shapiro.

The present monograph on *Gelles – Shapiro – Friedman* extends the genealogical and historical studies begun in my first book *An Ancient Lineage* (Valentine Mitchell, London 2006), and continued in *Family Connections : Gelles – Horowitz – Chajes* (Shaker Publishing B.V. The Netherlands, 2008).

It presents new material on the descendants of Moses Gelles of Brody and their Shapiro connections, in particular, the marriage of Rabbi Samuel Gelles to the only daughter of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz.

My grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles was for some time a member of the inner circle of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedman of Czortkow, who resided in Vienna from 1914 until 1933. Israel Friedman was not only the spiritual guide of the Czortkow Chasidim but a leader of European orthodoxy at large and a supporter of *Agudas Israel*, the political society or action group for a large part of the orthodox community.

New findings throw some additional light on these families in the period leading up to the second world war and the holocaust. The book concludes with a note on the immediate post-war period in Vienna.

London, March 2009

Chapter 1

The millennial family background

From the Spanish March to the Russian Pale

In an article entitled “Moses the servant of God” I outlined some of my family’s Chasidic connections. I began with Moses Gelles, a scholar of the Brody *Klaus*, who flourished in the mid-18th century. He was a descendant of Rabbi Mordecai Yaffe of Prague (1530-1612), known as the *Levush* from the title of his major work. A grandson of Moses Gelles of Brody was Rabbi Samuel, who married a daughter of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (1726-1790), one of the leaders of the 18th century Chasidic movement. Samuel and Rachel Sheindel were the progenitors of a line of rabbis in an area that is now in the Ukraine.

An eponymous grandson of Moses Gelles married a granddaughter of Chief Rabbi Shmuel Helman of Metz (died 1764). This line continued to Rabbi David Isaac Gellis and his son - my grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles of Solotwina near Stanislaw in Galicia. The latter’s eldest son Efraim Fischel died at a young age. I have recently brought to light the tragic life story of Efraim Fischel’s son, my first cousin Rabbi Joseph Gelles, in the “End of the Gelles rabbinic line”.

My grandfather was a follower of Israel Friedman of Czortkow (1854-1933), a scion of the Friedman Chasidic dynasty. Gelles, Friedman, and Shapiro rabbis had connections of one kind or another over many generations, from Nathan Nata Shapiro of Grodno (died 1577) to his grandson, Chief Rabbi Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow (1585-1633) , to Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz and then on to Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887-1934).

In addition to their Shapiro connection my grandfather and Israel Friedman may also have had a common Horowitz ancestor in Rabbi Meir Horowitz of Tykocin (died 1743).

Another grandson of Moses Gelles of Brody married a daughter of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz (died 1804), who was a scholar of the *Klaus* as well as being the grandfather of Shalom Rokeah (1779-1855). This Gelles branch were thus cousins of the Rokeah Grand Rabbis of Belz.

The founder of the Chasidic movement, Israel ben Eliezer (1698-1760), known as the *Baal Shem Tov*, recognised the importance of *yichus* or family lineage among the disciples and future leaders of the movement. He had particular respect for the lineage of the Margolioth (Margolies), Shapiro, and Horowitz families. The story is told that when he met initial opposition to his ideas from my ancestor Isaac Horowitz (1715-1767), the Chief Rabbi of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg, he remarked: “ What can I do? He is of a stock whose descendants are heard when they weep before the Lord”.

From these 18th and 19th century Chasidic connections we may go back to the 16th / 17th centuries in Prague. This city was of the greatest historical importance at the cross-roads of Jewish migration from western Europe leading ultimately to Poland and beyond. Its great rabbis included Mordecai Yaffe whose forebears were in Bologna, Isaac ben Abraham Chayes (ca 1538-1617) of the “pious men of Provence”, his brother-in-law Judah Loew (ca 1525-1609) from the rabbis of Worms, Isaiah Halevi Ish Horowitz (1568-1627), the most famous rabbi of his family, and Yom-Tov Lipman Heller (1578-1654) from Wallerstein in Bavaria. There was much inter-marriage between these families and others. The tombstones of Prague provide evidence of ancient connections including epitaphs of Gelles and Gelles-Katz in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

A daughter of Judah Loew and his first wife Mirel Chayes-Altschuler married Isaac ben Samson Katz (Hakohen or Kohen Zedek), scion of the ancient priestly family. Successive marriages to Katzenellenbogen and Margolioth gave rise to descendant lines of Margolioth, Fischel, Zausmer, and Horowitz, as shown in the attached charts. There are Wahl Katzenellenbogen and Chayes ancestors on both my mother's and father's side. The Katzenellenbogen go back via a nexus of the Luria, Treivish, and Shapiro families to the great 11th century scholar and bible commentator Solomon ben Isaac, known as Rashi of Troyes.

The family of Judah Loew of Prague and indeed the Chayes – Altschuler and some other families in the charts are also believed to be descendants of Rashi, who is generally taken to be of Davidic lineage.. The afore-mentioned sacerdotal Katz family of Prague claimed descent from Eli the priest, while the Shem Tov Halevi of medieval Gerona had a tradition that they were of the line of Samuel the prophet. The connections between the Shem Tov Halevi, the Benveniste, and other families, who were Jewish community leaders and royal counsellors in medieval times are also to be found in the attached charts. The Horowitz were a sprig of these Halevi transplanted from the Spanish March and Provence to Bohemia in the 15th century, taking their name from the estate of Horovice near Prague where they first settled. Rashi's pedigree connects with the Kalonymos, Jewish Princes of Narbonne, whose Makhir - Kalonymos line is supposed to originate in the 8th century from a descendant of Jewish Exilarchs of Baghdad and a daughter of Charles Martel, the grandfather of the Emperor Charlemagne.

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idem, Finding Rabbi Moses Gelles (*Avotaynu*, Vol. xviii, No.1, Spring 2002)
idem, Jewish Community Life in Brody (*Sharsheret Hadorot*, Vol.18, No.4, November 2004)
idem, Genealogical Background of some Hasidic Sages (*Sharsheret Hadorot*, Vol.19, No.1,
February 2005)
idem, Die Familie Chajes und ihre genealogischen Verbindungen (*Zeitschrift fuer Genealogie
und Heraldik "Adler"* Vol.25, No. 4, 2008)
idem, Davidic Descent (*Sharsheret Hadorot*, Vol.17, No.2 June 2002)
idem, Some Jewish Strands in European History (*in preparation*, chapter 1, Carolingian
connections)

Detailed references will be found in the above publications and also in footnotes to some of the appended charts.

The genealogical charts on the Shapiro and Friedman rabbinic families draw on data in:
Meir Wunder, Meorei Galicia, Volumes 1-6 (Jerusalem, 1978-2006)
Neil Rosenstein, The Unbroken Chain, Volumes 1-2 (CIS Publishers, 1990)
idem, The Lurie Legacy, The House of Davidic Royal Descent (Avotaynu, Bergenfield, New
Jersey, 2004)

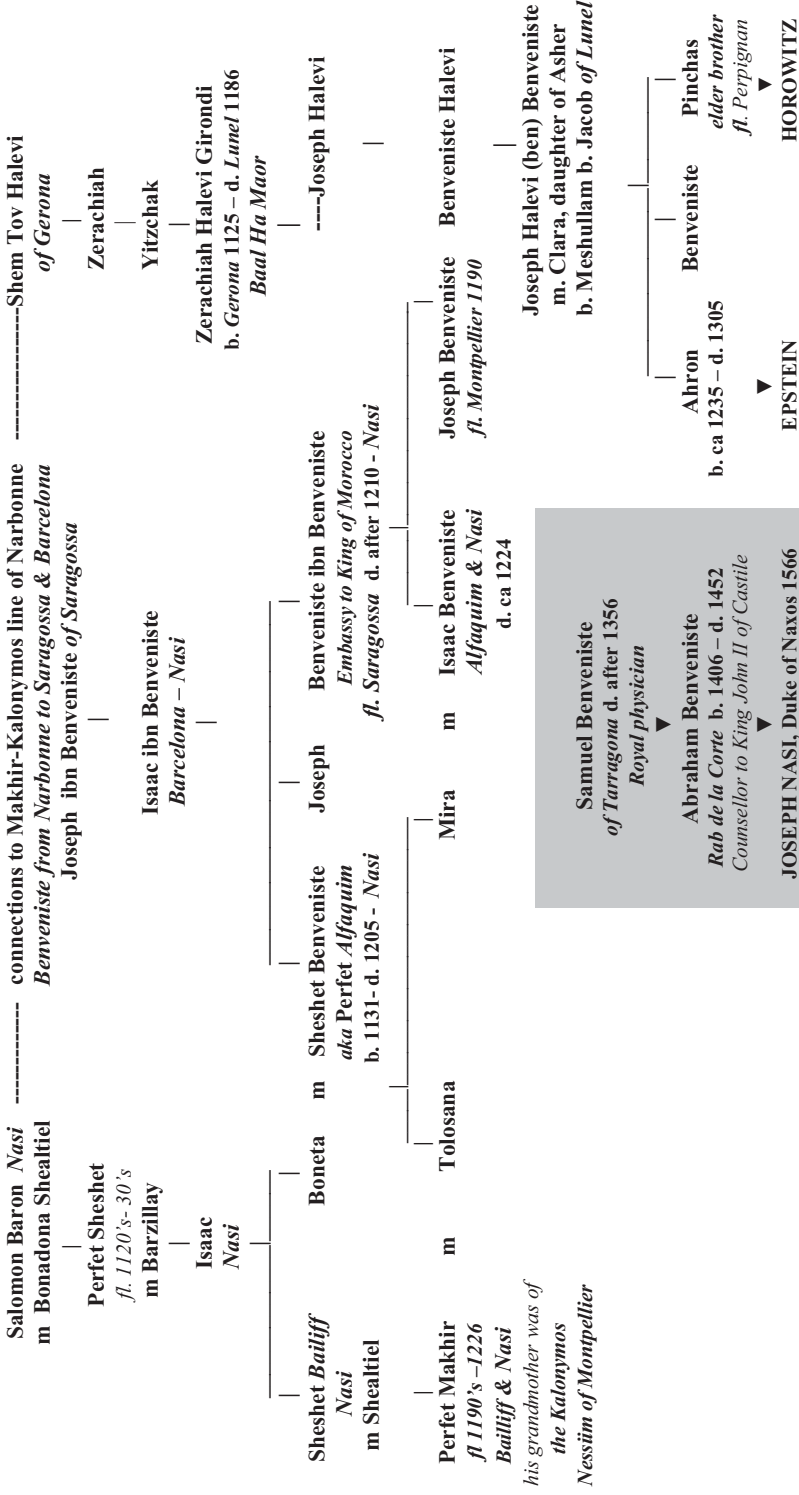
additional background is provided by web sites including:

Spira Family Genealogy, [freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~prohel/names/
Ba'al Shem Tov](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~prohel/names/Ba'alShemTov), www.tovste.info/Personalities/BaalShemTov.php
Susan K. Steeble, Two Tzaddiks (on Rebbe Pinchas and Rebbe Raphael),
www.twotzaddiks.org/part1.html
Abraham Heshel on The Chasidic Group of Czortkow,
www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Suchostaw/sl_czortkow_chasidic
Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapiro, www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Piotrkow/pit073.html

see also the following :

Glenn Dynner, Men of Silk, The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society (O.U.P., 2006)
Simon Hock, Die Familien Prags nach Epitaphien des alten Juedischen Friedhofes (Adolf
Alkalay, Pressburg, 892) – including Gelles and Gelles-Katz tombstones
Ahron Samuel ben Naftali Hirsch Katz, VeTzivah Hakohen (Belaya Tserkov, 1823) –
ancestral claims of the Katz family of Prague
Moshe Yair Weinstock, Tiferet Beit David (Jerusalem, 1968) –
ancestral claims on behalf of the Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona

Benveniste Nestim of Barcelona and Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona



Footnotes

The above chart focuses on Sheshet ben Isaac ben Joseph Benveniste, also called Perfet (Catalan for the Hebrew name Meshullam), his brother Benveniste ibn Benveniste and his nephew Isaac Benveniste. They were Jewish community leaders with the title of *Nasi* and also served Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona and succeeding Kings of Aragon in more than one capacity.

Their connections to other leading Jewish families such as the Shealtiel and Barzillay are indicated on the chart (Elka Klein, Jews, Christian Society, and Royal Power in Medieval Barcelona, Univ. of Michigan Press, 2006; Moshe Shealtiel-Gracian, Shealtiel, Academy Chicago Publishers, 2005).

A later Benveniste line (indicated against a grey background on the chart) runs to the family of Joseph Nasi, whose economic and political services to the Ottoman Empire were recognized when he was made Duke of Naxos in 1566 (Cecil Roth, The House of Nasi : Dona Gracia, p 13, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1948).

According to family traditions, the Epstein and Horowitz families descend respectively from Aharon and his elder brother Pinchas, the sons of Joseph Halevi (ben) Benveniste and his wife Clara, although some believe that a brother of Pinchas and Aharon, named Benveniste, was the progenitor of the Horowitz line (see Meir Wunder, Meorei Galicia, Vol. 6 : 450, Jerusalem 2005). Rabbi Aharon de na Clara ben Yosef Halevi of Barcelona in his book *BedeK Habayit* gave his paternal pedigree as follows:
Aharon Halevi b. Yosef b. Benveniste b. Yosef b. Zerachiah b. Shem Tov. Later scholars had *Zerachiah* as the son of *Yitzchak* son of *Zerachiah* (see Chayim Josef David Azulai, Shem Hagedolim, Jerusalem 1979, Vol.1 page 18; Itzhak Epstein, Epstein Research message 112 posted 31. 12.2002). So it appears that descent from Zerachiah ben Yitzchak Halevi Gironi to Aharon Halevi proceeded via Zerachiah's son Joseph to a Benveniste (grandfather of Aharon and Pinchas Halevi), and then to their father Joseph Halevi ben Benveniste (see also Henri Gross, Gallia Judaica, new edition, Philo Press, Amsterdam 1969 pp 330 et seq). A Joseph Benveniste is believed to have been the brother of the *Nasi* Isaac Benveniste (see Jewish Encyclopedia article on Benveniste and Neil Rosenstein, Ashkenazi rabbinic families, RAV-SIG online journal). This Isaac Benveniste, a distinguished leader of Aragonese Jewry, died at a mature age circa 1224 and is identified as a son of Benveniste ibn Benveniste (Elka Klein, *loc cit*). Aharon Halevi was born around 1235 to 1240 (H, Gross, *loc cit*) and one of his teachers was his elder brother Pinchas. Their father Joseph might have been born round about 1195-1205 so he could not be a brother of the *Nasi* Isaac ben Benveniste. However, a Joseph Benveniste is recorded as living in Montpellier around 1190. The connections indicated in the chart appear to reconcile most of the details in the above references.

Descent from Katzenellenbogen of Padua & Venice and Judah Loew of Prague

Saul ben Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen aka Saul Wahl 1545 -1617 Judah Loew of Prague ca 1525-1609 m Mirel Chayes –Altschuler

Judah Katzenellenbogen Isaac ben Samson Katz of Prague, d. 1624 m Voegele Loew d. 1629

Abraham Joshua Heschel of Cracow d 1663 m (2) Dinah Katzenellenbogen m (1) Naftali Katz of Lublin, d 1649

m (1) Miriam Lazars – see *BABAD chart*

Isaac Katz of Stepan m. Margolioth _____ _____ _____ _____

Isaiah Katz of Brody

Shprintze m Jacob Ashkenazi-Katzenellenbogen of Posen _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Bezalel Katz of Ostrog d 1717 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Menachem Meinisch Katz

Abraham of Posen and a daughter m Efraim Fischel of Ludmir d 1719 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Meir Horowitz of Tiktin d 1743 m daughter

daughter _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Isaac Dov Ber Margolioth Jacob of Ludmir d 1730 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Jacob Jokei Horowitz of Brody & Glogau d 1755

of Jastowitz m Katzenellenbogen _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Isaac Horowitz 1715-1767

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Jacob of Tlust Benjamin Bushka of Zamosc _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Nahum Zausmer

Abraham Mordecai Margolies Zwi Hirsch Zamosc 1740-1807 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

of Ustechko of Brody, Glogau, & Hamburg _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Reitze Babad d 1755 - *BABAD chart*

Zalman Berish Rottenberg Chaya m Aryeh Leib Berenstein _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

of Brodshin of Brody d 1788 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Gittel Hakohen Adlersberg Isaac Wolf Berenstein _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

daughter

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Menachem Nahum Zausmer

Miriam Rottenberg Margolies _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Yehuda Ahron Horowitz son of *Isaac Chayes of Brody* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Efraim Fischel Horowitz ca 1790 -1861 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Yehuda Ahron Horowitz of Sopotwina

moved to the Bukowina in 1858-59

ABD of Saniawitz – Mihaileni

ABD of Munkacz 1841-1860 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

m Miriam Rottenberg Margolies

Leiser Wahl of Tamobrzeg m Zlate Roisel of Nisko		Isaac Chaim Chajes of Kolomea m Beile		Efraim Fischel Horowitz	Miriam Margolies m Yehuda Ahron Horowitz
Shulim Wahl m Sarah Saffer		Sarah Matel Chajes m Eliezer Griffel of Nadworna		Sarah m David Isaac Gellis ca 1785-1870 of Glina & Brody	? Gittel m Hirsch Leib Weinstein died 1884 <u>ABD of Sopotwina</u>
Chawa Wahl 1877-1941	m	David Mendel Griffel 1875-1941		Nahum Uri Gelles 1852 - 1934 born at Narajow and <u>ABD of Sopotwina</u>	m Esther Weinstein 1861 - 1907 born in the Bukowina
Regina Griffel 1900-1954	m	David Isaac Gelles of Vienna, 1883-1964		----- Efraim Fischel Gelles 1879- Berta (Feige Rivka) 1881- David Isaac Gelles 1883- Hirsch Leib 1886 - Rosa 189?- Lotte 1895 - Max Gellis 1897 -	
		Edward Gelles			

Footnotes

- Efraim Fischel Gelles**, died at a young age – his wife was from the rabbinical Laufer family of Nadworna his son **Joseph Gelles** was considered for the succession to Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles, but a kinsman **Yoel Babad** was appointed ABD of Sopotwina – *see BABAD chart*
- Dr. David Isaac Gelles**, died 1964 – in his youth he studied at the **Munkacz** yeshiva - became advocate in Vienna (1916) married **Regina Griffel** (1900-1954), daughter of David Mendel Griffel (1875-1941) of Nadworna and Chawa **Wahl** (1877-1941)
Issue: Ludwig Gelles (1922-42) and **Edward Gelles**
[David Mendel Griffel was the eldest son of Eliezer Griffel (1850-1918) of Nadworna and Sarah Matel Chajes (died 1940), a daughter of **Isaac Chaim Chajes** of Kolomea (1823-1866), descendant of **Isaac Chajes of Brody**, died 1807]

Rabbis of Sopotwina near Stanislaw

Yehuda Ahron Horowitz - 1858 /59
Hirsch Leib Weinstein - 1884
Nahum Uri Gelles - 1934
Yoel Babad - 1941

Katzenellenbogen Descent

Isaac of Katzenellenbogen in Hesse – Nassau married a daughter of Jechiel Luria of Alsace (ABD of Brest-Litovsk, died ca 1470).

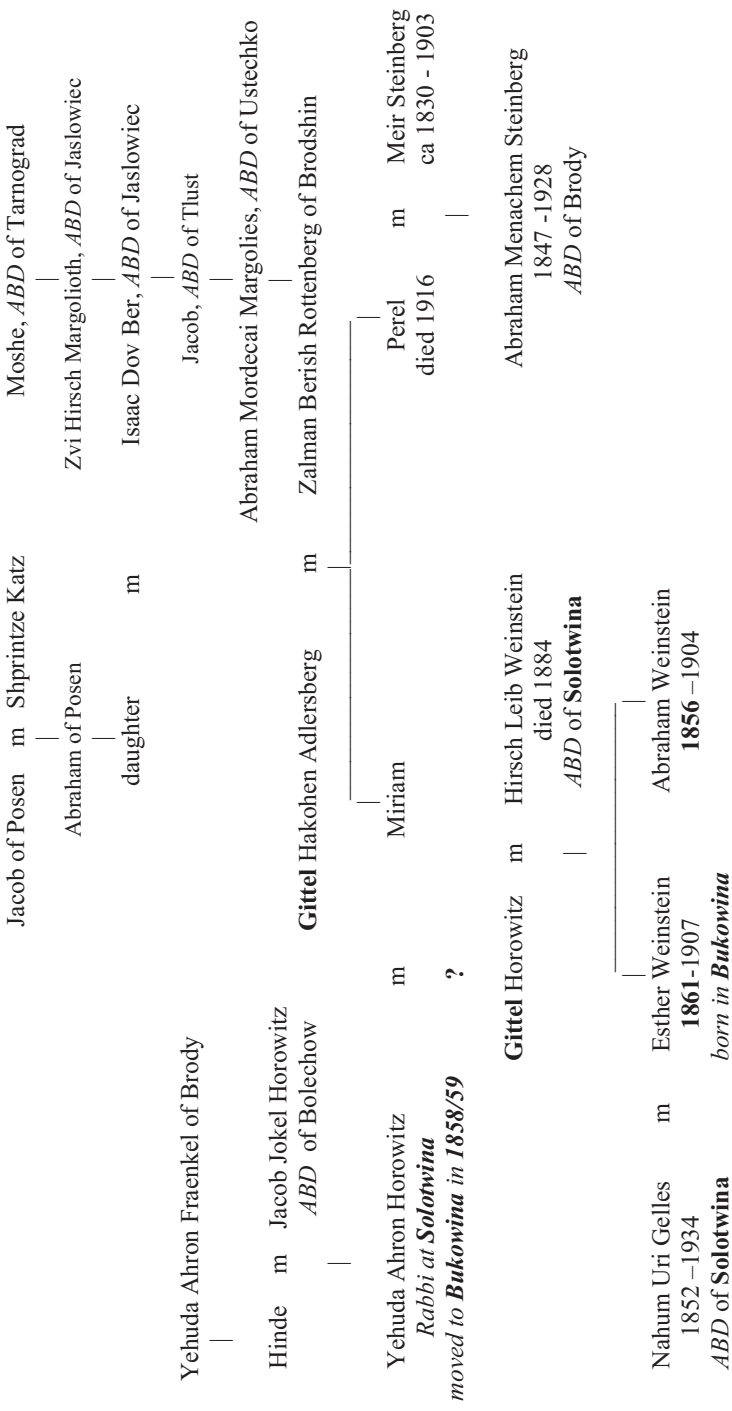
Their son Meir Katzenellenbogen (ABD of Padua, 1482 - 1565) married a granddaughter of Rabbi Judah Minz of Padua

Their son Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen (ABD of Padua and Venice, 1521-1597) married Abigail Yaffe.

Their son Saul, later known as Saul Wahl, (leader of Polish - Lithuanian Jewry, 1545-1617) married Deborah Drucker.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1596-1663), the Chief Rabbi of Cracow, was descended through his father from Meir Katzenellenbogen, while his mother and also his second wife Dinah Katzenellenbogen were grand-daughters of Saul Wahl (being daughters of Saul's sons Meir and Judah Wahl respectively).

A Margolies Connection



Footnotes

Solotwina was a little town near Stanislaw. Half way between lay Bohorodzany (known to the Jews as Brodshim). In these and other little *shetls* of the area appointments tended to favour those with Horowitz family connections.

Yehuda Ahron Horowitz was a son of Jacob Jokel Horowitz, ABD of Bolechow, by his third wife Hinde, daughter of Yehuda Ahron Fraenkel of Brody [Zvi Hirsch Horowitz, *Letoldoth Hakehilot BePolin*, p.110]. Rabbi Yehuda Ahron Horowitz lived in Solotwina until 1858/59 when he moved to Saniawitz (Mahaileni) in the neighbouring province of Bukowina [Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia*, Vol.2 : 220]. Around that time, Hirsch Leib Weinstein, who may have been his son-in-law, became ABD of Solotwina. The birth records of my father and of his elder sister at Mielnica Podolskaya state that their mother Esther Weinstein was born in 1861 in the Bukowina. The custom was for births to take place, whenever possible, at the home of the grandmother. The date and place of Esther's birth thus ties in with the date of removal of Yehuda Ahron Horowitz to the Bukowina.

The JewishGen JRI –Poland data base records the death of Esther's elder brother Abraham Weinstein at Kolomea in 1904. He was born in 1856 and the record gives his parents as Gittel and Hirsch Leib Weinstein of Solotwina.

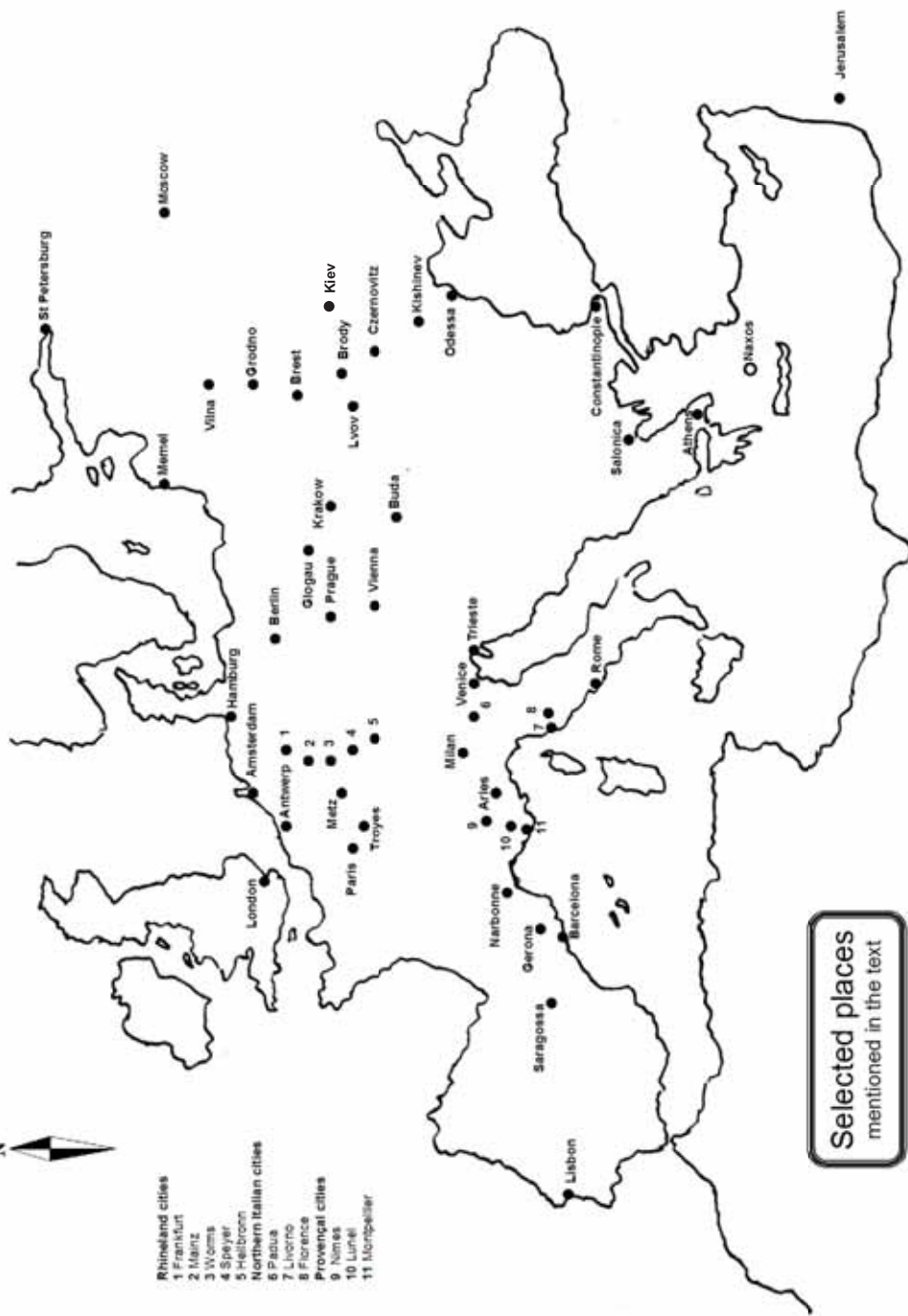
The wife of Yehuda Ahron Horowitz was Miriam, daughter of the wealthy Zalman Berish Rottenberg of Brodshin, son of Rabbi Abraham Mordecai Margolies [Meir Wunder, Vol 6 : 479]. The Margolies, some of whom claimed descent from the great 11th century scholar Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac), are supposed to have derived their name from a lady of the ancient Shor family called Margole (Pearl). Alexander Yoel Hakohen Adlersberg records that his aunt Gittel married Zalman Berish Rottenberg of Brodshin, who was a relative of Efraim Zalman Margoloth of Brody and also claimed descent from Rabbi Abraham Broda of Prague [*Magen Avos*, pp 8-9]. A part of the Margolies (Margoloth) rabbinical line in eastern Galicia is shown in the Table.

Isaac Dov Ber of Jaslowiec (Jaslowitz), son of Zvi Hirsch Margoloth married a grand-daughter or according to another source a daughter of Shprintze Katz and Jacob Ashkenazi – Katzenellenbogen of Posen. Shprintze, a daughter of Naftali Hirsch Katz of Frankfurt, was a descendant of Judah Loew and Miri Chayes-Altschuler of Prague as shown in Table 17 [Neil Rosenstein, *The Unbroken Chain*, pp 451, 467; Meir Wunder, *Elef Margoliot*, p. 20]

Perel Rottenberg (Margolies), who died in Vienna in 1916, was a sister of Miriam. She married Meir Steinberg and their son Abraham Menachem Mendel Steinberg was the distinguished Chief Rabbi of Brody from 1908 to 1928 [Meir Wunder, *loc cit*, Vol 5 : 161]. His correspondence with my grandfather is couched in terms of particular friendship. They were both adherents of Israel Friedman of Czortkow [see Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage*, p. 190].



- Rhineland cities
1 Frankfurt
2 Mainz
3 Worms
4 Speyer
5 Heilbronn
Northern Italian cities
6 Padua
7 L'Anno
8 Florence
Provençal cities
9 Limas
10 Lunel
11 Montpellier



Selected places
mentioned in the text

Chapter 2

Shapiro Connections

Charts

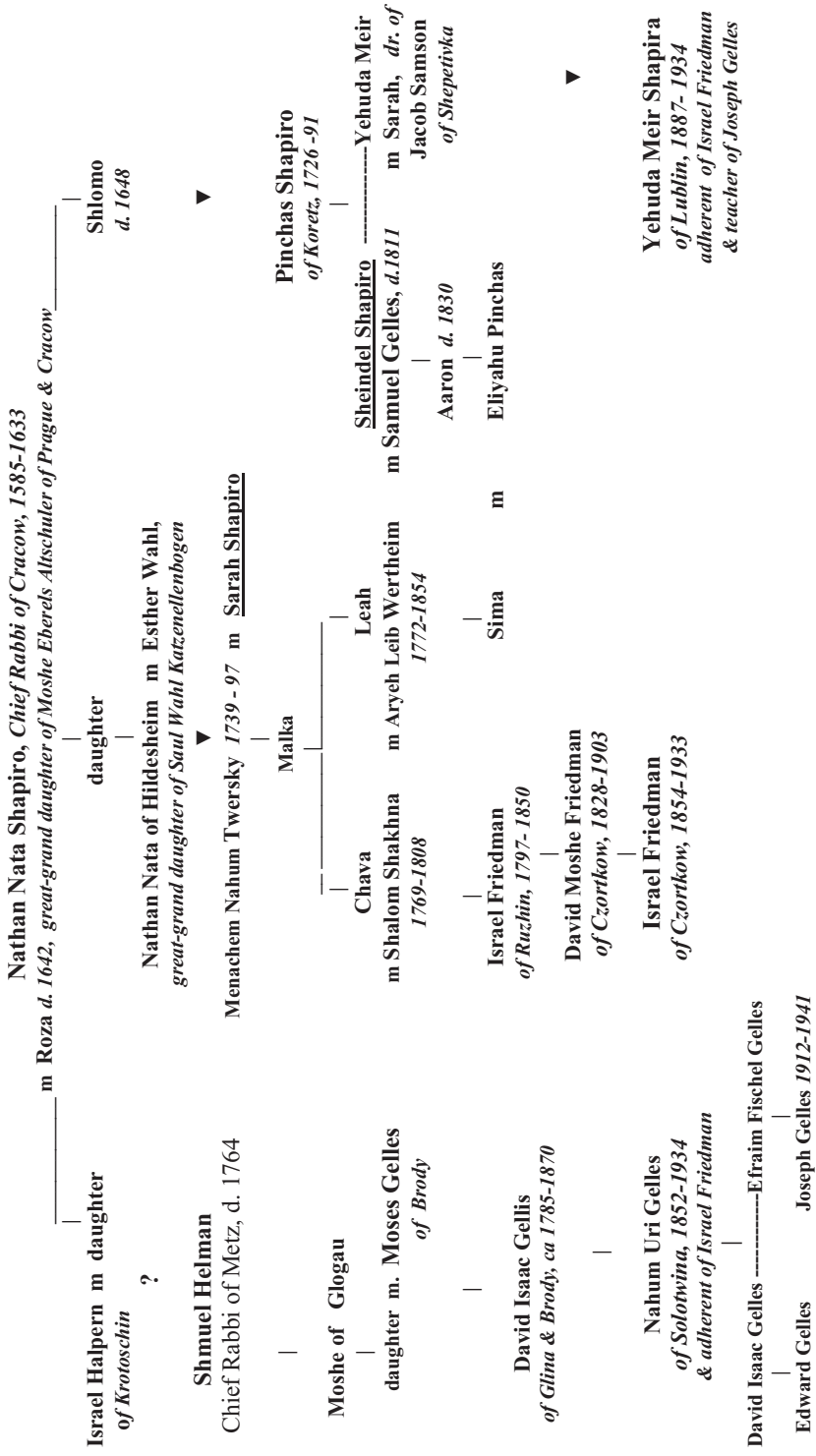
Descent from Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow

Ancestry of Yehuda Meir Shapira of Lublin

Ancestry of Israel Friedman of Czortkow

Hager Chasidic dynasty of Kosov and Vishnitz

The Shapiro Connection

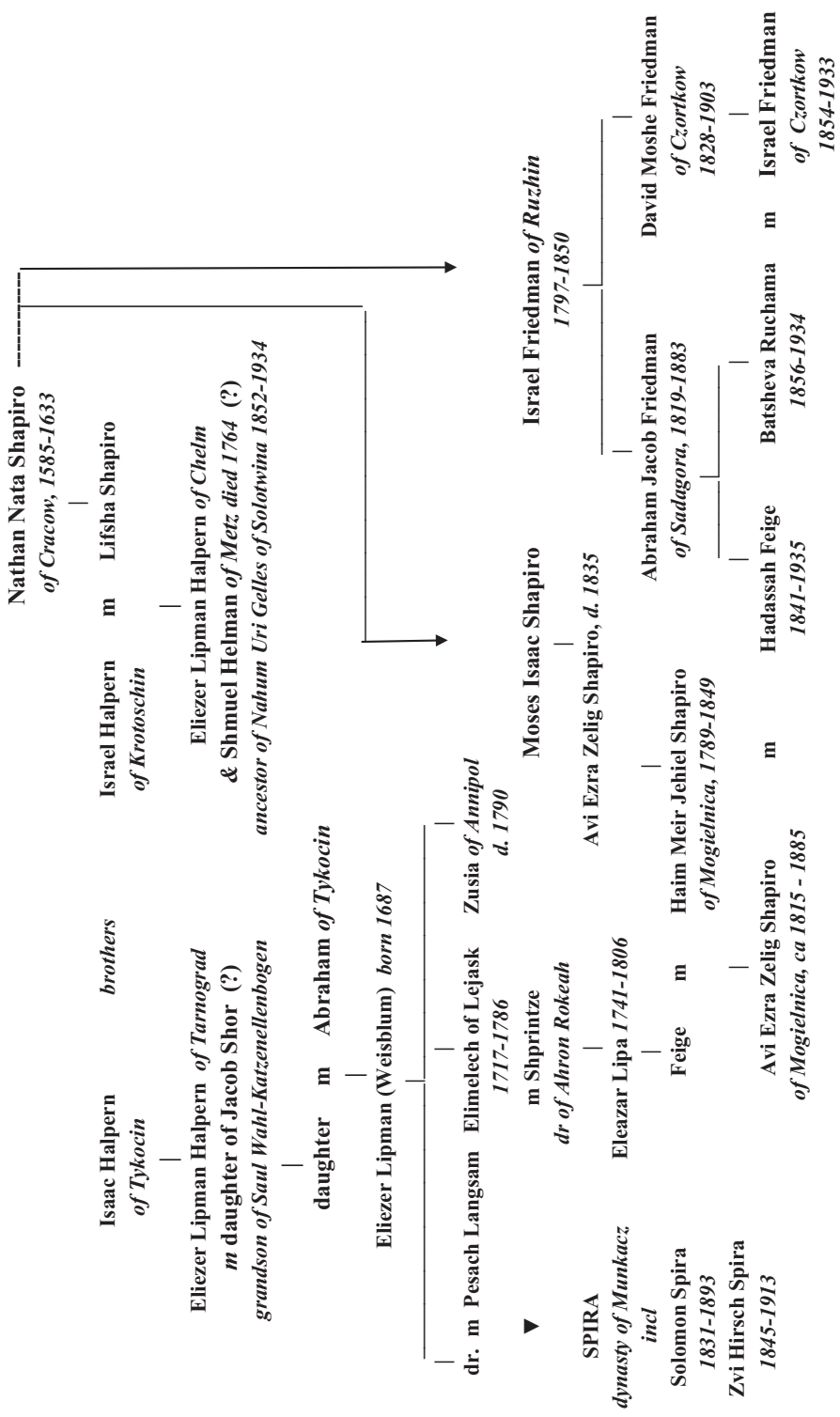


Footnotes

Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow was often referred to as the *Megaleh Amukot*, the title of his cabballistic work (Revealed Depths). Through his wife Roza there was a connection to the Chayes – Altschuler family. The famous 18th century Chasidic Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz was their direct descendant. The latter's only daughter Sarah Rachel Scheindel Shapiro married Samuel, son of Mordecai Gelles and grandson of Moses Gelles, a scholar of the Brody Klaus [Levi Grossman, *Shem U'She'erit*]. Another grandson and namesake of Moses Gelles aka Levush married a daughter of Moshe of Glogau, the eldest son of Shmuel Helman (Hillman), the Chief Rabbi of Metz [Shmuel Nach Gottlieb, *Ohalei Shem: Meir Wunder, Meorei Galicia* etc]. This younger Moses and Samuel Gelles were perhaps brothers or at least cousins [see the preceding chart and Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage*, Ch.29].

The great Chasidic dynasty founded by Israel Friedman of Ruzhin, one branch of which developed at Czortkow, was descended from Shalom Shakhna, who was a grandson of the Chasidic leader Dov Ber of Meseritz (1704-72) as well as a descendant of Meir Horowitz, (died 1743), the *Maharam of Tiktin*. Shalom Shakhna married Chava, whose Shapiro ancestry included Menachem Nahum Twersky and his wife Sarah Shapiro. Menachem Nahum was descended from Nathan Nata of Hildesheim, a grandson of Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow. Sarah Shapiro counted Nathan Nata of Grodno, the grandfather of the *Megaleh Amukot*, among her forebears [see the charts “Spira-Treves-Luria and the Shapiro (Spira) rabbinic line” and “Descent of the Friedmans of Czortkow”]. . So the Friedmans came from Rabbis of the Horowitz as well as the Shapiro lineages. A grandson of the dynasty's founder also called Israel Friedman was *Admur* of Czortkow but lived in Vienna from the time of the first world war until his death. My grandfather Nahum Uri Gelles and Yehudah Meir Shapira (a leading 20th century Polish Rabbi) were his close adherents. Yehuda Meir Shapira, a direct descendant of Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz, founded the prestigious Lublin Sages Yeshiva where he took my first cousin Joseph Gelles under his wing [Yehuda Meir Shapira, *Imrei Da'as*].

The Shapiro Connection – continued



Footnotes

The previous chart showed direct descent from Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow (the *Megaleh Amukot*) through the male line to Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz and then on to Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapiro of Lublin. It also indicated how the great Chasidic dynasty founded by Israel Friedman of Ruzhin was descended from Nathan Nata Shapiro and connected by marriage to the family of his descendant Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro.

Israel Friedman of Czortkow, the eponymous grandson of the Ruzhiner, married his cousin Batsheva Ruchama Friedman and her sister Hadassah Feige became the wife of Avi Ezra Zelig Shapiro of Mogielnica. Thus the Friedmans were linked to another Shapiro branch which also descended from the *Megaleh Amukot* [Levi Grossman, *Shem U' She' erit*, p.84]. The marriage gave rise to numerous descendants with many further Shapiro – Friedman marriages [Neil Rosenstein, *The Unbroken Chain*, pp 1142 et seq].

Aviezer Zelig Shapiro's father Haim Meir Jehiel founded the Mogielnica Shapiro dynasty through his marriage to Feige, the grand-daughter of the famous Chasidic Rabbi Elimelech of Lysansk (or Lejask), the author of *Noam Elimelech* and other works. Elimelech's wife was Shprintze, the daughter of Ahron Rokeah, a brother of Eleazar Rokeah, Rabbi of Amsterdam (died 1741). [Levi Grossman, *loc cit*; Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia*, Vol.2, p 562]. Elimelech and his brother Zusia of Annipol had many descendants who used the epithets (later family names) of Weisblum and Averbuch respectively. Haim Meir Jehiel Shapiro was the son of Avi Ezra Zelig Shapiro, a son of Moses Isaac Shapiro. This Avi Ezra was a son-in-law of another famous Chasidic sage, Israel, the Maggid (preacher) of Kosenice, who had been a pupil of Elimelech of Lejask. A sister of Elimelech married Pesach Langsam and that marriage led to the Chasidic Spira dynasty of Munkacz in Hungary. Among these were Solomon Spira and his son Zvi Hirsch Spira. The latter was Chief Rabbi of Munkacz when my father David, second son of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles of Sopotwina, was sent to study at the Munkacz Yeshiva. Zvi Hirsch Spira was married to a daughter of Hanania Horowitz of Ulanow, a cousin of the Horowitz connected with the Gelles family.

The father of Elimelech of Lejask was Eliezer Lipa or Lipman. His ancestry is given in the chart following Neil Rosenstein and Meir Wunder but other sources cast doubt on several links [see Meir Wunder, *loc cit*, Vol 2, pp 870-4, Vol.6, p. 666].

Eliezer Lipman of Tarnograd was a son of Isaac Halpern of Tykocin, whose brother Israel Halpern of Krotoschin married a daughter of the *Megaleh Amukot*. Shmuel Helman or Hillman, the Chief Rabbi of Mannheim and Metz, was a direct ancestor of my paternal Gelles line. He was traditionally believed to be a brother of Eliezer Lipman Halpern of Chelm and a son of Israel Halpern of Krotoschin. Doubts have also been raised about this connection, but there is firm evidence that this Rabbi of Metz was of the Halpern – Katzenellenbogen family nexus. So Gelles and Weisblum lines emerge from this chart as cousins of the Halpern connection [Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage*, Chapter 33 and *Family Connections* : *Gelles-Horowitz-Chajes*].



Yehuda Meir Shapira (Szapira)

1887 - 1934

Rabbi in Gliniany, Sanok, and Piotrkow-Tribunalski

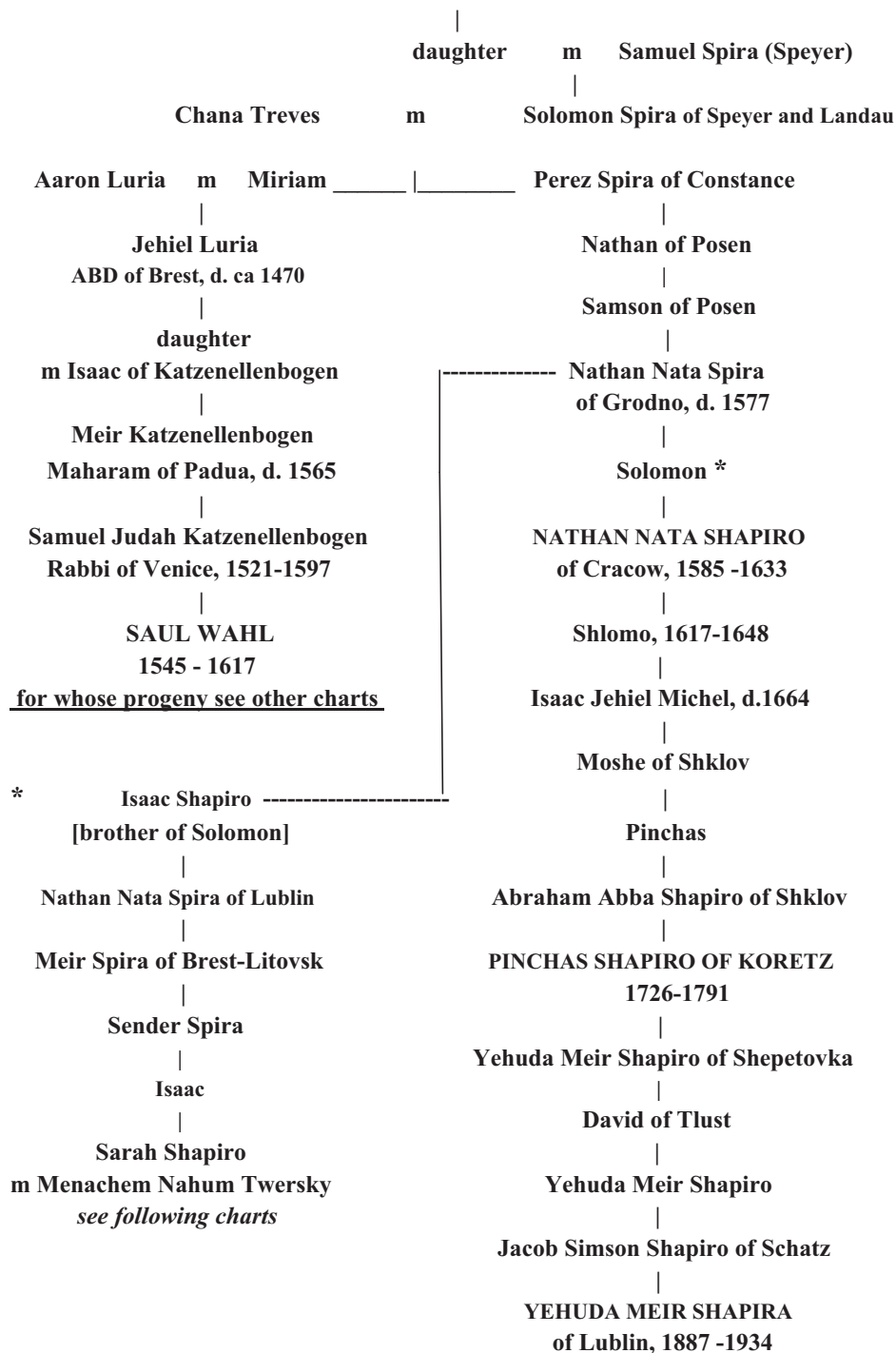
Chief Rabbi of Lublin 1928-1934

Founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshiva

Member of the Polish Parliament

Spira - Treves - Luria and the Shapiro (Spira) rabbinic line

Mattityahu Treves, Chief Rabbi of Paris, ca. 1325 -1385



Nathan Nata Shapiro (Spira) – entry in Jewish Encyclopedia 1904

23. Nathan Nata Spira:

Son of Samson Spira; rabbi at Grodno; died 1577. He wrote a supercommentary on the commentaries of Rashi and Elijah Mizrahi under the title "Imre Shefer," and a commentary on the Pentateuch, published by his son Isaac (Lublin, 1586 [1597]), and at the request of his pupils "Mebo She'arim" (Lublin, n.d.; Jessnitz, 1724), a commentary on Isaac Duran's "Sha'are Durah." The Zohar was edited not by him, as Fürst and others think, but by Nathan b. Isaac Spira (Lublin, 1624). Nathan Nata left two sons: Isaac (No. 12) and Israel Issachar (No. 14).

Bibliography: David Gans, *Zemah Dawid*, ed. Offenbach, p. 30a;
Jehiel Heilprin, *Seder ha-Dorot*, ed. Warsaw, i 248;
Azulai, *l.c.* i. 148;
De Rossi-Hamberger, *l.c.* p. 301;
Fuenn, *l.c.* p. 55;
Fürst, *l.c.* iii. 373;
Zedner, *Cat. Hebr. Books Brit. Mus.* p. 609.

24. Nathan Nata Spira:

Son of Solomon Spira and grandson of Nathan Nata Spira (No. 23); born about 1584; died July 20, 1633. In 1617 he was called to the rabbinate of Cracow, where, being well-to-do, he refused to accept a salary. He was gifted with an extraordinary memory, and devoted much time to the study of the Cabala. He wrote a cabalistic commentary on the prayer of Moses in Deut. iii. 24, and two prayers, under the title "Megalleh 'Amuḳḳot" (Cracow, 1637; Fürth, 1691). He published also novellæ to Alfasi's work which were printed with it (Amsterdam, 1720).

Bibliography: Azulai, *l.c.* i. 148;
De Rossi-Hamberger, *l.c.* p. 301;
Steinschneider, *l.c.* col. 2049;
Zunz, *Monatstage*, p. 41;
Zedner, *l.c.* p. 610;
I. M. Zunz, *Ir ha-Zedek*, pp. 52, 176 (contains Spira's epitaph).

25. Solomon Spira:

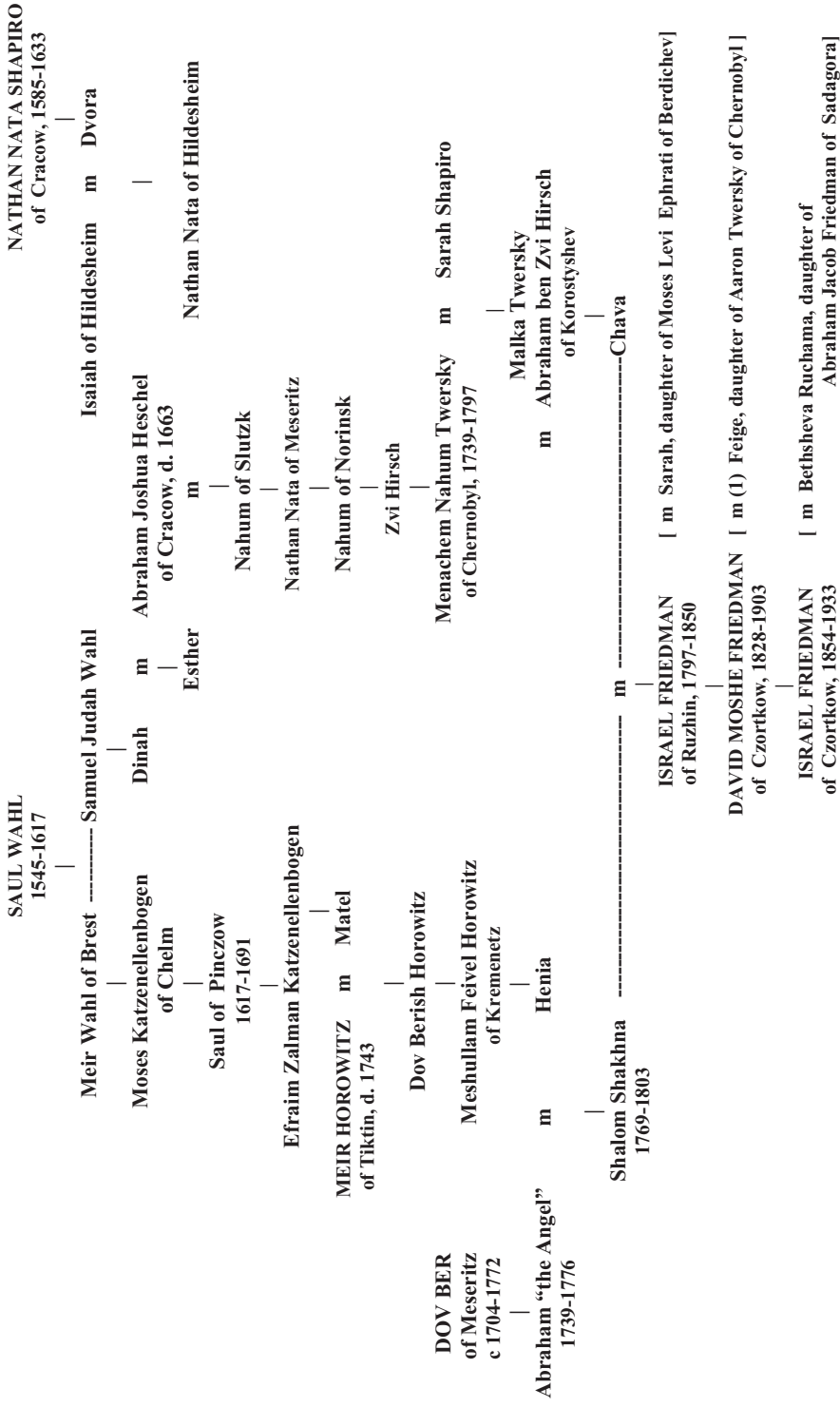
Son of Nathan Nata Spira (No. 24); born in 1616; slain by the Cossacks under Chmielnicki in 1648. He was rabbi of Satanow, and edited, together with his brother Moses, the work "Megalleh 'Amuḳḳot," to which he wrote additions and a preface.

Bibliography: Fuenn, *l.c.* p. 66.E. C. M. K.



Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Czortkow (1854 – 1933) resident in Vienna from 1914

Descent of the Friedmans of Czortkow



**Shapiro – Friedman connections of
Hager chasidic dynasty of Vishnitz**

Yisroel ben Eliezer
1698-1760
The Baal Shem Tov

Yaakov Koppel Chosid
(disciple of the Baal Shem Tov)

Pinchas **Shapiro**
of Koretz
1726-1791

Menachem Mendel **Hager** of Kosov
Ahavas Shalom
1768-1826

Yehuda Leib **Shapiro**
of Shepetivka

Zippora

m

Chaim **Hager** of Kosov
Toras Chaim

Israel **Friedmann**
of Ruzhin
1797-1850

Menachem Mendel **Hager**
1st Rebbe of Vizhnitz
Tzemach Tzadik
1830-1884

m

Miriam

Baruch **Hager**
2nd Rebbe of Vizhnitz
1848-1892
Imrei Baruch
m daughter of Aryeh Leib **Shapiro**
of Koretz

Footnotes

The history of the Vishnitzer – Tzaddikim dynasty, including their connections to the families of Rabbis Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz and Israel Friedman of Ruzhin, is recounted by Dr.N.M. Gelber in Hugo Gold's *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina*, Vol.1, pp 89-90 (Tel Aviv, Olamenu, 1958)

Rabbi Gershon ben Menachem Mendel **Hager** (1888 - 1954) was Rabbi of Tluste 1912-1914, when he moved to Vienna. He became a member of the Beth Din there and Rosh Yeshivah of the Tomche-Thora school. (cf. Rabbi Nahum Uri **Gelles** in "The Inner circle of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedmann in Vienna"). Rabbi Gershon **Hager** escaped to the USA in 1938. He was a first cousin twice removed of Menachem Mendel **Hager**, the 1st Vishnitzer Rebbe. see Rabbi Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia* (Jerusalem 1978 e seq) , Vol.2: 23-25 and Dr. Neil Rosenstein, *The Unbroken Chain* (CIS Publishers, New York-London-Jerusalem, 1990), p. 942.

My maternal great-grandfather, Eliezer **Griffel** of Nadworna (1850-1918) is described by Meir Wunder as one of the distinguished Chasidim of Vizhnitz and later of Otiniya. Eliezer Griffel was close to Rabbi Menachem Mendel **Hager**, the 1st Vizhnitzer Rebbe, and to Rabbi Meshullam Zusia Weissblum, a descendant of the famous Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk who lived in Nadworna (Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia*, Vol. 6 : 381-383). I have copies of the original birth records of Nadworna in which Griffel's first name is shown as Eliezer He was born in 1850 and his eldest son (my grandfather) David Mendel Griffel is shown in his birth record of 1875 as the son of Eliezer Griffel.

Eliezer (known as Zeida or "grandpa") was patriarch of the Griffel family and head of the Nadworna Jewish community. He was a highly successful business man with major interests in oil, timber, and other enterprises in Galicia also extending as far as Vienna. The family's close association with the Hagers included a Griffel – Hager marriage and, according to family tradition, both families were descended from David Halevi Segal (1586-1667), the Chief Rabbi of Lvov, who was a son-in-law of Rabbi Joel Sirkes of Cracow..

Eliezer Griffel and his wife Sarah Matel Chajes had ten children. Their two eldest sons, David Mendel and Isaac Chaim took over most of the Griffel enterprises. They served on the community council of Nadworna as representatives of the *Agudas Israel* (ultra-orthodox) party. (Edward Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage* (Vallentine Mitchell, London 2006), chapter 12, p 91 and chapter 15, pp 110, 112).

Chapter 3

Gelles – Shapiro

Moses the servant of God

Introduction

Moses Gelles of Brody and some of his descendants had connections to leading figures of the Chasidic movement from the 18th to the early 20th centuries.

The city of Brody gained in importance in the early 1700's as a trade entrepot between east and west. By mid-century the Jewish community had become one of the largest in Europe and developed a vibrant cultural life. The so-called Brody *Klaus* was a study group of Talmudic scholars and enjoyed considerable prestige. One of its members was my ancestor Moses Gelles, who probably died in the 1750's. So many records have been lost in the holocaust and in earlier times of trouble that we are lucky to have a fragment of the Records of the Brody Rabbinical Court (*Beth Din*) for the years 1808-1817. This manuscript is in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and contains valuable information on Moses Gelles and several generations of his descendants (1). It can be supplemented and to some extent dovetailed with surviving tombstone inscriptions (2), and with birth, marriage, death and property records for Brody to be found in the archives of Lviv (3). An analysis of these data is included in my books (4). It appears that the scholar Moses Menachem Mendel Levush married a daughter of a Rabbi S. Gelles of Brody and was thereafter called Moses Gelles. The name Levush can be shown to be indicative of descent from Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe of Prague (1530-1612), whose epithet was derived from the title of his major work, *The Levushim* (5).

The Rabbi S. Gelles just referred to may have been Shmuel Gelles, the ABD (*Av Beth Din* or head of the rabbinical court) of Siemiatycze. He was a great-grandson of Uri Feivush, the Chief Rabbi of Vilna, thought to be the rabbi of that name who became *Nasi* or head of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem near the end of his life in the 1650's (6).

Moses and Samuel – two grandsons of Moses Gelles

Some of the children and grandchildren of Moses Gelles used the epithet Levush as an alternative name, or side by side with the family name Gelles. The three sons of Moses Gelles shown on the first appended chart were Michel Levush, whose son Mordecai Levush married a daughter of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz (7), Joseph Gelles *Vaskievonie*, who ran the family chandlery or waxworks, and finally Mordecai Gelles, who was the father of Rabbi Samuel

Moses Gelles of the Brody Klaus had a grandson who married a daughter of Moshe of Glogau, the eldest son of Shmuel Helman, the Chief Rabbi of Metz. This younger Moses Gelles was perhaps a brother of Samuel or at least his cousin (8). From Moses a line of descent goes via Rabbis David Isaac and Nahum Uri to my father Dr. David Isaac Gelles. My grandfather and his father were close to the Friedman Chasidic dynasty of Czortkow. The Friedmans and the venerable Shapiro rabbinical line both go back to Nathan Nata Shapiro (1585-1633), a Chief Rabbi of Cracow, and to his grandfather Nathan Nata of Grodno (died 1577) (9). A direct Shapiro descendant, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz and Shepetivka (1726-1791) was a towering figure in the Chasidic movement that swept through eastern Europe in the 18th century (10). Chasidism remains a vibrant part of Judaism, as exemplified at the present time by the world-wide Chabad -Lubavich movement and many traditional groups.. Pinchas Shapiro was of the generation following that of the founder, Israel ben Eliezer (1698-1760), who was known as the *Baal ShemTov* (master of the good name).

The Gelles – Shapiro line

The connection between the Gelles and Shapiro rabbinical lines includes the marriage of Samuel Gelles (d.1811) to a daughter of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. Several generations later, my first cousin Joseph Gelles (1912-1941) studied under Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887-1934), the distinguished founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshivah, who was a direct descendant of Rabbi Pinchas (11). My grandfather Nahum Uri Gelles and Yehuda Meir Shapira were both adherents of the Czortkower Rebbe Israel Friedman (1854-1933). Some of these connections are shown on the first chart of the previous chapter.

The Gelles – Shapiro marriage is well documented. Rabbi Levi Grossman noted that “Rachel Sheindel, daughter of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, married Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi Mordecai Gelles, son of Rabbi Moshe Gelles, one of the scholars of the Brody Klaus, whose epitaph refers to him as **Moses the servant of God** “ (12).

Pinchas Shapiro moved from Koretz to nearby Shepetivka in his later years. Not far away were Polonnoye and Koniow (Kunev). The latter was a few miles to the south-west of Meseritz and Ostrog, *shtetls* that also featured in the lives of the Chasidic leaders. Further to the south was Medzibozh, the home for many years of the Baal Shem Tov.

Samuel Gelles of Koniow became Av Beth Din of Kalnibolet (Katerynopol) with responsibilities in a substantial surrounding area situated about 100 miles SSE of Kiev (13,14). This area included Zvenigorodka, Talnoye, Shpola, and Mokra Kalyhirka. The Jewish names for these towns were Kalnibolet or Kalnibolota, Zvenigorodka, Tolna, Shpole, and Kalerka. The distances between them were of the order of 10 to 20 miles, and in the later 19th century they severally harboured several thousand Jews. Samuel’s family held this rabbinical post in direct line of succession for five generations. The letters of appointment

of himself and of his grandson Eliyahu Pinchas are reproduced in the book of the sayings of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. It appears that Samuel obtained this post with the backing of Rabbi Jacob Samson of Shepetivka, whose daughter Sarah had married Rabbi Yehuda Meir, the son of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro (15-17).

Samuel and his son Ahron were followed by Eliyahu Pinchas and then by Menachem Nahum, who adopted the name Polonsky, presumably from the district of Polonnoye or Polonne, the Volhynian town lying between Shepetivka and Berdichev. Menachem Nahum's son, Abraham Isaac Polonsky, was the fifth incumbent of the line (14-18).

Books touching on the Gelles – Shapiro line include the works of Rabbi Samson Aaron Polonsky, son of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Polonsky, and of Rabbi Matityahu Yechezkiel Guttman, who was a descendant of Eliyahu Pinchas Gelles and his wife Sima Wertheim, as well as of the famous Chasidic Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berdichev (14,19).

The known ancestral connections of the Gelles line, the status of Moses Gelles as a noted scholar, and tombstone inscriptions of his descendants that include phrases such as “of distinguished lineage “ or “descendant of Moses Gelles of the Brody *Klaus* ” indicate a *Yichus* (pedigree) in keeping with the marriages shown on the charts. Glenn Dynner in his recent book discusses the importance of family *Yichus*, to Jews in general and to Chasidic leaders including Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz in particular (13).

Moses Gelles – the servant of God

Moses Gelles of Brody clearly had a standing beyond the ambit of his community, but the available records could not throw additional light on his life in Brody. An intriguing clue to his later movements comes from *Shivhei HaBaal Shem Tov*, the collection of stories about the *Besht* and his disciples

first published in 1815 (20). I am indebted to my Hebrew translator Yissochor Marmorstein for drawing my attention to a passage about an episode in the Baal Shem Tov's travels and for subsequent correspondence on the subject.

“ He was proceeding from Polonnoye to a “new town” The road passed its Jewish cemetery and the Baal Shem Tov perceived a great pillar of fire over one of the graves. He sent his attendant to look at the tombstone and he found that it said a Tzaddik (a wholly righteous man) was buried there who was described as “Moshe the servant of God “

The authors of a recent edited English translation of the collected tales tentatively identify the “new town” with Novograd Volynsky (formerly Zviagel, known as Zvihl to the Jews), situated about 30 miles north of Polonnoye (21).

Could this have been the grave of the scholar, Moses Gelles of Brody ? Local enquiries confirm that it would be a miracle if the site could now be located, let alone its tombstone.

Rabbis were very mobile in earlier times. They travelled great distances to fulfil professional engagements, to visit other rabbis, or for family reasons. The Baal Shem Tov himself had lived for some time in Brody, and married the daughter of a rabbi there, before settling at Medzhiboz not far from Polonnoye. We recall that the later descendants of Samuel Gelles adopted the name of Polonsky, from family connections with Polonnoye.

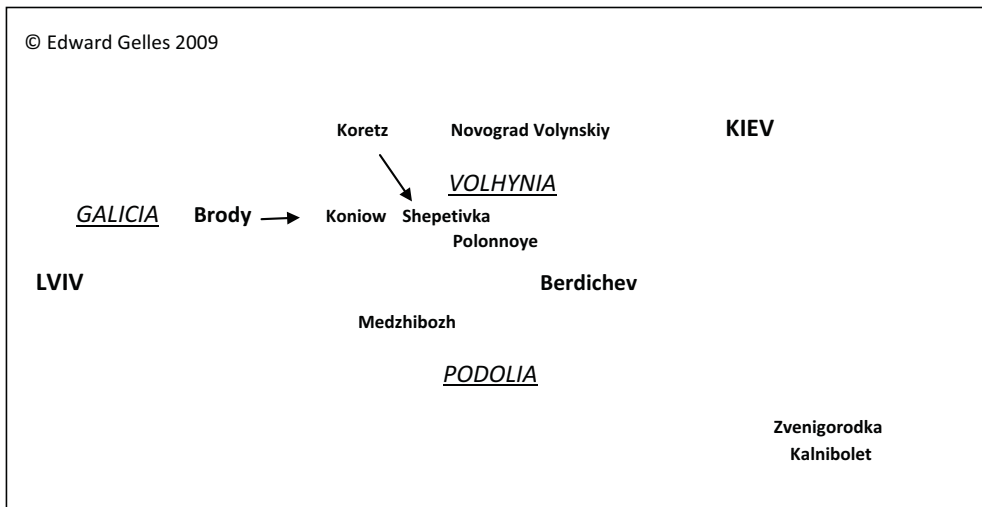
The sketch indicates the relative locations of Lviv (Lemberg) and the city of Brody in eastern Galicia, and the towns of Novograd Volynskiy, Koretz, Shepetivka, Koniow, and Polonnoye in the neighbouring province of Volhynia. Berdichev and also the area around Kalnibolet and Zvenigorodka are indicated in the provinces that border Volhynia to the south. All this land is now part of the Ukraine.

After the 18th century partitions of Poland, Galicia was for a lengthy period a part of Austria, while Volhynia and Podolia were for some time within the Russian Empire. This is the geographical background to family connections over a period of time that saw many political upheavals and frontier changes.

Summary and Conclusion

From Moses Gelles, a scholar of the Brody Klaus, several rabbinic lines take their descent. These include a Galician line from his grandson Moses Gelles to my grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles of Solotwina near Stanislau. The last rabbi of this Gelles line was Nahum Uri's grandson and my first cousin Josef Gelles, whose tragic life story has recently emerged (22). There are links of this line with the Friedman Chasidic leaders of Czortkow and with rabbis of the ancient Shapiro line. Our Gelles cousins in the Ukraine descend from another grandson of Moses Gelles of the Klaus. This was Rabbi Samuel, who married the only daughter of the great Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz and Shepetivka. The present study brings out the links between these two lines and connections with other Chasidic leaders

A Lineage descended from Moses Gelles of Brody and Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz



Notes

- (1) Pinkas of the Beth Din of Brody. Manuscript BN 4037 in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
- (2) The Brody tombstones include that of my great-grandfather Rabbi David Isaac Gellis. a photograph of which was kindly made available to me by Rabbi Dov Weber of New York. The inscription indicates his Chasidic connections in similar terms to those on the stone of my grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles in Vienna (4, 8). Other Brody tombstone inscriptions include that of Aryeh Leibish “a young man of distinguished family”, a son of Rabbi Chaim Naftali Gelles, and of Leah Gelles, “a descendant of Moses Gelles of the Brody Klaus” (see the first appended chart.
- (3) Brody vital records. Extensive searches in the Lviv Archives were carried out for me by Alexander Dunai and covered birth, marriage, death, and property records for Gelles – Levush from the late 18th to the late 19th century (4).
- (4) Edward Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage : European Roots of a Jewish Family* (Valentine Mitchell, London 2006). Referred to as **AL**.
Family Connections : Gelles-Horowitz- Chayes (Shaker Publishing B..V., The Netherlands, 2008). Referred to as **FC**.
- (5) Edward Gelles, Finding Rabbi Moses Gelles, *Avotaynu*, xviii, No.1, Spring 2002. Jewish Community Life in Brody, *Sharsheret Hadorot*, Vol. 18, No.4, Nov 2004
- (6) Hillel Noach Steinschneider, *Ir Vilna* (Wilna, 1900), pp. 3-4
David Tebele Efrati, *Toldot Anshei Shem* (Warsaw, 1875), pp. 35-38
- (7) **AL**, *loc cit.* p. 215. See Table 27. “Zundel Ramraz”
Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz was grandfather of Shalom Rokeah, the first Grand Rabbi of the Belz Chasidic dynasty.
- (8) **AL**, *loc cit.*, pp 19-20. Figures 3, 4, and 5 showing the tombstones of my father and grandfather in Vienna, and of my great-grandfather . The inscription on the latter gives my great-great-grandfather as Rabbi Moses Gelles.
He was a grandson of Moses Gelles, the scholar of the Brody Klaus, of whose three sons Michel and his immediate descendants used the name Levush, Joseph Gelles had a son called Moses Gershon, and Mordecai, the father of Samuel, was therefore possibly also the father of my great-great-grandfather Moses.
- (9) The second chart is adapted from **FC**, *loc cit* Table 3.
The Gelles connection to Moshe of Glogau and Shmuel Hillman of Metz is given in **FC**, Table 4, taken from Shmuel Noach Gottlieb, *Ohalei Shem* (Pinsk, 1912), pp 261-262. Shapiro, Friedman, and Gelles have a common ancestral Shapiro connection. My grandfather was close, in life and death, to Rabbi Israel Friedman of Czortkow, **FC**, *loc cit* Table 6.
- (10) Martin Buber, *Die Erzählungen der Chasidim* (Zurich, Manesse Verlag, Consett & Huber, 1949).
Rabbi Pinchas ben Abraham Abba Shapiro of Koretz, article in *Encyclopedia Judaica*.
Susan K. Steeble, *Two Tzaddiks : The Teachings of Rebbe Pinchas of Koretz and of his disciple Rebbe Raphael of Bershad* < www.twotzaddiks.org/

- (11) Ben Giladi (ed), *A Tale of one City : Piotrkow Trybunalski, Poland* (New York, 1991) pp.73-78. Profile of Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887- 1934), founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshiva.
Yehuda Meir Shapira, *Imrei Da'as* (Bnei Brak, Israel, 1990)
(the list of students in the appendix to this work contains the name of Josef Gelles, son of Ehraim Fischel Gelles of Solotwina - see also ref. 20)
- (12) Levi Grossman, *Shem U' She'erith* (Tel-Aviv, 1943), p. 92-93
Refers to the epitaph of Moses Gelles, the scholar of the Brody Klaus, whose grandson Rabbi Samuel married Sarah Rachel Scheindel Shapiro.
Details are given of five generations of this couple's descendants:
Their son Rabbi Ahron married Henya, daughter of Rabbi Daniel David, son of Rabbi Shemarya of Verchifka, and their son Rabbi Eliyahu Pinchas married Sima, a daughter of Rabbi Aryeh Leib Wertheim of Bendery. Their son Rabbi Menachem Nachum was the father of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Polonsky, the fifth rabbi of the line. A brother of Menachem Nachum was Rabbi David Samuel whose marriage formed a link to Rabbi Levi Isaak of Berdichev.
Links of the Gelles – Shapiro line with the Heilprins include the marriage of a daughter of Samuel and Scheindel to Rabbi Abraham Halpern of Sudilkov (**AL**, table 36). A daughter of Eliyahu Pinchas and Sima, named Chana Chava, married Rabbi Israel Nachman Halpern of Brzezany, who became ABD of Zvenigorodka and later of Odessa (died 1870).
- (13) Glenn Dynner, *Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (Oxford University Press, 2006), Appendix 1, pp 234-235
Refers to Rabbi Samuel, Av Beth Din of Koniow, Kolinblat, and Zwenigorodka as the husband of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro's daughter.
The locations of Kalnibolet (Katerynopol) and Zvenigorodka are indicated on the sketch map. Koniow is quite close to Shepetivka (see 15 below for the possible sequence of Rabbi Samuel's marriage and appointments).
Dynner's book contains a valuable discussion of *Yichus* under the heading of "The social composition of Hasidic leadership" pp. 117-135
- (14) Samson Ahron Polonsky, *Chidushei Horav Miteplik* (Jerusalem, 1984)
"Rabbi Shimshon Ahron Polonsky, son of Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Polonsky, son of Rabbi Menachem Nahum, son of Rabbi Eliyahu, son of Rabbi Ahron, son of Rabbi Samuel of Kolnibolet (son-in-law of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz), son of Rabbi Mordecai Gelles of Brody, son of Rabbi Moshe Gelles, member of the famous Brody Klaus".
- (15) Abraham Joshua Heschel, Yiwo Bletter, Vol. 36, p. 124 *et seq.* *Unbekannte Dokumente zu der Geschichte des Hasidus*
Yechezkel Shraga Frankel (ed), *Imrei Pinchas* (Benei Brak, Israel, 2003)
Vol.2, pp 486-488.
AL , *loc cit*. The letters of appointment of Rabbi Samuel (1793) and of his grandson Rabbi Eliyahu Pinchas (1831) are reproduced in Figures 42 and 43.
It is stated in the second document that the initial appointment of Rabbi Samuel was at the behest of Rabbi Jacob Samson of Shepetivka, who had ordained him.

This famous Rabbi of Shepetivka was a *mehutan* of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz, his daughter Sarah having married the latter's son, Rabbi Yehuda Meir. It would appear from the times and dates given in the Yiwo Bletter and the letters of appointment that Rabbi Samuel and his bride were already living in Kolnibolet prior to the date of the official appointment in 1793. Perhaps the marriage took place around 1788-89 (when the bride was 16-17 years of age) and 2 years or so before the death of Rabbi Pinchas.

It is also mentioned in the book that Rabbi Pinchas said "I am giving a protective gift to the Ukraine, my only daughter, to stop Haidamaks [bands of Cossacks and peasantry] from inflicting damage there, and so it was".

According to Imrei Pinchas, Vol. 2, pages 171 and 485, two sons of Rabbi Pinchas were connected by marriage to Polonnoye - Rabbi Moshe's wife was the daughter of Rabbi Isaac, a dayan (judge) in that town, and Rabbi Isaac Ezekiel married a daughter of Rabbi Josef, the Maggid (preacher) of Polonnoye.

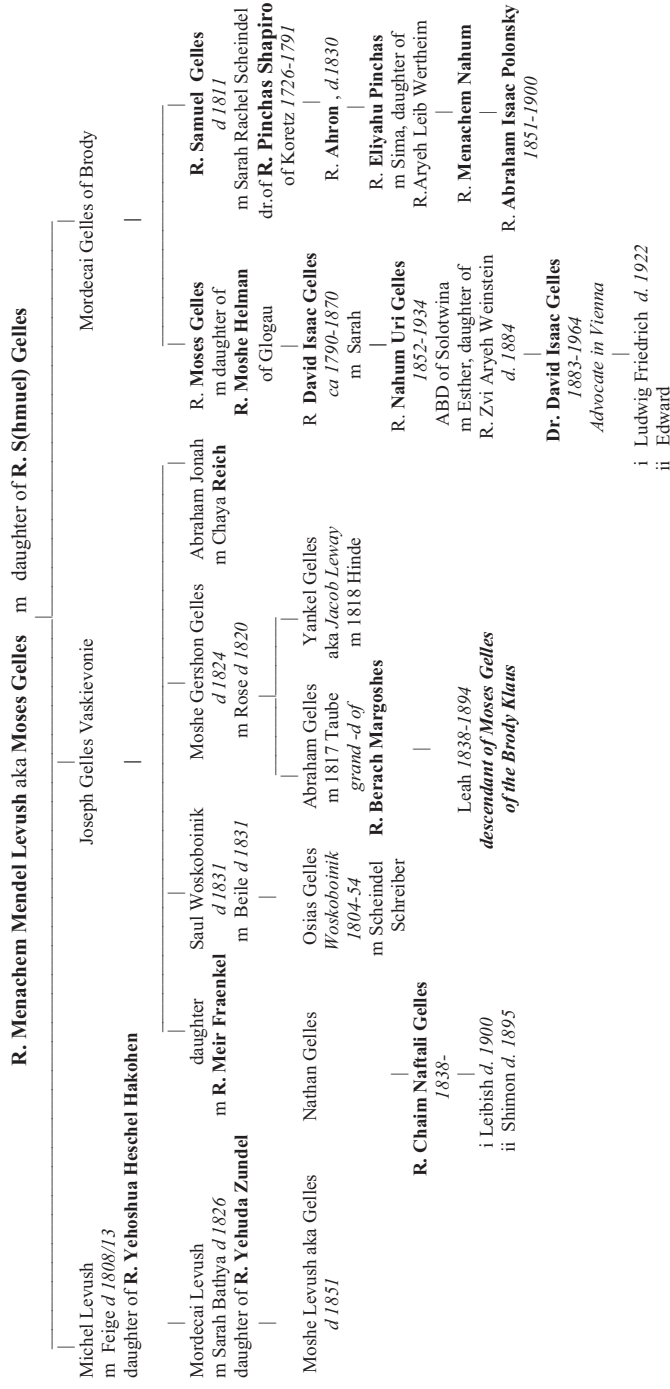
(Glenn Dynner, reference 13, v.s., p.235 gives Rabbi Moshe of Slavuta's father-in-law Isaac as a rabbinical judge in Prague and son of Saul, ABD of Cracow. Isaac's children included Rachel, wife of the above-mentioned Rabbi Moshe Shapiro. She was a sister of the tzaddik Rabbi Gedaliya of Iliniec (near Polonnoye), a disciple of Rabbi Dov Ber of Meseritz)

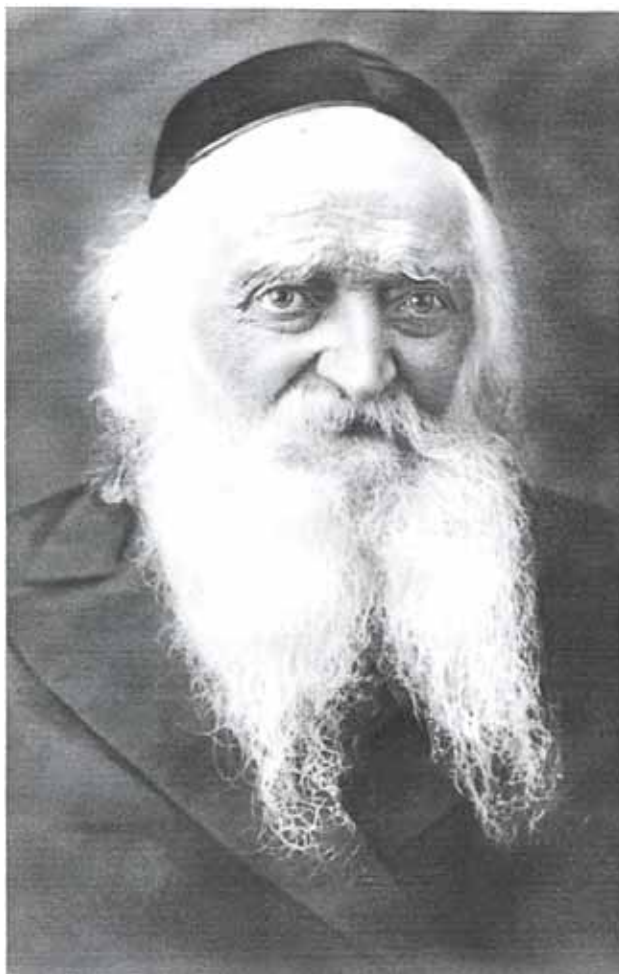
- (16) Menachem M. Brayer, *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature. A Psychohistorical Perspective* (KTAV Publishing, 1986), note on p. 233 Sarah, the daughter of Rabbi Jacob Samson of Shepetivka and wife of Yehuda Meir Shapiro, son of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, was extolled by the Chasidic sage Meir of Przemyslany as "the woman who has a say in heaven" and her *mehutan* Rabbi Israel Friedman of Ruzhin described her as a "tzaddekhet [female tzaddik] with no equal in the entire world". She was the sister-in-law of Rachel Sheindel Shapiro and her husband Rabbi Samuel Gelles.
- (17) Grossman, Shem U' She'erith, *loc cit*, p. 95 Zippora, a daughter of Yehuda Meir Shapiro and Sarah, married Chaim Hager of Kosov, and their son Menachem Mendel Hager (1830-1884), the 1st Rebbe of the Chasidic Vishnitz dynasty married Miriam, daughter of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, thus linking the families of Rabbis Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz and Israel Friedman of Ruzhin.
- (18) Harry W Rabinowitz, *Hasidism : The Movement and its Masters.* (Jason Aaronson, 1988). Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz married firstly Trani Weil [a descendant of Rabbi Moshe Meir Weil, known as the Maharam Ashkenazi Weil of Stühlingen], by whom he had two sons, Rabbi Judah Meir of Shepetivka and Rabbi Moses of Slavuta. This book suggests that Rabbi Pinchas married secondly Yuta, and that his other three sons and his only daughter Sarah Rachel Scheindel were from the second marriage
- (19) Matityahu Yechezkiel Guttman, *Rabbi Pinchas MiKoretz* (Tel-Aviv, 1950) The author was a descendant of Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berdichev (1740-1810) and of Rabbi Eliyahu Pinchas (Gelles), whose wife Sima was a daughter of Rabbi Aryeh Leib Wertheim of Bendery (died 1854), the head of a Chasidic line in Bessarabia. see **AL**, *loc cit.*, Table 34
- (20) Shivhei HaBaal Shem Tov (*Tales of the Baal Shem Tov - a Hebrew edition* published in Jerusalem, 1969), p.142

- (21) Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, edited English translation
In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov (Schocken Books, New York, 1984)
Tale No 216 (pp 219-220) and notes on pp 339-340
- (22) Edward Gelles, End of the Gelles rabbinic line. *The Galitzianer*, Vol.16, No.1,
November 2008 (see ref.11)

Moses Gelles, a Scholar of the Brody Klaus

Partial family tree showing some rabbinical connections





Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles (1852-1934)

Chapter 4

Gelles – Friedman

The Inner Circle of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedmann in Vienna

Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles was born at Narayow in Austrian Galicia in 1852 and died in Vienna in 1934. He was the son of Rabbi David Isaac Gelles of Glina and Brody and a lineal descendant of Moses Gelles, a scholar of the important study group, the Brody *Klaus*. Moses Gelles flourished at the time the Chasidic movement began its sweep through eastern Europe. Its leader was Israel ben Eliezer (1698-1760), who was known as the *Baal Shem Tov* or “master of the good name”. One of the most important Chasidic rabbis of the next generation was Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz (1726-1791). He married his only daughter to Samuel, a grandson of Moses Gelles of the *Klaus*. This couple were the progenitors of a line of cousins who were rabbis in the Ukraine. Another grandson of Moses Gelles married a granddaughter of Samuel Hillman, the Chief Rabbi of Metz (died 1764). This union gave rise to the line leading to my grandfather, Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles.

The Shapiro marriage and other Chasidic connections of the Gelles family are discussed in my article entitled “Moses the servant of God” (1). A chart in that article indicates the connections of the Gelles, Shapiro, and Friedmann families. The Friedmanns were one of the important dynasties of Chasidic leaders and attracted a large and devoted following, first at Ruzhin, and later at Sadagora, Czortkow and other towns.

The grandson of the founder Israel of Ruzhin was Israel Friedmann of Czortkow (1854-1933). He moved to the safety of the Imperial capital at the outbreak of the first world war when Galicia became the battle ground between the Austrian

and Russian armies. He established his court in Vienna and remained there until the end of his life. Many other rabbis gathered in the city at that time.

My grandfather was Av Beth Din (head of the rabbinical court) of Solotwina and surrounding villages situated near Stanislau in eastern Galicia. He held this post for 50 years from 1884 until his death. I had always assumed that he returned to Solotwina at the end of WW1, but I have now gathered evidence that he stayed in Vienna until the mid 1920's, while a substitute was carrying out rabbinical duties in Solotwina and apparently receiving, at least for a time, some subvention from him (2).

Galicia became part of a reconstituted Polish Republic at the end of the war, and rabbis who had been loyal Austrian subjects may have found the atmosphere in Vienna more congenial for their intensely active religious life. Vienna had a large Jewish community that had received thousands of refugees from the east, many of whom would undoubtedly have come from my grandfather's home ground.

An extract from *Neue National-Zeitung* published in Vienna shortly after the outbreak of the war describes the plight of Galician Jews fleeing before the advancing Russian armies and contains an appeal from a committee of the leading Galician rabbis including Israel Friedmann of Czortkow and my grandfather Nahum Gelles of Solotwina. (3)

In my previous publications I mentioned the close ties between my grandfather and Israel Friedmann (4). An obituary of my father asserted that the Gelles and Friedmann families were *verwandt* i.e. related by blood or marriage (5). I have not identified any close blood relationship, but Nahum Uri Gelles and Israel Friedmann did have common ancestors in the Shapiro and Horowitz rabbinic lines and they were united in their Chasidic faith. My grandfather lived at one time in the Heinestrasse in Vienna, just a few doors from the Friedmann

residence. The ties between them extended beyond their lives – my grandfather is buried in Vienna next to Rabbi Friedmann and his wife, the adjoining graves being those of their son Dov Ber Friedmann and of another close follower, Rabbi Benzion Katz (6).

The chart in the article previously referred to indicates ancestral Gelles and Shapiro connections. The line from Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro is linked by marriage to that of Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Ruzhin, the first such link being via a son-in-law of the Hager Chasidic family (7).

Newspapers of the inter-war years, notably the Viennese orthodox *Jüdische Presse*, provide much information about the life of the Grand Rabbi. Many issues can be found on the internet and a few extracts presented here illustrate the strength of the Czortkow connection and the Rabbi's relationship with the inner circle of his adherents.

Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira (1887-1934), the distinguished Rabbi of Lublin and founder of the Lublin Sages Yeshiva, was one of the closest adherents of the Czortkower Rebbe (as Israel Friedmann was known). The appended extract from Friedmann's obituary notice in the *Jüdische Presse* describes the close friendship between these two rabbis (8). Friedmann took a great interest in the new Lublin Sages Yeshiva. He travelled to Poland to lay the foundation stone and when the building was completed he came to the opening ceremony and affixed the first golden *mesusa* to its portal.

I recently published some findings that shed light on the life of a lost first cousin, Rabbi Josef Gelles (1912-1941). From an orphanage in Vienna he went on to study under Rabbi Yehuda Meir at his elite Yeshiva, a process undoubtedly aided by these family connections (9). This war orphans' home was founded by *Agudas Israel*, the ultra-orthodox movement that had the Czortkower Rebbe's continued support (10). The following picture shows that

at the opening ceremony the rabbis included scholars such as Chief Rabbi Meir Arak of Buczacz, the above-mentioned Chief Rabbi Benzion Katz, and Chief Rabbi Mendel Steinberg of Brody (11). These three rabbis were among the most distinguished adherents of Israel Friedmann. Steinberg was related to my grandmother and his correspondence with my grandfather is referred to in my book *An Ancient Lineage* (12).

Other newspaper extracts describe the examination of 300 Bible students at the Viennese society “*Tomche-Thora*” (Supporters of the Thora) in 1920. The society enjoyed the patronage of the Czortkower Rebbe (13). The examiners were “Rabbiner Gelles aus Solotwina und Rabbiner Hager aus Tluste”. Several rabbis of the Friedmann family were present. The following extract lists some donations to the society made on this occasion, including 2,600 crowns from Rabbi Israel Friedman, and 200 crowns from Rabbi Gelles (14).

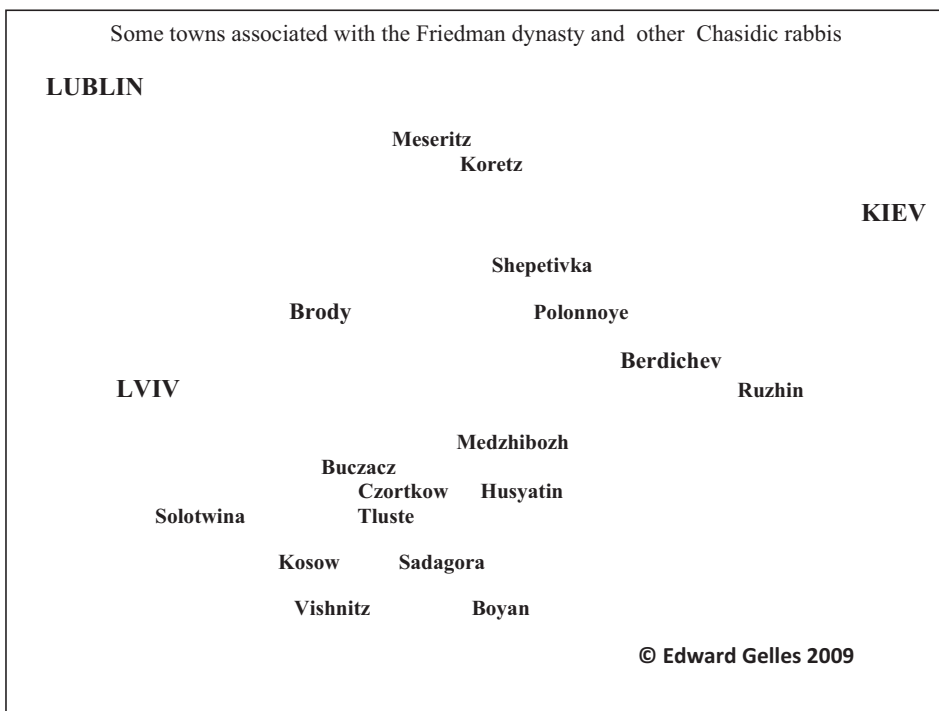
The formal opening in 1923 of an Aguda Youth Group is reported as being attended by leading personalities of the orthodox community including Chief Rabbi Gelles (Solotwina), Chief Rabbi Katz (Borsczow), and Rabbi Hager (Tluste) who were among the speakers at the ceremony (15).

Finally, there is a newspaper report of a Friedmann wedding. A granddaughter of the Czortkower Rebbe, (referred to in German as Grossrabbiner) married a Friedmann cousin. Religious blessings were recited by Chief Rabbi Steinberg of Brody and Chief Rabbi Rappaport of Czortkow. Large sums were subscribed to charitable institutions (16).

Six hundred guests were invited to the wedding feast. Those seated at the high table were the Grand Rabbis of the Friedmann family from Czortkow, Sadagora, Husyatin, and further the Rabbis Baumgarten, Kohn, Babad, and Gelles. I surmise that this Babad was Joseph Babad, the later Rosh Beth Din of Vienna (17). The Babads were our distant kinsmen, and some time after my

grandfather's death a member of that family, Yoel Babad, was finally appointed to succeed him in the Solotwina post (18).

This selection of reports from the *Jüdische Presse* in the early 1920's is by no means exhaustive, particularly as far as the names of the Chasidim in the Rebbe's inner circle are concerned, but it does indicate that my grandfather was one of the company and active in both faith and works..The great love and esteem for Israel Friedmann felt by his immediate followers was echoed by the enormous respect of the wider Jewish community in Vienna and of many non – Jews who were aware of his far-reaching moral and cultural influence (19).



Notes

- (1) The article “Moses the servant of God” deals with Moses Gelles, scholar of the Brody Klaus, and the descendants of two of his grandsons, whose links with Shapiro and Friedmann lineages are outlined on appended charts.
There is considerable literature on the house of Ruzhin and on the dynasties that sprang from the children of Israel of Ruzhin. The family name of Friedmann was an adaptation of the name of Israel’s father, Shalom Shakhna. Israel had to flee from Ruzhin in the Russian Empire around 1840 and settled at Sadagora. His progeny established dynastic branches at Sadagora, Husyatin, Boyan, and Czortkow. One of Israel’s sons, David Moshe, became the founder of the great Czortkow Chasidic dynasty in Austrian Galicia. His son Israel succeeded him in due course, but transferred his court to Vienna at the beginning of the first world war. The briefest historical outline of the Friedmanns of Czortkow can be found on the jewishgen “shtetLinks _czortkow_chasidic” web site. An eponymous great-grandson of Israel Friedmann, wrote a book, *The Rebbes of Czortkow* (Art Scroll Mesorah Publications, New York, 2003).
- (2) My grandfather was an active member of the Czortkower Rebbe’s inner circle in Vienna and, as my discoveries of numerous newspaper references suggest, he did not seem to be in a hurry to return to his post in Solotwina after the end of the great war. Correspondence with Rabbi Uri Tennensaft, who carried out rabbinic duties while my grandfather was on leave of absence in Vienna, was brought to my attention by my Hebrew translator Yissochor Marmorstein. It seems that my grandfather may not have returned to Solotwina until the mid -1920’s, when he resumed his post as Chief Rabbi but kept on RabbiTennensaft as Rosh Beth Din - see *Otzar Chayim*.- a periodical published by Rabi Chayim Schechter of Janow (Warsaw 1939,) pp 57-66; cf Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia* (Jerusalem 2006), Vol. 6: 764. It also emerges from the correspondence that Rabbi Tennensaft was again sidelined during the long drawn out negotiations that finally led to the appointment of Rabbi Yoel Babad as successor in my grandfather’s post.
- (3) *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 26, page 5 (13 November 1914)
The members of the Viennese committee in aid of Galician refugees included Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Czortkow as well as the Friedmann rabbis of Boyany and Sadagora, rabbis of Cracow and Lemberg, two rabbis of the Horowitz family, Rabbi Margulies, and Rabbis Meir Arak and Nahum Gelles.
- (4) Edward Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage : European roots of a Jewish family* (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2006), chapter 33.
idem, *Family Connection : Gelles – Horowitz – Chajes* (Shaker Publishing, B.V., The Netherlands, 2008)
- (5) Obituary of Dr. David Gelles (1883-1964) in the Viennese Jewish newspaper *Heruth*, 4. 9. 1964. cf. Evelyn Adunka, *Die Vierte Gemeinde, Die Wiener Juden in der Zeit von 1945 bis heute* (Philo Verlag, Berlin, Wien, 2000), p. 180.

- (6) Details of the burial sites of my grandfather and of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedmann, his wife, and son Dov Ber are shown on the attached chart.
Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, *Zwischen Ost und West – Galizische Juden in Wien* (Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 2000) see pp 48-49 for photograph of street scene at the funeral of Grand Rabbi Israel Friedmann in Vienna in 1933.
- (7) Gelles, Moses the servant of God, *loc cit*, see reference 17
a granddaughter of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz married Rabbi Chaim Hager of Kosow, and their son Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hager of Vishnitz married a daughter of Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Ruzhin
- (8) The appended extract from an obituary notice for the Czortkower Rebbe refers to the great friendship between him and the Rabbi of Lublin, Yehuda Meir Shapira. The Grand Rabbi took a lead in all matters concerning orthodox Judaism, whether socio-political, as one of the founders of *Agudas Israel*, or educational as in his support for the Lublin Sages Yeshiva built by Rabbi Shapira.
Jüdische Presse, No. 48 (8.12. 1933)
- (9) It is no coincidence that Josef, the orphaned grandson of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles, a distant relative and member of this inner circle, should have been placed in the newly constructed Agudas War Orphans home in Baden near Vienna, or that he was later taken into the elite Lublin Sages Yeshivah to be trained a a rabbi.
Gelles, End of the Gelles rabbinic line, *The Galitzianer*, Vol.16, no.1, 2008
- (10) The opening of the Aguda home in Baden was reported in the *Jüdische Presse* No.21 (24. 6. 1921)
- (11) Among those attending the opening ceremony were adherents of Israel Friedmann, including the Chief Rabbis of Brody, Buczacz, and Borszow who were friends and colleagues of my grandfather. Benzion Katz, later Chief Rabbi of Czernowitz, was buried next to my grandfather and to Dov Ber Friedmann - see the appended table.
- (12) Abraham Menachem Mendel Steinberg of Brody was a relative of my grandmother Esther Weinstein and his correspondence with my grandfather is mentioned in responsa (Gelles, *Family Connections*, *loc cit*, table 15 “A Margolies Connection” which is reproduced in Chapter1 and Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage*, *loc cit*, p.191
- (13) The examination of 300 Thora students by Rabbi Gelles of Solotwina and Rabbi Hager of Tluste is reported in the *Jüdische Presse* No.7 (25.2. 1921).
(see the appended Hager – Shapiro – Friedmann chart)
- (14) An appended list of supporters of the Tomche –Thora society includes donations from the Czortkower Rabbe, several members of his immediate family, and from Rabbi Gelles of Solotwina.
- (15) At the formal opening of a Youth Group sponsored by Aguda, *Jüdische Presse*, No.19 (11.5. 1923) Chief Rabbi Gelles of Solotwina is mentioned as being among the distinguished representatives of the orthodox community and again that he was one of the speakers on that occasion.
- (16) At a “dynastic” Friedmann wedding (more often than not they married cousins) as reported by the *Jüdische Presse* , No. 22 (1.7. 1921) Grand Rabbis of the several Friedman branches were seated at the high table together with Rabbis Baumgarten, Kohn, Babad, and Gelles, among others.

- (17) At the time of this wedding the Chief Rabbi of Vienna was our distant cousin, the eminent Zvi Perez Chayes (1876-1927). Josef Babad (1875-1943) became Rosh Beth Din of Vienna in 1929. (Meir Wunder, *Meorei Galicia*, Vol.1: 383).
- (18) After my grandfather's death in 1934 there was a move to make his grandson Josef Gelles Rabbi of Solotwina. After considerable delay the appointment went to a distant relative, Rabbi Yoel Babad. It is interesting to note that he was a cousin of the Josef Babad my grandfather knew in Vienna in the 1920's. The two Babads were both descendants of Aharon Aryeh Leib Babad, ABD of Mikulince (died 1860) , who was a son of Joshua Heshel Babad (1754-1838) ABD of Tarnopol. (see Gelles, *Family Connections*, table 12).
- (19) Menachem Brayer, *The House of Ruzhin* (Mesorah Publications, New York, 2003) for the origins of the Ruzhiner dynasty
 Neil Rosenstein, *The Unbroken Chain* (CIS Publishers, New York-London-Jerusalem, 1990). Chapter 15 for a detailed genealogical study of the Friedman, Hager, Heschel and other Chasidic dynasties
 David Assaf, *The Regal Way : the life and times of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin* (Stanford University Press, 2002) The Ruzhiner was an example of the tendency of Chasidic leaderships to develop into hereditary dynasties which in this case laid great stress on lineage (*yichus*) and adopted an almost royal life style. see also Glenn Dynner, *Men of Silk: the Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
 Kohlbauer-Fritz, G. *Zwischen Ost und West*, v.s., for the background to Grand Rabbi Israel Friedmann's life in Vienna
 Adunka, E., *Die Vierte Gemeinde*, v.s., p. 220:, quoting Rabbi .J. Heschel, remarks that Vienna in the inter-war years became one of the most important European centres of Orthodoxy through the influence of the famous Chasidic Rebbes Israel Friedmann of Czortkow and his Friedmann and Heschel cousins of Sadagora, Husyatin, Boyan, and Kopyczynce, who came to the city at the time of the first world war.

NEUE NACIONAL-ZEITUNG



HERAUSGEBER: DR. S. R. LANDAU.

XVI. Jahrgang.

Wien, 13. November 1914.

Nr. 26.

Um diese Wohltätigkeitsaktion fortsetzen zu können und eventuell zu erweitern, wendet sich das unterzeichnete Komitee an edel fühlende Herzen mit der Bitte, Spenden in Barem und Naturalien, die in diesem Blatte ausgewiesen werden, an den Kassier des Vereines, Herrn Simon Sternberg, II., Rembrandtstraße 39, eventuell an den Obmann des Vereines, Herrn Jakob März, I., Augustengasse 1, gütigst überweisen zu wollen.

Rabbiner M. Mayersohn, Vorsitzender des Komitees.

Rabbiner Isak Friedmann (Bojan).

Rabbiner Israel Friedmann (Czortkow).

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Rabbiner Nuchem Gelles (Solotwina).

Rabbiner Pinkas Horowitz (Bohorodezany).

Rabbiner Dr. Baruch Margulies (Drohobycz).

usw. usw.

LEADING GALICIAN RABBIS ON AID COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES IN
VIENNA 1914



deihen ließ. Mütterlicherseits war Rabbi Israel Friedmann ein Enkel des bekannten Rabbi Aron Tschernobler, bei dem er auch seine Jugendjahre verbracht hat. Schon als ganz junger Mensch genoß der Verblichene den Ruf eines Ilui. Man erzählt, daß er 18 Stunden des Tages der Thora und Awoda gewidmet hat.

Als der „alte“ Czortkower Rebbe im Jahre 5664 verschied, folgte Rabbi Israel Friedmann ihm in seiner Würde. Alle Chassidim, unter ihnen die größten Thorafürsten der Zeit, von denen wir nur den Buczaczer Raw und den Lubliner Raw s. Z. l. erwähnen, übertrugen nun ihre Anhänglichkeit auf den noch verhältnismäßig jungen Rabbi, der sich der untätigsten Hochachtung vieler Größen der Thora erfreute.

Bei Kriegsausbruch, im Jahre 1914, übersiedelte der Czortkower Rebbe nach Wien, wo er bald einen großen Einfluß auf das jüdische Leben dieser Stadt gewann und wo er jedesmal, wenn es sich um die Interessen der orthodoxen Judenheit handelte, aktiv eingriff.

Einer der Hervorragendsten aus dem Kreise der Anhänger war der leider eben erst so jung verstorbene Lubliner Raw, der, so treu er ihm im Leben war, ihm auch in den Tod vorangegangen ist. Der Czortkower Rebbe hat an der Errichtung und dem Ausbau der Jeschiwas Chachme Lublin tätigen Anteil genommen und für das Verhältnis, das zwischen ihm und dem Lubliner Raw geherrscht hat, ist es bezeichnend, daß er den Grundstein zum Bau der Jeschiwas Chachme Lublin gelegt und nach Vollendung des Baues die erste goldene Mesusa feierlich angeschlagen hat.

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Abonnementspreis: Einjährig: 100 Kronen, halbjährig: 50 Kronen, vierteljährig: 25 Kronen. Einzelhefte: 2 Kronen. Druck- und Verlagsanstalt: Jüdische Presse, Wien, 1. Dofner, Eisenstrasse Nr. 40, 10.

Nr. 48 Wien-Bratislava, 8. Dezember 1933 19. Jahrg.

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(„JÜDISCHE KORRESPONDENZ“)

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Wien, II., Mariahilfer 12a. — Telephon Nr. 43.054.
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Für Artikel: Montag, für Nachrichten: Dienstag.

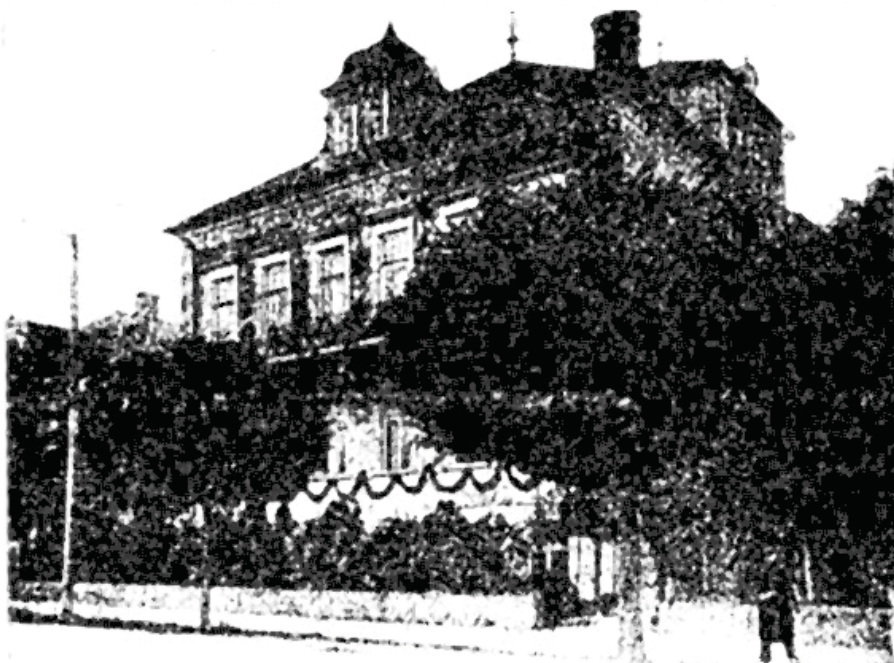
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Nr. 21

Wien-Bratislava, 24. Juni 1921

7. Jahrg.



Das Kriegswaisenhaus der Aguda in Baden.



Die Einweihung des Aguda-Waisenhauses.

Von links nach rechts: 1. Wolf Pappenheim. 2. Lippe Türkl.
6. Großrabbiner Abraham Heschel (Kopyszinsze). 7. Oberrabbiner
Meier Arak (Buczacz). 8. Oberrabbiner Mendel Steinberg (Brody).
9. Oberrabbiner Benzion Katz (Borszow).

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Nr. 21

Wien-Bratislava, 24. Juni 1921

7. Jahrg.

JÜDISCHE PRESSE

(„JÜDISCHE KORRESPONDENZ“)

ORGAN FÜR DIE INTERESSEN DES ORTHODOXEN JUDENTUMS.

Redaktion und Administration:
Wien, II., Kallergasse 12 a. — Telegraph Nr. 40.064.
Telephon Nr. 11.
Erscheinet jeden Freitag. — Redaktionsort: Wien.
Für Artikel Montag, für Nachrichten Dienstag.

Abonnementspreise: Ganzjährig: Für Österreich und Ungarn
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Nr. 7

Wien-Bratislava, 25. Februar 1921

7. Jahrg.

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Nr. 19	Wien-Bratislava, 11. Mai 1923	9. Jahrg.

Feierliche Eröffnung der Aguda-Jugendgruppe im XX. Bezirk. Sonntag, den 20. Ijar fand wie angekündigt die feierliche Eröffnung des Aguda-Heimes im XX. Bezirk statt. Zu dieser Feier haben sich die Herren Oberrabbiner Jeruchom (Altstadt), Rabbiner Baumgarten, Oberrabbiner Gelles (Slotwina), Oberrabbiner Katz (Borszczów), Rabbiner Hager (Tlusta) nebst vielen anderen hervorragenden Persönlichkeiten der Orthodoxie eingefunden. Herr Rabbiner Dr. Pinchas Kohn war in Vertretung des Zentralrates der Agudas Jisroel erschienen. Um 1/2 6 Uhr abends begann die Feier, eingeleitet durch einen vom Oberkantor Braun meisterhaft dirigierten „Mismor schir chanuckas habojis“. Die Herren Oberrabbiner Jeruchom, Oberrabbiner Gelles, Oberrabbiner Katz, Rabbiner Hager wiesen mit begeisterten Worten auf die Wichtigkeit der Eröffnung dieses Heimes und auf die besondere Bedeutung der Feier hin. Herr Rabbiner Dr. Kohn ergriff das

Hochzeit. „Weinrebe um Weinrebe“ versinnbildlicht ein altes jüdisches Wort die Vereinigung zweier Kinder aus hervorragenden jüdischen Familien. Dieser Vorstellung entsprach das erhebende Bild der in echter Mizwafreude versammelten Gemeinde von Verehrern des Czortkower Großrabbiners n. j., der sein Enkelkind Fräulein Vege, Tochter des R. Chaim Aron Friedmann mit Herrn R. Hersch Friedmann dem Sohne des verewigten Großrabbinervon Sadagorer R. Jisroel Friedmann s. z. l., vermählte. Aus Nah und Fern kamen dem Brautpaare Glückwünsche und Zeichen der Verehrung zu. Die Trauung fand im Hofe des Hotel Continental unter außerordentlicher Beteiligung statt. Bal-Messader-Kiduschin war Großrabbiner Steinberg (Brody), die Berocho rischoino oblag dem Buczaczer, die zweite Berocho wurde von Großrabbiner Rappaport (Czortkow) gemacht. Hierauf fand der traditionell „süße Tisch“ im Speisesaal des Hotel Continental statt.

Abends fand im Sophiensaal das Hochzeitsmahl statt, an welchem mehr als 600 Personen teilgenommen hatten. Der Prachtsaal bot ein wunderbares Bild der Zusammenfassung aller sozialen Schichten. Es war eine wahre Sudas Mizwa, da Reich und Arm in echter brüderlicher Liebe sich um die gefeierten Führer versammelt haben. Das war eine vollständige Erfüllung des Gebotes: Und die Armen sollen wie die Kinder deines Hauses sein. Eine nachdenkliche Impression war es auch, alle Parteien des konservativen Judentumes huldigend um die Tete der Tafel versammelt zu sehen. Jupice und Frack charakterisierten die Harmonie der Kontraste. Das Bild war ein Symbol des stillen Sieges des Chassidismus, der ohne Propaganda, ohne Presse, ohne Organisation durch seine innewohnende sittliche Macht nicht nur die Suprematie im Leben der Glaubenstreuen erlangt hat, sondern dessen Reflex sogar im Geistesleben der jüdischen Moderne wetterleuchtet. Die Wohltätigkeit waltet an allen Tischen. Mehr als K 150.000 sind bei diesem Mahle gesammelt worden. Chassidim und Gemilut chassodim sind verwandte Begriffe. Auch den Armen von Wien hat der Großrabbiner von Czortkow selbst K 15.000

zugeeignet. Die Wohltätigkeits-Institutionen der Kultusgemeinde wurden reichlich bedacht. Außerdem wurden 230 Arme gespeist. An der Tête der Tafel haben Platz genommen, die Großrabbiner aus der Familie Friedmann von Czortkow, Sadagora, Husyatin, ferner die Rabbiner Baumgarten, P. Kohn, Babad, Gelles u. a. Eine besondere Frauentafel war im Abteil unter der Galerie aufgestellt. Die Musik besorgte Konzertdirektor Zimble und Kapellmeister Geiger. Die Versorgung der Tafel lag in den Händen des Restaurateurs B. Schreiber (Wiener).

JÜDISCHE PRESSE

(„JÜDISCHE KORRESPONDENZ“)

ORGAN FÜR DIE INTERESSEN DES ORTHODOXEN JUDENTUMS.

Redaktion und Administration:
Wien, II., Malgasse 12 a. — Telefon Nr. 48.064.
Technisch-Verlags: Bratislava, Fürstengasse 14.
Erscheinet jeden Freitag. — Subskriptionslohn:
Für Artikel Montag, für Nachrichten Dienstag.

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Nr. 22

Wien-Bratislava, 1. Juli 1921

7. Jahrg.

Florence Mayer Lieblich - "Someone is watching over me"

Extract from the Memoir of a Holocaust survivor

A pre-war visit to Czortkow by Rabbis Israel Friedman and Yehuda Meir Shapira

<http://remember.org/florence/part1.html>

I remember a few years before the war, Rabbi Friedman arrived in Czortkow to celebrate the holidays. Czortkower Chassidim came from all over Poland to spend the holidays with the Rabbi. That time, Rabbi Meyer Shapiro from Lublin also arrived with around one hundred of his students. Among them was my brother. Those times were very memorable and enjoyable, especially for my father. My father invited the Rabbi and all the students to our house for Kiddush on Saturday. My mother and all the family started to prepare. They cooked fish, challah and prepared a cholent that was warmed without using the stove on Saturday. We had a special box. Friday, before Shabbat, the food was put in and it was warmed. It was chicken and vegetables.

Before the Rabbi arrived, we emptied the apartment of some furniture. Couches, chairs and tables were left. It was set to be a buffet. Only the Rabbi was to be seated and served. There was wine, challah, drinks, cold tea, and fruit. Plates were on the table. Saturday arrived and our house was filled with excitement. My father and brother walked to the synagogue. It was a long walk. Around 12:30 we could hear songs from far away. The Rabbi was in the middle. Right beside him was my father. Behind them was my brother and all his friends. They walked in two lines, singing all the long stretch until they arrived at our house. I will never forget that scene. People were lined up to greet the Rabbi. All our neighbors were on their terraces waiting for his arrival. It was a very exciting time for the Chassidim of Czortkow. My mother greeted the Rabbi at the entrance to our house. I still can hear her gentle voice saying, "Rabbi Shapiro, it's my privilege to meet my son's teacher. Thank you very much for the honor that you have given me by coming for kiddush." He smiled and in a very soft voice said, "I'm very happy to meet the mother of a very special, bright student." My mother didn't have the chance to introduce me. He turned around and said to me, "So, you are the little kid sister that your brother always speaks about." He turned back to my mother, and in that very soft voice said, "You have very nice children. God bless you. You should have a lot of nachas from them." The Rabbi walked up the stairs, came into the apartment, made kiddush over the wine, cut the challah and said a prayer. When the food was served, the rabbi sat at the head of the table and was served. After the meal, the singing and dancing started. There was dancing on both sides of the house and the terraces. I will never forget that wonderful and happy day in my parents' life.

Rabbis Nahum Uri Gelles of Sopotwina and Israel Friedmann of Czortkow
Graves in Vienna, Zentral-Friedhof – Gate IV, Group 21

	27		28	29	30
<u>ROW 16</u>	Nahum Uri Gelles d. 18. 11. 1934 aged 82 years <i>son of</i> <i>Rabbi David Isaac Gellis</i>	Ruchama Shewa Friedmann d. 1. 11. 1934 aged 78 years <i>daughter of</i> <i>Abraham Jacob Friedmann</i> <i>Admur of Sadagora</i>	-	Israel Friedmann d. 1. 12. 1933 aged 79 years <i>son of</i> <i>David Moses Friedmann</i> <i>Admur of Czortkow</i>	

<u>ROW 17</u>	Benzion Katz d. 6. 11. 1934 aged 46 years	Dov Ber Friedmann d. 11. 9. 1936 aged 52 years <i>son of</i> <i>Israel & Ruchama Shewa Friedmann</i>		
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Footnotes

Rabbi Israel Friedmann was married to his first cousin Ruchama Shewa for 63 years. One of their sons is buried in an adjacent grave. Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles has an honoured place of rest as one close to Friedmann's family and among his circle of adherents that included Rabbi Benzion Katz, Rabbi of Czernowitz in the Bukowina, sometime residents in Vienna.

The Hebrew tombstone inscription for Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles reads:

Here lies Rabbi Nahum Uri who served for fifty years as Av Beth Din of Sotowina
son of the pious Rabbi David Isaac of blessed memory from Brody

both of whom spent time in the shadow of tzadikim

Born 20th Shevat 5612

Passed away 11th Kislew 5695

May his soul be bound in the bond of everlasting life

Chapter 5

Gelles family history

End of the Gelles rabbinic line

In the extended study of my ancestral roots I have been frequently frustrated by the apparent loss or inaccessibility of primary sources, but new avenues have been opened up by serendipitous discoveries in old texts, newspapers, and other ephemera. A series of such findings have now revealed in outline the life of a first cousin whose very existence was hitherto unknown to me. I hope that this story will come as an encouragement to other genealogical researchers.

From the end of the 17th to the early 20th centuries rabbis of my name made their home in Brody and other Galician towns. A scholar of the prestigious Brody *Klaus*, called Menachem Mendel Levush married a daughter of a Rabbi S. Gelles. There is evidence that the name Levush was indicative of descent from the 16th century Rabbi Mordecai Yaffe of Prague, whose epithet derived from the title of his *magnum opus*. After his marriage (Moses) Menachem Mendel Levush was also known as Moses Gelles. His direct fifth generation descendant was my grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles (1852-1934). He married Esther, a daughter of Hirsch Leib Weinstein the *Av Beth Din* (ABD) of Solotwina near Stanislau and succeeded his father-in-law on the latter's death in 1884 (1,2).

Nahum Uri Gelles and Esther Weinstein had six children (at least one more died in infancy). The eldest son was Efraim Fischel, who trained as a rabbi. Then came a daughter Bertha (Feige Rivka), who emigrated to America in 1910 and whose issue flourishes there. My father David Gelles, was the second son. He was sent to the Munkacz yeshiva in Hungary but opted for a secular career, studied law at Czernowitz and Vienna and became an advocate there in 1916. He brought his younger siblings Max and Lotte to Vienna. These three were all doctors of law of Vienna University. They lost touch with the orthodox branch of the family and hardly ever discussed family history in the presence of their children.

In the course of searching for some of my mother's cousins some years ago I asked a Jewish scholar in Lviv to look out for local records on the Taube family, who had over a period of time proliferated in that city. In due course Jacob Honigsmann sent me some material including a few newspaper cuttings referring to members of that family. In one cutting from a Yiddish daily newspaper published in Lvov [the Polish Lvov, previously the Austrian Lemberg, and now the Ukrainian Lviv] I found to my amazement a brief notice about Solotwina and the succession to my grandfather's post (3) : *"Solotvina – Our town does not yet have a successor to the deceased rabbi, Rabbi Nachum Uri Gelles of blessed memory. A number of factions have developed in the town, who are arguing whether Solotvina needs a rabbi at all. In fact, it is the ultra-orthodox who say No! One faction wants to appoint a grandson of the old rabbi, but there are very many who oppose this"*.

This newspaper entry was at first a great puzzle to me as I was unaware of any rabbinically qualified grandson. However, this discovery was very soon followed by another more enlightening one. The son of my Hebrew translator Yissochor Marmorstein, was reading a book by the eminent Polish Rabbi Yehudah Meir Shapira, the founder in 1929 of the Lublin Sages Yeshivah (4). In the appendix to this book he came across a list of students. It had an entry *"Josef Gelles, son of Efraim Fischel Gelles of Solotwina"*. Here was the grandson who was a candidate for the Solotwina post in 1935. This was indeed a lucky find, considering the chances of anyone who knew my name coming across this list and being sufficiently interested to study it. Josef was never mentioned by my father or my uncle Max, though they did tell me in passing that their elder brother Efraim Fischel had died at a young age. Efraim Fischel's other son Leo (Ahron Leib) visited us in Vienna. Leo later went to America and died there in 1973. He appears to have maintained his adherence to the Chasidic Czortkow connection of his forebears, but he made the necessary concessions to outward western forms (5). Much later, I gathered from relatives on his mother's side that his father, Efraim Fischel, had married a Leifer from the rabbinical family of Nadworna, who were descendants of the zaddik Meir of Przemyslany.

I suspect that the uncompromisingly orthodox Josef and his easy-going Viennese relations were embarrassed by each other. This must be seen in the context of the history of Europe in the earlier part of the 20th century and of Austrian conditions in the 1930's.

The Jewish records for Sotowina in various archives have proved of little help. Much has been lost and some existing files in Warsaw have proved very difficult to access. Birth records at Mielnica Podolskaya (6), death records of Kolomea (7), and sundry other findings on the JRI-Poland data base have provided relevant information, but it is the series of exceptionally lucky discoveries that has provided essential leads as well as introducing an element of adventure into the methodology of this genealogical research.

The next extraordinary find came only a few months ago. It was an old postcard addressed to Josef, care of his brother Leo Gelles, by his future father-in-law (8). It is post-marked Tarnopol 31.12.1934 (8). Remarkable, not only that the card survived for 74 years but that it should surface this year on the eBay auction web site ! The card is not only a welcome confirmation of Josef's existence, but gives an insight to the contested election of a new rabbi. My grandfather died at the Rothschild Hospital in Vienna on 18th November 1934 (9). My cousin Josef must have come to Vienna to look after him during his illness or for the funeral and was still there at year's end when he received this urgent call to return to Sotowina in order to secure his grandfather's old post. Both sides of the postcard are shown in the illustration and the Hebrew – Yiddish text reads thus in translation :

With the help of G-d.

Monday [in the week of the Torah reading] Va'erah.

Greetings and all the best for ever to my future son-in-law, the distinguished Yosef. may he live long good days, Amen !

When I came to Stanislaw in connection with my business affairs, I had [discussions ?] regarding the Sotowina rabbinate, and I heard that they want to organize a meeting regarding the elections for the appointment of a rabbi. There are already six significant candidates who have made a great impression in the town and they make light of your claims [to the rabbinate]. Therefore, my opinion is that at all costs, without any delay,

you should immediately return home. You should not even wait for the [fur coat ?]. Presumably your brother will provide whatever you need. You should let me know immediately when you are travelling home and with G-d's help, I will meet you in Lemberg, just let me know which train you will be taking so I should know where to meet you. We will then discuss everything.

Regards to all the family, especially to your dear brother.

From your future father-in-law

Sender: [?] Spiegel

It was well-established Galician practice that in communal appointments, such as those of a rabbi, preference would be given to a qualified son or son-in-law. There appeared to have been strong competition from several candidates for the Solotwina post. A kinsman, Rabbi Yoel Babad, was finally appointed after considerable delay. We do not know enough about the candidates and their supporters to make more than the tentative suggestion that Josef Gelles may have been too young and inexperienced at that time. His father Efraim Fischel was born in 1879 and the Lublin Sages Yeshivah opened in 1929. One could hazard a guess that Josef might therefore have been born just before the outbreak of the first world war and that he would have been in his early twenties at the time of the contested rabbinical election in 1935.

The number of Jews in Solotwina had fallen from a high of more than 2,000. The hold of the old religion had declined, and many young people emigrated to America, among them many descendants of my Weinstein great-grandfather. A grandson Sam Weinstein married a Gussie (Gittel) Spiegel from Solotwina. His brother Jake married her sister Clara Spiegel. It is interesting to discover that Josef's prospective father-in-law was a Spiegel from nearby Zloszow. There is little doubt that these various Spiegels in or near Solotwina were closely related (10).

A month after the appearance of the first postcard a second card was displayed on eBay by the same vendor (11). It was from Ch. Gelles of Solotwina and addressed to Josef Gelles at Boryslaw, not far from Solotwina and Stanislau [Stanislawow – now called Ivano-Frankivsk].

Written in Hebrew and Yiddish it calls on the “Dear Children” to come to Solotwina post-haste to help the writer in her argument with a Mr Haller. It is signed *Horabonis* [the Rabbi’s wife] Chaya Gelles. The postmark is unclear. On its own, this card would have been difficult to interpret.

However, a few years ago I had obtained from the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem four microfilms of Solotwina files covering community affairs for the period under discussion. One of these contained some correspondence between Malke Chaya Gelles, widow of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles, and the local authorities regarding the inadequacy of her pension. A letter bearing a 1936 date complained about this Mr Haller (12). This was the first evidence I had that my grandfather had taken a second wife, though it was not entirely unexpected since my grandmother Esther Weinstein died in 1907 and my grandfather survived her for 27 years. The correspondence suggests that the second postcard, which has just turned up, was written in 1936 and that Josef Gelles, having failed to get his grandfather’s post in 1935, had moved from Solotwina to Boryslaw. As his step-grandmother addresses them as “ Dear Children” one might surmise that Josef had married his Spiegel fiancée and obtained a post in Boryslaw or perhaps had relatives there (13,14).

The above findings were published in the November 2008 issue of *The Galitzianer* (15). More information has now come to light from diverse sources.

An entry in the *Jüdische Presse*, an orthodox Jewish newspaper, published a list of war orphans accepted at the new orphanage opened in 1921 by *Agudas Israel* in Baden near Vienna. It included the names and ages of Josef Gelles and his brother Ahron Leib Gelles from Boryslaw. This gave the years of birth of Josef Gelles and of his brother Leo as 1912 and 1913 (16). The orphanage was intended for boys from 6 to 14 years of age hailing from Galicia and Bukowina and to give them an orthodox Jewish upbringing. Priority was to be given to those who had lost both parents in circumstances directly attributable to the war (17). Leo (Ahron Leib) Gelles appears in Viennese press notices of 1932 as secretary of the orphanage old boys association (18).

A glimpse of Leo and Josef's father may be provided by a notice in the *Jüdische Zeitung* of 1916 giving details of a Jewish fund collection among Austrian soldiers on the Galician front. Efroim Gelles and Bendet Spiegel were comrades in an infantry unit. This and other connections between Gelles and Spiegel and Weinstein may perhaps foreshadow the later betrothal of Josef Gelles and a Spiegel, revealed by the postcard sent to Josef by his prospective father-in-law in 1934 (19).

Another piece of this “jig-saw puzzle” fell into place from an entry in a list of unpaid water bills in Drohobycz – Boryslaw for the years 1941 / 1942. The name of Giza Gelles of Lukasiewiczza Street 18, Boryslaw is marked “vermisst” i.e. missing, a sure indication that Giza was one of the many Jews murdered or deported from Boryslaw at that time. The address is the same as that of Josef Gelles on the postcard sent to him by his step-grandmother from Sopotwina in 1936. Giza was probably Josef's wife or possibly his sister (20).

The post-war trials and convictions of Viennese ex-policemen for mass murders of Jews in Boryslaw during the holocaust period were reported in the Zionist newspaper *Die Stimme* published in Vienna (21).

Josef's tragic life ran from his birth in 1912, to the loss of his parents and the war orphanage near Vienna in 1921, back to Galicia to join his old grandfather around 1926, on to the famous Lublin Sages Yeshivah and his rabbinical ordination, his betrothal, failing to obtain his grandfather's post at Sopotwina in 1935, and his death in the holocaust in 1941 or 1942.

These findings, as the others previously reported, are remarkable for many reasons, not least for the extraordinarily serendipitous sequence of discovery over a relatively short period of time, and how the interpretation of items of information depended critically on earlier discoveries. The variety of sources is also remarkable – a Galician newspaper cutting from 1934, a list of students in the appendix to a rabbinical monograph, a letter in the Sopotwina files at the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, two postcards written in 1934 and 1936 which separately appeared in 2008 on an e-bay auction web site, a paragraph in a Viennese newspaper in 1921, and a list of unpaid water bills from the holocaust period in Galicia.

Notes

- (1) Edward Gelles, *An Ancient Lineage* (Vallentine Mitchell, London 2006)
see Chapters 27 and 28 for the families of Rabbis Nahum Uri Gelles and Hirsch Leib Weinstein
 - (2) idem, *Family Connections : Gelles-Horowitz- Chajes* (Shaker Publishing B.V., The Netherlands, 2008)
see Table 2 for the Gelles – Shapiro connections including Friedman of Czortkow and Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira, the teacher of Josef Gelles. see also Tables 14 and 15 for possible connections of Horowitz to Weinstein and Gelles.
- Yehuda Ahron Horowitz was a rabbi in Sopotwina. He moved to the Bukowina in 1858 / 59 and at that time Hirsh Leib Weinstein became ABD of Sopotwina. His daughter Esther was born in 1861 in the Bukowina while her elder siblings were born at Sopotwina. Hirsch Leib Weinstein died in 1884 and was succeeded by his son-in-law Nahum Uri Gelles. On the latter's death his grandson Rabbi Josef Gelles competed for the post which went to Rabbi Yoel Babad
- (3) Der Najer Morgen Tagblat, 26thDecember 1934, page 4.
this Yiddish daily was published in Lemberg (Lvov).
 - (4) Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira, *Imrei Da'as* (Bnei Brak, Israel 1990)
A list of students at the Lublin Sages Yeshivah is appended
 - (5) A Commemorative Dinner was held by the Czortkow Chasidic connection in New York on December 7th, 2003. (followers of Rabbi David Moshe Friedman of Czortkow and of his son Rabbi Israel Friedman). A memorial tablet to Leo (Ahron Leib) Gelles who died in 1973 is illustrated in the programme see *An Ancient Lineage* (v.s.) Chapter 35, note 11 on p. 257
 - (6) The birth records at Mielnica Podolskaya of my father David Isaac and of his elder sister Bertha (Feige Riwka) in 1883 and 1881 state that their mother Esther Weinstein was born in 1861 in the Bukowina
see Note 2 above
 - (7) The death record of Abraham Weinstein at Kolomea in 1904 indicates that this elder brother of Esther Weinstein was born in Sopotwina in 1856.
see Notes 6 and 2 above
 - (8) Postcard sent by S. Spiegel from Tarnopol on 31. 12. 1934 addressed to Josef Gelles c/o Leo Gelles in Vienna.
Sold on eBay on 9th May 2008, Reference:
cgi.ebay.co.uk/Judaica-Postal-Card-Tarnopol-Vienna-Yiddish-Hebrew_W0QQitemZ130219663055QQihZ003QQcategoryZ3514QQssPageNameZWDVW
I am greatly indebted to my translator Yissochor Marmorstein for finding the two postcards on the eBay site (see note 11).
 - (9) Letter from the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna dated 20. 10. 1999 confirming that Nahum Uri Gelles, born at Narayow on 18 February 1852, died in Vienna on 18 November 1934
see *An Ancient Lineage* (v.s.) Fig 4 and p. 258 for details of my grandfather's tombstone and grave.
 - (10) A tombstone extant at Sopotwina (shown in a photograph obtained from Rabbi Kolesnik of Stanislaw) reads: "Chaim Levy, son of Rabbi Zvi Aryeh" and the date of death is given as July 1906.

It could mark the grave of Rabbi Hirsch Leib's eldest son, Chaim, who went to America but came back to Sopotwin. A number of his children emigrated to the US, some of them at quite a young age. Sam and Jake Weinstein, who married the Spiegel sisters from Sopotwin have been mentioned above. Two brothers of Sam and Jake also came over at about this time. They were Izzy and Hirsch Leib (born in the year of his grandfather's death and named after him). The connections between Sopotwin emigrants and the "home town" were maintained until the eve of the second world war. I am indebted to Elaine Beth, a daughter of Philip Weinstein, for information about the later Weinstein cousins (see appended chart). The First Sopotwin Rabeini Hirsch Leib Weinstein and Rabbi Mordecai Leifer Sick & Benevolent Societies are further sources of information, as are the Ellis Island records and the burial records at Mount Hebron Cemetery, Flushing, N.Y.

- (11) Postcard sent by Ch. Gelles of Sopotwin to Josef Gelles in Boryslaw, Galicia.
The card is postmarked Sopotwin but the date is illegible.
The eBay reference is (note the incorrect spelling of Boryslaw) :
cgi.ebay.co.uk/Judaica-Postal-Card-Sopotwin-Bozylaw-Father-Yiddish_W0QQitemZ350068261125QQihZ022QQcategoryZ3514QQssPageNameZWDVWQQrdZ1
- (12) Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem relating to the history of the Jewish community in Sopotwin, Galicia
microfilm : Roll No. HM2 Start 8663 (1-19) Sopotwin -Part 2
contains correspondence of Malke Chaya, widow of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles
(copies in Edward Gelles Family Archive)
- (13) JewishGen Shtetlinks – Boryslaw.
www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/drohobycz/shtetls/shtetls_Boryslaw.asp
Drohobycz Administrative District – Map of Boryslaw 1880-1900.
Key to Map prepared by Valerie Schatzger lists houses with names of owners. House No. 32 : Gelles & G-----.
- (14) JRI-Poland Data Base. Spiegel in Boryslaw (Lwow Wojewodztwa)
entries for Spiegel in late 19th century including a Spiegel – Horowitz marriage
- (15) *The Galitzianer*, Vol.16, N.1, November 2008
- (16) *Jüdische Presse*, Organ für die Interessen des Orthodoxen Judentums, Vienna, No.18., 27 May 1921:
Agudas (Jewish ultra-orthodox organization) list of admissions to their war orphans home at Baden, near Vienna, of Ahron Leib Gelles, aged 8 years, and Josef Gelles, aged 9 years, from Boryslaw.
- (17) Thomas E. Schärf, *Jüdisches Leben in Baden*.
Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart (Mandelbaum Verlag, 2005), pp 98-99.
The orphanage opened in Baden by *Agudas Israel* in 1921 had the declared purpose of providing a home and an orthodox Jewish upbringing for orphaned boys from the ages of 6 to 14 years who hailed from Galicia and Bukowina, and primarily for those who had lost both parents in circumstances directly attributable to the war.
- (18) Association of former boys at the Baden Orphanage. formed in 1932, Leo Gelles acting as meetings organizer. Several notices in *Jüdische Presse* of that year including issue No. 10 (11 March 1932)
- (19) Bendet Spiegel and Efroim Gelles listed as comrades in 17 / 22 Marsch-Kompanie in a press notice about a Jewish fund collection at the Galician front in 1916.

This finding may turn out to be significant in view of the later engagement of Josef Gelles to a girl of the Spiegel family, who were to be found in Solotwina, Boryslaw and other little towns of the area and had earlier marriage alliances with Weinstein and Horowitz. *Jüdische Zeitung* No. 19, Vienna, 12 May 1916)

- (20) JewishGen web site for Drohobycz and Boryslaw, Galicia
Unpaid water bills in Boryslaw 1941-42, pages 13 and 126 :
“Giza Gelles, Lukasiewiczza Street 18, Boryslaw : *vermisst* “
The address is exactly the same as that on the second illustrated postcard addressed to Joseph Gelles in Boryslaw – see reference 11.
(The street was named after Ignacy Lukasiewicz, an engineer and inventor whose work benefited Boryslaw as a centre of the Galician petroleum industry).
- (21) Report of the post-war trials and convictions of Viennese Nazis for the mass murders of Jews in Boryslaw during the holocaust period – in the newspaper of the General Zionist Federation, *Die Stimme*, published in Vienna, August-September 1956, with the heading “Ungesühnte Massenmorde”



Handwritten text in Polish, likely a letter or document, written in a cursive script. The text is dense and covers most of the page. It appears to be a personal or official communication, possibly related to the address on the stamp above. The handwriting is somewhat difficult to decipher due to its cursive nature and the age of the document.

JÜDISCHE PRESSE

ORGAN FÜR DIE INTERESSEN DES ORTHODOXEN JUDENTUMS.

Redaktion u. Administration: Wien, II., Große
Floriansgasse 22. — Tel. 405-3422, Telephon-
slovakisch: Bratislava, Postfach 140.
Erscheint jeden Freitag. — Redaktionsschluss:
Mittwoch Mittag.

Abonnementspreise: Ganzjährig: Für Österreich 5 16,
Tschecoslowakei tschech. K. 80, Einzelnummer öst.
Gr. 50, das übrige Ausland 3 Dollar.

Zustimmung der Wiener „Jüdischen Presse“, Wien für Öster-
reichs Postgesetznummer 10. 216/111 Österreichische Post-
schickungsbefreiung Nr. 112/111. Ingegration: Postamt (aus-
gabenlos) Nr. 40111, Postamt (ausgabenlos) Wien Nr. 10000.
Ingegration: Postamt (ausgabenlos) Nr. 10000, Post-
amt Nr. 10000, 4117, für die Tschechoslowakei: „Die
Jüdische Presse“, Bratislava, Postfach-Amt Prag, Konto Nr. 1230.

Nr. 10

Wien-Bratislava, 11. März 1932. כ"ב חשוון תרצ"ב

18. Jahrg.

Bund ehemaliger Zöglinge des Badener Waisenhauses in Wien.

Wir ersuchen alle ehemaligen Zöglinge, zu den
jeden Mittwoch, 8 Uhr, stattfindenden Zusammenkünften
zu erscheinen. Zuschriften an Leo Gelles, II., Volkswehr-
platz 16/5.

JÜDISCHE ZEITUNG

 NATIONAL-JÜDISCHES ORGAN 

Mit Beilage: „DER JUDISCHE NATIONALFONDS“

■ Erscheint wöchentlich. — Redaktion, Administration und Inseratenaufnahme: Wien, II., Zähringergasse Nr. 23. — Sprechstunden täglich von 11—12 Uhr vormittags und 4—5 Uhr nachmittags. — Manuskripte werden nicht zurückgestellt. — Abonnementspreise: Für Österreich-Ungarn: Ganzjähr. K. 18.—, halbjähr. K. 10.—, vierteljähr. K. 6.—, Für Deutschland: Ganzjähr. Mk. 18.—, halbjähr. Mk. 10.—, vierteljähr. Mk. 6.—, Für das übrige Ausland: Ganzjähr. Frem. 15.—, Einzelnummern 20 h. — Postsparkassenkonto 123.064. — Telefon 46.325. ■

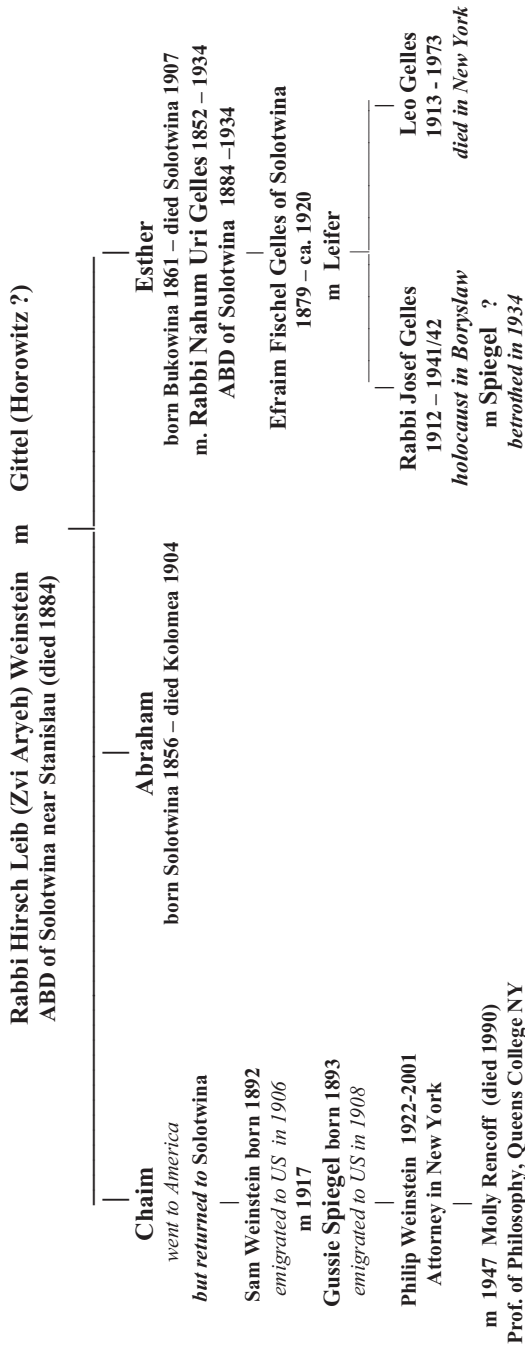
Nr. 19

Wien, Freitag, den 12. Mai 1916 — 9. Jhr 5676.

X. Jahrgang.

Sammlung Ing. Lt. Salomon Nussbaum-Speiser im Felde: 17/22 Marsch-Komp.: Oberleutn. Hermann Sommer 10.—, Korp. Jakob Jung, Selig Lieblich, Kalman Schapiro, Abraham Friedmann je 5.—, Leiser Mild, Samuel Schorr, Hilel Baran, Moses Färber je 3.—, Meilech Juda Wiesner, Samuel Katz je 2.—, Israel Gürtler, Bendet Spiegel, Efroim Gelles je 1.90, Leutnant Salomon Nussbaum-Speiser —.60. 18/22. Marsch-Komp.: Osias Klein, Markus Kraus je 10.—, Kalman Lehrer 6.—, Heinrich Grund, Isak Nachfolger, Adolf Tritt, Feldw. v. Ladst. R. je 5.—, Mendel Chaim Kalisman 3.—, Jakob Blaukopf 2.—, Juda Sobel, Markus Trommer je 1.90. Dragoner 12: Josef Höllenberg, Mendel Allweil je 10.—, David Reiner, Solwen Bierbach, Arnold Appel, Hermann Weiss je 5.—, Hermann Buchwald 4.—, Samson Brot, Hermann Binder je 2.—, zusammen 157.10.

Josef Gelles and Weinstein Connection



JewishGen

Borislav-Drohobycz Delinquent Water Bills 1941-1942

Searching for Surname Gelles

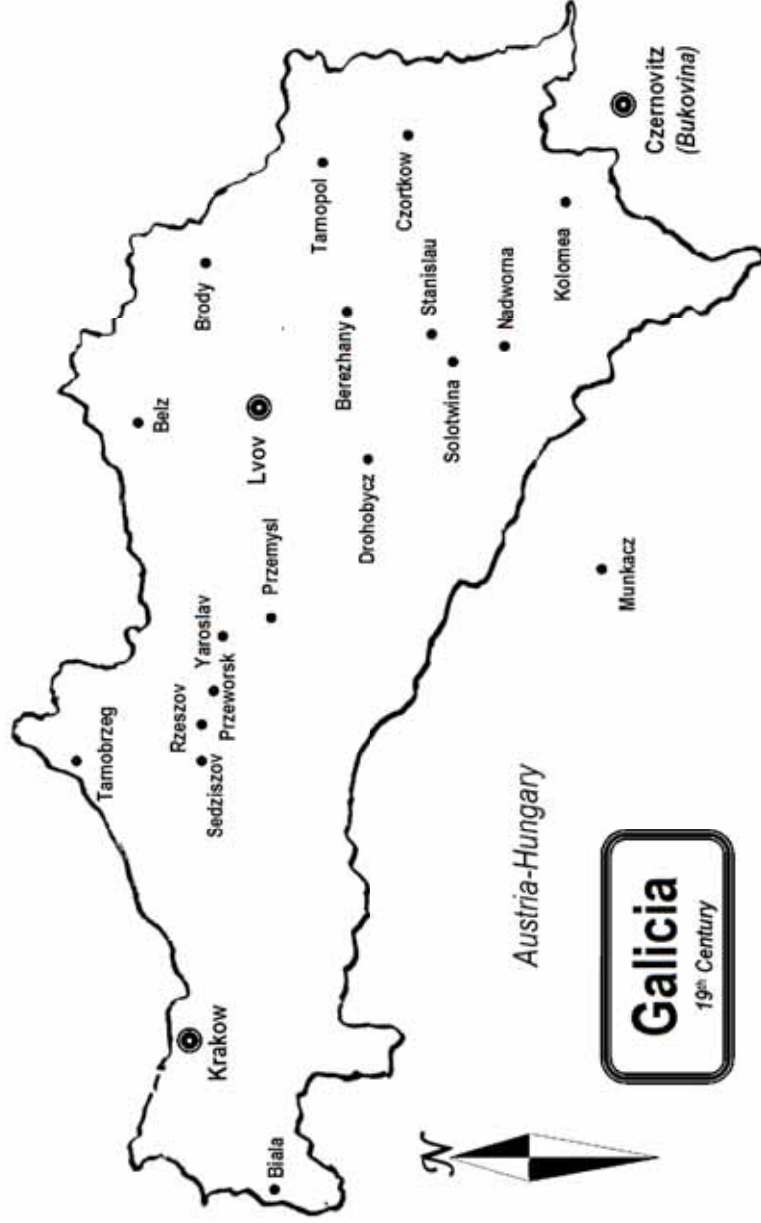
(D-M code 584000)

Number of hits: 25

Run on Tuesday 10 March 2009 at 02:13:13

Surname,	GELLES,
Given Name	Giza
Page	13
	126
Street	Lukasiewiczza 18 (Boryslaw)
Remarks	vermisst

Poland, divided between the Russian and German Empires



Ungesühnte Massenmorde

Nach der Vernichtung des Nazismus ging die finstere Nacht zu Ende und die gesittete Menschheit konnte darangehen, die gesellschaftliche Ordnung wiederherzustellen. Hierzu gehörte auch der Entschluß, jene Elemente zur Verantwortung zu ziehen, die sich schändlicher Verbrechen schuldig gemacht haben. Soweit man die Nazischakale im Jahre 1945 in Österreich aufgreifen konnte, machte man ihnen den Prozeß.

Erst im Jahre 1947 begannen in Wien die Erhebungen gegen die ehemaligen Wiener Polizisten, die in Boryslaw Massenmorde verübt haben. Es sind dies Mitas, Neumayer, Pöhl, Weigl, Schuch und Guldan.

Da Boryslaw der Tatort war, und dieses Gebiet der russischen Oberhoheit untersteht, verlangte die russische Besatzung die Auslieferung der Beschuldigten. In Rußland machte man den Schwerverbrechern den Prozeß, der mit der Verhängung von lebenslänglichen Zuchthausstrafen endete.

Als Rußland im Jahre 1955 den Staatsvertrag mit Österreich abschloß — verlangten österreichische Politiker — die Überstellung der Kriegsverbrecher in ihre österreichische Heimat. Die Russen gaben dem Anliegen der Österreicher unter der Bedingung statt, daß die Ausgelieferten dem hiesigen Strafgericht überantwortet werden. Trotz der vom österreichischen Innenministerium verschul-

deten Verzögerung und vom gegenwärtigen Bundesminister für Landesverteidigung Graf unternommen Interventionen zu Gunsten der Massenmörder, fand der Prozeß tatsächlich vor einem Wiener Schwurgericht statt und erregte nicht weniger Aufsehen, als der seinerzeitige Prozeß gegen den berüchtigten Würger Brunner II, der auf dem Galgen endete.

Ein nicht geringes Verdienst daran, daß die Massenmörder Mitas und Konsorten ausgeforscht und vor das Gericht gestellt werden konnten, erwarb die Jüdische Dokumentation in Wien unter Leitung von Tadek Friedmann.

Die sechs Angeklagten waren als Schutzpolizisten nach Boryslaw kommandiert worden um dort Wach- und Absperrdienste zu leisten. Ihre Aufgabe erblickten aber die ehemaligen Wiener Polizisten darin, jüdische Männer, Frauen, Kinder und Greise, Kranke und Körperbehinderte zu peinigen, zu schänden, zu plündern und zu morden. Die ärmsten Menschen, mußten ihre Gräber selbst schaufeln, worauf die Kriegsverbrecher aufgeschossen. Wer noch nicht tot war, wurde in die Grube gestoßen, die unverzüglich zugeschüttet worden ist. Das Scheusal Mitas forderte einen Mann an, der voll damit beschäftigt war, für ihn die Pistole zu laden, weil Mitas sonst mit den Massenerschießungen der Juden nicht fertig geworden wäre.

Die
Stimme
Organ des Allgemeinen Zionisten in Österreich

Preis 2 Schilling V. i. b.

Redaktion u. Administration
Wien IX, Universitätsstr. 41
Telefon A 26473

Postcheck-Konto Nr. 134.291

August/September 1956

Zionistischer Landesverband Wien

erbitten durch einreden

Nr. 01/56

Chapter 6

Dr. David Gelles – a Zionist in Vienna

David Gelles was born in Galicia in 1883. He was the second son of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles and Esther Weinstein. The couple brought up three sons, Efraim Fischel, David, and Max, and three daughters, Bertha, Rosa, and Lotte. The family settled in Solotwina near Stanislau where Nahum Uri succeeded his father-in-law Rabbi Hirsch Leib Weinstein as Chief Rabbi. His Hebrew title was Av Beth Din (Head of the Rabbinical Court) while he was referred to at different times in German as Bezirksrabbiner and Oberrabbiner. My grandfather retained this post for 50 years until his death in 1934. He was an adherent of the Rebbe of Czortkow, Israel Friedman. The latter's grandfather and namesake Israel Friedman of Ruzhin founded a dynasty of Chasidic leaders who established themselves in several towns in the outlying provinces of the Austrian Empire and gathered large and devoted followings. The Czortkow Chasidim were part of the wide ranging and continuing movement of mystical Judaism that began to sweep through eastern Europe in the later 18th century. This movement had its populist as well as elitist elements. Among the most inspirational early Chasidic leaders was Pinchas of Koretz from the ancient line of the Shapiro rabbis. I have discussed the connections between Gelles, Shapiro, and Friedman families in previous articles.

My grandfather and Rabbi Israel Friedman were among the many Galician Jews who fled to Vienna at the outbreak of the first world war, when their homes became a battleground fought over by the Austrian and Russian armies. Israel Friedman established his court in the capital and remained there until his death in 1933. Although my grandfather eventually went back to Solotwina he was for many years active in the inner circle of Friedman's adherents. Vienna at that time had a large Jewish community swollen in numbers by war refugees. The Czortkower Rebbe was a leading light of pan-European Jewish orthodoxy and a strong supporter of *Agudas Israel*, the party or action group of the orthodox movement.

As such, he and his circle were against the reform tendencies in Judaism, which had made a belated but strong impact on the eastern heartlands of orthodoxy in the closing decades of the 19th century. They were also opposed to the Zionist movement that was making such headway at the beginning of the new century.

Orthodoxy had for long been able to encompass some modernist tendencies. Two rabbis of the Chajes family, who were distant cousins on my mother's side, were prominent exponents of traditional teaching while fully engaged with the rapid changes going on around them. Zvi Hirsch Chajes, the 19th century Rabbi of Zolkiev, was a scholar steeped in secular European culture who put forward many educational and social reforms, and his liberal-minded pro-Zionist grandson, Hirsch Perez Chajes, was a greatly respected Chief Rabbi of Vienna in the years from 1918 to 1927. At the other extreme were some rabbis of the Spira dynasty of Munkacz in Hungary, known for their uncompromising orthodoxy. Zvi Hirsch Spira succeeded his father Solomon Spira as Chief Rabbi of Munkacz in 1893 and was followed by his son Haim Eleazar Spira in 1913. Zvi Hirsch Spira married a daughter of Rabbi Hananiah Horowitz of Ulanow, who was a cousin of our Horowitz connections.

My grandfather's eldest son Efraim Fischel was born in 1879 and became a rabbi. His wife belonged to the Leifer rabbinical family of Nadworna. They had at least two children, Josef and Ahron Leib (Leo). Efraim Fischel had passed away by 1921 when his sons are recorded in the orthodox war orphanage in Vienna. I have recounted the story of my lost cousin Josef Gelles, who perished in the holocaust.

My father, the second son, was sent to study at the Munkacz Yeshiwa in the 1890's, that is, in the days of Zvi Hirsch Spira.

This was the period of Russian pogroms that shocked western Europe. Many young Jews, hovering between family loyalty to age-old orthodoxy and a yearning to participate in the social and political life of countries in which Jewish emancipation was becoming a reality, were swayed by the plight of Russian Jewry and by the activities of Theodor Herzl, the Hungarian born founder of modern Zionism, who published his book *Der Judenstaat* in 1897.

Zionist dreams of a Jewish state struck a particular chord in the Habsburg lands where ideas of national self-determination for its constituent ethnic groups were fermenting. This ferment finally came to fruition after the first world war when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismembered. The map of Europe was redrawn and Vienna with its large Jewish community became the capital of a small Austrian republic.

An obituary notice published shortly after my father's death in 1964 states that he remained at the Munkacz Yeshiva until he was in his 17th year, so that would indicate that it was perhaps in 1900 that he took the fateful decision to break away from his parents, his home town, and centuries of orthodoxy and to seek a modern education and a new life within the mainstream of European culture. He made his way to Czernowitz, the capital of the Austrian crown land of Bukowina. He had to add a knowledge of German and Latin to his childhood Yiddish and Hebrew, he had to acquire a high school education to qualify for entry to the University, and as far as I know he financed this through his own efforts by giving private Hebrew lessons. By 1911 we find him advanced in his studies at the University of Czernowitz, where he read law and attended courses in subjects such as political economy. Certificates and testimonials survive including one from his economics professor, Joseph Schumpeter, who later became famous in America (see my book *An Ancient Lineage*). By the outbreak of the first world war my father was in Vienna. A diploma of 1915 confirms his degree of *Doctor Juris* from the University of Vienna. A year later he was admitted to the roll of advocates and began his legal career.

He did not set up his own practice until about 1921. In that year he married my mother Regina Griffel, daughter of David Mendel Griffel and Chawa Wahl of Nadworna. She had come to Vienna with her parents as refugees from the Galician war front. Her father belonged to a family that had substantial business interests in Galicia and further afield. Her grandfather and most of his children followed the ultra orthodox path. They were close to the Hagers, the rabbis of Vishnitz and Otoniya, who as I have shown in an earlier article were related to the Shapiro and Friedman Chasidim. Among such orthodox families marriages were arranged. As the son of a respected rabbi with a promising career in an honourable profession my father might have been welcomed as a son-in-law.

However, the rift between my father and his orthodox relatives was soon to be echoed in the Griffel family. My maternal grandparents returned to their home town after the war when it had become part of the newly reconstituted Polish republic. While they and other branches of the Griffel family clung to their ancient traditions, a few years in Vienna had sufficed to transform my mother and her two brothers into modern Europeans who cherished their Jewish heritage in a different way. The religious divide in my father's family was also deepened when his two like-minded younger siblings came to study in Vienna and duly obtained their law degrees. Lotte was also a Zionist and emigrated to Palestine in the 1930's, while Max practised as a lawyer in Vienna and ultimately wrote the standard commentary on Austrian company law, which is still in print in a revised 5th edition after 45 years.

In the interwar period my father's life in Vienna revolved around his family and the education of his children, his legal profession, and the Zionist contribution to Jewish community life. This life was shattered in March 1938 when Austria was forcibly incorporated into Hitler's *Reich*. We managed to flee to England in August 1938. During the war years my father continued to take part in the Zionist discussion groups organised by Austrian refugees, and in about 1949 he returned to Vienna to resume his legal work. From that time until his death fifteen years later he was most active in the Jewish and Zionist life of Vienna. After near annihilation during the war the Viennese Jewish community was gradually revived through the influx of Jewish survivors from eastern Europe. My father's life was fragmented by the terrible forces that tore Europe apart for so long and cost so many lives, including those of many near relatives. But throughout his adult years, from his student days in Czernowitz, in pre-war Vienna, during his days in England, and in his final years, he did not falter in his concern for the Zionist cause.

The story of Austrian Jewry in the 20th century and his small part in it cannot be told without reference to the wider political background - the last days of the Habsburg monarchy, the creation of a truncated Austrian republic after the first world war, the following economic crisis and the rise of National Socialism in Germany, the conflict between parties of the left and right in the Austria of the interwar years, and the political events that led to the *Anschluss*, the catastrophe

of the war and the holocaust, the eventual recognition of a new democratic independent Austrian republic, and the creation of the State of Israel.

In 1917, when the defeat of the central powers and the dismemberment of the moribund Ottoman Empire could be foreseen, the British government issued an undertaking to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Dr. Chaim Weitzmann, who later became the first President of the State of Israel, played a significant role in the events leading up to the *Balfour Declaration*. The fulfilment of that promise clearly lay some considerable time in the future.

In the immediate aftermath of the war and in the prevailing spirit of national self-determination Viennese Zionists formed a party called the *Jüdische Nationale Partei* and entered the arena of national politics. Vienna at that time harboured getting on for 200,000 Jews, forming about 10% of its population. The leading spirit of the *JNP* was the publisher and journalist Robert Stricker. He was elected to the Austrian National Assembly in 1919, but he remained the sole parliamentary representative of his party. Some of his colleagues managed to get seats on the city council. My father was his friend in these post-war years. An appended photograph shows a group of Viennese Zionists in Jerusalem in 1922 and I can identify my father, standing in the middle of the front row and Stricker, as fourth from the left of the picture.

When Austria found itself without an empire in 1919 there was considerable sentiment for a political union with Germany but this was unacceptable to the victorious powers. By 1920 the Christian Social party of conservative and clericalist background formed a government. For more than a decade there followed an uneasy polarity between this party and the Social Democrats who had control of Vienna. The Christian Socials were more right wing and the Social Democrats were more radical and socialist than their names might suggest to us today. The overwhelming strength of these two parties overshadowed the minority groups at either end of the political spectrum, the “greater German” nationalists, the Austrian Nazis, and the communists. In 1933 parliamentary government was abrogated by the Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, and for the next few years Austria was under an authoritarian rule not dissimilar to that of its neighbours to the east and south.

It seemed that only a right wing government could expect military support from Horthy's Hungary and Mussolini's Italy to keep Hitler's ambitions of a greater Reich in check. In February 1934 Vienna erupted into several days of civil war in which the rightist militia put down a rising by the socialists. A few months later the Austrian Nazis attempted a *putsch* during which Dollfuss was murdered. The new Chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg, continued his balancing act but when Mussolini eventually threw in his lot with Hitler Austria's fate was sealed.

During this period Viennese Jewry and the Jewish community Council [the IKG or Israelitische Kultus Gemeinde] was split along lines reflecting the changing national scene. In the orthodox community there were some Zionists (*Mizrachi*) but many more were opposed to political Zionism (*Agudas Israel*). A majority of assimilated Jews were adherents of the Social Democratic party, while a substantial Zionist movement had the support of business people and the professional class.

At first the focus of the world wide Zionist movement was the role they should play in domestic politics. In the mid 1920's Vladimir Jabotinsky and his Zionist Revisionists broke away from the movement, calling for the immediate establishment of a Jewish National State. The General Zionists started as a non-aligned group within the Zionist Organisation. As the movement became polarised between labour Zionists and revisionist Zionism, the General Zionists became identified with European liberal and middle class beliefs. At a later date left and right wing splinter groups underwent various changes of direction.

Jewish attitudes towards the Austrian national political parties were complex. The socialists had a number of prominent Jews among their leadership. Their principal political enemies were Hitler and his Austrian Nazi proxies. They would fight to protect their Jewish comrades against anti-semitic acts by local Nazis. The Zionists, however, imagined that their security against German Nazism lay in cooperation with the ruling Christian-Social party. A traditional religious anti-semitism was endemic in the Austrian right but it welcomed the support of liberal conservative Zionists in so far as this weakened Jewish support for the socialists and improved their image in the western democracies.

Thus Dollfuss approved the appointment of the Zionist Jewish community president Desider Friedmann to the Council of State. But Hitler was biding his time, and in March 1938 time ran out for Austria and for its Jews. Soon after the German invasion, Chancellor Schuschnigg and some Jewish leaders were sent to Dachau, a concentration camp used mainly for political opponents. Schuschnigg was soon released and found refuge in the United States, but Desider Friedmann and Robert Stricker were among those who were later murdered in Auschwitz. On the tenth anniversary of their deaths in 1954 the Herzl Club, of which my father was then President, organised a commemoration in the Great Hall of the Jewish Community Council (a contemporary newspaper report of this solemn occasion is appended).

My father had returned to Vienna shortly after the end of the second world war and the creation of the State of Israel. These two historical events had clear causal connections – the defeat of one of the most evil tyrannies the world had ever seen, that had destroyed millions of Jews, and the seeming end to 2,000 years of dispersion of the Jewish people. These events produced far-reaching geo-political changes in the decades that followed.

Many Jews now had the choice of being citizens with full social and political rights in most of Europe (whatever religion they professed) or opting to become citizens of Israel. Some survivors of the holocaust who had millennial European roots chose to remain in the lands of their immediate ancestors while acknowledging their emotional ties to the land and its capital Jerusalem that had become holy to three great religions.

On his return to Vienna my father found the Jewish community in ruins but it gradually revived, not least through the efforts of Zionists who saw their main post-war task in Vienna as social and cultural rebuilding with the Community Council and the cooperation of the world Zionist movement. A most important aspect of this work was that of transmitting the ideals of Zionism and a knowledge of Jewish history and tradition to the next generation of Viennese Jews. In this context intensive programmes of cultural meetings and lectures were organised under various auspices in which my father played an active part.

He was a member and later President of the Herzl Club, as mentioned above. He wrote articles and gave lectures that were reported in the local press (such as the appended report of a lecture on Maimonides given in 1953 under the auspices of the Zionist Federation of Austria). He also involved himself in other community affairs and in due course served as a Vice-President of the IKG (as in the appended report in the American Jewish Yearbook of 1961). He had been Honorary President of the General Zionists of Austria and a member of their organisation's world council. He was President of the Federation of Austrian Zionists at the time of his death.

My father broke away from a centuries -old orthodox rabbinical line in the face of the opposition and great anguish of his parents and their circle. But in assessing his life I have come to the conclusion that, in the circumstances of his time, he was in essence true to his inheritance This essence is the Jewish contribution to our Judeo –Christian civilisation which is pre-eminently an ethical one. It came out in my father's concern for law and justice as it did in his younger brother and fellow lawyer Max. Through Zionism my father was seeking justice for his persecuted Jewish brethren. In the world of the 21st century the more grotesque forms of racism are thankfully in decline but the task of finally banishing narrow outdated nationalism and religious intolerance must remain the goal of following generations.

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"Three Generations. Grandfather, father, and son"

Jewish and other newspapers and journals referred to in the text.

One valuable entry to this extensive source of material is : -

< www.compactmemory.de >

Zum Gedenken an Dr. David Gelles

Der Präsident der Zionistischen Föderation Oesterreichs, Dr. David Gelles, ist am 20. August 1964 im 81. Lebensjahr gestorben. Mit ihm verliert die Wiener Judenheit und der Zionismus überhaupt eine der markantesten Persönlichkeiten. Als Sohn eines Rabbiners war er für die Rabbinerlaufbahn bestimmt gewesen. Bis



zu seinem 17. Lebensjahr Jeschiwah-Jünger, lebte er in der Welt des Talmuds. Sein reger Geist erkannte aber, daß es auch eine andere Welt gibt, die viel zu bieten vermag. Das Verlangen, diese Welt kennenzulernen, wurde in ihm so mächtig, daß er sich entschloß, gegen den Widerstand des Heimat-Städtchens in die große Stadt zu ziehen.

Dr. David Gelles war eine Mischung zwischen jüdischem Osten und Westen im besten Sinne, sein Vater war 65 Jahre Rabbiner und verwandt mit der rabbinischen Familie Friedmann in Czortkow.

Zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts kam eine Art von Hasakalah-Emanzipationsströmung auf, die auch den jungen David Gelles erfaßte und in ihm den Durst nach den modernen Geisteswissenschaften erweckte. So verließ er die Jeschiwah in Munkacz, um in Czernowitz weiter zu studieren.

Seine Studien finanzierte er sich durch

Privatstunden und konnte seine juristischen Studien erfolgreich beenden. Seit 1921 beschränkt er in Wien die juristische Laufbahn, in der er sich durch Wissen, Güte und durchdringenden Verstand auszeichnete. Unter dem Eindruck der Programme in Kischinew und der Tätigkeit der Persönlichkeit Theodor Herzls beeinflusst, wurde er schon als junger Student, Zionist. Diesem zionistisch-politischen Ideal ist er bis an sein Lebensende treu geblieben.

Das Wiener Judentum hatte immer wieder Gelegenheit, seine profunde Kenntnis und geistreiche Interpretierung der jüdischen und hebräischen Literatur zu bewundern.

Vor 1938 gehörte er zu den engen Freunden von Robert Stricker in der Judenstaatspartei.

Sein Leben war reich an Verheißung, Erfolg, Schicksalsschlägen und Bitternissen — eben ein menschliches Leben. Vieles wurde ihm gewährt, aber mehr blieb ihm versagt. Bis zuletzt nahm er regen Anteil am zionistischen und jüdischen Leben Wiens und ging im vollen Besitz seiner geistigen Kräfte als Präsident der Zionistischen Föderation von uns. Vorher war er Vizepräsident der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde und Ehrenpräsident der Org. Allg. Zionisten in Oesterreich gewesen.

Mit ihm ist ein Mensch von uns gegangen, der die Quintessenz jüdisch-talmudischer, gepaart mit aufgeschlossener westlicher Bildung verkörpert hat. Schwer und kaum vorstellbar die schmerzende Lücke, die das Ableben dieses großen Mannes geschaffen hat, überhaupt zu füllen.

Er starb im Monat Elul, und das ist als Gnade Gottes anzusehen, ist Elul doch der Monat der inneren Buße und Einkehr zu Gott. So nehmen wir auch auf diesem Wege Abschied von Dr. David Gelles, in der Gewißheit seiner liebevollen Aufnahme durch die Arme des Allmächtigen und daß er Ruhe für seine Seele gefunden hat. Sein Andenken und sein Geist wird uns beflügeln zu Taten in seinem Sinne.

Translation of the Obituary of Dr. David Gelles published in the Jewish newspaper
“Heruth” in Vienna, 4th September 1964

To the Memory of Dr. David Gelles

The President of the Zionist Federation of Austria, Dr. David Gelles, passed away on 20th August 1964 in his 81st year. With him Viennese Jewry and indeed Zionism at large lose one of their outstanding personalities. As the son of a rabbi he was marked out for a rabbinical career. He lived in the world of the Talmud as a Jeshivah student until his 17th year. His eager spirit recognised that there existed another world out there which had much to offer. The desire to get to know that world became so powerful that he decided to make his way to the big city against the opposition of his little home town.

Dr David Gelles represented, in the best sense, a mixture between Jewish East and West. His father was a rabbi for 65 years [*about 60 years ?*] and was related to the rabbinical Friedmann family of Czortkow.

The surge of emancipation that came at the turn of the century [*1900*] captured the young David Gelles and awoke in him a longing for knowledge of the modern epoch. So he left the Jeshivah in Munkacz [*Hungary*] and went to Czernowitz [*capital of the Austrian province of Bukowina*] to continue his studies. He paid for his further education by giving private lessons and was thus able to complete his juridical studies successfully. From 1921 he followed a career as a lawyer in Vienna, where he made his mark through his knowledge, moral qualities, and good sense [*he came to Vienna shortly before the outbreak of WW1, received his degree of Doctor Juris from the University of Vienna in 1915 and was admitted to the roll of Advocates in 1916. He opened his own practice in 1921*]. Under the impact of the pogroms in Kishinew and the activities of Theodor Herzl [*founder of modern Zionism, Author of “Der Judenstaat”*] he became a Zionist in his student days and remained true to this Zionist-political ideal to the end of his life.

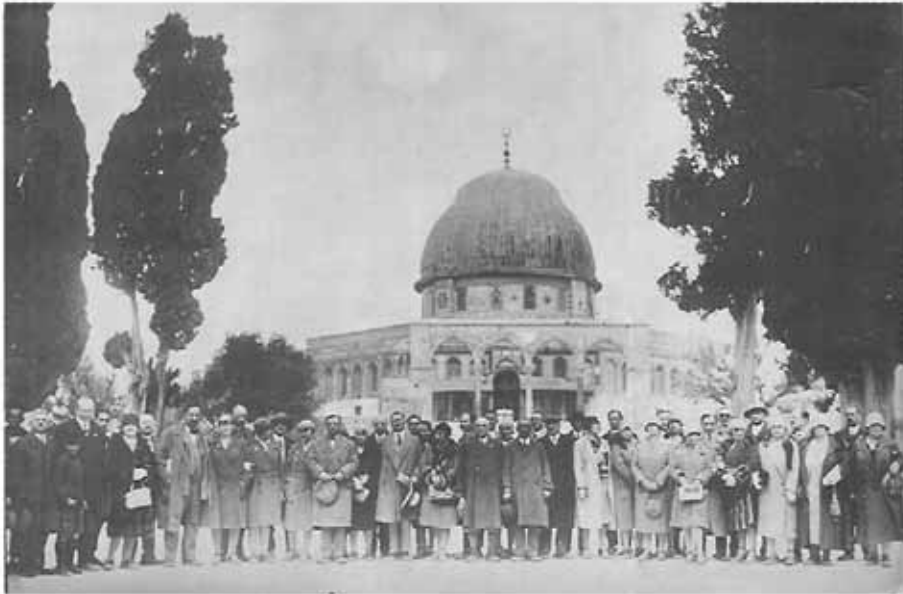
The Jewish community in Vienna had the opportunity to marvel repeatedly at his profound knowledge and genial interpretation of Jewish and Hebrew literature.

Before 1938 he belonged to the close friends of Robert Stricker of the Jewish National Party.

His life was full of promise, success, but also blows of fate and bitterness – in fact a human life. Much was granted but more was denied to him. Until the end of his life he participated actively in the Zionist and Jewish life of Vienna and left us “in full harness” as President of the Zionist Federation. Before that he had been Vice-President of the Jewish Community (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde) and Honorary President of the Organisation of General Zionists of Austria.

With him we lost a person who incorporated the quintessence of Jewish-Talmudical as well as cosmopolitan western culture. It is difficult to imagine how the painful gap left by the departure of this great man is to be filled.

He died in the month of Elul and this could be taken as a sign of divine grace as it is the month of penance and return to God. And so we take leave of Dr. David Gelles in the certainty of his loving embrace by the arms of the Almighty and that he will have found rest for his soul. The memory of his life and spirit will spur us on in our endeavours.



Dr. David Gelles in Jerusalem,1922 and lecturing in Vienna,1955

Im Herzl-Klub

Am 21. Juli — Kaf Tamus — fand im Großen Gewerkschaftssaal, eine vom Herzl-Klub veranstaltete Herzl-Gedenkfeier statt, die einige hundert Teilnehmer anzog.

Nach einem würdevollen Vortrag des El Mole Rachamim, des Ersten Kantors Roth, hielt der Präsident des Herzl-Klubs, Herr Dr. David Gelles, die Gedenkrede, aus welcher wir einige Gedanken wiedergeben :

„Von Moses bis Herzl haben die Juden einen vollen Kreis durchwandert. Sie sind unter Moses als politische Nation in die Weltgeschichte eingetreten, haben in Zeiten nationaler Katastrophen es mit der Umgestaltung zu einer geistigen Nation und später zu einer Religionsgemeinschaft versucht, um die Eigenart zu erhalten, bis sie unter der Führung von Herzl wieder eine politische Nation geworden sind.“

Die *Stimme*
Organ des Allgemeinen Zionisten in Österreich

Preis 2 Schilling V. b. b.

Redaktion und Administration:
Wien IX, Universitätsstr. Nr. 44
Telefon A 26 472
Postcheck-Konto Nr. 134.292
August/September 1954

Zionistischer Landesverband Wien

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Nr. 88/89 — 1954

Desider Friedmann Robert Stricker zum Gedenken

Am 12. Oktober 1944 wurde Dr. Desider Friedmann, der Präsident der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien bis zum Einbruch des Nazismus und am 14. Oktober 1944 Ing. Robert Stricker, ehemaliger Abgeordneter der konstituierenden Nationalversammlung der ersten Republik Österreich von Theresienstadt nach Auschwitz deportiert, wo sie den Märtyrertod fanden.

Am 10. November 1954 veranstaltete der Herzi-Klub im Festsaal der Israel. Kultusgemeinde eine Gedenkundgebung für Friedmann und Stricker. Diese Kundgebung leitete Dr. Gottlieb Weidenfeld ein worauf ein Trauerchoral vom Tempelchor vorgetragen wurde.

Dr. Maurer, der gegenwärtige Präsident der Kultusgemeinde sprach als ehemaliger Mithäftling des Konzentrationslagers und Freund der Märtyrer Friedmann und Stricker, der mit den Verewigten unendliches Leid teilte gab ein erschütterndes Bild über das jammervolle Leben der Beiden im KZ. und würdigte die erhabene Größe dieser großen Männer, deren Lebensziel es war, dem Judentum uneigennützig zu dienen und schloß mit den Worten: „Heute da wir das Gedenken Friedmanns und Strickers ehren wollen wir geloben, daß wir niemals vergessen werden, was der Nazismus uns angetan hat.“ Hierauf ergriff Dr. Heinrich Sokal das Wort und entwarf ein getraues Bild des Lebens und Wirkens von Stricker und Friedmann, deren Tatkraft, unbeugsamer Wille, zielbewußte Handlung und Ergebung zur Sache des Judentums ewige Beispiele bleiben werden. Der Präsident des Herzi-Klubs, Dr. David Gelies führte einige markante Daten aus dem Leben dieser beiden großen Männer an und schloß die solenne Kundgebung.

LEBEN IN WIEN

Zionistische Föderation in Österreich

VORTRAG Dr. DAVID GELLES

Die Reihe der Kulturvorträge, veranstaltet von der Zionistischen Föderation Oesterreichs, wurde mit einem Vortrag des Herrn Dr. David Gelles am 29. September d. J. eröffnet. Dr. Gelles sprach zum Thema „Maimonides, der große Baumeister des Judentums“. Der Festsaal der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde war bis auf den letzten Platz besetzt, wodurch das große Interesse der Zionisten manifestiert wurde.

Nach vorgenommener Definition des Begriffes Judentum im engeren und weiteren Sinn und nach Anführung einiger großer Meister vor und nach Maimonides ging der Vortragende von dem uralten Satz der Ueberlieferung aus, daß jede Generation in Israel die offenbarte Lehre so zu betrachten habe, wie wenn sie selbst am Sinai gewesen wäre. Die mögliche, zweifache Auslegung dieses Satzes führte zu einer Spaltung innerhalb der gläubigen Judenheit. Während die Orthodoxie bis heute daran festhält, daß die offenbarte Lehre in der Geisteshaltung von damals zu betrachten und auszuliegen sei, behaupten die anderen, daß die Auslegung stets in der Geisteshaltung der jeweils lebenden Generation zu erfolgen habe. Diese Auffassung nahm bereits bei den alten Propheten (Amos, Jesaja) ihren Anfang, führte dann zum Gegensatz zwischen Pharisäern und Sadducäern, spielte auch eine Rolle beim Widerstreit der Talmudischen Schulen von Schammai und Hillel, beeinflusste die Wandlung in Maimonides und führte schließlich durch die späteren Jahrhunderte bis zu der 1926 erfolgten Gründung der World Union for Progressive Judaism. Während nun Maimonides zur Zeit der Verfassung seines ersten Werkes, des Kommentars zur Mischna, offenbar noch auf orthodoxem Boden stand, indem er die berühmten 13 Dogmen der jüdischen Glaubenslehre formulierte (an ma'amin), die jeder fromme Jude täglich im Anschluß an das Morgengebet zu sagen pflegt, hat er später im ersten Buch seines berühmten Werkes „Mischne Thora“ und insbesondere in seinem philosophischen Werk „More Nebuchim“, offenbar unter dem Einfluß der griechischen Philosophie, insbesondere des von ihm geschätzten Aristoteles, die fortschrittliche Auffassung sich zu eigen gemacht. Mit dem Werke „Mischne Thora“ hat Maimonides die erstaunliche Arbeit zustande gebracht, die schriftliche Lehre der Thora und die mündliche Lehre des Talmud zu einem einheitlichen System zu verschmelzen und solcherart jedem Lernbesseren das

Studium zu erleichtern. Denn der Umfang des 63 Traktate umfassenden babylonischen Talmuds war schon damals nur den besonders großen und begabten Gelehrten in seiner ganzen Bedeutung erfassbar. Nur wer halbwegs durch den Talmud gegangen ist, kann die ungeheure tiefgründige und systematische Arbeit des großen Meisters des Judentums richtig einschätzen. In der Einleitung erklärt Maimonides die Wahl des Titels dieses Werkes damit, daß er dieses Werk als zweite Stufe für die Studierenden gedacht hat, die die Bibel zuerst studiert haben. In seinem dritten und bedeutendsten Werk „More Nebuchim“ versucht Maimonides die jüdische Glaubenslehre mit der Philosophie zu verschmelzen derart, daß er manche Glaubenssätze philosophisch zu erklären versucht, was ihm aber nur zum Teile gelungen ist. Hier nimmt er zu den meisten Dogmen in rationalistischer Weise Stellung, wobei er den reinen Gottesbegriff, die Prophetie, die Bedeutung der messianischen Verheißung, das Leben und die Vergeltung im Jenseits, Willensfreiheit und Vorsehung zum Gegenstand der Erörterung machte.

Die im ersten Buch der „Mischne Thora“ bereits versuchte philosophische Erklärung mancher Glaubenssätze und insbesondere die im „More Nebuchim“ vortragene Lehre sind vielfacher Gegnerschaft in den Kreisen der Orthodoxie begegnet. Schließlich wurde aber seine Arbeit von allen anerkannt und das Volk krönte ihn mit dem Titel eines „zweiten Moses“.

Im Licht des derzeitigen Standes der Wissenschaft weist die Lehre von Maimonides manche Mängel auf, die begreiflich erscheinen. Die fortschreitende Entwicklung der Lehre von der Evolution und das physikalische Weltbild von heute lassen manche Anschauungen aus dem zwölften Jahrhundert überholt erscheinen und ein dritter Moses müßte entstehen, um manche Dogmen der Geisteshaltung der gegenwärtigen Generation anzupassen. Im allgemeinen bleibt aber die Riesengestalt des Maimonides auch für kommende Generationen unsterblich.

Wir freuen uns sagen zu können, daß wir in Dr. Gelles nicht nur einen Mann mit profundem Wissen schätzen, sondern auch einen Redner mit hohen Qualitäten. Der Präsident der Zionistischen Föderation, Gustav Leitner, dankte im Namen des begeisterten Publikums.

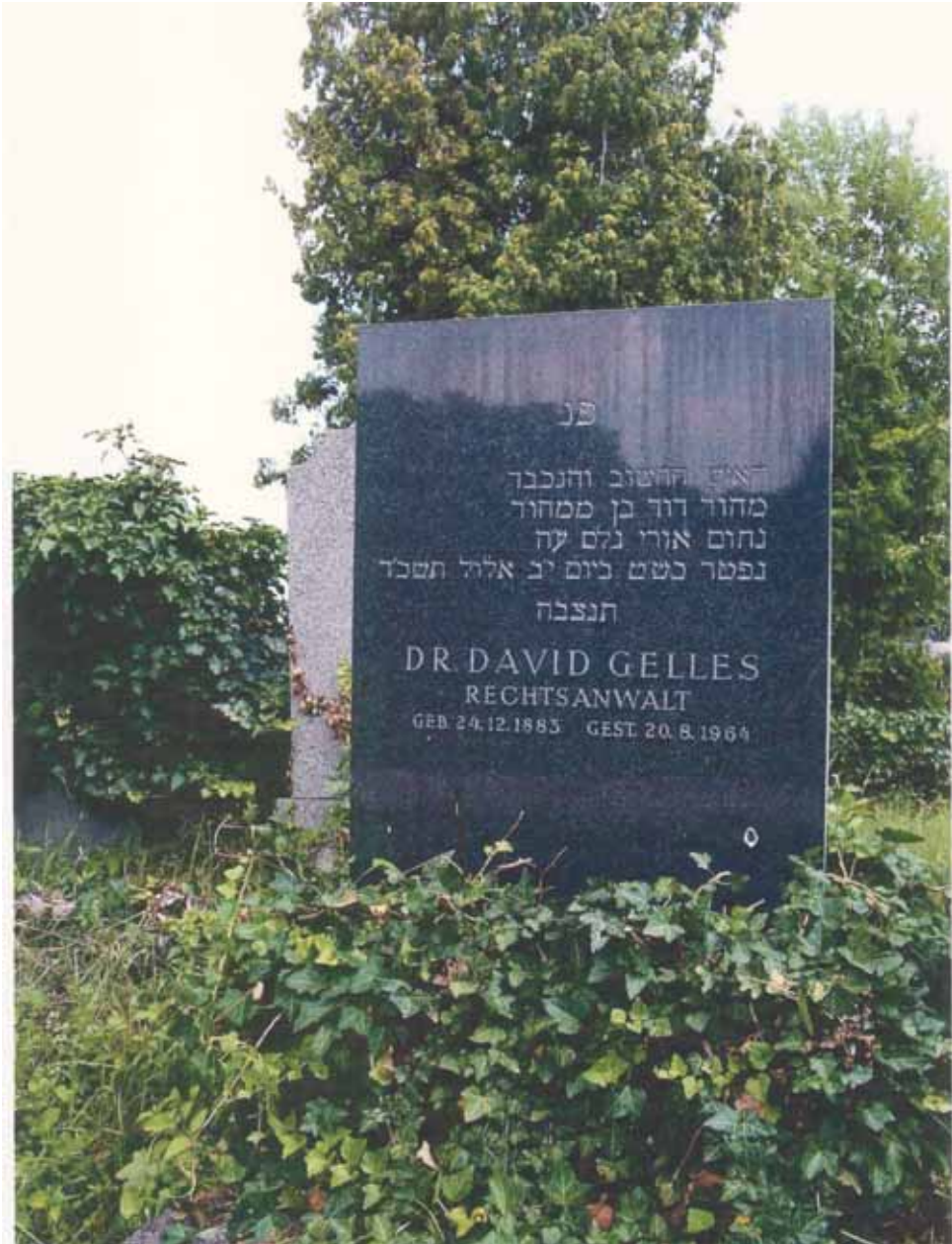
Dr. David Gelles, Vice-President of the Jewish Community Council (IKG)

Elections for the Vienna Jewish community council, after being postponed for a year (AJYB, 1960 [Vol. 61], p. 251), took place in December 1959. Facing the struggle for adequate indemnification legislation, the membership wanted to demonstrate by the "Gesamt-jiidische Liste" (united Jewish list) their unity and determination to obtain just compensation for the victims of the Nazi regime. The united list received 2,184 votes, i.e., 47 per cent of the total number eligible to vote. According to the by-laws, as amended in 1958, only those members were entitled to vote whose Kultussteuer (Gemeinde tax) was paid up (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 202). Of 8,000 adult members only 4,600 met that requirement, and fewer than half of these cast their ballots.

The new Gemeinde council's 24 members (of whom 19 were incumbents) included 13 Socialists, 6 Zionists, 3 Orthodox, and 2 Communists. **The new board of directors consisted of Emil Maurer (Soc), president; Ernst Feldsberg(Soc.) and David Gelles (Zion.), vice presidents;** Paul Bernstein (Soc), ErnstHein (Soc), Anton Pick (Soc), Otto Wolken (Soc), Anna Neugroschl (Zion.),and Wolf Rosen (Orthodox), directors.

from the American Jewish Year Book 1961, page 278

Tombstone of Dr. David Gelles in Vienna



Looking Back

The Gelles, Shapiro, and Friedman families discussed in previous chapters had religious and social as well as genetic links that have a significance beyond their interest to the families and to rabbinic genealogy. The strands formed by such connections are part of the warp and weft of the grand tapestry of the millennial Jewish history in Europe. A few dozen families played a major part in providing the intellectual, moral, and social leadership of European Jewry. Kalonymos, Luria, Treves, Shapiro, Horowitz, Margolies, Halpern, Yaffe, and Katzenellenbogen are some that spring to mind, Their genealogical connections are so manifold that many members of these and of other ancient families are likely to be related, if only distantly, by blood or marriage.

The ancestry of the Friedmans of Ruzhin, Sadagora, and Czortkow encompassed Katzenellenbogen, Horowitz, and Shapiro. The strength the Friedmans drew from these lineages was later preserved by the practice of marrying their cousins. This endogamy may have been motivated by the acknowledgement of the exalted status accorded to them by their followers and a desire to perpetuate a noble line.

Lineage (*yichus*) was of course of importance since biblical times. Its religious significance is indicated by the age-old phrase “may the merit of our ancestors protect us” with its implied obligation to be a credit to one’s forebears. Notable families valued their lineage and tried to improve it by marriage. There were, of course, some distinguished rabbis or scholars of modest background, but very often they would strive to ally their children to one of these families.

The recognition of inbred moral and intellectual qualities was part of the ethos of the Ashkenazi rabbinical elite. It led at times to the establishment of family dynasties in which rabbinical posts and other appointments passed unchallenged to sons or sons-in-law. A prime instance is provided by Chief Rabbi Meshullam Issachar Horowitz of Stanislaw (1808-1888), who avowed that only members of his family should ever occupy his seat, and his dynasty did survive

until the second world war. Furthermore, about a dozen little *shtetls* around Stanislau, including Bohorodzany and Solotwina, often had rabbis who were Horowitz or related to them by marriage. The dynastic principle also flourished among the Chasidic branches of the great families such as the Horowitz and Shapiro.

It was a common occurrence for a promising pupil to marry his teacher's daughter and in due course to inherit his father-in-law's post. This preferment was not so much an exercise of nepotism as an accepted form of recognising talent and honouring the memory of predecessors. Family influence could make itself felt in more distant appointments, as in the instance of Rabbi Samuel Gelles, who married a daughter of Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz. Samuel was sponsored in his rabbinical career by Rabbi Jacob Samson of Shepetivka, a *mechutan* of Rabbi Pinchas (whose son Yehuda Meir Shapiro had married Rabbi Jacob Samson's daughter).

Rabbis of pan-European standing whose influence reached across the continent included our 18th century ancestor Samuel Helman, the Chief Rabbi of Mannheim and later of Metz. He married one of his daughters to the son of Chief Rabbi David Mirels Fraenkel of Berlin, another to Rabbi Eliezer Katzenellenbogen of Hagenau and Bamberg, a third to Rabbi Isaac Rapaport of Hanau, and a fourth to a grandson of Chief Rabbi Naftali Hirsch Katz of Frankfurt and Posen, who was of the ancient Kohanic (sacerdotal) line connected to the Horowitz and the famous Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague. One daughter of Samuel Helman's eldest son, Rabbi Moshe of Glogau, married Jehiel Michael, a son of Asher Lemel Halevi Segal, the Chief Rabbi of Glogau and Eisenstadt, and another daughter was the wife of Moses Gelles, a grandson of the Brody scholar of that name. A daughter of Samuel Helman's younger son, Uri Feivush, who was in turn Chief Rabbi of Hanau, Lissa, Bonn, and Cologne, married Samuel, the son of Ezekiel Landau, the Chief Rabbi of Prague.

The progeny of Samuel Helman adopted the first name of Helman as a family name in the form of Hillman. Samuel Helman of Metz was traditionally taken to be the son of Israel Halpern of Krotoschin and grandson of Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow. There is some conflicting evidence for this connection but the Rabbi of Metz was certainly of the Halpern-Katzenellenbogen family nexus.

His contemporary Moses Menachem Mendel Levush of Brody married a daughter of Rabbi S(hmuel) Gelles, and was thereafter known as Moses Gelles. The use of an epithet such as Levush to indicate descent from the author of an important rabbinical work was quite common in certain parts before the use of family names became obligatory in the states of central and eastern Europe at various dates in the period 1780 – 1820. In this case the ancestor was Mordecai Yaffe, the 16th century Chief Rabbi of Grodno, Prague, and Posen and author of *Levushim* (Rabbinical robes of learning). The immediate progeny of Moses Gelles were known by either or both names of Levush and Gelles.

The adoption of a mother's family name was not unusual, particularly when her family was perceived to be of higher status by lineage, scholarship, or wealth. When Beile, a daughter of Isaac Horowitz (1715-1767), the Chief Rabbi of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg, married Rabbi Menachem Mendel Rubin of Lesniow and Lesko some of their issue opted to be known as Horowitz.

The first name of a female relative had been used as a second name in earlier times by Chief Rabbi Joel Sirkes of Cracow, who belonged to the Yaffe family, and Rabbi Samuel Eidels of Chelm, Lublin, and Ostrog, who adopted the first name of his mother-in-law in appreciation of her support. A mother's first name was used as an epithet for Aryeh Leib Sarah's, an 18th century Chasidic mystic.

Occasionally a father-in-law's first name was added as an epithet, as in the case of Rabbi Moshe Reb Zelig's of Brody who married a daughter of Rabbi Ahron Zelig ben Yehuda Zundel Segal. An acronym of Rabbi Moshe Reb Zelig's (Ramraz) became the family name of his descendants. His son, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz was a grandfather of Shalom Rokeah (1779-1855), the first of the Rokeah Grand Rabbis of Belz, and of Moshe Levush aka Gelles, a great-grandson of Moses Gelles. Ahron Zelig (died 1731), his grandson Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz, (died 1804), and my ancestor Moses Gelles (died ca 1760) were all scholars of the prestigious Brody Klaus.

In old families several branches at times adopted different names for their respective lines (Fraenkel, Ornstein – Ashkenazi, and others). Changes of name

could distinguish progeny of a particularly important member of the main line or a branch of a family that established itself in a new location.

Thus, the descendants through the male line of the Maharam of Padua, Meir Katzenellenbogen, were known by the name of the German town of their origin. The Maharam's grandson, was known as Saul Wahl, and his Wahl – Katzenellenbogen descendants carried on the name of Wahl. The noted Chief Rabbi of Cracow, Abraham Joshua Heschel, was descended through his father from Meir Katzenellenbogen and from Saul Wahl through his mother, and some of his progeny used the Heschel name. His grandson Isaac Krakower, a Chief Rabbi of Brody, was the progenitor of a separate family called Babad, this name being an acronym of the Hebrew for “sons of the Av Beth Din” (head of the rabbinical court) and rendered in the vernacular as Rabinowitz. So his family are sometimes referred to as Rabinowitz-Babad.

The Horowitz family are a sprig of the Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona (Levites of the good name) who were allied with a number of other ancient families such as the Benveniste. From the Spanish March and Provence a family of these Levites found their way to Bohemia in the late 15th century and settled at the little town of Horovice near Prague from which they took their new name. The Halevi Horowitz flourished in Prague and subsequently in Cracow and elsewhere. They married with other leading Prague families. Of particular interest in the present study are their marriages with the Chayoth (Chayes) family, whose Isaac ben Abraham Chayes had been a Chief Rabbi of Prague and whose sister was the first wife of the famous Rabbi Judah Loew. The Chayes family like the Horowitz had ancient roots in Iberia and Provence. A daughter of Judah Loew and Mirl Chayes-Altschuler married Isaac ben Samson Katz, of the millennial sacerdotal family. From the offspring of that marriage there descended Katzenellenbogen, Margolies, Fischel, Zausmer, and Horowitz lines. In the glory period of Prague Jewry that extended into the first part of the 17th century Gelles are also recorded in that city and on its tombstones, and some called Gelles Katz. The priestly line connects a number of families that mingled in 16th century Prague and came together again in 18th and 19th century Galicia.

References to these manifold connections are to be found in the text of previous chapters and in the footnotes of appended charts.

Index of Names

page numbers in bold refer to charts & their footnotes

- Adlersberg, Gittel Hakohen (m Margolies) **14, 15**
 Alexander Yoel Hakohen **15**
- Altschuler see also Chajes **10, 18, 19**, 106
- Arik. Meir 48, 50, 53, 56
- Aryeh Leib Sarah's 106
- Ashkenazi see also Ornstein 105
- Baal Shem Tov (Israel ben Eliezer) 4, 6, 30 -33, 37-38, 45
- Babad, also Rabinowitz – Babad 106
 Jacob Yollis **13**
 Reitze (m Horowitz) **10, 13**
 Joshua Heschel of Tarnopol **13**, 52
 Aryeh Leib of Mikulince 52
 Josef of Vienna 48, 51, 52 , 61
 Yoel of Solotwina **12,13**, 49, 50, 52
 Moses of Lemberg (Lvov) 53
- Barzillay **8**
- Baumgarten 48, 51, 59, 61
- Benveniste, 5, **8, 9**, 106
 Sheshet ben Isaac ben Joseph **8, 9**
 Benveniste **8, 9**
 Isaac **8, 9**
 Joseph **8, 9**
 Abraham , **8, 9**
 (see Mendes, Nasi)
- Berenstein, **10**
 Aryeh Leib of Brody **10.**
 Isaac Wolf **10**
 daughter (m Chajes) **10**
- Broda, Abraham of Prague **15**

Chajes (Chayes, Chayoth), 2,5, 6, **10** , 106
 Isaac ben Abraham , 4
 Mirl Chayes-Altschuler (m Loew) 5, **15**, 106
 Isaac (ben Meir) **11**
 Menachem Manish (m Berenstein) **10**
 Zvi Hirsch 86
 Hirsch Perez 52 , 86
 Isaac Chaim **11**
 Sarah Matel (m Griffel) **11, 28**

Charlemagne 5
 Charles Martel 5

Dollfuss, Engelbert 89, 90
 Dov Ber of Meseritz **19, 26**

Eidels, Samuel 106
 Eli the priest 5
 Elimelech of Lejask (Weisblum) **20, 21**
 Epstein **8, 9**

Fischel 5, **10** , 106
 Efraim of Ludmir (m Ashkenazi-Katzenellenbogen) **10**

Fraenkel, 105
 Meir (m Gelles of Brody) **42**
 Yehuda Ahron of Brody **14, 15**
 Hinde bat Yehuda Ahron (m Horowitz) **14**
 David Mirels of Berlin 104
 Judah Leib (m Helman) 104

Friedmann, 1,2, 50, 87, 95, 103
 Israel of Ruzhin 1, **18, 19, 20, 26, 27, 28**, 37, 50, 52
 Miriam (m Hager) **27, 28, 37**
 David Moshe of Czortkow **18, 20, 26, 50, 73**
 Israel of Czortkow (m Friedman) 1,2 ,3, **18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26,**
 45, 49, 50, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60, 62, **64, 65, 73, 85**
 Dov Ber 51, 57,58, **64**
 Abraham Jacob of Sadagora 5, **20, 21**, 53
 Bathsheva Ruchama (m Friedman) **20, 21, 64, 65**

Hadassah Feige (m Shapiro) **20, 21**
 Isaac of Boyany 53
 Desider 91, 99

Gelles, see also Levush 2,4, 29, 30, **42**, 103
 Shmuel of Siemiatycze 30, 105
 Moses of Brody (see Levush) 2,3, 29, 30-34, **42**, 45, 105
 Michel aka Levush (m Heschel Hakohen) 30, **42**
 Mordecai ben Michel (m Zundel) 42
 Moshe ben Mordecai Levush aka Gelles 106
 Joseph (Vaskievonie) 30, **42**
 daughter (m Fraenkel) **42**
 Abraham (m Reich) **42**
 Moshe Gershon 35, **42**
 Abraham (m gd-daughter of Margoshes) **42**
 Mordecai ben Moses 30, 35, **42**
 Samuel (m Shapiro) 2,3 , **18, 19** , 30 – 37, 40, **42**, 104
 Ahron **42**
 Eliyahu Pinchas (m. Wertheim) **18, 19**, 32, 36, 41, **42**
 Menachem Nahum – his descendants known as Polonsky **42**
 Moses (m. Helman), 3, 30, 35, 104
 David Isaac 3, 30, **42, 65**
 Nahum Uri (m Weinstein and m 2nd Chaye Malka)) 2,3, **11, 12**,
14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 28 ,31, **42**, 43, 45 - 48, 51, 53, 57 , 58,
 59, 61, **64, 65**, 67, 73, 85
 Chaye Malka 70, 71,74, 76
 Efraim Fischel (m Leifer) 3, **18**, 36, 67, 68, 72, 78, 80, **81**, 86
 Josef (m Spiegel) 3, **18, 19**, 31,34, 47, 51, 52, 68-78, **81**, 86
 Giza 72, 75, 82
 Leo (Ahron Leib) 68-76, 78, 79, **81**, 86
 David Isaac of Vienna (m Griffel) **11**, 67, 73, 85-102
 Edward **11, 18, 42**
 Ludwig **42**
 Max **11**, 67, 68, 88
 Bertha **11**, 67, 73, 85
 Rosa **11**, 85
 Lotte **11**, 67, 85, 88

- see also Katz 4
- Griffel, Eliezer (m Chajes) **11, 28**
 David Mendel (m Wahl) **11, 28, 86, 87**
 Regina (m Gelles) **11, 86, 87**
 Isaac Chaim (m Breit) **28**
- Guttman, Mattityahu Yehezkiel 32, 37
- Hager, family dynasty 52 , 87
 Menachem Mendel of Kosov **27, 28**
 Chaim (m Shapiro) **27, 28, 37**
 Menachem Mendel of Vishnitz (m Friedmann) **27, 28, 37**
 Gershon of Tluste **28, 48, 51, 57, 59**
 Baruch (m Shapiro) **27**
- Hakohen (Katz or Kohen Zedek)
 Gelles Katz 4
 Yehoshua Heschel (m Levush aka Gelles) **42**
- Halevi see Shem Tov Halevi
 see Horowitz
 see Epstein
 see Segal
- Halpern, Israel of Krotoschin **20, 21, 103, 104**
 Isaac of Tykocin **20, 21**
 Eliezer Lipman of Chelm **20, 21**
 Eliezer Lipman of Tarnograd **20,21**
- Heller, Yom Tov Lipman 4
- Helman (Hillman),
 Shmuel of Metz 3, **18, 19, 20, 21, 45, 104**
 sons of Shmuel Helman:
 Moses of Glogau **18, 19, 104**
 Chana bat Moses (m Halevi Segal) 104
 Uri Feivush of Hanau, Lissa, Bonn etc 104
 Hinde bat Uri Feivush (m Landau) 104
 daughters of Shmuel Helman :
 daughter (m Katz) 104
 Jached (m Katzenellenbogen) 104
 Beila (m Mirels Fraenkel) 104
 Deborah (m Rappaport) 104

Herzl, Theodor 86, 98, 99
 Heschel, family 52
 Abraham Joshua of Cracow **13, 26**, 106
 (m 1st Lazars, 2nd Katzenellenbogen)
 Yissachar Ber (m Yollis) **13**
 Abraham of Kopyszincze 53, 56, 57, 58
 Hitler, Adolf 88, 90, 91
 Horowitz, (see Halevi) 1, 2, **8, 9**, 103, 106
 Isaiah Halevi Ish 4
 Meir of Tykocin 4, **10, 19, 26**
 (m 1st Katz & 2nd Katzenellenbogen))
 Dov Berish **26**
 Meshullam Feivel **26**
 Isaac (“Hamburger”) (m 2nd Babad) 4, **10, 13**, 105
 Beile bat Isaac (m Rubin) **10, 13**
 Jacob Jokel of Bolechow **10, 13, 15**
 (m 1st Zausmer & 3rd Fraenkel)
 Efraim Fischel of Munkacz **10, 11, 13, 21**
 Yehuda Ahron (m Margolies) **10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15**
 Gittel bat Yehuda Ahron (m Weinstein) **14, 15, 81**
 Meshullam Issachar of Stanislau 103
 Hanania of Ulanow **21**, 86
 Usher of Cracow 53
 Pinchas of Bohorodzany 53
 Horthy, Miklos 90

 Isaac Krakower (Babad) **13**, 106
 Israel ben Eliezer see Baal Shem Tov
 Israel, the Maggid of Kosenice **21**

 Jabotinsky, Vladimir 90
 James I of Aragon **9**
 Jacob Samson of Shepetivka 32, 36, 37, 104
 Joel Sirkes of Cracow (Yaffe) 105
 John II of Castile **8**
 Josef, the Maggid of Polonnoye 37
 Joseph Nasi (Mendes) **8, 9**

Kalonymos 5, **8**
 Katz (see Hakohen) **10**, 106
 Isaac ben Samson (m. Loew) 5
 Naftali of Lublin **10**
 (m Katzenellenbogen)
 Isaac of Stepan (m Margolioth) **10**
 Naftali Hirsch of Frankfurt 6, **10**, **15**, 104
 Shprintze (m Ashkenazi-Katzenellenbogen) **10**, **14**, **15**
 daughter (m Fischel) **10**
 gd.-daughter (m Margolioth) **14**
 Bezalel of Ostrog (m Halpern) **10**
 Isaac of Ostrog **10**
 daughter (m Zausmer) **10**
 Isaiah of Brody **10**
 Menachem Meinish **10**
 daughter (m Horowitz) **10**
 Benzion, 48, 51, 56, 59, **64**, **65**
 Katzenellenbogen, 1,5, **10**, **12**, 103, 105, 106
 Isaac (m. Luria) **23**
 Meir (Maharam of Padua) **23**, 106
 Samuel Judah of Venice (m Yaffe) **23**
 Saul Wahl (see under Wahl – Katzenellenbogen)
 Meir (m Horowitz)
 Judah **10**
 Dinah (m 1st Naftali Katz **10**, **12**
 m 2nd Abraham Joshua Heschel)
 Eliezer (m. Helman) 104
 Kohn, Pinchas 59, 61
 Landau, Ezekiel of Prague 104
 Samuel ben Ezekiel(m Helman) 104
 Langsam, Pesach (m Weisblum) - see Spira of Munkacz **20**, **21**
 Leifer chasidic rabbis of Nadworna 68, **81**, 86
 Mordecai 74
 Levi Isaac of Berdichev 32, 36, 37
 Levush (see Yaffe, Gelles) 105
 Menachem Mendel of Brody 67

Loew, Judah of Prague (m 1st Chajes-Altschuler) 4,5, 15, 104, 106
 Vögele (m Katz) 4

Luria, 1, 103
 Aaron **23**
 Jehiel of Alsace and Brest **12, 23**

Maimonides, Moses 100
 Makhir (see Kalonymos) 5, **8**
 Perfet **8**

Margolies (Margolioth), 4,5, **10** , **14, 15** , 103, 106
 Efraim Zalman of Brody **15**
 Zvi Hirsch of Jaslowice **14, 15**
 Isaac Dov Ber of Jaslowice **14, 15**
 Abraham Mordecai of Ustechko **14, 15**
 Zalman Berish Rottenberg of Brodshin **14, 15**
 (m. Adlersberg)
 Miriam (m. Horowitz) **11, 14, 15**
 Baruch of Drohobycz 53

Margoshes, Berach **42**

Maurer, Emil 99, 101

Meir of Przemyslany (ancestor of the Leifers of Nadworna) 37, 68

Mendes family name of Joseph Nasi (Benveniste)
 Dona Gracia Mendes (Benveniste) **9**

Mussolini, Benito 90

Nasi, Joseph, Duke of Naxos **8**

Nathan Nata ben Isaiah of Hildesheim (m Wahl) **18, 26**

Ornstein see also Ashkenazi 105

Polonsky, desc. of Samuel Gelles and Sheindel Shapiro 33
 Abraham Isaac 32, 36
 Samson Aaron ben Abraham Isaac 32, 36

Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona **9**

- Ramraz, see Zundel Ramraz 105
(Rabbi) Moshe Reb Zelig's called Ramraz 106
(his son) Yehuda Leib Zundel Ramraz of Brody 106
- Raphael of Bershad 35
- Rappaport, Israel of Czortkow 48, 60
Isaac of Hanau (m Helman)
- Rashi see Solomon ben Isaac 1,5
- Rokeah, Ahron **20, 21**
Eleazar of Amsterdam **21**
Shalom of Belz 4, 105, 106
- Rubin, Menachem Mendel (m Horowitz) 105
- Samuel the prophet 5, 6
- Schumpeter, Joseph 87
- Schuschnigg, Kurt 90, 91
- Segal David Halevi **28**
Jechiel Michel Halevi (m Hillman) 104
- Shakhna, Shalom **18, 26**
- Shapiro, 1,3, **18, 19, 20, 21, 23**, 24 , 87, 103
Nathan Nata of Grodno 1,3, **19, 23**, 24
Nathan Nata of Cracow 1,3, **18, 19, 20, 21**, 24, **26**
Pinchas of Koretz 1,3, **18, 19, 23, 27, 28**, 30, 34-37, 45, 85, 104
Sara Rachel Scheindel (m Gelles) 2, **18, 19**, 31, 37
Yehuda Meir ben Pinchas of Shepetivka **18, 19, 27, 28**, 32, 36, 37,
104 (m Sarah bat Jacob Samson)
Moshe ben Pinchas of Slavuta (brother-in-law of Gedaliya of Iliniec
near Pollonnoye) 37
Yehuda Meir of Lublin 1,3, **18, 19**, 22, **23**, 36, 51, 54, 62, 73
Haim Meir Jehiel of Mogielnica (m Weisblum) **20**
Avi Ezra Zelig of Mogielnica (m Friedman) **20, 21**
Spira dynasty of Munkacz **20, 21**
Zvi Hirsch Spira (m Horowitz) **20, 21**, 86
- Shealtiel **8, 9**
- Shem Tov Halevi 5, 6, **8, 9** , 106
Zerachiah Halevi Girondi
Joseph
Benveniste

Joseph (ben) Benveniste
(m Clara bat Asher b. Meshullam b. Jacob)
Ahron (ancestor of Epstein family)
Pinchas (ancestor of Horowitz family)
Shor ancestral family connection to Margolies **15**

Solomon ben Isaac see Rashi

Spiegel, S. 70, 74, 75, 76, **81**
daughter (m Gelles) 70, 72
Bendet 72, 74, 80
Gussie of Solutwina (m Weinstein) **81**

Steinberg, Abraham Menachem of Brody **14, 15, 48, 51, 56, 60**

Stricker, Robert 89, 99

Susia of Annipol **20, 21**

Tennensaft, Uri 50

Treivish, 1,5, 103
Mattitياهو of Paris **23**

Twersky, Menachem Nahum of Chernobyl **18, 19, 23, 26**
(m Shapiro)
Aaron **26**

Uri Feivush of Vilna 30

Wahl – Katzenellenbogen 5, **10, 11**
Saul (m Drucker) 1, 6, **10, 23, 26, 106**
Meir ben Saul (m Horowitz) **26**
Shulim (m Safier) **11**
Chawa (m Griffel) **11, 87**

Weidenfeld, M of Dobrowa 52

Weinstein, Hirsch Leib (m Horowitz) **11, 12, 14, 15, 67, 73, 81**
Esther (m Gelles) **11, 14, 15, 67, 73, 81, 85**
Abraham **14, 15, 73, 81**
Chaim 73, **81**
Sam and Jake (m. Spiegel sisters) 70, 74, **81**
Philip (m Rencoff) 74, **81**
Elaine Beth 74

Weisblum family name of descendants of **20, 28**

Elimelech of Lejask **20, 21**
 Meshullam Zusia **28**
 Wertheim, Aryeh Leib of Bendery **18, 37**
 Sima (m Gelles) 32, 37

 Weil, Trani (m 1st Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz) 37
 desc. of Moshe Meir Weil of Stuehlingen
 Weitzmann, Chaim 89

 Yaffe (Jaffe) 103
 Mordecai of Prague (HaLevush) 3,4, 29, 67 , 105

 Zausmer, 5, **10**, 106
 Nahum of Sandomierz (m Katz) **10**
 Menachem Nahum **10**
 daughter (m Horowitz) **10**
 Zundel see Ramraz
 Yehuda Leib of Brody 4, 30, 35
 Sarah Bathya (m Levush aka Gelles) 42
 Zusia of Annipol **20, 21**

Dr Edward Gelles
Published work on Genealogy and History

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Family Connections
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Shaker Publishing 2008
ISBN 978-90-423-0338-6

(paperback - 74 pages, 21 tables, 1 map, bibliography, etc)

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ISBN 978-90-423-0370-6

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