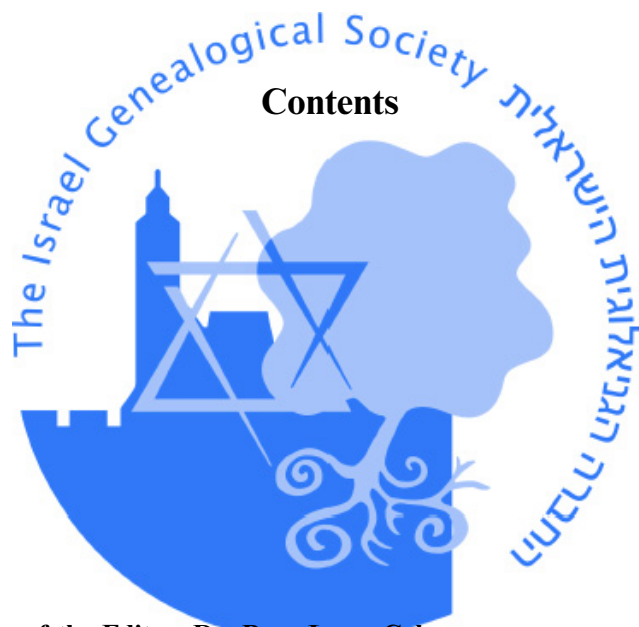


# שרשרת הדורות

חקר תולדות המשפחה היהודית



From the Pen of the Editor, Dr. Rose Lerer Cohen .....	i
From the Israel Genealogical Society's President, Michael Goldstein .....	ii
Dr. Lea Haber Gedalia: Update from Philadelphia .....	iii
Dr. Alexander Beider and Dr. Stephen P. Morse: Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching – An Alternative to Soundex with Fewer False Hits .....	iv
Reuven Rivlin and Jules Feldman: How We Discovered Relatives .....	xiii
Dr. Elioze Hefer: The History of the Antebi Family.....	xvi
Ada Holzman (Edited by Rachel P. Cohen): Remnants from the Community of Gombin – Following R' Yehuda Lajb Zlotnik (L.Z. – Avida).....	xviii
Rosemary Eshel: Some Archival Resources in England .....	xxvi
Dr. Ofra Keinan: Taking Torah from Nature – Beit Gordon the First Museum in the Agricultural Sector .....	xxx
Mathilda Tagger: <i>Helkat Hamehohkek</i> – From a Book to an Online Database.....	xxxiii
Ellen Stepak: Second Stage of the Memorials for Vanished Communities (MVC) Project.....	xxxvi
Professor Gerald Lee Esterson z"l (1927-2009).....	xxxviii
Missing Persons Bureau	
Searching for Relatives in Israel .....	xxxix
News from Israeli Archives	
Flora Avital and Efraim Levi: City of Jerusalem Archive .....	xxxix
Ask the Experts	
Jordan Auslander .....	xliii
Beryl Baleson .....	xliv
Book Review	
Saul Issroff .....	xlvi
Mathilde Tagger: Abstracts of Articles from Foreign Journals .....	xlvi

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## *Sharsheret Hadorot* Journal

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**Submissions:** Via email attachment to: [rose.sharsheret@gmail.com](mailto:rose.sharsheret@gmail.com) or [igs@isragen.org.il](mailto:igs@isragen.org.il) or by CD by regular mail POB 4270, Jerusalem, 91041

The Editorial Board reserves the right to translate from English to Hebrew and vice versa and to make any editorial changes deemed necessary.

The Editorial Board assumes no responsibility for factual errors in the articles published.

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Queries: Please enclose an international postal coupon for replies.

## From the Pen of the Editor

*Dr. Rose Lerer Cohen*

In keeping with my interdisciplinary definition of genealogy this edition of *Sharsheret Hadorot* covers various aspects of genealogy.

With computer technologies assuming an important part of genealogical research, *Sharsheret Hadorot* received permission from *Avotaynu* to reprint the article Beider Morse Phonetic Matching: An Alternative to Soundex with Fewer False Hits. The Hebrew translation of this article will give our Hebrew speaking members an opportunity to become familiar with the new BMPM soundex which has been implemented on JewishGen.

Two articles describe family histories, Reuven Rivlin MK and Jules Feldman describe their research on the Rivlin family and Dr. Elioze Hefer, relates the history of Antebi family.

Flora Avital and Ephraim Levi, provide a description of the holdings of the archives of the Jerusalem Municipality. Rosemary Eshel introduces the reader to archival resources in England. Ofra Keinan, describes the first Museum of the Agricultural Sector.

Databases have become an integral element of genealogical research. Mathilde Tagger describes the development of the Helkat Hamechokek database and Ellen Stepak reports on the Second Stage of the Memorials for Vanished Communities (MVC) Project. These are projects of the Israel Genealogical Society and the databases may be found on our website. There is also a description of the Online Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialism at the University of Vienna, 1938. Ada Holzman, in her article on the Remnants of the Community of Gombin, describes the way in which she deciphered a microfilm of the community of Gombin.

The *Sharsheret Hadorot* Search Bureau is being featured for the first time. Other features of this edition include Lea Gedalia's reports from the conference in Philadelphia. Beryl Beilson is the expert on South African research and Jordan Auslander on former Hungary.

Our regular contributor Mathilda Tagger, provided the summary of the articles in foreign genealogical journals.

I would like to thank my editorial committee for reading the articles. Thank you also to Meriam Haringman and Nurit Cohen for assisting with translation.

Wishing you a *Shana Tova*, a year of health, happiness, prosperity and peace in our realm.



### **Mazal Tov**

*To our chairman Michael Goldstein, on his appointment as President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS).*

*To our Info-Librarian, Mariana Kronfeld Zavidov and Abba Shaul Zavidov family on the birth of their son.*

## From the Israel Genealogical Society's President

*Michael Goldstein*

Israel Genealogical Society activities over the spring and summer were marked by a notable increase in both their number and nature. Among the highlights, meetings and field trips have taken place at an unprecedented rate. *Sharsheret Hadorot* was made available online to our members, simultaneous with the printed version. Our website development has continued, with an expanded Members Corner.

Moreover, the unification with JFRA is proceeding well. For the first time, JFRA members and Israel Genealogical Society members can now participate in either organization's activities at member rates. JFRA is participating in the organizing and financing of the upcoming Annual One-Day Seminar.

With both organizations making outstanding efforts, this year's one-day seminar "Preserving Memory: Family and Community", to be held at Bet Hatfusoth on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, promises to be a high point of the year and an important milestone in Israeli genealogy.

It was heartening to see the number of Israelis participating in the IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Philadelphia in early August. A number of our members made presentations. Plans are underway to hold the 2014 IAJGS conference in Israel.

I wish the entire membership – and all the House of Israel – a wonderful, healthy and prosperous New Year!



### Israel Genealogical Society – Jewish Family Research Association Fifth Annual One-Day Seminar – 2009

#### PRESERVING MEMORY: FAMILY and COMMUNITY

Tuesday, 1 December 2009, Beit Hatfutzot, Tel Aviv University  
from 8:30-18:30

Preserving the memory of vanished communities whilst their cultural and spiritual values stay alive.

There will be two parallel sessions in Hebrew and English.

The programme will include an introduction and computer workshops relating to the genealogical holdings of Beit Hatfutzot.

The workshops and opening and closing sessions will be conducted in Hebrew.

Further information on the program, lecture abstracts and registration details can be found at <http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/198/6380.asp>

Steering Committee regarding lectures: [yi2009igs@gmail.com](mailto:yi2009igs@gmail.com)

Steering Committee regarding logistics and administration:  
[avicotton@gmail.com](mailto:avicotton@gmail.com)

## Update from Philadelphia

*Lea Haber Gedalia*

### 1. News from the National Romanian Archives by the director since 2007

For the first time the head of the Central Romanian Archives attended the AIJGS convention. Dr. Dorin Dobrinicu explained that the aim of the directorship of the archives is to make it available online ([www.arhivelenationale.ro](http://www.arhivelenationale.ro))

At present the website is in Romanian only and there is a possibility of searching according to 41 counties. There are 36,000 collections. To search the country use the term "allege". The documents are written in the following languages: Romanian, German, Hungarian, Russian, Yiddish, Latin, old Romanian and Gothic.

Unfortunately, due to financial constraints one cannot order the documents online.

For further information contact:  
[secretariat.an@mai.gov.ro](mailto:secretariat.an@mai.gov.ro)

### 2. Activities of the ROM-SIG on Jewishgen

- 2.1. The cemetery project in Iasi—six volumes of data from 1915-1966- will be put on the website JOWBR.
- 2.2. Mapping out the cemetery in the city of Roman is in progress. The problem is that many of the tombstones are illegible.
- 2.3. Mapping out the cemetery in the city of Bucharest. The material is being put on CD.
- 2.4. Classification of all documents from the province of Bessarabia (once Russia, now Romania) is in progress.

### 3. Update on Routes to Roots Foundation, Inc by Miriam Weiner.

[www.rtrfoundation.org](http://www.rtrfoundation.org),  
[mweiner@routestoroots.com](mailto:mweiner@routestoroots.com)

- 3.1. An agreement of cooperation between RTR and Ancestry.com has been signed.
- 3.2. New databases for specific places in Eastern Europe including photos can be located with a search engine.

For example, Beltsy, Moldova. RTR received permission to translate the index of the cemetery (5,000 names since 1863).

A second example is Odessa. There too, there is cooperation with the city archives to search the index for a list of documents.  
[www.rtrfoundation.org/odessa.html](http://www.rtrfoundation.org/odessa.html)

### 4. Update on the website Footnote.com

- 4.1. They have an agreement with the historical archive for digitations of 58 million historical documents.
- 4.2. Material from the Holocaust Museum will go online on September 1, 2009.

### 5. News from the Fund for the Preservation of the Jewish Heritage in Poland by Monika Krawczyk [www.FODZ.PL](http://www.FODZ.PL)

- 5.1. Project on the "Hasidic tradition"—preservation of the synagogues and the Hasidic courts. e.g. Zamosc Chelm, Leczna, Lublin, Debica
- 5.2. Memorial site for the Polish Jewish heritage. Educational projects for schools. [www.polin.org.pl](http://www.polin.org.pl)
- 5.3. Project to rejuvenate the synagogue of Zamosc in cooperation with non-governmental organizations.
- 5.4. Heritage trips to Poland
- 5.5. Combating overt anti-semitism with propaganda in conjunction with the local police to ensure it is not termed vandalism.

### 6. Update on the National Archive of Ukraine by Olga Muzychuk

Deputy director of the archive  
[omuzychuk@archives.gov.ua](mailto:omuzychuk@archives.gov.ua)  
[www.archives.gov.ua](http://www.archives.gov.ua)

The directors of the national archive are not "friendly" to the subject of genealogy. A new agreement was signed by them with JRI Poland on July 31, 2009.

- 6.1. The national archives of the Ukraine include 680 institutions, with 9 central

archives, an archive for the autonomous area of Crime, 24 district archives, city archives for Kiev and Sabastopol, 487 departments for various archives and 157 local archives.

- 6.2. For the Jewish researcher there is the following:
  - 6.2.1 Registers of the synagogues giving the birth, marriage, divorce and death documents.
  - 6.2.2 Tax registers (list of residents with addresses) in the cities
  - 6.2.3 Documents pertaining to the schools (lists of pupils)
  - 6.2.4 Police records
  - 6.2.5 Family papers
- 6.3. Cooperation with Yad Vashem, Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. RTR, Project Judaica – Russia-USA, and other archives worldwide
- 6.4. All military documentation is to be found in Russia and not in the Ukraine.

All documents can be viewed. Requests for archive material have to include: the historical district, exact name of the village, name of the family before marriage (if it is a woman), date of birth. The payment can reach the amount of \$500 and includes the direct payment to a bank (according to the law) and a notary public's stamp for the client if the request is that of a researcher.

*Lea Haber Gedalia has been the National Secretary of the Israel Genealogical Society since 2005; Secretary and Chairperson of the Jerusalem branch 2005-2008. Member of the Bukovina committee and one of the organizers of the Bukovina International convention in 2007. Member of the Czernowic List and the team deciphering tombstones in the Czernowic Cemetery (once Bukovina now Ukraine). Researcher and family tree builder for a large number of people, and responsible for building the website for the town Hirslau (Romania) in Jewishgen. Lecturer in the field of genealogy.*

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**Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching:  
An Alternative to Soundex with Fewer False Hits\***  
*Alexander Beider and Stephen P. Morse*

**Background**

Searching for names in large databases containing spelling variations has always been a problem. A solution to the problem was proposed by Robert Russell in 1912 when he patented the first soundex system. A variation of Russell's work, called the American Soundex Code, was used by the Census Bureau to facilitate name searches in the census.

Simply put, soundex is an encoding of a name such that names that sound the same will get the same encoding. A search application based on soundex will look for matches of

the soundex code rather than matches of the name itself, thereby finding all names that sound like the name being sought.

As an example, the American Soundex code for Schwarzenegger is S625. If the name was misspelled as Shwarzenegger, the code would still be S625, so any search application based on American Soundex would still find the match in spite of that misspelling. However if the name was misspelled as Schwartsenegger, the American Soundex code would be S632, so a search application based on American Soundex would not find the match with that misspelling.

\* This article appeared in *Avotaynu: the International Review of Jewish Genealogy* (Summer 2008).

A major improvement to soundex occurred in 1985 with the development of Daitch Mokotoff (DM) Soundex by Randy Daitch and Gary Mokotoff. DM Soundex is a soundex system optimized for Eastern European names. Under DM Soundex, the correct spelling, Schwarzenegger, has two codes, namely 474659 and 479465. The incorrect spelling, Shwarzenegger, has the same two codes, and the incorrect spelling, Schwartzenegger, has the DM code of 479465, which is one of the two codes for the correct spelling. So a search application based on DM Soundex would find the match with either of these misspellings. This illustrates the advantage of DM Soundex over American Soundex for Eastern European names (Austrian in this case).

Both of these soundex systems have, nevertheless, a major disadvantage – they generate many false hits, requiring the researcher to wade through a lot of extraneous matches. The phonetic-matching method proposed in this paper attempts to alleviate that situation.

## Main Principles

Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching (BMPM) was developed by Alexander Beider (Paris) and Stephen P. Morse (San Francisco). Beider dealt with the linguistic part of this method and Morse with the computer aspects and all technical issues. Major algorithmic decisions are due to common efforts of both authors.<sup>1</sup>

The main objective of BMPM consists in recognizing that two words written in a different way actually can be phonetically equivalent, that is, they both can sound alike. But unlike soundex methods, the “sounds-alike” test is based not only on the spelling,

but on linguistic properties of various languages.

For common nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs this task is of limited interest. Except for orthographic and typographic errors, these words rarely have spelling variations. The situation is different for proper nouns (i.e., names) – they can appear in documents written in different languages and spelled according to the phonetic rules of the language of the document. Determining that two different spellings correspond to the same name becomes even more difficult when the two spellings use letters from different alphabets.

As an example, consider the name Schwarz (standard German spelling). It can appear in various documents as Schwartz (alternate German spelling), Shwartz, Shvartz and Shvarts (Anglicized spellings), Szwarc (Polish), Szwartz (blended German-Polish), <sup>a</sup>var (Romanian), Svarc (Hungarian), Chvarts (French), Chvartz (blended French-German), Шварц (modern Russian), Шварцъ (Russian before 1918), שברץ and שורץ (Hebrew), and שווארץ (Yiddish).

In its current implementation, BMPM’ is primarily concerned with matching surnames of Ashkenazic Jews. This is due to the list of languages whose graphic and phonetic features are already taken into account. These languages are Russian written in Cyrillic letters, Russian transliterated into English letters, Polish, German, Romanian, Hungarian, Hebrew written in Hebrew letters, French, Spanish, and English. The name matching is also applicable to non-Jewish surnames from the countries in which those languages are spoken.

However the structure of BMPM is general, and we are already planning to extend it to

1. The initial work on this algorithm was based on the article by Alexander Beider, *Avotayne: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*. Vol. XXIII, Number 1, Spring 2007, pp. 3-13, and the long term desire of Stephen P. Morse to ameliorate the engine of his various online searchable database [<http://stevemorse.org>] including Ellis Island Passenger Lists. The initiation of this project (and, more precisely, the personal meeting of its two authors in Newark in July 2007 and their decision to work together) was made possible due to the organisational efforts by Sallyann Amdur Sack and the sponsoring provided by the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (Jerusalem). The two authors would also like to thank Logan Kleinwaks, Gary Mokotoff and Jean-Pierre Stroweis, who tested the draft versions of BMPM and provided numerous valuable comments.

additional languages such as Lithuanian and Latvian. We also plan to incorporate Italian, Greek and Turkish, since this would allow BMPM to be applicable to Sephardic names (as well to non-Jewish names from those countries). In order to extend it to a new language, all we need to do is include of supplementary rules specific to that language. The rules are not hard-coded into the program; instead the phonetic engine is table driven and all that is necessary is to add additional tables to support the additional languages. A description of the different tables involved is presented below.

BMPM is designed to be used as a programming tool, and an individual would be very hard-pressed to do the calculations manually. To use the system, a user would enter a name on a form, that name would be transmitted to a server running the phonetic engine that would generate the BMPM code, and that code would then be compared to the BMPM codes that were previously generated for all the names in a specific database. The steps of this comparison are described in the following sections.

### **Step 1: Identifying the Language**

The spelling of a name can include some letters or letter combinations that allowing the language to be determined. Some examples are:

- “tsch”, final “mann” and “witz” are specifically German
- final and initial “cs” and “zs” are necessarily Hungarian
- “cz”, “cy”, initial “rz” and “wl”, final “cki”, letters “ś”, “ł” and “ź” can be only Polish

More often, several languages can be responsible for a letter or a letter combination. For example, “ö” and “ü” can be either German or Hungarian, final “ck” can be either German or English, “sz” can be either Polish or Hungarian. Sometimes it can be easier to name the language or the languages in which the letters in question can never occur. For example, “y” and “k” are not present in Romanian, “v” can not be Polish, the string “kie” can be neither French, nor Spanish.

The current version of BMPM includes about 200 rules for determining the language. Some of them are general whereas other include the context in which they are applicable (e.g., beginning or the end of a word, following or preceding some letters). The processing of these rules yields one or several languages that could, in principle, be responsible for the spelling entered by the user.

One option of the BMPM engine allows for specifying the language explicitly. That would apply when the database is known to be in a specific language, in which case each name in that database can be encoded using the rules of that language, and the language-determination test need not be done.

### **Step 2: Calculating the Exact Phonetic Value**

In a number of languages, forms of surnames used by women are different from those used by men. For example, it would be Jan Suchy but Maria Sucha. And the wife of Mr. Novikov would be called Mrs. Novikova. This occurs in Slavic tongues (including Polish and Russian), Lithuanian and Latvian. Since the name under analysis can, in principle, be feminine, this step starts with replacing feminine endings with the masculine ones.

After the name has been defeminized, the phonetic engine tries to identify the exact phonetic value of all letters of the name, and transcribe them into a phonetic alphabet. Since in principle the number of different sounds is huge, we decided to restrict the phonetic alphabet used in BMPM to those sounds that are shared by the languages we were interested in. For example, the difference between Polish “y” and “i” was deliberately ignored because there is no way to express it in non-Slavic languages. Also ignored was the difference between two sounds expressed in German by “ch”, those present in words “ach” and “ich”. For the same reasons, numerous vowels found in French and English do not figure in our version of the phonetic alphabet, but instead were replaced with closest equivalents found in Germanic and Slavic languages. The retained list appears in the table below.



	<b>Example</b>		<b>Example</b>
a	Like in <i>part</i>	b	Like in <i>boy</i>
d	Like in <i>dog</i>	e	Like in <i>set</i>
f	Like in <i>flag</i>	g	Like in <i>dog</i>
h	Like in <i>hand</i>	i	Like in <i>Nice</i> (the city), or <i>ee</i> as in <i>fleet</i>
j	Like y in <i>yes</i> , equivalent to German <i>j</i>	k	Like in <i>king</i>
l	Like in <i>lamp</i>	m	Like in <i>man</i>
n	Like in <i>neck</i>	o	Like in <i>port</i>
p	Like in <i>pot</i>	r	Like in <i>ring</i>
s	Like in <i>star</i>	t	Like in <i>tent</i>
u	Like in <i>flu</i> , or <i>oo</i> in <i>good</i>	v	Like in <i>vase</i>
w	Like in <i>wax</i>	x	Like <i>ch</i> in <i>loch</i> ; equivalent to German <i>ch</i>
z	Like in <i>zoo</i>	S	Like s in <i>sure</i> , or <i>sh</i> in <i>shop</i>
		Z	Like z in <i>azure</i> ; equivalent to French <i>j</i>

Generally, the signs for sounds conventionally chosen by us are the same as those used by International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The only exceptions are S and Z, whose IPA's equivalents are  $\int$  and  $\text{ʒ}$ , respectively. Our choice was dictated by limiting ourselves to standard Latin characters present on any keyboard using the Roman alphabet.

The transcription of the name into the characters found in the above table (a better term for it would be *mapping*) depends of the result of Step 1. Either Step 1 determined a unique language, or it determined a set of possible languages.

If only one possible language was left after Step 1 the phonetic engine transcribes the spelling to the phonetic alphabet using rules specific to that language. In BMPM, every language possesses its own set of rules for this mapping (less than 40 for Romanian, about 80 for German and more than 130 for Polish). For example, if the language is German, then some of the rules are

- “sch” maps into the “S” of our phonetic alphabet
- “s” at the start of the word and “s” present between two vowels becomes “z”

- “w” becomes “v”

For certain languages, some letters can be read in several ways. In these cases, the phonetic engine assigns them two (or more) elements from the phonetic alphabet. For example, Polish “a” normally corresponds to phonetic “a”. In some cases, however, this letter can result from Polish “ą” in which the diacritic sign (comma under the “a”) was lost. In this example, the phonetic value would be either “om” (before “b” or “p”) or “on” (before other consonants).

If Step 1 resulted in more than one possible language, the phonetic engine processes the name using generic rules. To adequately support the languages of the current version of BMPM, we needed to write more than 300 generic rules. There are two types of such generic rules – ones that are language independent and ones that apply only to certain languages.

An example of a language-independent generic rule is the rule for final “tz” – it can be pronounced only as English “ts”. Such language-independent generic rules are applied regardless of which languages are present in the output of Step 1. Other generic rules might be applicable, however, to specific languages only. The output of Step

I would determine whether or not these language-specific generic rules would be applied. For example, “ch” can be mapped (using the signs of our conventional phonetic alphabet) to “x” in Polish or German, “S” in French, or the diphthong “tS” in English or Spanish. If during Step 1 we learn that English, Spanish and French are not possible, only the Polish/German language-specific rule will be applied, causing the “ch” to be mapped to “x”.

Once the name is processed by either the generic rules or the language-specific rules, the phonetic engine applies to the resulting string of phonetic characters a series of phonetic rules that are common to many languages. As an example, consider the rule known in linguistic literature as *final devoicing*. It applies to many European languages, such as German, several Slavic tongues including Russian and Polish, and some dialects of Yiddish. Final devoicing states that at the end of the word the voiced consonants are pronounced as their unvoiced counterparts – i.e., “b” is pronounced as “p”; “v” as “f”; “d” as “t” etc. The phonetic engine takes this peculiarity of speech into account and keeps in the final position only the unvoiced consonants. For example, Perlov gives Perlof. Another rule, also applied by the phonetic engine, is that of *regressive assimilation*, whereby a consonant acquires characteristics of the consonant that follows it:

- Voiced consonants become unvoiced when followed by unvoiced consonants. For example, “b” before “s” is pronounced as “p”: Shabse is equivalent to Shapse
- Unvoiced consonants become voiced when followed by voiced consonants. For example, “t” before “z” is pronounced as “d”: Vitzon becomes Vidzon

At the end of Step 2 the initial surname is transformed by the phonetic engine into one or several strings of characters that we call the exact *phonetic value*.

### Step 3: Calculating the Approximate Phonetic Value

After the rules mentioned in Step 2 are applied, the phonetic engine applies a series

of additional rules. These rules take into account the fact that some sounds can be interchangeable in some specific contexts that are more complex than the contexts considered in Step 2 (“beginning/end of word” or “previous/next letter”). For example, in Russian and Belarusian unstressed “o” is pronounced as “a”. As a result, Mostov and Mastov sound alike because the first syllable is unstressed. On the other hand, there is no interchangeability in the stressed position: Kats and Kots sound differently. Since automatic determination of the stress position is non-trivial, we decided to deal with “a” and “o” as *approximately* interchangeable. Other rules allow for phonetic proximity of a pair of sounds resulting in their partial confusion. For example, “n” before “b” sounds close to “m” and Grinberg becomes *approximately* equivalent to Grimberg. (Note that in Spanish this equivalence is total. Consequently, in Argentina Grinberg and Grimberg are *exactly* equivalent.)

Just as in Step 2, the *approximate* rules applied here can be either language-specific or generic, depending of the results of Step 1. To adequately handle the languages of the current version of BMPM we needed to write about 200 rules common to all languages, about 120 generic rules (some of which are limited to certain languages), and several dozens language-specific rules per language.

At the end of this step the initial surname is transformed by the phonetic engine into one or several strings of characters that we call the *approximate phonetic value*.

### Step 4: Calculating the Hebrew Phonetic Value

All previous steps, even if they were primarily designed to process Ashkenazic Jewish surnames, can in principle be applied to other cultures too. This step, on the other hand, is specifically Jewish. The main aim of this step consists in taking into account the fact that the initial name as written in Latin or Cyrillic characters can be the result of a transliteration from Hebrew. Such spellings are commonplace in various materials related to the Holocaust. Numerous memorial

(*yizkor*) books of communities from Eastern Europe are written in Hebrew and, as a result, the names they mention appear in Hebrew characters. Many lists from these books were transliterated by Jewish genealogists, and in many cases the resulting spellings using Latin characters are simply educated guesses. In the online searchable database of the Holocaust victims provided by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, many surnames from interwar Poland fall in this category – they appear on the pages of testimony compiled in Hebrew during 1950s and 1960s, and the spelling using Latin characters often represents a guess by Yad Vashem’s employees.

Since some vowels do not appear in Hebrew spelling and the sounds of other vowels and certain consonants are ambiguous, a transliteration of the same name from Hebrew to Latin characters made by different people can yield different results. For example, פסטר can yield Fester, Faster, Paster, Pastar, Pester, Fasater, Psater etc., בנין can correspond to surnames that were spelled in German as Bien, Bin, Bühn, Bün and Bein, פרימס can be Frimes or Primas.

This step is designed to fix the issues related to the transliteration from Hebrew. To accomplish this, the phonetic engine takes the results of Step 2 and applies a series of additional rules that allow for the ambiguity of certain sounds when dealing with the Hebrew spelling. At the end of this step, the initial surname is transformed by the phonetic engine into one or several conventional strings of phonetic characters that we call the *Hebrew phonetic value*. Surnames whose Hebrew spelling is the same have the identical *Hebrew phonetic value*. Some examples are Bader and Beder; Brak, Berak and Barak; Bober, Buber and Bubar; Brauner, Bronner and Bruner; Mandel and Mendel; Thaler and Teller; Zipper and Ziffer.

Note that the *Hebrew phonetic value* calculated here can apply to surnames that are spelled in Latin, Cyrillic or Hebrew characters. In all these cases, the original characters have already been mapped into the characters of the phonetic alphabet during Step 2. As a consequence, this step

deals with strings of phonetic characters only.

### Step 5: Searching for Matches

Applications of name matching involve searching for names in electronic lists. Some examples of lists that are of interest to us are:

- Names mentioned in reference books on Ashkenazic surnames by Alexander Beider and Lars Menk, all published by *Avotaynu* Inc. (1993-2008)
- Names present in sources related to the Holocaust such as the Yad Vashem list of names, necrologies from various memorial (*yizkor*) books, lists of inhabitants of various ghettos, prisoners of concentration camps such as Dachau etc.
- Names appearing in Ellis Island Passenger Lists
- Names extracted from the Polish or Russian civil records and indexed by the JRI-Poland project
- Names used by Jews in Argentina

The phonetic values (*exact, approximate, Hebrew*) of the name being searched for needs to be generated by the phonetic engine at the time the search is performed. But prior to doing any searches, the phonetic value of each of the names in the list needs to be calculated. Some simplifications can be used when processing the entire list of names because there might be information known about the language and the spellings used within the list.

For example, in reference books on Galician and German Jewish surnames, the orthography of all names conforms to the German spelling. As a result, during Steps 2 and 3 every name is processed by the set of rules specific to the German language. The case of Jewish names from Argentina is more ambiguous: some names are spelled in Spanish, others in German, Romanian or Polish. But even in this situation, the processing is simplified because we know that such languages as Hungarian, French or English are irrelevant and, as a result, numerous rules used during Steps 2 and 3 (those restricted to these languages) can be ignored.

The matching of individual name to names present in specific electronic lists proceeds in the following way:

- If the one of the *exact phonetic values* of this name and a name from the list are identical, we say that the match is *exact*. These two names are phonetically equivalent.
- If one of the *approximate phonetic values* of this name and a name from the list are identical, we say that the match is *approximate*. These two names can be (or not be) phonetically equivalent.
- If one of the *Hebrew phonetic values* of this name and a name from the list are identical, we say that the match is *Hebrew*. These two names can be phonetically equivalent only if at least one of them was originally spelled in Hebrew. If the user knows that neither of them was spelled in Hebrew or results from the transliteration from Hebrew, the *Hebrew match* is of no importance and can be simply ignored.

Matches done by BMPM are not necessary *commutative*, i.e., if a surname A matches a surname B, this does not imply that the surname B will match the surname A. For example, the list of surnames present in “A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland” contains the names Bak and Bk: if a user searches for the name Bak, he will get Bk among the approximate matches, but if he searches for the name Bk he will not find Bak.

The absence of commutativity occurs because the phonetic engine processes the name entered by the user different from the way it processes the names in the list – in the former case the engine allows for the possibility that some of the diacritical marks (e.g., the mark under the “a”) were omitted by the user, whereas in the latter case the engine assumes that all names in the list have been proofread and are known to contain all necessary diacriticals. So the name Bak entered by the user could also be Bk, but Bak appearing in the list is really Bak and never Bk.

## Implementation Issues

The result generated by the steps above is a set of one or more sequences of phonetic characters. However computers are much more efficient at matching numerical values from some small space than in matching arbitrary character strings. For this reason, the following additional steps are performed on the phonetic values before matching is attempted:

- Each phonetic character is assigned a digit so that a sequence of phonetic characters can be replaced by a numeric value. This numeric value can be quite large, depending on the number of phonetic sounds in the name being encoded.
- The resulting number is reduced to a small number space by taking it modulo some base value. This has the disadvantage that two names that are unrelated phonetically can wind up with the same numeric value. Although this is possible, the likelihood of it happening is small, especially if the base value is carefully chosen. For example, that number should not be a multiple of ten, because then only the trailing phonetic characters would be represented and the leading ones would have no effect on the result.

It should be noted that all the sounds in the name contribute to the BMPM phonetic value, and subsequently to the resulting numeric value. This is in contrast to soundex methods in which (1) some sounds such as vowels do not contribute and (2) the latter letters in a name have no bearing on the resulting code value since the codes truncate after four consonants in American Soundex and six in Daitch Mokotoff Soundex.

## Comparison to Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex

Soundex is one of the solutions proposed in the past to solve the problems of name matching. It has several variants of which the Daitch-Mokotoff (DM) method is the one that is the most commonly used in the domain of Jewish Ashkenazic genealogy.

When soundexing, any letter either receives a numerical value, or is simply omitted.

Different consonants can receive the same numerical values, for example, b and v, m and n, g and k. All vowels are treated as interchangeable. As a result, contrary to BMPM, soundexing does not search for the equivalence of sounds: even different (but sometimes close) sounds can match. Consequently, when matching names, soundexing may have a significantly larger number of false positives than BMPM. On the other hand, it can find some true matches that are not found by BMPM because the equivalence is not purely phonetic.

The domain in which soundex seems to be more appropriate than BMPM is when the original form of the name (which is the form as it appears in the list) is not known and all that is known is the form of the name used today. Here are some examples:

- Various names starting with Silver – such as Silverberg, Silverstein. Here, Silver came from the original German Silber (or Yiddish “zilber”). But the change is not just phonetic, it is partly semantic – the German/Yiddish word for “silver” is replaced with its English equivalent
- Names having English “stone” instead of German “stein” (Yiddish “shteyn”) – such as Rotstone instead of Rotstein. The DM value for both of them is the same, though the pronunciation of these two words is significantly different. (The situation is different in the case of “green” for “grün” and “field” for “feld”: they do match in BMPM too because here the match is phonetic as well).
- Tartatski/Tartatzki/Tartacki becoming Tartaski in US. Here we are dealing with anglicizing – the consonantal cluster “tsk” never occurs in English whereas “sk” is commonly used. Again, phonetically speaking, Tartaski and Tartaski are not equivalent and for that reason BMPM does not consider them as matches.

In the examples above, DM Soundex can find some Anglicized fits for the following reasons:

- Adaptation of sounds from one language to another often changes them to sounds that are different, but still close (and

consequently their DM-code can be identical)

- English is a Germanic language, that is, from the same linguistic group as German and Yiddish. That means that semantic adaptations of Ashkenazic surnames (like Silber to Silver) can produce forms that are close both phonetically and semantically.
- DM-Soundex codes include only six digits. So forms shortened by immigrants to a name that contains less than seven consonants (or consonant clusters) can match under DM Soundex. BMPM values are based on the entire name, no matter how long it is. For example, both Konstantinovsky and Constantine have the same DM Soundex code but not the same BMPM values.

On the other hand, here are some cases for which neither DM Soundex, nor BMPM will find matches:

- Numerous names ending in *ovsky/ovski/owski* for which their ending were Anglicized to *osky/oski*
- All translations to words sounding different such as Schwarz to Black, and Adler to Eagle
- All shortened forms that include more than six consonants.
- Hebraicized names will rarely give matches by DM-Soundex because Hebrew is a Semitic language, not from the same family as German/Yiddish/Slavic languages. Moreover, often the Hebraicizing involves some shortening and/or change of letters, which will present problems for BMPM as well. Examples are Perski to Peres, Rabichev to Rabin, Scheinerman to Sharon, Gryn to Ben Gurion, Meyerson to Meir, Shertok to Sharett, Shkolnik to Eshkol, Brog to Barak, not to mention Ezernitsky [Jeziernicki] to Shamir, and Mileykovsky [Milejkowski] to Netaniahu.

Summarizing the above, DM Soundex is more appropriate than BMPM for individual searches made by descendants of immigrants to North America or England who know the names of their ancestors in their Anglicized form only. In that case the disadvantage of

the large number of false positives is outweighed by the advantage of finding some Anglicized forms that would otherwise not be found. DM Soundex is also more appropriate in cases when a matching should be done between two lists of names, one of which deals with original name and the other with the Anglicized versions. For example, someone may be searching for matches between names in the Ellis Island passenger records (which contain the original European names) and the US census records (in which names have already been anglicized).

In other contexts, BMPM is more appropriate than DM. These include:

- Automatic processing by computer of large data bases in order to find matches between elements of various data bases. This was the primary objective that led to the conception of BMPM. If DM Soundex were used in this context, the computer would not be able to weed out the large number of false positives that would be generated.
- Searching for individual original names (names used before immigration and not yet anglicized) in large databases. If we want to quickly find matches between two spellings both of which correspond to the European forms, BMPM will immediately provide the list of fits. In this case, the main advantage of DM (finding of some Anglicized forms) is irrelevant. As a result, if someone knows roughly what the original name of interests was, BMPM will be much more appropriate because it will immediately cover the identicalness of numerous variant spellings of Schwartz (given at the beginning of this article), without polluting the list by the presence of numerous false positives.

There is also a group of matches found by BMPM that are not found by the current version of DM Soundex. Below are several examples, along with the reason why they do match in BMPM:

- Triphthongs are *approximately* equivalent to diphthongs: Altmayr matches to Altmayer, Heym to Heyem, Kajm to Kaiem

- Forms with “h” between vowels or at the beginning of the word are *approximately* equivalent to those in which “h” was lost: Johanes and Joanes, Halperin and Alperin.
- The letter combinations “inm” and “jnm” are *approximately* equivalent to “im” and “jm”: Weinman(n) and Weiman(n), Fajman and Fajman.
- “sc” before a vowel is not equivalent to “s” or “sch”, it can be *exactly* equivalent to “sk”: Boscowitz and Boskowitz, Muscat and Muskat.
- When one sound expressed in our conventional phonetic alphabet by the signs “S” (English “sh”), “Z” (French “j”), “s” and “z” is followed by another sound from the same group, it can be dropped (due to the phenomenon of the regressive assimilation, discussed above in this article). As a result, the following names match exactly: Hirschstein and Hirstein, Ovruchsky and Ovrutsky.
- The sound “d” disappears if it is followed by the sound “t” or a diphthong that starts with “t” (such as that expressed by “ch” as in English “check”). Consequently the following match exactly: Gladtko and Glatcke, Goldzweig and Golzweig, Kurlandchik and Kurlanchik.
- Several transliterations into English of Cyrillic vowels followed by “e” are exactly equivalent: “ae”, “aye”, “aie” and “aje” [all for Cyrillic “ae”]; “oe”, “oye”, “oie” and “oje” (all for Cyrillic “oe”) etc. Examples: Faer, Fajer, Faier and Fayer (Cyrillic Фaeр), Meer, Mejer, Meier and Meyer (Cyrillic Meeр). In D-M Soundex the forms with “ae”, “oe”, “ee” do not match to “aye-aie-aje”, “oye-oie-oje”, “eye-eie-eje”, respectively.
- Initial “Rh” is *exactly* equivalent to “R”: Rhau and Rau, Rhein and Rain.

Evidently, some of these drawbacks of the DM-Soundex can be easily eliminated by introducing new rules (for example, the last one). For others, the logic of the DM-Soundex prevents such pairs from matching.

The above arguments show that globally speaking BMPM and DM are complementary tools: each of them has contexts in

which its application is more appropriate than that of another method.

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*Dr. Beider has written a number of books dealing with surnames in Slavic countries, all published by Avotaynu. They include: A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire (1993 and 2008); Jewish Surnames in Prague (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries) (1995); A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland (1996) [“Best Judaica Reference Book” award for 1996]; A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia (2004); A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names (2001). Since 1990, Dr. Beider lives with his family in Paris, France.*

*Stephen Morse is the creator of the One-Step Website for which he has received both the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Outstanding Contribution Award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Award of Merit from the National Genealogical Society, first-ever Excellence Award from the Association of Professional Genealogists, and two awards Polish genealogical societies.*

*In his other life Morse is a computer professional with a doctorate degree in electrical engineering. He has held various research, development, and teaching positions, authored numerous technical papers, written four textbooks, and holds four patents. He is best known as the architect of the Intel 8086 (the granddaddy of today's Pentium processor), which sparked the PC revolution 30 years.*

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## How We Discovered Relatives

### *Reuven Rivlin and Jules Feldman*

In genealogical research we trace relatives in various ways – by interviewing family members, internet searches in sites such as JewishGen and IsraGen and through archives and other resources. However it sometimes occurs that a relative lives nearby and a chance encounter brings him to the fore.

Such an event is described by Ruben (Ruva) Rivlin and Jules Feldman who have been compiling the family tree of the Rivlin family, a Rabbinical family that stems from Prague in the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century, continues in Vilna in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century we find Shlomo Zalman Rivlin in Shklov in Belarus. He was the first to go by the name Rivlin and was the progenitor of over 50,000 descendants.

#### **Ruva Rivlin tells:**

I received a call from my good friend Shmuel Huminer (his grandmother was a Rivlin). Shmuel tells that one of his family was

hospitalized and one evening he was preparing to spend the night by her side when the doctor said that there was no need as the duty doctor is Dr. Rivlin who will look after her.

Shmuel asked Dr. Rivlin how she is connected to the family, to which she replied that she does not know the family history but that he should contact her husband Dr. Alexander (Sasha) Rivlin an anesthetist at Rambam hospital in Haifa.

That very evening Shmuel phoned me and gave me the phone number of Dr. Alexander Rivlin and I, of course, phoned him immediately and asked him as to the family connection. Sasha told me that he and his wife came here from Omsk in Siberia 7 years ago with their 2 sons, the older now serving in the navy, the younger in the last year of high school. As to the family connection, he himself does not know of other Rivlins but his parents, who came from Omsk 2 years ago know some family history. Sasha added

that the family originated in Bessarabia and his father always told that the Rivlins are a very big family. Sasha told that the family had been banished to Siberia and had lost contact with the other Rivlins.

Since the father, Phillip, does not speak Hebrew, English or Yiddish, and I could not talk to him directly, I asked Sasha to question his father and to collect the names of grandparents, and their brothers, sisters, uncles etc.

A few days later I phoned again and Sasha reported that Phillip tells that his father was Pavel (Feivel) Rivlin and that his father's parents were Fishel and Anna Rivlin and that Anna too was a Rivlin by birth, though from Lithuania. I searched unsuccessfully in Sefer HaYachas and asked Jules to try too.

**Jules Feldman continues:**

Searching Sefer HaYachas (a book by Ruva's father, Eliezer Rivlin, detailing the Rivlin Family Genealogy from the late 15th Century until his day, printed in 1940). I found the following 3 entries.

- "Reb Efraim, died in Benedar, son of Shneur Zalman Rivlin of Chernika, and his wife Chana, daughter of Shraga Feivel Rivlin of Kochanova".
- "The honourable Chana, daughter of Shraga Feivel Rivlin of Kochanova, wife of Efraim Fishel, son of Shneur Zalman Rivlin of Chernika".
- "Reb Feivel of Benedar, son of Efraim Fishel Rivlin of Chernika".
- These entries match what Phillip tells and his grandmother Chana is none other than the sister of "the honourable Shneur Zalman Rivlin from Kochanova, son of Shraga Feivel, now in Tel Aviv, and his wife Chana nee Brudny-Citron".
- The same Shneur Zalman Rivlin is the grandfather of my wife Nitsan.

All the details seem to fit but one fact is out of place: in his conversation with Ruva, Sasha mentioned Bessarabia. However the family narrative tells that the family lived in Lithuania and Belarus.

Yet another coincidence: the same week I am informed that in the New Lexicon for Hebrew Literature

<http://library.osu.edu/sites/users/galron.1/00140.php>

An entry has been added for Menachem Rivlin, the son of Zalman and my wife's uncle. There we are informed that Menachem was born in Bessarabia. I open the memorial book for Menachem and there we are told that the revolution of 1917 found Shneur Zalman Rivlin and his family in Bendery, Bessarabia (today Moldova). Until then I had been certain that Benedar referred to a town of a similar name in Belarus.

Yet another surprise: the same week I received from Goni Rivlin, the cousin of my wife, Nitsan, and a granddaughter of Zalman Rivlin, a box of family pictures. On the back of some of the pictures appear details of the identity of those photographed.

From the pictures we reveal that the presence of the Rivlin family in Bendery from 1907 until 1938 and living there were Zalman Rivlin and his brother Yakov, their sister Fruma Dvora, wife of Avraham Shimon Alexandrov, and a second sister Chana, wife of her cousin Efraim Fishel Rivlin.

Two pictures seemed particularly significant.



behind this picture is written  
"Filia Rivlin, Bendery 1938"





Behind this picture is written  
“Genia Rivlin and her son Filia, Bendery 1934”

I scan the pictures and send them to Sasha. He immediately phones to confirm – “**these are pictures of my father Phillip, we have the same pictures**”.

A few days later Sasha came with his parents, Phillip and Marta, and his sons, Evgeny and Alexei, to visit us here at *Kibbutz Yizre’el*. When we saw Phillip we immediately saw the resemblance between grandfather Phillip and Filia the 4 year old – the same eyes.

We sit around the table and look at family pictures. I take out these two pictures and place them on the table. Phillip takes out the two same pictures and places them next to ours.

The town of Bendery was part of the Russian Empire until World War One. In the period between the wars it was in Romania. In 1940 the Soviet Union annexed the area. In 1940 with the Nazi invasion of the area there was the “Evacuation” and Feivel and Genia Rivlin and their son Phillip were evacuated deep into Russia. In 1946 as “suspicious elements” they were deported to Siberia to difficult conditions. After the death of Stalin, the Rivlins settled in Omsk in Siberia and lived there until they came to Israel.

We do not know if after 1938 there was any contact between the Rivlins in *Eretz Yisrael* and the family of Feivel Rivlin. We are happy to renew the family connection after 70 years.



In the picture second cousins Phillip Rivlin and  
Nitsan Rivlin-Feldman, *Kibbutz Yizre’el*  
April 2008.

*Ruben “Ruva” Rivlin, born in Jerusalem, 7<sup>th</sup> generation in Israel. His father Eliezer Rivlin and his brother Binyamin Rivlin researched the family history. In 1940 Eliezer Rivlin published the “Sefer HaYachas” and in 1971 Binyamin Rivlin published “R. Moshe Rivkash, Be’er HaGolah, and his Descendants” Ruva continues the genealogical research on the Rivlin family and together with Jules Feldman is bringing the family tree up to date.*

*Jules Feldman, born in Johannesburg, South Africa. In Israel since 1971, member of Kibbutz Yizre’el. Addicted to genealogy since 1997 – after working on his relatively small Litvak families became involved with his wife’s Rivlin family, not realizing the enormity of the project.*

*Ruva and Jules are both active in the preparations for the Rivlin Reunion – 200 Years in Jerusalem which will take place at Binyanei HaUma on October 15, 2009.*

## The History of the Antebi Family

*Elioz Hefer*

Going back in time to reconstruct my family history has been a project for the past thirty years. I have collected what my forefathers left behind: memoirs, stories, newspaper clippings, photos, archive data, documentary history of the family and the religious books where rabbis of the family wrote down information pertaining to the family over the course of two hundred years and more. The saga begins in Spain at the time of the Inquisition when the family is forced to flee and reaches the Orient. Over a period of hundreds of years they moved from country to country and eventually made Aliya to *Eretz Yisrael*.

The family originated in the town of Ein Teb. Members reached Haleb = Aram Zuba in Syria and from there moved on to Safed and Tiberius in *Eretz Yisrael*. Once again on the move within the Ottoman Empire on to Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem and then westward, to Paris and eastward, as far as Bombay, India.

The Entebbe family got its name from the town "Ein Teb" = "Good Spring" which is in the area of Diar Bakir in Asia Minor. After the Turks conquered the area, the prefix "Gazi" = winner was given to the name of the town which is now called "Gazi-Entab" and it is located in southern Turkey next to the Syrian border.

Several elders of the family, born at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, kept alive the oral tradition on the history of the family and its origins. This legacy was based on the stories they heard from their parents and late in life they sat down and documented the bits and pieces they had from the oral tradition plus what was written in the religious books in the possession of the family. Different members of the family wrote what they knew but they did not manage to get together and write one family history.

The traditions differ as to the origins of the family. There are those who claim that the family reached "Ein Tab" as a result of the Expulsion from Spain in 1492. (See Biblio-

graphy # 1, 2, 3). Others think (Bibliography # 4, 5, 6) that the that the ancestors were "Mustaravim", i.e., Jews who lived in the area since the time of the First or Second Temple. Thus, we shall never know the true origin of the family name. The scholar Avraham Cohen Tawil in his article describes the Jewish families from Spain who were living in Ein Tab in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cohen-Tawil gives a list of names for these families who were residing there. However, if our family was indeed one of those living there at the time it is difficult to determine though the name-*kinnui* begins with our ancestor Reb Rahamim Antebi, (1554-1627) when he left Ein Tab and went to Haleb.

According to the second tradition whereby the family originated from the "Mustaravim" has not been verified since people did not have family names and were known by the first name and the son of so and so. Examples abound in the Talmud with names like: Rabbi Hillel the Elder, Rabbi Yonatan son of Uziel, Rabbi Yohanan son of Zaki, Rabbi Avdimi Daman Haifa and others.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century two mohalim (circumcisers) from Haleb, Rabbi Yitzhak and Yedidya Dayan, father and son, kept a written account of the babies they circumcised (See Bibliography # 7). In this hand written book, the first names are listed together with the term "tribe" Antebi who were living in Haleb. Names like Tarzi-Antebi, Tawashi-Antebi, dashi-Antebi, Cohen-Antebi appear together with those known to our family like: Tabosh-Antebi or Saka-Antebi (See Bibliography # 8). This is testimony to the existence of the various families. However, the family described above never had an additional name and there are circumcised babies with the sole name "Antebi". This may be a hint that the family is indeed from the "Mustaravim".

According to family tradition, Rabbi Rahamim, the grandson of the expelled

Jews, was born in 1554 in Ein Tab and when he left of Haleb = Aleppo he took the *kinnui* (= nickname) Antebi. Haleb was an important Jewish center and was thus termed "Aram Zuba". The family tradition marks the dynasty of the rabbis from Rabbi Rahamim as follows: his son Rabbi Yitzhak Rahamim (1624-1706), his grandson Rabbi Shabtai Yitzhak (1669-1746) and his great-grandson Rabbi Yitzhak Shabtai Antebi (1721-1804). Only for the latter are there written records (1) that have survived and thus the document on the name of his father Rabbi Shabtai Antebi.

The family chronicle can be told via the various persona over the generations. Parallel to the written documentation be it books, articles and research papers whereby members of the family are mentioned there is a wealth of stories that were passed down from generation to generation as an oral tradition. Though these tales cannot be verified they were accepted by all as part of the family tradition. See what Ehad Ha'am had to say on the character of Moshe (2).

The following people were the main rabbinic personalities of the family:

Rabbi Yaakov Antebi (1787-1847) was the chief rabbi of Damascus at the time of the Blood Libel (1840). The report to Sir Moses Montefiore in the year 1841 served as the main source of documentation of the event. (Bibliography # 9).

His grandson Albert Antebi (1869-1939) was the representative of the Alliance Francaise in *Eretz Yisrael* and the principal of the first Jewish vocational school in Jerusalem. He was friendly with Meir Dizengof, Avraham Elmaliach, and others (Bibliography # 10). Being close to the leaders of the Ottoman regime he managed to help his fellow Jews. For example, his close ties with Jamal Faha, the Turkish governor, enabled him to have the expulsion of many Zionist Jewish leaders, annulled. These leaders include: David ben Gurion, Menachem Sheinken, Yehuda Gurzovski, Yaakov Chelouche, Avraham Almaliach, Meir Dizengof, Menashe Meirovitz and Dr. Haim Bograchov. Albert drew up the agreement with Jamal Paha, the Turkish governor, whereby the Jews could

buy the area of the Western Wall from the Turkish regime. The agreement fell through since the Jews were suspicious. Albert Antebi made the shidduch between Itamar Ben Avi (Eliezer Ben-Yehuda) and Lea Abu Shadid, from the well-known Sephardi family; after a refusal of three years. When Ben Gurion was prime minister he sent a letter of thanks on his deeds in saving the members of the family.

Rabbi Avraham Antebi (1765-1858) was the Chief Rabbi of Haleb (= Aleppo) for forty years. He was well versed in the Torah and from his writings, six books were printed: "*Hochma u-Musar*", "*Ohel Yesharim*", "*Yoshev Ohalim*", "*Beit Ohel Mo'ed*", "*Mor Va-Aholot*", "*Pnei Ha-bayit*" (Bibliography # 11, 12). His personality was connected to many tales of miracles till he was called with awe "*Anish vekatil*" because his prayers were able to punish the sinners. For an example of this see the book of Haim Sabato (Bibliography # 13). He wrote *piyutim*. One of them is known till today and begins thus: "If your heart, my son is intelligent, then my heart will be happy". His son, Rabbi Yitzhak Antebi was a well known rabbi in Haleb.

Rabbi Yehuda Shabtai Rafael (HaYaShaR) Antebi born 1808 or 1809 was the nephew of Rabbi Avraham Antebi and he is the ancestor of my branch of the family tree. Hayahar Antebi lost his parents at an early age and he was raised like a son by his famous uncle. When he was older he was sent to his aunt in Safed where he studied with the great rabbis and kabbalists of the city. He is mentioned in the first census of Moses Montefiore in 1839. (See Bibliography # 14).

In the course of time Yashar Antebi became a "*shadar*" = emissary for the Sephardi Kollel and went on two big missions to collect money. From his second mission, he returned home with much money which helped rebuild the city after the ruins of the earthquake (1837). Till this day there is a small synagogue "*Sha'arei Rahamim*" (= The Gates of Mercy) which he built. Yashar Antebi married Kadon Kaski and the couple had eight children, all of whom became rabbis. The eldest, Rabbi Eliyahu Rahamim Antebi (1852-1920) was also an emissary

from Safed. More can be learned about him from the research of President Yitzhak ben Zvi (Bibliography # 14) and the historian Avraham Ya'ari (Bibliography # 15).

Among the children of Rabbi Eliyahu Rahamim Antebi, two are famous: Rabbi Rafael Menashe Antebi who was known for his sharp wit in his birthplace, Safed and later served as the head of the Rabbinic court in Haifa, and his brother the educator Yehuda Antebi. He was amongst the first teachers in the moshavot of the Baron in the Galilee. He also served as a principal, was a member of the city council of Safed, head of the Sephardi community in Safed, and principal of the Mizrahi girls school in Safed. He was also the delegate of Safed in the first general assembly of the Jews in *Eretz Yisrael*. Yehuda Antebi was the private tacher of the Pickovitz children, one of whom became famous as Yigal Alon.

This is the summary of the history of the family Antebi. This short description can be

the prelude to further study through the internet publication "Return to Ein Tab". <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2241427/-The-Antebi-Family-Heritage>

For bibliography and footnotes see Hebrew section.

*Elioz Hefer is a Ministry of Health physician at the County Health Bureau of Haifa, specializing in public health. He wrote his Post Doctorate in Health Systems Management at the School of Public Health at the Medicine Faculty, Hadassa Ein Kerem. He is senior lecturer in the department of Health Systems at the Emek Izrael College. He is also the winner of the Minister of Education and Culture prize for "Creators in the Jewish Culture" in 1993 for research work on the subject of the "Damascus Plot" (1840), and the author of articles about the history of Rabbis and public figures from the Antebi family which is the family of his mother.*

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## Remnants from the Community of Gombin Following R' Yehuda Lajb Zlotnik (L.Z. – Avida)

*Ada Holzman (Edited by Rachel P. Cohen)*

### 1) Pinkas Chevra Mikra of Gombin (Gabin), Poland 1840-1876~

This Pinkas (ledger, register) was printed from a microfilm held in the archives of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in New York. It was sent to them, together with other Pinkasim, for preservation at the beginning of the twentieth century, by **Rabbi Yehuda Lajb Zlotnik** known as "**El Zet (L.Z.)**", who later changed his name to "**Avida**". Then, after more than 100 years, it was printed from a microfilm by Noam Lupo

from the Gombin Society in New York and was sent to me.

I discovered the existence of this Pinkas and others (never found though) and the story of its rescue by **Rabbi Zlotnik** in my research of the **R' Zlotnik** heritage, part of my family history personal quest. I discovered an article written by the Rabbi in *Reshumot* ("Records"), a collection of Memoirs, Ethnography and Folklore in Israel, published by "Dvir", Tel Aviv 1946, p. 217: "**Remnants from the Community of Gombin**".



בעוה"י כ"ה (בעודת השם יתברך בן י"ד רצ"ו)

פנקס

חברת מקרא

פה ק"ק (קהלת קודש)

גומבין

יעא (יכתוב עלינו אמן)

With God's help, Blessed be He  
Pinkas of the Bible Society  
here, the Holy Community  
of Gombin,  
May the Lord found it well!

In 1911, **Rabbi Zlotnik** was nominated the Rabbi of Gombin, situated in the Mazowsza region, where he had a sister, my grandmother, **Rasza Holcman née Zlotnik**. This town was famous in the Jewish world because of its great **Rabbi Abraham Abele Gombiner** (1637-1683), son of **Haim Levi**, author of the important halachic book: "Magen Abraham". R' Zlotnik opens the article by describing the stories passed down from father to son about the great Rabbi, and his mother, a native of the town. One of the stories was that behind the synagogue and the Beth Midrash was a well which served many years ago as a "Mikve" for the purification of the daughters of Israel and in it, the mother of the Great Rabbi purified herself as well. Another story R' Zlotnik heard from one elder was that the Rabbi's mother used to come to the synagogue every morning, would sit in the women gallery and pray to G-d: "Gute-Morgen Got'ie". I cannot spend much time here, I have to go home and prepare food for my Abrehmele, so he will have power to deal with your holy Torah, "Gutten Tag Got'ie".

**R' Zlotnik** was a folklorist, and he strived to record and preserve tradition, tombstones and lost Jewish culture which dominated Jewish life in Poland for many centuries. He writes in his article about the community Pinkasim (ledgers). One was about the

Pinkas "D'Cheva Mishnayoth" (the Society for the Study of Mishnayot). He quoted a speech by **R' Mosze Lichtensztajn** found in the Pinkasim who founded the Society. The years it was active were around 1800-1880. The Pinkas included tax matters, names lists, synagogue kept seats, the erecting of more Beth Midrashim and schools, various payments and many events in the life of the Society. For example, it mentions that in the year of 1821, a new member was accepted into the Society: **R' Dawid Tebeli**, son of the famous genius **Rabbi Szlomo**, a rabbinical judge in London.

The second Pinkas **R' Zlotnik** write about in his article is the Pinkas of "Chevre Tehilim" the Society for reading the Book of Psalms. Also, this Pinkas opens with a speech by **R' Mosze Lichtensztajn** and the years are also in the same range, 1800-1880.

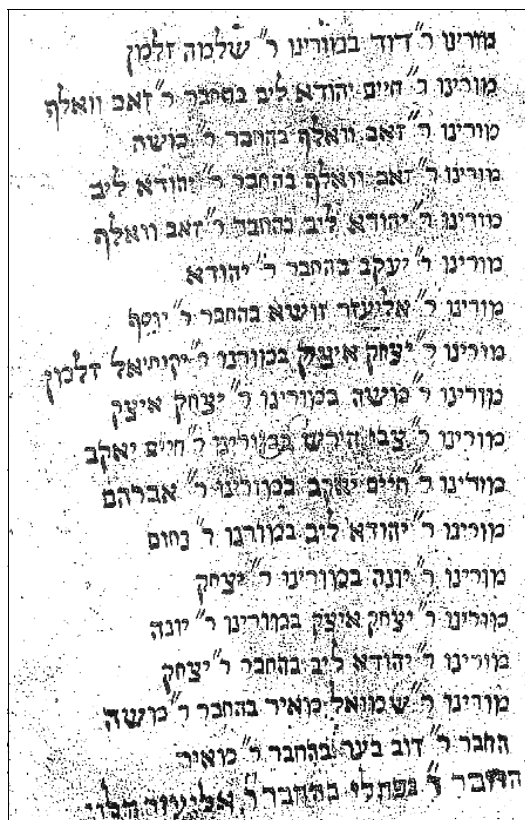
What was found in the Schechter Institute was a different Pinkas; although it is not mentioned in **R' Zlotnik's** article, it was one which he rescued and sent to the institute 100 years ago. This is *Pinkas Chevre Mikra* – The Society for Reading the Bible in Gombin. The Pinkas constitutes a rare document which revives the life of the shtetl, mainly its religious and orthodox way of life. Reading the Torah, its interpretations and meaning tied the Jews together, strengthened them and

raised their spirits above the hardships of daily life. It was all written in Hebrew and it contains protocols, procedures, accounts, details of events, verdicts, rulings, prayers and more. I sensed that the members were totally dedicated to their roles and the Society

filled their life with meaning and purpose.

For deciphering purposes, I marked the pages from left to right. In part of them, there are pages in which we can identify surnames and in others, only first names and fathers' names, like in page 130:

Name	Son Of
Dawid	Szlomo Zalman
Naftali	Eliezer (Levite)
Eliezer Zosza	Yosef
Cwi Hersz	Haim Jakob
Dow Ber	Meir
Haim Jakob	Abraham
Haim Yehuda Lajb	Zeew Wolf
icchak Icek	Yekutiel Zalman
icchak Icek	Yona
Jakob	Yehuda
Yona	icchak
Mosze	icchak Icek
Szmuel Meir	Mosze
Yehuda Lajb	Nachum
Yehuda Lajb	icchak
Yehuda Lajb	Zeew Wolf
Zeew Wolf	Yehuda Lajb
Zeew Wolf	Mosze



List of members on page 130

But there are many places where the surname already appears and so the Pinkas has also genealogical value. On page 140, I deciphered a summary of the election which took place in order to elect the men for the various roles in the Society and in the Synagogue. The handwriting is sometimes very difficult to read, in view of the time which has passed, the microfilm quality, and the text itself. The language is completely orthodox and religious, full of abbreviations, religious terms and sometimes in Yiddish.

Pinkas: **Lajzer Laks**... Recently, one Miriam Goldstein from Farmington Hills searched in the Internet Gombin Forum for information about her Gombin family: Wisper. The name was changed during the years and the original name is **Wispa**. One of the names I deciphered in the Pinkas Mikra was **Cwi Wispa**, proof that someone with the name of **Wispa** lived in Gombin in the nineteenth century.

Noam Lupo, who should be commended for finding the microfilm in the Schechter Institute, may find his ancestors in the

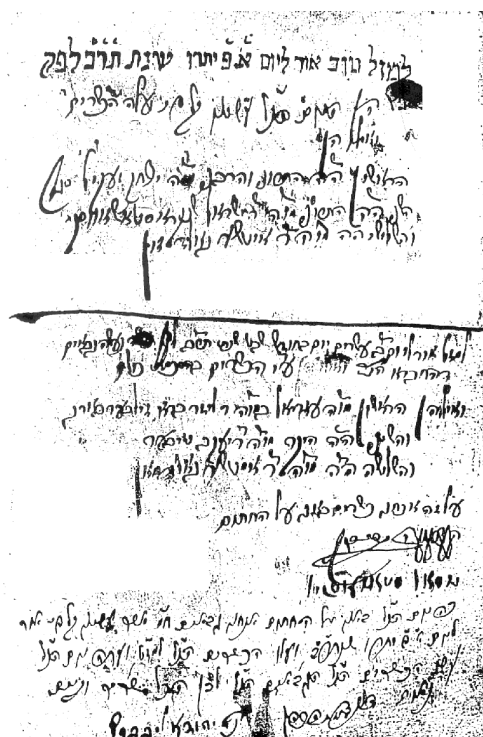
One of the names I found to my excitement was **Lajzer Holcman**, one of my own ancestors, the father of my great-grandfather, **Zalman Holcman**. He became through this revelation, no more than only a name in my ever-growing family tree, but a

real person, a very religious, pious Jew, totally involved in a life of an orthodox community in the nineteenth century, a community which exists no longer, and only remnants of the remnants were left to tell its vanished story...

This is the list I have managed to compile from the Pinkas. If anyone is interested in the original page, please let me know and I shall send the relevant page(s).

<b>Page</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>SURNAME</b>
44, 106	Josef	BAJDER or BINDER
71	Dow	BARACZ
63	Yehuda Lajb	BARACZ
142, 143	Mordechai	BARASZ
147	Jakob Lajb	BOHL
118, 142, 143	Mordechai	BOL
45, 106	Szmul Jakob	BORENSZTAJN
44	Sender	CHAJA
71	Cwi	DARANOWSKI
69	Zalman	DIAMANT
121, 142, 143	Aron Israel	ETINGER
108	Szmuel Meir	FRENKEL
72	Zalman	FRIDMAN
44	Mosze	GILBAJTER
71, 106	Icik	GOLDMAN
118	Yona	GRIN
45, 71	Mosze	HODIS
121	Abraham Icchak	HOLCMAN
96, 101	Lajzer	HOLCMAN
142, 143	Szymon	KAC
142, 143, 149	Zindel	KAC
120	Icek	KARPINSKI
157	Szlomo Zalman	KUTNER
71	Lajzer	LAKS
45, 129	Nisan (or Natan)	LOSZINSKI
145	Szmuel Meir	LOSZINSKI
45	Cwi Dow	MAJNCZYK
142, 143	Yudel	NAJMAN
146	Melech	ROZGA
45	Dow	RUSAK
44, 63, 120	Cwi Dow	SEGAL ?
45	Mosze	SEGAL ?
44	Cwi	SZEWCKER ?
142, 143	Yehuda Lajb	SZKLAREK
137	Yosef	SZWARBORD
118	Reuwen	SZYMON
45	Szmuel Meir	T?
118, 120, 149	Abraham	TADELIS
146, 149	Jakob	TADELIS

Page	Given Name	SURNAME
44	Lajb	TCZAK
142, 143	Abraham	TIBER
142, 143	Gerszon	TIBER
144	Gerszon Dawid	TIBER
142, 143	Israel	TIBER
90	Jakob	TIBER
64	Yehuda	WEKSLER
142, 143	Cwi	WISPA
121, 142, 143	Icchak	WOJDESLAWSKI
147	Fizzel	WRUBLE
146	Israel	WRUBLE
63, 71	Zalman	ZAJDMAN
30, 73	Cwi Hirsz	ZARKOWSKI
131	Baruch	ZICHLINSKI
142, 143	Zalman Lajbusz	ZIELONKA
76	Azriel Szmul	ZILBER
44	Azriel	ZILBERBERG
144	Szaja	ZILBERBERG
142, 143	Yehoszua	ZILBERBERG
96	Icchak Icik	ZILBERMAN



An example of a page from Pinkas Chevra Mikra of Gombin



## 2) 26 *Matzevot* (Tombstones) from the Cemetery of Gombin

In the article about the remnants from Gombin, R' Zlotnik recorded also 26 tombstones from the Gombin cemetery. He was concerned that the old cemetery and the great synagogue would be destroyed in the days of the First World War (which did happen, but one generation later, during the Second World War). So he photographed the tombstones and the 200-year-old great synagogue and sent them for preservation to his good friend Rabbi Lewin Epsztajn, founder of the famous Publishing House in Warsaw, which later moved to Jerusalem. R' Zlotnik writes that R' Lewin Epsztajn prepared from the photographs "glass mothers for pictures of light" – probably, he meant "negatives". I have written to the heirs of Levin-Epstein in Jerusalem, but no reply was ever received. The photographs and negatives are probably lost and destroyed, as well as the great synagogue of Gombin and nearly the whole Jewish heritage of Poland, although it may be there as a miracle, and these treasures will be found eventually in a dusty archive or crumbling in a warehouse of one museum or another.

In the article, he documented 26 tombstones, the names and the inscriptions. He commented that Gombin was a very Hassidic community and the tombstones prove it. They were ancient headstones from the eighteenth century, but beautifully written in figurative and traditional Hebrew.

There are nearly no surnames, but one caught my eye which was an exception, tombstone nr. 17: "The divine philosopher, **Rabbi R' Aharon Szlomo the Levite/ETINGER** from the family of **EITINEGA**, natives of Mäharin (Moravia) the town of Holesov, died Kislev 1, 5644 (November 30th, 1883)". Since I knew the late **Zelig Etinger** from *Kibbutz* Evron all my life as a Gombiner married to a Gombiner (**Rachel Kerber**, blessed be her memory), I was astonished to find out that the roots of this family are not from Gombin, Poland, but rather Moravia... The wandering Jew ended up in a *Kibbutz* in Eretz-Israel... His brother **Abraham Etinger** z"l from *Kibbutz Kfar Menachem* wrote about "*Hashomer Hatza'ir*" in Gombin, in the Yiddish part of the Gombin *Yizkor* Book. The **Etinger** family of bakers was deeply rooted in Gombin, but their real roots were not there.

There are other documented tombstones, most of them belonging to Hassidim, Rabbis, and halachic judges, but also to modest and righteous women, young yeshiva pupils and others. Thirty years after R' Zlotnik transcribed the inscriptions of the *Matzevot*, the Germans invaded Poland and spread death and destruction wherever they were, including Gombin and its ancient cemetery. This enhances the importance of R' Zlotnik's work, and his documentation became the tombstone of the tombstones...

### Inscriptions of 26 Tombstones in the Old Cemetery of Gombin

Here is the data I extracted from R' Zlotnik's article, the chapter about Gombin *Matzevot* (tombstones).

Nr.	SURNAME	NAME	SON OF	HEBREW DATA	COMMON DATE	COMMENTS
1		Ozer	Matatyah	5540	1780	
2		Eliezer Lajzer	Yosef	2nd Shavuot, 5553	May 29, 1773	He was probably the Rabbi of Gombin. After him served R' LICHTENSTEIN who founded the <i>pin-kasim</i> ; the oldest <i>matzeva</i> recorded by R' Zlotnik

Nr.	SURNAME	NAME	SON OF	HEBREW DATA	COMMON DATE	COMMENTS
3	LANDAU	Icchak Iciek	Yona Hatan	Heshvan 6, 5573	October 12, 1812	Grandson of "The Great Light", President of Halachic Court of Opatow: R' Jakob Simcha
4		Yosef		Adar II 21, 5573	March 23, 1813	Seg"l ( <i>Segen Levaya</i> – deputy of the Levite). May be he is the master who engraved during many years in a small knife the wonderful ornaments on the Holy Ark in the Grand Synagogue of Gombin. LZ
5		Arie Lajb	Szlomo	Tishrei 27, 5603	October 1, 1842	"A teacher and a judge here, the Holy Community of Gombin"
6		Mosze	Katriel	Tevet, 5605	December 1844	"married the <i>tzadikim</i> of his generation" (was a <i>Hassid</i> )
7		Cwi	Mordechai	Av 7, 5608	July 24, 1846	
8		Eliezer Lajzer	Icchak	5608	1846	Poetical verses with rhyme
9		Cwi Hirszt	Icchak	Nisan 1, 5610	March 14, 1850	<i>Hassid</i>
10		Yhoyda	Chaim	Elul 2, 5612	August 17, 1852	Kohen, grandson of the author of the book " <i>Bigdei Kehuna</i> " ( <i>clothes of Priesthood</i> )
11		Cwi Eliezer Lipa	Abraham	Shevat 11, 5621	January 22, 1861	
12		Abraham Yosef	Lajbiszt			from the town of Sierpc
13		Abraham Icchak	Eliezer	Elul 9, 5622	September 4, 1862	One of the most beautiful Matzevot, with remarkable picture of the sacrifice of Icchak
14		Dow	Aharon Simcha	Nisan 3, 5624	April 10, 1864	Written in Aramaic / father was a Rabbi in Gombin, author of "Rimzei Esh" (Allusions of Fire)
15	KAC	Baruch	Chaim	Tamuz 22, 5624	July 26, 1864	<i>Hassid</i>
16		Mordechai	Icchak	Tishrei 24, 5625	October 24, 1864	<i>Hassid</i>

Nr.	SURNAME	NAME	SON OF	HEBREW DATA	COMMON DATE	COMMENTS
17	ETINGER	Aharon Szlomo		Kislev 1, 5644	November 30, 1883	From the family of EITINGA, natives of Māharin (Moravia) the town of Holesov
18		Gerszon Icchak	Yehuda	Av 9, 5645	July 21, 1885	Was a <i>Dayan</i> – orthodox judge in Gombin
19		Aharon Simcha	Szmuel	Adar 14, 5648	February 26, 1888	29 years Rabbi in Gombin, wrote in his will not to praise him on the tombstone, father of nr. 14
20		Mosze Szohel	Mordechai Menachem	Adar 27, 5666	March 24, 1906	Great grandson to the holy and genius Rabbi of Radoszyce
21		Chana		Tevet 8, 5583	December 22, 1822	Wife of Katriel
22		Sada or Tada	Abraham	Tamuz 23, 5591	July 4, 1831	“The modest and important woman”; father was a Rabbi judge in Plock.
23		Chaja Sara	Yosef	Nisan 3, 5593	March 23, 1833	Father was Seg”l ( <i>Segen Levaya</i> – deputy of the Levite); killed by gun, probably a result of a battle between the Russians and Polish rebels, 1833
24		Frumet	Yosef	Sivan 11, 5615	May 28, 1855	An old woman
25		Czafa	Cwi	Shevat 26, 5622	January 27, 1862	Father was a Rabbi
26		Pesa	Dow Berisz	Adar II 22, 5651	April 1, 1891	The righteous, important woman; 53 years old; daughter of “one of the great men of Israel”, grandson of the Tzadik Cwi Hirs MALACH, wife of R’ Ziszel, <i>Hassid</i> .

These were the remnants of the remnants... Very moving lamentations, lamenting the dead and also the culture in which they were created and which exists no more. Nothing survived, but only a very few rare fragments of the tombstones which were removed from the Jewish cemetery and used as curbstones in the streets of Gombin. In

1998, these fragments of symbolic memory were assembled in a monument built in the Jewish cemetery, by the Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society (“GJHGS”) and the Nussenbaum Foundation. One of these stones was of my own grandfather, the “Tehilim Zeiger” (as was inscribed on his tombstone) **Eliahu Holman**,

died in 1922, after an anti-Semitic attack. It is believed that the Germans built a whole bridge from the tombstones of the destroyed Jewish cemetery... Only some remnants of the remnants have remained to remind us that once our ancestors lived, died and graced the earth of Gombin, that long-ago disappeared shtetl in Poland...

*Ada Holtzman was born in Kibbutz Evron. She has been an analyst of a foreign airline in Israel. Since 1998 she has created and*

*maintained her commemoration web site: [www.zchor.org](http://www.zchor.org) where her personal research of her roots, developed into a quest into both her parents' shtetl Gombin (Gabin), then tens of other lost communities in Poland, then Polish Jewish heritage and more. She donated and coordinated various projects for Jewish-Gen, among others: posting Pinkas Hanitzolim I & II. She published 2 books: "Meir Holtzman" (Tel Aviv 1999) which contains her father's memoirs and "The Jewish Cemetery of Warta" (Tel Aviv 2006).*

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## Some Archival Resources in England

### *Rosemary Eshel*

Some families like mine have their roots in many places but there is one thing in common that unites them – that at one time or another many of them lived in England, or passed through *en route* for other places, and their brief stay or activities has left some record.

Where are these records? And what kind of records are available? Today barely without leaving the chair and computer one can open up a vista of sources and documents and much material is available to order from the comfort of one's home.

But for the family historian nothing replaces a visit in person to the archives themselves, which can avoid a costly application for a certificate or document that may not belong to a relative. In England the National Archives located outside Central London in Kew are a rich source of material for family researchers <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>. They have a vast array of documents and a detailed on-line search that can be done in advance of the visit.

The first-time visitor will want to register for a Reader's Ticket to enable access to original documents. The Website gives full instructions how to register and bring proof of identity to obtain a Reader's Ticket. The Archives' web pages give instructions about their facilities and what the researcher can

take inside the Reading Room

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/visit/whattobring.htm>

What can you find there? Census returns/military records/naturalizations/shipping lists/wills are just a few of the many resources available. Documents can be requested in advance, and photocopies of material can be obtained. A brief search of particular family names being researched brings up a variety of documents and may include a naturalization file number. This is the first step in applying to look for the document or file. Naturalization certificates often give a wealth of information where the relative was born and other details, names of their parents, a record of jobs and work in England, professions and occupations. Not every Jew who came to England became naturalized, and women generally acquired naturalization on marriage.

A visit to the National Archives reveals new details each time and in my own family a search for possible relatives and naturalization details about Webers from Poland found some unrelated Webers as well as the naturalization papers of my grandfather Joseph Simon Webber and his brother Phineas David Webber who arrived in England in the 1880s. Both were born in Brzostek in Galicia and each file contained

much family information. Much later I discovered by chance that not only had Joseph's father Elimelech been married previously, but that four unknown children from his first marriage had accompanied the family to England.

A further search in the National Archives yielded the naturalization papers of Joseph's half brother Samuel Isaac Weber. The certificate showed he was born in a neighboring shtetl Fryszak and not Brzostek, and it also gave the name of his mother, Adelaide, Elimelech's first wife – until then unknown. The search continued... Elimelech later moved to Manchester with his second wife Rebecca my great-grandmother and there the Aliens Register which still exists in the Greater Manchester Police Museum contained even more details of the family including Elimelech's birthplace – Brody – date of birth: ca 1846, the names of married children, the various places the family had lived in, and their service in the British Armed Forces in the First World War. These records have miraculously survived and were recovered from the cellars of police stations, where they were stored until recently. The Police Museum in Newton Street Manchester is however only open one day a week on Tuesdays, see <http://www.gmp.police.uk/mainsite/pages/history.htm>

In Manchester another source for research is the Central Library, which holds extensive collections and resources. A list of their holdings and material of Jewish interest can be found on the website of Manchester City council, see [http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/Jewish\\_Records.pdf](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/Jewish_Records.pdf)

The National Archives in Kew provide free access to the Census returns for England Scotland and Wales from 1841. The newly released census for 1911 is also available. The census is taken every 10 years and contains a wealth of information – where the family lived, who else was living in the house at the time the census was taken, the names and ages, relationships and occupations of all those recorded. Ten years later the census

may show additions to the family, relatives visiting, lodgers at the address or the absence of family members who may have since died. These are an invaluable source of knowledge and are very revealing providing much information – but can raise more questions than provide answers!

My mother's Bing family with their Alsace roots first appears in the 1841 UK census. The family had been the subject of intensive research by a solicitor in the 1970s – before the advent of the internet. He had been entrusted with the task of tracing relatives of a Rosine Jonas who had died unmarried and intestate.

The 1841 UK census gives French born Jacob Bing b. 1781 a shopkeeper living at an address in Brighton with his wife Collette and several children. Jacob Bing (also known as Bing Jacob) is well documented and information about him can be found in the on-line archives of The Jewish Chronicle newspaper, including his obituary in 1855. For access to the Jewish Chronicle's Archives (in print since 1841) see <http://www.thejc.com/>. In Brighton, the Bing family included Jacob & Collette's two sons – Samuel and Nathan and four daughters, Celestine, Eliza, Rosine and Rachel. The 1851 census show them still in Brighton with four of their children Celestine, Eliza, Rachel and Nathan, their daughter Rosine having married French born Lion Lion in London in 1846.

The family next appear in the 1861 census where Collette, now widowed, still living in Brighton, has reverted to the surname Jacob and is living with two unmarried daughters Eliza and Celestine. From then onwards there is no sign in England of Samuel b. France 1827, Rachel b. France 1831 and Nathan b. England 1836 who have disappeared from view. And certainly the research carried out by the solicitor looking for descendants of their sister Eliza's daughter Rosine, who died in 1960 never uncovered their existence. Continuing research however has revealed traces of them in various archives outside England.

Burials and tombstones are an important source and a visit to a UK cemetery may provide that all-elusive piece of information, although finding which of several possible cemeteries in a town may be daunting. A list of Jewish cemeteries in London and other places can be found online at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Cemetery/brit/london.html> and <http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/brit/>

Searching for the grave of a family member in a cemetery in Manchester drew a blank. Arriving from Poland in 1882, my grandfather's half brother had changed his name from Jacob Stein to Jack Stone after some years in England. A cemetery visit arranged in advance eventually bore results together with the very helpful non-Jewish sexton who had obligingly searched through the records of both surnames. He found the burial of Jacob Stein in his original name and took us to the grave. There in a row were other members of the family whose tombstones recorded much information.

Indexed records of UK Births Marriages and Deaths (BMD) from 1837 provide a name, date and reference number, searches are free although copies of certificates need to be ordered through the General Register Office (GRO) [http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/order\\_certificates/index.asp](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/order_certificates/index.asp) The certificate itself provides additional data – death certificates show place of death, who registered the death or was present, and if a relative, often includes their relationship to the deceased. Civil marriage certificates show the names of both fathers and witnesses. A BMD certificate can resolve ambiguities, fill in the blanks, establish the identity of someone in an unexpected place, provide missing details and relationships and help in identifying a possible relative. At first glance “Sarah Siporah Sagiyah” recorded as buried in London's Novo Cemetery in 1892 (Bevis Marks Records VI) seemed to be a hitherto unknown relative but she turned out to be an Italian cousin from Livorno known in the family as “Sassia” who must have died while on a visit to family in England. The official death certificate which came in the name “Sophia” confirmed her identity by the

inclusion on the certificate of a previously known family member, her grandson Auguste, who recorded her death and his relationship to her.

Jewish marriages were often solemnized in the home and the record of two people of the same surname who were probably cousins was intriguing. Her name appeared in a 1915 will of a cousin who died in the UK without children and left a number of bequests. One was directed to an unknown family member Jeanne the “widow of my late nephew Alberto” Applying for a copy of the certificate for a 1903 wedding in England confirmed that both the groom and the bride had the same surname. It also showed the names of both fathers, two witnesses and place of marriage – the bride's family home in London. This was just one stage in finding out the relationship between bride and groom. Further research in Livorno's Jewish archives revealed that both sets of parents had married there, one in 1857, one in 1859. The registration details of the marriages in Livorno provided confirmation that Jeanne and Alberto were second cousins.

Shipping records and passenger lists often show the name and address of a nearest relative, occupation and reason for visit and many of my mother's Sephardi ancestors whose births, marriages and deaths are recorded in Italian archives in Livorno, Venice and other places came to England and stayed briefly. Census records show them in England, while naturalization records show they came to England serving an apprenticeship in one of the family businesses obtaining British citizenship while in England and later returning to Italy, Egypt, the US and other countries.

Another source of material in the National Archives comes from the Foreign Office records (FO) and includes consular records, correspondence in different places and commercial records. Information about Jewish records held in the National Archives can be found on-line at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/RdLeaflet.asp?sLeafletID=249&j=1> Such resources also include material on Jews

outside England. Records in the National Archives reveal that my mother's relative, Salvatore Arbib a notable 19<sup>th</sup> century African explorer born 1853 in Venice was apprenticed in a family business in London in the 1870s, became naturalized, obtaining British citizenship in 1875, and eventually returned to Venice. A note in the Foreign Office Archives revealed a request in 1889 from Salvatore by then back in Venice requesting a British passport for one of his daughters Marcella then at school in Brighton southern England.

The London Metropolitan Archives hold a rich collection of Jewish material including that of communal organizations, business and trade directories, electoral registers and other records. A full list of material the archives hold of Jewish interest can be found in their Information Leaflet 16, accessible on line at

<http://217.154.230.218/NR/rdonlyres/A309CAC1-C05F-4DE0-94D5-AA1BFFDFE618/0/infono16.pdf>  
Their material includes that of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation Bevis Marks London, recently acquired and currently being indexed.

Some material in the Archives is restricted such as that of the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues, and a letter in advance of a visit can ensure access. The website gives a list of those organizations for which prior permission is needed. The Federation of Synagogues – to which many immigrants belonged when they first arrived in England – was established to unify synagogues and *chevrot* formed by the newly arrived immigrants in the East End of London.

The United Synagogue Records form the largest Anglo-Jewish archive at the London Metropolitan Archives – and records from the oldest Ashkenazi synagogues in London are part of this collection – and include the Great, the Hambro, the New, the Bayswater and the Central Synagogues. There the ketubbot from my mother's Phillips family, watch-makers and jewelers from Wales were discovered, who are known in England from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some New Synagogue records have survived of the brothers Joel, David, Lawrence, Lewis and Moses Phillips

and their father Phillip Phillips (d. 1842). At the University of Southampton's repository of Jewish Archives <http://www.archives.soton.ac.uk/jewish/> there is further material on the Phillips family and other Jewish families, organizations, and communities.

The British Library is the repository of several million books, articles and electronic resources and has an extensive on-line catalog, (see <http://www.bl.uk/>). A ticket to the reading rooms allows access to indexed and computerized newspapers, books and other material which can be ordered in advance. Newly accessible are 19<sup>th</sup> century UK newspapers indexed and on-line at <http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/> comprising material from 49 national and regional UK newspapers. This is an important new resource enabling easy access for genealogists, academics and members of the public – freely available in the library or at home via a 24 hour or 7-day pass.

A visit to London archives is never complete without one to the JGSGB (Jewish Genealogy Society Great Britain). Their comprehensive library, and extensive resource center in Seymour Place, Central London is a treasure trove and is open on various days of the month, see <http://www.jsgsb.org.uk/program1.shtml> – free for members of the society, while a fee is payable for non members. Access can sometimes be arranged in advance on other days. Their website gives details of available databases <http://www.jsgsb.org.uk/aboutjcr.shtm> A computer is available with online access to Ancestry and a member of the society is there to assist and help in research. Records of marriages are currently being indexed – a collaborative project between the United Synagogue and the JGSGB – and copies of Marriage Authorization Certificates (currently 1880-1891) which took place under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi are available to order online see: [http://www.theus.org.uk/support\\_services/find\\_your\\_family/marriage\\_records](http://www.theus.org.uk/support_services/find_your_family/marriage_records)

For general information about Jewish marriages in the UK and resources see <http://www.jsgsb.org.uk/engmarr.shtml>

These are just a few of the many UK resources available to those researching families and ancestors who may have lived, passed through or spent time in England

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## **Taking Torah from Nature: Beit Gordon – the First Museum in the Agricultural Sector *Ofra Keinan***

Israeli researchers claim the museums in Israel and in particular the historic museums which are termed the museums of the agricultural sector (Rodin, 1998) fulfill a central role in the creation of an Israeli identity and are influenced by the ideological concept concerning the connections between a people and its land (Broshi, 1994).

Beit Gordon is located in Degania Alef and its vision is expressed thusly: “to the memory of the modest man who was a farmer out of conviction and served as a role model for all those returning to the Jewish homeland in order to till its soil and as such his ideas and deeds were an example for the generations to come”. All the above comes from the introduction and thus we learn the nature of the institute which is called Beth Gordon: The A.D. Gordon Agriculture and Natural Study Institute. The aim is to represent the life and the philosophy of A.D. Gordon. The institute will emphasize a number of basics: manual labor and agricultural work, the return to the homeland and the return to nature. (document of the society, Degania Alef Archives, 01-02-52).

### **Who was A.D. Gordon?**

Aharon David was born in the village of Troyno in South Podolia (Russia) in 1856. In his youth he studied mainly Jewish religious subjects and only at the age of 17 did his world begin to broaden with the acquisition of languages and general subjects. He came on Aliya at the age of 48 and joined the “*halutzim*” = pioneers as an agricultural worker. He believed in the Jewish people and its reawakening in its own land through

physical labor and specially tending the soil. He served as the spiritual mentor to the many of the people who arrived in the Second and Third *Aliya*. It was he who wrote down the ideas and ideology of these people which manifested itself as the doctrine of the labor movement in *Eretz Yisrael* in general and the *kibbutz* movement in particular. He was a member of Degania Aleph, the first *kibbutz*, and died there in 1922. In his memory “Beit Gordon” was founded and bears his name. (<http://www.degania.org.il/gordon.htm>)

### **The Beginning**

The founders of “Beit Gordon” took as their starting point the vision of A.D. Gordon as they understood it. At the top of the document “Beit Gordon: Guidelines for the Project” which was composed by Yaakov Palmoni, appears as a logo the following quote from A.D. Gordon: “to take Torah from Nature”. This quote became the motto of Beit Gordon and appears on the letterhead of the stationary of the museum. The aims of the museum as stated in the rules and regulations of “Beit Gordon” from 1954 are” to develop and encourage public interest in science in general and in *Eretz Yisrael* in particular, to adopt the connection of people in Israel to nature, to further the knowledge of agriculture and to acknowledge the place of the village in Israel (document of the non-profit organization, Degania Aleph Archive 01-02-52). The museum represents Nature as belonging to all mankind and that of *Eretz Yisrael* to the Jews living in Israel.



According to the approach of Gordon work itself was important. He saw work as the important element in curing the ills of the Jewish people as described in his article “in work we were defective and in work we will be cured” (A.D. Gordon, “The People and Work”, Zionist Library, 5712=1952). A.D. Gordon placed utmost importance on agricultural work which was one of the ideological elements of the Zionist idea. One cannot disregard the fact that much of the doctrine of Gordon is not exhibited in the museum. According to Prof. Shapira in Gordon’s work there is the demand to reach personal salvation as the basis for national salvation. (Shapira, 2006). This question asks about the status of the individual vis a vis the collective, like the question of salvation of the individual which is not represented at the museum at all.

There is a certain tension between the approach that saw in the scientific nurturing of research of Nature and the approach which favored the nurturing of the moral aspects according to Gordon in the museum. Beit Gordon tries to bridge the differences between ideology and application. “The concept that Gordon tried to influence the founding fathers was that the moral approach which is the basis of human existence cannot always live in harmony with the “Torah”=ideal. This museum is a synthesis—a ladder which puts the ideal of work as a basis and the pinnacle reaches the ideal” (Niv hakevutza, Shevat 5695=1935, pp. 75-76).

According to the documentation at hand, the idea to found Beit Gordon was first broached in 1932, ten years after the death of A.D. Gordon. In that year Yaakov Palmoni arrived at Degania Aleph after ten years work as a teacher in Nahalal. According to Menuha, Yaakov Palmoni’s wife, he was asked by the principal of the school in Degania to chair the museum that was to be built in memory of Gordon. The connection between the two events is not clear though it was Palmoni who suggested the first program for Beit Gordon. Already in Nahalal, Palmoni had a collection of boxes with all kinds of preserved insects which was

considered a professional work by various Nature researchers.

In 1935 the corner stone was laid for the museum and in 1941 the museum opened its doors to the general public.

### **The Implementation**

From the time of the initial idea onwards Beit Gordon is identified almost completely with the personality of Yaakov Palmoni even if others worked with him. There were members of Degania Aleph and from other places who lent a hand to the museum but it was Palmoni who gave the museum its character, status and activities. Yosef Baratz was asked to find appropriate books for the library or to raise money for the museum and helped in these areas.

The artifacts of the museum during the first decades, were primarily based on Nature and agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael*, steeped in academic terminology. The artifacts were collected, classified and given notation before being shown. They included the flora and fauna of *Eretz Yisrael*, the geology of the country and specific problems in agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael* as well as a corner on Gordon. The major asset of the museum was the academic approach and its very fine library which was considered one of the best in the country for Nature and agriculture.

### **What then is exhibited in the museum?**

Two basic elements are represented in Beit Gordon: a library and a museum. There are books in Hebrew and other languages in the fields of science and agriculture. Besides basic books in the field there are journals, research papers and guides. The museum collects artifacts from flora and fauna from all over the country as well as relevant objects. There is special interest in objects from the Kinneret area as well as objects connected to agriculture. In addition, there is a laboratory, a lecture hall and a memorial corner to A.D. Gordon (Palmoni, 5733=1973).

The library was supposed to include every publication relating to agriculture that was published in Hebrew. There are also basic books and research material on agriculture in other European languages such as: English,

French, German and Russian. Research projects and the observations made in Nature in *Eretz Yisrael* are to be represented as well as the problems relating to agriculture. The job of the museum is to not only collect the material and publish it but have an available bibliography of the material pertaining to Nature and agriculture at hand. During all the years of its existence since the initiation of Yaakov Polemi, the first director, the emphasis on the continuing work of the library has been foremost in the minds of all. Already in 1937 before Beit Gordon opened its doors there was much work done on the library. He used his connections with different bodies to build the library. (Letter to Yosef Baratz 07-04-1937 Degania Aleph, Archive 01-02-52). By the late fifties there were over 17,000 titles listed in the library in both Hebrew and foreign languages. The catalogue had over 56,000 entries (Avoda Archives, IV 235,279/2 temporary number 883).

The museum as it is termed has three categories: flora and fauna of *Eretz Yisrael*, animals kept in different kinds of storage and other artifacts. According to Palmoni, when the museum was opened to the public in 1941 it already had 1,700 pieces of flora subdivided into three parts: general collection, specific collection on the Kinneret basin and cultivated plants. The animal collection had 16,000 items though it is not clear how they were classified. The meteorology collection had 500 items. (Palmoni, Y. 1935 "Beit Gordon" in Palmoni, Y. Research and Dreams, Degania Aleph: 89-90).

### **Since then until today**

Since the opening of the museum there have been various changes. During the 1980's it was decided to change the museum into a museum that represents the Kinneret basin,

since the museum is based there. Thus, additional collections especially those relating to the Kinneret area have been added. There are both permanent and temporary exhibits. The major change has been to make it a national museum and viewing Beit Gordon as a center of information, study and research on a national level though emphasizing the geographical area where the museum is located. Despite the above, the museum still puts forward its basic premise on making the museum a center for researching and exhibiting Nature and agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael*. Both elements are pursued both in the library and in the museum.

Despite the 75 years that have gone by Beit Gordon remains the first museum in the agricultural sector. It is alive and functioning and continues to be an important element in the cultural development of the society in *Eretz Yisrael* and in the world of museology.

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# *Helkat Hamehohkek – From a Book to an Online Database*<sup>1</sup>

*Mathilda Tagger*

## **Forward**

The cemetery of the Mount of Olives is the most ancient and most sacred Jewish cemetery, situated on the western slope of Mount of Olives, across the southern side of the old city walls, with Wadi Kidron valley as the border between the old city and the cemetery.

The belief in the sanctity of the Mount of Olives goes back for many centuries, since according to tradition; it was the last location of the Divine Spirit before its departure following the destruction of the First Temple. The prediction of the prophet Zechariah (14:4) heralds that the Apocalypse will take place on the Mount of Olives. For tens of generations, this cemetery has been chosen as the a burial site by the Jews of Israel as well as by Jews from all over the world who came to the holy city to die and be buried on the Mount of Olives.

According to Rabbi Asher Leib Brisk<sup>2</sup> there are a few tombstones from the biblical times and they are 3,000 years old. The famous traveler, Benjamin Metudela, who crossed the Mediterranean Sea, arrived in Jerusalem in 1173. He reported how the crusaders had destroyed many tombstones and used the stones as cheap building material. This sad situation continues through the following generations. Zeev Vilnai<sup>3</sup> quotes the book “True Language” by Rabbi M. Haggis, who wrote in 1707 that the Jews of Jerusalem had to pay high sums to the Arabs in order to ensure that they would not desecrate and destroy the tombstones on the Mount of Olives.

Between the War of Independence and the Six Day War (1948-1967), the Mount of Olives was under Jordanian regime. During this period Jews were not allowed to visit their dead and worse more, thousands of tombstones were completely destroyed when

a hotel was built on the mountain top and an access road to Jericho was paved.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Asher Leib Brisk took upon himself a sacred task: to write all of the inscriptions on the tombstones on the Mount of Olives. According to the directors of two of Jerusalem's oldest *Hevra Kadisha*, Brisk started his loggings from the mountain top that, as mentioned, was destroyed during the Jordanian regime. But Brisk passed away before he finished the task. He none the less managed to publish five booklets each representing a few plots and in certain cases a copy of the *Hevra Kadisha* registry. In 1913 these booklets were conjoined into one book. The name of the book is the same as that of the booklets: *Helkat Hamehohkek* “Portion of a Ruler”. It is a term taken from the book of Deuteronomy (33:21) and means the burial place of the ruler, i.e., “the burial place of Moses”.

During the centuries, monuments and tombstones, if there ever were any, crumbled and sank. That way layers of tombstones were formed. This is the reason that the oldest tombstone Brisk has written about is from the year 1667. it should be mentioned that there are only 6 tombstones from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. From the total of 8,092, 205 belong to the 18<sup>th</sup> century while 165 of them are dated to the last two decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. About 67% of all tombstones are form the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore the period covered by most of the tombstones is 1740-1906. It should also be emphasized that a quarter of the tombstones do not carry a name or a date. They are usually tombstones of little children.

Out of the 8,092 tombstones of women, men and children, about 1,500 enscriptions relate to Sepharadim and 6,500 to Ashkenazim.

1. By Asher Leib Brisk. Jerusalem 1906-1911.
2. A descendant of a student of the Gaon of Vilna who came to Israel and settled in Safed in the 20's of the 19<sup>th</sup> century together with many other students.
3. Vilnai, Zeev. Jerusalem., capital of Israel. Jerusalem, Achiezer, 1960.

## The Database

In order to build a database<sup>4</sup> that includes all of the information from the tombstones logs, the team had to make a few decisions:

1. The database will be built as an Excel file and as customary when editing a database, each column will include the same type of information i.e., name, surname, etc.
2. The English version will be based on the translation and the transcription<sup>5</sup> of the names and words.
3. The names of birth places will be written in Hebrew as they are in the original and names in a foreign language will be the current names of these settlements. We added the Hebrew and English names of states in which these settlement are located today.

## Analyzing the Database

With the details of the book transformed into the database, it is possible to analyze the composition of the population at hand, identity of the deceased, and details of the death.

### 1. The Composition of Population at Hand

- 1.1. The ethnic division is as follows: Sephardim: 19%, Ashkenazim 81%.

The composition of the population is as follows:

Composition of the deceased population	
Women	2,437
Men	2,399
Children	3,143
Fetuses	113
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,092</b>

4. The database is bilingual Hebrew-English.
5. The transcription rules are those accepted in the Israeli science world e.g., we will write Mordekhai and not Mordechai or Rahel and not Rachel as many write since **KH** is the transcription of the letter *Kaf* (כ) and **Ha** is the transcription of the letter *Het* (ח).
6. In many cases the registration of a child's death included the name of the grandfather instead of the name of the father. It is assumed that this phenomenon is due to the superstition that "a father will not be noted to have bereaved his child". Usually the name of these children is not written.

These numbers indicate a high mortality rate among children, sometimes babies before circumcision.

- 1.2. The population of children is divided as shown by the following table:

	Total	With first name
Boys	1,161	183
Twin boys	26	5
Girls	800	110
Twin Girls	17	4
Children with no given gender	1,117	
Twins with no given gender	22	
	<b>3,143</b>	<b>302</b>

From this table we learn that the names of children were recorded in less than 10% of all cases, and that for 40% of the children their gender was not specified.

### 2. Identity of the Deceased

- 2.1. The details identifying the person are: surname, name, name of the father, name of the grandfather<sup>6</sup> and place of birth. Here is a table showing the data for the deceased Sepharadim and Ashkenazim.

Identification item	Sepharadim	Ashkenazim
Surname	90%	17%
First name	97%	55%
Father name	8.5%	9%
Grandfather name	0%	3.5%
Birth place	7%	57.5%

From the table above we learn that the identity of the Sepharadi was determined only by his surname and first name. On the other hand the identity of the Ashkenazi was mainly determined by his first name and birth place. Regarding the Ashkenazi it should be noted that the percentage pointing to first name and birth place are low, due to the large number of children in this group.

The information details that did not coincide with any other place, were put into the “remarks” column. This information is the profession of the person, or his father’s profession, cause of death like “giving birth”, accident etc.

## 2.2. Birth Place

Birth places were given for 50% of the deceased. This number is low since birth place “Jerusalem” was not given when it is assumed that many of the children deceased were born in Jerusalem. This fact distorts the general picture.

## 3. Details of the Death

### 3.1. Date of Death

The dates of death were written as they were in the original, i.e., according to the Hebrew calendar and also in Hebrew. We added them in the transcription to English as well as the corresponding date of the Gregorian calendar.

### 3.2. Place of Burial

The burial place is indicated with the aid of the number or name of the plot, the number of row in it, and the number of space in the row. When the author used the registry of the Hevra Kadisha only the plot number is written with the notation “Hevra Kadisha registry”. From time to time it is indicated that the deceased had acquired his burial place in advance. Sometimes it is written that an Ashkenazi person is buried in the Sepharadi section. There are more cases where two people are buried together like a mother and her fetus, a father and his child and who died within the course of hours from an epidemic etc.

### 3.3. Cause of Death

For several deceased a cause of death is written, the breakdown given in the table below.

Cause of death	#
Died of old age	150
Died suddenly	14
Dies of the smallpox epidemic	60
Dies before circumcision	65
Died in birth	46
Killed in an accident (fire, drowning)	11
Babies smothered by their mothers	13

The last cause of death “smothered by his mother” is terrible and surprising as well. In order to investigate this phenomenon, we asked a professor of pediatrics. He related that the phenomenon is known in the professional literature from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A baby that was born with a severe birth defect, was killed in this method. The physician’s explanation concurs with the fact that this information was written very openly.

### The difficulties in editing the database

1. The vast use of unaccepted abbreviation that was probably invented by the author. The deciphering required the use of many books and sometimes also... imagination.
2. The deciphering of birth places that were written in Yiddish script. Here were aided by two information sources:
  - 2.1. Amdur Sack, Sallyann and Gary Mokotoff. *Where Once We Walked*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Avotaynu, 2002.
  - 2.2. The database for Jewish communities found in the Jewishgen website in: <http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~shtetlmaster2>
  - 2.3. Technically it was difficult to work on a file that spread over 33 columns and over 8,000 lines.

**In conclusion**, the transformation of the information in the book “The Portion of a Ruler” to an online database with a search engine was a complicated but a worthy undertaking due to the many fields of information. It is found in the Israel Genealogical Society website:  
<http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4977.asp>

This article constitutes another effort of the Israeli Genealogy Society to present information sources regarding Israel to the public researching its familial roots both from the country and abroad.

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## Second Stage of the Memorials for Vanished Communities (MVC) Project

*Ellen Stepak*

Six years ago, volunteers from the Israel Genealogical Society began documenting the memorials in Israel to communities destroyed in the Shoah. The project came to be known as Memorials for Vanished Communities (MVC). This project was completed in preparation for the 2004 IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) Conference in Jerusalem, and was included in the CD distributed to participants. The information compiled in every case includes at the very least a photo of the monument and a description of the town's location. Among the towns and villages in the project, only a relative few were not located.

Among the memorials documented in the first stage were mainly memorials located in cemeteries around Israel. Beit Vohlyn in Givatayim was also included. In addition, members of the Israel Genealogical Society submitted photos and data from memorials in their home towns. Also included in the MVC are memorials to pogroms committed against Jewish communities anywhere in the world. This came about when the team found the memorial to pogroms in Aden in the cemetery in Holon. The organizers of the MVC project concluded that there is moral imperative to include monuments for other

pogroms in which Jewish people were murdered because of their religion.

Recently the leadership of the Israel Genealogical Society decided to add the MVC data to the Eretz Israel Records Indexing (EIRI) records at the Society's website at [www.isragen.org.il](http://www.isragen.org.il). The direct link may be found at [www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/473/5806.asp](http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/473/5806.asp). In preparation for this second stage of the MVC, I reviewed the entire project, checking all of the data, in the interest of making the information provided as accurate and complete as possible. Among the items corrected was my tendency to employ a Russian instead of a Ukrainian spelling as the current Latin-alphabet spelling of the Ukrainian town names, so there have been changes since publication of the CD. In the recent additions, longitude and latitude have been included in the entry for location of the community, adding a new level of precision to the data.

The advantage of having the project online, of course, is that we now have the ability to: make corrections when necessary; and add new memorials as they are brought to our attention.

Among the information we have added while preparing the data for the website is the list

of towns from Beit Marmaros in Tel Aviv. Close to 160 towns are involved. Although this documentation was carried out in 2004, it was not ready in time for the Conference CD. We have plans to add memorials in the Martyrs' Forests of *Keren Kayemet*, and from any other location in the country. At the moment, we have a total of 1600 communities documented from memorials, although this number includes many communities which are recorded at more than one venue.

As part of the second stage of the MVC project, the database will be expanded to include synagogues which memorialize a community, plaques on synagogue walls and other buildings, and any memorial in Israel to a vanished Jewish community throughout the world. The latest addition to the MVC will be street and square names in Israel, commemorating towns and regions.

Israel Genealogical Society is cooperating with Yad Vashem and sharing information. Israel Genealogical Society has sent Yad Vashem a list of memorials it has found with personal names inscribed on them, and in return Yad Vashem will send Israel Genealogical Society photos of memorials mentioning communities that its team finds as it scours the synagogues and public buildings throughout Israel.

If you think you may have found an error in the identification of a town, or are able to give us precise location data for one of those not located, please let us know, so that we may make corrections. If you are aware of a memorial not already in our project, you are invited to send us photos, including a full description of the data inscribed on the memorial to: [webmaster@isragen.org.il](mailto:webmaster@isragen.org.il). This second stage has been possible only through the volunteer efforts of Israel Genealogical Society members around the country.

*Ellen Stepak nee Goldenberg grew up in Huntington, Indiana, USA. After graduating from the U of Wisconsin/Madison, she made aliyah in September 1969. Ellen has been engaged in research of her ancestors from (Pinsk) Belarus, (Rotenburg an der Fulda) Germany (and in the US from 1854), Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland, since 1995. Among her family surnames are Brenn, Posenitzky, Werthan, Gotthelf, Krukstein, Klots and Kling. She has translated material for the Internet, is writing family books, and has written articles on genealogical topics. She is the wife of Zvi, mother of three and grandmother of two.*

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## New on the Israel Genealogical Society Website

- New – 1915 Tel-Aviv census in the *Members' Corner*  
<http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/73/5949.asp>
- New – 1922/3 combined Tel-Aviv & Petah Tikva census in the *Members' Corner*  
<http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/73/5949.asp>
- New additions to the *Memorials for Vanished Communities Database*  
<http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/232/6164.asp>
- New – search engine for the 1937 Rehavia address book
- New – Medical Practitioners Database from the Mandate period in the *Members' Corner*  
<http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/73/5949.asp>
- Volunteers please contact [webmaster@isragen.org.il](mailto:webmaster@isragen.org.il)

## Professor Gerald Lee Esterson ז"ל (1927-2009)

Gerald "Jerry" Esterson, the creator of the Jewish Names Database on JewishGen.org, died in Israel on May 22, 2009, and was buried in Ra'anana. Jerry was born in Baltimore, MD to Anna Marcus from Baisagola, Lithuania and Jacob Esterson of Berdichev, Ukraine. Jerry was married to Leah Hill, also a native of Baltimore. Jerry received a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering, and a Doctorate in Electrical Engineering from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. For a number of years he taught as Professor of Chemical Engineering at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

In 1975, Jerry and Leah came on Sabbatical to Hebrew University as a Visiting Professor of Applied Chemistry. They had been preceded to Israel by their son and daughter, who were then in their late teens. After a year Jerry was invited to join the faculty which is when their *aliyah* took place. He continued his academic career as a Professor of Applied Chemistry and Director of the Pilot Plant of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Upon retirement,

Leah and he moved to Ra'anana, which is when he began his full time dedication to his work in genealogy. He was a warm and gentle person, loved by all: his family, his students, his friends, and genealogists world wide. He was kind and helpful to anyone who approached him for his advice. Although Jerry was an avid researcher of his family roots, his greatest contribution was to international Jewish genealogy with his Given Names Database which is linked to jewishgen.org. There is hardly a researcher who has not consulted this database many times. In addition to giving Jewish documental background on the use of Jewish given names, it allows genealogists to discover all of the alternative Jewish and vernacular names which an ancestor may have used in Europe and in his new country of immigration.

Although Jerry is no longer with us, his tremendous contribution to Jewish genealogical research will remain with us forever.

He is survived by his wife, Leah, his son, Avraham, his daughter R'nana, five grandchildren and three great-grandsons.

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### Announcement

Online Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialism at the University of Vienna 1938

<http://gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at/index.php?&L=2>.

The online data base 'Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialism at the University of Vienna 1938' – published in 2009 – includes roughly 2,200 names and short biographies of affiliates of the University who were dismissed and subsequently driven away and/or murdered for 'racial' and/or 'political' reasons – dismissed professors and lecturers, expelled students and graduates, whose academic credentials were rendered invalid (from all countries of the former Habsburg-monarchy, besides Austria from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary...).

The research process is ongoing and those involved hope to discover more names of forgotten victims of national-socialism, who will consequently take their place amid their peers in the online data base. The project team would be extremely grateful for any relevant information or reference ([gedenkbuch@univie.ac.at](mailto:gedenkbuch@univie.ac.at)).



## MISSING PERSONS BUREAU

### Searching for Relatives in Israel

*Sharsheret Hadorot* has embarked on a new project, the *Sharsheret Hadorot* Missing Persons Bureau.

If you have family members you are seeking, please send their names and information to us and we will publish your search request. The aim of this project is to provide researchers with an additional avenue to search for their relatives in Israel. Please send your requests to [rose.sharsheret@gmail.com](mailto:rose.sharsheret@gmail.com)

The following individuals are searching for their relatives in Israel:

1. Nancy Diamond [[nkdiamond@yahoo.com](mailto:nkdiamond@yahoo.com)] searching for **Dashut, Krupik, Bassof/Basof**
2. Ruth Kurschner [[ruthkur@verizon.net](mailto:ruthkur@verizon.net)] searching for **Kurschner** from Vienna
3. Doris Nabel [[madame@comcast.net](mailto:madame@comcast.net)] searching for **Shlomo Katz**, Haifa
4. Anne Heltzner [[hjhelzner@hotmail.com](mailto:hjhelzner@hotmail.com)] researching **Brandstaetter Brandstatter Brandstadter**  
My grandmother, Anna, was a Brandstaetter. She was born in Jaslo, Galicia with family also in Krakow & Warsaw. Her father's name was Wolf & her mother's name was Jente.  
Her sister, Lifcia Brandstaetter Fischer,

lived in Vienna, and died in the Shoah. One cousin supposedly escaped to the Isle of Mann. It would be wonderful to find a survivor.

The data that you have is correct and you can share my e-mail address.  
Thanks again. With my best wishes

5. Barbara Algaze from Los Angeles, California [[Algaze@ca.rr.com](mailto:Algaze@ca.rr.com)] searching for the **Algaze** family in Israel. Our **Algaze** family originated in Istanbul, Turkey.

It consisted of three brothers who emigrated to the US. They were: Vitalli **Algaze**, born about 1884 in Constantinople, Turkey. Emigrated to the US in August of 1909; Isak Algaze born about 1887 in Constantinople; emigrated to the US in May of 1910; Moishe "Muishe" **Algaze**, born about 1895 in Constantinople; emigrated to the US in February of 1911.

We were told that there were a few more brothers, but not much is known about them. One tradition has it that one of the brothers was named David (or Nissim) and emigrated to Israel because he would not have been admitted into the US. Apparently he had a bad leg (or foot?) which would have made him not acceptable for US immigration

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## NEWS FROM ISRAELI ARCHIVES

### City of Jerusalem Archive

#### *Flora Avital and Efraim Levi*

#### General

The historic archive of the Municipality of Jerusalem specializes in gathering information relating to the city, its sites, treasures and its governing institutions, starting from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The archive also sorts and preserves material for public viewing and use.

The archive serves researchers and academics from Israel and abroad, as well as the citizens of the capital who from time to time need documents which are kept only within its walls.

#### What is in the archive?

City registers; private archives; photographs (for now only for internal use); audio-visual

material; building files; municipality publications; registers of closed schools; books; periodicals; objects – medals; changing presentations.

There are over 12,000 registered containers in the archive. If we add to these the unregistered containers and other scattered uncatalogued material, we will reach about 20,000 containers (about 6,666 meters of shelves).

Types of materials found in the archives: files, photographs, books, maps and plans, notices, placards and announcements, objects.

Below is the division of the archival material according to the categorization groups:

**Group A – divisions:**

(Includes the municipality and institutional archives, schools, neighborhoods, private archives, single certificates, municipality publications): Total of 5,000 meters.

**Group B – collections:**

Estimated quantity in units of collections (partly by calculations from 1998):

Publications, printed matter and press	2,200
Notices and placards	55,000
Objects and gifts	5,000
Maps	5,000
Library	6,000
Photographs	55,000
Negatives	600,000

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**Total** **728,000**

In the archive there is extensive documentation collected from schools in Jerusalem that have been closed. These contain lists of pupils and certificates they received. This allows the archive to give diploma authorizations to the residents of Jerusalem who have lost the elementary or high school graduation certificates.

The archive holds important collections from different institutes and organizations, one of the most prominent being the historical

archive of the Jerusalem Sepharadim Ethnic Committee.

This archive is a remnant of a large archive that included a period of hundreds of years since the beginning of the Jerusalem Sephardic Council. This archive includes among others, material of historic genealogical value.

The archive collections are open to the public for viewing only in the designated area.

The material originating from the municipality designated for permanent custody is open to public view only twenty years after its creation. Protocols of the city counsel and its committees are open to the public and so are publications on behalf of the municipality – open for viewing.

There are private collections that are closed for viewing for varying periods depending on agreements relating to this material.

It is possible photocopy historic documents with the copying machines located in the viewing room or alternatively to independently scan or take picture with a private digital camera.

The city of Jerusalem archive was established in 1963 and relocated to various places in the city until it settle in its permanent residence today at the address:

1 Safra Square (main building floor 0)  
POBox 775, Jerusalem 91007  
Tel: 02-6297899, Fax: 02-6296687

The archive is open to the public on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays between 10:00-13:00.

Additional details like the lists of divisions and collections can be seen in the search of the municipality of Jerusalem website <http://www.jerusalem.muni.il>

**Articles about the city archive:**

1. City Archive – Municipality of Jerusalem, an article by Yohanan Cohen-Yashar published in “Ariel”, 1994 (a copy of the article can be found in the city archive).
2. City of Jerusalem Archive, an article by Menachem Levin “Cathedra” for the history of Israel and its inhabitation, Tishrei, Tashna”g, September 1992.

Bellow is a partial list of **genealogical resources** that are in the archive, compiled with the assistance of Mr. Ephraim Levi:

<b>Subject/Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Addresses notebook of the Jerusalem Sepharadim Ethnicity between the years 1893-1951	Container 6277 and follow-up notebooks – container 6279, temporary no. 1000	Within it are detailed the names of grooms and brides, their parents, the sum of the <i>Ketubah</i> and the date of marriage
The notebook of deceased of the Sepharadim ethnicity buried in the mount of olives and the “Sambusky” cemetery from the years 1909-1948	In part edited and bound Work in progress Not yet open to the public	Within are details the name of the deceased and the date of his passing (sometimes the age and name of father are indicated). The notebooks are handwritten (“half quill”) and a part of them were deciphered along the years to regular handwriting by Mr. Ephraim Levi.
Files of personalities, rabbinical messengers, final committee	Container 6282	Within are concentrated extensive correspondences with the committee institutes
Elections notebook, voters lists, community committee	4605-9	
Marriage registration notebook 1918-1928, city committee	cell 4657	
<i>Aliyah</i> registration – certificates, city committee	Containers 4555, 4549, 4550 and more	
United Elder Parliament 1909 and on	Deceased notebook of – cell 8183	
United Elder Parliament 1896-1911	Dependants notebook – cell 8182, cell 8184	
Deceased notebook of donors – the general house of elderly (Sepharadic)	Container 2749	
Book of the dead – 1880-?		A magnificent handwritten notebook
Census of the Jews of Israel Montefiore 1839	Book – 312(9)	
Montefiore censuses 1854-1875	Container 507	
Montefiore censuses 1866	Cell 8006	
Lists of Hevron refugees 1925	Container 326-1	From the estate of David Avisar
Lists of Hevron refugees	Container 1885	From the collection of Tzvia Semonov

<b>Subject/Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
A general list of the adult Jews of Jerusalem 1928	Original – container 4610, bounded in a book (two volumes) J312	From the ages of 18, alphabetically on behalf of the city committee for the Jews of Jerusalem
The notebook of adults of the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem (second notebook 1942)	115.312 (9) – bound in a book	Edited based on the census of the Hebrew population August-September 1939
Annual reports 1897-1913 Misgav Ladach – maternity hospital	Container 284	From the collection of Yehudit Meyuhav Levi
Maternity Registry notebook, Misgav Ladach – maternity hospital	Container 60-140	
Arithmetic of the fundraising, education house for the blind	Container 422	
Report of orphanage education house	Container 403	
List of the Sepharadim for election 1926		
Nefussim registration notebook –Final committee – old city	Container 6281	Temporary number 1044 – registration notebooks of the members of the Sephardim communities in Jerusalem. In these lists include the names of the family fathers and their children, including birth dates classifies according to neighborhoods
Nefussim registration notebook – Final committee – <i>Mazkeret</i>	Container 6281	Temporary number 1043 – same as the above
Committee members notebook	Container 6281	Temporary number 1045
Tahkemoni School alumni book 1942		
List of new pupils, Tahkemony school	Cell 8199	1927-1961
Guests notebook of the Beit Kerem committee, with signatures of known people	Cell 8202 A	
Pupils registries notebook, Lemel school	Cell 8200	1934-1940
Residents registries, old settlement collection 1902-...	Containers: 272-275	Different lists like: payers of army tax; lists of the Ashkenazi sages; list of resident men; including Ungrarin: “acquisitions book ”of the Nahalat Tzvi” houses, list of the Kolel house buyers 1904 and more

*Flora Avital is the Deputy Director of the city archive. Prior to this appointment, she was director of the archive for three years, following the retirement of Mr. Menachem Levin, the previous Director. She deals all of the professional issues relating to the archive and is very involved in working towards turning it into a computerized archive.*

*Ephraim Levi is a biblical scholar with*

*extensive knowledge of the history of Israel and Jewish communities in exile. He has acquired great experience in Jewish genealogy. Ephraim is known as an expert in deciphering ancient manuscripts and also deals with cataloguing the historic archive of the Sephardim Council of Jerusalem, deposited in the city of Jerusalem archive. In this framework Ephraim assists and advises researchers and all interested in these subjects.*



## ASK THE EXPERTS

### *Jordan Auslander:*

#### **Former Hungary which Includes Present-Day Slovakia, Parts of Austria, Transylvania Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Transcarpathia in Western Ukraine**

**Question:** I am just embarking on my family research and was told that my family hails from Carpathian Mountains. Where are these mountains? Can you tell me about the history of the area, changing borders and place names? As a beginner in this area, how should I embark on my research?

**Answer:** Outside of the major cities, the largest concentration of Jews in the Kingdom of Hungary was in its northeast Transcarpathian region, also known as the Felvidék, upper Hungary, which now straddles the eastern Slovak Republic, western Ukraine and northern Transylvania.

Most localities within this region were known by multiple names their official Hungarian as well as a German, Romanian, Slovak, even Polish and Yiddish names, Official names changed with the succession of rule Austro-Hungarian to Czechoslovak and Romanian in 1918 to Russian in 1945 and post-Communist Ukraine.

As with the Hungarian Empire, Jewish records were kept separately prior to

universal civil registration in 1895. Some 200 Jewish “metrical” books hold the vital records for the region, these were recorded not by individual localities, but in centralized “depot district” towns. The successor regional Slovak archives in Presov, Kosice as well as the Ukrainian archives in Uzhorod inherited the old Hungarian system. As a result, some Slovak records are still in Ukraine and vice verse.

While the *Slovak archives* are user friendly with research requests, the Ukrainians are not as forthcoming. However The Mormon Family History Library has been making some headway in the region. The most accessible resources for Transcarpathia are in the All Hungary Database at Jewish-Gen.org. Knowing the current and former name of your ancestral town is critical, there are several resources for this. To solve the problem of obtaining multiple current and contemporary gazetteers, I compiled the data in a single volume, *Genealogical Gazetteer for the Kingdom of Hungary, available at*

most genealogical libraries, or for purchase at Amazon.com.

**Useful Addresses:**

**SLOVAK NATIONAL ARCHIVES**  
Slovensky narodny archiv  
Drotarska cesta 42  
817 01 Bratislava, SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
( + 421 2 672 981 11; 628 011 78, -81, -83, -85  
fax: + 421 2 628 012 47  
e-mail: archiv@sna.vs.sk  
internet: www.civil.gov.sk/snarchiv/

**SLOVAK STATE REGIONAL ARCHIVES**

Státny oblastny archiv v Bratislava Krizkova  
ul c. 7  
811 04 Bratislava, SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
(If region is not known, use this address).

**KOSICE**  
Státny oblastny archiv v Kosiciach ul. J. Bacíka  
c. 1.  
014 56 Kosice, SLOVAK REPUBLIC

**PRESOV**

Státny oblastny archiv v Presove Hlvaná ul.  
c. 137.  
080 01 Presov, SLOVAK REPUBLIC

*Jordan Auslander – a New York based professional genealogist, lecturer and expert witness. Since 1982 pursued real estate histories, title search in addition to genealogy, across the United States, Europe and Israel. Jordan translated, created and published an index to vital records in the Slovak State Archive system, and completed an alphabetized translation of “Magyarország Helsegneutara”, a gazetteer of 1877 Hungary.*

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***Beryl Baleson:***

**The Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG)**

The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) for family history and genealogy relating to the communities of South Africa, Lesotho (Basutoland), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Swaziland, Mozambique and the former Belgian Congo is to be found at the following website: <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

Subscriptions for the SA-SIG (free) daily discussion group are found at <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/subprimer.htm>

A quarterly newsletter and information is published as a paper edition and also available at the following site: <http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/newsletter/index.htm>

The Southern African Center for Jewish Migration and Genealogy Studies:

This Centre is under the umbrella of the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town. It was the first academic centre world wide to

study Jewish Migration and Genealogy. The project is integrated in a multi-disciplinary manner at the University of Cape Town and has close collaboration with the Centre for Social Research at the University of Cape Town.

Students and Researchers are employed for data entry and research, and liaise with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archives; South African Country Communities Project, Chevra Kadisha for burial data, Beth Din, Chief Rabbi's Office for marriage and other data.

The research focuses on the locations where the families originated (mainly Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus), patterns of migration to South Africa, where families first settled, the connections to the broader non-Jewish communities, subsequent movements, inter-relationships of families and places they have emigrated to.

The thinking behind the inception of Jewish Migration and Genealogy project is twofold:

To map the entire history of Jewish migration to South Africa with the aim of providing authoritative and definitive data.

The website is to be found at

[http://chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/CGI/cgi\\_Rootweb.exe](http://chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/CGI/cgi_Rootweb.exe)

Once you open up that site and if the information has already been researched, it will be found by using the searchable database.

A very helpful site in searching for family is the South African Archives at

<http://www.national.archives.gov.za/>

After opening up the site, click on National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System and fill in their Search Engine at All Archive Repositories.

*Beryl Baleson was born to parents of Lithuanian and English origin. She was educated in South Africa; was active in the Habonim Youth Movement and came to settle in Israel with her husband and children in 1977. Beryl has been very actively involved in the South African Special Interest Group in Israel since 1999, first as the Editor of its quarterly Newsletter and now as the S.A. SIG Co-ordinator in Israel.*

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **Rosemary Wenzerul, Tracing Your Jewish Ancestors A Guide for Family Historians**

**Published by Pen and Sword Books Ltd. – [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)**

**ISBN 9781844157884, Price: £12.99**

*Saul Issroff*

This is an excellent book suitable both for beginners and the more advanced researcher in the rapidly growing field of Jewish genealogy and Family History. Rosemary Wenzerul has improved and added to her previous publications, which included *A Beginners Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Great Britain*, *Genealogical Resources in the Jewish Home*, *Jewish Ancestors: A Guide to Organising Your family History Records*, *A Guide to Reading Hebrew Inscriptions and Documents* and other works. She starts with a brief Social History of the Jews in England, and deals with London, the east end and the Provinces. This type of summary is difficult to encompass yet Rosemary has managed to make the subject lively and very relevant to the sections that follow. The next chapters deal with practicalities; how to begin, how to draw family trees and to use genealogy programmes to do this, a variety of internet

links and then goes on to detail specific archives, public record offices, libraries and museums that have both general records and more specifically, Jewish records. The subsequent chapters are on the minutiae and specifics of marriage and divorce records, death and burial records, and the deciphering of tombstones (the Hebrew text with transliterations is very useful). Additional sections are on extending the family history, Jews in the Armed forces and how to obtain these records, and Jewish names and naming patterns. Out of the ordinary areas of research, and of use to non-Jewish researchers, are the chapters on medical profession and Heraldry. Very useful areas are the UK connections and Overseas connections. Unfortunately the latter omits the Caribbean and Latin America, but this does not detract from its usefulness. The book ends with useful illustrative case studies based around her own ancestors. All in all

this attractive and compact publication is very well laid out and illustrated. It is properly referenced and the bibliography, although succinct, is most useful. There is certainly no equivalent publication to date in the U.K. I have no hesitation in recommending it to all who have even the remotest interest in the topic.

*Saul Issaroff is one of the founders and an Hon. vice president of the Jewish Genealogy Society Great Britain. He is a member of the Board of Governors, Jewishgen Inc.. A founder and president of South Africa SIG. Project director, Centre for Migration and Jewish Genealogy Studies, Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre of Jewish Studies, University of Cape Town.*

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## Abstracts of Articles from Foreign Journals

### *Summary: Mathilde Tagger*

#### **ETSI, Vol. 11, No. 43, December 2008**

The journal opens with a long and detailed article by Sonja Vansteenkiste-Bilé about finding her familial roots in Izmir, Turkey, with a story of a woman living in a small town in Belgium holding a photograph of the her grandfather she has never knew. The only thing told is that he was born in Turkey and was Jewish. He died suddenly at the age of forty-four and was survived by a non-Jewish Belgian wife and three children. Sonja's father was six years old then.

Discovering a certificate among the paperwork left by her father turned into a snowball. The certificate was a declaration on behalf of the diplomatic representative of the King of Spain in Belgium, in which it is confirmed that Leon Bilé (the grandfather), a Jew born in Izmir in 1882 and being in a Spanish exile, is under the Spanish refuge.

From there began a crazy search expedition that included sites for Spanish genealogy, the Jewishgen, the Royal Archive of Belgium, help from Laurence Abensur-Hazan the editor of Etzi and from Rabbi Dov Cohen of the Ben Tzvi Institute and more. Thanks to all these and after an intensive research of eight months only, Sonja managed to track four sisters and a brother of grandfather Leon and also 4 generations backwards up to 1750.

Editor Laurence Abensur-Hazan wrote about the situation of the Jews of Aydin, Turkey, after the earthquake of 1899. The city was severely damaged and then the

management of "All of Israel are Friends" (AIF, Kol Israel Chaverim), asked of Mr. Gabaeel Ariye, then the manager of AIF school in Izmir, to travel to the place of the earthquake in order to assess the state of the Jewish community and its needs. A certificate was found in the archives of AIF wherein was a list of 192 heads of families and details of their houses: whether completely destroyed or damaged, number of persons in the family and their economic situation. This list can serve as a kind of census of heads of the Jewish families that lived in Aydin then.

#### **GenAmi, No. 46 – December 2008**

This journal opens with a comprehensive article about the history of the Jews of Argentina by Paul Armony, who was the founder and the spirit of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Argentina. He also built many databases and was the editor of the quarterly "Toldot". In the past, several articles of it were translated to Hebrew and English for *Sharsheret Hadorot*.

The review opens with a paragraph telling of the Jewish presence in the state prior to 1860, those were mostly the descendants of the Marranos. Only after the Inquisition rules were canceled in 1816, a small portion of them dared to openly return to Judaism. In 1855 only 5-6 Jews lived all over the territory of Argentina.

The Jewish Community of the Republic of Argentina (CIRA) was officially established



in 1862 by a few tens of Ashkenazi Jews. Following the request of the government to the chief rabbi of France, a rabbi was sent to head the community.

Starting in 1854 the different Argentinian governments decided on giving benefits to the Jewish immigrants. This is the reason that between 1857 and 1920 about five and a half million Jews arrived in Argentina but only 3 million settled permanently in the state. 6,082 Jews lived in the capital Buenos Ayres in 1895 when 62% of them were Ashkenazim. The first synagogue was built in the capital in 1897. It is interesting to note that the name of the house of worship was given after the boulevard it is on, similar to the synagogues of France. It should be said by the way that a Jewish museum was built in the adjunct buildings to the synagogue in 1967.

The Jews from the Diaspora of Spain and mainly from Morocco, Syria and Turkey started settling in Argentina in the '80 of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1889 they asked to build a Sephardic synagogue and it was indeed inaugurated in 1891.

A massive immigration of Russian Jews started in 1881. While drastic medical inspections were required of Jews who wanted to settle in the USA, many preferred South America. This is how the first Jewish city named Moisesville was established. With the mediation of AIF in Paris, Baron Hirsch has acquired lands on which the Jewish immigrants from Russia settled and became farmers. Between 1892 and 1937 the Russian Jews in these settlements have recreated the lives they had in Europe, building synagogues, libraries, literary classes, theater etc.

Saving Jews from the Nazis has been restricted due to the anti-Jewish immigration policy of President Peron. About 22,500 will nonetheless succeeded in escaping and arrived in Argentina. Starting in 1945, the Holocaust survivors were not allowed to enter Argentina and many settled in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile.

The immigration to Israel started with the dwindling of the Jewish population.

Additionally, in this journal the biography of the comedian Rene Goscinny appears followed by his family tree and a comprehensive article about the Jews who lived in the town of Gray in the north east of France. At the end there are the regular sections of the genealogical press review, Questions & Answers etc.

#### **GenAmi No. 47 – March 2009**

The Jewish cemetery in Tunis is named after Borgel and was opened in 1894.

It contains over 30,000 tombstones in addition to those from the old cemetery that were transferred to here in 1958.

The International Association of the Jewish Cemeteries in Tunis was established in 2007, its main task is to build a detailed database that will serve the researchers, based on the tombstones inscriptions. The photographs of the tombstones can be used for the research of the special art that is displayed on these tombstones. During the writing of the article the data of 12,000 tombstones was already photographed and processed.

The association works in cooperation with the Jewish-French Genealogy Society Gen Ami.

In this journal there is another description of the synagogue in El Ghriba on the island Djerba, an Island belonging to Tunisia. This is the most ancient synagogue in the world. According to tradition it exists since the destruction of the First Temple, i.e., over 2,600 years. The meaning of its name is "The Foreigner" or "The Wondrous". The current structure was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the same location. It is recommended to visit one of the websites describing it.

In this journal there is another review of the Calmer family covering firstly the first years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in The Hague (Netherlands) and Vienna, and continuing to France. Following that is an article about the artist Jules Adler who lived in France between 1856 and 1852 and whose genealogy goes back to 1480.

There is another article about a small community that existed in the Normandie region in north west France in the middle ages.

**Review of the Jewish Genealogy Circle No. 98**

**April – June 2008**

“The placement of first names in the North African Jewish surnames pool” is the name of an article by the anthropologist Jacques Taieb. The author found 234 out of 1306 surnames that are somehow connected to first names from which the corpus of names of this region was developed. The author divides the first names according to their language and also according to their character: belonging to the bible and other Jewish sources and to the religion. They describe a characteristic or refer to plants and animals or to abstract terms. The author

concluded with a chapter about the important part of names in society.

For those among the readers of *Sharsheret Hadorot* investigating the name Veil, this journal includes a very interesting article whose title can be translated to “there are people named Veil and there are others named Veil”.

An article about the Bollwiller community in the region of Elsas and which is the origin of the Grumbach family.

In conclusion the manager of the French Genealogy Society explains how the different search engines on the company’s website <http://www.genealoj.org> work.

