

SHEALTIEL GAZETTE

The international journal of the family network



Baron von Saltiel, the father of the founder of the Brazilian colony of Saltiels

The Discovery of the Brazilians
Moshe Shaltiel & others

The “Grand Narrative” of the
Shealtiel Family—*Miles Saltiel*

The Making of the
Shealtiel Film—*Ilan Ziv*

An Internet Colloquy on
Sephardic Surnames, Part II
Vibeke Sealtiël Olsen & others

¡BARCELONA 2000!

*Programme and
contact details*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*From Ed Motola
& others*




Words from the Dutch
Vibeke Sealtiël Olsen

Just call me “Gram”
Steve & Robert Saltiel

A Time of Passover, Part II
Della Saltiel



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Next issue—Winter 1999

The next issue—which will be the final one to be treated as part of the current subscription to make up a set of three for the two years 1998-9—is planned for the end of the year. It have more on the Barcelona reunion; we are also planning a collection of material on the German family.



Articles on the lighter side of family life, including Ladino proverbs and love songs, as well as more on hobbies, recipes, travel and social life as well as works of fiction, humour and poetry.

ORGANISATION



the family

The current family has three known lines: from the North Sea ports, the Levant, and the Danube valley, with links between them certain but as yet undocumented. All are the descendants of a Sephardic—that is Spanish-Jewish—family from Barcelona and *environs* which left before the expulsions of 1492-7. We are variously known as Chaltiel, Chartiel, Saltiel, Sealtiel, Sealtiel, Shaltiel and Shealtiel, all derived from the Biblical *לִאֲשׁוּלָאָב*, generally translated as “asked of God”.

shealtiel website

The website has been designed by Steve Saltiel of Chicago and is funded by anonymous family donors. It offers an introduction to the family and its activities. It is possible to use the website to participate in such family activities the *Open Door* programme of hospitality exchanges, or subscribe to the *Gazette*. The website address is www.shealtiel.org

shealtiel gazette

The *Gazette* is an outgrowth of the *Magazine* published by Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen at the reunion in Amsterdam which first brought us together in August 1994. It is intended to be published and printed on an occasional basis—that is two or three times per year—in London, England. It is distributed to subscribing members of the family and *gratis* to libraries and scholars, as well as to others with a professional interest in our subject matter.

editorial policy

The *Gazette* is to act as an international medium of communication between members of the family; and to support the re-establishment of ties between us.

For the time being, the *Gazette* is being edited by Miles Saltiel, who welcomes contributions of all kinds, including material enabling us better to understand our own history, that is personal reminiscences, as well as genealogical or historical material.

We are not, however, to be only backward looking. The *Gazette* is intended also to be the forum for the exchange of family news, advice of forthcoming events of interest to members of the family, and reports of newly discovered members or branches of the family; as well as for the organisation of co-operative endeavours.

material for publication

As the *Gazette* very much relies on contributions from members of the family, we look forward to continuing to hear from you. The *Gazette* welcomes text and illustrations that relate to any aspect of the family, its history or its members; as well as opinionated articles and personal reminiscences of any kind. The Editor will acknowledge—but does not undertake to return—material. It is particularly convenient to receive files by e-mail. Contact details are set out on the right.

For those unconnected to the Internet, please help by sending material intended for publication on a 3.5 inch disc, either in *ascii* text, or formatted for Word for Windows 2.0 or above. to the address below.

subscriptions

The annual fee is £30. Please remit in UK funds to the address below. Payment can be made by phone or fax (*but for security reasons by not e-mail*) by advising number and expiry date of credit card.

correspondence

The Editor welcomes letters from readers, whether or not members of the family. Please write to the address below. If intended for publication, please mark accordingly.

our cover

Our cover shows a portrait, dated to the 1830s or 1840s, of the father of the founder of the Brazilian colony of Saltiels. The tradition of his descendants is that he was a baron of Huguenot origins. His son, Karl Clemens Georg, traced his origins to Strassbourg and arrived in Brazil in 1871.

PUBLICATION

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If you had asked me if the family could keep up the momentum of events some seven years after we launched upon our voyage of self discovery, I would have said it was impossible. Enthusiasm would wane, new discoveries would taper off, we would run out of things to do.

Wrong, wrong, wrong! The current *Gazette* may have been a long time coming but in showing just how mistaken such as point of view would be, it is destined to be a vintage edition. We have great matters to report.

V

First and most spectacular, the discovery we report on page five of two hundred formerly unknown Saltiels in the Southern Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul. Originating from the early 1870s, the Brazilians pose several intriguing challenges to us. The founder of the line identified himself as Baron von Saltiel from Strassbourg. His father was sufficiently prosperous to have his portrait painted showing monogrammed coat buttons, but at first the family in Brazil lived modestly as farmers. We have not yet been able to trace the links between the two families—a Strassbourg connection is altogether new to us. It is also possible that we have all been misled by one or another aspect of the turbulence of immigration during the last century: an elopement, an assumed name; a new identity. But we are delighted to welcome our two hundred new namesakes and to report the fruit of a collaboration between Herman Bredl, Helga Heilbut, Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen, Moshe Shaltiel and the editor.

V

Second, we are turning to the family's next great project, our Third International Reunion, Barcelona 2000, organised by the French-based *Association des Familles Saltiels*. An outline of the programme is set out on page thirty-one, together with arrangements for joining in. The advent of the next reunion has prompted your editor

to revisit the history of the family and to update his drafts of the family's *Summary History*. After circulating this to interested members of the family for comment, it came to me to boil down the most pertinent strands of our history, in particular those which give rise to controversy, and to set out the pros and cons of the arguments which arise. This led to the thirty-nine theses of the *Grand Narrative* set out following page five, and on which Ed Motola makes some wise comments on page twenty-seven. The *Grand Narrative* builds on the findings of last year's Internet colloquy on Sephardic surnames, the second part of which we publish after page fourteen.

Third we have the reverberations from the *Shealtiel Film*. This has now been broadcast in much of the world, giving rise to new information about the family as viewers have got in touch with us. After page twenty-two, the film-maker, Ilan Ziv, sets out his experience of getting the film together, often by the skin of his teeth, over the couple of years he devoted to it. But we harbour many unanswered questions, as attested by the appeal for information by Helena Saltiel on page twenty-seven.

V

On a more intimate note, we have more family announcements than ever before in the *Gazette*, though the lateness of some of them calls for an apology on my part. We include a collaboration between Betty Saltiel and Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen on Dutch phrases surviving among the Saltiels of London. We are also glad to include the concluding part of Della Saltiel's coming-of-age short story, *A Time of Passover*; and the moving tribute to their grandmother of Rob and Steve Saltiel.

And finally, in the *View from Gloucester Square*, I try to put a human face on two of the dramatic developments of the recent past, with a personal perspective on the showing of the *Shealtiel Film* to the Brits and on the discovery of the Brazilian colony.

OUTREACH



The von Saltiels of Brazil

The most thrilling result of our outreach programme so far has been this discovery: a colony of two hundred namesakes, the occasion of a fruitful collaboration between Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen, Moshe Shaltiel Gracian, Herman Bredl and Helga Heilbut.

For many years, Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen has been an untiring explorer of the World Wide Web. In March she sent out an introductory e-mail to various sites which seemed to have a Shealtiel connection. On 30 March 1999, she received an e-mail reply from Liege Saltiel Webber of Rio Grande do Sul, the capital of the southern Brazilian province of the same name. This contained the astonishing news of a colony of two hundred formerly unknown Saltiels. Vibeke immediately passed this on to others in our family network—in her e-mail she asked if she qualified for a prize for the number of new-found Shealtiels she was reporting! Amid a bustle of e-mails, an emergency contact group was hurriedly convened. It hastened to courier copies of the *Gazette* and our *Summary History* to Brazil in order to make sure they would be in time for a coincidentally imminent meeting of the Saltiel clan there. On 25 April 1999, telephone contact was initiated in a call from a family party at the house of Moshe Shealtiel Gracian, outside Chicago, to the home of the Saltiel Webbers in Rio Grande do Sul. This represented the first contact between the Brazilian Saltiels and any namesakes outside the country in 128 years.



Then and over the following few weeks, Liege told us the story of the Brazilian family. It was founded by Karl Clemens Georg, who was born on 26 December 1855 or 1856 and died on 6 April 1940. He arrived in Brazil in 1871, with his wife, Maria Wilhelm, and his brother Guillaume (the French form of the English “William” or the German “Wilhelm”), who had no descendants. According to family tradition, Karl Clemens was descended from a French baron of Huguenot origins, who remarried after his first wife died. The Brazilian founder used the style “von Saltiel” and told of origins in Strassbourg, the capital of Alsace, on the borders of France and Germany.

Liege has e-mailed me a scan of a portrait which the Brazilian founder brought out of his father, the Baron. His features could easily be Sephardic—Liege won't mind if I mention that she has northern European looks—but he looks like he was living as a Christian. His well-to-do costume includes brass coat buttons monogrammed with a Roman “S”, which seems an odd thing for a Jew of the period to do. Vibeke has spoken

to Sotheby's about the art-historical aspect of the picture and reports that the style of painting and the Baron's personal jewellery date it to the 1830s or 1840s. The back of the picture has a label of English origins.

Liege also told us that, like most of the German immigrants who settled in Rio Grande do Sul, at first the von Saltiels lived on the land, farming tobacco for cash and manioc for subsistence. They now live as Catholics all over the province; some seem to have dropped the “von”. In a startling echo of our own customs, they hold annual family reunions.



At that time, migration from Germany to Brazil was largely economic in character, with landless agricultural labourers or dispossessed peasants moving to work the free land of the New World. The son of an aristocrat would presumably have different motives. There are other complicating factors. One is that Strassbourg had just been ceded by France to the newly unified Germany, following the Franco-Prussian war. Another is that Karl Clemens was barely seventeen when he brought his bride to Brazil, too young to marry in the land of his birth, and raising the romantic possibility of an elopement.

Our researches in Europe have not yet been able to close the gap between Alsace and Brazil. Herman Bredl has reported his grandmother's account of the Hamburg Sealtiels using “de Saltiel”. Helga Heilbut, however, is slightly more hesitant in linking the Brazilians to the Hamburg family, who appear in the record only with the style Sealtiel. Helga has not yet been able to explore the Strassbourg archive of the period. Perhaps the Brazilian founder's Strassbourg roots can be traced to the nearby Danube line; alternatively a Pennsylvania family in the Yomtob line has reported a tradition of French links. Finally and in the interests of completeness, we should not rule out the possibility that an immigrant—in flight from his bride's family or other difficulties in the Old World—might assume the name on the boat out. The rarity of our name makes this unlikely, but we know that such things did happen.



Since June, contact with the Brazilians has been kept up. We are learning more, hope to continue to do

so, and extend a heartfelt invitation to our new-found namesakes to come to our Barcelona 2000 reunion.

HISTORY

The “Grand Narrative” of the Shealtiel family

In this article, Miles Saltiel summarised the major themes for members of the family with an interest in history, fore review ahead of the Barcelona Reunion.

The Amsterdam reunion of August 1994 was the occasion for the first edition of our *Summary History*. Its introduction pointed out four major “missing links” in the account of the family then known to us. These were:

- The sixteen-hundred year gap from the original Biblical reference to the name to its re-emergence into the record in the Spain of the 1000s.
- The details of the family’s move from medieval Spain to the Eastern Mediterranean and in particular to Salonica.
- The links—believed to exist but undocumented—between the Saltiels of Chicago and Vienna—the “Danube Line”—and their place in the overall puzzle.
- The origins of the Saltiels of London, Amsterdam and Hamburg—the “North Sea Line”.

These had the effect of restricting our awareness of our history to isolated episodes in Spain, Salonica, the Danube and the North Sea, with little grasp of any link between them or of earlier origins. Since then we have made progress—sometimes tentative, sometimes conclusive—on all of these.

- It is as galling now as it was nearly five years ago to report that we have discovered no references to a flesh and blood Shealtiel between c650bc and c1050ad. It is beginning to look increasingly pertinent, however, that this *lacuna* coincides precisely with the sixteen-hundred years of the Babylonian Exilarchate. We have also learned that the Gnostics of the first two centuries of the modern era applied the name to an archangel.
- We have learned much of the family’s history in Aragon and over the period when the Jews were leaving Iberia. Indeed, we have sufficient to support several contending theories of just how the family migration took place.
- The origins of the “Danube Line” are now documented with the links between the two branches confirmed.

- Information is emerging to support a dramatic new theory of the origins of the “North Sea Line”.

Investigating the past is a peculiar business. Much of what we find out lends itself to several views. Interpretation calls for new theories, some of which prosper while others have to be abandoned. The process of debate is great fun if sometimes heated; in this respect the family is well served by a body of energetic and opinionated investigators whose zest for new understanding has prompted a constructive combination of resourceful conjecture, robust challenge, and honest respect for the evidence.

Almost everyone in the family has made a contribution to our understanding. Those playing a leading role include Ed Motola of Salt Lake City; Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen of Amsterdam; Jehudith Shaltiel of Jerusalem; Moshe Shaltiel of Northbrook, Illinois; and Shlomo Shaltiel of *Kibbutz Amahapil*, Israel.

We also owe much to the maker of the *Shealtiel Film*, Ilan Ziv of New York City, whose work led to new discoveries and stimulated new ideas about our history. In addition, the broadcast of his film made our story known to a broader audience, so attracting additional information, eg, from Ram Thein of Tel Aviv.

As we prepare for the Barcelona Reunion next year, we are updating our historical account. We have now learned so much more that it is worth taking stock so as to identify outstanding areas of uncertainty and controversy, not to say out-and-out ignorance. Thus this “Grand Narrative”. Historians use the phrase ironically to characterise a distortion of the historical record to support a point of view. I propose to press it into service as a vehicle to unify the principal strands of the unfolding account arising out of our investigations into the 2,600 years during which our name has been in use. My purpose is to illuminate the continuity in our account as well as to illustrate how one part of our investigations bears upon others and to seek out new areas where investigation might be fruitful.



The “grand narrative” which follows has thirty-nine theses. Some support each other—sometimes subtly so; others are mutually contradictory—alternative accounts of an unresolved aspect of our history. Some have implications which go well beyond the family; others are specific to an individual forbear. Some represent attempts to create new historical understandings; others seek to correct the judgement of history where we believe our kin have been misunderstood. Some should be relatively easy to resolve with (eg) street directories or census records; others may enlist museum archivists or Talmudic scholars. Some theses will be proved or falsified tomorrow or the next day; others may never be resolved. And—as you may follow from the points below—the very act of writing this survey has forced me to recognise that some theses

have combined to grow so strong as to destroy positions which once I cherished.

In some cases, we have been able to develop “strong” and “weak” versions of our theses, with the former offering more comprehensive explanations and/or more dramatic accounts. For example, the thesis that there was a *single* Spanish family of Shealtiels is the strongest version of the thesis that there was an *identifiable* family. Such “strong versions” offer more explanation but are harder to sustain. We are also in a position to articulate the strong version of our “Grand Narrative” as a whole. This is the most heroic account of the family we are able to devise from the evidence before us. Some of it must be true, but much is likely to turn out false. With these cautions, it is as follows:

The Grand Narrative of the Shealtiel Family

The Shealtiels have been a single family for 2,600 years, descending from King David and kin to Jesus Christ. The original Shealtiel was the son of the last independent King of Judea. He lived and died c650bc in Babylonian exile, where he cannily laid the ground for the career of his son, Zerubbabel. In due course Zerubbabel was appointed to govern Judea where he rebuilt the Temple. He then returned to Babylon where his heirs lived as members of the line of the Exilarch till they left one thousand years ago to become a leading family in medieval Aragon.

Most contrived to leave Spain before the Expulsion of 1492 with their property and faith intact, but some had to flee the Inquisition eventually living as crypto-Jews in New Mexico. One line lived for two or three hundred years as grandees in Crete. After the Ottoman invasion, they moved to London to found the “North Sea Line”, disposed of their illuminated *Haggadah* which found its way to the British Museum, and migrated around the world. Another line settled in Poland founding its leading Jewish family, the Charlaps. A third line left traces in Italy, with most going on to settle in Salonica, whence over the following three hundred years they migrated around the Mediterranean littoral and up the Danube valley.

In 1872 a Saltiel from Strasbourg founded the line of Saltiels in southern Brazil—now our largest with some 250 descendants. In this century many from Salonica emigrated to France and thence around the world. The Holocaust destroyed the family in its ancient homes, but we now flourish in twenty-three countries all over the world.

Our great men include the Aristotelian commentator and translator into Hebrew, Zechariah ben Shealtiel Hen fl1270; Bonjuha Saltel, fl1325 banker to the Aragonese Crown and his descendant, Saltel Gracian, artful saviour of the family from the riots of 1391; *Kakhya* Shealtiel, fl1500, whose leadership unified the Jews of Istanbul; Judah ben Emanuel Hen Shealtiel, fl1630, whose display of the family’s coat of arms at the synagogue of Candy (the modern Heraklion), Crete signalled our ancient lineage in the most graphic fashion; Emanuel Saltiel, fl1880, a pioneering entrepreneur in the Rockies; and Gen David Shaltiel, whose defence of Jerusalem in 1947 enabled it to become the capital of the infant Jewish state.

We are energetic, resourceful and loving, sometimes wily but more often fiery, our passions occasionally giving rise to misunderstandings in the historical record, but enabling us to withstand adversity and thrive in happier circumstances.

The following thirty-nine theses represent the foundation of our “Grand Narrative”—both support and challenge.

Thesis One That all Shealtiels are descended from the original historical Shealtiel and thus from the line of David—the claim of the Davidic descent” or “the Davidic claim”.

Why it matters This is the central myth of the family and the reason for our interest in much of the following.

Sponsors This view is traditional within the family and is taken by Moshe Shaltiel, Rob Sealtiel, Vibeke Olsen and many others.

- Outside the Jewish community similar claims are made authentically, eg, by the descendants of Confucius and Mohammed.
- A claim of this importance would encourage those concerned to take great care of records.
- Records of the claim go back to medieval times, when information may have been to hand that has subsequently been lost.

- d) The claim was generally accepted among the medieval Jews from whose records we first learn of it. Jews are a quarrelsome people who would not have conceded such claims lightly.

Challenge This is disputed by Miles Salties, as well as by Jehudith Shaltiel who wisely reminds us that “We all descend from Adam”.

- a) It is implausible that the records necessary to sustain the claim should survive the turbulence of Jewish history over the 1,600 years from the Babylonian Exile to medieval Spain; no such records exist today.
- b) The Shealtiels were not alone in making such claims, which may have had a purely conventional character, or been imposed upon the community by the wealth or social standing of those concerned, or promoted by the community so as to aggrandise in the eyes of the civil power those with responsibilities for dealing with them.

State of play We will probably never resolve this, the most exciting of our hypotheses. It relies upon and adds point to many of the following propositions, our current understanding of which is set out below. Net, net, it still looks like a stretch.



Thesis Two That the Biblical Shealtiel was a historical figure who descended from King David.

Why it matters This forms the foundation of the Davidic claim.

Supporting arguments

- a) Shealtiel appears in almost every canonical pedigree in the Old Testament (as $\text{אֵלְתִּיֵּל בֶּן־דָּוִד}$) and New Testament (as $\sigma\lambda\alpha\theta\iota\epsilon\lambda$) as a descendant of David.
- b) There are independent records in Babylonian ration tablets of Shealtiel’s father, Jehoiachin, and his five sons.

Additional comment There is no independent record of Shealtiel’s life who appears only in Biblical lineage lists.

State of play Where independent evidence exists (admittedly not to hand in the case of Shealtiel) Biblical lineages are generally found to be reliable. On this basis, the balance of probability favours the existence and lineage of the historical figure.



Thesis Three That Shealtiel’s son, Zerubbabel, built the Second Temple.

Why it matters This is a corollary to the Davidic claim and adds to the distinction of the line.

Supporting argument Supported by readings of the Bible which place weight on the coincidence of Zerubbabel’s appointment as Governor of Judea and the reconstruction.

Counter-argument Disputed by readings of the Bible which place weight on the absence of Zerubbabel’s name from those cited at the dedication ceremonies.

State of play The Biblical record seems to indicate that Darius appointed Zerubbabel Governor of Judea *inter alia* so that he should complete the project, after the former Governor backed down in the face of local opposition. This hostility may explain the absence of Zerubbabel’s name from the ceremonies, the record of which comes from the locals he (or his project) offended—for another explanation see (4) following. But taking the matter in the round, it seems fair to give him what we would now call the “political credit”.



Thesis Four That Shealtiel’s son, Zerubbabel, fomented rebellion against the Persians.

Why it matters This topic is more of a controversy between Zionist revisionists and traditional Biblical scholars than an argument between Shealtiels. The family would, however, take an interest in its bearing upon the failure of the Biblical chroniclers to grant Zerubbabel credit for the reconstruction of the Temple.

Supporting argument Supported by readings of the Bible which place weight on invocations for such rebellion.

Counter-argument Disputed by most Biblical commentators on a view of the lack of any record of such a rebellion and what we can gather of the character of Zerubbabel, who seems to have been a loyal civil servant or vassal rather than a would-be dynast.

State of play The lack of evidence that Zerubbabel rebelled provides another explanation for his absence from the record of the Temple’s opening ceremonies. Either those presiding over the formalities or those generating the subsequent record may have felt he was insufficiently zealous a patriot to qualify for inclusion.



Thesis Five That Shealtiel was a forbear of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus Christ.

Why it matters No impiety is intended by this thesis, which by and large has not preoccupied a family whose historically Jewish character would have made association with the founder of a rival religion uninteresting if not disagreeable. Possibly it would mean more to members of the family who are not Jewish, though as best I know it has not come up so far.

Supporting argument The genealogies of Jesus offered by Matthew and Luke.

Counter-argument The tradition that the Messiah should come of the line of David may have prompted the Evangelists to introduce such lineage claims.

State of play Modern theologians take the view that these pedigrees had a symbolic content beyond the legitimacy conferred by the Davidic claim. Thus, the pedigree ascribed to Jesus by Matthew has three sets of fourteen generations: from Abraham to David, from David to the Babylonian exile, and from the exile to Jesus. The significance is the multiples of seven, with the second group of generations excessive and the third insufficient for the periods concerned. In addition, female forebears with an equivocal reputation such as Tamar are likely to have been introduced as a signal of the universal character of Jesus' ministry. Certain aspects of the pedigree presented by Luke are more realistic: for example, its tally of forty generations from David to Jesus is more consistent with the actual interval. On the other hand it then goes on back to Adam.

Overall we are unable to decide whether a lineage claim was introduced by the Evangelists or such a claim was already traditional within Jesus' family, contributing to his prestige.



Thesis Six That the presence of an Archangel Shealtiel in the iconography of the Gnostics of the first two centuries of the modern era indicates that the name held some sway at the time.

Why it matters No person is known to have borne the name in the sixteen hundred year period between the Babylonian exile and medieval Spain. This makes any reference during the period—even a mythological one like this—a welcome supplement to our “Grand Narrative”.

Sponsor Vibeke Olsen brought the matter to our attention, but it has been little discussed.

- a) The argument might be that the use of the name signifies recognition of the Davidic lineage, concern with which would be likely to be intensified by Luke's appropriation of such links to Jesus' origins.
- b) Alternatively, the use of the name signifies its familiarity at the time, confirming its everyday use.

Additional comments

- a) Invoking the prestige of the Davidic lineage would make sense for a fledgling sect, but a mythological figure of this kind tells us nothing about either the existence or reliability of any claims by mere mortals.

- b) There is no reference to flesh and blood use of the name in the history, literature, religious commentary or business records from any source—Christian, Jewish or Moslem—surviving from this period.

State of play The thesis is so weak that it cannot be gainsaid; if the name was used it had some sort of weight. The question is what sort?

The Gnostics were a group of mutually inimical sects with similar beliefs—of a world in contention between generally equivalent forces of good and evil; and claims—generally of the esoteric knowledge necessary to negotiate a passage through this world to the next. Part of this esoterica was secret names, the use of which might serve successfully to challenge eponymous antagonists, among them the archangels who served as the gatekeepers to heaven and whose indulgence must be won. The names applied to the archangels reflected their function; all such names had great prestige and secret power.

Shealtiel is notably similar to other such names: all had Hebrew names which often ended in the “-el” suffix denoting God: thus, Emanuel, Gabriel, Michael, Rafael, Uriel and so on. After Gnosticism was suppressed, Christianity and Islam developed the more benevolent view of archangels as intercessionary figures, with which we are familiar today.

In any event, the name survives in the Catholic tradition as an uncanonical saint (the patron *inter alia* of Thursdays), presumably the subject of the statue identified as Shealtiel in the church of Mosda, Malta.



Thesis Seven That the Jews of Christian Spain used surnames from the outset.

Why it matters The concept of a Shealtiel family lacks meaning before the emergence of surnames. Prior to this families defined themselves as “the descendants of (patriarch)” to whom they traced their origins with lineage lists, the authenticity of which was generally accepted. This causes us to break our researches into three parts. The first step is to identify the forbear of the family now calling itself Shealtiel who introduced the name into the record *as a surname*. The second step is to establish his origins. The final step is to trace the subsequent use of Shealtiel as a surname identifying the family up to the present day. The earlier in history that we can establish that Shealtiel came to be used as a surname, the greater the force of the Davidic claim and such other elements of the “Grand Narrative”, as the thesis of “associated families”; see (8) following.

Sponsors This view is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel, Prof Yosef Kaplan, H.E. Mordechai Arbell, and Dr Riera i Sans.

- a) At this time and earlier, some Jewish families had surnames in the Islamic world including Spain.
- b) The record in Christian Spain shows recurring patterns of naming among the identifiable families of Jews from the earliest times.

Additional comment Last year Vibeke Olsen organised an Internet colloquy between Jeff Makla, Leon Taranto, and Ben Nahman on this topic. This gave rise to the following comments:

- a) In the case of most of the Sephardim, the early patterns of recurring names are not surnames, instead being gentile representations which suppressed the “ben” of Jewish patronymics.
- b) Surnames came into use as Jews found themselves obliged to come up with unambiguous identities in their dealings with the civil authorities, specifically for purposes of property registration and taxation. They may have been chosen to honour celebrated ancestors.

State of play Our colloquy shed a less definitive light on the matter than might be hoped. The evidence for the universal use of surnames by the Jews of the early medieval period (say before the 1100s) seems weak, but they do seem to have been in widespread use by the 1300s. But such a general conclusion is so weak as to leave the position of the medieval Shealtiels unresolved. Given the family’s distinction, it remains arguable that they were among those using surnames earlier rather than later. But we still have no way of knowing if they had used the name from ancient times, or instead settled on it either to memorialise the Biblical figure or to honour a more recently distinguished forbear. This leaves us obliged to address head-on the question of whether the Shealtiels were an *identifiable* family—see (12) below.



Thesis Eight That the Shealtiels of medieval Spain had extensive (and largely exclusive) dealings with a small group of “associated families” of Crescens, Sheshet and Chasdai.

Why it matters This supports the thesis of origin from the north in Roman times; see (9) below.

Sponsors This is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel, Dr Riera i Sans and reinforced by Miles Saltiel’s preliminary statistical examination of the record.

State of play The examination of the record is incomplete. To the extent that we have difficulties with the thesis that Sephardic surnames were in use from the outset in Christian Spain, then the “associated families” may turn out to be little more than rotations of customary given names with Shealtiel. It might be illuminating to complete the statistical examination.

Thesis Nine That the Shealtiels arrived in Spain from the north in Roman times.

Why it matters This provides continuity in the “Grand Narrative”, in particular filling in the gap between Babylon and Spain. This and the following alternative thesis address one of our original missing links.

Sponsors This has been advocated by Moshe Shaltiel and Dr Riera i Sans.

- a) Medieval records of Shealtiel are found only in Northern Spain.
- b) Most of the given names attaching to Spanish Shealtiels are Latin; one of the three “associated families” has a Latin name.
- c) The Shealtiels and “associated families” do no business with families with Arabic names.

Additional comment Few records of Judeo-Spanish names come from anywhere but the north.

State of play When first put forward, the onomastic (naming) associations seemed to be persuasive, but it is premature to form a definitive view, particularly if we are moving to a “Grand Narrative” based on arrival from Babylon—see (10) following.



Thesis Ten That the Shealtiels arrived in Christian Spain at the beginning of the medieval period from Babylon (by this time rebuilt as Baghdad but generally referred to by the Jews under its original name).

Why it matters This is an alternative to the thesis that the Shealtiels came from the north in Roman times—see (9) above—and is important for the same reasons of providing continuity in the “Grand Narrative” and filling in the missing link between Babylon and Spain, *inter alia* introducing the notion that “Shealtiel” might have been revived to commemorate its use by the first of the Davidic line to be born in Babylonian exile and to mark the exile from Babylonian of the line.

Sponsor The origin of this line of thinking is the oral tradition of the Charlaps of Poland, who claim descent from a Shealtiel of Spain—see (25) below—and that the originator of the line of Shealtiels was such a refugee from Babylon. It is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel and supported by two complementary and more-or-less contemporaneous traditions of the early medieval period.

- a) Records of the flight from Babylon (more properly Baghdad) of the two sons of the last Exilarch, the leader of the Jews of Babylon and traditionally a descendant of David, after his assassination in 1040.
- b) Records from Granada of the arrival of the two brothers, who fled after the assassination of their protector in 1066, One settled in “Monzon”, which

sounds like the township in Palencia, Monzon de Campos, the site of the first funerary reference to Shealtiel dated 27th August 1097. The other is said to have settled in Zaragossa. This was in the Duchy of Aragon in whose capital, Barcelona, occurs the earliest legal record of the daughter of a Shealtiel. This denotes the father as *rm*—“Mar”—mistranslated as “Master”, but up to that time a title of distinction monopolised by the Exilarch. Unfortunately for this thesis, this reference occurs on 12th October 1061, undermining the link to the story of the brothers’ flight from Granada. In addition the earliest census of Jews in Barcelona, dated xxxx, refers to a xxxxx, whom Elsa Klein has identified as xxx.

State of play This is a marvellous theory, with all of the best elements of myth-making. Overall, the thesis would be wonderful to believe but there is insufficient evidence for the time being.



Thesis Eleven That records of Shealtiel in Spain should not be regarded as signifying a family in an unambiguous fashion from the outset of the period. That it is more likely that the name was revived as a given name in early medieval Spain for reasons no longer apparent—possibly in recognition of the bitterness of exile, possibly for a late-born child—and came to serve as a surname as these came into use some centuries later.

Why it matters If this is correct it is a knife at the heart of the Davidic claim, as well as those elements of the “Grand Narrative” which seek to account for the origins of the Spanish family.

Sponsors This has been advocated by Miles Saltiel.

Supporting argument The evidence from the record of the early medieval period fails to establish the use of surnames; to the contrary, patronymics are sometimes explicit and otherwise implied by the rotation of names between the generations.

Challenge This view is disputed by Moshe Shaltiel, Prof Yosef Kaplan, H.E. Mordechai Arbell and Dr Riera i Sans.

- a) If we accept the thesis that surnames were introduced for the purposes of unambiguous identification in dealings with the civil authorities—see (7) above—then the prosperity of the family indicated by the record would have prompted this to occur sooner rather than later.
- b) Even if surnames were not in use from the earliest years of the period, the onomastic pattern of rotations between a limited number of names indicates the existence of an identifiable and self-conscious family—and see (12) below.

State of play It is hard to stand against such a distinguished body of challengers, but in order to watch the debate approach a conclusion in the theses following, let us leave it that the matter remains unresolved and move on to (12) below, the converse of this thesis.



Thesis Twelve That the Shealtiels were an identifiable family in Spain from the outset of their appearance in the record.

Why it matters The converse of (11) above. Such an identification is essential to support the Davidic claim and those other elements of the “Grand Narrative” which have to do with origins prior to Spain.

Sponsors This is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel, Prof Yosef Kaplan, H.E. Mordechai Arbell and Dr Riera i Sans.

- a) Commentators on Benjamin of Tudela (eg, El Charizi and the Atashbet) wrote in terms of a Shealtiel family.
- b) The name is transmitted between identifiable generations, ie, from grandfather to grandson.
- c) The Davidic claim—whether or not authentic—signifies the existence of a self-conscious family the identity of which was generally recognised.

Challenge This has been disputed by Miles Saltiel.

- a) The commentators on Benjamin of Tudela attributed the origins of the family to Yehuda ben Barzelai—*Habarzelony*—who was born several centuries after Shealtiel first appears in the record. If anything, this supports the view that early references to the name should not be taken as signifying a family.
- b) Although some rotations may occur in the case of identifiably succeeding generations, this proves nothing in the case of other such rotations.
- c) There is something in the argument about the implications of the Davidic claim, though this only tells half the story, as at any given point the identity would be of a prior lineage, that is a list of ancestors, rather than of a family whose subsequent continuity is traceable by a common surname.

State of play It is hard to decide between the first two arguments, which at this point are finely balanced, turn on details of the record or of interpretation, and can probably be debated indefinitely.

The point about the Davidic claim is harder to rebut and causes us to take an interest in the claim not merely in its own right, but as an indicator of the identity of the lineage. This causes us to seek to find out the earliest date on which a Shealtiel made such a claim.

It also adds point to the debate about the application of “*Nasi*”, as the character of this title may weaken the distinction between “lineage” and “family”. If *Nasi* attaches only to those making the Davidic claim, it combines with coincidence or rotation of names to become a powerful tool to aid traceability—see (14) and (15) following.



Thesis Thirteen That the Shealtiels of Spain were a single family.

Why it matters This would be the strongest version of—though is not essential for—thesis 12 above, of an *identifiable* family in Spain. It is, however, essential for those elements of the “Grand Narrative” which have to do with tracing an unambiguous line *after* the expulsion from Spain, as multiple Spanish families would make links less certain and—in a sense—less interesting. It is necessary for the strongest version of (18) below, that Saltel Gracian’s conversion ensured the survival of the modern family.

Sponsor Moshe Shaltiel.

Supporting argument The Jewish population of the Catalan cities concerned was so small that it was inconceivable that the few Shealtiels should not be of a single family.

Additional comment The use of the name as a surname could have occurred independently several times, once it was revived.

State of play Once accepting an identifiable family—which we should probably be willing to do after (say) the twelve-hundreds—the issue of a single family is less worrisome. Indeed we might almost find it more of a stretch to contemplate the spontaneous generation of several independent Shealtiel families, particularly as the distinction of the existing family would presumably discourage any “passing off”. Naturally, as time passes families grow and split; lines of the modern family may have separated in medieval times.



Thesis Fourteen That the designation *Nasi* is always associated with the Davidic claim.

Why it matters *Nasi* means “prince” in Hebrew and was used as a title of honour among pre-modern Jews. As already mentioned in (12) above, we are interested in the Davidic claim both in its own right and as an indication of the identity of the lineage, that is family. If the designation *Nasi* was accorded in recognition of the Davidic claim then we can use it to trace the history of the claim. If it was accorded from time to time for individual merit we learn nothing of these matters.

Sponsors This position is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel, who acknowledges that *Nasi* was awarded in some parts of Jewish Spain. It seems, however, to have

been transmitted only by inheritance in Aragon. It disappears from the Aragonese record after 1265, when the Jews of Aragon were forced out of civil life. Moshe also refers to a record of the title of *Nasi* being withdrawn from a dignitary from Jerusalem, who was found not to be of Davidic descent.

State of play If Moshe’s Jerusalem story is confirmed it is extremely telling, both in respect of this thesis and the generality of the Davidic claim. This is because it would indicate that medieval Jewry had generally accepted standards by which the community felt able to adjudicate such claims. Although we are unable to test these standards ourselves, the mere fact of their existence in such a sceptical community would count for much.



Thesis Fifteen That the Shealtiels qualified for the designation *Nasi*.

Why it matters As already mentioned, we are interested in the Davidic claim both in its own right and as an indication of the identity of the lineage. If the designation *Nasi* always signifies the Davidic claim, then its application to a Shealtiel confirms his participation in the claim and the identity of his lineage up to that point

Supporting argument The earliest records of a Shealtiel include the title *Nasi*.

State of play There can be no challenge to this plain fact. If we accept (14) above, that the designation of *Nasi* signified a generally accepted claim of the Davidic descent, then this thesis enables us to accept that all persons bearing the name Shealtiel belonged to a lineage recognised as such by its contemporaries. This lineage is claimed from the earliest records of the name in Spain to the late 1300s by which time surnames enable us to trace the family in a conventional manner. This brings us close to the continuity of record enabling us to recognise the episodic transmission of the name as signifying a family throughout the period. This would be a real advance in our knowledge and a testament to the work and scholarship of those concerned, inside and outside the family.



Thesis Sixteen That the Hen/Gracian family descend from the Shealtiels.

Why it matters The family of Gracian or Hen (respectively Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew for “grace” or “wisdom”) were celebrated for their learning as philosophers, rabbis and doctors for several centuries from the 1100s onwards. Association with them would add to the distinction of the Shealtiel line.

Sponsors This is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel and H.E. Mordechai Arbell.

Supporting argument The Gracian/Hen family emerges later than the Shealtiels, whose name often appears in combination with theirs.

Additional comment Once again, the record shows a rotation of names. On a sceptical view, this would cause us to revert to our uncertainty about what we may conclude from the onomastic usages of the Jews of medieval Spain about a family we might recognise today.

State of play We should probably be graceful enough to defer to the advice of such third party experts as Mordechai Arbell and accept this thesis.



Thesis Seventeen That Tolrana Saltell should be identified with Maria del Salto.

Why it matters Maria del Salto is cited by Sari Mayer as the Jewess who founded the name Saltiel when she jumped (Spanish—"salto") to her death rather than accept forcible conversion during the disturbances of 1391. This thesis makes slightly more sense of Ms Mayer's false etymology and bears on the reliability of the story told of Tolrana Saltel—see (18) following.

Sponsor Vibeke Olsen points to the similarity of this account and the story of Tolrana Saltel of Gerona—see (18) following. The notion has been put forward too recently to give rise to any real debate within the family.

State of play This whole business is a rum do. What was a Jewess doing with a name like "Maria"? I have always thought that Sari Mayer's story was just poor scholarship and should be left at that.



Thesis Eighteen That the wiles of Saltel Gracian in negotiating his public conversion saved the rest of his family, their religion and their wealth.

Why it matters Near the end of his life, Saltel Gracian, a former banker to the Court of Aragon and a distinguished member of the medieval family, converted to Christianity. This was in 1391, a year of violent anti-Semitic disturbances. Saltel took the name of his baptismal sponsor, Archbishop d'Anglesola of Barcelona. His brother, Bonet, and daughter also converted but the rest of the family survived as Jews.

The strongest version of this thesis, that Saltel Gracian's stratagem ensured the survival of the family to this day, would be a dramatic contribution to the "Grand Narrative".

Sponsor This view was developed by Miles Saltiel as a rebuttal to the account presented in the *Shealtiel Film*.

- a) We know that both Crown and Church were embarrassed by these popular disturbances and would have wished to calm them.
- b) The high profile of the conversion suggests that it was undertaken for exemplary purposes and to mollify the mob.
- c) The character of those who converted smacks of a brokered deal. In particular, none was responsible for raising children—we may take it that the daughter was grown up and unmarried—and no property was confiscated.
- d) Saltel's conversion did not stick. A year or so later he turned up under his Jewish name in Perpignan.

Challenger This view is disputed by Ilan Ziv.

- a) The privations of the Jewish community of Gerona were such that no-one could have withstood them.
- b) In the climate of the times, no-one would renounce his faith except under the most terrible duress and certainly not as a tactic.
- c) Saltel's sister-in-law, Tolrana, is said to have killed herself and her children rather than submit to conversion.

State of play It may be that Ilan has not thought this through with his customary rigour. Saltel was a downy bird who would have kept his head and known how to scheme even in such desperate times.

Tolrana's suicide would be more of a objection, but she is supposed to have been the wife of Bonet who did convert. It is odd that this elderly figure should have the young children of the legend, suggesting that it may be apocryphal—there are other such stories; see (17) above.

In any event, it is more pleasing to family self-esteem that Saltel should be seen as a cunning tactician whose mastery of a high-stakes endgame made him the saviour of the family. So why not?



Thesis Nineteen That most Shealtiels left Spain for Salonica after 1391.

Why it matters This would offer such consolation as might be found in the family's acuity in reading the outlook in Spain. It would also simplify links between Spain and Salonica, at best enabling us to dispense with prolonged speculations about the details of migration from one to the other.

Sponsor This is advocated by Moshe Shaltiel.

- a) The name falls out of the Spanish record almost entirely after 1400 or so.
- b) The preface to the prayer book of *Catalan Chardash*, the family synagogue in Salonica, refers to the presence of the Shealtiels in Salonica to wel-

come the refugees from the Expulsion from Spain of 1492 *et seq.*

State of play It would be nice to see the preface to the prayer book, but we should probably accept this thesis as far as it goes. Unfortunately it fails to fulfil its promise of simplifying the story of the family after the Expulsion from Spain, given the records of survivals in Spain and well documented references to the name in Istanbul and the Greek islands.



Thesis Twenty That some or all of the Shealtiels who left Spain for Salonica migrated via Italy, where they formed a line now known as Saltelli.

Why it matters This adds detail to our “Grand Narrative” with details of the migration from Spain to Salonica and adds to the number to be included in the modern family.

Sponsors Elements of this thesis have been developed independently by Vibeke Olsen and Moshe Shaltiel. There has been little debate within the family about this, but neither is the thesis proven.

- a) There is evidence of Shealtiels migrating to Perpignan, at that time unified with Northern Spain under the Crown of Aragon. This would lie on the land route to Italy.
- b) There is evidence of Shealtiels migrating from Spain to Naples, also a possession of Aragon at that time.
- c) The Italian record shows Saltellis as Jews in Venice in the 1700s.

State of play The Saltellis of Italy seem now to be Christian and have not responded to approaches. We have not yet done much with the Italian record. Presumably we should try harder. Vibeke Olsen points out that Saltelli may mean “e” (Italian: “out of, from”) Saltell.



Thesis Twenty-one That the record of *Kakhya* Shealtiel, the leader of Istanbul’s Jewish community in the early 1500s has been defamed.

Why it matters The *Kakhya* was the representative of the Istanbul Jews to the Ottoman authorities. Summaries of the *Responsa* literature have put Shealtiel’s career in an unflattering light. The demands of our “Grand Narrative” oblige us to set straight the reputation of a figure already present in the historical record. And presumably family self-esteem should cause us to wish to defend one of our own.

State of play At the Salonica Reunion, Shlomo Shaltiel presented a paper on the career of the *Kakhya*, who unified the communal organisation of the Jews of Istanbul, enabling them to represent themselves more ef-

fectively to the authorities. His critics were defenders of the former arrangements. They drew attention to his use of his tax collecting responsibilities to enrich himself. Eventually they were able to make use of his attempt to make his position hereditary to expel him from office and the community. After an interval, Rabbinical colleagues negotiated his reinstatement which may be seen as confirming the end of the former communal fragmentation.



Thesis Twenty-two That some Shealtiels left Spain for North Africa where they formed independent lines.

Why it matters This is little more than a conjecture which might tie up unconnected scraps of information or hearsay.

Sponsors Many Israeli Shealtiels whose history has not been examined were believed by Gen. David Shaltiel to be of North African origin.

State of play It now looks like the Chaltiels of Tunis came from Corfu several centuries after the Expulsion. They may be of the same line as the Chaltiels of Algiers. One of these, Baruch ben Isaac, was married in Gibraltar and may be a kin to the patriarch of the “North Sea line”—see (29) below, into which this thesis may end up incorporated.



Thesis Twenty-three That some Shealtiels settled in Crete where they formed a distinguished family in the 1500 and 1600s.

Why it matters This adds detail to the “Grand Narrative”, adds distinction to the family and lays the ground for one of the theories for the origins of the “North Sea Line”—see (29) below.

Supporting arguments Records in the *Responsa* literature, their ownership of the *Shealtiel Haggadah* in the 1500s—see (32) below—the family’s use of the designation “*Don*” and their assertion of the right to a coat of arms in the 1630s—see (24) following—all attest to the distinction of the Cretan Shealtiels.

State of play A very pleasing set of discoveries for which all credit to Moshe Shaltiel, Iris Fishoff and Nikos Stavroulakis.



Thesis Twenty-four That the Lion of Judea, crown and sword on the coat of arms depicted in a bas relief installed above the door of the synagogue of Candy (now Herakleion) Crete by a prominent Shealtiel in the 1630s reinforces the Davidic claim.

Sponsors & supporting argument Moshe Shaltiel and Vibeke Olsen argue that the presence of these self-evident symbols in the coat of arms confirms that the

Davidic claim was generally accepted, including possibly by the Gentile authorities which granted arms.

Additional comments

- a) We may question if the coat of arms was granted by some more-or-less legitimate authority or simply devised by the family of the day. The bas relief was installed in the 1630s when Crete was a frontier possession of Venice, in the front line with the Ottomans to whom it was shortly to be lost. In such unruly conditions a prominent family might well have been able to appropriate such symbols as it chose.
- b) The presence of a crown, a symbol normally monopolised by the royal family, undermines the view that the coat of arms had official standing. This said, Vibeke reports that the crown depicted has a “baronial” rather than “royal” design, diminishing the suspicion of an implausible *lese majesté*.

State of play Even if the coat of arms was awarded legitimately, its design merely asserts the family’s claim, by no means signifying that the claim was accepted or even understood by whatever body made the award. We should be hesitant in drawing firm conclusions from symbols where we know so little of their contemporary significance and context. We need to learn from the Venetian and Spanish records what such arms might have signified.



Thesis Twenty-five That Simon Shealtiel—a former minister in Spain—settled in Poland where his descendants became the Charlaps.

Why it matters This adds detail to the “Grand Narrative”, adds distinction to the family, underpins the oral tradition of the origins of the Charlaps and supports the thesis of the Babylonian origins of the Spanish family—see (10) above.

Sponsor This came to our notice after Ram Thein, who married into the Charlaps, got in touch with Moshe Shaltiel following the showing of the *Shealtiel Film* in Israel.

Supporting arguments The story is a central part of the oral tradition of the Charlap family.

State of play This thesis has come up too recently to give rise to any real debate within the family. It is intriguing but unexamined, calling for further investigation.



Thesis Twenty-six That some Shealtiels fled the Inquisition to the Americas where they lived as crypto-Jews.

Why it matters This is something of a byway to the “Grand Narrative”, but has its own fascination. It is an

advance on the now abandoned view that Shealtiels played a part in the foundation of Saltillo, a provincial capital in Northern Mexico. This conjecture was based on little more than the similarity of names. We have subsequently learned that Saltillo means cascade and the town was named for an adjacent watercourse, as presumably were similarly named Spanish settlements.

Sponsor At the Salonica Reunion, Prof Hordes presented his discovery that the name has been found as a manuscript annotation to documents created by crypto-Jews in New Mexico in the 1700s.

State of play Prof. Hordes’ discovery speaks for itself. In researching the now abandoned “Saltillo” thesis, we discovered that *Sephardim* migrated to Mexico covertly and then drifted to the frontier territories of the north. Although we found no records of Shealtiels in their number, we need not attach too much weight to this, as formal records would have been avoided or falsified by Jews fearing the Inquisition.



Thesis Twenty-seven That Shealtiels arrived in London from Spain or Portugal at the beginning of the 1700s, possibly via Gibraltar.

Why it matters Adds detail to the “Grand Narrative” and provides an origin for the “North Sea Line”. This and the following two theses address one of our original missing links.

Sponsor This was the view taken and investigated in the 1960s by the first genealogist of the “North Sea Line”, General David Shaltiel, but it seems to have been based on little more than the traditional characterisation of the *Sephardim* as “Spanish and Portuguese”.

Challenge This is disputed by all historians consulted.

- a) No Jews were living openly in Iberia at this time. Any doing so covertly would be unlikely to hang on to a Hebrew family name over two hundred years of persecution.
- b) No record of any variant of Shealtiel appears in examinations of the records of the Inquisition.
- c) No *Sephardim* arrived in London at this time directly from Spain or Portugal.
- d) No record of any formerly known variant of Shealtiel was found in examinations of genealogies or current records of Gibraltar when these were reviewed in 1993.

State of play This view has been abandoned and is unlikely to be revived despite Vibeke Olsen’s discovery of a reference to the marriage of a Chaltiel or Cheltiel in the Gibraltar record in 1810—see (29) below.



Thesis Twenty-eight That Shealtiels arrived in London from Istanbul at the beginning of the 1700s.

Why it matters Adds detail to the “Grand Narrative” and provides an alternative to (27) and (28) as an origin for the “North Sea Line”.

Sponsor This view has been developed by Vibeke Olsen.

- a) An Istanbul merchant, Isaac Saltiel, did business with the London firm of Thomas and Co during the 1700s.
- b) Isaac is taken to be the name of the patriarch of the “North Sea Line”—see (30) below.

State of play It is not clear when this commercial contact took place. If late in the century, it would have no explanatory value. On balance the view is interesting and plausible but unproven.



Thesis Twenty-nine That the Cretan Shealtiels migrated to Tunis or Algiers and thence to Gibraltar and London at the beginning of the 1700s.

Why it matters This adds detail to the “Grand Narrative”, provides an alternative to (27) and (28) as an origin for the “North Sea Line” and lays the ground for (30) following. It has been put forward too recently to give rise to any real debate within the family.

Sponsor This view has been developed by Moshe Shaltiel.

- a) The Ottomans seized Crete from the Venetians in 1669, after which the Shealtiels of Crete disappear from the record. One of the last of them is called Elias, a name characteristic of the “North Sea Line”.
- b) There is a record of an Isaac Shealtiel in North Africa immediately thereafter.
- c) In 1704 under the Treaty of Utrecht, Great Britain took possession of Gibraltar, from which *Sephardim* of Moroccan origin are known to have migrated to London. Vibeke Olsen reports records of the Gibraltar marriage of a Chaltiel or Cheltiel in 1810.
- d) The records of Bevis Marks, the Sephardic synagogue in London, show associations in the 1700s between the Saltiels of London and families with Moroccan names.

State of play If Vibeke’s report is confirmed it supercedes our failure to find any known variant of Shealtiel when Gibraltar records were reviewed in 1993, This said, it occurs too late to add much to this thesis.

Generally, this is a very pleasing conjecture which provides a distinguished set of ancestors for my (rather humble) family and makes for a fabulous piece

of myth-making about the *Haggadah*—see (32) below. But we should seek to test the records and for the time being must regard the thesis as unproven.



Thesis Thirty That the patriarch of the “North Sea Line” is an undocumented Isaac Saltiel whose two sons, Yomtob and Elias i founded lines in London and Amsterdam respectively.

Why it matters Adds detail to the “Grand Narrative”, combining with any of (27) to (29) above to provide an origin for the “North Sea Line”.

Sponsors This has been developed through the work of Moshe Shaltiel and Vibeke Olsen to the point where it is generally accepted.

Supporting argument The rotation of Isaac, Yomtob and Elias in the London and Amsterdam lines confirms this view.

State of play The pleasing result of work over several years, which has succeeded in filling in one of our original missing links.



Thesis Thirty-one That Elias i of Amsterdam had two families or that there were two contemporaneous Eliases.

Why it matters This is something of a side-show to the “Grand Narrative”, seeking to resolve apparent discrepancies in the Amsterdam record.

Sponsor These theories have been developed by Vibeke Olsen to make sense of an otherwise confusing record of wives and children.

State of play There has no real discussion in the family about this, though it seems to be the occasion of dispute among archivists of the Amsterdam record.

Thesis Thirty-two That the *Shealtiel Haggadah* came to the British Museum from the “Yomtob” line of English Saltiels who had brought it with them from Crete.

Why it matters Adds detail to the “Grand Narrative” in a dramatic fashion, contributes to a provenance for the *Haggadah* and adds distinction to the Yomtob line of the English family.

Sponsor and supporting arguments This is a new theory recently advanced by Moshe Shaltiel as an extension of (27) above, that the “North Sea Line” descends from the Shealtiels of Crete who had original possession of the *Haggadah*. Moshe’s notion is of a sale—perhaps in the 1700s—to a third party who in turn (directly or indirectly) sold it on to the British Museum.

Additional comments The notion has been put forward too recently to give rise to any real debate within the family or beyond. The British Museum bought the

Haggadah at the sale at Sotheby's on 7th to 10th June 1876 of the library of the Victorian collector, William Bragge, who also made collections of gems, the works of Cervantes and pipes and smoking paraphernalia. We do not know how Mr Bragge obtained the manuscript.

State of play Moshe will concede that this is pure speculation at this stage, as should we all that it ties up a number of loose ends very neatly.



Thesis Thirty-three That the Shealtiels of Salonica emigrated round the world, in particular initially via France.

Why it matters Adds detail to the “Grand Narrative”.

State of play Uncontested, the frustration being the fragmentation of the Salonican record following the fire of 1917 and despoliation of the cemetery during WW2.



Thesis Thirty-four That the Saltiels of Chicago and of Austria are linked in the “Danube line” and that the line originates from Salonica.

Why it matters One of our original missing links; adds detail to the “Grand Narrative” and provides an origin for the lines concerned.

Sponsors Long the belief of Natalie Saltiel of Chicago and Hertha Siegel of Vienna, this thesis has recently been confirmed by researches by Moshe Shaltiel.

Supporting argument In his researches into the Danube line, Moshe has traced them to a migrant from Turkey to Budapest in the early 1800s.

Additional comment In his testimony to an oral history project, Illinois State Senator Edward P Saltiel, Natalie's uncle, recounted the oral tradition of his family that an ancestor had been born in the British Embassy in Barcelona.

State of play Another pleasing result of work over several years, which has succeeded in filling in one of our original missing links. Edward Saltiel's story has an authenticity arising out of the “deeper truth” of the family's ultimately Catalan origins.



Thesis Thirty-five That Emanuel H Saltiel has been slandered by descendants of colonists of a failed agricultural settlement in Cotopaxi, Colorado.

Why it matters Emanuel H(arriss) Saltiel is a figure of minor notoriety in Colorado as the promoter of this failed colony for *Chasidim* on land above Cotopaxi which he sold to hias in the early 1880s.

As with *Kakhya* Shealtiel, the demands of our “Grand Narrative” oblige us to attempt to correct any defamation of a figure in the historical record. And once again family self-esteem encourages us to do what we can to set the record straight.

Sponsor This is advocated by Miles Saltiel as a result of his involvement in the *Shealtiel Film*.

- a) Every Jewish agricultural colony in the U.S. ended in failure; why single out Emanuel for this one?
- b) Nothing tells us how he might have expected to profit from his alleged villainy, with Ilan's investigation finding no support for the traditional allegations that Emanuel perpetrated a fraud on hias and connived at the supply of cheap labour for his mine.

Challenge This is disputed by Dr Jeanne Abrahams of the University of Denver, who adheres to the traditional view, and Ilan Ziv who independently investigated and ended up taking the view that:

- a) Emanuel promoted the colony recklessly in light of his knowledge of the poverty of the land concerned.
- b) He was in it for the temporary use of the money subscribed by hias for land and infrastructure.

State of play Ilan's examination of the record revealed that the original accusations fail to hold water, leaving Dr Adams with no real explanation for the alleged villainy. Ilan also realised that if Emanuel knew in advance that the colony would fail he could not—as a locally prominent Jew—have expected to hang onto hias' money. Sticking to the local tradition of villainy has forced Ilan to develop the notion that Emanuel knowingly promoted the debacle to obtain the temporary use of the sums involved. This is a real stretch. It looks more like bad judgement all round.



Thesis Thirty-six That another Emanuel, one of the three sons of Elias iii who left Amsterdam for London in 1869, settled in the States after he left his family in London.

Why it matters A byway in our “Grand Narrative”. The oral tradition of the Emanuel line has it that he told his wife, Louisa that he was going to America, but no documentary trace of him has ever been found.

State of play This comes to us from Lorna O'Connell, who would simply like to resolve the mystery of her forbear. Moshe has found suggestions of his presence in New York census records of the early 1900s. It would be nice to clear this up and it ought to be possible to do so.



Thesis Thirty-seven That Gen. David Shaltiel's war record has been unfairly criticised.

Why it matters Gen. Shaltiel commanded the Jerusalem garrison during the 1947 War of Independence. He held the city but an assault to relieve the Jewish Quarter of the Old City failed, obliging its abandonment and exposing Gen. Shaltiel to condemnation then and since. Once again family self-esteem and the demands of our "Grand Narrative" oblige us to set the record straight if we can.

State of play There can be no question that the raid failed and that as the theatre commander, Gen. Shaltiel had formal responsibility, something which he felt keenly for the balance of his life. The issue is how much should he be criticised.

According to Jehudith Shaltiel, the General was under no illusions either as to his military prowess—a tour of duty in the ranks of the French Foreign Legion fifteen years before—or the reason for his appointment: "No one wants Jerusalem, so they have given it to the dumb Kraut who will take orders".

It sounds like his subsequent reputation has suffered at the hands of historians with strong feelings about Israel's claim on the Old City. The General's widow Jehudith Shaltiel speaks ruefully of the character of modern Israeli historical and political disputation, "We live on infamy".

In 1947, however, the fragile tactical position of the Jerusalem garrison evidently placed the Jewish Quarter beyond relief. In this light we can only ask whether the raid should have been mounted if it was doomed to failure. Presumably the record would reveal much of the decision-making process. In the meantime we may understand in this instance any departure from the idf's customary lack of sentiment. We should also keep in mind that David Shaltiel held enough of the city for it to become his country's capital.



Thesis Thirty-eight That the Shealtiels are beset by a curse and subject to a tragic destiny.

Why it matters We have to start from the commonsensical premise that no such generality ever makes sense—any more than its converse in (39) following. This said, self-dramatising themes of this kind affect the way in which we look at ourselves and our past and thus the spirit in which we construct our "Grand Narrative".

Sponsors This is advocated in different ways by Ilan Ziv, Robert Saltiel and Lynette Grave, as well as by Vibeke Olsen—see (39) following. Ilan has made no bones that the "Shealtiel Film" reflects his ultimately tragic view of the world by presenting the paradox of the family's continuity in the face of a series of calamities—the forced conversion of Saltel Gracian, the pov-

erty of Elias of Amsterdam, the failed dreams of Emanuel of Colorado, the submission to the false gods of the thirties of Ralph Saltiel and Rosa Miller, the destruction of the family of Rob Sealtiel, and David Shaltiel's failure to save Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter.

Less seriously, when Robert Saltiel of Lafayette, California and Lynette Grave of New Zealand met recently, they had a humorous conversation about a "Saltiel curse"—though on Lynette's part this embraced little more serious than mishaps with domestic appliances.

Challenge This is energetically disputed by Moshe Shaltiel, who would have it that we should be in the business of talking up the family—see (39) following—and that all such nay-saying is to be discouraged. And your editor has never been happy that Jews have been in the van of the modern cult of the victim, however understandably following the Holocaust, or that the family should play a part in this.

State of play Your editor felt that Ilan's film served the family well, portraying our positive qualities despite his Chekhovian view of the world. I also gather that a more generous approach to scheduling at pbs may permit the film to include material making for a more upbeat ending for the u.s. audience.



Thesis Thirty-nine That the Shealtiels are great successes and fine fellows.

Why it matters As above. Themes of this kind affect the way in which we look at ourselves and the spirit in which we construct our history.

Sponsor This view is urged by Moshe Shaltiel, who argues that the family has been generally prosperous throughout its history with a full quota of distinguished figures in rabbinical and lay scholarship, medicine, public affairs and business.

Additional comment It would be unfair to set Vibeke up in opposition, but it is true to say that she is particularly conscious of the modest condition of the Dutch family.

State of play There can be no rights and wrongs in any of this. But we should be alert for the agenda of all of those who play a part in the history which comes down to us. Thus, I have become aware of how much the English family's dalliance with communism as a defence against the anti-Semitism of the 1930s caused that generation to reinvent the family—actually a mixed bag of traders and tradesmen with no-one on the bread-line—in a more agonised and proletarian light.



These then are our thirty-nine theses, some proven, some calling for investigation, some for analysis, some

for debate. Much of our work may be done privately, but if we are serious about correcting historical reputations we may also have to enter the public domain with material akin to the paper on *Kakhya* Shealtiel presented to the Salonica Reunion by Shlomo Shaltiel. And in sum we may say that if we make as much of these theses as we did of the missing links set out fifty-six months ago, we will do well—for the family

and for the generality of scholarship in the field—and that we may expect to have new findings to present to the family when we assemble in Barcelona next year.

A response from Ed Motola is printed on page 27. More are welcome.

GENEALOGY



An Internet colloquy on Sephardic surnames

Last year Vibeke Sealtiël Olsen presided over the following exchange on Sephardic surnames which took place under the auspices of the “Dona Deli” group for the study of Sephardic history she has founded on the Internet.

From: Leon Taranto LBT EPT LBTEPT@aol.com

Date: Thu, 26 Feb 1998 01:24:02 EST

I am pleased that you have raised the important issue of Ottoman archives, as I am eager to obtain access to genealogical data concerning my Sephardic ancestors who lived almost exclusively in the Ottoman domains before they began to emigrate in the early years of this century. I have a little information to share on the subject, and would welcome whatever anyone else can add.

(1) Harold Rhodes' (HR) article on “The Ottoman Empire and Jewish Genealogy,” published in the Spring 1992 issue of Avotaynu, vol. VIII, provides some guidance concerning the archives of the Ottoman Empire that might pertain to the Sephardim who lived in its domains. HR refers to Ottoman Census Registers, which were drawn up for tax purposes. Perhaps as long ago as the 16th century, registers of all the non-Muslims were prepared (as they were the taxpayers). HR recounts that at times, the Jews made deals with the Ottoman authorities whereby they were allowed to pay some specific amount, typically below the amount that would have to be paid if the Ottomans had registered every head of every Jewish household. As a result, the registers do not contain all heads of households.

An even greater problem for the Jewish genealogist of today is that the registers contained virtually no surnames. Men are commonly listed by their personal names, and that of their fathers (e.g. Moshe ben Yehuda). Sometimes the individual's occupation is also included, or even the name of the place associated with him.

HR explains that these registers, known as Mufassal Defters, are in Turkish and written in Arabo-Persian script. To make matters even more complex for the Sephardic genealogist of today, the scribes used their own version of the script called Siyaqat, which supposedly only these scribes could read. HR says that

this script is extremely difficult to decipher today. He adds, however, that some have been transliterated and published in Latin script. HR, for example, has transliterated a register of the Jews of 16th century Safat. Although his register is not published, he points out that some registers have been published for Buda (part of Budapest today), and Tblisi, Georgia. He suggests that inquiries be made to the U.S. Library of Congress, possibly in the European Division or the African and Middle Eastern Division. Registers would be cataloged by the country that it might concern today (e.g. Hungary, Georgia, Bosnia, Turkey, etc.). “At least two copies of the registers were made. One was left locally;

the other was sent to the archives of the prime minister in Istanbul.”

***“The Jewish genealogist of today
faces the problem that the registers
contain virtually no surnames.”***

HR cautions that obtaining access to the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul may not be easy. “The Turkish authorities allow access to these records but the researcher must prove that he can read the Ottoman script first.” However, the fact that “there are many valuable documents in the archives,” going all the way back to the 1500s, might encourage one to make the attempt.

In the same article, HR refers to the work of Professor Mina Rosen of Tel Aviv University's History Department in photographing all existing Jewish tombstones in the past and present Ottoman Empire, including over 80,000 Jewish gravestones from present-day Turkey. Supposedly the data from the photographs is being or has been computerized. As I understand it, the project was funded by the Annenberg Research Institute (ARI). The librarian there mentioned that a very expensive book of photos by Rosen had been published. The librarian was to fax me a copy of the cover sheet for the book, but unfortunately I did not receive it and have not followed up.

HR's article also mentions an “Amnon Cohen of Jerusalem” who is “doing in the Ottoman Archive of the Israel State Archives.”

(2) Another article in the same issue of Avotaynu, this one a piece by Randy Daitch (RD) entitled “Ottoman

Empire Resources,” mentions that Professor Bernard Lewis, former director of the Annenberg Research Institute for Judaic and Middle Eastern Studies in Philadelphia, prepared a monograph in 1952 entitled “Notes and Documents from the Turkish Archives.” RD mentions that Lewis’ monograph provides a “ tantalizing glimpse of Ottoman registers” and suggests that it is a valuable source for family records in Turkey. RD also refers to Lewis’ 1980 work entitled “Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire.” Perhaps the 1980 book (article?) provides additional information concerning these Ottoman Empire archives.

RD mentions several other published and unpublished items that might be of interest in researching the genealogy of the Ottoman Sephardim. These include: (a) Stanford Shaw’s book (which I have) on *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (1991); (b) “Korot Kayehudim be-Torkiyah ve’Artsot Ha-kedem” (History of the Jews in Turkey and the Oriental Countries) (Hosiatin, 1907, Vol. I, pp. 270-371) (a Hebrew text with “an extensive list of Sephardic surnames in the Ottoman Empire and an explanation of their likely origins”); (c) *Turkiye ve Yahudiler* (Turkey and the Jews) (Istanbul, 1968) (described by RD as “an anti-Semitic tract that includes lists of contemporary Jewish merchants in cities throughout Turkey”); and (d) “unpublished papers of a seminar held May 10-12, 1987, at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts,” on “Jews in the Ottoman Empire,” which apparently includes a report given at the seminar by Fatma Muge Gocek on “Archival Information on Ottoman Jews_Inheritance Register of the Chief Rabbi, 1769 CE.” Avidor Levy, director of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Brandeis, was the seminar chairman.

RD’s article also alludes to some sources for the genealogy of Jews in Greece.

(3) In addition to the sources mentioned above, I happen to know of listings of deaths and burials among the Jews of Izmir for the last seven decades, and listings of Jewish brides and grooms who were married in Izmir during the last fews decades of Ottoman rule (1881 onward). Articles or publications by Dov Cohen, Philip Abensur, and Laurence Abensur-Hazan discuss much of this data. If anyone is interested in specifics on this, please let me know. Also, I know that birth data has also been preserved in Izmir, going back to the early years of this century. I also know of (and have) listings of burials and deaths for the Jews of Rhodes, going back about 150 years.

If anyone within our group finds any treasure trove concerning archival material for the Sephardim of Izmir, Rhodes, Salonica, or Antalya I Adalia), I would be extremely interested since virtually all of my ancestors over the last couple of hundred years come from these four places within the Ottoman Empire (especially Izmir and Rhodes).

Leon Taranto

From: malkajef@orthohelp.com

Date: Fri, 27 Feb 98

As you know I have had questions about the apparent disappearance of certain Sephardic names from Spain. I have received a very interesting answer from Ben Nahman that I thought the group might be interested in:

Jeffs question: It has always struck me as peculiar that when one reads of the Jewish names of the “Spanish Golden Era”, they seem to be predominantly Hebrew or Arab sounding and when one looks at the listing of Jewish exiles from Spain, they seem to be predominantly Hispanic sounding names. What happened to the descendants of Hasdai ibn Shaprut, ibn Ezra, Ibn

Gabriol, Judah Halevi, Ibn Daoud and all the other prominent Jewish names during the “Golden era” of Spanish Jewry?

**“What happened to the descendants
of the prominent names of the
Golden Era of Hispanic Jewry”**

Bens responses: Did they have no descendants? Did they Hispanicise their names? Did they move out of Spain to Arab lands with the Arabs with whom many had come to Spain and who had allowed them much more freedom than the Christians? With the Muslims in Spain for eight centuries (I even found and put a document on my website where the King Carlos of Spain signed his own letter in Arabic!) how come the majority of Sephardic exiles have Spanish sounding names? Lets go down the list of names of prominent families.

- Ibn Ezra descendants (or names) are still around as Benezra, I knew some.
- Ha-Levi are still around, both those who dropped the ha- to become Levi, Levy. One Rabbi Ha-Levi became the Bishop of Burgos and another left Spain for the town of Horowitz east of Pilsen taking that name as his family name, (his descendent is a friend of mine.)
- Hasan, name still around as Hassan/Hasson etc
- Crespin, still around as Crespi.
- Mascaran, there were and still are in Gerona, Mascara/Mascaran are Chuetas from Mallorca. or Maxcaran from Toledo.
- Abulafia, Plenty still here. Ha-Levi and Abulafia families intertwined.

- Sefaradi converted to Pedro Alfonso de Huesca
 - Daud/David died as a martyr. David name still around as surname.
 - Maimon name still used.
 - Abrabanel/ Abravanel/ Abravaya names also.
 - Nahman, alive and while not a large clan, I keep finding more.
 - Ovadia still around.
 - Abouab/Abouaf large group still around (one is a friend of ours)
 - ben-Yitsjak are mostly known under Isaac surname
 - ben-Shaul now used as surname Shaul
 - al-nakawa became Elnacave
 - ben-Veniste now Benveniste
 - ha-Cohen became Cohen
 - ben -Moshe became surname Moshe (my paternal aunt married one)
- and many more.

Note that the overwhelming are not “Spanish” names, but of Hebrew or Arabic origin. The term is really a misnomer as

the only Spanish names are the Basque names, all others have more recent Roman, Visigoth connection. The mass conversions removed many of the original names from the scene and they “gave their illustrious names to the Spanish literature of the 15th. century, like Santa Maria y Cartajena, the Caballeria, the Santa Fe, Fernando de la Torre, Juan de Baena, Alfonso de Zamora, Francisco Lopez de Villalobos and many more in finance, such as Diego Arias Davila, Luis de Santangel, Gabriel Sanchez etc.” Then when many of the *Marranos* escaped to the new world or to the Ottoman-ruled areas one, two or three generations or more later, they usually changed only their given names back to Jewish ones and kept their new surnames; or—as in many “new world” areas—even hid their past or forgot it. Though, among my contacts, I find they intermarried with other *conversos*. Coincidence? At the same time, those Jews with no surnames began to adopt them using either a given name or the name of a town; Toledo, Zaragoza, or profession: thus, Isaac el tendero = Isaac Tendero.

My own guess is that this development might be a combination of two things: The Jewish luminaries of the ninth and tenth centuries of the “Golden era” lived under Muslim rule and most moved out of Spain much earlier than 1492 retreating with the Arab retreat out of Spain, (though obviously many did stay in Spain in the advancing Christian kingdoms and may have

panicised their names). Those that stayed removed the A, Aben, al, abu, etc from their names as can be seen from reading the list of the Toledo Jews in the Tello book, but that did not Hispanicise their names. The prefixes removed, their names became Adan, Adany, Adar, Albacan, Ambram, Namen, Namias, Atar, Cadiq, Sason, Benezra, Farach, Gadallah, Harun, Hayon Sabad, etc., though some were hispanicised by that same removal or had Jewish names to begin with: Viva, Biva, Nunez, Zamerro, Granate

Jeff’s comment: The 1492 Jewish exiles from Spain were a different group, living in Christian Spain, mostly moving south from their origins in northern Spain (which had always remained Christian), gaining their wealth in Christian Spain and prone to use Hispanic names and inter-marry with the Christian nobility. These would be the families of Sephardim with very Hispanic sounding names.”

Ben’s response: Well, not quite so, I cannot find that there was any greater amount of conversion in Christian Spain than took place in the newly reconquered areas wrested from Moslem Spain. As a matter of record, when the Almohades (invited into Spain by the

Kalifs to stem the tide of the reconquest) began forcible conversions, it was to the Christian north that the Jews fled and Catalonia took them in.

“It is possible that there were two groups of Jews in Spain, leaving at different times”

While some of the Jews in the north were known by their Catalan names, such as Rabbi Nahman called Bonastrug da Porta, or Gerondi, this was not as a forcible or punitive phenomenon. Bonastrug da Porta was first Bayle of Gerona and later of all Catalonia, as well as the King’s personal physician. He was treated with honour, as were others. Benveniste da Porta as his brother was known, was the Bayle for Barcelona. It was the wedding of the church to the Spanish state that turned later rulers into the handmaidens of the church’s drive to impose its religion on the Jews.

Jeff’s question: The idea of two groups of Jews in Spain is supported by some language studies (Paul Wexler from Israel comes to mind) which show a difference in language of the Jews of north versus the southern 4/5th of Spain. However I am otherwise just guessing. Mainly I am intrigued with what happened to the descendants of the biggest Jewish names of the Spanish Golden Era which occurred mainly under the Muslims. What happened to these descendants? That is the gist of my query and I find it hard to believe that the discrepancy has not caused others to wonder too. Any thoughts?

Bens reply: I haven’t read Wexler’s book yet but his contention that the Sephardim were not really Jews doesn’t sit well with what I have read so far and using

linguistics as a base for such a study doesn't sound like good scholarship. But I'll have to read what he said. As for the language differences, yes the Jews of Catalonia spoke Catalan, Hebrew, as well as Latin and Arabic depending on how educated they were and what position in society they held.

By contrast in Moslem Spain, the languages of the province were Hebrew and Arabic, once again depending on the positions they held economically, socially, and politically. Except for ritualistic necessary Hebrew words used when speaking to other Jews and words such as Shabat and Alchad instead of Sabado and Domingo I don't think there was any special difference. At one time it was thought that they spoke Ladin, but I don't think anyone says that now.

There were two distinct migrations into Spain but when the Jews that accompanied the Moors into Spain from North Africa they found established and "called Tarragona the city of the Jews" (Medinet-al Yuhud). The same name was applied to Granada. Lucena was a predominantly Jewish city. There is no doubt that Moslem rule in general, and in Spain particularly, was much more tolerant in religious matters and conducted a "living together" than was true in Christian Spain especially as the reconquest gained militarily. But it far from a climate of perfect tolerance of other creeds and the Almohades even persecuted other Moslem sects who were not "pure" enough for them. **End of Bens comments.**

Jeff Malka

From: Leon Taranto LBT EPT LBTEPT@aol.com

Date: Sun, 8 Mar 1998 20:31:52 EST

In the Dona Deli discussions concerning Sephardi surname development, Ben Nahman made a number of important observations and raised some very interesting questions. One particular inquiry caught my attention. So maybe we ought to look to Italy to see when surnames became the norm under Roman rule, if they did.

My interest in Ben's inquiry is due, in part, to the fact that some branches of my own family came from Italy

(e.g. the southern Italian cities of Taranto and Capua are the source for at least two of my family surnames—Taranto and Capouya), or at least spent a couple of generations there (e.g., certainly Oumano, and perhaps Herrera and Capelluto). Since they came to the Ottoman Empire with geographic surnames identifying their Italian city of origin, I suspect that they were not using surnames in their native land of Italy. Or perhaps they had abandoned their Jewish surnames when the Inquisition followed the Sephardim to southern Italy in the early 1500's and the Jews living there were forced into exile.?

Ben Nahman noted that the argument made that the needs of the state for more accurate tax rolls is so far the soundest we can come up with for the introduction of family names from an economic point of view, which is primary in my view.

While I offered that view previously and still subscribe to it, I also wanted to mention that yet another economic underpinning for the need for family names is the recording of deeds and other commercial transactions. There are some commercial instruments in which the surnames of Jews of Navarre are recorded. Beatrice Leroy's book on *The Jews of Navarre* refers to these documents.

Leon Taranto

The participants in this colloquy have offered the following autobiographies:

Benjamin Haim Nahman, Born 3/22/21, in N.Y. USA, the 4th. of 5 children.; Parents: Haim Joseph Nahman and Jentil Soulam, both from Salonica. Married Nilda Ramos 6/28/41, We have 2 sons, Jaime (Haim) b1947; David b1964. Now residing in Los Angeles, Calif.

Jeff Malka is an Orthopedic surgeon with an interest in Jewish genealogy.

Leon Taranto, born in Atlanta, Georgia, is a descendant of Ottoman Sephardim from Rhodes and Izmir. He lives in Rockville, Maryland, and is a partner in the Washington, DC, law firm of Schmeltzer, Aptaker & Shepard.

FAMILY HISTORY



The Shealtiel Film

In his memoir of the Shealtiel Film, taking us to the end of shooting, Ilan Ziv traces the nerve-wrenching conditions in which it was made.

Believe it or not, film-making is a serious affair. It takes a couple of years of life to produce a film; you immerse yourself in other people's lives and realities, you meet dozens of new people—in short, every film becomes a life-changing experience.

So when I look back at the making of the Shealtiel film it is hard, maybe impossible, to look at it in any other way. It took me to places I have never been before, introduced me to new people, and through research, to periods in history I knew little about, and finally, put me in touch with personal questions and issues I had hardly focused on before.



I have tried to summarise the experience below, not only for the reader but also for myself. It is the first time that I have paused to think and remember.

The nature of my business is such that I am always moving forward to new projects and films. I am now involved in a documentary series produced throughout the Middle East; in a film following the Public Defender and Public Prosecutor in the Bronx in New York; and in the preparations for another film in Jerusalem to be filmed this fall and winter. Besides concrete plans, there are the dreams and the hopes of various other projects so, although many of you have just seen the film or heard about it, for me, unfortunately, it is increasingly only a memory. Such is the relentless pressure of surviving as a filmmaker at the end of the century. Although I resisted writing this piece for a long time, I now welcome the chance to slow down, remember and try to define what the Shealtiel film meant for me.

The family members who will read this will realise early on that my experiences have little to do with the family or with the family's history. What attracted me to the project, and I believe what attracted people to the film, is that through the story of one family we get in touch with the history of the Jewish Diaspora. Thus although few of us can trace our ancestors back to the House of David or to medieval Spain, all of us have something of the Shealtiel. The family re-awakening af-

ter so many hundreds of years is a phenomenon not limited to the Shealtiels, but one which touches all of us who are exploring a Jewish identity which is not tribal or backward-looking, but an identity that fits our contemporary multicultural, primarily secular world.

So when I try to define to myself what attracted me to the story of the Shealtiels, how I was "lured" into this adventure, it is perhaps this combination of a fascination with history on one hand and a need to define what it means to be Jewish at the end of the 20th century on the other. In my own case I do not need to define it so much for myself (born and raised in Israel) but much more for my daughters who were born and are growing up in New York. I am the third generation

"The film took me to places I have never been, introducing me to personal issues I have never before dealt with"

of my family who is not living in his/her place of birth. My grandparents on my mother's side came to Israel from Russia after the Russian revolution; my father's family

perished in the Holocaust and he escaped to Israel. I was born and raised in Israel, yet I have been living for the past 25 years in the US. It is only recently that I began to think of the meaning of it all. So maybe I turned to the Shealtiel family history, if not for answers, then for a point of departure for personal research. Like that of any Jewish family, the Shealtiels' is a history of migrations and dispersions, some forced by historical circumstances and some voluntary. The family experiment in self-discovery is maybe an early attempt to come to grips with such a history and to try to invent a form, to forge a family identity that does not deny this particular history but embraces and incorporates it.



The beginning of the project was hardly eventful and its details are rather banal: Nathan Caspi, the Head of Documentaries in Israeli TV, is a friend and he asked my help to co-produce a six part series on Jewish families in the Diaspora. They had worked on it for a year with no success and had been unable to raise any real money. They had not chosen the families to be included in the series but had done preliminary research at the Diaspora museum on one family, the

Shealtiels. “We do not know who the other five families should be”, I remember Nathan saying, “but the Shealtiels must be included!”

When I read the two or three pages which summarised the history of the Shealtiel family, I saw immediately that the story was too big for one hour and that it would be a mistake to squeeze it into one program. I felt that by focusing on one family, we would create a much clearer and more dramatic narrative that would tell better the story that Israeli Television wanted to tell: the story of Jewish “peoplehood” and the place of Israel in such a saga. So I suggested a series or a feature-length documentary that would be the story of only one family. Israeli television agreed and thus the film was born.



In my field there are plenty of ideas for great films. However the art is to make them happen, since television production can be so expensive. Since Israeli television was already in touch with various foundations including the Bronfman family foundation, I naively thought that we could move rapidly from ideas to action, i.e. begin research and production. In my mind it was an easy one: rather than spending months trying to raise funds, I would have the luxury of being given a budget so that I could do what I love to do most—make films. I was in for a rude awakening.

Fund-raising was uphill from the outset. Even after the bbc got involved, it took months to turn commitments into contracts. Six months were spent in meetings, writing letters to broadcasters, rewriting proposals—the boring part of film-making which unfortunately takes most of the time. But now suddenly the project was real: in October 1997, almost six months after I first met my friend from Israeli tv, I received the first development money which would turn our few pages of proposal into a shooting script. For me this was the real birth of the film. I was speaking on the phone to “real Shealtiels”, not pitching to television producers or potential backers. I began travelling in search of people and locations that would transform the Shealtiel saga into concrete visual scenes and episodes—into a film.



I started with a visit to Moshe in Chicago. I remember it as an overwhelming experience. Moshe’s hospitality was wonderful and I loved the hours spent with him and with his wife Gila. The problem however was

that I was thrown quite unexpectedly into an ocean of information and I was drowning quickly. I will never forget the huge dinner-table Moshe had covered with different heaps of books and documents, a fragment of the enormous research he had already done. For him it was an efficient way to organise my visit, but for me it was a frightening example of what I was getting into. Moshe was walking me around the table talking non-stop, offering a litany of facts, dates, historical connections and connections he found between family members. I felt I was descending to the ocean floor, unable to come up for air. It is a feeling that was not to leave me for three months as I delved into the ocean of facts, names, dates, locations, decades, centuries...over nine hundred years of history of a family spread literally around dozens of countries.

I was saved only by experience. I have been in similar situations many times before. I learned in the past that the only solution is to let go and hope that eventually one day as you come up for air you will realise that somehow out of this vast ocean, you have succeeded in selecting a narrative, a story that can be told and that can be appreciated and understood by large audiences.

“I was submerging in an ocean of facts, names, dates—over nine hundred years around dozens of countries.”

ences. This I believe was the most difficult part of making this film. I knew from the beginning that only fragments of information could make it into the series or the feature-length film.

But which stories out of the dozens? Who would be the main characters? How can you tell the story of a family spread all over the world without overwhelming audiences to the point of lost interest? How can you form a narrative spine that will transform the film from a collection of fascinating anecdotes to a coherent narrative? At that stage there were only questions and an ocean of facts, places, dates and people.



The research period not only introduced me to some wonderful people and fascinating stories but to places I have never been before. I have had a professional relationship with Dutch Television for over 15 years. I am in Amsterdam maybe 5 times a year, maybe more. But I have never visited the “Snoga”, the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. I will never forget my first visit there with Rob and Vibeke. It was a cold December morning. It was freezing in the unheated synagogue. We were alone and I found the experience almost overwhelming. It is not only the size and grandeur of this place, left preserved as if it were built yesterday, not over 300 years ago; but the knowledge that centuries of humanity had passed through this synagogue: hundreds of thousands, maybe millions,

whose lives intertwined with this building. From Rob I got the sense of the great importance of the synagogue in his life and that of the Shealtiels in Holland. It was this knowledge, set against the emptiness and vastness of the place, that was so moving. I think it is there that I

felt for the first time the weight of history in this film and that the Shealtiels is not a film about one family or even about individuals within a family, but the story of so many Jewish civilisations throughout the past centuries, each civilisation leaving a relic: buildings, ornaments, books and maybe religious objects—small reminders of so much history.



I had a similar experience in Salonica. I came to the city after doing a lot of reading, and spent an evening, including a delicious Friday night dinner, with Rosa Modiano and her 92 year old mother Lili, listening to those haunting stories of Salonica before the war. On my way to Salonica I stopped in Athens, where I visited the home of Yanis Megas. He has an extraordinary collection of rare post cards from old Salonica; newspaper clippings from the 19th century; and business directories from the beginning of the century (with page after page of Shealtiels).

In France I had seen scratchy black and white archive films. So by the time I arrived I had such a clear picture of the city in my head that the confrontation with the “real” Salonica was a shock. This was the Jerusalem of the Balkans, at times the largest Jewish community in the Diaspora, the only city where Jews were once a majority—and yet there was no trace of it. It was as if a huge tornado had swept once through the city, sucking in its people, their graves, their buildings and synagogues, leaving only memories with nothing in reality to anchor them.

The fact that Salonica also “modernised” itself after the war with almost no regard to its rich past added to this feeling of alienation. Only in Salonica did I understand what “Engineer Rousseau” (who established the centre for Salonica Jews in Israel) told me when we spoke on the phone, before I left: “I never go back to Salonica”, he said, “Why should I? The city now has nothing to do with the Salonica I remember. For me it is only a graveyard”.

In fact, Salonica’s former graveyard (uprooted by the Nazis) is the place that symbolised this disconnection between past and present for me. It is now part of the Aristotelian University, a huge hill dotted with gardens, parks and university buildings. A few days earlier at the house of Yanis Megas, I had seen that wonderful collection of photographs taken at the beginning of the century. In them one could see how the same area looked before the war: a vast Jewish necropolis with graves dating back to the 14th century.

The Jewish civilisation that was destroyed in Salonica did reappear, albeit in a mutated form, in the dozens of young Israeli, French and Argentine Shealtiels, all tracing themselves back to Salonica, the city which survives only in memories and faded photographs.

The Shealtiel film for me will always be those impressions of Salonica and Holland in December on the one hand and the family reunion in Salonica later that year, in the hot summer of 1997, on the other. In between lies for me the story of the film and of Jewish history up to the 20th century—cycles of destruction and re-birth.



It was June 1997. almost six months had passed since I submitted the script and yet the budget had not been fully raised. The reunion was around the corner and yet I could not hire anybody or commit myself to any schedule. I was about to lose my crew and assistants. I felt that, if we were to miss this deadline, the project would never happen. I was growing desperate. I was ready to begin filming. I knew I could

charge my American Express card to ensure that we could film the reunion but how was I going to pay out those tens of thousands of dollars?

“No-one at the reunion knew the drama behind the scenes: I might have to charge filming to my credit card.”

We had a telephone conference between Michael A Levine, the lawyer to the Bronfmans in Toronto, who had been so helpful in getting the film launched, and the bbc offices in Manchester and New York. We agreed on an emergency plan. The bbc would begin advancing money towards the production while I committed to produce the film on whatever budget we were able to raise, in case we failed to raise the rest of the funds. It was an insane idea. If things went wrong the bbc was going to be left with an unbroadcastable film which would fit no slot. I was going to be working months without pay—in short, a disaster. Everyone agreed to take this risk. The entire project was hanging in the air, but we were there on location to film the family’s second international reunion in Salonica.



None of the participants in the reunion knew of the drama behind the scenes: daily calls flew between the hotel, London and Manchester as John Drury, the bbc Executive Producer, tried to by-pass his bureaucracy and to ensure that when I was back in New York there would be money to pay the bills I was accumulating. It seems like a distant nightmare now.

I remember it as a disorienting experience. I have very few memories from those days and those are mostly of being woken up early in the morning after we had filmed until 3-4 a.m., to be told by the production manager in Manchester that money would not be wired today for this or that reason; and of chasing the executive producer in London on his mobile phone while talking at the same time to Laurence, the associate producer, to see when we could see the props needed for the following night's filming. Because we wanted to save money, we were filming in Salonica both the reunion and those other scenes that needed to be filmed in the city for the rest of the film.

It was a surrealistic production but not atypical. There was no way we could have missed filming the reunion and without everyone involved boldly jumping into the water, who knows, the project might never have begun after all those months of work everyone put into it.



The rest of the production was less eventful though hardly lacking in stress. I know I am supposed to remember fondly all those wonderful interviews and great people we met and talked to on the road but my keenest memories focus elsewhere. I vividly remember working all night in a medieval lane in Gerona, filming scenes which simulated the 1391 riots. I remember myself at 4 a.m. crouching in front of a monitor with the camera-operator while everybody else on the set threw feathers in front of fans to create the snow of feathers that became such a moving image of the looting of the Gerona *Juderia* (Jewish quarter) which took place in exactly the same streets 600 years earlier. Unlike Salonica, history was all around us, including

the Cathedral bells which rang every half hour. It was that same Cathedral where in 1391 Saltel Gracian converted to Christianity to escape death. Somehow at 4 a.m. the combination of feathers, the tolling of the bell, myself literally crouching at the bottom of the narrow lane in the shadow of the immense Cathedral, was like an hallucination where history and the present fused into one. In my delirious state, I could almost imagine the shadows of the *Juderia's* inhabitants against the walls, running in front of the fires we set up in the steep narrow lane. Needless to say they were two assistants coming to view how the scene came out on tape.

Miles will never forget his wet shoes in the snow in the Cotopaxi cemetery in Colorado, being asked to pass in front of the camera just one more time. Later, as he sat shivering in the car, he told me he couldn't remember being so cold since he was a child. I have a similar memory from Hamburg—a freezing morning in December while waiting for first light, so we could capture the image of "Elias' wagon" making its way from Amsterdam to Hamburg in early morning mist.

And so from the steaming heat of Salonica in July to frozen Colorado, we trod the same ground where hundreds of years ago individual Shealtiels lived, died, and were buried. This was a unique experience I will never forget. The cold, the sweat, the lack of sleep just made it more real: you could almost imagine how it felt to be in such a place hundreds of years earlier.



By January production came to an end and with it ended the easy part. The real difficulties were only beginning.

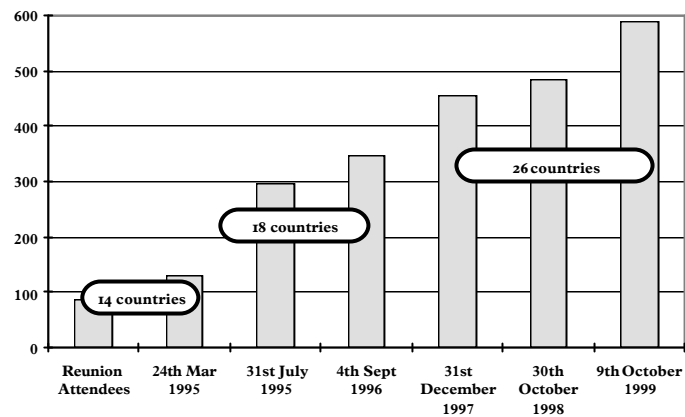
FAMILY MATTERS



Outreach

The graph on the right illustrates how the number of confirmed family households known to us has expanded from 85 in fourteen countries at the time of the Amsterdam reunion to 589 in twenty-six countries now. This includes households which we have approached but which have not necessarily responded including Saltellis in Italy & North America, Chaltiels and Saltells in France, and US addresses identified by Internet search engines.

Number of known family households—1994-1999



Local volunteers

Social Our local volunteers are our most immediate connection to our family network, helping to maintain local records and to promote local family spirit. Examples of such activities may include:

- Organising national or local social events.
- Receiving newly discovered members of the family.
- Recording births, *brisses*, Bar Mitzvahs, marriages, and deaths.
- Soliciting personal advertisements & announcements for the *Gazette*.

We will include reports from time to time in future issues.

Contact points

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The Americas

Moshe Shaltiel Gracian +1 847 498 8884

Genealogy

Ed Motola +1 801 644 2999

On the basis of the material sent to us by family, follow-up interviews in France, Greece, Israel, Mexico and the us, and examination of the Salonica records from 1915 to 1942 now held in the Ids genealogical archives in Salt Lake City, we have made a preliminary identification of the following:

Danube line.

This embraces the families of Hertha Siegel of Vienna and Natalie Saltiel *et al* in Chicago. It was founded by Reuben Saltiel of Pest (now Budapest), Hungary, born *circa* 1795.

North Sea line.

This line originates with an implicit Isaac Saltiel of London *circa* 1700. Yomtob—the presumed brother of Isaac—founded a line with branches in the US, as well as a recently discovered English branch including David Saltiel of Hull. Isaac's son, Elias, founded the extensive and well-documented London–Amsterdam–Hamburg line with modern offshoots in Australasia & the Far East, Israel, the Netherlands, the uk, and the us, among them (e.g.) Suzanne Best, Robyn Byron, Vibeke Olsen, Rob Sealtiel, Miles Saltiel, Irene Takamizu, and the late Paula Aaronson.

Ottoman lines.

This includes several branches where we are in the process of documenting

links and to which we have given the following working names:

“Han Bechor”: The founder of this branch was Yosef Moshe Shaltiel. He lived in Salonika *circa* 1830 and his descendants include Aron Saltiel of Graz, Austria and descendants in France, Turkey, Israel and the US.

“House”: This family has been in Israel from the early years of this century, lending its name to the eponymous house, a Tel Aviv land-mark. Members include Thomas Saltiel of London and family in France and Israel.

“Istanbul”: This includes Simon Saltiel of Istanbul and his cousins in Mexico and Israel.

“Moïse-Paris”: This Parisian branch was founded by a brother of the founder of the “House” branch. Members include the founder and his children in Italy, as well as his brother, physics professor David Shaltiel of Hebrew University, and his family.

“Salonica”: The Carasso family of Argentina descends from Rabbi David Sadi Saltiel of Salonica. They are also related to Colonel (ret.) Moshe Shaltiel of Re’ut, Israel; and the sub-branch which includes Shmuel Shaltiel, Flora Saltiel Modiano, Maurice Saltiel of Villiers-sur-Marne, Henry Saltiel of Vancouver, and Moshe Shaltiel of Chicago.

Following Moshe Shaltiel Gracian’s presentation to the family of his multi thousand name family tree, new information should go to him at :

1901 Raymond Drive
Northbrook, Illinois 60062
USA

tel 1 847 498 8884

fax 1 847 564 1303

Open Door—Exchange visits**Thea Rønsby-Veltkamp +45 53 46 20 84**

One in ten of our subscribers are now participating in the family's hospital-ity exchange scheme. For details, please see separate enclosure. Those wishing to join the scheme should write to:

Thea Rønsby-Veltkamp
Tuse Naes Vej 14
4300 Holbaek
Denmark

Gazette & Administration**Miles Saltiel +44 171 262 6498****e-mail:****100605.2677@compuserve.com**

The *Gazette* is the principal medium through which the family communicates. The editor welcomes all comments, letters (for publication or otherwise), book reviews, articles and illustrations. All will be acknowledged. Please see *Organisation* on page three for details.

Family History

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A synthesis of our work is contained in the "Grand Narrative" in this issue.

Trait d'Union—French Newsletter

Maurice Saltiel has written to the family to say that he has reluctantly had to give up the responsibilities of Trait d'Union.

All of the family is very much in Maurice's debt for the outstanding contribution he has made over the last five years.

Our thanks to you Maurice.

Shealtiel Family Co-ordination Committee

The committee has now taken on the organisation of the Barcelona 2000 Reunion.

W Europe	Vibeke Olsen, Amsterdam, Netherlands Miles Saltiel, London, England Philippe Saltiel, Fourques France Herman Bredel, Karlsruhe, Germany
S Europe	Loukia Saltiel, Thessalonica, Greece
Israel	Moni Shaltiel, Netanya, Israel
Asia Pacific	Lynette Grave, Dunedin NewZealand
S America	Francesca Carasso, Buenos Aires, Argentina
N America	Moshe Shaltiel, Riverwood, Ill USA Joseph Saltiel New York USA

Letters to the Editor**"Grand narrative"**

What a marvellous compilation of surmises and conjectures you have amassed in the *Grand Narrative*. What a wonderful lore of oral history to spin tales with for our grand children. And what scholarly researches may yet emerge, although we would be wise never to accept any view point as conclusive. Some comments on my part:

Thesis 1: What is the origin of the traditional view regarding our claim to Davidic decendancy other than that which crops up as each new generation discovers it's surname in the Davidic scriptural genealogies? Is there some oral tradition handed down?

Thesis 2: Although the scriptural genealogies differ somewhat, they all refer to historical Shealtiel and Zerubbabel who were related and in the Davidic line. Do the Babylonian ration tablets of Jehoiachin list the names of his children, or just that there were five? 1 Chronicles 3 lists as many as eight: Assir, Salathiel, Māchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazar, Jacamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah.

Theses 3 & 4: Whether Zerubbabel merely presided over the work for a season, or laid the foundations, or built an altar, or stuck with it through com-

pletion, does it matter as long as we accord him honour for his contribution to so great and marvellous a task in such a politically challenging atmosphere?

Thesis 5: We need not conjecture whether "modern Biblical scholars take Luke's claims that seriously." Nor should we ignore the concurring testimony of Matthew as if it did not exist. We must also be careful how we treat differing translations regarding critical issues of faith. The devout place confidence in these scriptures.

Thesis 6: As to what weight the name of the Archangel Shealtiel may have lent, perhaps we should not dismiss the inspiration of the Gnostic faith so quickly. They may have understood some truths that Mormons believe to be refreshed through restored scriptures. And see below.

Thesis 10: The idea of an heir to the Exilarchate escaping Babylon and surviving in a new land is echoed in the Book of Mormon, which tells the tale of Mulek, the youngest descendant of Judah's last King, Zedekiah, who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem, the annihilation of his siblings and his father's exile to Babylon. He was taken as an infant by his associates to the

western continent where they eventually merged with the descendants of the prophets Lehi and Nephi who made the passage from Judah to the Americas starting in 600BC.

Thesis 11: If we are moved by more than mere vanity to believe we are of royal descent, perhaps that faith is enough proof. If such a faith motivates us to live virtuous and exemplary lives, then to mind, a Godly purpose is fulfilled. If such belief seeks earthly honour, we will earn only contempt for our arrogance, and suffer the consequences of vanity and pride.

Theses 38: I am energetically opposed to equating spiritual excellence and worldly success. The honour given Marguerite Saltiel by her daughter Gloria Stein is an appropriate recognition of our great family. As to worldly modesty of the Dutch family, my personal experience during the Amsterdam reunion convinced me that we are of a noble inheritance because of the inner strength, *joie de vivre*, and unified purpose their amassed diversity exemplified. What a marvellous family we are! Such a diverse lot pulling together to chorus a cantata of cherished memories. Must go, my prose is getting the better of me.

Ed Motola
Salt Lake City

Marcel Saltiel

My name is Helena Saltiel. I live in the city Wels in Austria. I am the daughter of Marcel Saltiel, born on 1st March, 1923, in Salonica. I know very little about the family of my father as he died when I was thirteen years old.

Shortly before he died, he told me that his grandfather and father had been business people in Salonica. During the Second World War his parents, his two sisters and he were brought to Ger-

many as political prisoners. His family died in Germany, and he himself was brought to the concentration camp Mauthausen.

On a transport to the concentration camp Ebensee, he managed to escape in Wels, together with a few other people. My father stayed hidden in Wels, where he met my mother. My father worked at the company Wertheim in Vienna. He died in 1962, at the age of 39, when I was thirteen years old. My mother Hertha Saltiel lives alone since his death. She lives in

Wels too. I do not have other relatives, except my son Jörg.

Could it be possible that cousins of Marcel Saltiel have survived the Holocaust? If you believe that you could be related to the family of Marcel, or you know someone who might be related, please write a letter and sent it to the editor of the *Shealtiel Gazette*.

Helena Saltiel
Wels, Austria



This edition of *Figo Loco!* has more of the lighter and creative writing we want to include.

Figo Loco!—named for the Wild Fig from which the Synagogue of the family took its name—is intended to be the family forum for creative material, giving all the opportunity put to their talents on display in the *Gazette*. It will also cover material with a lighter touch, including humour and anecdotes.

To make *Figo Loco!* varied and interesting, we hope to receive contributions from as many members of the family as possible, so this request is aimed at **YOU**.

– Do you have an interesting hobby?

– Do you have a good story to tell?

– Have you met someone worth telling us about?

– Have you travelled somewhere interesting recently?

– What is the favourite food in your family?

– Do you know a good joke?

– Have you written a poem or a song?

– Do you have old family pictures, or do you photograph as a hobby?

– Are you an artist, an hobbyist, a poet-to-be?

We would welcome any material that you have which relates to our family in some way, either because you have it, or because you made it. We reassure you that we will return any creative material you forward.

Words from the Dutch

These translations of “Dutch” words from a poem about emigrants to London were compiled by Betty Saltiel from work done by her cousin and have been annotated by Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen.

“FLUMBOWRY” (Dutch transcription: vlambooverig?)

Betty: hat with a lot of flowers or a colour; flamboyant. Vibeke: unknown

“CHUT” (Dutch transcription: goet)

Betty: Dutch Jewish immigrant—slightly derogatory term used by Eastern European Jews.

Vibeke: from the Yiddish word “Gotspe”—meaning swank, a trait which is usually ascribed to people from Amsterdam.

“CHUM” (Dutch transcription: g’om)

Betty: out of the way—off the beaten track.

Vibeke: from the sentence: (Ik) ga om—(I) walk around

“CLATZ” (Dutch transcription: klatsj)

Betty: Chatter-box.

Vibeke: The Dutch word “klets” is usually used in combination with others; e.g. geklets/kletskoek—nonsense, kletskous—chatter-box.

“MALORNA” (Dutch transcription: meloorene?)

Betty: mournful, miserable. Vibeke: unknown

“PETURCH” (Dutch transcription: peutoeach)

Betty: neat little girl, well-bred

Vibeke: from the Dutch word “peuter”, meaning a nipper or a small child.

“GAUTCHE TRAUPIE” (Dutch transcription: houdsje trowpie)

Betty: an imaginary name. Vibeke:

“Houd je koppie” meaning: “be quiet”

“MAUTCHE MOPPEY” (Dutch transcription: moutsje moppie)

Betty: an expression of “nobody” used when asked who broke something (in mothers absence).

Vibeke: “moeders/ma d’r moppie” meaning: “mummy’s darling”; used for example in combination with the former phrase: Houd je koppie, moeders moppie = be quiet, mummy’s darling).

“FROWLIYIMYUM” and

“GUMPEY” (Dutch transcription: vrouwlijjemjoem and hompie/koempie).

Betty: imaginary names. Vibeke: Characters from fairy tales? I do not know how and when these expressions were used. They could resemble: “vrolijk kind” meaning “happy child” and “hummel” meaning “tiny tot”.

“RORTZ” (Dutch transcription: rotsj)
 Betty: tease, tantalise (used when children behave badly).
 Vibeke: addressing a Dutch child with the words: “Doe niet zo rot” means: Don’t be so mean (to your brother/sister)

“PUTZ” (Dutch transcription: poetsj)
 Betty: dirt. Vibeke: probably derived from the word “poetsen” which means (to) polish or (to) scrub. “Smeerpoets” means a dirty child.

“CLANDERPYP” (Dutch transcription: kleinderpie)
 Betty: dumpling; Vibeke: possibly the Dutch word “kleutertje” meaning toddler, but it could also mean “Klein Duimpje” (Thumbelina) a name from a popular fairy tale by the 19th century children stories writer Hans Christian Andersen.

“MESJRAAIE” (Dutch transcription) was said by Betty’s grandmother with a hand raised to the sky as she wanted to stress the truth of what she said. I do not know the meaning of this word, maybe it is a Yiddish expression? I asked Rob, and he thinks it must be derived from the Hebrew word *Mits-raijim*, meaning “Egypt”; comparable to the expression “Good Lord”. I believe that “Chonieofer” came from “goedgevig” meaning generous and “Crunchy” from “kreenterig” meaning niggling.

Betty Saltiel

Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen

Just call me Gram

In Loving Memory of our Grandmother Bertha Marie (Tait) Saltiel by Rob and Steve Saltiel.

To us, Bertha Saltiel was known simply as “Gram”. When we were about seven and five years old, we believed our grandmother needed a new name that would be unique to her. We suggested a number of possible names—Granny, Grandmom, Gram Crackers—that were either too common or too silly. Finally, she said, “Just call me Gram”. And so we did.

Gram was the only grandparent we ever really knew, and that made her presence in our life that much more special. As our family moved around the country during our childhood years, Gram was a regular visitor in our home. Never fond of flying, Gram logged more miles on Greyhound buses than anyone we knew. She usually

travelled with a close friend or family member, and her friends Rose Shirley and Ruth and her cousin Alvina were welcome visitors during the holidays or in the summer.

While we could be very trying as youngsters, Gram was always patient with us and usually said “All right” when we asked her to go for a walk or play a game. Gram was the one who taught us to play her favorite card game, Pinochle, and we played many 3-handed games together. Gram showed she was a great sport when we convinced her to play wiffle ball in the backyard of our Memphis home when we were short a pitcher. In our later years, Gram would often go for walks with us

on the boardwalk or the Cape May mall when we were visiting.

Gram’s favorite restaurant for many years was the Lobster House, and we would take her there whenever we were visiting. Of course, lunches with Gram could take up an entire afternoon, and her friends affectionately nicknamed her “Speedy Gonzalez”. Gram’s favorite drink was a “Stinger” and, on rare occasions, like an evening we all spent together at Ed Zaberer’s, Gram would have just enough of those to be a little tipsy. Gram also enjoyed travelling, and she would often send postcards to us from exciting places like Pike’s Peak or Las Vegas. Most of all, Gram loved living in the resort town of Wildwood, New Jersey, all year

'round in fact, and once she moved back in 1970 from Tucson, she never thought of leaving again.

A few aspects of Gram's personality will always be remembered fondly. Gram was a very generous person who always sent us money even for the most minor holidays. In recent years, she would often send Steve nuts from Rauhauser's Candies in Ocean City, his favorite cashews usually, just as a way of saying hi! Her generous high school graduation gifts allowed both of us to purchase our first cars.

Gram also had a fantastic mind for facts and details—she never forgot a birthday or an anniversary, and she could recall

with amazing detail conversations that had taken place years earlier. Gram also had a very strong sense of both family and friends, and she greatly enjoyed the times she spent with her friends at the Senior Citizens' Center. Her 90th birthday surprise party moved her to tears and was a great time for all of us. Finally, Gram had a delightfully wry sense of humor that was both good-natured and indicated that she usually knew more about things than she would let on.

Gram will be sorely missed for what she meant to us as a grandmother, a teacher and a friend. We are grateful that we were able to enjoy her for the many years that we did, and that she was able to see her great-

grandchildren as well. We'll always remember Gram for her unique telephone etiquette—she would answer the telephone by saying "Yes" rather than "Hello" and she never said "Good-bye", she would say "So long". While we are very sad to do so, we say "So long" to Gram and thank God for her life and for granting her eternal peace with Him.

Rob and Steve Saltiel

<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~ssalt/gram.html>

A time of Passover

This is the concluding part of Della Saltiel's short story about a young girl's rite of passage in London's East End.

The next morning when Ruthie kneels on her bed to look at the chestnut trees, there are the tender, pale green leaves, trembling in a gentle spring breeze.

"They're out Mummy, they're out," she shouts, "and I saw them first! I knew I would."

Her mother has already seen them, but smiles indulgently. "A good week then, eh?"

This is the busiest day of the holiday. It is the eve of Passover tonight and they are going to Sadie to celebrate the Seder with her family. The flowers Naomi has bought with the money Ruthie has shared with her will grace the table which fills the small room, and, around which they will crowd. Everybody will have a wonderful rumbustious time. There the men will don their skull caps and prayer shawls and they will all read, in turn, the ancient story of the Israelite's flight from captivity. There, the annual heated discussions about the correctness of this or that interpretation will take place. Uncle Izzy, a big man, his bottom hanging over the sides of his narrow chair, will repeatedly get up, thump his fist on the table, his plump face red with the vain effort of calling for more decorum. There they will ritualistically sip

sweet wine. There the children will become ever so slightly tipsy. And there, eventually, they will eat the delicious special food that the women have spent hours preparing.

"Next year in Jerusalem" they will call at the end of the Passover Service. Sonny and Hershele, who eager for added significance, will bellow out these words. But Ruthie's father will scowl contemptuously, for he loses no opportunity to show his bitter opposition to this Zionist nonsense. His wife will dig him, meaning, don't you dare spoil this day with politics. He will hunch his slight shoulders: his dark, brooding eyes cloud over as he tries to blot out his son's waywardness, his wife's disapprobation. He says nothing now. A reluctant participant, but a good Hebraist, he has provocatively raised obscure points which he knows will always confound his friend, for there is a war of belief between these two men. Small victories won: he has had his say.

It is over. And very late. Ruthie puts on her new coat ready to go home. Auntie Sadie says casually,

"Nice coat Ruthie, Zeida make it?"

Ruthie nods. "Such a lucky girl to have a Zeida." Ruthie is put out not to have

the usual "wish you health to wear it." Disappointingly too Aunt Sadie's children studiously ignore it. Tomorrow night the same service will be repeated, and it is agreed that Ruthie will come in the afternoon with more food her mother will have prepared for that night's meal.

Next morning Ruthie sleeps in very late and it is almost dinner time before she has finished her breakfast, which, although she still feels full of last night's food, her mother insists she eats. She decides to go to Auntie Sadie early, to be with Naomi. Perhaps they can go for a long walk and visit some of her other aunts, or perhaps they can all play the various nut games they always enjoy this time of the year. One involves cutting out square openings of one side of a matzo box, standing the requisite distance away and rolling and throwing cob nuts through the openings. The first to get all his or her nuts through the openings successfully wins everybody else's nuts. There are plenty of nuts around but the winning of this game is coveted by all the children and it is played with great competition. Last year, Hershele and Sonny won most of the games. This year Ruthie thinks that she can beat the boys. At any rate she wants to try.

The usually paper strewn pavements have been swept and all the shops are closed for the Passover. She carries the food very carefully through the strangely quiet and unusually clean streets, exchanging greetings with people she knows. "Good *Yomtov!*" They smile at each other and benignly up at the patch of sky they can see between the tall tenements. The sun is shining and they want to feel and savour its warmth. She and Naomi decide to go visiting and in every home take their fill of the cakes, the fruit, the nuts that are pressed on them.

When they return, the other children are there and it is still a long while before the Seder service will begin. They play board games for a while and then the inevitable nut game is suggested. Suddenly Ruthie feels something at the top of her thighs. She runs into the bedroom. There has been no warning and although her mother explained just a short time ago that this would happen and that when it did, then she would be a woman, she finds herself crying. She doesn't know why, she is not in pain, the flow is slight, but it is so unlike how she imagined it would be. The suddenness has shocked her; crying seems the only thing she can do. Immediately she realises that the others will crowd in to find out what has happened, so she stands back against the door, pushing hard. Hershele's voice is raised above the others. "Let me go in. I'll find out what's happened."

Ruthie is panic-stricken. "No, no, not you. Let Auntie Sadie come in."



There is a scuffle and banging on the door. "Ruthele, Ruthele, let me in. Don't be a silly girl. Open the door".

Ruthie opens it, and her Auntie wriggles through the gap. As soon as she sees Ruthie, she guesses what has happened.

"Azoy Ruthele! So you're a woman now. So why you cry? *Mazeltov!* Come, I'll give you things for it and all right you'll be." She rummages in a drawer.

"You want to lay down a bit?" Ruthie shakes her head. She has stopped cry-

ing and suddenly feels foolish. Auntie Sadie is smiling at her and tweaks her cheek. "A woman eh? Well, I suppose my Naomi will be next. A woman!"

She leaves the room and Ruthie hears her talking, very softly. As she re-enters the living room, she senses that they all know. Naomi mouths, "all right?" They have often speculated about it, long before Auntie Rosie's explanations.

Ruthie nods. "Come on then, let's get on with the game." This year she throws so much better that the contest is really between Hershele and her. To her dismay he keeps sidling up to her, brushing against her, elbowing her.

"You're trying to cheat Hershele, all that pushing. It's not fair!"

"Ho ho, listen to the woman talking. I'm not pushing. You're just a baby Ruthie!"

Ruthie flushes, decides not to rise to his bait, but he persists in pushing her as she tries to roll the nuts. She pushes him with her shoulder.

"Look who's pushing now!"

Their voices are raised. Auntie Sadie, her greying hair dishevelled, her slight figure bent as she rubs a stiff hip, limps in from the kitchen, where, before the evening begins, she has been trying to snatch a rest in a wooden armchair.

"No shouting! In the kitchen I am, hoping to close my eyes for five minutes. And what happens? Shout, shout, shout! You hear me?. No more!"

"It's not fair, Auntie Sadie. Hershele's cheating at nuts."

"You don't like, then don't play. Only no voices. You understand, Ruthie?"

Ruthie nods—furious but determined to win. Naomi intervenes.

"He wasn't all that bad Ruthie. And you did your share."

Ruthie is flabbergasted at Naomi's disloyalty.

"Well you would stick up for him, wouldn't you? He's your brother! Come on, I want to get on with the game. And he doesn't want me to win, that's what it is. You just watch him a bit more carefully."

They continue throwing the nuts, Ruthie into the holes and Hershele wide of the mark. Hershele is now

pushing her lightly with his hands.

Every time he pushes her, she retaliates. He is pushing her shoulder, the front of her arms, his hand shifts slightly so that it is on her chest. She continues prodding him with her shoulder, still throwing the nuts. Suddenly his hand is on her breast, pinching it. She staggers back, away from him. He pushes. Incensed, she lunges at him, pulls his hand away, lifts it to her mouth and bites it hard. He yells, looks in amazement at the blood oozing from the tooth dents in the back of his hand.

There is a *frisson* of fearful excitement among the others. Immobilised, they stand in a frozen tableau like actors before the play is about to begin. It is shattered by Auntie Sadie who rushes in from the kitchen. "Gott in Himmel, what's happening here?"

Hershele points at Ruthie. "She bit me, she bit me!"

Ruthie is shaking. "He pinched me, my..."

Hershele interrupts her. "I told you, call yourself a woman! You're a baby. Can't take a joke."

Auntie Sadie, denied a rest all afternoon, is beside herself with weary rage. Not waiting for Ruthie's explanation, she shouts, "You're a *schlechte kind*, Ruthie. A *schlechte kind!*"

Ruthie is mortified. She rushes into the bedroom, snatches her new suede coat, pulls it on, tears streaming down face.

"And another thing," Hershele yells at her. "Your precious suede coat. You think you're so smart with it. You're the swank! Well if we had a grandfather here, we'd have new coats all the time, not just for *Pesach!*"

She cannot bear to hear another word and rushes out of the room, slams the door and races away. As she stumbles down the stairs, the door opens and Naomi calls after her.

"Come back Ruthie! Mummy didn't mean it. I've told her what happened!"

But it is too late, Ruthie is in the street, running home, the rough towelling chaffing the insides of her thighs.

Her mother is frying a fresh batch of matzo meal pancakes when she hears her daughter's footsteps. But they lack their usual lightness, the breathing is laboured. And Ruthie's face is smudged

with tears. Rosie puts down the fish slice and grabs her daughter's arm.

"What's the matter, what's the matter?"

Tearfully, and glad that her father and Sonny are still out visiting her grandparents, Ruthie tells her mother. Rosie, smiling with pride, draws the girl to her and fondles her hair.

"*Maidele, meine tire maidele.* You're a little woman now. And so soon you learn the silliness of men! Come sit down. I'll take these pancakes out. A cup of tea and one of these with lots of sugar on it, you'll be a different girl." She kisses her and leads her to a chair.

Later, Ruthie, less agitated, is munching a sweet pancake.

"I'm not going back to the *Seder*. And Hershelle, I hate him! I'll never speak to him again."

"Ruthie, listen to me. You know Auntie Sadie doesn't explain very well. God only knows what she said to them. Naomi's a girl. She understands. But Hershelle? Suddenly little Ruthie, who he teases all the time, isn't a little

girl anymore. I suppose she said you're a woman now. Does he know what that means? That little *lobus*? All he knows is that somehow you're different. But you're not different. You go back and want to beat him at nuts. And yet you've been looking different for a while, because now you've got little breasts. That he can see. So he pinches you, perhaps to see what will happen."

"Why're you on his side?"

"I'm not *maidele*. You're all growing up now, with grown-up feelings. Hershelle also. He's becoming a man. Perhaps he feels excited when he sees you with breasts. And then his mother tells him you're a woman. You're a girl-woman. He's a boy-man. You want to beat him at nuts, like a little girl. He wants to pinch you, like a little boy."

Ruthie is vaguely aware that she has changed. She excites Hershelle? What does that mean? It is bewildering. She can not put a name to it, a darkness, a disturbing depth secretly inside her. She doesn't want it yet. Will she still be able to slide down the banisters? Or

do handstands against the wall? Her mother's sensible words do not allay her unease. And Hershelle, she can only think of him as a nasty boy, too big for his boots.

"You talk to him. You tell him he hurt me and hurt my feelings."

Her mother senses her disquiet. She reaches over and takes her daughter's soft hand in her roughened own, her housewife's own.

"It has to be *maidele*. And I'll speak to him, of course I will. You come, yes? And you both make up."

Thinking, as her heartbeat misses, *Ach*, a woman so soon; and wondering, is this boy after my little Ruthie? No, no, he must not be. I must keep my eye on him, perhaps speak to Sadie. That I'll keep to myself though - for the time being.

Ruthie nods. Her mother pulls her up.

"Come Ruthie, come, look at the chestnut leaves. Let's see how they've grown."

Della Saltiel

Announcements

New Year Greetings to the family from

Shlomo and Ophra Shealtiel (Israel)

Esther Sealtiel and Edith Luiting (The Netherlands)

Hertha and Willi Siegel (Austria)

Jack Navon, (Arizona, US)

George Baldock,

Maureen Firmin regrets to announce the death of her uncle, George Baldock, a.k.a. Sutherland, the last surviving son of Kate *née* Saltiel and John "Jack" Baldock. Born 31 Jan 1925; died 2 Feb 1999, mourned by his widow, Dorothy, and children Lee, Kim and Lisa.

Dirkje Faber-Sealtiel

Congratulations to Dirkje Faber-Sealtiel who celebrated her 90th birthday on 26 February 1999.

Forsyth-Tyson

Pamela Forsyth has pleasure in advising the family for the record of the marriage of her daughter, Margaret Jean to Jeffrey Tyson on 6 September 1996 in Auckland, New Zealand

Forsyth-Tyson

Pamela Forsyth has pleasure in announcing the birth of her grandson, Benjamin Jeffrey Tyson on 28 June 1997, the first son of Margaret Jean *née* Forsyth and Jeffrey Tyson Auckland, New Zealand.

Thomas William Grave

Lynette and Selwyn Grave have pleasure in announcing the birth of their grandson, Thomas William Grave, the son of Christan and Tania Grave, on 9 February 1998 in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Luna Benvenida Hale

Rabbi Kevin Hale of Wooster Ohio has pleasure in announcing the birth of his daughter, Luna Benvenida Ever-Hale on 29 May 1999. She is named inter alia to commemorate her great-great-great grandmother, Benvenida Shaltiel Heilbut.

David Lederman

Minneke Sealtiel of Antwerp has pleasure in announcing the birth of her grandson, David Lederman, on 11 September 1998 in Bogota, Colombia.

Alexander London

Stuart and Dori London of New York

have pleasure in announcing the birth of their son Alexander on 29th November 1999, who is named to commemorate his uncle Alec Saltiel.

Nel Oosterbaarn

Congratulations to Nel Oosterbaarn who celebrated her 50th birthday on 7 March 1999.

William Saltiel

Sandra Woodhouse *née* Saltiel regrets to announce the death of her brother, William Saltiel, in Paphos, Cyprus, mourned by his widow, Loulla, and his brothers and sisters. Born 2 April 1931; died 12 December 1998.

Saltiel-Weinberger

Belated congratulations to Marjorie Saltiel Weinberger and her husband, Joshua Rubin Weinberger who were admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1996. Marjorie is the daughter of Rhoda and David Saltiel of Newton, Massachusetts.

Jacob Rubin Saltiel Weinberger

David and Rhoda Saltiel have pleasure in announcing the birth of their grandson Jacob Rubin Weinberger, the son of Marjorie *née* Saltiel and Joshua Weinberger.

Miles Saltiel

Congratulations to Miles Saltiel who celebrated his 50th birthday on 10 June 1999.

Micholas Emmanuel Lax Saltiel

Thomas Saltiel and Paula Laxa are pleased to announce the birth of their son Nicholas Emmanuel Lax Saltiel, 6lb 1oz; 2.776kg, in London on 3rd August 1999.

Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen.

All congratulations to Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen who graduated as a Doctorandus of European Archaeology at the University of Amsterdam on 26 August 1999.

David "Deddy" Sealtiel,

Congratulations to Deddy Saltiel who celebrated his 60th birthday on 26 March 1998.

Felix Sealtiel

Congratulations to Felix Saltiel who celebrated his 70th birthday on 22 February 1999.

Harry Sealtiel, Harry

Congratulations to Harry Sealtiel who celebrated his 80th birthday on 9 October 1998.

Sealtiel-Keukenbring

Rachel Sealtiel and Rob Keukenbring of the Hague, Netherlands, have pleasure in announcing their wedding which took place on 16 December 1998.

Shealtiel-Even Chem

Shlomo and Ophra Shealtiel have pleasure in announcing the marriage of their son, Amiram to Einal Even-Chem in July 1998 in Neot Kedumim, Israel.

¡Barcelona 2000!

Third World Shealtiel Family Reunion Provisional Program

Friday July 14th		before	3.00 p.m	Arrival at hotels and registration
	4.00	to	5.00 p.m	General information meeting
	5.30	to	8.00 p.m	Guided visit of old Jewish <i>Call</i>
	8.00	to	9.00 p.m	<i>Shabbat</i> ceremony in the <i>Cal</i> (we hope)
			9.30 p.m	Welcome dinner along the harbour
Saturday July 15th	9.30	to	11.00 a.m	The Jews in Catalonia until 1391: Historian to be determined.
	11.30	to	1.00 p.m	The Shealtiels in Catalonia: Moshe Shaltiel Gracian Traditional Spanish <i>tapas</i> lunch
	1.30	to	3.00 p.m	Family news, exchanges.
	3.00	to	5.00 p.m	Civic reception
	7.00	to	8.00 p.m	Gala evening
			9.30 p.m	
Sunday July 16th			9.00 a.m	Departure for a day trip to Gerona/ Besalu
	10.30	to	12.30 p.m	Guided visit of medieval Jewish <i>Call</i> and Archaeological Museum, Bonastruc ça Porta
	1.30	to	3.00 p.m	Lunch
	3.30	to	4.30 p.m	Catalonian and Spanish aspects of Jewish history: lecture by (to be determined), questions.
	5.30	to	6.30 p.m	Departure to Besalu. Visit of the old medieval and Jewish village with 11th century <i>mikvah</i>
			7.00 p.m	Departure to Barcelona
			8.30 p.m	Free evening in Barcelona
Monday July 17th	9.30	to	11.30 a.m	Constitutional Meeting of the Saltiel Family World Association. Structure, Family Program for the next three years Farewell lunch
	1.00	to	3.00 p.m	Free afternoon and departure or trip in Spain

A 12 day optional tour of Spanish cities with Jewish history is in preparation. Details will follow.

The cost of the reunion is FF1500 per adult, FF750 per child; a range of hotel accommodation has been block booked.

For details please get in touch with

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Last december, the brits got together to see the Shealtiel Film in Central London. The film-maker, Ilan Ziv, put us on to the Sony Pictures viewing theatre in Golden Square, the heart of London's rather scanty media district which contends with the strip-clubs and Chinese restaurants of southern Soho.

The catering arrangements were the usual rolling emergency, as we turned between fear of insufficient food and the danger of an overrun budget. My mother did sterling work within the constraints she was set and my father acted heroically to ferry all the goodies from my flat, which had served as an advance depot. His task was made none the easier when he discovered Golden Square cordoned off by the police so that a monster crane could do its duty over the quiet of the week-end. Nor were we best pleased to discover that the area we had earmarked for the reception was occupied by a gilded assembly of Sony Pictures executives from all over the world. They seemed to be coming to the end of a heavy bonding session, involving—at the point at which we turned up—group Tai-Chi.

But somehow we eased the Hollywood types out and set up in time. Ilan had generously agreed to turn up for the viewing and distinguished himself early in the proceedings with his skill at setting up a buffet table. The film was then shown to spellbound attention and muffled sobs. After the call for questions there came a rapt silence, broken by plucky Lorna O'Connell, who asked Ilan how he had selected the material. He said it was easy: the story had told itself.

At the reception afterwards, we tore into the Waitrose canapés and quiches. I congratulated Ralph Davies on his *sang-froid* at his interview's end on the cutting-room floor. Meanwhile, sixty or so cousins from all over England milled around in a noisy throng, the characteristic Saltiel disorder very much in evidence. Some of the faces were new to me, among them Emanuel O'Connell, who told us that among the Irish he was "Marnie", and with the Jews "Manny", like my paternal

grandfather. I was tickled by John Baldock's recollection that when first I approached him, claiming to be a relative, he thought it must be a scam. And I was delighted to welcome Kenneth Todd, the brother of Jehudith Shaltiel of Jerusalem.

No surprise that there turned out to be too much food. My impulse is always to bin the excess. I was shamed by Ilan and by Thomas and Paola Saltiel, who took the trouble to pack the three or four platters and take them to a nearby shelter for the homeless.



In april, i accepted one of Moshe's invitations to Chicago and

The view from Gloucester Square

turned up for a family get-together. For me, this trip was distinguished in three respects. First, let me promise you that it is hardly a normal weekend for me to go to Chicago. Only an extraordinary combination of events could prompt me to behave so extravagantly: Felicity was away for the week-end; I had a few pennies in my pocket from the end of the year; and Moshe's party promised great happenings. And so it was to be.

For the second distinction of the week-end was the telephone call to Brazil, more soberly described on page four. For my part, I was conscious of the momentous character of what we were doing: re-establishing contact with a colony of Saltiels who had been cut off from their namesakes for nearly 130 years. After a flurry of e-mails and failed connections, we finally got through to Rio Grande do Sul. We made our connection during Moshe's Sunday brunch party and the silence in Chicago enabled us all to hear the halting conversation, made all the more dramatic by the difficulties of language and the punctuation of tears. No-one there will forget how goodwill and persistence overcame confusion and misunderstanding.

On a lighter note, was I the only one who noticed a slightly old-fashioned look between man and

wife. This came when one of the Chicago party revealed a formerly undisclosed familiarity with colloquial Brazilian Portuguese—the fruit, he told us, of a war-time posting, presumably with satisfactory opportunities for fraternisation.

The third reward for my trip was meeting David and Rhoda Saltiel of Newton Massachusetts. Davis is my second cousin, but we had never before met, though I did meet his daughter, Marjorie, when she was at the London School of Economics in the seventies. Then Moshe and Gila crowned their generous hospitality by taking us out for dinner at the top of one of those Chicago skyscrapers, with a view out over the southern shore of Lake Michigan and match-books on the table embossed "Shaltiel Party".

It was a treat to visit Moshe on his home ground for the first time, to see the house and the office which have been the destination and origin of so many phone calls, faxes and e-mails over the last six years.

Needless to say, Moshe and Gila's accommodations could not be faulted, extending to a ride back to O'Hare in an airport bus which was more like a stretch-limo. It was still early spring in Illinois and over the week-end the trees were beginning to take on their first leaf. The skies were clear and the landscapes endless. I was sorry to leave—even in that stretch-limo!



While i was with moshe I took a look at his extensive library of Judaica and what might be called "Shealtieliana", that is documents bearing upon the Shealtiels. This is more extensive than I had realised. I was particularly struck by work on the *Nessim* (Hebrew, plural of *Nasi* prince, leader) of Barcelona by Elka Beth Klein. She has been able to identify a Shealtiel among those appearing in the first census of Barcelona. This confirmed the presence of the name in the earliest tally of Jewry in that part of the world.

Elka's work examines the status and history of the leading Jewish families in Barcelona of the period. Their generally recognised right to use the title of honour, *Nasi*, attests

to the local acceptance of their
claim to be descended from David.

But that's another story!

Miles Salties

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