

Anchoring the Schischa Family Firmly in Austro-Hungarian History During the 1600s

by Carole Garbuny Vogel

Jakob (Yaakov) Levy lived in perilous times. He was born in the early 1600s in the small village of Mattersdorf on Hungary's sparsely populated western frontier. If he were alive to tell his story, he could regale you with tales of bubonic plague, marauding Turks, and lying scoundrels. He might warn you about the rising tide of Jew-hatred and perhaps he would tell you about his community's own harrowing brush with it.

Jakob is the earliest known member of the Schischa family from Mattersdorf, and my eighth-great-grandfather.¹ Like many of his descendants prior to the Holocaust, he dwelled in the *Judengasse*, the village's small Jewish quarter.² In 1622, when Jakob was still fairly young, Mattersdorf came under the rule of the Esterházy family. They were Hungarian nobles loyal to the Austrian Habsburg

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monarchy and staunch supporters of the Roman Catholic Church. Today, due to border changes and growth, Mattersdorf is the substantial town known as Mattersburg, Austria.

In May 1661, a Catholic girl disappeared from Mattersdorf. Her foster mother, Catharina, the wife of Caspar Bruckner the field warden, accused three Mattersdorf Jews of abducting and killing the girl. Frau Bruckner made the accusation in the marketplace on market day.³ She was heard by a large crowd, and many of the Christians believed her.⁴

Frau Bruckner based her allegation on the false premise that Jews murdered Christian children to use their blood for ritual purposes. Blood libels sometimes led to *pogroms*—organized, deadly riots targeting Jews and condoned by local authorities. Jakob Levy and other Mattersdorf Jews surely feared for the accused and their entire community. They decided to fight back by appealing to the feudal court. Jakob and Hirschel Löbl traveled to Sopron, a distance of nine miles (15 km), to file a grievance against Catharina Bruckner with the Council of Sopron. They did this on behalf of the Mattersdorf Jewish community and the three Jews who could not safely appear in public. To take such a prominent role, Jakob and Hirschel surely were community leaders. One of them was likely the *Rosh Hakohol* (head of the Jewish community) of Mattersdorf. Typically, the *Rosh Hakohol* was one of the richest men in the community.

A week later in a second hearing before the council, Jakob and Hirschel repeated their complaint. The record showed that outside of the council sessions they had offered

to prove the validity of their grievance against Frau Bruckner. Through her advocate (lawyer), Frau Bruckner claimed that she had accused only one specific Jew of the crime, not all the Mattersdorf Jews. The advocate noted that “when that Jew reappears, Frau Bruckner will bring him to court to account for his crimes.” Jakob Levy and Hirschel Löbl protested that Frau Bruckner had libeled all Jews from Mattersdorf. They also reported that the missing girl had turned up alive a week after vanishing. The council assigned two men to investigate the events.⁵ The records did not show any resolution to the matter but bloodshed was averted.

Eight years later in 1669, antisemitic acts taking place in Vienna, 33 miles due north of Mattersdorf, had disastrous repercussions for Jakob and his coreligionists. Christian merchants petitioned the Habsburg monarch, Kaiser Leopold I, to rid Vienna of their Jewish rivals. A fire broke out in the Hofburg, the imperial palace, and the merchants accused the Jews of igniting it. A Christian woman drowned in the Jewish quarter and her death, too, was attributed to Jewish malfeasance. Finally, the young queen suffered a miscarriage and blamed it on the presence of Jews in the city. Kaiser Leopold decided to expel the Jews.

Vienna had the fourth largest Jewish population in Europe at the time with approximately 3,000 to 4,000 Jews. Kaiser Leopold did not limit his *Judenrein* policy to the city walls. In April 1671, he ordered all Jewish inhabitants of Niederösterreich (Lower Austria) to leave. This decree extended to the western Hungarian towns of Mattersdorf, Eisenstadt and Kobersdorf. Paul Esterházy was powerless to stop the forced exodus of the Jews in his domain, but he resettled the exiles in other villages on his vast estate.

A few months later, Esterházy secured their return. The Mattersdorf Jews discovered that in their short absence Christians had claimed their houses. Paul Esterházy did not intervene and the Jews had no legal recourse. Presumably among the cheated homeowners were Jakob Levy, who was now well advanced in years, and his only known son, Isaac Jakob. Four years later, Esterházy permitted the Jews to buy back their own homes, but they lacked the capital to do it *en masse*. In subsequent years, they gradually repurchased all the *Judengasse* houses. By the time Isaac Jakob died 25 years later in 1700, he and his sons owned four of the homes.⁶ The 1738 and 1744 Mattersdorf Jewish censuses (*Conscriptio Judaeorum Nagymarton*) and a *Grundbuch* (real estate registry) place Isaac's son Aron Schischa in Haus 4; Joseph Schischa in Haus 8; Moses Schischa in Haus 26 and Yishai Schischa in Haus 32.

Researching the Schischa family

Jakob Levy and Isaac Jakob are the progenitors of the enormous Schischa clan from Austro-Hungary. The family

can be tracked from the 1600s to the present day and consists of at least 13,150 descendants in 14 generations. Anyone with Jewish ancestors from the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the surname Schischa likely belongs to this family.

It was Isaac's signature that first brought Jakob to the attention of my collaborator, Yitzchok Stroh. In February 1698, Isaac Jakob had signed a statement in the "Black Book" of Mattersdorf's Jewish Community using his Hebrew name, Yitzchak, the son of Yaakov Segal.⁷ (Yaakov is the Hebrew version of Jakob.) The suffix Segal following the name indicated that Jakob belonged to the Levite tribe. Levite status is passed from father to son. Not every Segal in Mattersdorf was a Schischa but with one exception, every male Schischa was a Segal. (The exception had adopted the maiden name of his grandmother.) No Hebrew records with a patronymic for Jakob were found, only secular records where he appeared as Jakob Levy. It is not absolutely clear whether Jakob's father was named Levy or if the term Levy simply denoted Levite status.

The Black Book is known formally as the *Protokollbuch der Gemeinde 1698–1825* (Protocol Book of the Community 1698–1825). It is the oldest known record book created by the Mattersdorf Jewish community and was crucial to the creation of Mattersdorf genealogies. Written in Hebrew and Yiddish script, it provides a record of the major issues that confronted the community. Of special genealogical importance are pages dealing with critical issues, such as significant tax increases to pay off new financial burdens placed on the Jews by the Esterházy family or the Habsburgs. Eligible voters—married men who knew the Torah—voted on the new tax levies and signed statements to back up their vote. These tax lists form a record of most of the Jewish men who lived in Mattersdorf at that time.

The Black Book, along with census and property records in Latin and German, provided the backbone for the reconstruction of the early history of Mattersdorf families. Additional insight about their lives came from documents published in *Magyar-Zsidó Oklevéltár* (*Hungarian-Jewish Archives*), abbreviated MZO. It is an 18-volume compendium of historical documents relating to the Jewish communities of Hungary from 1096 to the end of the 1700s. The MZO consists of miscellaneous documents from various archives (governmental and private) that were reprinted in their original language (Latin, German and Hungarian). It is now available online at: <https://kisebbszekutato.tk.mta.hu/adat-bazis/magyar-zsido-okleveltar>.

The MZO includes a small collection of documents pertaining to Mattersdorf Jews, including:

- complete copies of the 1738 and 1768 Jewish censuses
- some tax collection data for Jews who sold their wares in Sopron's marketplace
- a smattering of court case summaries that demonstrate how Jews exercised their limited legal rights to obtain justice in a Christian realm
- miscellaneous documents

I discovered three significant challenges when using the

MZO. First, the court cases of interest were written in a combination of Old German and Latin that was quite difficult to translate even for professional translators. Second, the MZO contains transcriptions only, with no images of the original, handwritten record. The occasional, inevitable transcription error is a concern. For example, in two documents, Mattersdorf was transcribed as Mardersdorff, and Jakob Levy as Jakob Lang.⁸ Third, patronymics proved problematic on occasion as the names were reversed.⁹

When I first turned to the MZO, I hoped to find general background material on Mattersdorf Jews. I did not expect to uncover information that would illuminate the lives of my ancestors, so I was astounded to find three court cases pertaining to the Schischa family. The MZO shed light in more mundane ways too. Jewish traders paid annual fees to towns with marketplaces for the right to sell their wares within their borders.¹⁰ Undoubtedly paying these charges was no pleasure for Jakob Levy and Isaac Jakob. Records of their transactions from the 1680s and 1697, however, established that they were traders who sold their products in the Sopron marketplace.

The MZO also revealed that Jakob Levy was wealthy enough to participate in an informal banking system in which individual lenders loaned money directly to the borrowers. The loans were secured with collateral and/or promissory notes, and they crossed religious lines. Jews not only loaned money to each other, but they also loaned money to Christians and sometimes borrowed money from Christians.

In the early 1660s, Jakob Levy was pressured into making a bad loan. Jörg Schreiner, a Christian, had beseeched Jakob to loan 40 florint kayserlich (the value of at least 30 cows) to his farmhand, Hans Bastl from Zinkendorff. Jakob initially refused because Bastl had no collateral. He relented, however, when Schreiner signed a promissory note pledging to repay the loan if Bastl could not. Hans Bastl defaulted on the loan and Schreiner refused to reimburse Jakob. On March 1, 1662, Jakob appealed to the Sopron city council to force Schreiner to honor the promissory note. Through an advocate, Jörg Schreiner claimed that he had no obligation to reimburse Jakob because he was not the debtor. Eventually he confessed that he had secured the bad loan, and the council ruled in favor of Jakob.¹¹

Making Assumptions about Daily Life

Aside from Black Book accounts, census records, and the occasional MZO entry, sparse documentation exists for the Schischas who lived in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, much can be extrapolated about their lives from other historical records and the customs that were passed down through the generations. For example, it is safe to assume that Jakob and Isaac conformed to the strict Jewish standards of the time—keeping the Sabbath, following the Jewish calendar, observing the rules of *kashrut* (kosher dietary laws), maintaining Jewish rituals, and participating in

Worth of Household Items in Hungary in 1741

Moses Lazarus Breuer (ca. 1669–ca.1745) was a contemporary of Jakob Levy’s four grandsons and another eighth-great-grandfather of the author. He owned the only brewery in Mattersdorf and was an extremely wealthy man for his milieu. Like Jakob Levy, Moses was rich enough to participate in the private banking system in the region. He lent money directly to borrowers and secured the loans with collateral and/or promissory notes. Also like Jakob Levy, Moses Lazar appealed to the court in Sopron to force an insolvent debtor to honor a loan agreement. Interestingly, in that era when men dominated the business world, the debtor was a Christian woman, Katalin Martius, a citizen of Sopron.

Court proceedings from July 5, 1741, established that Katalin Martius owed the “Jew Moses Lazar” 65 forints 75 denar in capital and interest. To satisfy the claim, the court ordered an evaluation of household items of the debtor. The resulting household inventory provides a glimpse into the relative worth of household items at the time. It was one of the extraordinary gems found in the MZO.¹

1 table with a stone top, 2 fl.	1 painting of fruit, 50 den.	20 big soup bowls, 40 den.
1 writing desk with 9 drawers, 4 fl.	1 painting of wild game, 50 den.	1 green bowl, 15 den.
2 hand-sewn upholstered chairs, 50 den.	5 <i>controfaid</i> , 75 den. (can’t translate)	1 white bowl, 5 den.
5 chairs made of walnut wood, 1 fl.75 den each	1 medium-sized mirror with inlaid red glass, 40 den.	1 glass vase, 40 den.
<i>Kaysser und kaysserin</i> , 1 fl. (Translates as “emperor and empress.” Are they figurines?)	1 very small square black table, 20 den.	3 glasses on stand, 15 den.
5 landscape paintings, 1 fl. 75.den.	1 old sofa with worn covering, 25 den.	1 of the same with a cover, 10 den.
1 black bed with gold painted columns, 6 fl.	2 old chests (for storing linens and clothes) , 2 fl.	2 big green vases, 30 den.
4 large white curtains for windows, 2 fl. each	1 inlaid box made from soft wood, 4 fl.	1 old épée dueling sword in bad condition, 15 den.
1 small black table made of soft wood, 10 den.	1 old iron fireplace shovel, 10 den.	1 small trough made of soft wood, 50 den.
1 old comfortable armchair, 15 den.	1 fireplace poker (fire iron), 5 den.	Books together with a stand , 10 fl.
1 old <i>ditto</i> (comfortable armchair), made of a red cloth, 25 den.	2 iron pans for red hot coals, 15 den.	1 black kitchen box, 2 fl. 50 den.
2 small chairs to put feet on, 25 den.	2 measuring cups with covers, 50 den	1 black tray, 75 den.
1 glass bottle with tin screwcap, 10 den.		1 old black box, 40 den.
5 paintings of fruits, 1 fl 50 den each.		2 walnut chairs, 80 den.
1 panorama landscape painting, 15 den.		1 white table, 15 den.
1 glass confection bowl (candy dish), 30 den.		22 fl.50 den. for the rest of the Sacz (items) in the house, with 11 fl.75 den. ^{2,3}
2 black stretch beds with 2 old curtains, 6 fl.		Total 65 fl.75 den.

Notes

1. MZO vol. 12, pp. 288–289, entry 269. Initial translation by Rodolfo Kohn with tweaks by Yitzchok Stroh, Carole Vogel, and Johannes Reiss.
2. Sacz appears to be the term *Sachen*, meaning belongings.
3. It is not clear what was worth the final 11 fl. 75 den.

the religious life of the community. Blatant nonconformity was not tolerated by the Mattersdorf Jews as seen in the following summary of a public admonishment from 1740.

Jakob son of Zelig has not been conducting himself properly. So even though he is getting married, we are not allowing him citizenship in the community. It is known to most people in the community that he didn’t conduct himself properly and sometimes we wanted to expel him from the community because of his actions. Neither he, his children, nor his inheritors will have the right to live in this community. No board can revoke this. Agreed by the head of the community.¹²

The writers of the admonishment deliberately left out Zelig’s misdeeds. They wrote, “He deserves to be expelled because of his wicked ways. That which he did, is not fit to be written.”

For Jewish women, much emphasis was placed on modest dress and behavior. They were especially discouraged from wearing luxurious clothing to avoid arousing envy among their neighbors and resentment from Christians. Occasionally, women rebelled and in at least one case the husband paid the consequences. Mattersdorf-born Torah

scholar, Shimon Hirsch Markbreiter (ca. 1780–1824), was about 23 years old when he encountered big trouble in Eisenstadt because of his wife’s fashion statement.

On Monday the 1st day of the intermediate days of Sukkot (October 3, 1803) the [Eisenstadt] community board summoned the *Torani* Shimon Hirsch Markbreiter from our community because of the incident that occurred with his wife. She bought something new and fancy, which nobody else in the community had, a “string purse.” [This was likely a handbag made of an expensive material.] She wore it to *shul* and brought it amongst the women [stirring up much jealousy and resentment].

We had enough problems up until now and now she is adding to them. Therefore, the community sent for Shimon Hirsch and ordered him to reprimand his wife and inform her that she should not bring any new things into the community, which nobody else ever owned. Shimon Hirsch did not answer. He refused to respond when he was called in. The head of the community asked if he agreed with his wife or not and he sat like a mute and did not open his mouth. His punishment is that he won’t be included in the special blessing for Torah scholars and he won’t be entitled to any of the privileges that Torah scholars receive for three years

from the above date.¹³

Note that Markbreiter and his wife lived in Eisenstadt, 10 miles (16 km) from Mattersdorf. Nonetheless, his story could still be woven into that of the Mattersdorf Jews.

While the occasional apostate and fashionista stirred up trouble within the Jewish communities in the Esterházy estates, the real danger lay with external threats—war, plagues and Jew-hatred. By incorporating historical events into family history and using conjecture, it is possible to make ancestors appear as likely witnesses to momentous occasions without being untruthful.

Schischa Progenitors and the Turkish Invasions

Between 1544 and 1683, Mattersdorf was a dangerous place to live as the village lay on the route of the Turkish invasion of Vienna, and marauding Turks and their allies looted it numerous times. The Ottoman Turks fought for Islam—conquering infidels, acquiring war booty, and sometimes making converts at the point of a sword. Jews and Christians had much to fear from these Muslim warriors and their allies. The invaders ravaged and burned villages along their path, killing many of the inhabitants or abducting them into slavery.¹⁴ The Schischas and other Mattersdorf villagers also faced threats from German and Hungarian soldiers, who fought the Turks in the name of Christendom. Yet, they were seemingly unrestrained when it came to looting the Hungarian countryside.

During Turkish incursions, Mattersdorf villagers—Christian and Jew—took shelter in the large Esterházy castle in nearby Forchtenstein, a 4- to 5-mile walk uphill from the Judengasse. The fortress, with strong walls up to 40 feet thick, was so substantial and well situated on the eastern slope of the *Rosaliengebirge* (Rosalie Mountains) that the Turks found it impenetrable.

The year 1683 was a particularly perilous time in western Hungary and eastern Austria. In mid-July, the large, well-equipped Ottoman Army laid siege on Vienna in an attempt to capture intact the well-fortified city and its riches. The siege was not a surprise. Over the previous six months, the Turkish forces had slowly advanced from Turkey, through the Balkans and along the Danube River Valley. They were joined by troops from all parts of the Ottoman empire, including some 8,000 Muslim Tartars who had ridden on horseback across Hungary from Ukraine.¹⁵ Not all the fighters were Moslem. Imre Tököly, a Protestant Hungarian nobleman from Transylvania and his anti-Habsburg Hungarian soldiers joined the fight.

On June 29, a couple of weeks before the attack on Vienna, the Turks had penetrated Hapsburg territory. They entered via the Danube Valley and neutralized Hapsburg military resistance along the way.¹⁶ In western Hungary, they plundered villages and farms in the northern parts, along with their ally, Imre Tököly, and his men. The Muslim and Protestant soldiers also invaded the mid-section of the region, but the chief damage in those parts was wrought by the Muslim Tartars.

During the Vienna siege and its prelude and aftermath, the Forchtenstein Castle provided a safe refuge for the inhabitants of the region able to reach it before the onslaught. One of the Mattersdorf Jews who found sanctuary in the castle was Isaac Jakob. A court document from 1684, transcribed in the MZO, provides proof¹⁷

During the tumult, Isaac Jakob fled to the castle, presumably with his family, and deposited a sack containing jewels, money, and precious metals with Georg Preidl, a Christian, for safekeeping. These items included Jakob's own possessions as well as valuables collected from people in the area (certainly Mattersdorf Jews, perhaps others). After peace was restored to the countryside, Preidl refused to return the valuables. On June 12, 1684, Samuel Keller, an advocate for Isaac Jakob, appeared before the Sopron city council to compel Preidl to return the money and other items to Isaac Jakob. Keller noted that, "The Jew Isaac Jakob from Mattersdorf had invoked his right to ask for princely intervention under a provision in article 106 from a charter granted in 1647." Keller presented a list of confiscated items:

- 18 lots of pearls, 60 gold rings, 70 lots of worked silver, together worth 886 fl (fl=*Florentiner Gulden*)
 - Monies equal to 134 fl.
 - 80 good graded emeralds—every grade valued at 2 fl—thus valued at 160 fl.
 - A ring belonging to Isaac Jakob worth 150 fl.
 - Also Reichsthaler (German coins) and ducats (gold coins), together worth 150 ducats or 450 fl.
 - *Lagio per 50 den* (untranslatable), thus 75 fl.
 - More works from Köln (probably silver), worth 40 fl.
- Total: 1,895 fl.

To put the purchasing power of this wealth into perspective, consider this. In 1683, a healthy cow in Sopron could be purchased for 1 florin, 25 groschen. [60 groschen = 1 florin].¹⁸ In 2018 a healthy cow in New York State cost \$2,000 to \$2,800. It appears that all the stolen monies equaled the cost of about 1,345 cows (about \$3 million in 2018 money). Isaac's ring alone was equal in value to 105 cows (about \$250,000 in 2018 money). Even if the monetary equivalents between 1683 and 2018 are invalid, it can be surmised that Isaac Jakob was a wealthy man for his milieu, and his fellow Jews trusted him to secure their valuables. Likely he was the Rosh Hakohol in Mattersdorf.

Four days later, on June 16, Samuel Keller came before the council and was adamant that the deposited items should be returned. Georg Preidl, through his representative Sigmund Schlatner, denied guilt. Five Christian witnesses then testified that the mayor, Michael Kersnaricz, had a sealed sack that was on his table. When the mayor was asked about it, he had stated that Preidl had brought the sack to him and that it contained a deposit from the Mattersdorf Jew, Isaac Jakob.¹⁹ The resolution of the case is not known.

If my ancestor had not appeared in this document, I would have nonetheless included the court case in my Mattersdorf families' history by speculating whether any of the coins, gems and jewelry belonged to any of my ancestors. I would also have noted that it was quite likely that my fami-

ly had stayed in the castle during the siege. If I could have found a description of the attack on the Forchtenstein Castle itself, I would have featured it in the story and used powerful verbs to describe the action.

Personalizing Generic Information

Plagues posed a considerable danger and were often more deadly than marauding soldiers. The MZO revealed how close Jakob Levy and Isaac Jakob came to contracting the bubonic plague. One day in 1680, father and son traveled from Mattersdorf to Sopron, transporting their brandy in a pushcart or in enormous packs strapped to their backs. Outside of Sopron, they were greeted by an Esterházy official who collected half their required payment for entering Sopron but denied them entrance to the town because of an outbreak of the plague.²⁰

This outbreak was part of an epidemic dubbed the Great Plague of Vienna which killed at least 76,000 people in Vienna and 83,000 in Prague between 1679 and the early 1680s.²¹ In 1681, the plague took its toll in the tiny Mattersdorf ghetto when at least 13 Jews succumbed to the scourge. All undoubtedly were known to Jakob and Isaac, and perhaps some belonged to their family.²²

If Jakob Levy were to recount his experience with the plague, he could not have told you that it was caused by a bacteria found in human fleas and body lice or that it was transmitted to humans via these parasites, and then from humans to other humans. This knowledge came much later. But he would have known that the telltale symptom was the emergence of painful buboes (swollen, inflamed lymph nodes) which first appeared on the groin, neck, and armpits and spread outward.

As the infection progressed, the buboes changed from red to purple to black. Gangrene developed in the extremities turning the flesh of the arms and legs black. Hence the other name for the plague—Black Death. No cure existed then, and the plague killed 30 to 40 percent of its victims. Death occurred within two to four days of onset. Surely some of the Mattersdorf Jews who had contracted the plague in 1681 survived. Could Jakob or Isaac have been among them? Or did they avoid it completely?

By speculating about what Jakob and Isaac may have witnessed or experienced, and pointing out what they could not have known, I entwined father and son in a significant part of the history of their time.

Value of Creating a Town-Wide Genealogy

My ability to trace the Schischa family into the 1600s was made possible only through collaboration, mainly with Yitzchok N. Stroh, who translated the Hebrew and Yiddish sources and had an uncanny ability to pinpoint relationships. Many others also made significant contributions.

When Yitzchok and I first pooled our resources to trace our own family lines, we never intended to create a town-wide genealogy, but we found that tracking collateral families made it possible to rule in or rule out our own family

members. One bonus of identifying seemingly unrelated families was the discovery that some of these lines actually were related.

Our research strategies are described in “Constructing a Town-Wide Genealogy: Jewish Mattersdorf 1698–1939,” an article we co-authored, and “Reconstructing a Lost Holocaust Family” written earlier by me. AVOTAYNU published both articles.^{23,24} After our joint article was published in 2007, Yitzchok and I discovered three more extraordinary sources of information:

- *Behauste Güter der Juden in Mattersdorf 1760–1845* (Dwellings of the Jews in Mattersdorf 1760–1845).²⁵ This *Grundbuch* (real estate registry) provides the ownership history of the Jewish-owned buildings in Mattersdorf. Each entry includes how each property came into the possession of the owner, whether through marriage, inheritance, purchase, or transfer, and sometimes the date. Most properties were owned jointly by husbands and wives; a relative few were in the possession of widows. The time span in the title is misleading. The register provides detailed information for the homes between 1757 and 1764, and then again from about 1818 to 1819. Occasionally, transfers are noted for additional years but they all reference a later *Grundbuch*.

- *Conscriptio Judaeorum Nagymarton, 1782* (1782 Jewish Census of Mattersdorf), found in Budapest at the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (National Archive of Hungary), includes the name and age of all household members, including servants.

- *Conscriptio Judaeorum Mattersdorf, 1836* (1836 Jewish Census of Mattersdorf), located in Budapest at the *Magyar Zsidó Múzeum és Oklevéltár* (Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archive), provides an accounting of the male heads of household and how much each owes in tolerance taxes. The census took place four years after the terrible cholera epidemic of 1831–32 killed ten percent of the population, and it uses the 1828 census as a basis of comparison. Some of the people listed as dead may have died between 1828 and 1836 from causes other than cholera. The census includes comments about most of the people. For example, the census noted that Schischa descendant Mandel Deutsch (1791–1867) was “totally in poverty from supporting his old parents.”

Our town-wide genealogy has a special focus on the Jews who lived in Mattersdorf in the late-1600s and early-1700s. It was a small community then and through the available information we could determine the economic status of individuals. Relatively few had the wealth to engage in informal banking like Moses Lazarus Breuer and Jakob Levy. Thus, the dictum “follow the money” was a useful genealogy tool.

Jakob Leui (Levi = Levy) and Isaac Jacob, appeared together in a document from 1680, which identified them as Jews from Mattersdorf and noted that they paid a fee jointly. This strongly suggests not only a business partnership, but a familial relationship as well.²⁶ That record was the last mention of Jakob Levy in the MZO. Perhaps he died shortly afterward. By 1683, much wealth was in the hands of Isaac

Jakob, as evidenced by the fact that he owned a ring worth 150 fl. Likely Isaac Jakob participated in the informal banking system, having learned the ins and outs from his father.

By the time the money trail disappeared in the MZO, the surname Schischa cropped up, albeit with mangled spelling. In the first entry, dated August 1, 1697, Zischau, a Jew from Mattersdorf, paid 2 fl 50 Ungarish for the right to sell 2½ buckets of brandy in Sopron. Three weeks later on August 22nd, Aron Zische paid 1 fl 50 Ungarish for the right to sell 1½ buckets of brandy. We surmised that the brandy seller was Aron Schischa, the son of Isaac Jakob, and a known brandy maker.²⁷ The first entry, however, could actually have been Isaac himself.

It is possible that other significant sources of information from the 1700s or earlier may emerge that will shed more light on the Mattersdorf Jewish community. We have seen references to the 1669 Jewish census of Nagymarton (Mattersdorf) but have not located it.

Notes

1. Due to significant intermarriage among his descendants, Jakob Levy is also the author's 9th- and 10th-great-grandfather.

2. *Judengasse* translates to "Jews Street" but in actual usage in Mattersdorf it referred to the main road that wound through the ghetto, as well as to the smaller alleys that branched off of it.

3. Frau means Mrs. It was not translated to English in an attempt to give the text a slight German feel.

4. *Magyar-Zsidó Oklevéltár (Hungarian-Jewish Archives)*, (MZO) vol. 6, p. 66, entry #83 from 11 May 1661. Translated by Harriet Lacksten. Note: Mattersdorf is spelled *Mardersdorff* and Jakob Levy appeared as *Jacob Lang*.

5. MZO, vol. 6, pp. 66–67, entry #84 from 18 May 1661. Translated by Harriet Lacksten.

6. *Protokollbuch der Gemeinde 1698–1825*, (known as the Black Book), p. 4b. CAHJP (Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People) microfilm #8174. Translated by Yitzchok Stroh. An entry from 29 Nov 1700, notes that Isaac's heirs had paid up all of his obligations.

7. *Protokollbuch der Gemeinde 1698–1825*, p. 20a. CAHJP microfilm #8174. Translated by Yitzchok Stroh. Isaac's name appeared in a list of signatures of people who had voted on a residence rights issue.

8. The editor of the MZO identified *Mardersdorff* as Nagymarton (Mattersdorf), and I noted from my own research that in this time and place, Jews were identified by patronymics, and not descriptors such as *Lang*, meaning *long*.

9. For example Moses Lazarus Breuer, the beer brewer, occasionally appeared as Lazarus Moses, the beer brewer. Moses did not have a son named Lazarus Moses and his own father was named Lazar Jakob. So there is no doubt that Lazarus Moses was really Moses Lazarus.

10. Christian traders also paid for the right to sell goods, but they were assessed lower fees.

11. MZO vol. 6, pp. 66–67. Entry 92 from 1 Mar 1662. Translated by Elka Frank. Note: Mattersdorf is misspelled as *Mardersdorff* and Jakob Levy appeared as *Jacob Lang* in the transcription.

12. Black Book, p. 68b. Translated by Yitzchok Stroh.

13. Wachstein, Bernhard. *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Eisenstadt und den Siebengemeinden* (Vienna, 1926), p. 426. German and Hebrew.

14. Dobrovich, Johann. "People at the Border: Destiny and

Mission: On the History of the Burgenland Croats." Provincial Archive of Burgenland. 1963. On Burgenland-Bunch.org.

15. The actual number of Tatars who participated in the Siege of Vienna is unknown. CGV has seen numbers ranging from 8,000 to 80,000.

16. Burgenland Bunch News no. 2018. March 21, 2011.

17. MZO, vol. 6, pp. 109–110, section 171 from 1684.

18. Paul, Hans. *50 Jahre Stadtgemeinde Mattersburg*, p. 59. He quoted from the "Chronicle of the City of Odenburg from 1670–1704" by Hanns Tschany (died 1733): "Die schönste Kuh hat man um 1 fl und 25 Groschen vor dem Potschi Tor kaufen können." (You can buy the most beautiful cow for 1 fl and 25 groschen in front of the Potschi gate.) Written in 1683.

19. MZO vol. 6, pp. 110–111, entry 172 from 1684.

20. MZO, volume 6, p. 96, entry #146 from 1680. The document showed that Jacob Leui (Latin spelling for Levi) and Isaac Jacob, Jews from Mattersdorf paid taxes together

21. "Great Plague of Vienna" entry. Wikipedia.

22. Schmid, Veronika. "Virtuelle Rekonstruktion der ehemaligen Synagoge in Mattersburg." Diplomarbeit. Technische Universität Wien. Jan. 2016.

23. "Constructing a Town-Wide Genealogy: Jewish Mattersdorf, Hungary 1698–1939" by Carole Garbuny Vogel and Yitzchok N. Stroh. AVOTAYNU, The International Review of Jewish Genealogy, vol. XXIII. No. 1, Spring 2007.

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25. *Behauste Güter der Juden in Mattersdorf 1760–1845*. Protocol no. 458 Grundbücher, Urbare, Konskriptionen und Grundbücher aus der grundherrschaftlichen Periode, Fürstlich Esterházy'sches Archiv Burg Forchtenstein.

26. MZO vol 6 p. 96.

27. MZO vol 6, pp. 180–181.

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