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Family Names of Zagreb Jews From the Beginning of the 19th Century Until World War II

Abstract

The continuous stay of Jews in Zagreb can be traced back to the end of the 18th century. Following the anthroponymy of Zagreb Jews from the first censuses which we have at our disposal to the beginning of World War Two (in which the Zagreb Jewish community was decimated), this paper analyses the family names of Zagreb Jews based on three sources: the book *History of the Zagreb Jewish Community from Its Foundation to the 1850s* by Gavro Schwarz (1939), Jewish birth registers from 1849 until 1898, and data collected from the Israelite (Jewish) section of the Old Cemetery at Mirogoj.

The data analysed include: the statistical analysis of family names and their frequency; the languages in which the family names originated, the official changes of family names, the diachronic frequency of those changes and motivations for change; as well as an examination of family names recorded in the Hebrew script.

This is the first such analysis of Jewish names in Zagreb and can be used as a foundation on which to build further research on the Jews of Zagreb, but also on the names of Jews in other communities in Croatia.

Keywords

family names, Jewish family names, Zagreb, 19th–20th centuries

1. A short historical introduction

The oldest document (a court file) mentioning a Jew in Zagreb (Elias Judaeus) dates to 1373 (“Židovska općina Zagreb”, n.d.). In the 15th century, several Jewish families lived in Zagreb, as can be seen from the documents issued by the historian Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić in his opus *Povjestni spomenici slob. kralj. grada Zagreba prijestolnice Kraljevine dalmatinsko-hrvatsko-slavonske* (1889–1905).¹ He wrote about the Zagreb “domus Judeorum” from the 15th century² and mentioned names of several Jews from the judicial acts of that time. However, up to this day no information was found documenting a Jewish Community in Zagreb at that time (Schwarz, 1939, p. 7). The small Jewish population in Gradec came to an end by the mid-15th century, when all Jews were expelled from the city (Goldstein, 2004, p. 14).

Zagreb became a united city by the Imperial Patent on 7 September 1850 by incorporating the royal free city on Mount Gradec, the bishopric city of Kaptol, Nova Ves, Vlaška Ves, as well as the suburbs and villages belonging to those towns. Consequently, all Jews living in Zagreb before that date fell under two jurisdictions, either under the municipal one in Gradec or under the bishopric one on Kaptol. Therefore, Jews who wanted to settle in the city had to apply for special permission either to the city magistrate or to the bishop, depending on the part of the city in which they intended to reside (Schwarz, 1939, p. 9).

The first permanent Jewish settlers in Zagreb arrived at the end of the 18th century. In 1782, the first “tolerated” Jew, Jakov Stiegler, from Trebitsch (Třebíč) in western Moravia, moved to Zagreb with such a special permission. He was issued a residence permit the following year (Schwarz, 1939, p. 9). In 1789, Elias Herschl and Jakov Weiss, both from Rechnitz in Burgenland (Hungarian: Rohonc, Burgenland Croatian: Rohunac), Josephus Fisher from Miskolczino in northern Hungary (present-day Miskolc) and Jacob (Jacobus) Stern from Lübenau in Pomerania (today’s Lubiki in Poland) followed (Schwarz, 1939, pp. 9, 13). These first Jewish settlers were mostly engaged in retail trade, opening small shops or

¹ Historical Monuments of the Free Royal City of Zagreb, the Capital of the Kingdom of Dalmatia-Croatia-Slavonia.

² “Kronologija židovstva u Hrvatskoj” (Chronology of Judaism in Croatia) dates a burglary into it in the year 1444 (“Židovska općina Zagreb”, n.d.).

peddling. At the beginning of the 19th century only seventeen Jewish families lived in Zagreb (Schwarz, 1939, non-paginated insert between pp. 8 and 9, p. 13).³

Despite this division between the two municipalities, the Jews in Zagreb united in a single Jewish community in 1806, probably due to their small number – only some twenty families – with seventy-five members (Schwarz, 1939, p. 9). Three years later, Zagreb welcomed its first Rabbi, Aron Palotta (1776 or 1777–1843) (Goldstein, 2004, p. 14).

As the available data show (Schwarz, 1939, non-paginated insert between pp. 8 and 9, pp. 13, 45–93), most Jews who immigrated to Zagreb came from various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or from German lands and they were Germanophone and Hungarophone Ashkenazim (Brandl, 2015, p. 56; see also Goldstein, 2004, pp. 18–19), with a minority of Italian Jews from Gorizia and its surroundings who are not so much distinguished by their family names as by keeping their Italian first names (*Achille, Adolfo, Aliče, Camillo, Eduardo, Egidio, Girolamo, Giudita, Guido, Grazietta, Margherita, Paola, Roberto, Stefano*) and were most often endogamous. Until World War One the Zagreb Jewish Community was a marginal one in a predominantly German- and Hungarian-speaking state.

After World War One, state borders changed and the possible ties between members of the Zagreb Jewish Community and the places they or their ancestors came from, if existing at all, were disrupted by new frontiers between newly established states. Zagreb became part of the short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs that was quickly absorbed by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which would change its name into Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. The Zagreb Jewish Community thus became the most important Ashkenazi community in the new, predominantly Slavic-speaking state and had to establish new ties with other Jewish communities, which were mostly Sephardi. This new situation probably prompted some changes in naming attitudes among the Jews of Zagreb.

Another event in Zagreb itself could have also influenced the choice of names. The Croatian National Revival in the middle of the 19th century aimed towards the creation of a Croatian nation in the modern sense of that word. Its leaders, who bore German and Hungarian names for the most part, changed their first and/or family names in order to sound more Slavic. Thus,

³ The list of Jewish families under municipal jurisdiction published by Gavro Schwarz (1939) in the table between pp. 8 and 9 lists nine families, while the list of Jews under the bishopric from 1812 from the same source lists eight more families.

the son of German immigrants Ludwig Gay (1809–1872) became Ljudevit Gaj, Jakob Frass (1810–1851) became Stanko Vraz, the Greek Δημήτριος Δημητρίου (1811–1872) became Dimitrija Demeter, Ignatius Fuchs (1819–1854) from a German-speaking Jewish family became Vatroslav Lisinski,⁴ and Ferdinand Wiesner (1799–1879) became Ferdo Livadić.⁵

There are three questions that this paper is going to answer:

- What family names were the most frequent in Zagreb in that period?
- Of what linguistic origin were the Jewish family names found in Zagreb in the given period?
- How were some Jewish family names changed, when and why?

2. Sources

Three sources of data were used for this research. In 1939, Rabbi Gavro Schwarz published the book “Povijest zagrebačke židovske općine od osnutka do 50-tih godina 19. vijeka”,⁶ that contains several lists of Zagreb Jews: the first census of Jews under the municipal jurisdiction from the year 1808⁷ (Schwarz, 1939, insert between pp. 8 and 9), the first census of Jews under the bishopric jurisdiction from the year 1812 (p. 13), the list of Zagreb Jews from the years 1840–1843 (pp. 45–76) and the alphabetical list according to the conscription from the year 1858, before the introduction of official registries (pp. 76–93).

In the Croatian State Archives (Hrvatski državni arhiv), Jewish birth registries from the years 1849 to 1898 (with the omission of the year 1857) are deposited.⁸ For the years 1859 to 1870 there are parallel records in two

⁴ BCMS (Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian) *vatra* ‘flame’, *lisica* ‘fox’. The ending *-slav* < PS. **slava* ‘glory’ is a typical Slavic one.

⁵ BCMS *livada* ‘meadow’.

⁶ The history of the Zagreb Jewish community since its foundation until the 1850s.

⁷ In one location, Schwarz mistakenly quotes 1908 as the year when the census was made (Schwarz, 1939, p. 10); however, in the following text he mentions the correct one, 1808.

⁸ Državni arhiv u Zagrebu: Zagreb – Židovi, MK rođenih (1849–1870, 1858–1878, 1879–1898), microfilms ZM-34C/101, ZM-34C-1226, ZM-34/457, ZM-34C/M-658.

registries, with different forms and written by different hands. Both data of the newborn children and of their parents are taken into consideration.

The Israelite (Jewish) section of the Old Cemetery at Mirogoj occupies thirteen fields at its south-western end as well as three southern pavilions (915–7) and three fields (924) of the arcade along its western edge. Along with Latin/Fraktur (both German and Croatian) and Hebrew inscriptions on headstones, more data are available from the database accessible on-line via the browser at the Municipal Cemeteries Internet site (Gradska groblja).⁹

Gavro Schwarz's book lists 1,213 individuals, birth registries 3,975 individuals and all the data collected from sources concerning Mirogoj 2,340 individuals. When data from different sources are combined, 6,600 individuals occur, who bear 1,074 different family names.

The problems that arise with this corpus are:

- (1) There is no fixed family name or form thereof. In some entries in the birth registries the child and the parents bear family names that differ mostly by suffix, e.g. *-berg* vs. *-berger*. The puzzling fact is that both these family names seem to be written by the same hand, supposedly at the same time. When comparing different sources even more discrepant data appear, e.g., *Rosendorfer/Rogendorfer/Ragendorfer* (10/1891, 18/1892, 4/1894, 10/1895, 90/1896¹⁰) or *Rosenfeld/Rosenthal* (456/1871, 511/1873, 583/1875, 679/1876, 962/1882, 1092/1884, 1350/1889).
- (2) Some family names are written according to different orthographies. This includes suffixes of the type *-mann* vs. *-man*, that is geminate consonants vs. single ones, but also the way some sounds are represented, e.g., devoiced *dt* vs. *t*, old orthography *th* vs. the newer *t*, umlauted *ö* and *ä* vs. digraphs *oe* and *ae* or single letters *o/e* and *a/e* respectively, as well as different representations of *scharfes S* (*Eszett*), *ß* vs. *sz* vs. *ss* vs. *s*.
- (3) The on-line database of Gradska groblja contains lots of typos due probably to the fact that the person(s) entering the data were unfamiliar with the handwriting of the epoch, both the Cursive Gothic script and the Latin cursive one and their mixes and combinations. However, some family

⁹ Gradska groblja Zagreb: Tražilica pokojnika (Search engine for the deceased), <https://www.gradskagroblja.hr/trazilica-pokojnika/15>

¹⁰ The numbers represent the number under which the birth is registered / the year in which it was registered.

names like *KANDERS*¹¹ (7 I 5¹²) are easy to interpret, as *Kauders* (Beider, 1995, p. 9; Guggenheimer, H. W., & Guggenheimer, E. H., 1992, p. 394; Menk, 2005, p. 417). On the other hand, the family name *FEIGAPESLA* (13A II/I 22), although a possible Yiddish family name,¹³ is a *hapax legomenon*, so there is no way to check the accuracy of its transcription.

While the abovementioned point 2) is not presenting a problem within the research, point 1) confronts the researcher with a dilemma: which family name to include as the correct one? In the case of each individual, the family name mentioned in the majority of sources was the chosen one. Concerning point 3), if it was not an obvious typo and a rather recognisable miswritten family name, it was as a rule a *hapax legomenon*, as the instance mentioned above, so it did not affect the statistic part of the research.

3. Analysis¹⁴

3.1. Frequency of individual family names

Establishing the frequency of a first name is easy and straightforward: one just counts the individuals bearing that particular first name. However, family names, as their appellation says, do not belong to individuals, but to families. So, to establish the frequency of a given family name one should count the families that bear it. But what exactly is a family in these circumstances? Just the core family consisting of parents and their children or the extended one? Does it encompass just the ones who live together (not necessarily genetically

¹¹ The data from the Gradska groblja on-line database are given in all caps as they are entered in the database itself.

¹² The numbers represent the field number, the grave category and the grave number.

¹³ As explained by Alexander Beider on 31 October 2019 in a private communication, it is derived from a Yiddish female double first name: *Feiga* (Beider, 2001, pp. 300–301) + *Pesla* (Beider, 2001, pp. 477–480).

¹⁴ In the analysis of Jewish family names, the following sources were used: Guggenheimer & Guggenheimer, 1992; Beider, 1995; Faiguenboim, Valadares, & Campagnano, 2003; Menk, 2005; Beider, 2008.

related to each other) or does it include all the ones who are in kinship relations with each other (but not necessarily living together)¹⁵?

In Gavro Schwarz's book, Jews are listed according to families, so there are 9 (core) families in the municipal jurisdiction 1808 census, 8 (core) families in the bishopric jurisdiction 1812 census, 57 (extended) families registered in the years 1840–43, and 59 (extended) families from the 1858 conscription. A total, therefore, of 133 families. Of all those, only two family names appear ten or more times,¹⁶ *Stern/Zvijezdić* with 15 families and *Schwarz* with 14 families.

In the birth registries for the years 1849–1898 (except 1857), individual families can be identified by the first and family name of the father and the first and maiden name of the mother. Counting in this way, we get a total of 803 families. However, family names were not consistently recorded and we find doublets and even triplets. Different spellings of the same family name are ignored in the analysis. The family names with ten or more families bearing them are *Weis/Weiß/Weiss/Weisz* with 31 families, *Schwarc/Schwartz/Schwarz/Svarz* with 26, *Stern* with 25, *Kohn* with 20, *Deutsch* and *Hirschl/Hiršl* with 18, *Spicer/Spitzer* with 14, *Rosenberg/Rosenberger* with 13, *Neuman/Neumann* and *Steiner* with 12, and *Alexander* and *Miller/Müller* with 10 families.

The graves in the Israeli (Jewish) section of the Mirogoj cemetery can be roughly divided into two groups: family graves, which sometimes occupy more than one grave site, and graves in which individuals who are not necessarily related by family or kinship are buried. Therefore, the analysis of the frequency of family names in this case will be divided into two separate analyses: the analysis of the frequency of family names on family grave headstones and the analysis of the frequency of family names on headstones of the graves of the second mentioned type. Among the family burials the most frequent family names are *Schwartz/Schwarz/Švarc* with 22 graves, *Weiss* with 18, *Dajč/Deutsch/Maceljski/Njemčić* with 17, *Neuman/Neumann* with 11, and *Kohn, Müller/Mueller* and *Spitzer/Špicer* with 10 graves. Among the individual burials the most frequent family names are *Weiss/Weis* with 19 individuals, *Schwartz/Schwarz/Švarc* with 17, *Neuman/Neumann* with 15, *Koen/Kohn/Kon, Singer* and *Spitzer* with 13, *Hirschl* with 12, *Büchler/Buchler/Buechler* and *Stern/Štern/Zvijezdić* with 11, and *Fischer* with 10 individuals.

¹⁵ BCMS has two words for 'family'. The word *obitelj* is derived from the root *obit-* 'to dwell', while the word *porodica* is derived from the root *rod-* 'kindred, genus'.

¹⁶ The two following lists also include only family names with ten or more families bearing it.

The family name *Schwarz* with its variants and translated forms is among the most frequent in all the sources. The family name *Stern* does not appear only among the listed family graves on Mirogoj (7 families). The family names *Koen/Kohn/Kon*, *Neuman/Neumann*, *Spitzer/Špicer* and *Weis/Weiß/Weiss/Weisz* appear among the most frequent in all sources except in *Schwarz* (there are one, none, six and eight families bearing them, respectively). The family names *Dajč/Deutsch/Maceljski/Njemčić*, *Hirschl/Hiršl* and *Miller/Müller/Mueller* appear among the most frequent in two sources each.

3.2. Origin of individual family names

The majority of registered family names, over two thirds of them, are of German/Yiddish origin. If we add to those family names from regions traditionally settled with Ashkenazi Jews, like Hungary, Russia, Poland and Czechia, a little over three quarters of all the family names might be attributed to Ashkenazi Jews (Figure 1).

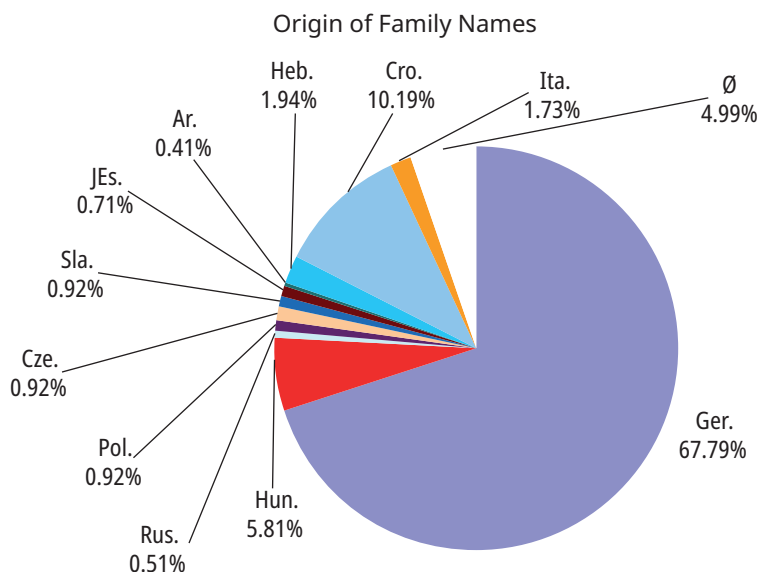


Figure 1. Origin of the family names of Zagreb Jews (Ar. – Arabic, Cro. – Croatian, Cze. – Czech, Ger. – German, Heb. – Hebrew, Hun. – Hungarian, Ita. – Italian, JEs. – Judeo-Español, Pol. – Polish, Rus. – Russian, Sla. – Slavic, Ø – uncertain)

Source: own work.

On the other hand, Sephardi family names constitute between 1% and 3% of all the family names (Figure 1). This can be explained by the fact that Sephardi Jews were never numerous in Zagreb and that they only started to arrive after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the later Kingdom of Yugoslavia) in 1918. Before that, only two Sephardi family names were registered in the birth registries, both maiden family names of mothers: Elvira Eisenstädter née *Camis* (1334/1889, 45/1892; Faiguenboim, Valadares, and Campagnano, 2003, p. 217), and Lisi/Lise Groskopf/Grosskopf née *Kabili* (874/1880, 940/1881; Faiguenboim, Valadares, and Campagnano, 2003, p. 215).¹⁷

3.3. Changes of family names

When it comes to family name changes, the least informative data are from Mirogoj cemetery. Namely, it is not uncommon for different families to be buried successively in the same grave, so a new family name on a headstone does not necessarily mean a change of the family's family name. In this case, one can be sure that there was a change of family name only when it comes to the simplest linguistic change processes, translation (e.g., *Deutsch* > *Njemčić*; 5 I 19), phonetic transcription (e.g., *Ausch* > *Auš*; 924 ARKP 21-1), or adaptation to the morphological structure of typical Croatian family names (e.g., *Lederer* > *Ledić*; 7 I 34).

In the lists of Zagreb Jews within his book, Gavro Schwarz quotes several examples of family name changes. Unfortunately, he regularly states the years of birth and death only for the *patres* (and sometimes *matres*) *familias*, so we cannot always affirm with certainty at what time the change of the family name occurred. Thus Schwarz mentions Mirko *Ilić* (15¹⁸), as the son of Henriete Hertmann (1843–1916) and Ignac *Israel*; Milan *Njemčić* (27, 5 I 19) as the grandson of Ruža Kremsir and as the son of her daughter

¹⁷ The 4.99% unclassified family names include the noble families mentioned below in the text, family names with ambiguous etymologies (e.g. BELIN, Košarak, Salaj/SALAJ) and *hapax legomena* including family names that were probably misspelled and those with unknown etymology (e.g. Deissiger, FENI, Fišar, Globnik, Gulgas, John/JOHN, Karan, Keele, Linski, Martin, Mogan, Perok/PEROK, Pessek, Piozk, Rojan, Temar, Tomi, VERBOY, Vojtitz/Wotik, Woliko, Zafuta/ZAFUTA, Zappit, Zeriali, Žurga).

¹⁸ The number represents the number under which the family is listed in the book.

Paulina and Ignac *Deutsch*; the sons of Abraham b. Šelomo *Stern* having translated their family name to *Zvijezdić* (35, 3 II 82); Adolf *Daničić* (27) as the son of dr. Miroslav *Schwarz* without mentioning the family name of his brothers Željko and Dragutin; the *Kolmars* as the descendants of David Herš Cevi b. Šelomo Jehuda *Kohn* (30); Edmund *Kohn* and his children Hermina (478/1872), Otto (548/1874), Bertha (622/1875), Paulina (693/1877) and Emil (896/1880) changed their family name to *Kolmar* too; as did Moritz *Kohn* (953/1882); and *Španić* Miroslav as one of the three sons of Egidio Moric *Spitzer* (1855–1924) (103).¹⁹

In the birth registers we find 143 individuals who changed their family names during their lives, some of them more than once.

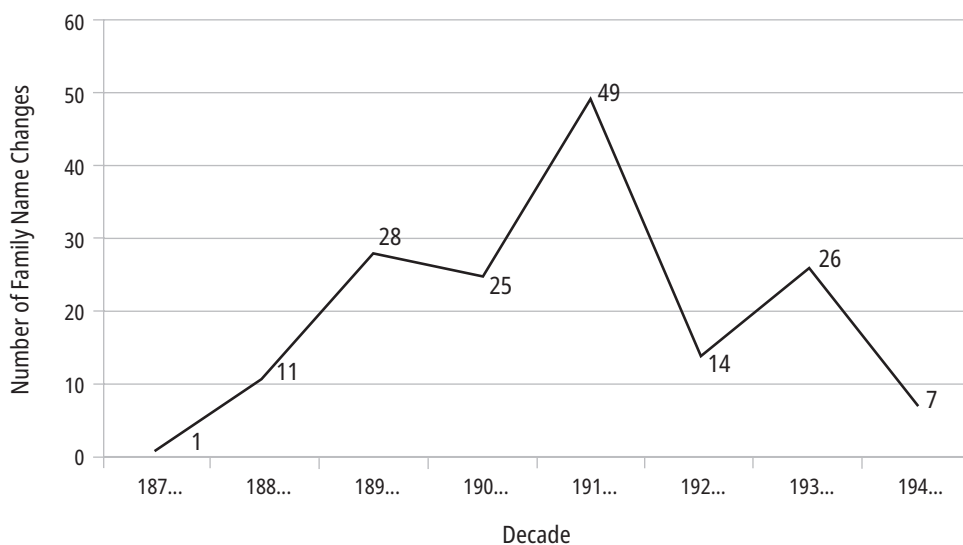


Figure 2. Number of family name changes per decade

Source: own work.

If we look at the diachronic frequency of family name changes (Figure 2), we see a peak in the 1910s with 49 individuals changing their family names.

¹⁹ It is noted in the birth registries that in 1919 both Miroslav (39/1894) and his sister Nada (26/1897) changed their family name from *Spitzer* to *Španić*. Stjepan is not mentioned there, and Vilko is probably Wilhelm (60/1892), for whom no mention of a change of family name is made.

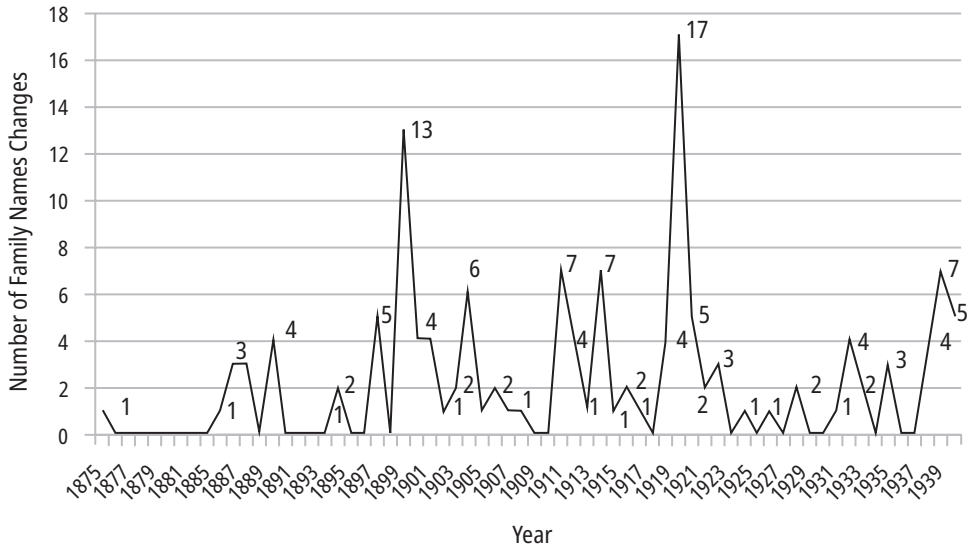


Figure 3. Number of family name changes per year

Source: own work.

Looking at individual years (Figure 3), two peaks can be observed, one in 1899 and one 1919.

In 1899, 13 changes were registered, mostly into Hungarian family names. It is probably not possible to give a definite answer as to why so many family names were changed that year. However, some speculations can be made when taking into consideration several circumstances. In that year, the Hungarianisation of Croatia under the administration of Ban Dragutin Khuen-Héderváry (1849–1918), who ruled Croatia and Slavonia from 1883 to 1903, was at its peak. Likewise, the anti-Semitic wave caused by the Dreyfus affair in France (1894–1906) was in full swing. A year before, in 1898, Karl Lueger (1844–1910) from the openly populist and anti-Semitic Christian Social Party became the mayor of Vienna (a position he remained in until 1910), building on the ideas of Georg von Schönerer (1842–1921), a leading exponent of Pan-Germanism and German nationalism in Austria, a radical opponent of political Catholicism and a fierce anti-Semite (Dobrovšak, 2003, pp. 46–76). At the same time, another factor may have influenced the choice of Hungarian family names. A large number of Zagreb Jews were employed at the State railway company which was in Hungarian hands. The change of the family name

into a Hungarian one might be an expression of the need for assimilation in the workplace as well (Dobrovšak, 2003, pp. 158–175; Kusin, 2020, pp. 298–299).

In 1919, 17 changes were registered, mostly to Slavic family names. It can be assumed that in the post-WWI period in a state that was considered the successor of the Kingdom of Serbia, one of the victors over the German-speaking states, a family name that sounded German was not desirable. If we add to that the distrust that Belgrade expressed towards “their”, Ashkenazi Jews, when compared to “our”, mostly Sephardi ones, it is clear that the political circumstances favoured the change of German family names to Slavic ones (Brandl, 2015, p. 65; Kusin, 2020, p. 300).

If we look at the ways the family names were changed, we will find several methods in which it has been done (Figure 3). More than half of the changed family names, 55%, kept the same initial (Figure 4). A similar tendency can be seen when first names were changed. The initial retained, however, does not necessarily include only the written first letter of the family name (e.g., *Ornstein* > *Oštrić*), but also the initial sound of a family name, e.g., both the family names *Schwarz* > *Šumanović* begin with a [ʃ] sound (Kusin, 2020, pp. 300–301).

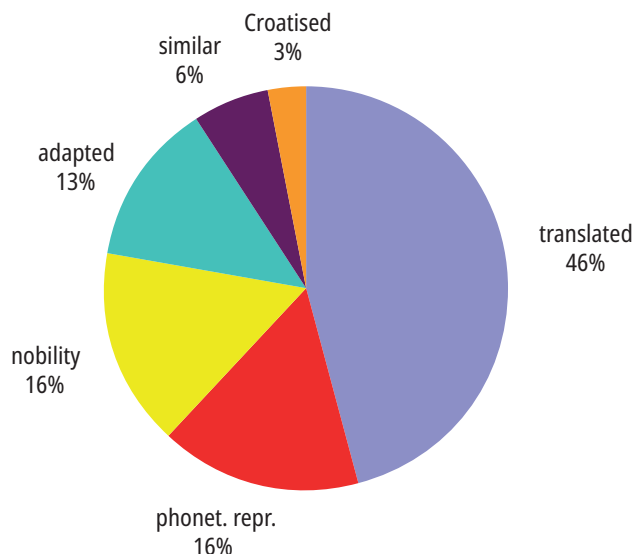


Figure 4. Changed family names with known motivation

Source: own work.

Most family names were changed by simply translating the leading morpheme of the original family name into the new language (Figure 4), e.g., *Deutsch* > *Njemčić*, *Stern* > *Zvezdić*, *Weiß* > *Bjelinski*. Among those the change *Schwarz* > *Vranić* stands out, as it was not the common root *crn-* for ‘black’ that was used, but a more archaic and poetic one, *vran-*, from a higher language register.²⁰

The phonetic representation of a family name can be imposed by a new government, whose clerks automatically write the family name according to the new official orthography, never consulting the actual family name bearer about that. Thus, only the cases when the phonetic transcription of a family name explicitly requested by the family name bearer was registered in the birth registries are taken into consideration (Figure 4), e.g., *Ausch* > *Auš*, *Müller* > *Miler*, *Süssman* > *Sisman*, *Weisz* > *Vajs*. In the case of *Deutsch* > *Dajč*, it should be noted that it was the Yiddish form that was phonetically transcribed, not the German one [dɔʏtʃ].

Adaptation is a process in which the original family name is kept to a certain degree, but phonologically or morphologically adapted to the new language, mostly by adding the patronymic diminutive suffix *-ić* (Figure 4), e.g., *Fröhlich* > *Frelić*, *Lederer* > *Ledić*, *Reichl* > *Raić*. However, the change *Pollak* > *Poljak* was carried out by simply applying the BCMS word for ‘Pole’, so it might also be considered a translation.

Four Jews were awarded nobility in Austria-Hungary (Figures 4 and 5). Emperor and King Franz Joseph awarded nobility to three of them, to the Zagreb wholesaler Jakob Weiss, the first Jew to be honoured so in Croatia, with the title “de Polna” in 1874; to the lawyer Dr. Hinko Sachs from Rijeka with the title “de Grič”; and to the timber merchant, wholesaler and landowner Filip Feivel Šrage b. Benjamin Deutsch, his wife Franjica and his sons Vilim, Benko and Albert and their legal descendants with the title “od Macelja” or “Maceljski” in 1910. His successor, Emperor and King Karl awarded nobility to the merchant, industrialist, banker and philanthropist Sandor Alexander with the title “Sesvetski”. Of all those mentioned above, Vilim, Albert and Benko, sons of Filip Feivel Šrage b. Benjamin Deutsch, took the title *Maceljski* as their new family name discarding the old *Deutsch* at the same time. This was another way of changing the family name.

²⁰ In BCMS traditional folk poetry *konji vrani* ‘black horses’ is a recurrent phrase when horses are concerned.

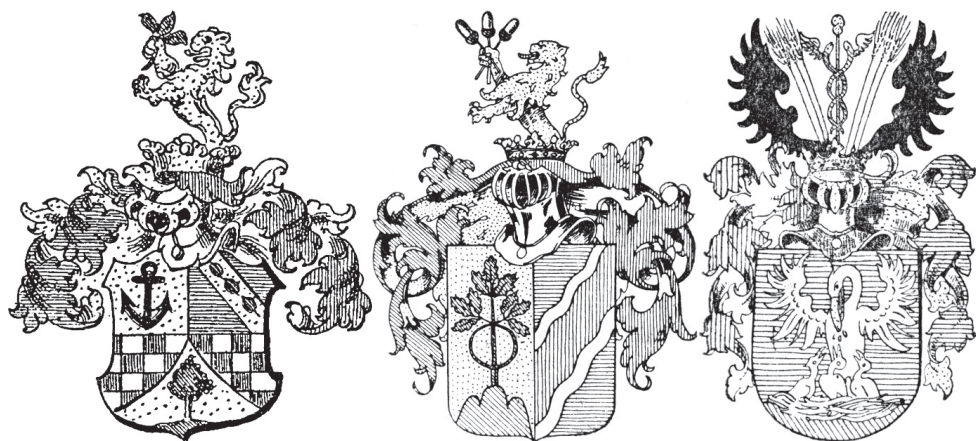


Figure 5. The coats of arms of the noble families (l. to r.) Weiss de Polna, Deutsch Maceljiski and Aleksander Sesevtski

Source: Bojničić, 1995 (1899): plate 144; Zbornik plemstva, 1938, p. 173; Zbornik plemstva, 1938, p. 12.

In the process of changing one's family name, the tendency not to alienate oneself too much from the original family name was present in some cases. Similar-sounding ones were chosen (Figure 3), e.g., *Fischbein* > *Fišar*, *Kohn* > *Kann* or *Kún*. The case *Kohn* > *Kunić* is rather interesting. Although *kunić* means 'rabbit', the family name is actually a patronymic form derived from another animal, *kuna* 'marten', with the typical diminutive suffix *-ić*.

With the German occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941, the pro-Nazi puppet Independent State of Croatia was established. It quickly copied the Nazi laws concerning Jews and other minorities, and among these laws, the Directive on the Change of Jewish Family Names and on Tagging the Jews and Jewish companies from 4 June 1941 forced the return of the Jewish family names that were changed after a certain date to their original forms. In the birth registries that change back was registered seven times with a stamp²¹ with the following text (Kusin, 2020, p. 297):

²¹ Based on the Directive on the change of Jewish family names number 336-Z. p. 1941 from 4 June, 1941, the change of family name to _____ is recorded.

Na osnovu Naredbe o promjeni židovskih
prezimana broj 336-Z. p. 1941 od 4 lipnja
1941 bilježi se promjena prezimana
na _____

4. Family names written in hebrew

Among the Mirogoj headstones 51 have an inscription in Hebrew. Among those there are 31 with a family name written in Hebrew characters (Kusin, 2020, pp. 301–302).

Oblatt/OBLAT	<i>/oblatt/</i>	אבלאטט
Eisenstädter/EISENSTADTER	<i>/ayzenštedter/</i>	איזענשטעדטער
Baš/BASCH	<i>/baš/</i>	באש
BUECHLER	<i>/bixler/</i>	ביכלער
Blatt/BLATT	<i>/blat/</i>	בלאט
Gaon/GAON	<i>/gaon/</i>	גאון
Grossmann/GROSSMAN	<i>/grossman/</i>	גראסמאן
Grünhut/GRUENHUT	<i>/grinhut/</i>	גרינהוט
Grünfeld/GRUENFELD	<i>/grinfeld/</i>	גרינפעלד
Deutsch/DEUTSCH	<i>/daytš/</i>	דייטש
Hirschl	<i>/hiršl/</i>	הירשל
Lewy/Levi/LOWY	<i>/halevi/</i>	הלוי
Schiller/SCHILLER	<i>/halevi/</i>	הלוי
HESSEL	<i>/hessel/</i>	העססעל
HERŠKOVIĆ	<i>/herškowitš/</i>	הערשקאוויטש
Weissmann/WEISSMAN	<i>/vaysman/</i>	ווייסמאן
Weitzner/WEITZNER	<i>/vaycner/</i>	ווייצנער
LEDERER	<i>/lederer/</i>	לעדערער
Mandolfo/MANDOLFO	<i>/mandolfo/</i>	מאנדולפו

ENGELSRATH	/engelsrath/	ענגעלסראטה
Kohn/KOLIN	/kohn/	קאהן
ROTHSTEIN	/rothstayn/	ראטהשטיין
Rechnitzer/RECCHMITZER	/rexnicer/	רעכניטצער
Steinhardt/STEINHARDT	/staynhart/	שטיינהארט
Štern/ŠTERN	/št(e)rn/	שטרן
Kastl/KASTL	/talevi/	תלוי ²²

Some of them follow the German orthographic rules, even when being written in the Hebrew script. That is, the characters of the German version of the family name were converted into Hebrew ones on a one-to-one basis. Thus, the sound [t], instead of being written as a simple ט, is represented by the digraph דט, corresponding to the German devoiced <dt>, in the family name אייזענשטעדטער /ayzenštedter/, and by the digraph טה, corresponding to the old German orthography convention <th>, in the family name ענגעלסראטה /engelsrath/ and ראטהשטיין /rothstayn/. Geminated consonants are used instead of single ones in the family names אַבלאטט /oblatt/, גראסמאן /grossman/ and העססעל /hessel/.

The family name *Kohn* was transliterated (not transcribed) as קאהן /kohn/, although that <h> has no consonantal value in itself, but only marks the length of the preceding vowel.²³

The orthography of the family name מאנדולפו /mandolfo/ is typical not only for Hebrew, but also for Judeo-Italian and other Jewish languages, the vowel /o/ being written with the mater *lectionis* וּ.

Several Hebrew family names were written according to Hebrew orthography, like גאון /gaon/, הלוי /halevi/ and תלוי /talevi/. In this case, הלוי /halevi/ and תלוי /talevi/ are not family names in themselves, just indications that the origin of the family is among the Levites. So instead of transcribing their family names in Hebrew, *Schiller*/SCHILLER and *Kastl*/KASTL respectively, they chose to mark their ancestry instead.

²² The name תלוי is most likely a misspelled name הלוי. However, *Talevi* is an actual family name in Italy.

²³ However, the eponymous Hebrew word כהן /kohen/ 'priest' has a pronounced [h] sound in it.

5. Conclusion

As expected, the most frequent family names, as well as the majority of all the family names (67.79%), are of German/Yiddish origin. The next most frequent ones are Croatian family names (10.19%), followed by Hungarian ones (5.81%). A certain number of family names from those two groups were obtained by changing the original ones, while in the case of Croatian family names inter-marriages also played a certain role. The only other languages with more than 1% family names are Hebrew (1.94%) and Italian (1.73%).

About 150 Jewish family names were changed at least once in the researched period. The most likely reasons for a family name change had to do with assimilation. In times of strong anti-Semitism, a Jewish family name (as well as a first one) could have been a cause of problems and changing it could have meant higher personal safety. Another reason might be that, in professional dealings with the Gentile surroundings, a name that did not sound Jewish could have meant better business perspectives.

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