

Wahl – Katzenellenbogen and Horowitz connections

Edward Gelles

My pedigree largely derives from the interaction of some old Jewish families during their millennial migrations which were influenced by political, religious, and socio-economic changes. To some extent my family history may be seen as reflecting a wider European history.

My parents David Gelles and Regina Griffel came from the Galician province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As the first appended chart shows, my immediate ancestral families were Gelles, Weinstein, and Horowitz, Griffel, Wahl, Chajes, and Safier. Our European journey took in dozens of notable rabbis, scholars and community leaders from Halpern, Shapiro, Jaffe, Loew, Cohen (HaKohen, Katz, Kahane), Levi (Halevi, Halevi Segal), Wertheimer and many other families, who contributed to my ancestral background.

This essay deals with my ancestor Saul Wahl, scion of the Katzenellenbogen family, and connections with my Horowitz ancestors.

References to other aspects of my pedigree will be found in the concluding Notes.

The Katzenellenbogen came from the eponymous town in Hesse–Nassau and went to Italy where they became Chief Rabbis of Padua and Venice in the 16th century. Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen and his wife Abigail Jaffe were the parents of Saul (1545 -1617) who went from Padua to study in Poland where he attained some importance in Polish - Lithuanian affairs of State.

He became known by the name of “Wahl” (“the Italian”). His numerous progeny contracted marriages with the leading Jewish families of the time. His eldest son, Meir Wahl of Brest married Hinde Horowitz, daughter of Pinchas Horowitz (1535 -1618) who had moved from Prague to Cracow, married the sister of Cracow’s Chief Rabbi Moses Isserles, and become President of the Council of the Four Lands (the semi-autonomous governing body of Polish Jewry).

The Horowitz were descended from the medieval Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona - - these Levites were related to the Kalonymos of Narbonne, their respective Hebrew and Greek surnames meaning “of the good name” and signifying an ancestry going back to Biblical times.

It seems that I am a 31st generation descendant from the 11th century scholar of Gerona. His line branched off to Bohemia in the 15th century, adopting the name of Horowitz from the estate of Horovice near Prague. Their formal family name became “Halevi Ish Horowitz” meaning the “Levite, man of Horovice”. The family flourished greatly in Prague before eventual eastward migration with many of the city’s Jewish families.

The principal impact of Wahl and Katzenellenbogen on my pedigree came through my maternal grandmother Chawa Wahl who was a descendant of Saul Wahl through the above-mentioned

Meir Wahl and Hinde Horowitz. The closest impact of Horowitz was through the mothers of my paternal grandparents Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles and his wife Esther Weinstein.

My maternal great-grandmother Sarah Matel Chajes of Kolomea belonged to the Chajes (Chayes, Chayyut) family who left Portugal in the mid 15th century and made their way via Provence to Prague where Isaac ben Abraham Chayes became Chief Rabbi, brother-in-law of the famous Rabbi Judah Loew, and progenitor of a long line of rabbis descending to the 20th century in Lithuania and Galicia. From Brody some went to Livorno and Florence and to Trieste, spreading to Vienna and elsewhere. The family included the ennobled branch in Livorno, a Chief Rabbi in Vienna, an American-Israeli composer, and the holder of an endowed Professorship of Law at Harvard University, as well as many other scholars.

The second appended chart shows descent from the 16th century Pinchas Horowitz and Saul Wahl, connecting with Judah Loew and his first wife Mirel Chajes-Altschuler and going down to Isaac Horowitz, the chief Rabbi of Brody, Glogau, and Hamburg, and then to two half-brothers, Yehuda Ahron Horowitz, Rabbi in Solotwina and later in Saniawitz and Mihaileni, and Efraim Fishel Horowitz who became Chief Rabbi of Munkacz in Hungary.

Yehuda Ahron and Efraim Fishel Horowitz were respectively grandfathers of Esther Weinstein and Chief Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles of Solotwina, who are thus seen to be second (half) cousins. Details for these connections are discussed in my earlier publications (*v.i* concluding Notes and References).

The third chart sets out the details of descent from Saul Wahl to Isaac Krakower, the Chief Rabbi of Brody and Head of the Babad family (called by a Hebrew acronym for “children of the chief Rabbi”). The Babad are thus in direct line of descent from Saul Wahl and Isaac Krakower’s son Jacob Babad was father-in-law of Rabbi Isaac “Hamburger” Horowitz.

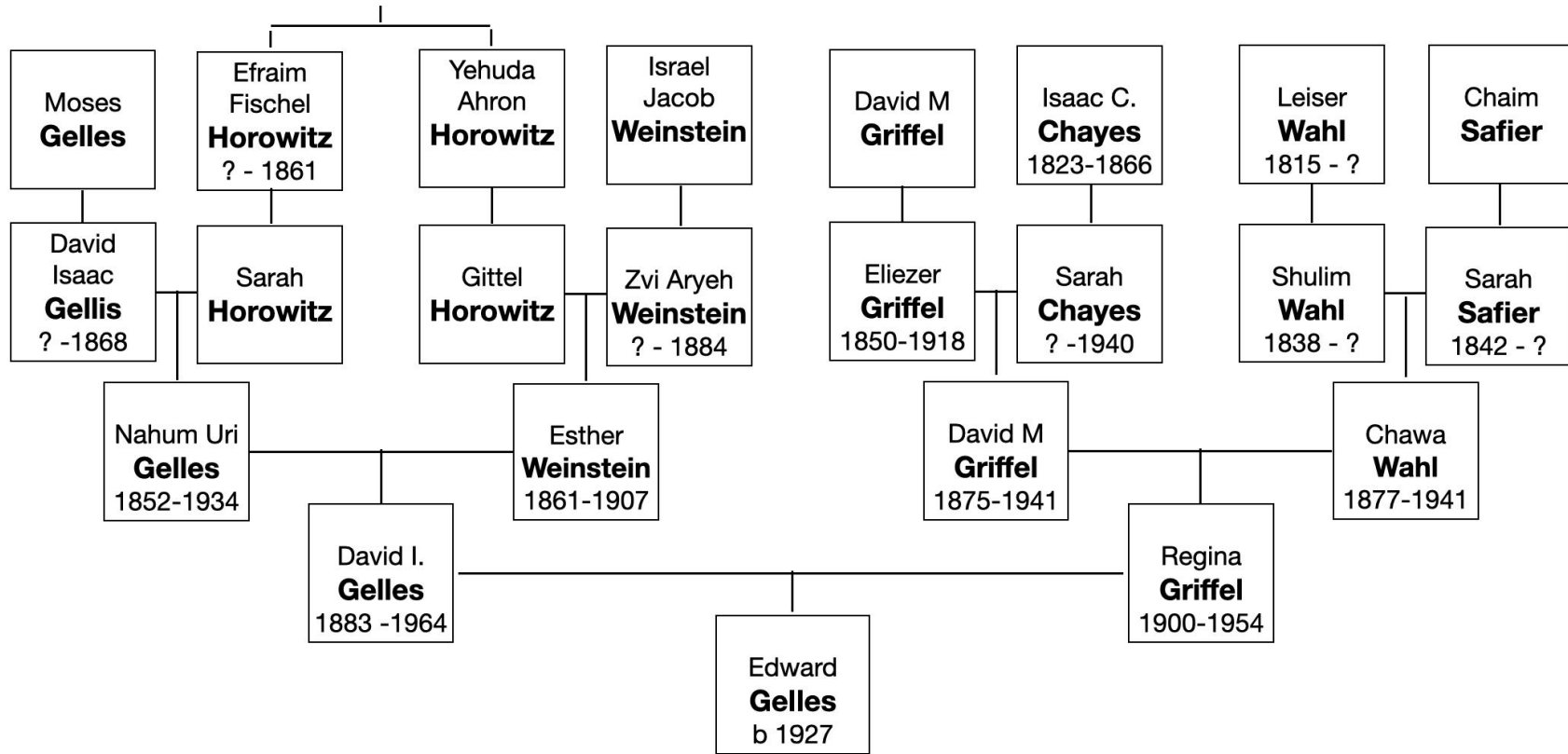
The fourth and fifth charts show lines of descent from Isaac Krakower and from Isaac Horowitz.

Solotwina, was a small east Galician town within the ambit of influence of the Horowitz Rabbis in nearby Stanislau (now in the Ukraine and called Ivano-Frankivsk). From the 19th century Solotwina had a succession of Rabbis who all had Horowitz connections, namely Yehuda Ahron Horowitz followed by his son-in-law Chief Rabbi Zvi Aryeh (*aka* Hirsch Leib) Weintein, and the latter’s son-in-law Chief Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles. The last Chief Rabbi of Solotwina was Yoel Babad who perished in the Holocaust.

The most distinguished rabbi of Solotwina in earlier days was Rabbi Moshe Heilprin of Berdichev who moved to Solotwina in the 1740’s and died in 1752. I am his 10th generation descendant via my grandmother Esther Weinstein , and Miriam Margolies, the wife of Rabbi Yehuda Ahron Horowitz (*v.i.* second and sixth charts).

My grandfather Nahum Uri Gelles is shown on the fifth chart as born in Narayow where his mother Sarah would have gone to her nearest female relative when a child was due, as was the custom of the time, the place of birth thus adding circumstantial evidence to the connection with Rabbi Efraim Fischel Horowitz of Munkacz. A generation later my father was sent from Solotwina to study at the Munkacz Yeshiva where my family connection continued with the then Shapiro Chief Rabbi.

Ancestry of Edward Gelles



My maternal grandmother Chawa Wahl was a descendant of Saul Wahl –Katzenellenbogen and my paternal great-grandmothers Sarah and Gittel came from the ancient Horowitz line which inter-married with Saul Wahl’s descendants.

In some of the following charts abbreviations are sometimes used : R. for Rabbi and ABD for Av Beth Din = Head of the Rabbinical Court / often also holding the title of Chief Rabbi.

- Chart 2 Connections of Horowitz lines with descendants of Saul Wahl
Descent via Isaac Horowitz of Hamburg to my paternal grandparents,
Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles of Solotwina and Esther Weinstein
- Chart 3 Descent from Saul Wahl (1545 – 1617) to Isaac Krakower the Chief Rabbi of Brody,
and Head of Babad family and on to Isaac Horowitz, the Chief Rabbi of Hamburg
- Chart 4 Isaac Krakower (died 1704) , Head of the Babad Family
Descent to Yoel Babad (died 1942) the last Chief Rabbi of Solotwina
- Chart 5 Isaac Horowitz , Chief Rabbi of Hamburg (1715 – 1767)
Gelles – Horowitz connections
- Chart 6 Rabbi Moshe Heilprin of Berdichev and Solotwina (d. 1752)
His descent via Cohanic line to Miriam Margolies, wife of Rabbi
Yehuda Ahron Horowitz and on to my grandmother Esther Weinstein

Horowitz – Wahl – Loew – Chajes descent to my paternal grandparents



Saul Wahl to Isaac Horowitz of Hamburg

Saul Wahl 1545-1617

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Meir Wahl Katzenellenbogen, ABD of Brest d. 1631

|

Deborah

m Jacob, ABD of Brest and Lublin

|

Abraham Joshua Heschel of Cracow d. 1663

Great-grand-son of Saul Wahl and Chief Rabbi of Cracow

m (1) Miriam Lazars

|

Yissachar Ber d.1690

President of the Council of the Four Lands

m (1) Roza Yollis

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Isaac Krakower d. 1704

Chief Rabbi of Brody and Head of the Babad family

m Beile Katvan, desc. from Chief Rabbi Moses Isserles of Cracow

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Jacob Yollis Babad d. 1748

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Reitze Babad d. 1755

m

Isaac Horowitz d.1767

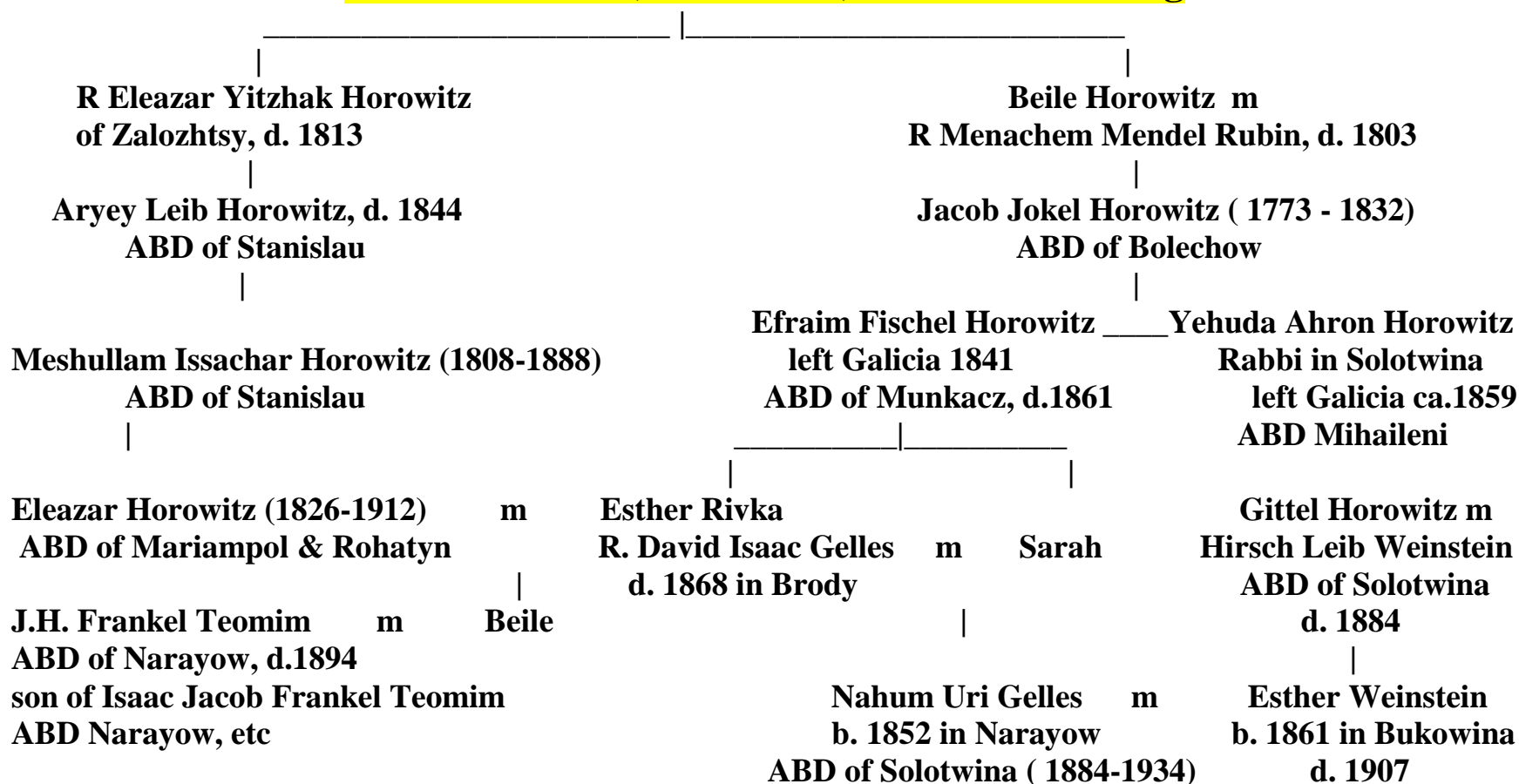
ABD of Hamburg

Lines of Descent from Isaac Krakower, Head of the Babad family



GELLES – HOROWITZ CONNECTIONS

Isaac Horowitz (1715 - 1767) ABD of Hamburg



My paternal grandmother's descent from a notable Rabbi of Solotwina

Rabbi Moshe Heilprin of Berdichev & Solotwina (d. 1752)
m Mindel Katz

Rudel m Rabbi Shmuel Katz

Reb Menachem Mendel Katz of Rosilna near Brodshin

Rabbi Abraham Katz, Rabbi of Brodshin

Reb Gershon Mendel Katz of Brodshin (d. 1841)

Gittel Hakohen Adlersberg (d.1862)
(sister of Rabbi Saul Hakohen Adlersberg, ABD of Brodshin, died 1850)
m Zalman Berish Rottenberg (Margolies) of Brodshin

Miriam m Rabbi Yehuda Aron Horowitz of Solotwina

Gittel m Rabbi Hirsch Leib Weinstein of Solotwina (d. 1884)

|
Esther Weinstein (d. 1907)

Notes and References

The Papers of Edward Gelles at Balliol College Archives and Manuscripts include a list of my published books, most of which can be read in digitized form on the College web site. Much of my unpublished research on the history and genealogy of my family background and the millennial migrations of European Jewry is collected here in more than sixty files.

Several of my books have chapters on Saul Wahl and the Katzenellenbogen and my Horowitz connections. For connections between the Rabbis of Sopotwina reference may be made to my books “An Ancient Lineage”, (2006) page 196, and to “Meeting my Ancestors (2011), Chapter 7 entitled “From Moshe Heilprin to Yoel Babad”.

This essay on ancestral connections with Wahl - Katzenellenbogen and Horowitz follows on file (A 33) “Wahl –Katzenellenbogen and Cohen connections “

Files providing further background to the present essay include :

- (B 1) “ Edward Gelles, ancestral overview “
- (A 25) “ Some Gelles and Jaffe family migrations in recent centuries “
- (A18) “Some Family Connections with Wahl – Katzenellenbogen”
- (A 10) “Millennial descent from Shem Tov Halevi of Gerona“
- (A 28) “Gelles and Weinstein connections “

P.S. A recent correspondent drew my attention to his ancestor Yehuda Atyeh (son of R, Moshe Zvi of Bogopol). He was a great-grandson of Rabbi Yehuda Ahron Horowitz of Solotwina and hence my father's second cousin. My father's descent was through Gittel Horowitz and Esther Weinstein while Yehuda Aryeh descended via Rabbi Naftali Horowitz and Sarah Hinda (Yehuda Aryeh's mother).

Yehuda Aryeh's pedigree was published in *Nachalas Zvi*, a Hebrew Journal for the Study of Hasidic Thought and History, Bnei Brak, No. 10, pp 180 – 186, and a critique by Dov-Berish Weber appeared in the same Journal in September 1995, Issue No.11, pp 175-177.