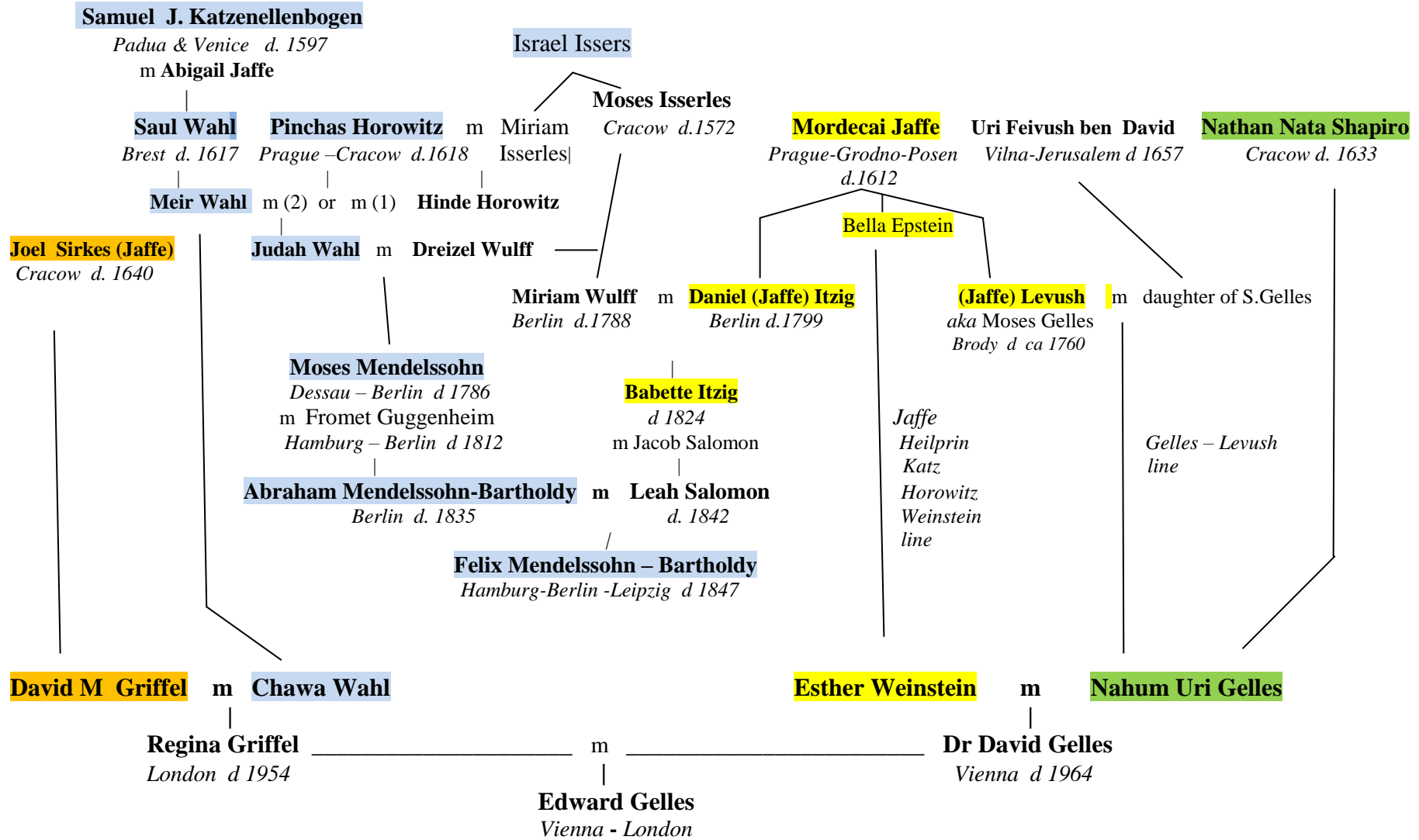


Ancestral Links of Edward Gelles and the Mendelssohns



Footnotes

Grandparents of Edward Gelles

Nahum Uri Gelles (1852-1934) Chief Rabbi of Solotwina, son of Rabbi David Isaac Gelles and Sarah (Horowitz) of Narayov
descendant of Gelles – Levush (Jaffe) line, of Nathan Nata Shapiro, Chief Rabbi of Cracow, and of many other rabbis

m

Esther Weinstein (1861-1907) daughter of Chief Rabbi Hirsch Leib Weinstein of Solotwina and Gittel Horowitz
descendant of Weinstein, Horowitz, Katz, Heilprin, Jaffe rabbinic lines, etc

David Mendel Griffel (1875-1941) son of Eliezer Griffel of Nadworna and Sarah Matel Chajes of Kolomea
descendant of David Halevi Segal, Chief Rabbi of Lvov and of Joel Sirkes, Chief Rabbi of Cracow
m
(who was a 2nd cousin of Mordecai Jaffe, Chief Rabbi of Prague, Grodno, and Posen)

Chawa Wahl (1877-1941) daughter of Shulim Wahl and Sarah Safier of Tarnobrzeg
descendant of Saul Wahl (1545- 1617), son of Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen, Chief Rabbi of Padua and Venice and his wife Abigail Jaffe

Rabbis Mordecai Jaffe of Prague, Joel Sirkes of Cracow, and the latter's son-in-law David Halevi Segal were known as the Levush, Bach, and Taz respectively, after the Hebrew titles of their major books

Some ancestors of Edward Gelles.

Some of the notables from the 16th and 17th centuries are shown on the above chart - Chief Rabbi Nathan Nata Shapiro of Cracow with whose ancient line my Gelles were linked for several centuries, the Katzenellenbogen Chief Rabbis of Padua and Venice, and the Jaffe, pre-eminently Chief Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe of Prague, Grodno, and Posen, in whose footsteps some of the Gelles rabbis followed. Their journey took them from Prague to Grodno in Lithuania and then one branch went west to the province of Posen and on to Berlin while my immediate family line moved south to Galicia on their way to Vienna.

I am also a 10th generation descendant of Uri Feivush ben David, the Chief Rabbi of Vilna who ended his life as head of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem.

My forebears included many community leaders - some became Presidents of the “Council of the Four Lands”, for some generations the semi-autonomous governing body of Polish Jewry. Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe was a political leader as well as a scholar. Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz came to Cracow from Prague and married the sister of the Chief Rabbi Moses Isserles of Cracow. Horowitz descendants married those of Saul Wahl, who combined leadership of the Jewish community with a distinguished role in Polish affairs of state.

Coming into the 18th century, Samuel Oppenheimer and his relative Samson Wertheimer, important Court Jews of Habsburg Vienna, were in my Gelles ancestral background. Fromet Guggenheim, the wife of Moses Mendelssohn, was a great-granddaughter of Samuel Oppenheimer (1630 - 1703).

Ancestry of Moses Mendelssohn and his family

Edward Gelles and Moses Mendelssohn, the 18th century philosopher of the German Age of Enlightenment, had common ancestors including Saul Wahl, scion of the 16th century Katzenellenbogen rabbis of Padua and Venice, and Israel Issers the father of Moses Isserles, the Chief Rabbi of Cracow and of Miriam Isserles

Moses Mendelssohn’s issue included his son, the banker Abraham Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. The latter’s marriage to Leah Salomon linked the Mendelssohn line to notable Court Jews of Berlin who were descended from Chief Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe of Prague but had adopted the family name of Itzig on moving from the province of Posen to Berlin. The Itzig line were thus Jaffe cousins of my paternal grandfather Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles, who was a descendant of the “Gelles – Levush” line from Moses Menachem Mendel Levush, known as Moses Gelles of the Brody Klaus after his marriage to a daughter of Rabbi S(hmuel) Gelles.

Another line of descent from Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe runs from his daughter Bella, who married the physician Michel Epstein (died 1632), to my paternal grandmother Esther Weinstein.

The composer Felix Mendelssohn – Bartholdy, grandson of Moses Mendelssohn and son of Abraham Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, acquired from his mother the Itzig Jaffe connection shown on the above chart.

References

Edward Gelles, “An Ancient Lineage : European Roots of a Jewish Family” (Valentine Mitchell, 2006)
Chapter 32 – Prague at the Crossroads
Table 53 – A Fragment of Yaffe Family History

Edward Gelles, “The Jewish Journey : A Passage through European History” (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016)
Chapter 35 – Mendelssohn, Marx, Buber and other descendants of Saul Wahl

< Papers of Edward Gelles at Balliol College Archives and Manuscripts >

“Some Gelles and Jaffe family migrations in recent centuries”	A25
“Pedigree of Rabbi Nahum Uri Gelles”	A26
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