

Illustrious Jewish roots of Tory leader revealed

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(PhysOrg.com) -- David Cameron's Jewish history goes back hundreds - if not thousands - of years, according to a University of Manchester historian.

Dr Yaakov Wise, who specialises in Jewish history, says the Tory leader is descended from a German-born Jewish scholar whose writings furthered the study of Hebrew in European Christendom at a time of widespread hostility toward its Jews.

And according to Dr Wise, who has been using archival material to examine the Cameron family tree, the Tory leader could also be a direct descendent of the greatest ever Hebrew prophet, Moses.

Cameron is a descendent of banker Emile Levita, who came to Britain as a German immigrant in the 1850s. Emile Levita was himself a descendent of Elijah Levita, who lived from 1469-1549.

During the last years of his life Elijah Levita produced, among other works, two major books: the 1541 Translator's Book, the first dictionary of the Targums or Aramaic commentaries on the Hebrew Bible.

His lexicon of 1542 explained much of the Mishnaic Hebrew language and was a supplement to two important earlier dictionaries.

Elijah Levita also wrote what is thought to be the first ever Yiddish novel - called the Bove-bukh (The Book of Bove) written in 1507 and printed in 1541.

The book is based on an Italian version of an Anglo-Norman tale about a queen who betrays her husband and causes his death.

Emile Levita, who was granted citizenship in 1871, is Cameron's great great grandfather.

Levita ,says Dr Wise, is the Latin form of the name Levite, a Jew descended from the Tribe of Levi, the son of Jacob and one of the original twelve tribes of Israel.

“The leader of the Levites at the time of the exodus from Egypt was Moses, who was married with two sons named in the Bible,” said Dr Wise - who is based at the University's Centre for Jewish Studies.

“However, later descendents of Moses are unknown and many of today's Levites - often carrying the surnames such as Levy, Levine, Levitan or Levita - could in fact be his descendants.”

Emile Levita enjoyed considerable financial success, becoming a director of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, which had offices in Threadneedle Street in the City of London.

He took on all the trappings of an English gentleman - he hunted, owned a grouse moor in Wales, and started an educational tradition which has continued through to today's Tory leader, by sending his four sons to Eton.

Emile's eldest son, Arthur, a stockbroker, married Steffie Cooper, a cousin of the Royal Family providing Cameron with a link to King George III, an ancestor he shares with the Queen - his fifth cousin once removed.

Provided by University of Manchester ([news](#) : [web](#))

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