

JEWES IN THE BRITISH ISLES IN 1851: MARRIAGE AND CHILDBEARING

Petra Laidlaw

Abstract

Earlier papers by the author, in Volumes LIII and LV, have drawn on the 1851 Anglo-Jewry Database (AJDB) to analyse the residence, migrations and occupations of Jews living in mid-19th century Britain. The current paper draws further on the database to consider patterns of marriage and childbearing among the same population.

Keywords: Anglo-Jewry 1851, historical demography, prosopography, social history, economic history, marriage, family, fertility, childbearing

Background

General historic background

There were about 31-32,000 Jews living in the British Isles in 1851.¹ Britain had attracted a more or less steadily growing stream of Jewish immigrants since the mid-17th century. They came from a wide range of locations, particularly from Holland and Germany, but most of all, from the late-18th century until the late-19th, from what is now Poland. A significant proportion – perhaps 10 per cent – would move on, in time, to other domiciles overseas. Most, however, stayed and multiplied in the British Isles, with the result that, notwithstanding accelerating inward migration throughout the first half of the 19th century, a steady proportion over that period of around 70 per cent of the adult Jewish population is likely to have been British-born. About three-quarters of them at any one time were living in London. The remainder were widely dispersed across the whole of the British Isles (Laidlaw, 2011: 34-46).

Only a minority of this population was born into affluence. Far more were born into poverty, and would face struggle and privation for much of their lives. With hard work and good fortune many did secure a

reasonably comfortable old age (Laidlaw, 2013: 142-147). The childbearing years, however, would be very tough ones, in material terms, for the majority of the population under review here.

Existing historiography

Studies of marriage and childbearing among the Jewish population in 19th century Britain are in short supply. One important reason is likely to be the general absence of classification by religious faith or ethnic grouping in sources for official social statistics such as censuses and birth and death registers covering this period. Joseph Jacobs' late-19th century statistical survey, which has much to say in other respects – such as occupation, class and anthropometry – about British Jews, is largely silent on this aspect of demography. The classic 20th-century histories (Lipman, Roth and more recently, for example, Alderman, Endelman and Feldman) make little reference to the subject.

There is no lack of high-quality published research, however, on 19th-century marriage and childbearing among the British population at large, not least the work of the highly influential Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. There have also been useful studies of these topics as they affect continental European, and indeed American, Jewry. They are drawn upon below for comparative purposes, but there are substantial methodological and definitional limits to how far such comparisons may be taken, and what useful inferences can be drawn from them.

The Database

The 1851 Anglo-Jewry Database (AJDB), drawing on the research of some 280 contributors worldwide, carries data on 29,275 Jews who were living in the British Isles in 1851. Details on the background to the project are in Appendix 1.

The people on whom the database has entries are reckoned to represent over 90 per cent of the total Jewish population of the British Isles at that date. The database attempts to track developments throughout the lives of its constituent population: it therefore has data stretching back to the mid-18th century, and forward to the mid-20th. By its nature, however, the richest data relate to the mid-19th century. The data on the early adulthood of people who were already old in 1851 are relatively sparse, as are the data on the late-lives of people who were just young children in this qualifying year.

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Moreover, the home-born heavily outnumber the overseas-born in the case of those who were children in 1851, for the simple reason that immigrants migrated predominantly in young adulthood (Laidlaw, 2011: 35-36). This places limitations on the comparisons that can be made across cohorts and between the home-born and immigrant sections of the population. It affects particularly those who would be marrying and bearing children around the 1870s, the period when family limitation was taking root widely among Britain's broader population.

The main data sources underlying the present analysis are, naturally enough, birth and marriage registrations. Because quite a number of the people in the database were born – and in some cases married – well back into the 18th century, before civil registration was introduced,² the main source is often synagogue records, though these in turn can be rather patchy before the 19th century.

Allowing for such constraints, the database is in principle well-placed to explore such themes as age at marriage – how it varied over time, whether there are differences between Jewish and non-Jewish patterns, whether there are differences between first-generation immigrants and British-born Jews – along with intermarriage (between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and Jews and non-Jews), family size, and related themes. Table 1 shows the volume of data available.

Marriage

About 2,000 of the database's population of 29,275 are likely to have died before reaching marriageable age, leaving roughly 27,000 who were potentially marriageable. As discussed below, probably something like 10 per cent of them would never marry, so the number that actually did marry is unlikely to be much more than 24,000.

Some data on marriage or cohabitation are available on about two-thirds of this imputed maximum ($n = 15,477$). In some cases, especially among the older generation on whom no form of marriage registration is known to survive, little may be known beyond the name and birthplace of the spouse/partner,³ along with their listing in censuses as married or widowed. The actual year of first marriage, or failing that second marriage, is known for about 40 per cent of the likely maximum who married ($n = 9,849$);⁴ and the full dates, which strengthen confidence in the data, are known for four fifths of these ($n = 7,987$).⁵

It is important to bear in mind that the database does not pretend to offer a structured sample. The proportions of entries on which at least some marriage/cohabitation data are available, however, are such as to

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allow reasonably secure analysis, particularly of those born after 1800, on whom the numbers are quite large (Table 1).

Table 1: Proportions of entries with some marriage/cohabitation data available

Birth decade	Age group in 1851	Males			Females		
		All entries (Nos.)	Some marriage data available		All entries (Nos.)	Some marriage data available	
			Nos.	% of all entries		Nos.	% of all entries
1740s	102-11	2	1	50	1	1	100
1750s	92-101	5	3	60	8	8	100
1760s	82-91	78	54	69	68	60	88
1770s	72-81	195	143	73	192	162	84
1780s	62-71	410	346	84	412	363	88
1790s	52-61	804	680	85	752	649	86
1800s	42-51	1,373	1,173	85	1,186	1,038	88
1810s	32-41	1,878	1,493	79	1,725	1,417	82
1820s	22-31	2,505	1,403	56	2,492	1,666	67
1830s	12-21	2,940	935	32	2,991	1,153	39
1840s	2-11	3,741	1,025	27	3,709	1,254	34
1850s	0-1	922	198	21	883	252	29
all decades		14,853	7,454	50	14,419	8,023	56

Age at marriage

The AJDB has a more or less evenly-balanced mix of males to females in all age-groups, with males slightly more numerous than females, as one would expect in a population with significant immigrant origins.⁶ Taking all age-groups together, the males' mean age at first marriage was 27.7 years, and the females' was 24.4.⁷ Table 2 shows a slight downward drift over the period covered; the figures for those born in the 18th century are mostly too small for reliable inference, but the pattern seems fairly firm among the younger cohorts.

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The youngest marriage-age of which we can be certain, from both birth and marriage registrations, is 15, involving a handful of girls, most of them Sephardi.

Table 2: Average age at first marriage by birth cohort

Birth cohort	Males			Females		
	Data available (Nos.)	Average age at first marriage		Data available (Nos.)	Average age at first marriage	
		Mean	Median		Mean	Median
1752-1761	1	32	32	-	-	-
1762-1771	14	33.28	35	15	25.53	26
1772-1781	57	31.54	28	43	25.72	25
1782-1791	143	29.81	28	121	24.20	23
1792-1801	342	28.96	27	242	25.40	23
1802-1811	566	28.66	27	459	25.17	23
1812-1821	870	27.91	27	803	24.45	23
1822-1831	910	26.66	25	1032	24.17	23
1832-1841	827	27.35	27	1028	24.39	23
1842-1851	914	26.94	26	1155	23.89	23
All	4644	27.66	26	4898	24.37	23

*shading denotes cohorts whose numbers are too small for useful inference

A small number appear to have married even younger, but these cases are not fully corroborated. Altogether, some 1 in 15 of database entries with marriage data appear to have married under age 20, the great majority of them women (n = 899/1,073).

The average ages for women do not appear to vary much by location, but men living in London in 1851 (n = 3,650) married on average two years younger than those in the provinces. Their mean age at first marriage was 27.2, whilst for those living outside the capital (n = 1,065), it was 29.2. This may reflect relatively lower earning power, or perhaps the typically more itinerant nature of male occupations away from the metropolis. It must also, to some degree, reflect simple demographics. In the provinces in 1851, males aged 20-30 outnumbered females by about 9:7, so they could be expected to wait longer to marry than their counterparts in London, where the ratio was reversed and females were plentiful (10:11).⁸

Exact comparisons with the wider British population are hard to arrive at, and figures for the population at large are themselves problematic. Wrigley and Schofield (1989: 255) offer estimates from reconstitution studies which yield mean ages at first marriage over the period 1800-49 of 25.3 for men, and 23.4 for women.⁹ Allowing for all the uncertainties in the comparison, this suggests that Jews were marrying noticeably later than the rest of the population. The reasons for this are not immediately obvious: there could be a mixture of geographic, economic and cultural factors in play, and possibly some statistical distortion. Some recent studies in continental Europe also find a later age of marriage among Jews than among non-Jews (Lowenstein 1981: 97-99; Goldstein 1981: 122-125); but the 19th-century statistician Joseph Jacobs (1891: 50-53) found the reverse, with Jews marrying on average earlier than non-Jews in various centres of Jewish population in mid-19th century Eastern Europe.¹⁰

There is a noticeable difference between the home-born and the overseas-born in the age-gaps between spouses. The mean age at marriage of overseas-born men is 28.9, and that of females 23.3, an age gap approaching six years.¹¹ This gap compares with just under three years among the British-born, where mean ages at marriage are 27.4 and 24.5 respectively. Similarly wide age-gaps are found in Germany and Eastern Europe (Goldstein 1981: 123; Jacobs 1891: 53; Lowenstein 1981: 98; Plakans & Halpern 1981: 27). It could suggest that the wide gap in the case of the overseas-born was mainly cultural in origin – perhaps reflecting a greater propensity to arranged marriages, or a culturally-mediated male preference for younger women. It could also reflect the greater economic strain that the immigrant sub-group laboured under, with the men generally waiting longer than non-immigrants before they could support a family, and their womenfolk coming under parental pressure to marry early. Another factor is likely to be location: adult males in 1851 who were born overseas were much more likely than their British-born counterparts to be living in the provinces, where, as noted above, there was a shortage of Jewish women.¹²

Non-marriage rate

Without comprehensive lifetime data on all cohorts, it is not possible to calculate with certainty the proportion that never married. In particular, there are insufficient data on the younger cohorts. But a reasonable approximation can be gained by looking at those who were aged 35-plus in 1851, that is to say already well above average marriage age.

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At that date 17 per cent of the men ($n = 708/4,150$) and 14 per cent of the women ($531/3,802$) were unmarried. Mortality would soon take its toll from these numbers, but some of the survivors would eventually marry. Drawing on entries in the database known to have survived beyond the 1850s, we can produce broad estimates of the numbers that never married.¹³ They represent 9 per cent of men aged 35-plus in 1851, and 11 per cent of women.

It is impossible, in most cases, to discern the circumstances behind non-marriage. A proportion of the non-marriers will have been homosexual. Some others will have had physical or mental disabilities or ill-health which may have militated against marriage. In other cases, the person concerned (often the eldest daughter) will have been constrained to remain at home to help bring up her younger siblings, and then to look after her parents in old age; a few such cases married in relatively late life once their parents had died. A simple lifestyle choice will rarely have been available other than to the affluent, but there are certainly cases in the database of comfortably-off siblings remaining unmarried and living as one household into old age.

Comparisons with the wider British population are again not straightforward, but Wrigley and Schofield (259-265) estimate that the non-marriage rate in England ranged from about 7 to about 12 per cent for similar age groups to those considered here: the estimated rate for the AJDB population sits comfortably within this range. Comparable data for continental Europe have not been found. Joseph Jacobs (49) presents data suggesting a lower marriage rate among Jews than among non-Jews in later-19th century continental Europe. This appears from more modern studies to have held true in 20th-century Poland (Dobroszycki 1981: 69), but perhaps not in 19th century Bohemia (Vobecká 2013:69-70).

Ashkenazi/Sephardi

Of the 15,477 entries in the database on whom some marriage data are available, specific evidence of faith affiliation is available on about two-thirds ($n = 10,011$).¹⁴ This gives us some basis for examining rates of Ashkenazi/Sephardi intermarriage and marriage out.

It is commonly believed that there were strong cultural constraints in 19th century Britain against marriage between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. The database indicates that although such marriages were atypical, they were certainly not rare.

Data on faith affiliation in early life indicate that about 8 per cent of the database population may confidently be assumed to have been

Sephardi by birth (n = 2,343).¹⁵ Of the 1,008 on whom data on mid-life faith affiliation are also available, almost 1 in 5 appear to have crossed over to the Ashkenazi fold (n = 197). A large majority of the 197 were Sephardi women marrying Ashkenazi men (n = 171), but Sephardi men married across the divide too.¹⁶ Factors in play in such cases might have included simple familial relationships, business partnerships and suchlike, and of course plain, old-fashioned love.

The reality is, however, likely to be more complex than the bare figures suggest. Some will have been married in an Ashkenazi synagogue because this was all that was available in their locality at the time: it may not imply a lasting change of affiliation or culture. But the inference must surely be drawn that if a sizeable proportion of the Sephardim of this generation were marrying Ashkenazim, quite large numbers from earlier generations probably did so too, with the result that many Jews by this time would have had mixed heritage. In these circumstances, the supposed cultural injunctions may have had little traction. A daughter of a Sephardi father and Ashkenazi mother, for example, though nominally Sephardi, might not have faced great problems if she wanted to marry an Ashkenazi.

Marriage to non-Jews

The AJDB has not collected systematically any data that would indicate how many Jews married proselytes, that is to say converts from (usually) Christianity to Judaism.¹⁷ Other sources however indicate that, in the 19th century, proselyte marriages accounted for about 4 per cent of all marriages in the main London synagogues, with the rate gradually increasing as the century proceeded.¹⁸ Whether the rate was higher or lower in other synagogues doubtless depended to an extent on the attitude of the synagogue authorities, but it might be reasonable to assume a broadly similar rate overall.

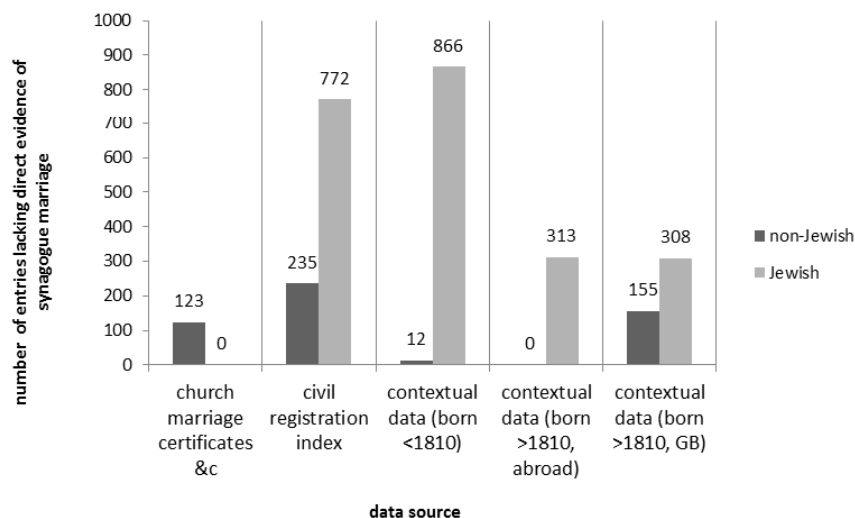
The proportion of the AJDB population that went the other way and married out is also hard to pin down, but appears to be small. There are 8,459 entries for whom a more or less specific faith affiliation in mid-life (which usually means at marriage) is recorded in the database, mostly drawn from marriage registrations or newspaper announcements. In just 104 of these cases, a specific church or chapel can be identified. The great majority of these are Anglican, which in some, and perhaps many, cases might reflect a simple default choice on the part of the uncommitted. But there are also marriages in Baptist, Irvingite, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Unitarian churches and chapels: these might be thought to indicate, in general, a higher degree of commitment to the

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adopted faith. Another 19 are understood to have had a Christian wedding of some unspecified sort – thus 123 in total (Figure 1).

In addition to entries on which specific affiliation data are available, the national civil registration index gives a fairly clear idea of which marriages involved Jewish rites and which did not.¹⁹ 772 additional entries can be identified by this means as having married under Jewish rites, and 235 in accordance with some non-Jewish – civil or religious – form. Of the 235, over 70 per cent were men (n = 167).

Figure 1: sources of marriage-out estimate



Putting the data from all these sources together gives 9,466 entries (about two-thirds of the total in the database on whom any marriage data are available) where the nature of the marriage ceremony can be inferred with some confidence. Only 358 of these appear to have married out. Not all those who were married in church or a registry office, moreover, will have abjured Judaism. Indeed, a few married the same spouse in both a Christian wedding and a Jewish one, presumably in most cases to accommodate the wishes of the two families. Others may have flirted with Christianity at the time of their marriage and returned to the Jewish fold later: there are several cases where the person concerned would later have a Jewish burial, so the degree of disaffiliation may be questioned.

We need also, however, to consider the 1,654 entries in the database where only the partner's given name is known, and no other details offer any direct indication of faith affiliation.²⁰ About half of the cases (n =

878) concern people born before 1810: most of their marriages would have pre-dated civil registration, and no other marriage documentation has been traced, but there is little doubt from contextual data as to the broadly-Jewish status of the couple.²¹ (On the basis set out above, the bride is likely to have been a proselyte in something like a dozen cases.)

Of those born later, some 313 are men whose partners were born abroad (the great majority of the men having themselves been born abroad). Many of them probably did undergo a marriage ceremony. Some appear to have done so before migrating to the British Isles with a young family in tow. Others appear to have married at a later date, possibly to a woman ‘back home’ betrothed to them by longstanding arrangement: such a marriage would normally be in the bride’s home town or village. It would be reasonable to suppose that the majority of these putative marriages (but maybe not all) involved a Jewish ceremony, but registration details are necessarily harder to track down than those in the British Isles.

Finally, there are 463 cases of men with British-born partners on whom no marriage data can be found. Based on their spouses’ given names, we can make a rough estimate that about two-thirds of them married or cohabited with Jewish women.²² The database is unlikely to contain many similarly ‘hidden’ instances of Jewish *women* marrying out.²³

Allowing that there may be a degree of sample bias in the data,²⁴ on these figures the proportion marrying out or cohabiting with non-Jews is unlikely to have been more than about 4 per cent.²⁵ This is a smaller figure than might be supposed from those narratives, quite common since the 20th century, that portray pre-1880s Anglo-Jewry as abnormally prone to marrying out.²⁶ Comparable data from continental Europe are hard to come by, but Jacobs (53-54) reported marriage-out rates ranging mostly between 1 and 8 per cent in various centres from the mid-1860s to early 1880s, suggesting that the British rate was not out of line.²⁷ If, moreover, the figure of 4 per cent suggested above for proselyte marriages holds broadly true, the implication is that there would be little or no net loss to the Jewish population.

Spousal birthplaces

The majority of overseas-born Jews migrated to Britain in young adulthood (Laidlaw 2011: 45-52). Judging by those arriving as adults in the 1830s and ’40s, many were already married;²⁸ others would marry only after they arrived in Britain. Some of the British-born would go in

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the opposite direction, marrying and sometimes subsequently living abroad; but the majority of British-born marrying overseas-born spouses married and subsequently lived in Britain.

Table 3 (a): Entries' birthplaces against spouses' birthplaces (nos)

Birth decade	All entries	Spouse birthplace known		Subject born in British Isles/ spouse in British Isles	Subject born in British Isles/ spouse overseas	Subject born overseas/ spouse in British Isles	Subject born overseas/ spouse overseas
	(nos)	(nos)	(%)	(nos)	(nos)	(nos)	(nos)
Male							
1740s	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1750s	5	1	20	0	0	0	1
1760s	78	32	41	11	2	8	11
1770s	195	92	47	60	3	19	10
1780s	410	276	67	181	9	39	47
1790s	804	597	74	353	18	114	112
1800s	1,373	1,089	79	652	34	181	222
1810s	1,878	1,437	77	862	39	261	275
1820s	2,505	1,217	49	753	22	207	235
1830s	2,940	589	20	502	18	47	22
1840s	3,741	512	14	456	27	22	7
1850s	922	58	6	52	6	0	0
all	14,853	5,900		3,882	178	898	942
Female							
1740s	1	1	100	0	1	0	0
1750s	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
1760s	68	7	10	4	1	0	2
1770s	192	42	22	26	3	2	11
1780s	412	163	40	103	29	4	27
1790s	752	426	57	277	62	17	70
1800s	1,186	839	71	523	133	19	164
1810s	1,725	1,297	75	771	233	40	253
1820s	2,492	1,431	57	823	270	24	314
1830s	2,991	637	21	484	92	14	47
1840s	3,709	599	16	514	71	8	6
1850s	883	100	11	88	12	0	0
all	14,419	5,542		3,613	907	128	894

Table 3 indicates that men born overseas were almost as likely to marry a British bride as one born abroad, whilst men born in Britain were

very unlikely to marry a bride born overseas.²⁹ This is in notable contrast with the position for women. Not only were those born abroad unlikely to marry British-born men, those born in Britain had a roughly 1-in-5 chance of marrying a man born overseas.

Table 3 (b): Entries' birthplaces against spouses birthplaces (%s)*

	Subject born in British Isles/spouse in British Isles		Subject born in British Isles/spouse overseas		Subject born overseas/spouse in British Isles		Subject born overseas/spouse overseas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1740s	-	0	-	1	-	0	-	0
1750s	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	-
1760s	34	57	6	14	25	0	34	29
1770s	65	62	3	7	21	5	11	26
1780s	66	63	3	18	14	2	17	17
1790s	59	65	3	15	19	4	19	16
1800s	60	62	3	16	17	2	20	20
1810s	60	59	3	18	18	3	19	20
1820s	62	58	2	19	17	2	19	22
1830s	85	76	3	14	8	2	4	7
1840s	89	86	5	12	4	1	1	1
1850s	90	88	10	12	0	0	0	0
all	66	65	3	16	15	2	16	16

* expressed as %s of entries whose spouse birthplace is known

What might have been driving this difference? One would expect the preferences of women and men to be more closely aligned. It is possible that it signals a greater degree of parental pressure on daughters than sons when it came to selecting marriage partners. This would be consistent with the apparently lower marriage-out rate among women than among men that was noted above.

Disparities in numbers, however, may explain much of the difference. The database population has about 25 British-born females to 22 British-born males ($n = 12,503:10,989$) – reflecting in part the significant level of young adult male emigration to the Americas, Australia and elsewhere in the first half of the 19th century. This is mirrored in the overseas-born segment of the population, where male immigrants outnumbered female immigrants by 2 to 1 ($n = 3,812:1,896$). The resulting high rate of marriage on the part of overseas-born males to British-born females is

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likely to have assisted their rapid integration into the wider Anglo-Jewish community – an opportunity that looks to have been afforded more rarely to immigrant women.

Separation, divorce and widowhood

Divorce under secular law was difficult, expensive, dishonourable and in consequence very uncommon in 19th century Britain. There were only about 330 divorces for the entire population of England and Wales between 1700 and 1857 (Anderson, 1990: 30-31). Not surprisingly, there are very few entries in the database known to have divorced by this means.³⁰ Divorce under Jewish law was less fraught, and commoner: between 1805 and 1855, some 347 were authorised by the London Beth Din, whose writ extended across the English-speaking world (Pfeffer 2008: 110-115). No AJDB entries, however, indicate such a divorce, perhaps reflecting its low-key nature.

Separation is likely to have been more common, but it is difficult to get a trace on the frequency with which it occurred. There are 117 entries in the database where a woman is described as married in the 1851 census, but with no husband present; in many cases, she is listed as the head of household. Given the large number of men in the database engaged in trading and mercantile occupations (Laidlaw 2013: 121-122), it is to be expected that many of the absent husbands will simply have been away on business on census night. Others, however, were probably living separately from their wives. Some wives listed as widowed may likewise have been, in reality, separated. It is impossible to put a reliable figure on this. Given, however, the pressures at the time on most homes of low incomes and large numbers of children, it may be expected that most wives would do all they could to keep the main breadwinner at home.

Widowhood would put most parents of young children under severe financial stress, and hardly less so in later life when opportunities for earning a living were reduced and there was little by way of safety net for those living in dire poverty. With male mortality outstripping female at most ages, women were more likely to be left in this position. Table 4 implies that men would generally have a better chance of remarrying. The database shows 622 entries who were known to have married at least twice, 463 of them men. 41 are known to have married at least three times, of whom 39 were men.

The Jewish community ran several almshouses and hospitals for the frail and needy elderly, but they presumably could accommodate only a fraction of the likely demand. The database shows 161 entries living in such accommodation in 1851. What the demand might have been is hard

to estimate, but there are 1,721 entries in the database who were aged 60-plus in 1851. Many would live out their old age with their children or other relations, but many others were living alone.

Table 4: Widows as at 1851 by age cohort and gender

Decade of birth	Males	Females
1740s	1	0
1750s	2	5
1760s	24	42
1770s	59	106
1780s	68	174
1790s	67	183
1800s	60	150
1810s	21	63
1820s	8	30
1830s		2
All	310	755

Childbearing

Just under 80 per cent of the database entries that are recorded as having married or cohabited are known to have had one or more children (n = 12,256). Some, but not all of the remainder would have been childless, whether for reasons of reproductive pathology, sexual orientation, or personal choice. Others would have had children that have simply not yet been attributed to them in the database, in some cases because of early death, and in others because the children concerned were not living with their parents at relevant moments, like censuses. (Children are quite often identified in the homes of other relatives, such as grandparents, on census night.)

Data on fertility and family size among this population are of interest on several counts. The database spans a period when fertility patterns in Western Europe were changing radically, reflecting a shift from uncontrolled to controlled fertility. The timing varied from country to country, and, within countries, from region to region, by occupation, by class and other variables (Szreter 1996). The database population comprises a mix of couples with quite deep roots in the British Isles and others with recent roots elsewhere, especially in northern and eastern

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Europe. Might their respective fertility patterns cast light on issues of culture and assimilation?

Measuring fertility and family size in this population is, however, problematic (see Appendix 2). By drawing on a wide range of sources, the database can lay claim to a reasonably faithful representation, taken in the round. There is, however, an inherent bias towards under-estimation, and all figures presented here must be read as fuzzy rather than precise.

Fertility

In the absence of any national statistics of Jewish births as such, the AJDB may be the best source available. But because of its structure, its sampling becomes thinner as one progresses away from its 1851 anchor date. For this reason, the only reasonably reliable date it offers for measuring fertility is 1851.³¹

Table 5 compares age-specific marital fertility rates for the AJDB population at this single point with those for England and Wales as a whole.³² The small size of the Jewish sample requires us to be wary of reading too much into a comparison with all-England and Wales numbers. *Prima facie*, the data suggest both lower overall fertility among the Jewish segment of the population, and a greater rate of reduction. The divergence, in the case of the youngest cohort, must be partly due to the Jewish population's later average age at marriage (see above). The figures for other cohorts could merit further exploration, but without comparable data for births in surrounding decades, there is little more that can be read into the data.

Table 5: Age-specific marital fertility rates (ASMFRs), 1851: AJDB compared with all England and Wales

Birth years	All England & Wales ASMFR*	AJDB 1851 births**	AJDB female population	AJDB ASMFR
1802-1806	0.018	14	498	0.028
1807-1811	0.120	73	549	0.133
1812-1816	0.249	158	640	0.247
1817-1821	0.306	210	728	0.288
1822-1826	0.367	223	711	0.313
1827-1831	0.426	114	433	0.320
Total MFR	7.43			6.31

* data from Woods (2000: 130) ** see Note xxxii

Family size

It may be more profitable to look directly at family size, that is to say the number of children in a completed family unit, in so far as that can be identified. Here too the AJDB has an inherent bias towards under-estimation, but the estimate can be improved by reference to the interval between the first-born and last-born in each family, assuming these are known accurately. (Interval-based estimates would, however, *overstate* completed family sizes if the fertility-limiting strategy of ‘spacing’ births were widespread: this is discussed further below.)

Table 6 indicates a mean completed family size of the order of 5.9 to 6.3, if we rely on the unadjusted database figures. The mean in England as a whole is estimated to have ranged between 5.7 and 6.2 for mothers born between 1771 and 1831 (Anderson 1990: 38-43). This could be taken as suggesting that Jewish families were slightly larger on average, notwithstanding their later age at marriage.³³ There may, however, be important differences in data coverage and treatment, for example regarding children dying in infancy. It would be safer to conclude that Jewish families were broadly similar in size to those of the majority community.

Table 6: Mean family size by core birth cohorts*

Birth cohort	No of entries known to have had children	Mean no of children per family	
		from actual nos in database	from interval-based estimates
1802-1821	1,198	6.29	7.49
1822-1841	1,446	5.91	6.88

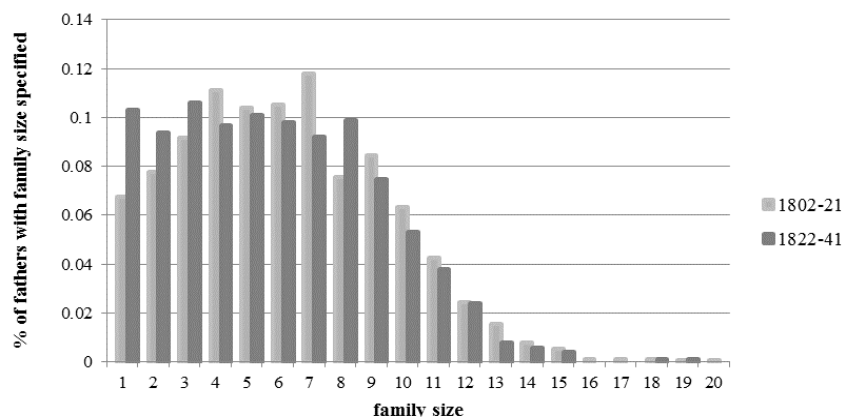
* count based on mothers and restricted to those tracked post-1851

The table also suggests that the younger cohort were having smaller families than their older counterparts, whichever measure is used. It is possible, but not a foregone conclusion, that this signals a move towards deliberate family limitation. Figure 2 attempts to come at this from a different angle, looking at the variation in family sizes between the same birth cohorts. Here the mean number of children refers to their fathers rather than their mothers. (In a count based on mothers, maternal mortality will tend to understate the numbers of larger families; and by using fathers, any additional children following a remarriage can be included,

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which is germane to judging whether any intentionality over family size was in play.) It will be observed that the younger cohort's families are slightly more clustered towards the left. The underlying figures tell us that 4 per cent of fathers in this cohort had 12 or more children, compared with 6 per cent of the older cohort; and that 60 per cent of the younger cohort had six or fewer children, compared with 56 per cent of the older. They are small shifts, but it is possible that they signal a gradual shift towards family limitation.

Figure 2: Distribution of family sizes (actual database nos) by father's birth cohort*



* count based on those tracked post-1851

Family limitation

The trend towards family limitation, which was becoming widespread in Western Europe in the late-19th century, was already under way in some locations several decades earlier, while in others it did not take hold till the 20th (Woods 2000: 111 and *passim*). France shows some of the earliest evidence of what appears to be deliberate limitation, and its Jewish population appear to have mirrored the trend (Hyman 1981: 82-90). Knodel (1974: 137-8) judges that Jews in Prussia, Bavaria and Hesse 'probably started to reduce their fertility at least several decades prior to German unification, and well ahead of the rest of the German population'. In Britain, family limitation becomes noticeable on a large scale in the 1870s, but its onset varies considerably by region, by occupation and other factors (Szreter, *passim*).

The Jewish population of the British Isles in the mid-19th century was quite diverse both in background and in occupations. It was also highly dispersed geographically, albeit with a noticeable concentration in London's East End. It might be imprudent, however, to disaggregate the data in search of underlying fertility patterns, for example by occupation.³⁴ We confine examination here to broad evidence that might bear on the long-running demographic debate about the relative importance in fertility decline of 'spacing' and 'stopping' behaviour. Did couples, in the later-19th century, on the whole just want fewer/less frequent children, or did they already have in mind a specific, ideal family-size? Spacing is generally considered to be consistent with the former, stopping with the latter. Either way, there was no lack of means, many of them time-honoured, if only partially effective.³⁵

Table 7: Mean birth interval by mother's birth cohort*

Mother's birth cohort	Nos of mothers with >1 children	Sum of intervals between known birth years of first and last children	Children total	Mean interval in years between births
1802-1821	1,885	22,438	10,879	2.06
1822-1841	1,520	16,565	8,784	1.89
all (1744-1851)	4,780	53783	26,697	2.01

*excluding those known to have remarried

The mean interval between births listed in the AJDB is very close to two years (Table 7). The older of the two cohorts shown here – who married about six months later and had larger families than their younger counterparts – also, counter-intuitively, exhibit a longer interval between births. Some of the difference may be down to statistical effects.³⁶ It is not impossible, however, that it also indicates a modest level of 'spacing' already being practised on the part of the older cohort, if only in the form of prolonged breastfeeding and/or a habit of relative abstinence on the part of the older generation. Prolonged breastfeeding practices have been attributed to Eastern European Jews later in the 19th century (Marks, *passim*), and could have been prevalent among this earlier, more Western-European population too, although direct evidence is lacking. Szreter (392-4) argues that populations given to late marriage and amongst whom

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illegitimacy rates are generally low might have carried through into married life a habit of relative abstention which would hold down fertility rates. If this could be said of the English at large in the 19th century, it might also be true of the Jewish section of the population, with their late marriage (see above) and low illegitimacy rates (see on).

If this in turn implies that the younger generation were less given than their elders to spacing, it may be because they were already shifting towards stopping, which tends to involve compressing childbearing into the early years of marriage. Evidence (though certainly not proof) of such a strategy can be found in mothers' ages at last childbirth. Among the general population of England and Wales, women up to the generation born in 1831 were typically aged 39 when they had their last child. At this point, the average age starts dropping off, falling to about 38 for women born in the late-1840s, and then falling further (Anderson 1990: 52). But even the older AJDB cohort appear to have had their last children at an earlier age than these England and Wales averages (Table 8). The sample numbers are small, and comparison may not be very meaningful. Of more interest, however is the apparent drop in average age within the Jewish data, which seems to reinforce the picture that emerged from family sizes.

Table 8: Mothers' mean ages at birth of last child*

Mother's birth cohort	Typical date-range of marriage	No of entries with last child birth-dates	Mean age at birth of last child
1802-1821	1827-1846	1,119	37.8
1822-1841	1846-1865	1,345	36.5

*for mothers born 1802 onwards, restricted to those tracked post-1851 and not listed as dying < age 45

The figures are not implausible. Anderson (1980: 7) quotes a mean age of 40.1 for Europe as a whole before 1800, falling to 33 by the early-20th century. Focussing on Jews, Lowenstein (1981: 99-101) finds mean ages in 19th century Bavaria ranging from 38.8 to 35.8 over much the same period (during which the averages for Catholic Bavarians were one/two years higher). On small samples, Hyman (1981: 82-83) finds the mean ages among Jews in France declining from 38 for those born in the 1790s to 33 for those born in the 1810s.³⁷

Against this background, it is tempting to speculate on whether the drop in age in the British figures (assuming it is real) indicates a degree of cultural import – not implausible, given the steady growth of immigration throughout the first half of the 19th century – or whether it was more of an

endogenous phenomenon. Table 9 could suggest that the older overseas-born already had smaller families than the British-born, and that the British-born followed later. But the numbers are small, and the difference may reflect, in large measure, the greater difficulty of tracking the overseas-born throughout the course of their lives.³⁸

Table 9: Mean family size by core birth cohorts*

Birth cohort	Birthplace	No of entries known to have had children	Mean no of children per family (actual nos in database)	Mean no of children per family (interval-based estimates)
1802-1821	British Isles	981	6.48	7.71
	Overseas	501	5.56	7.06
	All	1,482	6.17	7.49
1822-1841	British Isles	1,174	5.73	6.65
	Overseas	209	5.66	6.75
	All	1,440	5.72	6.67

* count based on fathers and restricted to those tracked post-1851

Even if, on the whole, the overseas-born did have smaller families, we should not necessarily infer that this arose from deliberate family limitation. It could reflect the hazards of immigrant life: more overcrowded living conditions, for example, resulting in a higher level of infant/early-childhood mortality.³⁹ Another factor in many cases could be the itinerant nature of the husband's work: frequent separation would of itself increase significantly the spacing between pregnancies (Szreter: 395). It is unclear, then, that the immigrant section of the community was already practising deliberate family limitation, and even less clear whether this would have had much influence on British-born couples' behaviour; but it would be an interesting line for further research.

Extranuptial conception

In his study of the immigrant Jewish population in London's East End in the late-19th century, Schürer finds the immigrants to be more given to a tight nuclear family structure than their neighbours (2000: 103-125). The AJDB does not record family structures as such, but the impression from extensive research through mid-19th century censuses is that earlier

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generations of Jews similarly, both in London and elsewhere in the British Isles, lived in close family groupings – typically just the parents and their children, though quite often housing a widowed grandparent or perhaps an unmarried sibling or two. The mid-19th century social documenter, Henry Mayhew, quotes one of his informants as saying that ‘the whole, or nearly the whole, of [young Jewish females] reside with parents or friends, and that there is among them far less than the average number of runaways’ (1985: 207). With this degree of parental and community oversight, it is to be expected that illegitimacy, as such, would be relatively rare; and this appears to be borne out by the AJDB.

This is not to say, however, that pre- or extra-marital sexual activity among this population was rare. The database cannot, of course, measure this directly, but it can identify those cases where the date of the first child’s birth is less than nine months after marriage.⁴⁰ Some 10 per cent of first births fall into this category.⁴¹ This is well under the supposed average for the British population at large: in early-19th century England and Wales, over half of all first births were probably conceived outside marriage, albeit the rate was generally lower in the urban settings where most Jews lived (Anderson, 1990: 35-37). The Anglo-Jewish figure is more similar to that found among 19th-century Bavarian Jews, which was 9 per cent (Lowenstein 1981: 107).

In a minority of the AJDB cases, the child is born months, even years, before the marriage; and in a few, several children are born before the parents marry, if they marry at all. Sometimes the explanation may be that the children were the product of an earlier marriage or partnership yet to be identified; in other cases, the parents may have delayed marriage for any of several reasons, such as lack of money, or parental opposition. But the majority of cases look like simple pre-nuptial conceptions that in all probability precipitated the marriage. It is tempting to suppose that such pregnancies gave women a better chance of marrying the man they loved, rather than just the man their family approved. Doubtless this was sometimes what occurred. But there must have been many cases where the woman fell pregnant either through ignorance or through unwanted pressure, so it would be wrong to infer that this device gave many women the man of their choice.

In addition to those who had prenuptial conceptions as identified by marriage date, there are 4,625 entries in the database who are known to have had children, but whose dates of marriage – if they married at all – are unknown. An unknown proportion of these would have been unmarried cohabiting couples. But the great majority of such entries concern older couples, for whom the likeliest explanation is that whatever

documentation once existed is no longer accessible: with an average birth-year for such entries of 1807, most would have married, if they did marry, before the introduction of civil registration in 1837. Illegitimacy, as such, is likely to have been low.

The database has entries on a further 826 couples for whom there is no clear evidence of marriage beyond the statement to that effect in censuses, and who are not recorded as having had children. Again, the proportion who were cohabiting unmarried is unknown, but it would be reasonable to conjecture that any eventual pregnancy would generally trigger marriage.

Conclusions

The Jewish population of mid-19th century Britain represented about one in a thousand of the total British population, and it should not surprise us if mean values for the one differ from mean values for the other. It is important not to read too much into such variance. Some real patterns seem to emerge, however, from this analysis. Jews living in mid-19th century Britain got married a little later, on average, than their counterparts in the population at large, but had broadly similar-sized – if anything, perhaps slightly larger – families. They had a similar non-marriage rate, but a relatively low (but by no means negligible) rate of pre-nuptial conceptions. There are hints in the data that the younger generation may have been beginning actively to limit family size, mirroring what was happening among Jews in France, Germany and perhaps elsewhere in continental Europe at the time; but family limitation was also beginning to take hold among the wider British population, and it is unclear where the main influence on Anglo-Jewish behaviour would have come from.

Intermarriage between Sephardim and Ashkenazim was commoner than is often supposed, and those whose families had been in Britain for several generations are quite likely to have had mixed heritage. Whilst the Anglo-Jewish community as a whole was by many standards very assimilated, marriage-out rates were well within the range found in many other Northern and Central European Jewish populations, and may have been more or less balanced by conversions to the Jewish fold.

Quite high numbers of British-born women married immigrant men, often several years older than themselves, whereas few British-born men married immigrant women. Furthermore, though always in small numbers, men appear to have married out more readily than women. These discrepancies may, to an extent, signal differences in parental pressure and control over their sons and their daughters, but simple demography is likely have played a part too. British-born females, taken

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in the round, outnumbered British-born males, presumably reflecting a greater propensity on the part of the males to emigrate;⁴² whilst overseas-born males outnumbered overseas-born females, again presumably because of a greater propensity to migrate. The resulting imbalance might be supposed to have given a passport to rapid integration into Anglo-Jewry to a substantial proportion of immigrant males.

The database, rich as it is, throws up many more questions than it answers. But it is under continuing development, and as the coverage becomes more comprehensive it might well cast further light on these and related issues.

APPENDIX I

THE 1851 ANGLO-JEWRY DATABASE (AJDB)

The AJDB is a ‘prosopographical’ database, that is to say, one built up from an aggregation of summary biographies on all its entries. Its core purpose is to create a statistical portrait of mid-19th century Anglo-Jewry. It carries details on 29,275 persons and thus covers over 90 per cent of the Jewish population estimated to have been living in the British Isles in 1851.

Each entry lists, wherever possible, the subject’s dates of birth, marriage(s) and death; their parents, spouse(s) and children (with birth-years); their place of birth, and of residence at decadal intervals thereafter (up to the 1910s); their occupations at decadal intervals (between 1800 and 1919); their faith affiliations in early-, mid- and late-life; their cause of death and place of burial. On Jewish status, the 1851 AJDB takes a deliberately broad approach, allowing the inclusion of any candidates who were born Jewish, or converted to Judaism, or were likely in their own lifetimes either to have considered themselves, or to have been considered by others, to be Jewish.

Work on the database began in the late-1990s, when the author invited contributions from community historians, genealogists and others. The response was generous. Some contributors had previously transcribed, from censuses, all the data on apparently Jewish households in a given city or cities. Most of the sizeable Jewish communities in mid-19th century Britain had been covered in this way, with the exception of London, whose 1851 census has since been comprehensively researched by the author. Others had researched particular families in depth. Others still had scrutinized particular data sources, such as insurance policies,

charity reports or lunatic asylum records, for Jewish listings. Since 2007, the database has been searchable online, free of charge, by individual name.⁴³ It has been widely used, prompting in turn an ongoing contribution of valuable additional data from researchers around the world. In total, some 280 contributors have participated in the project to date: their names are listed on the website. The author has however maintained full editorial control throughout, ensuring that all data conform to the definitions and conventions set out on the website.

All entries in the database relate to people who were living in the British Isles in 1851. Most, but not all, appear in the 1851 population census: some died before the census date; others were born after it; and others again, though attested to have been based in the British Isles at the time of the census, for a range of possible reasons cannot be traced in the census itself. The census has no specific significance in the project, except as a valuable and fairly comprehensive source of data.

Nor is the year 1851 of particular significance in project terms. The mid-century population generally is of interest because it has been relatively under-researched. A single year was needed as a means of defining a cohort and minimizing duplicates, and a census-year was obviously preferable. 1851 was preferred as a base-year over, say, 1841 (also a census year) because data sources were richer than those ten years earlier. These sources include the one-off religious census taken in that year;⁴⁴ the recent introduction of the *Jewish Chronicle* newspaper; and most importantly the 1851 census itself, which was fuller than its 1841 predecessor and arguably one of the more reliable England and Wales censuses of the 19th century. 1851 was also preferred over 1861, in this case because the target population at the earlier date was that much smaller, and therefore more manageable in a project of this nature.

It is important to appreciate that the data in the database span two centuries: a small proportion of those covered were born in the mid-18th century, while others lived through to the mid-20th century. In principle, the database charts these people's entire lives; and in practice, though data on many entries are fairly sparse, it yields substantial data-sets covering several decades. By definition, however, the data are richest on the 1850s and immediately surrounding decades. Coverage is generally thinner in the outlying decades, as illustrated by the example of residence data in the Table below. Taking both the numbers of entries represented in each decade and the proportions they represent, the database is strongest over the period from the 1790s to the 1880s.

At nearly all ages, males in the database slightly outnumber females, as shown in the graph below. This is to be expected in a population which was always being augmented by migrants from abroad, among whom

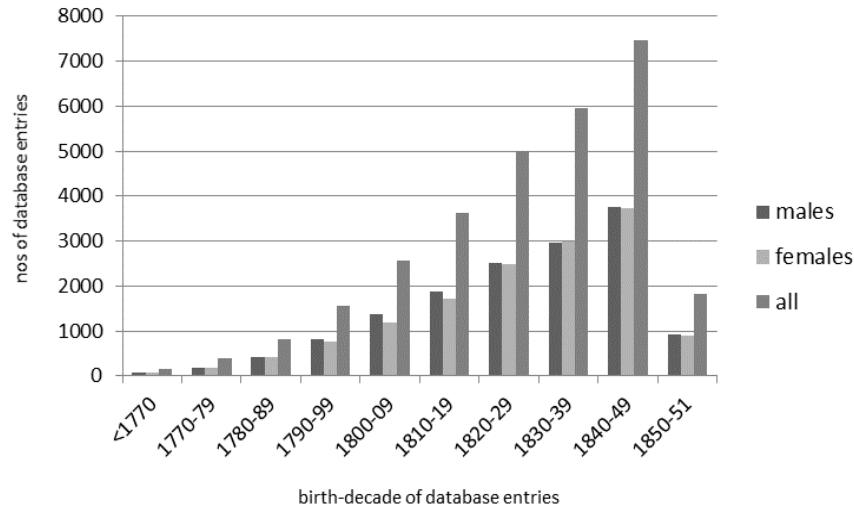
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young, single males would be predominant. But the population was also being depleted by emigration, particularly of young males.

	Persons with known residence	Those with known residence as % of those in AJDB known to be living*
1760s	140	86
1770s	384	70
1780s	846	61
1790s	1,645	56
1800s	2,890	53
1810s	4,607	51
1820s	7,692	54
1830s	11,779	59
1840s	19,100	69
1850s	29,275	100
1860s	9,758	38
1870s	8,136	37
1880s	6,326	38
1890s	2,117	16
1900s	1,338	16
1910s	673	14

* estimated survivor numbers after 1851

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Although the database tracks the later lives of emigrants wherever possible, it is not always easy. Data on the later lives of females tend in consequence to be somewhat richer than on the later lives of males.

As to sources, the national censuses from 1841 to 1911 have been among the most important in compiling the AJDB. Other key general sources include the registration of births, marriages and deaths under the national systems which began in England and Wales in 1837, in Scotland in 1855, and in Ireland in 1864. Jewish sources include the records of the Great, Hambro, New and Bevis Marks synagogues, which go back to the 18th century, becoming more comprehensive in the first half of the 19th. Announcements in Jewish newspapers throughout the second half of the 19th century are particularly germane to the 1851 AJDB population, and have been usefully collated in two printed volumes covering the period 1861-1880 (Berger, 1999 and 2004) and online in relation to the periods up to 1869 and 1880-95 (www.jeffreymaynard.com). Extensive listings of entries relating to Jews in trade directories and the like in the first half of the 19th century are also available online (*ibid*). An index to Jewish names in insurance policies from the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries (www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK/GR_Insurance_Policies/JewishSurnames) has proved a rich resource, especially for occupations, on the early 19th century. All these sources have been extensively trawled in the compilation of the 1851 AJDB and many contributors have drawn on other sources, for example naturalization papers, court records, published biographies and gravestone inscriptions, for data that are also incorporated.

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The full database is now available for research applications by registered users of the UK Data Archive (<http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7668&type=Data%20catalogue>).

APPENDIX 2

MEASURING FAMILY SIZE

The measurement of family size in this population is problematic on several grounds. Some of these concern the nature of the sources themselves:

Censuses Until the 1911 census (by which date probably well over 90 per cent of the database population would be dead), there was no comprehensive survey in Britain of completed family size. Decennial censuses might or might not document the full family: they would, by definition, miss out most children who died in infancy; and parents with large families in crowded accommodation would often farm out some of their children to stay with relations.

Registrations of births in synagogues or churches This tends to be haphazard, certainly in the 18th century, but remains so after civil registration was introduced in 1837.⁴⁵ Some parents, for example, would register the births only of boys. Parents who moved around the country, moreover, might register only a small proportion of their children at any one synagogue.

Civil registration of births Although an invaluable source following its introduction in 1837 (England and Wales), 1856 (Scotland) and 1864 (Ireland), it was not at first compulsory. Compulsory registration was introduced in England and Wales in 1875, and it is thought that before that date up to 15 per cent of births in some parts of the country went unregistered. Registrations, moreover, do not always equate with actual date of birth: for any of several reasons a registration could be delayed for months or even longer.

Birth announcements in newspapers These can make up some of the deficit, but do not become commonplace until the 1870s, and in any case are largely confined to the relatively affluent.

Other constraints arise from the nature of the data collection:

Cohort differences The under-counting that derives from the patchiness of birth records before civil registration is exacerbated by the fact that most of the children of older people in the database (those born before, say, 1800) would have left home by the time that censuses might have been a useful source; many of the children, indeed, would have emigrated. Furthermore, a considerable number of any children they had would have died by 1851, many of them in infancy and early-childhood

Keeping tabs on individuals It can be hard to track an individual throughout the decades of his or her life. Individuals with very common names, like Isaac Isaacs or Rebecca Levy, are always hard to follow through with confidence. Name changes give rise to difficulties too – not so much a woman's change of surname on marriage, which can generally be identified quite easily, as random changes, for example to Anglicise or de-Judaise a name (Levy to Lawson, Moses to Moss, Polack to Pollock and so on), or simply the adoption of informal appellations like John or Jack or Joe for Jacob, Jonas, Joseph and suchlike

Population mobility The database population were often highly mobile: at least 9 per cent of those surviving to the 1860s are estimated to have emigrated to other continents (Laidlaw, pp 46-8, with data since augmented), and others moved a great deal around Britain and Europe. It is often difficult to capture comprehensive data on the marriages and children of people who moved abroad.

Counteracting these shortcomings, many of the entries have been researched in depth by genealogists or social historians employing a wide armoury of sources and techniques to uncover as much information as possible on the individuals concerned. Additional sources such as family prayer books, Wills, naturalisation papers, court records, hospital records and so forth can provide invaluable data to supplement those from standard sources such as censuses and birth registers.

This notwithstanding, the raw data in the database are likely quite frequently to understate completed family sizes. One way of correcting for this, to some degree, is to look not at the listed children for each entry but at the interval between the birth-years of the first and last-born in each family. If, for example, a woman is shown as having had eight children between 1850 and 1872, a possible surmise is that she actually had 12, with four unaccounted for, perhaps having died in infancy. This is not the only possible explanation. She might, for example, simply have had low fertility; she might have been widowed and then re-married; she might have been instructed to avoid childbirth for some years on medical

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grounds; or she and her husband might have taken active steps to restrict their family size.

By and large, however, and especially for the older database cohorts, the likeliest explanation in most such cases is that the database undercounts their family size. This being so, an alternative calculation based on the interval between first and final births probably captures a better picture of family size than the raw data. The approach used in this analysis has been to generate an imputed figure, based on an assumed two-year gap between pregnancies, in all cases where the interval is significantly larger than would be expected from the known number of children. The resulting figures obviously do not allow for the other possible explanations of wider-than-predicted birth intervals. Given, however, the inherent under-counting that arises from the nature of the sources and the data collection, it is probably fair to suppose that this degree of inflation of the raw figures goes in the right direction.

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Notes

¹ The expression ‘British Isles’ covers England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. All were subject to the 19th century censuses, and all had Jewish residents in 1851

² in 1837 for England and Wales, 1855 for Scotland and 1864 in Ireland

³ and not even that in some cases, where all that is known from an extant registration is that the person concerned had been previously married

⁴ This figure relates, strictly, to the year of first *known* marriage: most, but not all, sources record whether the person concerned had had a previous marriage. In 181 cases where the year of first marriage is not known, the year of a second or later marriage is known. Second-marriage dates are known for some 622 of the database entries, but this is almost certainly an underestimate. Though divorce was uncommon in the 19th century, relatively high mortality (especially among women of childbearing age) might be expected to have resulted in a higher re-marriage rate than the figures here suggest.

⁵ This is because the data usually come from marriage certificates or synagogue records, rather than simply a registry index. Additional data in these sources (such as father’s Hebrew name, and/or address and occupation) offer important assurance in the case of people with commonplace names that the data have been correctly matched.

⁶ 14,419 females to 14,854 males, a ratio of 49.3:50.7.

⁷ Accuracy of age at marriage data depends on accuracy of birth data. The AJDB lists exact birth dates (that is to say, drawn from sources such as birth registers in DDMMYY format) for 960 out of 4,364 marrying males (22%), and 952 out of 4,955 marrying females (19%). In other cases, the age at marriage is computed from year of birth, which in the great majority of cases is drawn from the 1851 census. This has been found – from the checks possible where exact date of date of birth is also known – to be generally very reliable. There is however an intrinsic bias in census-based dates: the 1851 census was taken on 30 March (other censuses on different dates), so although the database treats anyone listed as (say) aged 20 in 1851 as having been born in 1831, something like 75% will actually have been born in 1830. Taking into account the fifth of cases where exact dates are known, the overall average ages for the AJDB population are probably understated by about six months. The distribution of the bias will, however, vary with age group and other variables, so it would be unwise to apply a correction factor across the board.

⁸ These figures need to be treated with caution. They refer, for the most part, to people’s residence on census night (though if their ordinary residence is different, and known, the database substitutes the ordinary residence). An uncertain proportion of the males listed as resident in the provinces – especially those with travelling occupations – will have been based in London, or at least had roots in London which might have been important when it came to finding a marriage partner. This, along with higher mortality and higher emigration among young adult males than among females, probably goes much of the way to explaining why London females in the 20-30 age-group outnumber their male counterparts by what appears to be quite a large margin (2243 to 2034)

⁹ Figures for England and Wales only, and based on reconstitution studies in 26 parishes

¹⁰ Specifically, ‘Austria’, Moscow, Pesth (ie Budapest), ‘Russia’ and St Petersburg. Posen/Poznan was cited as an exception to the observation: perhaps significantly, it was

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one of the chief sources of Jewish immigration to the British Isles in the first half of the 19th century

¹¹ The overseas-born represent 18 per cent and 7 per cent respectively of all males and all females whose ages at first marriage are known

¹² 47 per cent of males aged 21-plus who had been born overseas, as compared with 20 per cent of those born in Britain (though see note 8 above). There is a complex interplay here with spousal birthplace, discussed later in the main paper. Roughly half of the men in the database who were born overseas, and on whom spousal birthplace data are available, married women who had also been born overseas: see Table 3. Probably in many cases this simply reflected a preference for a spouse with a similar linguistic and cultural background, along perhaps with some family or community pressure. Against that, marrying a British-born woman would have given a passport to integration which more of the immigrants might have seized had the numbers not been stacked against them.

¹³ The calculation goes as follows:

		Males	Females
All married and unmarried born <1817	a total aged 35+ in 1851	4,150	3,802
	b deaths from 20% mortality in 1850s	830	760
	c estimated survivors to 1860s (b-a)	3,320	3,042
	d survivors tracked in AJDB	1,882	1,554
	e grossing-up factor (c/d)	1.76	1.96
	f unmarried in 1851	708	531
Unmarried born <1817	g deaths from 20% mortality in 1850s (assume predominantly old, so no late marriers)	142	106
	h estimated survivors to 1860s (f-g)	566	425
	i survivors tracked in AJDB and remaining unmarried	134	167
	j tracked unmarried survivors grossed up to estimated survivor total (i x e)	236	327
	k never married (g+j)	378	433
	l never married % of all 1851 population (l/a)	9.1	11.3

¹⁴ This should not be taken as implying that there is much doubt about the broad Jewish status of the remainder – only that specific data is absent on their synagogue affiliation. Other considerations like family naming patterns, announcements in the Jewish press and suchlike permit a high degree of confidence as to Jewish status in many cases where synagogue data are lacking

¹⁵ Data generally drawn from synagogue birth records, or, in the absence of those, inferred from family names and/or birth in countries like Italy, Gibraltar, Morocco and Turkey. In addition, an uplift of 7 per cent has been applied to bring in those with common family names like Cohen, Levy, and Solomons, which are not clearly suggestive of either

Sephardi or Ashkenazi origins: this is the proportion which such names represent in the indexes of Bevis Marks birth and death registrations. Some further uplift would be in order to reflect the fact that a proportion of Jews from northern European countries, most notably Holland, had Sephardi origins, although this is often not clear from their names (eg Van Den Bergh, which could be derived from Delmonte). The figure in the main text assumes, *faute de mieux*, that the Sephardi proportion among the Dutch-born Jews in Britain was in line with the proportion among non-Dutch in Britain. See also discussion in Whitehill (1973: 4-5), which lends support to a figure of this magnitude

¹⁶ Whitehill (1973: 5) suggests that the rate of mixed Sephardi/Ashkenazi marriages might have been quite a bit higher than the figures here suggest, with about 42 per cent of Sephardi men marrying Ashkenazi brides over the period 1838-70. His figures are based, however, on surnames rather than more detailed data, and an assumption that people with names like Cohen, Levy and Solomon would have been Ashkenazi, which he acknowledges may give rise to error. Whichever estimate is truer, the judgment can hold good that 'Marriages between Sephardi men and Ashkenazi women were far more frequent in the Victorian age than is generally supposed' (ibid)

¹⁷ Just two dozen are so listed, but this is probably a large underestimate

¹⁸ The figures available are as follows:

Synagogue	Date range	Proselyte marriages (nos)	Total marriages (nos)	Proselyte proportion (%)	Source
Bevis Marks	1841-1901	64	1212	5	Whitehill (1973: 6)
Great	1791-1859	123	4301	3	Courtesy of Angela Shire (www.synagoguescribes.com)
Hambro	1791-1837	13	263	5	
New	1819-32	10	230	4	New Synagogue Duplicate Ketubah Book (transcription by Bernard Susser)

¹⁹ This may be inferred from online BMD indexes, like www.freebmd.org.uk. These display results grouped together by volume and page reference, which means marriage data supplied by a single registrar or institution. If we take as an example a search against the name 'Edward Nathan', in 1846 we find one man by that name in a group of marriages in Stepney whose other members are Mary Brown, Jane Chalmers, Elizabeth Clayson, James Furze, Jane Maslin, John Porter and John Stewart – one of the women here presumably being his bride. None of the names except his look Jewish. By comparison, in 1851 we find an 'Edward Nathan' marriage in London City alongside Dinah Abrahams, Rachel Cohen, Lewin Crawcour, John Davis, Sophia Isaacs, Daniel Myers and Maria Samuel. We might reasonably conclude, without any more specific information, that the Edward Nathan marrying in 1846 married out (if indeed he was Jewish), whilst the one who married in 1851 stayed within the fold

²⁰ In a further 588 cases, only the *surname* of the spouse is known. The great majority are widowed women, or women whose husband was absent on census night, but whose married surname and other details (like children's given names and other contextual data) generally leave little doubt as to their Jewish status

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²¹ Extensive, but not comprehensive, marriage records have survived for some but not all of the main synagogues in 18th and early-19th century Britain. A quarter of this generation, in any case, were born abroad, and married partners who were also born abroad (n = 250): if they were *married* abroad too, there is little prospect of tracking down their marriage record other than by dedicated genealogical research. It must be recognised also that, for people – men especially – reaching marriageable age in Britain in the 18th century, finding a spouse from within the still relatively small Jewish population would not always have been easy. Some married converts (see note 18), but even those whose spouses did not formally convert would not necessarily forego Jewish culture in the home and beyond. Suffice to say, there is little doubt about the Jewish status of older generations in the database, even though explicit Jewish marriage data may be lacking. Family naming patterns and other contextual data can be very telling, and corroboration can often be found in people's *children's* Jewish marriages

²² At least a quarter of the 463 have fairly Jewish-sounding forenames (Bloomer, Deborah, Esther, Hannah, Jael, Leah, Rachel, Rayner, Rebecca, Welcome, Zillah &c). In the remaining 350-odd cases, the partners mostly have names like Caroline, Catherine, Clara, Elizabeth, Fanny, Jane, Louise, Phoebe, and Sarah, which could as easily be Jewish as not. The absence of a matching marriage record might indicate a Jewish couple cohabiting (or indeed who were married, but under different names) or a mixed Jewish/non-Jewish couple. We assume here that half of the 350 were non-mixed Jewish couples

²³ Jewish women who married out before 1851 are unlikely to feature in the database except where they have been picked up through family research by one of its contributors, and there are several such cases. Those marrying out after 1851 are included in the civil registration and church-marriage figures in the body of this paper, and represent 28 per cent of the marrying out total. There are likely to be some others, not thus far identified, who married out after 1851 but whose marriage data can be traced, if at all, only by in-depth family research. Their numbers are probably small. If we were to apply the 28:72 ratio from civil registration data to the 463 men whose partners' identities cannot be traced, and assume a similar 50:50 division between those marrying Jews and those marrying non-Jews, we would have 68 women marrying out in thus-far untraced marriages. But the absence of numbers of this order from the numerator is likely to make minimal difference to the estimated marriage-out rate, given their absence also from the denominator

²⁴ Of the 270-plus contributors of data to the database, a significant proportion are genealogists researching their own, Jewish families. Some may not have followed through on collateral ancestors who left the fold with the same assiduity as they applied to those who stayed within: this would lead to exogamy being under-reported to at least a small degree. The search through marriage announcements in Jewish newspapers, but not on the whole in non-Jewish ones, may also have created some bias (at least among the more affluent sections of the community that announced marriages in newspapers).

²⁵ $(X + Y + Z)/15,447$, where X refers to 123 marriages in Christian ceremonies, Y to 235 marriages identified from the civil registration index as non-Jewish, and Z to a notional 50% of the 350-odd partnerships with women whose forenames were not obviously Jewish. The denominator refers to all the entries in the database on whom any marriage data are available

²⁶ See eg Endelman (1990: 104-8). Further, indirect evidence that the Jewish population in Britain at this time remained at least broadly observant of Jewish traditions comes from an analysis of nuptial seasonality. The database shows evidence of a clear dip

in marriages in April, September and October, that is to say around Pesach, the High Holy Days and Sukkot – a very different pattern from that among non-Jews in England (Wrigley & Schofield, 1989: 300)

²⁷ The locations quoted are Algeria, Bavaria, Berlin, Pesth (ie Budapest), Prague, ‘Prussia’ (presumably excluding Berlin) and Vienna. Berlin was shown as having a much higher marriage-out rate than the rest, with 8 per cent of Jewish men and 5 per cent of Jewish women reported as marrying out. The basis of calculation of all these figures is however uncertain (in particular, it is unclear whether Jacobs’ figures measure the stock – as do the AJDB calculations above – or the flow), and they are probably in some cases shaky, so direct comparison cannot be made with the AJDB figures. Vobecká (2013: 66-69) explains some of the difficulties of measuring the heterogamy rate in jurisdictions where marriage regulation was based on canon law

²⁸ or at least in a partnership. In the great majority of such cases, no details are to hand of the marriage in the home country. It is probably safe to assume that most were indeed married. There were doubtless some cases, though, where couples, freed from the constraints of the community they were leaving, simply paired up without a ceremony

²⁹ ‘Overseas’ in this context might just mean continental Europe (typically France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and especially Poland) but could also indicate the West Indies, the USA or Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere across the globe. By the mid-19th century, trans-oceanic travel was by no means exceptional: a significant proportion of the Anglo-Jewry Database population themselves emigrated to new continents (Laidlaw 2011, pp 46-8). The large majority, however, of entries (or entries’ spouses) listed as born overseas were born in continental Europe

³⁰ Status is uncertain in several cases, but the number recorded is unlikely to be more than about 35 out of the 15,477 known marriages/partnerships spanning the late-18th to early-20th centuries.

³¹ The census for 1851 – from which a high proportion of the data have been captured – picks up births only in the first three months of that year. Table 5 therefore uses the annual mean of listed births in 1850 and 1851 as a proxy for comparison with the age-specific marital fertility rates for the population of England and Wales at large. If the raw count of births in 1851 is understated because of the census date, the raw count of births in 1850 will be overstated for the same reason, and the mean should give a reasonable approximation to the actual figure

³² A time series should, in principle, be more telling than a single year’s snapshot. But until the AJDB has comprehensive data on most of its entries across all decades of their lives, it would be hard to estimate adequately the relevant married female population at different dates. Any fertility data that could be produced in this way would, moreover, be of limited interest. They would tell us about shifts in fertility patterns among the AJDB population *per se*, but would give only a partial picture of fertility rates among the Jewish population as a whole at the given date. This is because of the large volumes of Jewish immigration throughout the 19th century. Time series applied to small populations undergoing considerable flux, as this one was, are inevitably more problematic than those applied to large (eg national) and more stable populations

³³ For a notional maximum, studies of benchmark fertility among the Hutterites (an isolated group known for their exceptionally high fertility rates) indicate a median of about 10 children per woman, along with a median age at marriage of 21 (Larsen and Vaupel, 1993: 84)

³⁴ Occupational data on the fathers with the largest families are slanted noticeably towards the professional and managerial end of the scale, but the numbers are probably too small to be very meaningful

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³⁵ for example, prolonged breastfeeding, coitus interruptus, non-coital sex, sheaths and sponges, varying degrees of abstinence, and abortion.

³⁶ for example, rounding error arising from birth-dates derived from age at last birthday expressed in whole years: in 19th century censuses, there was an observably more casual approach to reporting adults' as distinct from children's ages. The difference could also be due in part to missing data on stillbirths and infant/early-childhood deaths, which would be more frequent among the older generation. The database does however include, in the children field, data on any known stillbirths and perinatal/infant deaths.

³⁷ The family sizes of French Jews were accordingly much smaller too: the average for women born between 1801 and 1806 who survived to age 45 was 3.52 (Hyman 82)

³⁸ for example, because of name-changes, but also because some, at least, would not develop much attachment to their new home before they migrated further afield. The overseas-born are under-represented in the database's post-1851 data: although they constitute 19 per cent of the total database population, they constitute only 14 per cent of those whose later lives have been tracked. This makes it more likely that their post-1851 children are under-recorded, in addition perhaps in some cases to children born before they migrated to Britain and who did not migrate with them

³⁹ The deflating effect this would have on their average family sizes, however, should be broadly countered by the use of interval-based estimates, as in Table 9

⁴⁰ These fall into three main categories: those where the precise date (DDMMYY) of marriage and first birth are known; those where only the broad dates are known (eg, marriage in the first quarter of the year, childbirth in the second quarter); and those where other contextual data suggest an extranuptial conception is likely, though uncertain. Most cases in the database fall into the first two groups

⁴¹ 798 out of 7,643 entries whose marriage dates are known and who are known to have had children

⁴² The rate of emigration after 1851 among the AJDB population, mostly going to Australia, New Zealand, the Americas and South Africa, was high, particularly among the British-born (Laidlaw 2011: 46-49)

⁴³ <http://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/1851/introduction.htm>

⁴⁴ National Archives, class HO 129, summary Jewish data from which are reproduced in Lipman (1954: Appendix). This one-off census does not give information relating to named individuals, but is a useful guide to the sizes of different communities.

⁴⁵ At the same time, synagogue records quite often contain valuable records of stillbirths and perinatal deaths