



THE KING'S JEWS

MONEY, MASSACRE AND
EXODUS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

ROBIN R. MUNDILL



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in Medieval England

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continuum

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Continuum US, 80 Maiden Lane, Suite 704, New York, NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

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First published 2010

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 9781847251862

Typeset by Pindar NZ, Auckland, New Zealand
Printed and bound by MPG Books Group

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*For my girls,
Elaine,
Emma, Catriona and Becky*

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Acknowledgements

Like any other book of this genre there are always many debts of gratitude and acknowledgements to be made. The idea originates from 1980 and my desire to study what was then considered to be a backwater of British history. The wish to bring medieval Anglo-Jewry into more focus came to fruition in a BBC *Timewatch* documentary, which was entitled 'All the King's Jews' and originally shown on 1 November 1990. Since the programme and with the publication of *England's Jewish Solution*, which analysed the last decades of the Jewish presence in England, as well as many years of further research, I had always aimed to write a book which would take readers back into the world of the small colony of Jews who came to England between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

I have been fortunate. Fortunate, in the first place, that Michael Greenwood approached me and asked me to write the book. Fortunate in the fact that my studies and work have been kept going over the last 30 years by a growing interest in what was once deemed to be a mere footnote of history or even minority history. I am grateful for the support I have had from the University of St Andrews, which awarded me an honorary Research Fellowship in the School of History. I was also fortunate in being appointed School Teacher Fellow in the Lent term of 2009 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which enabled me to once again brave the lift in the North Front of Cambridge University Library. I thank Corpus Christi for their hospitality and friendship. I am also greatly indebted to the Council of Glenalmond College, Perth for allowing me to take what in effect was a sabbatical term, in Lent, 2009.

My thanks, as always, must go to Elaine Mundill for reading and commenting as the book gestated and for letting me follow the trail. They also

deservedly go to Professor Chris Given-Wilson, who has read and commented on most of what follows. As fate had it, I bumped into Chris on my first day at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, many years ago and he pointed out the delights of the Nordic Sandwich Bar as a possible place to grab a sandwich while not taking too much time off from the E101s, E9s and E401s (not to mention the SCs). More recently, a productive set of impromptu meetings and coffees in the University Library at Cambridge led to the interest and kind offer by Professor Miri Rubin to read a near completed version of the work. I am very grateful to her for her astuteness and comments. My thanks also go to Michael Greenwood and his team at Continuum for their belief in and hard work on the final production.

Naturally in what was commissioned to be 'a more general history of the Jews of medieval England' in some places I have drawn heavily on the work of others, such as Professor Barrie Dobson, Dr Zefira Rokeah and Professor Robert Stacey to mention but a few. In Chapter Four I have relied on the work of Joseph Jacobs extensively. His pioneering compilation is still a Pandora's box, which you emerge from having noticed yet another aspect he has covered. I regard all of them and many others as fellow enthusiasts and companions in a long journey to get closer to one specific aspect of Jewish civilisation and congratulate them and others who have been active in this field. I have drawn much from my own work, some of which has been published and some of which has been given as papers.

Having been so fortunate, any mistakes, misprints or misinterpretations that have been made are entirely my own misfortune!

I hope that reading about the medieval Jews of England will demand questions, foster understanding, but above all will make the reader reflect on the follies of bigotry, hatred or persecution. My fervent hope is that all should try to be more accepting, tolerant and open in all that they do among all those they rub shoulders with.

Lammas 2009
St Andrews

Preface

*Never in the field of medieval history is it possible to know so much about
so few as it is about the Jews of Angevin and Plantagenet England.*

CECIL ROTH¹

Material remains of the first Jewish colony in Britain are not abundant. The former Jewish populace has left the sites of its burial grounds, several stone houses with associations with Jewish owners and a few religious items, which include a bowl and a prayer book. In recent years there have been the infrequent but exciting archaeological finds of a possible synagogue in Guildford, *mikva'ot* in London, and the opening of Jacob's Well in Bristol. The Jew in medieval England has left a memory – sometimes a place name or a street name, at other sites a legend and certainly, at Clifford's Tower in York, a scene of martyrdom, which has entered both Christian and Jewish recall alike. While there is not a tremendous amount of tangible evidence, the documentary evidence is vast. Medieval Anglo-Jewry is unique in the amount of records that it has left behind. It was precisely because the Jews were considered to be royal property that their records far outstrip the surviving documentation of some of their Christian contemporaries.

Because the Jews were regulated and protected by the whim of the Crown, they always remained under royal surveillance. To control them the Crown eventually founded the Exchequer of the Jews in Westminster, appointed Justices of the Jews and maintained this dedicated ever-vigilant government machinery for over a century. There were also the less important officials who worked with the Jewry such as Sergeants, Keepers of the Rolls and other clerks. Locally, there were chirographers who were paid every time a financial transaction was made. There were also certain

Christians in some towns that were specifically charged with looking after the Jews.

The Jewish Plea Rolls recorded any involvement in legal cases with Christians, which range from trespass to non-payment of debt. Such a class of documents gives us a feel for the issues that preoccupied both central government and local officials. The types of business conducted by this special court for Jewish affairs, which was once described as both an 'official bureau and a judicial tribunal', give us a real sense of the impact of the medieval Anglo-Jewish community on Christian society. These records are being made available by the Jewish Historical Society of England and are a rich source for information on both medieval Jewish and Christian life. Similarly, the Patent Rolls, which granted permissions, are full of special licences and orders concerned with the social intercourse between Christian and Jew. The Close Rolls reflect in full the orders given to the officials of the Jewish Exchequer and the sheriffs about the general day-to-day running of the Jewries. The Pipe Rolls and the Receipt Rolls are full of details of payments made both by individuals and Jewish communities. These particular records are in themselves the distant cousins to the more specific Jewish Receipt Rolls.

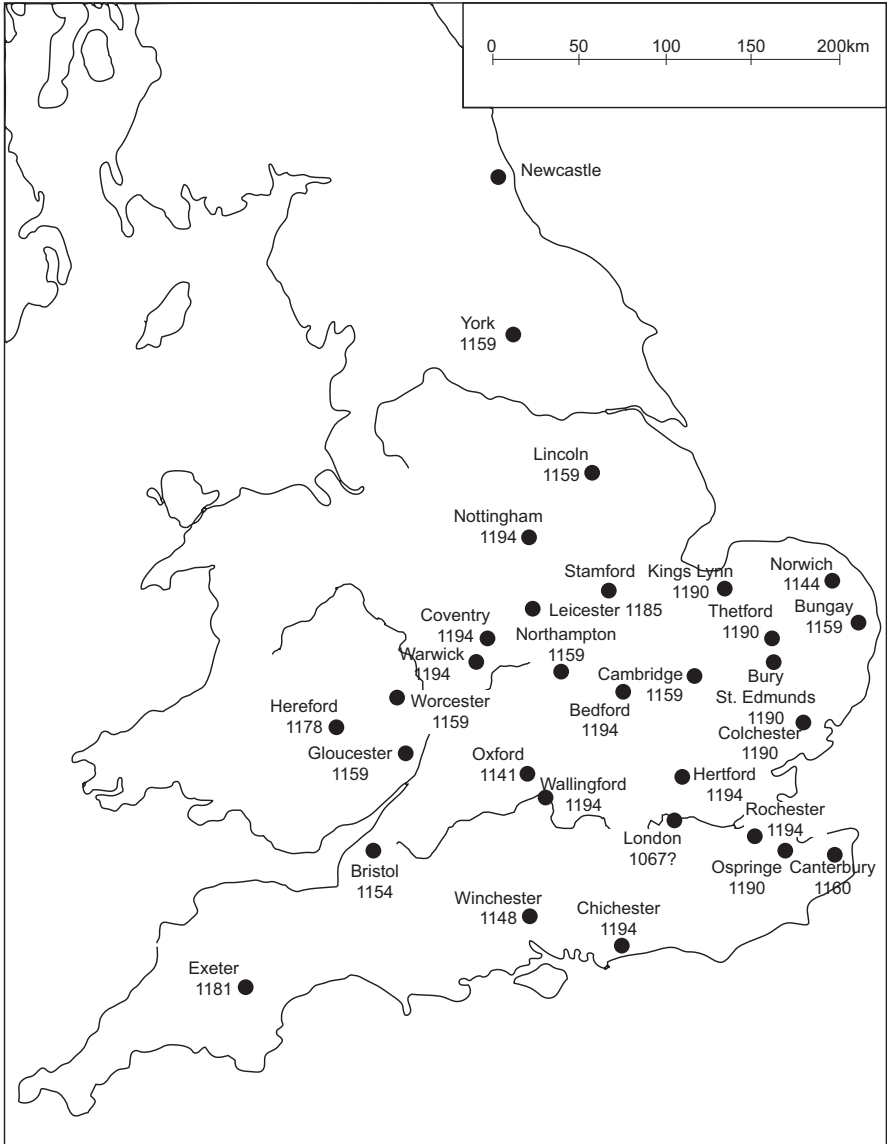
Elsewhere, the actual financial documents that the Jewish community generated are still accessible and lists or registers of long lost individual transactions still allow the historian to recreate the dealings of some of the Jews who engaged in the thirteenth-century money markets. Above all, the *archa* system, which was spawned by the Crown's desire to regulate Jewish affairs, has produced a detailed archive that allows the historian to take snapshots of how differing Jewish communities or an individual Jewish family fared in increasing or decreasing its lending. Of course, this is not to say that there were no impoverished Jews in medieval England. From time to time we do have information about Jews who were poor or who did not have financial documents registered in the *archae*.

Other individual documents, such as mortgages, contracts and other types of agreements, still survive in major archives such as the National Archives, the British Library and Westminster Abbey. Other documents

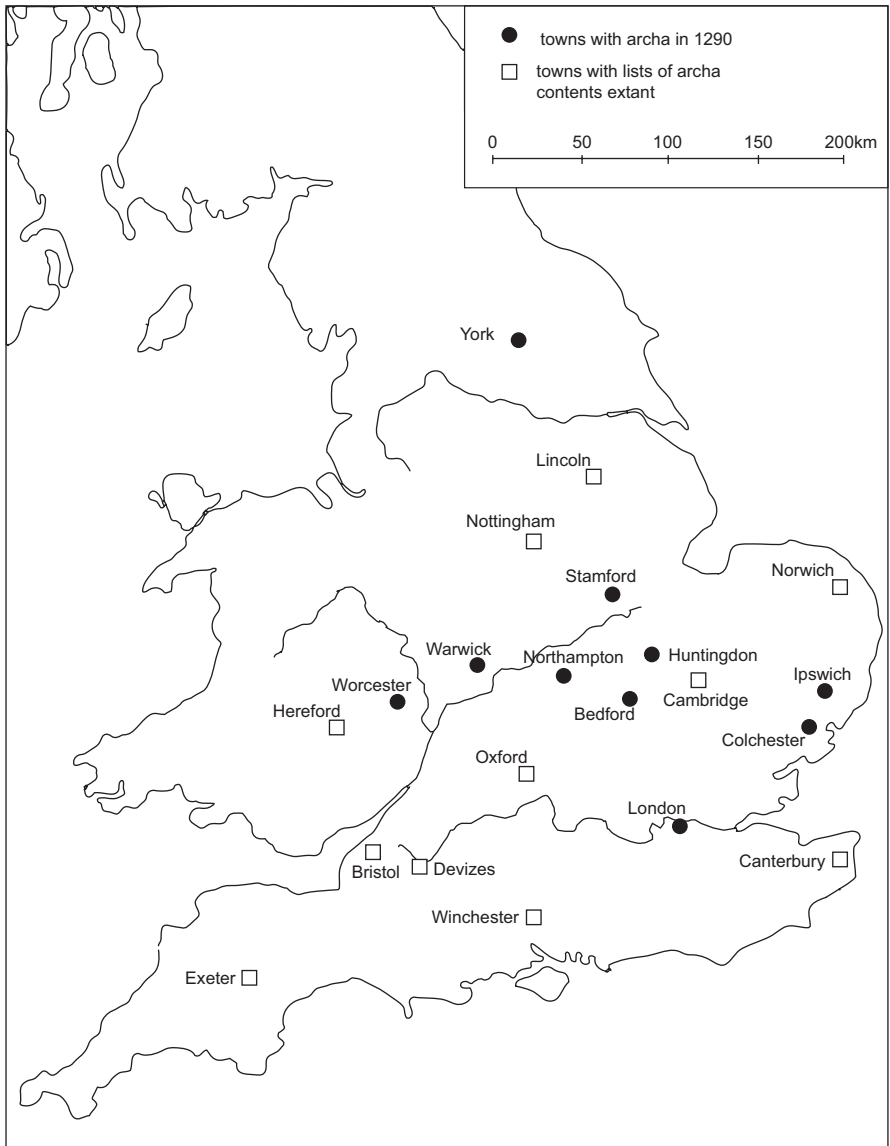
survive in Cathedral archives and local record offices. There are single documents that date to the period of the first Jewish colony, which can be found in odd places. A cereal bond was fairly recently discovered in the Hereford Cathedral archives. A single document with relevance to the Jews even turned up for sale at Sotheby's in 1904! There are Hebrew documents or *starra* and other quitclaims that survive elsewhere.

These written records give us a day-to-day glimpse of a single, small community. As we glimpse the activities of the Jews, it is easy to forget that, for every transaction or guarantor, there were also Christians involved both in the agreements and the recording of the transactions. Relations with Jews and their debtors cannot always have been bad. It is likely that some Christians, at least, must have been grateful for the injection of capital and even possibly for friendship.

Over and above this, we can glimpse the gripes and grumbles of contemporary chroniclers who naturally tended to denigrate what some of the more fanatical of them saw as the 'enemy within' or even as 'fifth columnists' who were trying to bring down order and take over society as a whole. Such writers were of course priests in holy orders. They represent the written literate record of the time. They also were responsible for preaching their message to the masses by means of caricature, scribal doodles, miracle plays and lastly but most importantly, preaching and teaching. Such was the background to the record left by the King's Jews who lived in England for almost two centuries.



1 Jewish settlement in the twelfth-century



2 Towns with archae in late thirteenth-century England

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Colonisation and confinement

*Did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon England's mountains green?*

WILLIAM BLAKE

There is still much mystery concerning the arrival of the Jews in Britain. One of the earliest students of Anglo-Jewish History, D'Blossiers Tovey, writing in 1738, admitted that historians did not agree when Jews first set foot in England's countryside.¹ Historians are unlikely ever to pinpoint exactly when Jews first came because the evidence is piecemeal. It is likely that a few Jews had set foot in this land well before 1066. In the mid-nineteenth century, a Jewish historian, Moses Margoliouth, claimed that Jews were settled 'on British soil, long ere Saxon, Dane, or Norman coveted the possession of the British Isles.'² While this might be an unprovable boast it is still worth musing on. Yet the problem of whether followers of the Jewish faith actually took up residence here prior to 1066 is still open to debate. Conversely, it is well known that the Jewish communities were expelled in 1290. Thus it is, as Barrie Dobson has observed, this neat compartmentalisation that makes the history of England's first Jewish community attractive. It is finite. It can be seen to start in 1066 and tragically ends with expulsion in 1290.³

Much mystery and myth can be connected to the legends of Joseph of Arimathaea, the secrets of Glastonbury Tor and the questions posed by Jacob's pillow, which allegedly later became the sacred stone of Scone.⁴ Far more tangible is the likelihood that Jews must have visited this country in the company of Phoenicians, who came to the 'Cassiterides' in search of lead and tin. Some Jews also came to Britain in the cohorts of

camp-followers and traders who followed the Roman legions when they settled here.⁵

Even the early documentary evidence is unclear. Archbishop Egbert of York in the eighth century forbade Christians from participating in Jewish religious services and from selling their co-religionists into the hands of Jews.⁶ Does this chance reference mean that there were sufficient numbers of Jews present within the diocese of York to merit this early prohibition? Yet this particular document was recorded on the continent, many years after Egbert's death, and might merely have been used to establish a precedent. Apart from this early dubious reference, there are several place names which might prove some connection with Jewish presence but that also might be coincidental. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle makes a reference to a fortress called 'Iudanbyrig' near York in the tenth century.⁷ Names such as Marazion or Menheniot exist in Cornwall and the latter might be a derivation of *min oniyot* – 'from ships' in Hebrew.⁸ Perhaps the earliest Jewish visitors to England did not come from the Continent via the Channel ports, as one might have expected. Did early Jewish settlers know the West Country rather better than the eastern coast? Jewish footsteps in ancient times are hard to track.

Pre-Conquest Jewish migration is referred to by St Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, who in the late fourth century had learnt his Hebrew from a Rabbi, and who was well aware of the Diaspora (70 CE) and even commented that 'The Jews move from sea to sea and from the British to the Atlantic Ocean.'⁹ Such a movement of Jews, possibly Jewish traders or even Jewish colonists, took place during the time of the Diaspora and for several centuries after. Jewish sources show a similar awareness. Indeed a *midrash* or commentary of the early second century states that the people of Britannia 'go about naked' and talks of Jews who had even been exiled to Britain.¹⁰ It is also possible that some Jews were driven to Britain as a result of the Bar Kochba revolt (132–5 CE). A sixteenth-century Jewish source refers to much earlier Jewish migration from Germany across the Channel to England. Joseph Cohen's *Emek Habacha* (*Valley of Tears*) claims:

In the year 4570 (810 C.E.) Christians and Moors fought one another, and men of high station were brought low, and for Israel there was a time of trouble. For many Jews fled from the sword from Germany to Spain and England . . .¹¹

There is some evidence that some Jews had settled slightly further afield. The *Annals of Innisfallen* in Ireland record that: ‘Year 1079: Five Jews came over the sea with gifts to Tairdelbach and they were sent back over the sea again.’¹² Thus, although the documentary evidence for Jewish presence in England during the first millennium CE is sparse and difficult to interpret, it does not rule out that Jews had visited the so-called ‘mountains green’ in ancient times.

The archaeological evidence is sparser still and even more difficult to interpret. There are some tangible links, which, if nothing else, indicate a sort of contact with the original Jewish homelands. One example of the most tenuous of these is a stone bas-relief of Samson driving the foxes into a field of corn, which was unearthed in London in the late seventeenth century. The theme of Samson and the foxes was a common ornamentation for Jewish granaries. Yet was the mason who carved the relief merely copying a design they had seen and were they actually of the Jewish faith?¹³ Early coins from the Jewish homeland have been found in Britain. One example found in London dated from the second revolt 132–5 CE, another found at a Roman fort at Melandra in Derbyshire dated from 66–72 CE, and a third found on Bingley Moor in Yorkshire dated from the reign of Herod Agrippa 42–3 CE.¹⁴ Coins such as these are not necessarily proof of Jewish residence. Using other evidence, Dr Shimon Applebaum has suggested that it was very likely that Jews had passed through early medieval Exeter. A ridged bowl dating to the third century that had a Hebrew graffito on it was found there.¹⁵ Yet, like the coins, the transmission of a design or Hebrew letters scratched on these artefacts might only suggest trading connections rather than any positive evidence for settlement.

Thus the archaeological evidence does no more than create the possibility of the presence of a few Jewish soldiers serving in oriental units of Roman Britain and of Jewish traders on business trips to the far flung

'Isles of the Sea', as England was later known to continental Jewry. Such articles may have belonged to Jews, from communities in Rouen and Bordeaux, who may have traded indirectly with Britain. The proximity of centres of Jewish settlement on the continent must have meant that some Jews had crossed the Channel and visited this country for themselves. It is thus unlikely that no Jew had set foot in England before the eleventh century and still possible that some settlement, if only of a single family, may have happened.

Despite thin evidence for Jewish presence before 1066, it is unanimously agreed that the Norman Conquest gave a new impetus to the settlement of Jews in England. Some have suggested, with little foundation, that the transfer of Jews from Normandy was accomplished by a bribe being made to the Rouen Jewish community by William the Conqueror. Others have even stated that his invasion fleet had some Jewish financial backing. Taking such hypotheses further it has also been suggested that Arlette, William's mother, who was raped by his father, Robert, was a Jewess from Falaise. The connections between some Jewish nomenclature and the Conqueror himself tend to suggest that there was a special association between William and his Jewish subjects. The widely used Jewish name Dieulecresse and its variants may well be an imitation of the Conqueror's battle cry 'Dex aiae' or 'God aid me'. Certainly the motto is genuine. Perhaps more intriguing is the name Manser, which may have derived from the Hebrew Mamzêr and may have been adopted by those who took the name who had some affinity to the Bastard – the men of the Bastard.¹⁶

All accounts of Jewish settlement coinciding with the Conquest are unequivocal in suggesting that the first Jewish colonists came from Rouen. Norman Golb, among others, has examined the Rouen Jewry and most of the accounts of the transfer of Jews from Normandy to England. Golb accepts that there were already Jews in England prior to the Conquest and suggests that the transfer was 'to ensure their assimilation into the framework of the Normannic administrative process'.¹⁷ Writing within 60 years of the Conquest, William of Malmesbury recorded that the Jews who were then living in London were brought over from Rouen by

William the Conqueror.¹⁸ Malmesbury's statement gives us a universally accepted start to England's first Jewish colony. Golb, writing some 900 years later, has pointed out that, at a council in 1070, William I addressed the status of the Jews and gave them the King's protection to the point that 'the king would treat both their persons and property as his own.'¹⁹ By 1070 therefore the Jew had become another part of the Normanisation of England. Certainly they were present in March 1093 when Gilbert Crispin wrote *The Disputation of a Jew and a Christian* and presented Archbishop Anselm with a copy.²⁰

In order to understand how willing Jewish colonists were enticed to seek a new life in the territories that the Normans had won in 1066, it is important to consider what kind of background these early Jewish settlers came from. By the late twelfth century the Norman Jewry had settled in just over 38 different centres.²¹ They were used to living in small communities and they were prepared to travel. The ducal charter of 1201, echoing as it does earlier pronouncements, treats the Jews as a group who were exempted from tolls and who engaged in retailing and peddling. It also recognised their activities as village moneylenders and pawnbrokers.²² The Jews of northern France were by the eleventh century already supporting themselves primarily by commerce and increasingly by moneylending.²³ Whatever reason first brought them to England in 1066, a link had already been established; immigration might offer them financial success and prosperity. Another spur to a new wave of immigration to the islands was brought about by the massacres of Jews in Rouen and elsewhere in 1096 during the opening of the First Crusade.²⁴ Some of the Jews who migrated from Normandy under the Conqueror and his sons came via Canterbury or London, which was not yet the capital but was still a trading port. Some of Jewish origin may even have taken the very first voyages in 1066 and landed at Pevensey and settled in the Rapes of Sussex. Some may also have reversed the Normandy landings of 1066 and come through Southampton and Winchester, the then capital. In 1177, Jurnet the Jew was fined a massive £1,333 6s 8d at Winchester for crossing the Straits without King Henry II's permission.²⁵

The migration of Jews from the continent in the second half of the eleventh century was mainly to the south of England and it is London which had the earliest traces of Jewish domicile. From a survey of properties belonging to St Paul's made in about 1127, mention is made of lands 'in the street of the Jewry'.²⁶ The earliest reference by actual title deed in London was a *chirograph* – or agreement – between the Canons of St Paul's and Benedict the Jew in 1152. The monastery of St Paul's granted Benedict a third part of the land that Alric Parole had held from them in return for 3s 2d a year. The payment was to be made in instalments at Easter and Michaelmas. Benedict was to hold the land 'freely and quietly and honourably like others holding land of them in the city'. It is clear that by a further agreement that Abraham the Jew, son of Symon, was Benedict's next door neighbour. Abraham was permitted to hold land 'from the post of the house of the said Benedict to the King's Road' (the main road from Cripplegate to Bishopsgate). The plot that Abraham had purchased cost him 6s 10d a year.²⁷ A further *chirograph* recorded in about 1197 by none other than the chronicler, Ralph of Diss, granted the Jew, Peter Blund, and his wife, Miriam, and their heirs some land that had formerly been held by Delesalt the Jew in the parish of St Lawrence, Jewry, for an annual payment of 6s 6d. Peter paid £1 6s 8d for this right. A few years later, in 1202, Peter Blund also paid £20 for a rent of £1 on some land and a shop in Old Fish Street.²⁸ Thus one of the earliest documented commercial transactions between Jew and Christian was for the rental of property and the purchase of rentals, and shows that Jew lived alongside Christian.

A similar pattern of land grants to Jews is discernible in Kent where other early references to Jewish moneylending show that at least some members of the Jewish community must have been quite well established. By the late eleventh century Jews had settled in Rochester and in Ospringe as well as in Canterbury itself.²⁹ A fairly sizeable and recognisable Jewish community was well established in the city by 1187, when a conflict broke out concerning Christ Church. It involved the Crown and the Papacy as well as the Jews of Canterbury. The bellicose Archbishop Baldwin had not got his way in a dispute and had blockaded the monks of Christ

Church in their monastery. The townspeople sided with the monks, and threw bread to the besieged over the walls and smuggled food by other means to keep their kitchens stocked with fish and vegetables. The Jews of Canterbury also helped the monks. As Gervase, the chronicler of the event relates:

But this was no real concern for the Jews, for they themselves sent food and as much drink as they could into the monastery and prayed in their synagogues for the constancy of the monastery. The Archbishop did not cease to remove them and for the Jews he did not hesitate to engage with them. The Archbishop excommunicated and the Jews prayed. Wonderful things to tell you.³⁰

A conveyance that was witnessed by seven Christians and five Jews showed that in about 1190 a Jew, known as Jacob the Old, had purchased several plots of land in Heathenman's lane, Canterbury, for £5 13s 4d. On one of the plots Jacob built himself a stone house opposite the synagogue.³¹ Jews such as Jacob were involved in moneylending as well as other activities in the surrounding area. By 1194, Jews had lent money to the Hospital of Strood. In exchange for some meadows along the road to Frindsbury, Bishop Gilbert of Rochester paid off £30 with arrears of interest that were owed to the Jews. Gilbert then gifted the lands back and also built the hospital a stone cloister and provided an organ.³²

Elsewhere early Jewish settlement was facilitated by the old road system and the rivers of eleventh- and twelfth-century England. Small colonies of Jews spread along the River Thames. Although over 20 Jewish colonies had been established by the mid-twelfth century, a spur to further colonisation occurred in 1177, when for the first time Jews were actually allowed burial grounds outside London.³³ Now Jewries such as Lincoln, York and Northampton had the right to bury their dead at Le Jewbury in York.³⁴ This new privilege not only shows that the Crown recognised the presence of significant Jewish communities but that each community must have had a fairly numerous congregation with enough capital to purchase land for establishing cemeteries.

Late twelfth-century Jewish settlements were dominated by Jewish magnates. Many such men bought up land and rents, built stone houses and supplied synagogues for their communities. William of Newburgh, a contemporary chronicler, remarked that both Benedict and Josce of York were engaged in moneylending and had also managed to build 'princely and spacious mansions for themselves through the profits'. Josce's mansion, in York, was in Coney Street, not far from St Martin's Church, while Benedict's house was in Spen Lane.³⁵ Such influential Jews had houses in other major centres. Despite having a house in Lincoln, Aaron of Lincoln died at his other house in London.³⁶ Rubigotsce, a leading member of the London Jewish community in the 1130s, also at one time had a house in Rouen, which was sold in 1203.³⁷ By the mid-twelfth century Jewish settlement had started to spread throughout England and Jews had become involved in the local economy.

Some Jews became involved in the tin business in the West Country. In 1198, Justiciar Hubert Walter sent William de Wrotham into the western counties as Warden of the Stannaries to regulate them, to issue new weights and measures and to issue ordinances pertaining to their smooth running. In Wrotham's subsequent ordinances it was made clear that neither Jew nor Christian could export first smeltings of tin if they had not first been weighed and stamped, nor were they allowed to export tin from Devon and Cornwall without a licence from the head custodian of the stannary. Jews were involved in some role in the stannaries because it is unlikely that de Wrotham predicted a massive migration of Jews to the West Country in the future.³⁸

By 1154 there was a significant Jewish settlement in Bristol when a local official, Robert Fitz Harding, allegedly founded a 'school for converted Jews'.³⁹ In 1170 there was at least one Rabbi in Bristol who, like so many others, owed his origins to continental Jewry and was descended from Rabbi Simeon the Great of Mainz.⁴⁰ The earliest mention of a Jew in Exeter was in 1181 and there were enough to form a community and to set up a *Beth Din* to try 'pleas which were between them'.⁴¹ From the records of a *donum* in 1159 the Jewish community at Gloucester was probably no more

than a few families but had clearly grown by 1168 when an accusation of ritual murder was made against them.⁴²

It is not surprising, as the late Dr Vivian Lipman pointed out, that Jewish communities were never far away from castles.⁴³ The fact that they were a Norman import, French-speaking, and naturally alien to the indigenous population meant that the Jews would have found it hard to be assimilated into local society, even if they had personally wished to be. The castles offered them some form of refuge and protection in a society where the Jew must have been widely resented by the majority of the population as much as any other foreign influence. It was for reasons of security, self-preservation and social welfare, as well as the preservation of their own religion, that they tended to live in centres that had a royal representative or a powerful protector close at hand. The Jew needed protection from society from the day he arrived in England until the day he was expelled. Joe Hillaby has examined the links between the Jews and their protectors and has shown that at times they were so strong that Jews sometimes moved with their patrons. When the Bigods' castle at Bungay was demolished in 1174 the Jewish community moved with the family to Hereford. Hamo of Hereford, as he became known, took advantage of the protection of the Marcher Lords and moved to the town sometime in the early thirteenth century. Further encouragement for him to settle there came from the promise of protection, from the sheriff, Walter de Lacy.⁴⁴

Colonisation was hampered by the disruption and dislocation of the struggle between Stephen and Matilda. The chronicler William Fitz Stephen observed that, after Stephen's reign, the Jews began to return to their business and that 'Peace was everywhere and there emerged in safety from the towns and castles both merchants seeking fairs and Jews seeking creditors'. Fitz Stephen indicated that Jews were a fairly common feature in twelfth-century England.⁴⁵ With the disruption over, and by the end of the twelfth century, separate Jewish communities had started to make connections with more rural districts. The Jews' financial activities and their search for clients made them even more itinerant and brought them out from the towns into the countryside.

Further Jewish immigration to England must have taken place in or around 1171, when the Jewish community of Blois was accused of ritual murder.⁴⁶ Some Jews might well have embarked for England in 1182 when they were expelled from the Ile de France by the French king, Philip Augustus.⁴⁷ Even more likely is the possibility that as Normandy fell to the power of the Capetians, in 1204, this again led to the arrival of Jews in England.⁴⁸ Given the proximity to the continent and the relative ease of the sea voyage, it is not surprising that Jewish communities seemed to have flourished more on the east and south coasts of England. By the end of the century Jews from the continent had discovered that they could find a new life in England. Certainly one commentator summed up the special position of the Jew in contemporary society:

Under our first three sovereigns they had been to a certain extent left alone; they had been loyal and industrious subjects, and had ministered much to the prosperity of the country of their adoption; they worshipped in their synagogues in peace, bought land and amassed riches; their lives had fallen in pleasant places and they concluded that the future would be as the past had been.⁴⁹

The Jewish settlements were widespread geographically, often isolated and divided into small numbers in each separate town but yet dependent upon each other for religious, academic and marital purposes. They were communities with a great deal of communication and frequent social mobility between them. They were also communities with a stratum of very rich influential men of business at the top, a majority of comparatively wealthy Jews in a larger middle social grouping, and a very few poorer Jews at the lower end, who might in some cases have been servants, but certainly would have found jobs within the community either in the food and victualling trade or in the metalworking trade.⁵⁰ Compared to their Gentile hosts, many of the Jews would have appeared to have been fabulously wealthy and influential because they conducted business with the higher social classes, including the king. By the closing decades of the twelfth century, the Jews were widely accepted as being part of the economic

infrastructure of the country at large. To some Gentiles in desperate need of cash they were the short-term answer to their prayers but in the long term to debtors like Roger de Estreby (whose plight will be discussed below), they were creditors who only inspired hatred and contempt and miraculous visions.⁵¹

It was not to be such a pleasant and peaceful existence. At the end of the twelfth century William of Newburgh complained about the position that the Jews had made for themselves: 'By an absurd arrangement they were happy and renowned far more than Christians, and swelling very impudently against Christ through their good fortune, did much injury to Christians.'⁵² It was growing anti-Jewish sentiment and Jew hatred that was to lead in 1189–90 to the massacres of *Shabbat ha-gadol*, the Sabbath preceding Passover, one of the most decisive turning points in the history of England's first Jewish settlers. This was a massive blow to Jewish colonisation and the attacks, which will be discussed below, stuck in the memory of both Jew and Christian alike for many decades to come. As a result many who show only passing interest in the first Jewish colony in England nearly always know that something happened at York in 1190 that involved Jews.

The despoliation of the king's Jews produced an angry response from Richard I. It was an event that was to mould the future for the Jews. In response Richard demanded that his royal Jews be protected and Hubert Walter, the 'Father of English archives', introduced the *archa* system, which made it compulsory to register all Jewish transactions in a chest. As a result of the massacres what amounted to a 'protection racket' was now established.⁵³ From 1190 to 1290 the Jewish community had protection provided it paid what was due to Caesar. It became the subject of intense intelligence-gathering, increasing financial demands and growing legislation. Despite his preoccupation with the Crusade as well as his quarrels with his brother, Richard left an organised government department for the Jews that controlled, directed and surveyed all there was to know about what had become 'the King's exquisite villeins.'⁵⁴ The establishment of Richard's new Department of Jewish Affairs, which will be examined

in more detail below, led D'Bloissiers Tovey to observe that in exile in Egypt the Jews had been asked to make brick, but in England they were now asked to make gold. The tide had indeed turned and for most of the thirteenth century the Jews were a regular source of royal revenue.⁵⁵

'If we have given our peace even to a dog,' so King John railed at the Londoners in 1203, 'it shall be inviolably preserved.'⁵⁶ The royal Jews were protected because they were the property of the Crown. King John protected the Jews but he was protecting them as a king who had started to profit by them. The story connected with the Bristol tallage of 1210, even though recorded by the St Alban's chronicler Roger of Wendover, shows a more horrific approach to the Jewish presence.⁵⁷ A Jew who refused to pay his tax of £6,666 13s 4d was ordered by King John to have a tooth removed each day until he paid in full. On the eighth day, as the torturers were about to begin their gruesome work, the Jew paid the required sum to save his last molar. For Jews the thirteenth century was to be a very different existence to that of their fathers.

While the Jews' royal status was to some degree 'protected', they were now restricted to living where the government dictated. As the Crown began to take a stronger hold on its Jewish subjects so it also began to limit where they could live and to restrict the Jews to the *archa* towns. In 1253, in the mandate of the Jews, they were confined to live only in the towns where they had been 'accustomed to live'.⁵⁸ The Crown was never able to completely confine the Jewish community and to keep it in locked ghettos, and there has been much debate over just how far Jews were restricted to living in defined and controlled areas in towns. Some have suggested that Jews lived in the *archa* towns because this was necessary for their lending activities. Others have suggested that Jews lived in towns because of the need to attend the synagogue. There were other limiting factors, such as the presence of a castle or a market or even simply the fact that the town of residence was a port, which may have affected where Jews settled. In the main, Jews seemed to have inhabited places which were the main commercial centres.

By the mid-thirteenth century greater polarisation of Jewish settlement took place and the evidence of tallage assessments of July and October

1256 and of actual tallage receipts for 1253 and 1260 confirms this.⁵⁹ There has always been much debate over how Jews could live in remoter areas. H. G. Richardson claimed that permanent residence outside the *archa* towns was illegal without the King's licence.⁶⁰ In France it has been established that despite it being difficult for Jews to live with Christians in more remote and isolated villages, it was fairly common place.⁶¹ If in thirteenth-century France there were places where only 'two Israelites' lived, why should this not be the case in England?⁶² More recently Paul Hyams accepted that while the pattern of Jewish settlement in England was urban-based there was the possibility that more rural settlements could have flourished.⁶³ It must now be accepted that the repeated government legislation to limit the residence of Jews to *archa* towns must mean that some Jews were accustomed to living in communities that did not have *archae* and which were rural.⁶⁴

Between 1262 and 1290 there were Jewish settlements, albeit in some cases a single family, in over 80 different places. Jews lived or conducted business in the mid-west of the country; in towns like Bridgenorth, Caerleon, Gloucester, Ludlow, Tewkesbury, Warwick and Worcester, Hereford and Bristol.⁶⁵ They lived, or certainly travelled, as far north as Shrewsbury, for between 1284 and 1289 they were forced to pay a special toll for using Montford Bridge.⁶⁶ Nearer to Hereford, where there was a large community in the 1280s, Jews lived in Weobley and later on the small manor of Much Markle.⁶⁷ Other evidence shows that some lived in places as remote as Abergavenny in Wales, Bridport in Dorset, Cricklade in Wiltshire, Dunwich in Suffolk, Maldon and Rayleigh in Essex, Retford, Royston, Sandwich and Tewkesbury.⁶⁸ In England, although there were attempts to contain and restrict the Jews in the *archa* towns, Jews were still able to live further afield.⁶⁹

However, there were other factors apart from government control that dictated where Jews lived. Two different models that influenced settlement emerge: first the restrictions as laid down by the Jews' overlord, the king; and secondly those laid down by local circumstance. In the early thirteenth-century taxation of the Jews, clerical pressure against the Jews

and the rumour of ritual murder of children by them led to more restrictive control of the Jewish communities. Local conditions and perceptions also played a role. In 1231 an early attempt to enforce a local Jewish expulsion took place in Leicester, where there had been a community of Jews for several years. Simon de Montfort announced a plan for the expulsion of the Jews from the town. In his charter he gave two major reasons, claiming that this would bring salvation for his soul and the burgesses of Leicester would be free from 'Jewish usuries'. De Montfort was probably inspired by his own family's hatred of the Jews and the fact that he had experienced earlier local expulsions in France.⁷⁰ His attempt certainly provoked debate from outside the town. When the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste, caught wind of what was happening he warned against it, claiming:

... they (the Jews) are a wandering people through their *diaspora* and they are fugitives from their proper home, that is Jerusalem, they wander through uncertain stopping places and flee from fear of death . . .

The learned bishop went on to remind both the Countess of Leicester and de Montfort that the Jews were the 'Lord's reminder of the Passion' and stated that the Jews should be protected:

Truly in the last times, together with all peoples, just as it says in the scriptures, they will enter in and turn to the faith. Then all Israel, that is the Jewish people – will be saved through their faith and will come to true liberty from their captivity.⁷¹

Grosseteste's admonishment bought time for the Jews of Leicester. The Leicester community were temporarily moved no further than the eastern suburbs of the town, which were held by de Montfort's great aunt, Margaret de Quinci. Finally, after Grosseteste's death in 1253, a charter for the expulsion of the Jews from Leicester was issued and enforced.⁷²

The 1230s were an important period of Jewish relocation within England. While little is known of Jewish settlement in the north of England, it is clear that by 1177 there had been a definite Jewish presence as far north

as Newcastle. It was probably a very small community.⁷³ Yet here on 2 July 1234 the burgesses of Newcastle paid £66 13s 4d to the royal coffers for the right not to have Jews residing.⁷⁴ Jews had lived in Southampton for some time when in the 1230s the citizens of Southampton petitioned the King to expel the Jews from their town.⁷⁵ In 1236 Henry III ruled that 'henceforth no Jew shall remain in Southampton without special order of the King and the Justices of the Jews are ordered that no Jew may come to reside in the same place without the King's special licence.'⁷⁶ The crown was starting to restrict Jewish settlement in earnest. Nicholas Vincent sees the spate of local expulsions that followed the Canterbury statute of 1233 as part of 'a coherent and deliberate campaign' against the Jews created by Peter des Roches and influenced by what was happening in France.⁷⁷

Elsewhere, in the mid-1230s there were examples of the government enforcing and deciding where Jews should live. In 1234, an order was issued to the sheriff of Warwickshire that stated that the King no longer permitted Jews to remain in towns or bailiwicks where they had not been accustomed to live. The sheriff was to arrange for the Jews to collect their debts, pay their tallage and then to force them to leave Warwick.⁷⁸ In 1235 the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire received similar orders concerning the Jews who had settled in High Wycombe. In March 1237, explicit instructions were issued to the Sheriff of Northamptonshire that no Jew should live outside the town of Northampton.⁷⁹

There were also enforced internal migrations of Jewish communities. In 1242, either for personal convenience or for better security, special permission was granted to Richard, Duke of Cornwall, 'to move Jews from one place to another.'⁸⁰ Also under his protection, the Jews of Berkhamstead were moved to Wallingford and he was granted permission to maintain an *archa*.⁸¹ In 1243 the Sheriff of Berkshire was ordered, 'without delay', to move the Jews who were staying in the towns of Newbury and Speenhamland to Winchester and to allow them to remain there, 'as they have not been allowed to live in the aforesaid towns.'⁸²

Different models of locally driven expulsion and enforced internal migration continued during the late thirteenth century. It might have been

the proximity of Leicester to Derby that made the burgesses there wish to banish their Jewish population. In 1261, in return for a payment, they applied for a special licence from the King, who granted that no Jew or Jewess would be allowed by the King or his heirs to 'remain or dwell in the same town.'⁸³ A further local expulsion from Romsey in 1266 gives a hint as to the motive. In that year, Henry III made a grant to a royal favourite, Robert Walerand, who had appealed to him on behalf of the abbess and nuns of Romsey in Hampshire, 'that no Jew shall henceforth dwell in the town of Romsey without licence'. Robert Walerand's sister, Alice, was the abbess of the convent of Romsey.⁸⁴

Jewish settlement was continually restricted and they were not allowed to inhabit new places. The government was suspicious of Jewish presence and concerned enough to take action. On 18 June 1273 the royal council issued instructions to the barons and bailiffs of the port of Winchelsea in Kent ordering them to remove those Jews who had, 'recently entered the town . . . without delay, without any damage to their bodies or goods, as according to the custom of the King's Jewry Jews ought not to dwell in any cities or boroughs or towns except those wherein they were wont to dwell of old time.'⁸⁵ A similar royal order was issued in October 1274 to the Sheriff of Shropshire instructing him to remove the Jews who had entered and were dwelling in the town of Bridgenorth.⁸⁶ Again this was a case of the Crown actively controlling Jewish settlement rather than a response to an individual request to be free from Jews.

Early in Edward I's reign the polarisation of Jewish residence became even more pronounced. Having returned from the Crusade in late 1274, Edward I visited his mother, Eleanor of Provence, in early 1275.⁸⁷ He granted her permission to make her will and to enter the convent of Amesbury in Wiltshire (eight miles north of Salisbury).⁸⁸ Possibly 'for the good of her soul', Eleanor enforced the removal of the Jews from her lands, which she held as 'dower towns' and which as such gave her an income. On 12 January 1275 Edward ratified this and ordained that 'no Jew shall dwell or stay in any towns which the queen mother holds in dower.'⁸⁹ On 16 January 1275, the Jewish community of Marlborough was expelled

and was moved to Devizes. Subsequently, the Jews of Gloucester were moved to Bristol, those of Worcester to Hereford, and those of Cambridge to Norwich. Eleanor also held several other towns, such as Andover in Hampshire, Bath in Gloucestershire and Guildford in Surrey.⁹⁰ Certainly, in January 1275, there was an attempt to remove Jews from Andover and Jacob Cok, a Jew, brought a charge of felony against Guy de Tanton, who had forcibly removed him from Andover on Eleanor's orders. However, if Jacob did manage to remain it is clear that by 1281, lands that had belonged to Jews in Marlborough and some in Andover were granted to new owners.⁹¹

The *Statutum de Judeismo* (Statute of the Jewry), issued in late 1275, reiterated that the Jews must live only in the *archa* towns.⁹² Yet even with these clear instructions such restrictions still did take place. Cecil Roth indicated the need for the issue of periodical orders to arrest Jews not residing in *archa* towns.⁹³ In 1277, Hugh de Digneuton was commissioned to investigate where Jews were living and how far the new legislation was being observed.⁹⁴ In October 1283 Edward ordered the constable of Windsor Castle to remove 'certain Jews who have entered the town and who inhabit it'. Windsor was described as 'a town wherein there is no chest of chirographers [*archa*] and no Jews were wont to dwell there in



1 Scribal illustration of a Jew wearing the tabula in the margin of an early fourteenth-century chronicle.

old time'.⁹⁵ In January 1284 new orders confining Jewish residence to the *archa* towns were issued.⁹⁶ Jewish settlement was still subject to anomalies, the influence of local protectors and even special royal licences. After the restrictions on settlement in the Statute of the Jewry, Edward I appears to have made a reversal of policy and to have granted licences to individual Jews 'to trade and ply merchandise and to live' in places like Baldwin Wak's town of Strapeston in Northamptonshire, Gilbert de Clare's town of Caversham near Reading, as well as Rochester, Southampton, Ipswich, Dorchester, Royston and Retford.⁹⁷ Such grants show that Jewish settlement was not polarised within a small number of *archa* towns.⁹⁸

Some Jews did inhabit and have contact with more remote rural communities. The evidence of mortgaging in rural areas in the twelfth century and the lending or advancing of cash in the thirteenth century shows that some Jews were widely travelled and must have known the countryside quite well. In the 1280s some of the Lincoln Jews specialised in lending to members of the village of Hackthorn some seven miles north of Lincoln. Jews from Canterbury seem to have had a network of debtors in the Romney Marsh.⁹⁹ Jews also settled in remote communities perhaps because of growing animosity in some towns. In the early 1270s, Norwich Jews were dealing in the east coast port of Dunwich.¹⁰⁰ In 1275 Josce fil Aaron of Colchester and his wife were living at Dunwich and were fined £22 16s 2d for having taken the chattels of Isaac Gabbay, a deceased Jew.¹⁰¹ Payments from Jews in other remote places and special fines for residency in smaller towns appear in the Jewish Plea Rolls. On the receipt roll for 1275, Belia and Ursell of Gloucester paid 12s so that they could remain at 'Broctred' (Bread Street in Gloucestershire); Vyves fil Moses of Clare paid 6s 8d to remain at Maldon in Essex; and Samuel fil Jacob and Samuel fil Manser paid 4s to remain at Wickham.¹⁰²

In 1275, other records show that William Page of Warminster, who had stolen a green mantle, a woman's coat, a tapet and a linen sheet, had sold them for 5s to Michael, a Jew of Fisherton Anger, just outside Salisbury.¹⁰³ In 1278 Samson of Norwich was killed by thieves and his goods were carried off from his house in Farningham in Kent.¹⁰⁴ The accounts and

surveys of the Wiltshire lands of Adam de Stratton reveal that Jews not only contributed to the farm but also lived on the manors of Cricklade from 1269 until at least 1281, and at Highworth from 1277 until 1281.¹⁰⁵ De Stratton was himself involved in profiteering from Jewish debts.¹⁰⁶ There is evidence that some Jewish families did live, in small numbers, in minor coastal ports and in the countryside. Clearly, families who dwelt in such isolated communities did so at great risk and it is likely that they had the protection of patrons in the form of their major clients. Even without the Jewish badge they would be easily distinguishable from their Christian contemporaries.¹⁰⁷

Thus Jews probably visited England before the Conquest but they never settled in any great numbers and did not form a recognised community. It was after the Conquest that greater numbers of Jewish colonists gradually established themselves in London. In keeping with their Norman charter they were subsequently granted royal permission to settle elsewhere. Some may well have landed on the south coast and remained in the ports, while some may have moved further inland by river or road. Colonies of Jews seem to have established themselves in other towns in the mid-twelfth century and such settlement was eventually recognised by granting them the right to establish their own cemeteries. Immigration from France and elsewhere on the continent was clearly an option for some Jewish families to escape either local expulsion or violence or simply to start a new life in the new territories. By the end of the twelfth century some Jews had established themselves in the West Country. Wherever the communities settled they were never far from the protection of a royal official in a local castle. Within the towns Jews tended to settle in commercial areas and by the mid-twelfth century they were a fairly widespread feature of society.

In the thirteenth century, despite the establishment of the *archa* towns, some Jews had started to live in more isolated and rural areas and had inhabited over 80 different locations. From the 1230s the pattern of settlement laws was altered by local expulsions and attempts by towns to rid themselves of Jews. For many reasons the Jews were often moved on from

one settlement to another. In 1275 the Queen mother, Eleanor of Provence, emptied her dower towns of Jews and several well-established Jewish communities such as Marlborough, Gloucester, Worcester and Cambridge were forcibly removed. Strengthened by the Statute of the Jewry in 1275, royal control of settlement tried to confine the Jews to live in towns where there were established *archae*. This led to some polarisation of settlement in such towns. The Crown consciously attempted to contain and monitor Jewish settlement but despite this would occasionally issue special licences for Jews to live in remoter places. Jewish settlement was always under scrutiny by royal officials and their residency in a particular location was always ultimately at the discretion of the king whose possessions they were.

Jews and the economy

There are few people in British history who have given their name to a government department. Such a man was Aaron of Lincoln. His career has left him as the best-documented Jewish financier of the medieval period.¹ If we wished to examine the accounts of a wealthy and successful twelfth-century businessman, the abundant records of Aaron and his activities are a case study in themselves. His business was carried out on a local as well as a national level. His financial activities included buying the debts of other Jews, lending both large and small sums, securing rent charges, pawnbroking and even speculating in cereal crops. It was a business that involved a wide range of clients from all over the land. His debtors included the Kings of England and Scotland, earls, abbots, priors, towns, sheriffs and even the Archbishop of Canterbury.² Historians know so much about this single Jewish entrepreneur because, in 1186, when he died in London, his debts (worth well over £15,000) were confiscated by the Crown.³

The King had a right to at least a third of all Jewish estates but in this instance Henry II took the whole estate. Aaron's possessions were seized and the Exchequer proceeded to realise his assets for the Crown coffers. To collect these debts a special branch of the Exchequer was set up in 1187. The new department, called the 'Exchequer of Aaron', had two full-time treasurers, Richard Le Breton, Archbishop of Coventry, and Robert of Inglesham, Archdeacon of Gloucester, who were assisted by two clerks.⁴ Their work was to collect and realise the maximum financial benefit for the Crown. This clearly was not an easy task and by 1201 there were still about £12,000 worth of debts outstanding.⁵ As an encouragement to debtors, Henry II allowed interest on debts to cease running on Aaron's

death. Yet even this moratorium did not help the officials to collect them.⁶ The administration of Aaron's estate and particularly the realisation of Aaron's bonds presented many problems. Not all were owed to him in his own name, some represented very complicated transactions, and it was not always certain that the loans had not already been repaid. In order to organise collection, the bonds were classified and entered on special individual rolls.⁷ All of Aaron's debtors were summoned to account with the King at different centres such as Nottingham, Northampton and Oxford. The officials were tenacious in pursuit of the King's rights and did not despair when faced with what amounted to hundreds of bad debtors. They tried many ploys to collect this windfall. Ultimately they even discounted the debts and tried to turn them into cash. Some debtors, like the Abbot of Peterborough, settled there and then, and paid £100, much less than he owed, to redeem his debts. Given the nature and spread of Aaron's business it is not surprising that the realising of his estate was a protracted and unsuccessful process.⁸

By 1192 the officials had almost given up and the residue of outstanding debts was transferred back to the ordinary machinery of the King's main Exchequer. Now it was a question of getting what they could for the debts. Benedict, the son of Isaac, who had discounted bonds with Aaron during his lifetime, bought some of Aaron's bonds from the Exchequer. Finally, 22 years after Aaron's death, in 1208, his son Elias agreed to pay a lump sum of £133 6s 8d for bonds worth £400, which were neither the worst nor the best debts from Aaron's estate. Elias also paid to have a special licence to secure payment on the charters that he claimed were of very little value to the King. He eventually paid a further sum of £133 6s 8d to obtain possession of 40 other charters of a slightly higher value.⁹

The dealings of the House of Aaron show a very varied portfolio of credit and investment. First and foremost he lent money to the King, whose repayments from the revenue of various counties are detailed in the records. In the early 1160s, Aaron had been responsible for advancing one-fiftieth of the annual royal revenue. By the late 1170s, Aaron and other Jews were lending large sums to the Crown in consortia.¹⁰ By 1179, the

concept of the Crown borrowing from its Jews seems to have changed. The King modified his finances and now simply took what he required in the form of taxes from his Jews.¹¹ In response to this, Aaron diversified his business.

Aaron was also a property developer. At least some business associations between Jews and Christians flourished on a local level and it was not just those who desperately needed finance who turned to Aaron but those who needed finance for capital investment. Aaron had property of his own in London, in the Gloucester Soke near Lothbury. This site (three plots of land near the present Mansion House) was an area of vacant land that lay between it and the Walbrook. A consortium of his neighbours approached him for a loan to develop the area. Gervase of Cornhill, his son Henry and three brothers, Alan, Gervase and Jascelyn, the sons of Peter Fitz Alan, joined the venture. Each group had a half interest in the property and borrowed money from Aaron on that security. On Aaron's death, Henry of Cornhill seems still to have owed £100 and the three brothers £50.¹² This was not a case of needy landowners borrowing improvidently from a moneylender, for Gervase of Cornhill was a wealthy man and a moneylender himself. It was a business deal financed, at least in part, by Aaron himself.

It is not clear why Aaron chose Lincoln as his base but he probably first went there in the 1150s. Certainly the town made an ideal centre. It stood almost 200 feet above the surrounding countryside and at the junction of roads – the successors to the Roman Ermine Street to London and the ancient Fosse Way from the West Country. It was also well served by waterways; the Cardyke ran from the River Witham to the River Nene at Peterborough and the navigable waterway, the Fossdyke, was re-opened in 1121, which united Brayford Pool at Lincoln with the River Trent at Torksey, making Lincoln a port.¹³ Remigius of Fécamp's Minster burnt down in 1141 and was immediately rebuilt by Bishop Alexander. Lincoln was also a fortress – by the late twelfth century the Lucy Tower had been built to replace the simple Norman motte and bailey.¹⁴ It was a bustling mercantile centre whose fortunes were in the ascendancy and was only

slightly less prominent than London and York. The wool trade, upon which Lincoln's fortunes were built, had begun to develop by the mid-twelfth century. The guild of weavers was formed in 1130. By the end of the twelfth century, the wool of Lindsey enjoyed a high reputation as far afield as Italy.¹⁵ Lincoln made an ideal place to settle and to make profitable loans. Aaron saw this potential and decided to leave London to others and to strike out on his own in what William of Malmesbury described as 'One of the most populous cities of England and a market place of men who came by land and sea.'¹⁶

Although he had a large house in London, Aaron clearly considered Lincoln to be of such importance that he obtained several houses worth £3 in the Bail. His brother, Senior, joined him in Lincoln and held land worth 10s per annum in the parish of St Michael, which had a much more modest house than that of his brother.¹⁷ Many other Jews, who acted as Aaron's agents throughout the country, also came to Lincoln during this period to seek their fortune. Aaron's presence in Lincoln had a large effect on the local Jewish community as well as on his Christian customers. As Lincoln became a centre of finance and Aaron's business flourished, it must have attracted barons, clergymen, merchants, farmers, townspeople, as well as poor Christians who came in search of financial aid.

Once established in Lincoln, Aaron quickly found new local creditors. The list of his debtors gives a striking picture of his relationship with local merchants and churchmen. William son of Fulk, founder of a chantry in the cathedral, owed £63 1s 4d, secured on his mill at Washingborough, his stalls at Stow and his lands in the parish of St Peter Stanhaket. Thomas son of Godwin owed £7 by deed on his land and house in Lincoln and a further £26 on his land in the churchyard of St Peter Stanhaket; a third bond was also secured on his land in Parcheminstreet. Ralf son of Fulk owed £7 9s 6d by deed and £13 on his house in Hungate by another deed. Robert the Constable owed £1 6s 8d as pledge for his brother William. Osbert le Long of Butwerk owed £9 4s by pledge of Brian son of Askill. James Fleming, the brother-in-law of the first mayor of Lincoln, owed £16 13s 4d. John son of August owed £13 6s 8d on land and houses in the high

market. Warin, the draper, owed £3 3s by pledge of Godwin the rich and Gamel, Warin's brother. Elwin Net, several times bailiff of Lincoln, owed £19 6s 8d by pledge of Gilbert his brother and Robert Cause. Reinbold son of Ralf owed £2 10s 6d on his lands in Bakestergate. Outi, the clerk of Eastgate, owed 10s secured on his house and orchard in the parish of Holy Trinity. The sacrist of the cathedral and five of the canons were also indebted to Aaron. Many Lincoln folk knew their way to his house in the Bail and Aaron gained an excellent knowledge of the commercial life of Lincoln.¹⁸

His lending went much further than the confines of the city. The dealings in Lincoln were far outstripped by his dealings with local monasteries. Between 1140 and 1152, Aaron made massive loans totalling well over £4,374 13s 4d to the abbeys of Rievaulx, New Minster, Kirkstead, Louth Park, Revesby, Rufford, Kirkstall, Roche and Biddlesden. All of these Cistercian abbeys were fairly new twelfth-century foundations. The abbeys used the advances for building and establishing themselves but the loans they contracted were so large that they had difficulty paying them off. Even after Aaron's death they were still heavily in debt. It was not until 1189 that Richard I granted them a charter which exonerated the nine abbeys from their debts.¹⁹ Aaron also made that to other major clerical establishments. He accepted the Lincoln Minster plate as a pledge for a loan made to Bishop Chesney. The loan was later redeemed in 1173 for £300 by Geoffrey, the son of Henry II, who was horrified that such valuable Christian religious objects should have been in 'hock' to a Jew.²⁰ Aaron also lent further afield than the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire hinterlands. The chronicler of St Albans states that when Abbot Simon died he left his abbey in debt for more than £400 to the Jews, besides other debts of £133 6s 8d and more:

Whereupon Aaron the Jew who held us in his debt coming to the house of St Alban in great pride and boasting, with threats kept on boasting that it was he who made the window for our St Alban, and that he had prepared for the saint a home when he was without one.²¹

Aaron also helped the Church on a smaller scale. It is commonly held that the villages of Selston and Normanton in Nottinghamshire possess parish churches that were founded with the help of Aaron's money.²²

In establishing his financial empire, Aaron used many employees. He had a network of agents to manage the far-flung geographical spread of his dealings. While Aaron found partners among his direct family – his brothers, Senior and Benedict, and his sons, Elias, Abraham and Vives – he also used agents who were not bound by familial ties. A Hebrew deed of 1183 shows that two Jews of Warwick, Peitivin and Leo, acted as attorneys on Aaron's behalf. Another document shows Deudone fil Aaron acting as an attorney. A third shows that a Jew came all the way from Paris to collect money at York which was due to his master, Aaron of Lincoln.²³

Aaron was also involved in lending money to members of the Jewish communities. Among 80 debtors from York in 1192, a quarter were Jews. Josce of York, another wealthy man of business, owed Aaron's estate £80 for a silver vessel which he had bought from him. In addition, Aaron also sold property to Jews. At Southampton, two Jews owed the King for their houses which they had bought from Aaron.²⁴

Aaron's debtors included William the Lion, King of Scotland, the Earls of Northampton, Leicester, Arundel, Aumale and Chester, the Abbot of Westminster and the Prior of the Hospitallers, the Bishops of Lincoln and Bangor, the Archdeacons of Colchester and Carlisle, the towns of Winchester and Southampton and the Sheriff of Norfolk. Even Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, owed him £66 13s 4d, which was secured on lands in Kent.²⁵ This list of Aaron's debtors clearly proves that a successful Jewish businessman or his agents had to be well travelled, well informed and well aware of the different types of securities offered for each loan, as well as able to deal with a wide spectrum of different Christian clientele. For business reasons, if no other, by the late twelfth century Aaron and other Jews had dispersed themselves throughout the land and were becoming familiar with national, urban and rural clients through their businesses.

Aaron also dealt in chattels. Roger de Estreby, a Lincolnshire knight, illegally pawned his coat of mail to Aaron. The impoverished knight's

conscience got the better of him. Concerned by his debts, Estreby had a vision that his coat had been miraculously returned to him. He found it at the foot of his bed. Voices told him to go to London to Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ranulph Glanville, the Justiciar, and order them, on behalf of God, to cross the Straits to King Henry and to tell him to fulfil seven Holy Commandments that God had revealed to Roger, and to go on Crusade. The officials, one of them himself indebted to Aaron, ignored Roger de Estreby's revelations and complaints. Estreby thus took it upon himself to cross the Channel and to seek out the King. When they met, the King duly promised to carry out the seven commandments. The commandments included injunctions such as not to condemn anyone to death without a trial but ended with an explicit command to expel the Jews from England. According to Estreby, the Jews should be allowed to keep their money and to take their families into exile but they were not to be allowed to have their pledges or their charters. It is ironical that Estreby's vision was a premonition of what was to happen to the Jewish communities over a century later.²⁶

Aaron's obituary appeared on the Pipe Roll of 1190, under the Surrey Forest Pleas, which noted that he owed £36, and under entries for London and Middlesex, which showed that he owed £333 6s 8d for a fine but added that 'he is dead, and the King has his goods.'²⁷ His death must have been a severe blow to the Jewish community. The confiscation of his estate by Henry II must have also been a severe blow to his debtors. Yet the King was also to suffer a financial blow of his own. In early 1187, Henry II, who was in France, urgently required money. The only immediate cash that could be raised was that from Aaron of Lincoln's goods. All of Aaron's treasure and belongings were transported to London and thence to Shoreham for shipment across the Channel. En route a storm caused the ship carrying the treasure to sink between Shoreham and Dieppe, a loss later described by Richard Fitz Nigel, an Exchequer official, as a 'grave misfortune.'²⁸ Aaron's death was also a misfortune for the Jewish community at large. Not only did the King now start to record the debts but he also started to collect them for himself. It might well be that it was the attempts of the

members of the Exchequer of Aaron to collect and realise debts that led to some of the resentment and the fear that caused the massacres of *Shabat ha Gadol* of 1189–90.

The stimulus for the foundation of the Jewish Exchequer came from the attempts to realise Aaron of Lincoln's fortunes for the Crown and the nationwide massacres of the Jewries in 1190. By 1194 the *archa* system had been founded and legislation passed that meant that all transactions between Jew and Christian were to be written down and to be kept in a series of arks or chests. These were to be guarded and accessed by two Jewish and two Christian chirographers. What was actually kept in the chests comprised many different types of transaction that regularly evolved as a result of changing government policy over the century that the *archa* system was in place.²⁹

Such transactions were the legacy of Aaron and Jews like him. In a way they can be seen as the top plutocratic end of Jewish society.³⁰ Aaron himself appears not only as a cameo in *Ivanhoe* but also featured in the *Sunday Times* 'Richest in History' supplement as if he were still an influence on modern-day society.³¹ His career and transactions give a good idea of what methods were available to both lender and creditor and exactly what would subsequently be kept in the *archae* of England. The House of Aaron set the mould for Jewish moneylending and provision of credit in medieval England. His financial acumen was to provide a pattern that had profound effects on medieval society from King to peasant. The Jewish Exchequer led to even more control of Jewish financial affairs. The detail of its record keeping is unparalleled in Europe. There were many different methods of lending that were used by Jewish financiers. Often as not such agreements and memoranda were referred to collectively as *instrumenta*. They represented a large amount of administration and record keeping, all of which was eventually put into the *archa* or archive. Such *instrumenta* included the tally which recorded both payment and debt, the written agreement, the promissory contract and the fee debt or annuity. This buoyant market in credit also led to what we might recognise as the concept of a transferable bond. It certainly led to the provision of

credit methods for Christian merchants in the form of a contract – the recognisance.³²

Jewish lending promoted the theory of ‘interest’ or *inter est* – ‘that which is between.’³³ It was from this that the concept of risk and ultimately the concept of futures and derivatives were developed. Such was the sophistication and range of methods that were used by Jewish lenders that it is difficult to maintain any notion that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were once described as ‘barter economies.’ Indeed the Jews were almost ahead of their time in providing the wherewithal for credit to drive an economy forward.

Some of the earliest references to Jewish settlement and investment relate to the purchase of houses. Bricks and mortar, wattle and daub, ready-built roofs over heads have always been valuable commodities. In many of the towns that Jews inhabited some trace of where they lived has been left behind. The traditional idea that Jews had stone houses whereas Christians could not afford stone does have some basis. Moyses Hall in Bury St Edmunds, Jurnet’s House in Norwich, Aaron’s house in Lincoln, Belasset’s house on Steep Hill in Lincoln, Jacob the Old’s house in Canterbury and Benedict of Southampton’s house, ‘Runceval’, are all clear reminders that some Jews’ houses must have mirrored the plutocratic palazzos of Renaissance Italy.³⁴ Some Jews, such as Benedict of York, who lived in Spen Lane, were also able to maintain a presence in the ‘chic’ areas of town.³⁵ Many other medieval Jews lived in domiciles which were centred on the main mercantile areas of the town. Those who were not so wealthy lived in suburbs or even on manors away from the urban centres. It has been suggested that the Jews in Oxford even moved into a revitalised part of the old town that had been dying away.³⁶

Other Jews followed the lead of Aaron of Lincoln and invested in what today would be known as ‘buy-to-let properties.’ In 1290, Elias had a shop in Colchester market that was worth 6s, for which Elias paid Elyas Daniel 3s a year and which he had let to Robert de Elmham, a merchant, for 12 years. Similarly in York, Sarah the widow of Josce and Benedict her son had a tenement worth £3 6s 8d, for which they paid the King 2d a year

house tax and to Lawrence de Bonthun 2s a year. They had let the tenement to Agnes la Gra for ten years.³⁷

Investment in property and utilising the rental market naturally led Jews to use the currency and the customs of the land they had adopted. The Jew who was involved in commerce soon picked up contemporary practice. They, like Christians, used the simple tally for both receipt of payment and the recording of debt.³⁸ Many 'Jewish tallies' survive. The evolution of the tally is just as lost in time as the question of pre-Conquest Jewish presence in England. The tally that was so widely adopted and used in Britain had evolved just before the late eleventh century.³⁹ It was a simplistic method for recording the payment of a debt. A piece of wood was marked up by making notches to represent the cash amounts, which after being split could be brought together to match up. This method of notching or 'nicking' provided an easy and convenient method for recording monetary sums.⁴⁰ The tally was written on and then cut into two, producing a stock and a counterstock or counterfoil. These stocks could be exchanged for money or could be used as proof of receipt – an early form of stock exchange.

Both Christian and Jewish men of affairs were responsible for the development of what we might recognise as both the (now disappearing) cheque and the bond. Where more complicated arrangements needed to be recorded there was growing recourse to parchment. Yet the model was the same. Chirographs, or bonds as they became known, were virtually a paper copy of their tally counterparts. Two or three copies of a deed were separated by indentures that cut through a whole word. Therefore, all three parts, as well as the teeth or indents, then fitted together in a jigsaw-puzzle-like precision to ensure the integrity of the deed. Such agreements were either bipartite or tripartite. The *capitula* and *pes* – the head and the foot in the case of a bipartite *instrumentum* – were divided, with one part being retained by the creditor and the other by the debtor. The third part of a tripartite bond was kept in a safe place to prevent the loss or later denial of the transaction. It was a major step forward in the development of the scribe or scrivener in England. It almost became an

obsession to write down charters, transactions and testaments of different kinds. Into this explosion of the written record came the credit-providing Jews. Each of their transactions now became a legally recorded agreement by all parties, which could be proven in court.⁴¹

Clearly arrangements needed to be made in case the debt was not repaid on time. Such arrangements had to allow for the loss that the creditor might sustain if the debtor was unable to clear his loan. This led to the provision of a recompense for that which was in between or *inter-est*. Payments of this kind were of two basic types: *damnum emergens* and *lucrum cessans*. In the case of *damnum emergens*, interest was charged on the understanding that the loss was actually sustained by the creditor by the debtor's default. *Lucrum cessans* meant that interest could be charged when the loan had failed to be repaid.⁴² It is no surprise that the derogatory term 'filthy lucre' emerged out of this wide acceptance of such arrangements. Yet in real terms *lucrum* was the legal device of a penalty or fine for non-payment at an appointed time in order to encourage the fulfilment of contractual agreement.⁴³ The penalty did not necessarily go to either of the two parties involved in the agreement; it could be payable to an altar, a shrine, an abbot, the King or a guild.⁴⁴ It could also, however, be used to cover the usurious element of moneylending.

The actual arrangements between Jewish creditor and Christian debtor can be categorised into three different types: the 'simple bond', which recorded that 'Reginald' would pay 'Aaron' a specified sum of money on a certain date and also recorded the date the agreement was made; the 'conditional bond', which recognised that 'Reginald' would pay 'Aaron' a certain sum of money or goods (or a mixture of the two), or whatever 'Aaron' desired at the time of payment – the payment was to be made either by fixed instalments or all of it on a certain date; and the 'penal bond', which recorded that 'Reginald' would pay 'Aaron' a certain sum on a specified date and that if he did not he would pay *lucrum* on the money at a specified agreed rate until the bond had been paid off.⁴⁵ In most cases the bonds themselves rarely contained the amount or quantity of what the creditor actually lent to the debtor. Indeed, out of the details of over a thousand

transactions that survive from the dissolution of the Jewries, there is only one, made in Canterbury, which gives any indication of what was lent out.⁴⁶ Usury avoidance was always paramount in the dealings of any credit agents. A charge of usury could after all lead to death and confiscation or both.

Parchment was also used to record receipt. This led to Jewish creditors developing their own kind of receipts or quitclaims, which would act as proof of final payment. The Jewish financiers also used their own methods, which had been used for many hundreds of years before their arrival in Britain. Such contracts were based on Hebrew tradition and even phrases of the original Hebrew were later lifted and translated into Latin copies of the transaction. Such a deed, sometimes in both Hebrew and Latin, was known as a *starrum* or *starr*. On the payment date of a loan, the Christian debtor, with his bonds, normally went to the place where the record of the transaction was kept and paid the debt. If the debt was settled in full the second copy of the transaction was returned. What was now required was an official statement from the Jewish creditor that the loan had actually been redeemed and any other claim had ended. If the debtor wished to be sure of his debt being well and truly cancelled, he would press the Jew for a *starrum* or quitclaim (an official receipt) in Hebrew for the debt. This would more than likely be drawn up by a chirographer for a small fee or even in some cases written by the Jew himself. It became quite common for *starrs* to be issued and even rerecorded on the Plea Roll of the Jewish Exchequer. Some *starrs* or copies were kept by the Jewish community in their synagogues.⁴⁷

From early times, Jewish lenders began to use their own styles of transactions, which in turn had influence on other transactions in the contemporary financial markets. Pollock and Maitland were among the first to point out that what they called the 'Jewish gage' was a completely novel institution in England, in that it gave rights to a creditor who was not in possession of the land.⁴⁸ It was introduced by the Jews and patterned by them after devices such as the Talmudic *odaita*, which they had used for many centuries prior to their settlement in England.⁴⁹ This type of instrument can only be understood by reference to Hebrew Law.

This ancient device, which was the precursor to what has been called the 'Anglo-Jewish gage', was not a mortgage as we would recognise it today but was more simply a pledge or promise of specific property as security for the payment of a debt. It was a general agreement in favour of the creditor upon all the real property owned by the debtor at the time the debt was incurred. By virtue of this the creditor could pursue their claim on the property into the hands of a transferee, who had acquired the property after the lien had attached to it. The right to claim the real estate was strengthened by the fact that the deed was signed at the instance of the debtor by two witnesses and accompanied by sufficient publicity and by judgements of a court. Most transactions of this type were also accompanied by a stipulation that the debtor bound his property for the payment of the bond, under Jewish Law this was taken as written, if it was not actually noted at the time (in the language of the Talmud the omission is presumed to be the error of the scrivener). Under Jewish Law the creditor was limited and could not follow the debtor's property into the hands of a transferee if the debtor had free assets to satisfy the debt in full. This limitation distinguished this lien from a proper mortgage.⁵⁰

Originally, the creditor could only claim on the debtor's immovable property. At a later period, special provisions were included in the agreement or *shtar* to cover the debtor's movable property. Medieval theory on what was allowable financially was always driven by trying to avoid the stigma of usury and to at all times maintain an acceptable façade. Such contrivances became necessary for everyday commerce and some of the earliest methods of lending on security such as the simple loan were, ironically, carried out by the monasteries in the twelfth century.⁵¹ The creditor simply enjoyed the use of something tangible – a horse, a carpet, a suit of armour – until the loan had been repaid.

Naturally, as it is today, land was the easiest commodity to use as security. The Jewish gage, which was limited, became not only transferable but also changed into the more recognisable mortgage of today. Although the Jews were versed in the ideas and theories of their own gage, it became common practice to accept the more severe Gentile interpretation, which

had been used by monasteries and other institutions to expedite their affairs. Because of this the *mort gage* and the *vif gage* developed. The *mort gage* was a contract where the creditor obtained the possession of the land and any profits he could make from it other than the rents, until the debt was paid off by the debtor. The *vif gage* was when the land was officially made the creditor's possession but the rents and profits of it were allowed to the debtor and could be used to pay off his debts.⁵²

By the mid-thirteenth century indebtedness had led to the development of the fee debt or annuity. Examples of such arrangements appear on a roll of debts dating from 1262 and perhaps serve to illustrate what lengths a debtor might go to to obtain credit in the short term. On the roll there are several records of annual payments to be made. Most of these date from 1258–61 and show that payments as large as £20 or as little as 4s were to be paid to creditors 'until the end of the world'.⁵³ Thus these perpetual payments show a different, far more binding agreement than had previously been the case. Such arrangements were brought to an end when, in 1269, the Provisions of the Jewry outlawed and acquitted 'all debts to Jews which are fees'.⁵⁴ However, records of other payments that were in perpetuity can be found elsewhere. For instance, there were two such arrangements still in the Lincoln *archa* in 1290 when it was finally closed to business and brought into Westminster. Both were undated and owed by Richard Foliot, a Yorkshire knight, to Hagin fil Magister Benedict of London. In the first, Richard owed Hagin a flying hawk annually during his lifetime and on Richard's death a final payment of £50 on the anniversary of his decease to his heirs. In thirteenth-century Lincolnshire, hawks and falcons were almost a currency and in some parts of the world they still have an intrinsic value today.⁵⁵ In the second agreement, Richard owed Hagin a beast of the chase (doe or buck) every year and on his death a payment of £66 13s 4d to Hagin's heirs.⁵⁶ The provision of a beast of the chase every year may just have been an agreement for Hagin to hunt on Richard's estate. Hunting was a pastime in which some Jews took part.⁵⁷

Just as many of the transactions of Jewish financiers give little hint to what exactly was advanced, so too there are relatively few indicators

of what, if any, was the standard rate of interest. The common view held by most historians is that the 'Jewish interest rate' was a flat rate of 43.3 per cent per annum. For example, the Lombards in Bruges, in 1306, were supposedly allowed by law to lend and charge weekly interest of 2d in the £1.⁵⁸ This figure has its attractions for reasons that will be explained below, but it does not really represent either the 'Jewish rate of interest' or 'profit margin'. It is merely the rate charged as a penalty or for *lucrum* for non-payment of a debt. The actual charge for the loan was probably concealed in the sum lent to and owed by the debtor. In the early thirteenth century, the Crown could fix rates almost at will and 2d or 3d in the pound per week was an accepted measure in England.

Several extant bonds from the reign of Henry III made in different parts of the country reveal a little more detailed information than many of their counterparts, from which some impressions of the real profit margin from loans can be gained. In 1226, Alan de Senior of Norwich owed Isaac fil Jurnet £9 6s 8d and was to give as interest thereof £1 every year. The interest was to be paid by instalments of 10s at Easter and 10s on 29 September. If the instalments were not paid, there was to be a penalty of 2d in the £1 per week. Thus for a loan of £9 6s 8d, Alan was to repay the principal, pay £5 and risk penalty interest of 2d in the £1 per week if he defaulted. The actual profit on the loan can therefore be seen, irrespective of penalty interest, to be of the order of 10 per cent per annum. In another transaction, the profit was higher. On 24 December 1226, John fil Robert of Depham owed Samuel fil Isaac £4 13s 4d and agreed that by 2 February 1227 he would have paid him a first annual instalment of £1 6s 8d, the first of a series of repayments which were to last for 15 years. After that date, John of Depham was to pay annually 8s 11d on 15 August, 8s 11d on 1 November, 8s 10d on 2 February, and finally, on 29 September, two loads of wheat. The three annual cash payments during this period added up to £1 6s 8d, and the wheat was extra. Thus, the annual interest rate in this case seems to have been approximately 25 per cent. Another bond shows a still higher profit margin. On 26 May 1227, Andrew Wascelin acknowledged that he owed Aaron fil Jacob £2. He was to repay it according to

the following terms: £1 on 25 March 1228 and £1 on 29 August 1228, and finally, to secure the withdrawal of the chirograph from the chest, a further £3. If Wascelin was to clear his debt of £2 in one year, the profit margin for Aaron fil Jacob would have been 150 per cent.⁵⁹

Indications of other rates of interest and profit margins can be found in the complaints of debtors. In 1220 at Northampton, Robert Fitz Henry, a clerk, complained to the Justices of the Jews that David of Northampton, unlawfully and against the assize, lent him on gage £1 for 10d a week interest, a rate of approximately 216 per cent per annum. In the same entry Cok of Northampton had a loan of £6 from mid-Lent to Pentecost and from Pentecost to Michaelmas, for which he demanded £11 13s 4d for his repayment. If the loan was not using compound interest, then it would appear that for £6 the total repayment of £11 13s 4d could only be arrived at by charging a rate of almost 8d per £1 a week, approximately 167 per cent per annum.⁶⁰ Another type of transaction is represented by a debt made by Emma de Beaufou in 1236. In return for £160 she promised to pay £6 13s 4d a year for the rest of her life. This, according to Cecil Roth, represented 'a yearly interest rate of 4.16 per cent.'⁶¹ A bond made in Hereford, in 1244, reveals the amounts that John de Balun, lord of the manor of Much Markle, had to repay for a loan from Moses fil Hamo. In this case it indicates that he was to pay an interest rate of 17 per cent per annum.⁶² Clearly all transactions show different interest rates and profit margins and different agreements between creditor and debtor. It is not possible to estimate a standard rate of interest or profit charged by the Jews. In general all the surviving bonds remain silent concerning the interest they contain. This makes it even more likely that debtors would look for the best deal that they could find.

Inter-Jewish loans tend to contain more information. Again such agreements are clearly not representative of the total interest attached to the original loan.⁶³ In a transaction made between Jacob fil Elias and his brother-in-law Moses in 1251, Jacob promised to pay Moses £2 13s 4d. As security, Jacob's sister Hannah held a bond that was owed to her and Jacob by Robert Bataile, from which Jacob promised to pay Moses the sum of

£2 13s 4d. As further security for the loan Jacob deposited a bond for £4 owed to him by Robert de Elmswell with the Rabbi, Jacob Gabbay. In order that Moses might be able to obtain interest on his loan of £2 13s 4d, it was passed through the hands of a Gentile (to avoid the stigma of usury). The actual amount of interest that should accrue was agreed to be at 4d in the £1 a week, approximately 86 per cent per annum.⁶⁴ Another inter-Jewish transaction gives some indication of a lender's expected profit margin. The Lincoln *ketubbah*, or betrothal contract, of 1271, gives details of a loan. In February 1271, Belassez undertook to marry her daughter Judith to Aaron fil Benjamin. A *ketubbah*, which has survived, was duly drawn up, and, as a dowry, Belassez promised to give the bride and groom a Hebrew Bible and £13 6s 8d in money. Benjamin, the father of the groom, was to administer the money and promised to lend it out at interest to Gentiles. On the day of the marriage, in February 1275, he was to return £20 to the bride and groom or more if it had accumulated from the original £13 6s 8d. Thus, in a space of four years Benjamin expected to turn £13 6s 8d into £20 or more – an interest rate of 12.5 per cent per annum.⁶⁵

There were other ways of obtaining instant advances that were perhaps not so regulated or scrutinised. Never has the attitude of both Church and medieval governments been more equivocal and more of a paradox than when it came face to face with pawnbroking.⁶⁶ Throughout history it has been a commonly held assumption that pawnbroking was aimed at the lower level of society but it is clear even from Aaron of Lincoln's advance on the plate of Lincoln Minster that pawnbroking involved all kinds of society. The Church might condemn any form of interest on consumer loans but the consumer was still in need of an advance from somewhere. It was not until the Church itself created a system that would advance such monies (and indeed charged interest) that any help was given to those in search of an immediate loan that was secured on chattels. Robert Grosseteste set up a loan chest at St Frideswide's, Oxford, to try and establish an alternative form of credit by setting up student loans. Similarly in Cambridge, the Hospital of St John the Evangelist provided short-term loans for townsmen and villagers.⁶⁷

The connection of poverty and pawnbroking is an ancient one and one which has left few records. Naturally, once a pawn has been claimed by the broker it became a matter of simple commercial trade to realise the asset, which may well have been obtained at a knock-down price. It is virtually impossible to quantify the degree to which Jews traded but it does seem that Jewish involvement in commerce might have been 'underplayed'. Jewish pawnbroking has remained relatively unexplored because of the lack of recorded evidence and because of the tendency to consider moneylending as the main Jewish occupation.⁶⁸

Unlike moneylending, which was heavily policed and systematised, the records of the pawnbroker were never under such scrutiny. There are in the records many arguments over wrongful detention of a pawn or an exorbitant charge to redeem a pawn. It is only when pawnbrokers' goods and stock were subject to confiscation that the world of the pawnbroker was illuminated. Such confiscations happened during the coin-clipping allegations and hangings of 1279, which will be examined below. The sale of goods confiscated from Jews clearly gives some idea of what must have been a fairly thriving pawnbroking business.⁶⁹ At face value these might have just been an opportunity for the government to cash in on former Jewish private possessions but the sheer volume of them must raise questions. The officials in charge of such confiscations were meticulous. In 1279 one account reveals details of Hugh of Kendal's sale of confiscated goods that had been taken from Jews who had been hanged. It shows that Jacob of Bedford owed £2 13s 4d for buying back some Jewish books. The Jewish community at Lincoln paid £9 for buying back what might have been Talmuds. Peter, a clerk of Stamford, owed £6 13s 4d for buying what was referred to as *pluma* of condemned Jews – possibly their feathered bedding. All of these items may have been the personal possessions of the Jews from whom they were confiscated, but the most frequently mentioned items on Kendal's roll are money, gold and silver rings and brooches, silver spoons and cups, as well as clothing and kitchenware, which are recorded in such abundance that they are certainly not personal possessions and must have clearly been goods collected in relation to some sort of commercial

activity.⁷⁰ John Le Falconer's accounts reveal silver salt-cellars, towels and table napkins, two horses, a cow and various amounts of grain, wool, salt and cloth. They include a payment for what might well have been Jewish prayer shawls and also feature a large amount of jewellery. Philip of Willoughby's account mentions the sale of similar items and includes the sale of Jewish houses and shops. William Gerberd's account, while not so explicit, makes references to various pledges taken from Christians, as well as cash found in the houses of the Jews of Exeter, Jewish chattels and the normal collection of brooches, silver spoons, salt-cellars and girdles barred with silver, making it perhaps the best evidence for such goods being in the hands of Jews as a result of the practice of pawnbroking.⁷¹

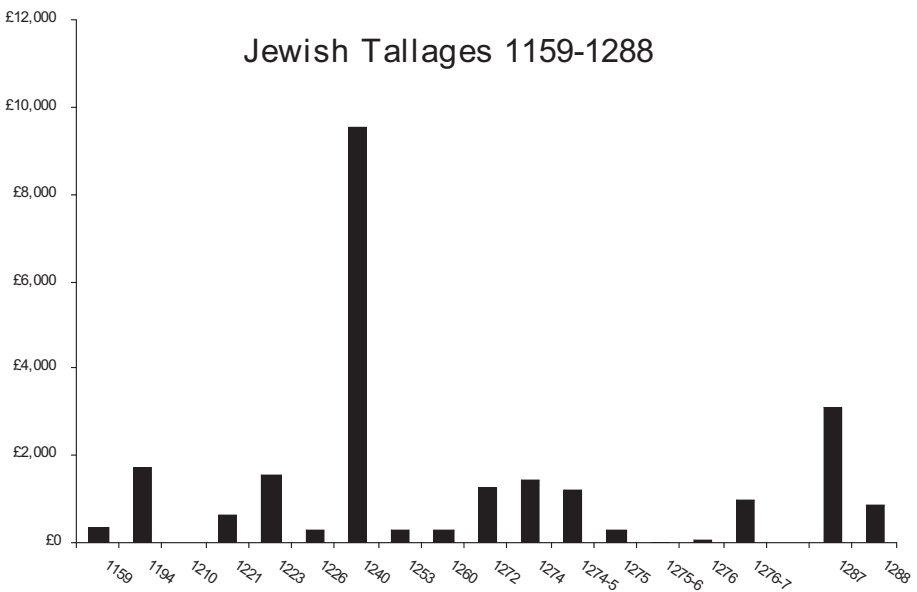
A later source from 1285, which is a continuation of the confiscations made by John Le Falconer in 1278–9, contains much fuller lists of Jewish chattels taken in the West Country. It names 26 Jews who had chattels worth a face value of just over £900. It shows that Benedict of Winchester had some 99 gold rings, 165 silver spoons, 13 silver rings, 23 silk girdles, 24 stones called 'peridot' and 105 garnet stones, as well as one silver cup, which is described as being in pledge to him. Henna de Perine had among her possessions 66 silver spoons, 73 silver brooches, 19 silver rings and eight silk girdles. A certain Abraham had one ounce of pearls. Solomon of Chippenham had 48 brooches and 54 books written in Latin. Mendaunt of Bristol had 68 spoons and 94 silver brooches, as well as one book of old decretals, four coats of mail, two corselets of iron, four pairs of iron chain-mail leggings, one neck piece, two iron helmets, one gorget, one suit of iron armour, two silk cushions and one Rheims carpet, which had evidently been pledged to him. Moses of Winchester had cloths, carpets and bronze pots worth £2 11s 3d. Hak Le Prestre had a crimson robe, a blue robe, a robe of threefold camlet with a mantle, five hoods, five napkins, 30 girdles of silk, one cup called 'cavele', one knife, one book described as 'the little volume' and a Bible. Among the possessions of other Jews many wooden bowls and mazers are also listed.

Such possessions were luxury goods. Naturally, a pawnbroker will only offer money on the security of a valuable item. These goods were not all

for personal use and some, given the pledges mentioned, would appear to be the 'stock' that a pawnbroker naturally accumulates with time. It seems unlikely that Benedict of Winchester would need 99 gold rings. Hak Le Prestre would not have worn 30 silken girdles at once. Mendaunt of Bristol would, in fact, have been breaking the law if he had appeared wearing any item from the four coats of mail, two corselets of iron and the four pairs of iron chain-mail leggings and the other military equipment that were in his possession.⁷² It does seem, as Vivian Lipman showed by his interpretation of such evidence, that:

My own picture of the proletarian Anglo-Jew of the Middle Ages is of one scraping a living by occasionally negotiating a loan, taking articles on pledge, and then furnishing them up and hawking a miscellaneous collection of unredeemed pledges.⁷³

There is evidence of some Jewish lenders becoming involved in what might be termed 'futures'. Some Jews, including Aaron of Lincoln, had already practised advancing money in return for commodities. However, in 1275, under the Statute of the Jewry, Jews were encouraged to act like 'legal



merchants' and some were able to advance money on wool and cereal. The evidence shows a burgeoning of commodity bonds, in some cases even alongside pure monetary transactions. Some historians interpret these transactions as false or 'fictitious' bonds or simply 'camouflaged usury' and point to the fact that such transactions were the main reason why the Jews were expelled in 1290. Yet there is good evidence, from what has been dubbed 'The Edwardian Experiment', that at least some transactions were perfectly genuine legal transactions or 'sale credits' and that some Jews had complied with the Statute and had tried to become 'legal merchants'.⁷⁴

Naturally both the profit from and the provision of credit by Jewish lenders prompted the government to take its own cut of the profit. Beards, windows, bikes, gambling, sex, alcohol, and tobacco have always attracted a hardy revenue in taxes; whether the government in power approved or disapproved of the business. The Jews similarly also had to pay their way in silver. Much work has been done on exactly what the Jewish financiers of medieval England rendered unto Caesar. After examining records which have been described as 'dull and repetitious' as well as confusing, a glimpse of the royal revenue created by Jewish finance can be obtained.⁷⁵ From around the 1150s and increasingly into the thirteenth century, the Crown taxed or tallaged the Jews. It collected the taxes through local officials using Jewish as well as Christian assessors. Often the main burden of taxation fell on the richer Jews but this was not always the case. The most complete details of a single Jewish taxation survive for the 1240 tallage. For this financial imposition a so-called 'Jewish Parliament' was called, the tax agreed and Jewish representatives appointed to make the collection.⁷⁶

Work on the revenue generated by tallages is hampered by several factors that will never be satisfactorily resolved. First, there was a tendency by the chroniclers to exaggerate the taxes and the wealth of the Jewish population. Secondly, there is often a discrepancy between the quotas that successive governments laid down as the sum to be assessed and the sum that was actually collected. Thirdly, the arrears of one tallage ran into the declaration of another.⁷⁷ While tax avoidance was possible, the government had the advantage in the fact that, through the *archa* system and the

bureaucracy of the Exchequer of the Jews, the full value of each Jewish community and, in some cases, pretty full details of individual lenders were precisely known. For many financiers it was impossible to avoid being financially exploited. Some tried to avoid being made an assessor of the tallage and were even happy to try to gain tax exemptions by lump sums.⁷⁸

It is through these tallages that the Jews have been compared to being a 'Royal Milch Cow' or a 'financial sponge'.⁷⁹ One of the major results of taxing the Jews was the fact that it put pressure on them to call in their debts. There can be no doubt that the 1190 massacres were partially caused by the financial pressures of the preaching of a crusade. Similarly, it was such financial pressures, which will be discussed below, which led to the Civil War of 1215 and the clauses set down by the barons in Magna Carta.⁸⁰ Again, in the 1260s, the rebels were under financial pressure caused by debts, as were the King's Jewish subjects themselves.⁸¹ The correlation of anti-Jewish riots, massacres and protests can in part be measured by the pressure caused by the King pressing for Jewish tallages, which meant that Jews had to enforce or try to foreclose on their debtors. It has even been suggested that the final expulsion was a trade-off for levying a national tax.⁸²

The Jews made a major contribution to the expansion of the medieval economy. They provided a large variety of credit facilities and practised the provision of credit in ways which were to be imitated by Christians. Under Aaron of Lincoln, who was able to successfully develop many varied types of business transaction, business flourished. Later other Jews, although they were not able to build such large conglomerates, began to specialise in property investment, mortgages, annuities, moneylending, pawnbroking and even towards the end of the thirteenth century investment in futures in cereal and wool. From the late twelfth century, as a result of Aaron's financial empire, the Crown began to take more of an interest in the Jewish money markets. Kings soon realised that they did not just merely have to borrow from their Jewish subjects but that they could just as easily tax the Jews to supply some of their needs. As a result the kings of England not only tacitly condoned and, to an extent, controlled the Jews' lending but they used the Jewish community to bolster the royal coffers.

A community within a state

... they persisted through so many centuries of dispersion as a clearly recognizable community, bound together by an intense feeling of solidarity, somewhat aloof in its attitude to outsiders and jealously clinging to the taboos which had been designed for the very purpose of emphasizing and perpetuating its exclusiveness.

Thus Norman Cohn described the isolation of European Jewish communities throughout the centuries.¹ In many ways it is a testimony to the beliefs of the Jewish men and women who inhabited England during the period of the first Anglo-Jewish community that they did remain so true to their beliefs. Yet, as will be seen, there were many internal and external factors and injunctions that must have made even the most fainthearted of them first doubt then strengthen their beliefs. They were, as Barrie Dobson has described them, ‘a medieval subject-minority struggling to retain its cohesion and identity within a hostile unitary “state”’.² Internally, the Jewish community had its own embedded organisation and heritage as well as its religion and faith. Externally, it was the subject of rules and regulations as well as persecution and suspicion.

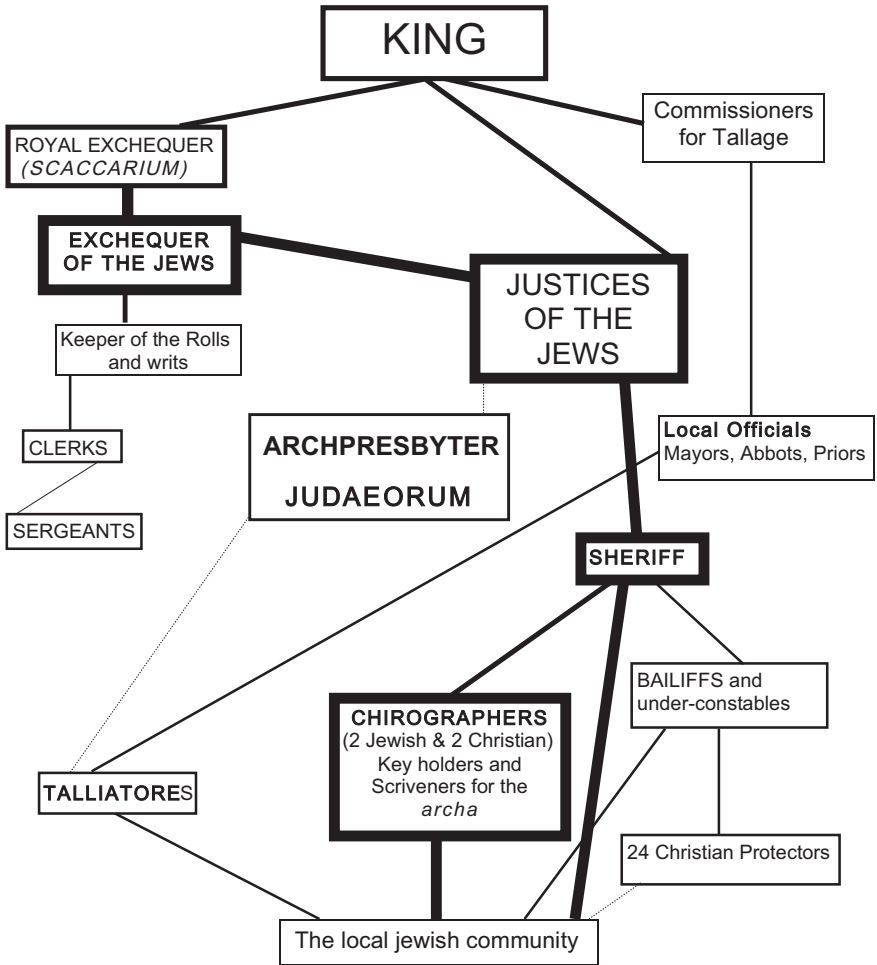
The medieval Anglo-Jewish community was a small, tightly knit collection of families with strong ties to their co-religionists on the Continent. Over the period of their presence, there can only have been seven or eight generations of Jews who could claim to have actually been born in England. For the vast majority of the host population there was probably little social intercourse or meetings with Jews at all. To this vast majority the Jews were merely a subject for margination. For some contemporary Gentiles, Jews were at the centre of accusations and stories and a subject

of scorn and hatred. Whatever estimates of population are adopted, the Jewish community in England was a small minority group probably numbering no more than 0.25 per cent of the total population.³ Yet they were controversial. They were the King's Jews and belonged to the ultimate secular overlord as mere servants of the Crown. This made them subject to different laws and regulations and immediately put them outside regular society. This unique status did not go unnoticed. The Jews were also a minority that could not stand up for themselves but were cocooned while, in effect, being the pawn in the lower end of a financial protection racket. Thus excoriated and accused while under the royal protection, the Jewish community could do little more than stick together as a homogeneous unit. They were a paradox anomaly that was pushed to the edges of society. They were also heavily dissuaded from any integration into society as a whole. It is little surprise that some chose to remain 'aloof'.

Their lives were controlled by the Exchequer of the Jews, a working department, housed in Westminster. It had its own royal seal, kept its own separate records in both Latin and Hebrew, and employed its very own justices, clerks and serjeants.⁴ It ruled in cases that were brought by Jews or against Jews. It was also responsible for all financial aspects of taxation and tallage and was controlled by two, sometimes three, salaried Justices. These royal officials were experts in administration and finance. They oversaw the administration of all Jewish affairs, heard cases, and passed judgements. Much of their work had to do with accounting and keeping records of loans made by Jewish creditors throughout the country. All of the upper echelons of Exchequer personnel were men in clerical orders and either King's clerks or holders of ecclesiastical benefices.⁵

The royal Justices of the Jews were aided by a Keeper of Rolls and writs, and assisted by several clerks and serjeants who were not appointed by the Crown. Thus the Jewish community was controlled by the King's own officials and any Christians they appointed. They were aided in their work by a member of the Jewish community who was also a royally appointed official. Over the period of Jewish presence such a position involved only a few Jews. The *presbyter omnium Judaeorum* or Archpresbyter, as he was

Royal Control of the Jewish Communities



known, had the same status as a Justice and was often a leading member of the wider Jewish community who usually held the office for life.⁶ It became an office that the Jewish community at large could sometimes fill by common election. The task of the Archpresbyter was to provide a link between Crown officials and the different Jewish communities. Indeed this position was amplified in contemporary records by affirming that the earliest known Archpresbyter, Jacob of London, was ‘our royal Jew

whom we retain especially in our service'. Jacob was also described as 'our well-beloved and intimate friend'. The next incumbent, Josce of London, held the position from 1207–36. A member of an influential rabbinical family, Josce did not hold the office for life. Having served for almost 30 years he was replaced in late 1236 by Aaron of York, who held it as a life appointment. When he was for some reason unable to sit in the King's Exchequer, Josce fil Copin represented him. Only a few years later Aaron was relieved of his position and in October 1243 Henry III granted the office to Elias Le Eveske, and commanded his Justices to invest him with the office. Josce fil Copin remained as deputy in case of Elias' absence.

Elias had been the representative of the London community at the 'Jewish Parliament' of 1241. He was also a chirographer for the London *archa*. When he was commanded to raise a Jewish tallage in 1253, Elias tried to persuade Henry III that the community could not pay his demands. By 1257, the Jewish community at large had lost faith with him and so Elias was deposed from office. According to Mathew Paris, he converted in 1259, and went on to accuse the Jewish community of attempting to poison certain noblemen. In return for a communal fine, Henry III stripped Elias of his office. He also conceded that any future holders of the post should be elected by the community.

The Jews now elected Hagin fil Magister Moses, a Lincoln Jew. Hagin's election allowed Henry III to restate the position. Soon after his appointment in 1258, Hagin 'was under oath to the King to assist the King's justices in the Exchequer of the Jews by his advice and in setting forth the King's rights'. It is clear that, although Hagin had connections with Lincoln, he also seems to have had a connection with a tower within the precincts of the Tower of London to which he gave his name. He even acted for the Jewish community when he acknowledged a debt of £39 to a wine merchant 'on behalf of the community of the Jews of England' for wines he had purchased for the use of the King. By 1275 Hagin was in some form of trouble and was imprisoned at Windsor Castle. By 1280 he stood accused of doubtful honesty in some of his dealings and later died in prison.

The last Archpresbyter, Hagin fil Deulecresse, was appointed in May 1281. Hagin was a London Jew who lived in Milk Street. In his new capacity Hagin tended to favour the government and clearly was not trusted by the Jews he represented. In 1275 he was actually excommunicated by the Jewish community for 'refusing to be tried according to the Law and Custom of our Jewry'. Hagin had royal influence and was well connected with Eleanor, the Queen Consort, who may well have been instrumental in his appointment.⁷ Although these officials were meant to represent the greater Jewish community, it is clear that many of them leant towards the government and at the end of the day had little influence on how the kings ran their Jewish affairs.

At the local level the sheriff was the royal representative responsible for ensuring the smooth running of Jewish affairs. The sheriff ensured that chirographers and locally appointed *archa* officials were elected.⁸ In each town, there were at least two Christian and two Jewish chirographers who both received payment for drawing up the business instruments.⁹ The *archa* was often simply a chest or safe box that was kept in a private house. In 1264 the Earl of Gloucester's followers stole the Canterbury *archa* from the house of the Christian chirographer, Simon Pabley.¹⁰ The chirographers followed set rules of work. At Nottingham, Henry de Braybroc, Justice of the Jews, instructed them to have at least one Christian and one Jewish chirographer present at all business transactions.¹¹ Such officials were an early form of scrivener – or official scribe – who were under direct orders from the Exchequer in London and also under direct orders from the King himself. When Henry III limited the interest that might be charged on debts, he also forbade the Nottingham officials 'from allowing any bond or tally to be made or placed in the scriveners' chest in which is contained more than 2d in the £1 interest per week'.¹²

We know something of the type of business such local officials conducted. Details from Nottingham during Edward I's reign show that they were not only responsible for recording bonds, but also for noting acquittances of debt, keeping a wide range of records for reference, taking action on other debts, extracting and replacing charters, and noting sales of debts

when requested to do so.¹³ When a Jew died, these officials often acted as part of a jury to inquire into the dead Jew's financial affairs.¹⁴ The chirographers and the sheriffs were also responsible for sealing and transferring the *archa* to London as well as providing scrutinies when so ordered. In 1268 John Le Moyne, the Sheriff of Northamptonshire, was reimbursed for 10s for the carriage of the *archa* of the Jews of Northampton to the Tower of London. Similarly, Giles de Gousle, sheriff of Yorkshire, was reimbursed in 1270 for £2 12s 3 1/2d for the carriage of the *archa* of the Jews of York to the Tower.¹⁵ The sheriff was also responsible for the protection of the Jews within his jurisdiction and was thus expected to appoint Christian protectors of the Jews. After John's reign, as a result of the renewed preaching of the Crusade and of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, 24 townsmen were appointed to be responsible for the safety of the Jewish community in every city where Jews dwelt. By 1218, such officials had been appointed in at least nine major towns.¹⁶

Some local sheriffs had even more personal contact with the Jews in their care. At Canterbury during the early 1250s the Sheriff of Kent, Reginald of Cobham, governed the Canterbury Jewish community with the aid of an under-constable, John of Northwood. The close contact that the local Jewish community had with such officials is reflected in the records of fines imposed on them being written in Norman-French, the common 'everyday' language of both Jew and local official rather than the Latin of official records. In such payments we see the Jews of Canterbury acting communally. They paid, as a community, for having their bonds received and valued when the *archa* was sealed; for delaying payment of Queen's Gold; for concessions related to the collection of tallage; and even for having their corn ground at the King's mill at Ospringe, near Canterbury. Individual members of the community also paid for other privileges rendered by the sheriff. Salle fil Josce, for instance, paid £1 for his son-in-law to become the Jewish keeper of the *archa*. Perhaps some of the most difficult items to understand are the payments made by 'Dame Abigail', Salle's wife, for assistance when her husband was overseas and she lay in childbed, as well as for providing her nurse leave to eat 'our

lamb at Easter'. Jews also paid to be excused from attending inquests; for getting inquests held; for not attending the Justices of the Jews in London; for help with the payment of dues; for assistance in claiming their debts from Christians; for obtaining exeats from the City; for marrying their daughters off to Jews from other communities and for special concessions. For instance, John of Northwood, the under-constable of Canterbury, was clearly so unpopular with the Jewish community that when his term of office was complete, they paid £2 because they did not wish him to be re-elected. In another case the Jewish community paid to have the whole contents of one particular Jew's house seized.¹⁷

Most of the national fiscal business that affected different Jewish communities was put into the hands of specially appointed commissioners.¹⁸ Robert Stacey's research on the 1241 tallage shows the efficiency of men like Jeremiah de Caxton and William Hardel, as well as what he refers to as a 'squad of royal clerks'.¹⁹ Such clerks then pressed a team of local officials, both Christians and Jews, to help them collect the money due. In York in 1275, the Abbot of St Mary, the mayor and others were held responsible for the tallage assessed on the Jews of York. Elsewhere the Prior of Okeburn was responsible for the Marlborough community, the Prior of St Nicholas, Oxford for the Oxford community and the Prior of Dinmore for the Hereford community.²⁰ The Jewish communities were sometimes asked to appoint their own officials to administer the payments. The evidence for the 1241 tallage provides us with an intricate list of appointments of Jews that included six wealthy Jews to assess the tallage, six *magnates*, six *minores* and six *mediocres*. Their role was clearly defined by an oath: 'so that no one may be injured by hatred nor spared by love or affinity'.²¹ The position of Talliator, who apportioned payments within the community, was naturally an unpopular duty as in 1273, Cok fil Cresse, a London Jew, paid a voluntary fine so that he would not be appointed.²²

So the business of the Jewish community was closely monitored by Christian officials in most of what it did. Yet, within their own community, Jews had a certain amount of autonomy. They were the King's Jews in the secular world, but they had a spiritual and cultural world of their own that

was just as tightly organised. As James Parkes once observed of the small Jewish community:

Internally it was unable to take a lead from a functioning priesthood, a Patriarchal authority or a Jewish sovereign. It therefore attached considerable importance to the sanctity of local customs and traditions within the overall framework of the Bible and the Talmud.²³

The Jews of medieval England were governed by their own very distinctive heritage based on Talmudic Law. Louis Rabinowitz observed that of the three traditions of Jewish customs, annals and Law, 'everything depends upon local custom.'²⁴ The centre of communal life and local custom was the synagogue.

Despite the importance and centrality of the synagogue to the Jew, history has demonstrated that it is not a necessity to actually attend a synagogue to be a practising Jew. It has been possible for Jews living in small or even large numbers without a synagogue to keep, foster and maintain their faith. The trademark of the Ashkenazi Jew has been said to be 'not what a Jew must know but what a Jew must do.'²⁵ For the most part the Jewish community of England was made up of many smaller communities, centred on major towns, often near a castle where the Jews could shelter, as well as close to markets and a cathedral and in some places they possessed a large public or smaller private synagogue as well as a burial ground.²⁶ It was the synagogue that provided a natural focus for the Jewish community's cultural, social and religious life.²⁷ This multipurpose building was used as a place of prayer, study and assembly.²⁸ It often offered accommodation for travellers and in their adjacent courtyards law cases were heard and marriages solemnised. Sometimes business took place and markets were allowed. It also had its ritual bath or *mikveh*.²⁹

Most medieval Anglo-Jewish synagogues were fairly simple buildings. All that was necessary was an ark for the Torah and a partition, which might merely a curtain, to keep men and women apart. The sole surviving synagogue, 'Jew's Court' at Lincoln, reflects these basic needs.³⁰ In other

cases synagogues were *bethels*, which were smaller establishments maintained by wealthy patrons in private houses.³¹ Documentary evidence from over 30 synagogues has survived, but there were probably more in existence at various times.³² Most of these synagogues were situated in the centre of a town. In some cases there are references to more than one synagogue in a town, differentiated by the descriptions 'old' and 'new'. In some towns there were public or communal synagogues as well as private synagogues provided by a patron.

Although at Bristol settlement for Jews was originally barred by a charter that prohibited strangers from settling within the town walls, the Jews established their synagogue on the corner of Small Street and Quay Street, inside the town walls. At some point in the late thirteenth century it appears that St Giles Church was constructed on this site. However, Jewish worship continued in a house that had formally belonged to Hak le Prestre in Winch Street. By 1285, the house was rebuilt and the community of Bristol Jews then rented it from a Christian family.³³ The community also seems to have established a burial ground on the secluded hillside of Brandon, little more than a mile away, which had two sources of water, one for the washing of their dead and the other for purification rituals. The chamber for preparing the dead for burial (*tahara*) was separate from the *mikveh*, which later became known as Jacob's Well. The *mikveh* still has the *sacholim* or warning sign deeply carved into the massive lintel stone above it.³⁴

The Cambridge congregation also had several sites for communal worship. There is reference to a synagogue called the Domus Benjamin, a fairly substantial building of brick and stone with a stone cellar, on the site of the old Tolbooth in Butter's Row by the Guildhall.³⁵ When the Franciscans arrived in 1224 they were given 'the old synagogue which was next to the prison', which had been taken from the Jews, where they then built a small chapel. There was another group of Jewish houses that formed what was known as 'the Jewry' in the parishes of All Saints and the Holy Sepulchre near the Hospital of St John the Evangelist (later St John's College). Geoffrey Andre, the Christian chirographer, lived in the same

parish in 1290. Antiquarians have tended to identify a further synagogue with a building that later became known as Bede's House on the north-east corner of the old St John's Lane.³⁶

The Canterbury synagogue was situated in the parish of All Saints where there were at least four or five properties within close proximity that were owned by Jews.³⁷ It has now been subsumed by the site of the present-day County Hotel, just opposite All Saints' Church, and close to the Eastbridge Hospital for Pilgrims off the High Street, in what was once known as 'Heathen Man's Lane' on the modern Stour Street. In 1290 the synagogue was granted to William Le Taylleur, who was Queen Eleanor's robe-maker, and was valued at 11s 8d per annum; by 1320 it was a private dwelling.³⁸ It remained a striking building, as in 1640, a local antiquarian commented that 'the Stone Parlour of the Saracen's Head which was mounted upon a vault and ascended by many stone-steps is the remains of a good part of that which was our Canterbury Jews' school or synagogue.'³⁹

While the whereabouts of the synagogue in Colchester is not known for sure, it may have been sited within a group of substantial stone-built houses in St Runwald's Parish in modern-day West Stockwell Street. It was situated not far from the castle and just off the High Street, more or less just opposite Pelham's Lane.⁴⁰ The Colchester synagogue also had adjoining shops, perhaps rented by Jewish shopkeepers to serve the Jewish community.⁴¹ The synagogue at Hereford was probably a late development; it was probably founded by the beneficence of Hamo of Hereford and was situated in Malierestreet (modern-day Maylord Street).⁴² In the early 1250s, Hamo's widow, Sara, and his impoverished son, Moses, had to sell most of the family property including 'all the buildings, stone and timber thereof' and the synagogue.⁴³ As noted above, Hereford also had a *mikveh*, called Jacob's Well, which was situated just to the north of Bewell Street and was also associated with the spring. The Hereford Jewish cemetery was situated to the rear of the site of St Giles Hospital (founded 1290), now the corner of St Owen Street and Ledbury Road.⁴⁴

On a visit to Lincoln in 1934, Cecil Roth concluded that Jew's Court on Steep Hill was the ancient *scola* or synagogue of Rabbi Peytevin the

Great. He stressed its importance as one of the few ancient surviving synagogues in Western Europe, and even compared its importance to the synagogues of Worms and Toledo. This historic building clearly played a major role in the lives of the medieval Lincoln community. The substantial building offered ample accommodation for a house of study downstairs. It may even have had a *mikveh* close by. Upstairs on the first floor, a niche in the wall has been identified as the ark for the Torah scrolls. Another, private, synagogue occupied a long plot of land between the High Street and Hungate at the junction of Brancegate, where several Jews held properties.⁴⁵ There may also have been a third synagogue.⁴⁶ The Lincoln Jewish community shared the large burial ground in York at Le Jewbury, but may have developed its own cemetery in the late thirteenth century just outside the town.⁴⁷

Joseph Jacobs was the first to identify a synagogue in London, opposite the present-day St Lawrence Jewry in modern-day Gresham Street.⁴⁸ In his Survey of London, John Stow actually left a sketch of it, and referred to it as Bakewell Hall. Stow even suggested that 'Bakewell' was a corruption of Bathwell indicating the presence of a *mikveh*. Joe Hillaby has shown that this 'magna scola' – probably the first and earliest London synagogue – was set up by private money belonging to Abraham son of the Rabbi and his family.⁴⁹ Such a communal synagogue probably had a *mikveh*, *hospitium*, *scola* and shops.⁵⁰ There were other synagogues in the city, both communal and private, which were built at various times. Complaints from the Friars next door about the sound of wailing prayers emanating from a Jewish synagogue in 1253 allowed Henry III to close it and to give permission for a new synagogue to be built.⁵¹ This may have been the newly built synagogue that was attacked during the Barons' Wars in 1264. In 1280 Aaron fil Vives, a rich leading London Jew, granted the Jewish community a stone building with its court in Gresham Street for the building of a new synagogue. This was an L shape that was somewhat obscured from the street.⁵² Despite this attempt at blending in to the city, Archbishop Pecham wrote to the Bishop of London in 1282 complaining and accusing all the leading London Jews of having their own private synagogues.⁵³

The London Jews also established a burial ground from about the mid-twelfth century. This cemetery was particularly important since, up to 1177, it provided the sole burial space for Jews in England. It became variously known as 'the common cemetery of the Jews', the 'ward of the Jews' and eventually the 'Jews' Garden', and was situated at St Giles, Cripplegate, just outside the City Walls.⁵⁴ From time to time the community enlarged it, as in 1268–9, when part of a garden planted with trees was sold to Jacob of Oxford and the entire community of Jews for £3 6s 8d. The Jewish community was subsequently allowed 'for ever to bury there at will – even those condemned to death'. It was a walled cemetery with a gate. By 1290 it had been improved and had a garden with a dovecot and a pond. By the seventeenth century the area was still quite open. It has been calculated that the total area by 1290 would have been somewhere in the region of 1 ½ to 1 ¾ acres.

The 'Jews' Garden' was administered by the London Jewish community, which paid a subsidy for 'the sustaining of their common cemetery in London'. Burial in accordance with Jewish Law was a communal responsibility under the leadership of senior community members and Henry III allowed the Master of the Laws to impose a *herem* (ban) on any London Jew who failed to promise financial support for the maintenance of the cemetery. Over the centuries, as the ground has been redeveloped and disturbed, some tombstones have appeared. John Stow recorded one with the Hebrew inscription 'Here lies buried Rabbi Moses son of the Honourable Rabbi Isaac'.⁵⁵

Recent archaeological excavations have also revealed the presence of two *mikva'ot* in Milk Street and Gresham Street.⁵⁶ The Milk Street *mikveh* was probably built in the mid-thirteenth century and was the more substantial of the two. It was built using high-quality squared green sand ashlar blocks. In 1290 the property on which it was dug was occupied by a Jew called Moses Crespin.⁵⁷ The Gresham Street *mikveh* was built earlier, during the twelfth century, and partly dismantled in the thirteenth century. Both were situated within private property and were therefore likely to be personal rather than communal, unless the *nadiv* who funded

and founded them allowed the community to use them.

At Northampton, the synagogue was situated close to their walled cemetery. The 'Jews' Garden' or 'House of Life' was situated outside the North Gate of the town in the present-day Barrack Road area. It is likely that the burial ground in Northampton was also used by the Stamford Jewish community, who contributed upkeep payments towards it. In keeping with Ashkenazic practice, the cemetery also had a small house for funeral rites, and provided lodging for the eternal watchman. After the expulsion, the stone fixtures of the Northampton cemetery were valued at £1 10s 'for carting away'.⁵⁸ A top corner of a late thirteenth-century Hebrew tombstone has remained, and was found in Princes Street in the 1840s after being lodged for several centuries in a wall. It may well have been the headstone of 'the devout Rabbi Solomon', who was a Talmudist.⁵⁹ The communal synagogue was situated in Silver Street, probably on the site of the former Red Lion Inn. The entrance, which was clearly discrete, also had houses close to it in Corn Row, the marketplace and near the Fish Market.⁶⁰

Norwich also had a synagogue and a small 'Jews' Garden' or burial place close by. The synagogue was situated on a site between the former Star Inn and the Lamb Inn and was clearly set back from public view. At one time, it was approached by three entrances – one from the west from the Haymarket, one from Orford Hill, and one from the south of the Haymarket. It was probably constructed with stone columns and had glazed roof tiles. It was the focal point of the Jewish community and, as the late Vivian Lipman observed, most of the Norwich Jewry lived within 250 yards of it.⁶¹ There were many formerly held Jewish houses to the north and east of the Haymarket and just opposite the eastern end of St Peter's Church. There was also a cluster of Jewish-held properties to the south of the Haymarket in the parish of St Stephen's. In 1290 the synagogue was valued at 5s.⁶²

At Nottingham, the main areas of Jewish residence were scattered throughout the city in the parishes of St Mary on the Wall and Wall Street, as well as the Parish of St Peter's.⁶³ A synagogue can be identified as being

near the marsh on the south-west corner of Castle Gate and Lister Gate. It is referred to in a transaction made in 1257, when a plot including the gateway to the Synagogue was sold.⁶⁴ In 1261, Rachel, the daughter of Jedodyah, and her husband, Jacob fil Menachem, sold a house and a courtyard in the parish of St Peter 'with a synagogue on it' to Moses fil Samuel. The vendors had bought it three years earlier from Jedidhay fil Eleazar, who had originally purchased it from William le Coroner, who had himself bought it from William le Convers. It was described as being on a plot of land that had a house with a courtyard and a cellar, near the marsh on the edge of town.⁶⁵ It was also described as 'being let to the Jews'. It seems that Moses fil Samuel sold the property on in 1264 as his wife, Miriam, daughter of Rabbi Chaim, resigned all claims on the properties, which her husband had sold to a Joseph fil Berechiah. Here again it is possible that some stones with Hebrew inscriptions, which were found in the 1940s, survived from a nearby Jewish cemetery.⁶⁶

The Jews in Oxford seem to have settled in the oldest part of the city.⁶⁷ There was a large concentration of Jewish houses around St Aldate's, an area known by contemporaries as the Great Jewry. The site of the known Oxford synagogue was not far from the churches of St Aldate and St Frideswide.⁶⁸ It is possible that there might have been two synagogues in Oxford, which may be explained by a split in the *minyan* or congregation between those who attended the public synagogue and those who attended a private synagogue under the patronage of David of Oxford.⁶⁹ The burial ground of the Jews was outside the East Gate of the city near Magdalen Bridge, at the present-day Botanical Gardens, and may well have also had a *mikveh*.⁷⁰

At York, despite the massacre of the Jewish community in 1190, there were at least two synagogues in use in the thirteenth century. One of them was on a plot that backed onto the River Ouse, while the second was probably in a house adjoining Le Jewbury or the burial site of the Jews.⁷¹ The former was abandoned in the late 1270s as it was granted to John Sampson and Roger Basy on 15 November 1279 by Eleanor and was described as 'the whole land with buildings and appurtenances and with

a school built therein and with steps leading to the entrance of the said land'.⁷² The burial ground at Le Jewbury was of great importance to the Jews of the northern parts of the country and served at least three different Jewish communities – those of York, Nottingham and Lincoln.⁷³ It was originally surrounded by ditches and a wall. There is good evidence to suggest that superimposed burials were used and that due to lack of space the cemetery was extended sometime in the 1230s.⁷⁴

Little is known about the Winchester synagogue, which, in 1290, was valued at being worth about 16s 6d per annum and was near the present-day Royal Oak Passage. The Winchester burial ground was situated outside the Westgate in the area of St James and had a yearly value of 2s 6d. It possessed what is to the best of our knowledge a unique feature – a laving stone for corpses worth 4s.⁷⁵ Like the Winchester synagogue there were other synagogues situated in other towns and cities whose whereabouts are not so well known. For instance there was, at one time, a synagogue in Stamford.⁷⁶ More recently there has been the discovery of a stone chamber that may well have been a private synagogue in Guildford.⁷⁷ Moyses Hall, Bury St Edmunds, may well have been a place of worship for the Jewish community before their expulsion from there in 1190.⁷⁸

Centres of Jewish worship in English towns and cities were well known to the townspeople be they large communal synagogues or smaller private synagogues.⁷⁹ This made such properties easy targets during the Barons' Wars, when the rebels were able to single them out and sack them. Ecclesiastical authorities were also well aware of the possible religious competition offered by the synagogue and sometimes tried to shut them down. The Friars complained about the 'howling' from one London synagogue, which disturbed their service.⁸⁰ Centres of Jewish public worship may have shifted according to circumstances. The government officials were also aware of the *scolae*, and even used them to make proclamations or announcements to the Jewish communities.⁸¹

The synagogue was not just the centre of worship but also of education and learning. Two surviving thirteenth-century *ketubboth* (marriage contracts) show the importance that the Jewish community placed on

both protocol and education.⁸² In one marriage contract, Yomtob fil Moses promised to engage a teacher to instruct his future son-in-law Solomon during the first year after his marriage.⁸³ Such a teacher could only have been trained at a major *yeshivah*. Another contract reveals a gift of 'a volume on calf skin containing the whole 24 books of the Hebrew Bible properly provided with vowel points and the *Masorah*, each leaf containing six columns and also having a separate portion with the *Targum* of the Pentateuch and the *Haftaroht*'.⁸⁴ Only a trained Jewish scribe could have accomplished this work and it would seem that synagogues must also have had the function of teaching and training in the writing of legal documents as well as sacred texts.

Synagogues were seats of Jewish education for the whole community. Jewish children were taught the basics of religious knowledge by the *hazzan* or 'overseer' in the *Beth ha Sepher* or the 'House of the Book'.⁸⁵ For the male adults' more advanced education there was the *Beth ha Midrash*; the *scola* of Peytevin Magnus in Lincoln was probably one such example.⁸⁶ It was here that Jews learned Hebrew and were taught the Hebrew Bible, Talmud and the Responsa literature. The Torah was well known throughout the Anglo-Jewish communities as it was recited throughout the year.⁸⁷ Jews in England were allowed to swear on the Torah scroll just as the Christian was on the Latin Bible. The Talmuds owned by the synagogues as well by some individuals had a very different reception from Christian society. As late as 1286, a papal injunction ordered 'that the books commonly called Thalamud which the Jews of England were putting forth as of greater authority than the Law of Moses were to be confiscated'.⁸⁸

The *scola* was also the centre for communal finance and self-government. The internal administration of the Jewish community was dominated by the synagogue officials: the Rabbi, the Hazzan, the Shamash (organiser/caretaker) and the Gabbai (treasurer/tax-collector). They were supported by wealthier Jews or *nadivs* (patrons) and the *kahal* (congregation).⁸⁹ Surnames indicating communal positions such as 'Gabbay' (treasurer), 'Chazan' (reader) and 'Chantur' (cantor) appear in contemporary records. Albert Hyamson made reference to Dayanim or ecclesiastical assessors;

Parnassim or presidents of the congregation, as well as Gabbayim.⁹⁰ It is likely that some synagogue functionaries received salaries and certainly *Rahash* payments were well established in the continental communities. At Purim the cantor received a special donation for reading the Megillah (Scroll of Esther), and on other Jewish festivals a plea was made for for communal collections.⁹¹ The *kahal* was also responsible for paying two levies to the Gabbai: a collection actually taken in the synagogue and a monthly contribution made by each member.⁹² Further funds were gathered from payments for weddings, funerals, and the administration of oaths, as well as for reciting prayers for the sick or leading mourners. The Gabbai co-ordinated the collections, paid the community officials, and even issued loans to augment the community's income. He also worked closely with the Shtadlan or advocate/pleader, whose business it was to try to modify and reconcile any unfavourable taxes or legislation imposed by the state.⁹³ Tallage payments were sometimes paid en bloc from communal funds: if more were required, the Jewish bailiffs or talliators appointed by the state negotiated with the *shtadlan* and the Gabbai, and spread the financial burden over the whole community.⁹⁴ Sometimes synagogue officials were in charge of a *bursa communis* or common purse, which would cover the general welfare and needs of the community. It was often used to provide the wherewithal for very poor Jews to be married or buried.⁹⁵ In some cases the community gave financial support as a corporate body to the synagogue. The Northampton Jewish community had an income from an annual rent of four shillings from houses it owned in Stamford. This income went towards the upkeep of the Northampton synagogue and the cemetery there.⁹⁶

In terms of local custom, the Jews were answerable to their peers and jurisdiction was in the hands of the *Capitulum Judeorum* or *Beth Din*. The *Beth Din* or court was normally composed of three appointed officials from the congregation who were responsible for arbitrating over dowry rights, marriage settlements, the appointment of guardians for minors and land and contract disputes.⁹⁷ Vivian Lipman's examination of the cases tried before the Norwich *Beth Din* between 1243 and 1267 shows

that these were temporary appointments made from among the most influential members of the community.⁹⁸ There was no right of appeal. The punishments ranged from a fine or temporary suspension from access to the community to full excommunication. There was a hierarchy of courts; just as the Parisian *Beth Din*'s decisions were considered to be more important than London's, so to in England the *Beth Din* at York was considered to be more authoritative than that of Norwich.⁹⁹

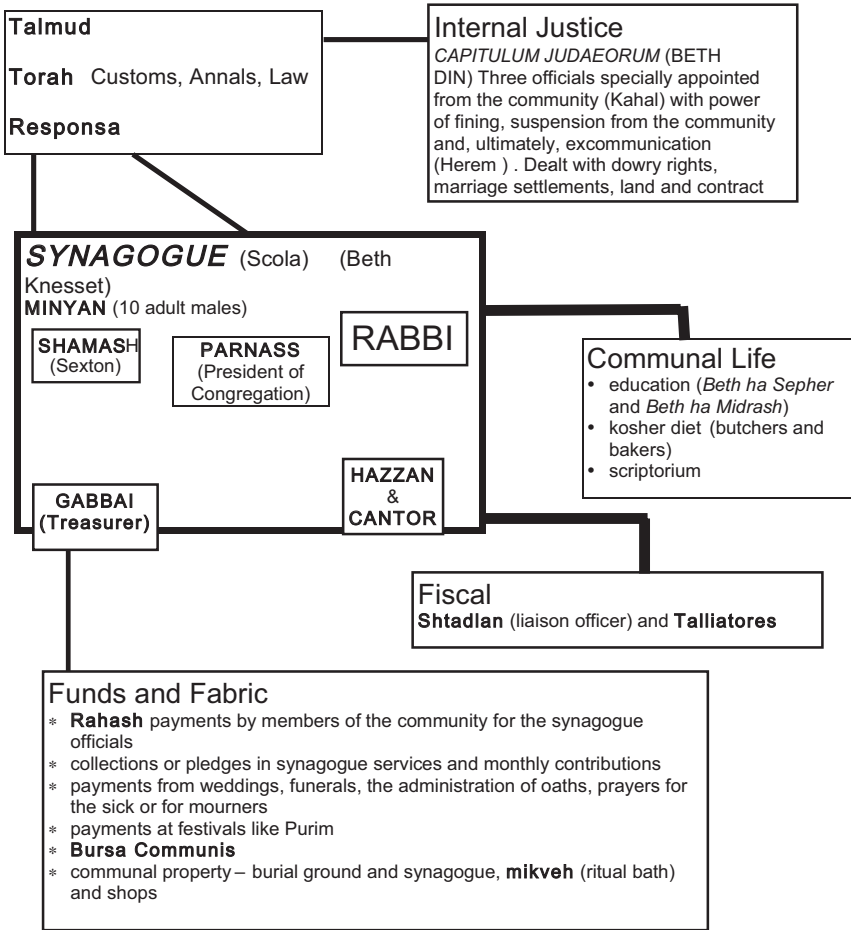
Communities controlled their members through bans, like the *Herem ha yishuv* or prohibition of settlement.¹⁰⁰ One example, signed by 17 Canterbury Jews, has survived and established that:

no Jew of any other town than Canterbury shall dwell in the said town, that is to say, any liar, improper person or slanderer, and that should anyone come to dwell there by writ of their lord the king, the whole community shall pay to the king . . . in order that the person may be disqualified by the king from residing there.¹⁰¹

Louis Rabinowitz claimed that this was 'probably the only document extant giving the formula of an institution which persisted in southern France, Germany, Italy and eastern Europe for some seven centuries'.¹⁰² Adler saw this document as an attempt to deal with the problem of an influx of refugees from other Jewries that might have been devastated during the troubles of the early 1260s.¹⁰³ Daniel Cohn-Sherbok saw the Canterbury *herem* as an attempt to deal with unscrupulous members of the Jewish community in order to improve the image of Jewish business. The *herem* was intended, in Rabinowitz's words, 'to bring about the economic protection of the community and the establishment of a virtual trading monopoly' in a time of difficulty.¹⁰⁴ It shows that the Jewish communities were occasionally prepared to exclude other Jews from settlement in their communities.

Not only the existence of places of worship, burial customs and law separated the Jew from Christian society, language did too. The legal used for contracts with Christians was Latin. But the Jews of England also spoke and wrote in French and it is possible that the majority were happier to use

The Jewish Community



this as their everyday language.¹⁰⁵ Certainly it was deemed necessary to translate the Haggadah, which was used on the Eve of the Passover into the vernacular for the benefit of women and children.¹⁰⁶ However, it was the use of Hebrew for ritual and prayer that set the Jewish community apart. It was used for epitaphs and graffiti, as well as inter-Jewish transactions and signatures.¹⁰⁷ Inter-Jewish loans, contracts and *kettuboth* were drawn up by Jewish scribes, and the Exchequer of the Jews also employed some

Hebrew scribes. A copy of the Plea Roll was recorded in Hebrew, and many of the stocks of tallies bore Hebrew characters, presumably as a means of easy reference for Jewish businessmen.¹⁰⁸

Food also set the Jews apart from Christian neighbours, as Jews observed the laws of *kashrut*.¹⁰⁹ Rabbi Benjamin of Canterbury forbade his followers to buy milk from a Gentile, even from one who had raised no unclean animals.¹¹⁰ English Jews followed similar laws to their brethren on the continent. Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg claimed that his teacher, Rabbi Leon of Paris, had heard that Rabbi Tam had directed implicitly that barnacle geese (which were widely believed to grow on trees) should be slaughtered after the Jewish fashion and even had his decision on this sent to the 'sons of Angletterre'.¹¹¹ Rabbi Moses of London has left his recipe for *charoseth* or the paste that the Jews ate on Passover to remind them of the mortar they used as slaves in Egypt. He instructed his congregation to take some 'dates or figs or raisins and crush them into vinegar and make them into a paste like mortar'.¹¹²

The Jews' diet was probably not only different, but probably better than that of their neighbours. The more copious evidence from France suggests that this was clearly the case. Moses of Coucy regarded bread, fish, meat and wine as a sufficient diet for poor Jews. At least 20 different kinds of bread and cakes were available to the French Jew, from a sponge cake fried in oil to a cake made with flour fermented in grape skins that Rabbi Tam had forbidden.¹¹³ Perhaps such delicacies were available to some English Jews too. In 1290 Hagin of Lincoln owned a house in St Martin's parish, rented from Adam Ack for 9s per annum. He also paid a yearly rent to the Priory of St Katherine for a plot of land on which his kitchen was built. Was this the kitchen of his busy household, or a communal one?¹¹⁴

Fish was also widely eaten, and Rabbi Tam had pronounced barbell as being the best for Jewish consumption; tuna, carp, herring and salmon were also eaten.¹¹⁵ Some Jews were even implicated in a large herring robbery in Norfolk.¹¹⁶ Meat was commonly eaten in the form of a *pastide* (pie) and perhaps the annual gift from Richard Foliot to Hagin of Lincoln of a beast of the chase, as well as other references to Jews enjoying hunting,

means that some game may have been eaten too.¹¹⁷ Meat fit for Jewish tables was clearly available; in 1285 in Hereford, John Bibol was fined for selling ‘meat of the Jews’.¹¹⁸

Wine was of great importance to the Jews. The *Kiddush* was recited over wine. The London Jew Rabbi Elijah Menahem imported wine from Gascony.¹¹⁹ There were Jewish vintners in Oxford and Isaac of Colchester even had his own vineyard.¹²⁰ There were rulings on alcohol and, in France, cider and liquor made from berries and cherries was not regarded as wine and could be purchased from a Gentile.¹²¹ The Tosafists give as an example of the partial abstinence enjoined on the Feast of the Ninth of Ab the advice that if a Jew was accustomed to drink ten glasses of beer a day, on this day he should drink only five.¹²² It was not unknown for Jews to drink with Christians. Two continental Rabbis had noted with disapproval that ‘It is surprising that in the land of the Isle they are lenient in the matter of drinking strong drinks of the Gentiles and along with them.’ They claimed that this could lead to intermarriage but added ‘. . . perhaps as there would be great ill-feeling if they were to refrain from this one must not be severe upon them.’¹²³

In the twelfth century, links between English and Continental Jews were certainly very close. The Jews of England were Ashkenazi in origin and, as such, shared the influences, culture, literature and ritual that their brethren in Northern Europe had practised for centuries. Louis Rabinowitz saw England’s Jews as a branch of northern French Jewry with few distinctive or separate characteristics.¹²⁴ Rabbi Tam quoted a Jewish scholar from Dover, while Ibn Ezra dedicated his work, the *Yesod Moreh*, to Joseph fil Jacob while he was in London; Rabbi Yomtob of Joigny died at York. Books stolen from the York Jewry ended up in Cologne.¹²⁵

Gershom of Mainz, Rashi, Rabbi Tam, Maimonides, Meir of Rothenburg and Moses of Coucy were the inspiring teachers, but the Jews of England also had their own cultural achievements.¹²⁶ Moses of London (d. 1268) wrote the *Darkhe ha-Nikkud veba-Neginah*, an important work on Hebrew punctuation and accentuation. His three sons all produced scholarly works during Edward I’s reign: Elijah Menahem, Benedict of Nicole and Jacob

of Oxford.¹²⁷ In 1287, Jacob fil Jehudah of London produced the work *Etz Chayim*, a collection of Jewish Law that made available the rabbinical opinion of scholars such as Rabbi Elijah of Warwick, and two of Moses of London's scholarly sons, Rabbi Joseph of Bristol and Rabbi Moses of Dover.¹²⁸ The poems of Meir of Norwich have also survived and bear witness to the events leading to the expulsion – the massacres, imprisonments and sequestration of property.¹²⁹

Cultural, social and economic links between the Jews of England and France were maintained throughout the two centuries of presence. Although forbidden from travelling across the Channel without permission, there were times when Jews did travel. The year 1218 saw the last great influx of Continental Jewry into England, while 1233 and 1240 saw Jews leave England; in 1255, they were forbidden to leave.¹³⁰ During the period 1240–60, Moses of Coucy allowed a Jew to embark for England on a Friday, because with a favourable wind the passage could be made before the start of the Sabbath.¹³¹ In 1254, Salle fil Josce, a Canterbury Jew, was overseas while his pregnant wife was cared for by the Sheriff of Kent.¹³² In 1273, Jacob of Oxford went overseas and took the key to the Oxford *archa* with him.¹³³ Rabbi Elijah Menahem was not only given permission to import wine from Gascony but was even summoned with his servant, Abraham Mouton, to the sickbed of the Count of Flanders in 1280.¹³⁴ Contact with the Continental Jewries was active, as was contact between the Jewish communities in England. Contact with other Jews outside and individual community was a vital lifeline for legal advice, support, business and when planning marriage.

Despite the problems posed by remoteness, local antipathy and the forcefulness of royal government to bring the Jews into line, it is to their credit that the Anglo-Jews remained true to themselves. Ultimately it was religion more than culture, linguistics or customs that kept them from assimilation. The fact that the only remains of Anglo-Jewry, apart from seals, yards of documents and a few surviving houses, are religious objects – the Bodleian ewer and a few prayer books – demonstrate unequivocally that the Anglo-Jew not only knew his religion but also practised it

ferently.¹³⁵ Even the Jews' own conception of time and history was coloured by religion. Their documents were dated by the Jewish calendar and they divided their year accordingly.¹³⁶ The Jews dated their transactions with the format 'from the beginning of the world to the end', reflecting the time at which, they thought, God created the world, and celebrated festivals throughout the year.¹³⁷ Even when incarcerated in the Tower of London between 1275 and 1277, Jews still took solace in performing their rituals. It is clear that some Jewish prisoners paid bribes so that they might be outside on the Sabbath and also be free to celebrate 'Josana et Enna que Purim'.¹³⁸ They also celebrated Seder, and it was unfortunate that this festival often caused offence to Christians, falling as it generally did close to Easter.¹³⁹ The Jews remembered the atrocities they had suffered, and elegies of their martyrs of Blois and York have survived as clear reminders of the sufferings of Israel for its religion.¹⁴⁰ Many must have held very strong beliefs that one day their lot would improve.

Thus the Jewish communities maintained and practised their own religion in their synagogues. They preserved their culture, ritual, customs, diet and language. As long as it did not impinge on the law of the state, they kept their own Law. They maintained their education and had their own sages. Within their community they elected officials both within and outside of the synagogue. They maintained their burial customs. They also maintained their links with Jewish communities on the continent. They were organised and mindful of their own traditions, as well as having an immense sense of corporate identity. Yet they were tightly controlled by a hierarchy of government officials. Ultimately they were the King's Jews, and as such were governed by the royally appointed Justices of the Jewish Exchequer, who in turn were advised by the Archpresbyter of the Jews. Their place of residence and their financial dealings were closely monitored. They were hemmed in by government interference and surveillance. They were to a point protected but were made to pay for that protection by arbitrary tallages. These small communities were indeed a community within a state that rendered unto Caesar and at times prayed that they might be delivered.

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Saints and martyrs

Writing in 1943, Joshua Trachtenberg observed that ‘the most vivid impression to be gained from a reading of medieval allusions to the Jews is of a hatred so vast and abysmal, so intense that it leaves one gasping for comprehension.’¹ Such expressions of raw hatred arise from the chronicles and were sustained by constant references to the ‘perfidious’ Jew in sermons. In the late twelfth century, Richard of Devizes referred to the Jews as ‘bloodsuckers and worms.’² In the thirteenth century Matthew Paris compared them to ‘Cain the accursed.’³ To fully understand this ‘vast and abysmal hatred’ for Jews, historians have to peel back a veneer of semantics and to reach their own conclusions about both spin and smear. Clearly one of the historian’s greatest gifts is hindsight but this can sometimes obscure foresight by the use of anachronistic semantics. With the exception of the word ‘holocaust’ (a word first used in the eleventh century), other words like ‘pogrom’, ‘anti-Semitism’ or even ‘anti-Judaism’ (all created in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) cannot replace the raw fears and turmoil that the Jew purportedly caused and, in turn, the horrors that they suffered from the product of the medieval mind. At times it was a mindset made up of both hate and rejection in equal proportions.⁴

At the start of the second millennium Europeans easily recognised expressions like ‘soldier of Christ’ or ‘imitation of Christ’ and were fired by slogans like ‘God wills it.’⁵ To the Christian the infidel was bad enough, but the Jew was worse. The first level of antipathy towards Jews was what a Christian had been told from birth onwards. To any Christian, the Jew was first and foremost the Christ Killer. The Jews had also refused to accept Christ as the Messiah; the Jew had missed and even rejected redemption.⁶ The story of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, was a front-line motif

sometimes used like the proverbial bogeyman by Christian mothers to frighten their children.⁷ First and foremost, the Jew was already beyond the register of most of Western society because of his religion alone. The second level of enmity was what Christians actually saw when they encountered Jewish communities. Often they could not see further than a difference in physiognomy, a difference in clothing, a difference in dietary practice or even a badge. Revulsion was easily increased as some Jews became creditors and some Christians became users of capital supplied by Jews. Resentment of debt and of riches is, and always has been, a reason for the development of abhorrence.⁸ The third level of odium was what a single individual actually believed and then embellished. It was possible to believe anything of an avowed enemy. This type of misbelief is the type that in history has produced Napoleon eating babies, German soldiers bayoneting babies at the outbreak of the Great War, and the creation in a popular psyche of weapons of mass destruction. Within the Christian medieval mind the Jew was capable of all of these accusations.⁹

To the citizens of Christendom, after the failure of the world to end in either 1000 or 1100 and Armageddon to be ushered in, these three single strands wound irretrievably into an aversion that led to intense hatred and eventually to massacre as the Jewish demon became even more demonised. Although words such as 'anti-Semitism' and 'pogrom' nearly always appear in modern discussions of the medieval Jew, they are probably more accurately replaced by the more simplistic 'Jew hatred' in place of 'anti-Semitism' and 'local massacre' in place of 'pogrom', and both reader and writer should try to have both the foresight not to be influenced by the terminology of later centuries and perhaps also to forgive contemporary ignorance that resulted in Jew hatred and the prevailing animosity towards the Jews.¹⁰

For scholars and almost all religious men Jew hatred was backed by a long history. In a society with an insatiable thirst for stories and tales and with the desire to see the supremacy of Christianity over evil, many different media developed concerning the accursed Jew. Stories and perceptions travelled widely. In one well-known story the death of a Jewish glassblower

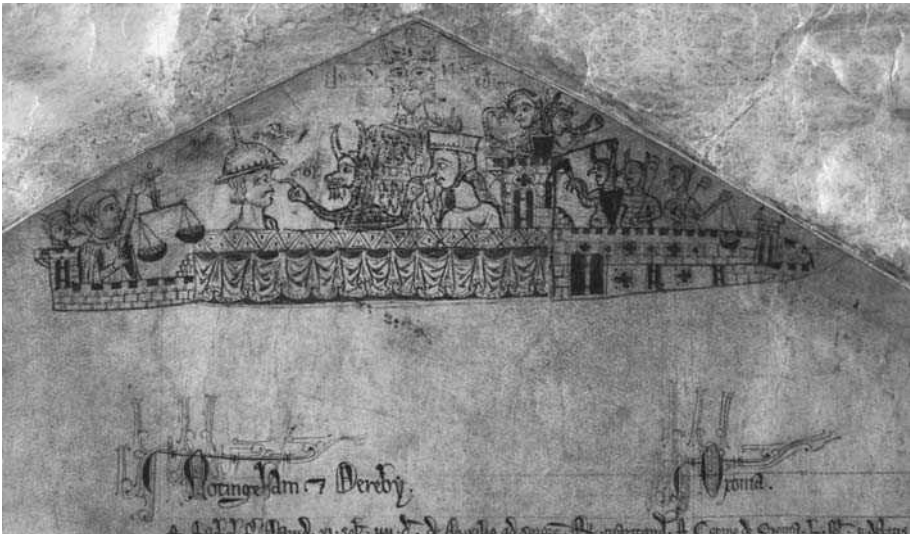
of Bourges, who attempted to kill his Jewish son for having attended a Christian mass, was portrayed to the literate masses as little more than a miracle. The Jewish father, who had thrown his son into the furnace, was the villain of the piece. The unfortunate boy was miraculously saved from the flames after his screaming mother had attracted a crowd. The Virgin Mary appeared and shielded the boy. The crowd who had gathered threw the father into the flames, where he died.¹¹ Such tales and widely circulating rumours and beliefs about the Jews naturally helped to increase resentment of Jewish presence.

Saints, and in particular the Virgin Mary, were the lifeblood of promoting Christianity. It is no surprise that soon after the Jews settled in Oxford there was a tussle with the local saint. In the late 1180s, Deulecresse, the son of Moses of Wallingford, was accused of ‘insulting the devotions of Christian folk and deriding the divine miracles with blaspheming words.’ He was even accused of having claimed he was as good as St Frideswide and that gifts should be given to him as well as to the local saint. His father, Moses, chastised his wayward son so much that Deulecresse later committed suicide. Moses tried to keep the death quiet but when Deulecresse’s body was leaving Oxford on a cart en route for the Jewish cemetery in London a number of Oxford dogs followed it howling and barking.¹²

Another blasphemous outrage is told in a further story. In 1250, Abraham of Berkhamstead was alleged to have bought an image of the Madonna and Child and ‘in order to heap more insults on Jesus Christ’ he placed the icon at the bottom of his privy. He then defecated on it and commanded his wife to do likewise. The Jewess took the icon out from the jakes and cleaned it. Her husband found out and killed her.¹³ Another lavatorial story of a Jew, called Solomon, who died as a martyr in 1257, was later included in John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and was clearly widely known in the medieval period.¹⁴ Solomon had fallen into a latrine in Tewkesbury and had refused to be pulled out because it was the Sabbath. The following day Richard de Clare, the Earl of Gloucester, refused permission for the unfortunate Solomon to be pulled out for ‘reverence of the holy day’ and the Jew was eventually found dead in the dung on the Monday morning.¹⁵

The different physiognomy of Jews was also seized on by contemporary scribes. From 1215, and possibly before, the Jews were further segregated from Christian society by having to wear a badge of shame or *tabula*, as well as being forced to wear a spiked hat. These physical marks were carried over into the portrayal of Jews. There are several extant drawings that illustrate these differences.¹⁶ The well-known scribal depiction of a vista at the head of one of the Jewish rolls of 1233 might well represent a glimpse of a common miracle play that the scribe had seen and now put names to the characters.¹⁷

At the top of the roll, with three heads looking everywhere at once and mirroring medieval pictures of the Antichrist, is Isaac fil Jurnet of Norwich, a moneylender who lent on a national scale. To the left is Moses Mokke who was Isaac's debt collector. Moses wears the Jewish spiked helmet. Moses was a rather shady character who had been charged for assault in 1230 and was eventually executed for clipping coins in 1242. Just beneath Isaac and near the castle is Avegaye, who was the wife of either



- 2 Caricature of Isaac of Norwich depicted as the Antichrist, with his wife Avegaye and his debt collector Moses Mokke being taunted by demons, 1233.

Moses or Isaac. There are also several devils representing the accursedness of the Jews. The main one is nicknamed Colbif. Even artists who portrayed biblical Jews began to depict them anachronistically.¹⁸ Thus Jew hatred was not just manifested in stories but in the popular image of the Jew and particularly associated with the moneylender and the Devil.

Execration of the Jew was also manifest in what Trachtenberg termed 'popular subjective and non-natural beliefs'.¹⁹ The belief of mystical powers and Jewish magic stirred by suspicion of the Kabbalah and particularly suspicion of the *mazzuzah* was common.²⁰ In 1240, the Synod of Worcester decreed that 'when men and women magicians shall be found and also such as consult Jews for the purpose of finding out by magic about their lives or actions, they shall be brought before the bishop to be punished'.²¹ The common belief that before selling meat to Christians the Jews had their children urinate on it to induce sickness and death led to prohibitions against Christians buying food from Jews.²² The belief that Jews had a thirst or need for blood to cure the haemorrhoids with which they had been punished was also prevalent.²³ Similar suspicion surrounded the fact that circumcision demanded the use of *Calumus Draco* or 'Dragon's blood', a gum obtained from a species of palm, in order to stem the wound.²⁴ The custom of male circumcision was itself open to misinterpretation and provided more fuel for absurd accusations.²⁵ It was widely held that all male Jews menstruated and that blood was needed to make *matzah*.²⁶ The belief that the Jew had a distinguishable smell was also common – possibly caused by the eating of garlic or the use of chemicals to remove hair, for the Jew was forbidden by religious law to use a blade on his beard.²⁷

Inevitably, any unusual or inexplicable disaster could be blamed on the Jews. The Jew was also seen as an international conspirator. In 1228, when an Armenian archbishop visited St Albans, news of Joseph Cartaphilus, the Wandering Jew, and of strange happenings in the East reached England. Such news only confirmed the worst suspicions of Gentiles. Was not the Antichrist to be born of Jewish parents and Armageddon ushered in by the Jews?²⁸ Then, as news of Mongol invasions reached the West, panic

broke out and the belief that the Jewish legions were at hand was rife. Many believed that there was a world conspiracy that threatened Christianity. The Jews were kinsmen of the Tartars and these invasions by the Mongols were carried out in order to release the sons of Israel. This rumour was further spiced up with the speculation that the Jews in Germany had bought up and hidden as many weapons as they could find. The Jewish Mongol 'Plot' of 1241 had all the makings and trappings of an international terrorism scare, with their own weapons of mass destruction.²⁹

One of the most enduring fantasies about the Jews was first told in England.³⁰ The story was backed by the evidence of a Jewish convert, Theobald of Cambridge, and was recorded in the *Life of St William of Norwich*, written by Thomas of Monmouth, monk of Norwich Cathedral Priory. Whether or not Thomas was partly inspired by earlier ritual murder allegations in Germany during the First Crusade, he certainly now disseminated a full dossier concerning a premeditated Jewish ritual murder in Norwich.³¹ By the time Thomas wrote his hagiography the case was six years old. The accusations and the martyrdom itself had come and gone but the embers from flames of bigotry were still glowing and now, a few years after the event, were fanned up.³²

According to Thomas, who has recently been described as both a 'cynical hagiographer' and a 'sly and secret manipulator', the affair started on 20 March 1144, the first Monday of Easter week, and involved the family of two Norwich women, Elviva and Leviva Sturt.³³ On that Easter Monday, a man claiming to be the Archdeacon of Norwich's cook appeared at Elviva's house and offered her son, William, a job. On Tuesday 21 March, the man and William visited Leviva's house. On 25 March, Easter Saturday, William's body was found in Thorpe Wood just outside the city by a nun and a peasant who immediately informed Henry of Sprowston, a forester. On Monday 27 March, Henry of Sprowston buried the body where it had been found in the wood. On Tuesday 28 March, Godwin Sturt (Leviva's husband), his son, Alexander, and William's brother, Robert, exhumed the body, recognised it and immediately reburied it. Godwin subsequently informed Leviva – who then told Godwin about a dream she had had

two weeks before. In the dream she had been in the marketplace when Jews ran at her, surrounded her and broke her right leg with a club, tore it from her body and ran away with it. The Sturt family then informed the boy's mother, Elviva, who immediately ran around the town accusing the Jews of murder.

At a synod held by Bishop Eborard of Norwich in the middle of April 1144, Godwin arose and publicly accused the Jews of the murder. Bishop Eborard summoned the Jews of Norwich three times to answer the charge. The Sheriff of Norwich denied the charges and took the Jews into the castle for security. A visiting cleric, Prior Aimar of the distant Abbey of St Pancras in Lewes, asked if he could have the body, but Bishop Eborard refused and ordered the body to be exhumed on 24 April 1144 and buried in the monks' cemetery. In order to fully establish a new shrine and to boost the pilgrimage revenues of Norwich cathedral it only needed a well-constructed and informed hagiography or saint's *Vita*, which, after the event, Thomas was happy to supply.

The sanctity of the martyr and the authenticity of the saint were further bolstered by Monmouth's one-sided evidence. He claimed that at first the Jews had received the boy kindly on the Tuesday, 21 March, which was the first day of Passover. After the synagogue service on the Wednesday the boy was seized and gagged, his head tied with cords and pierced with thorns; he was then bound as if on a cross upon three uprights of wood and a horizontal bar. To these his right hand and foot were secured with ropes, his left hand and foot with nails. His left side was later pierced to the heart and scalding water poured over the body to cleanse the wounds and stop the flow of blood.

He next described a meeting of the Jews, which took place on the morrow and at which the decision was made to take the body to a remote place. On Good Friday, a time when Thomas admitted that Jews did not normally stir abroad, the body was taken by the leading Jew, Deus-adiuvet, Eleazar and another Jew to Thorpe Wood.

This monk-detective was quite clear in adding and exploiting further evidence for his readers. First, Thomas claimed to have interviewed a

Christian maidservant who had served in the house where William was murdered. She professed that she peered through a chink in the door and caught a momentary glimpse (with one eye) of a boy fastened to a post and that she later found a boy's knife in the room. To put the matter beyond doubt, Thomas himself was shown two nail holes in the post in the house. The marks of wounds on the body (which were found on 24 April, more than a month after its discovery) more than proved that skulduggery and murder had taken place.

Five years after the discovery of the body, in 1149, a citizen of Norwich, Aelward Ded, confessed that he had seen two Jews entering Thorpe Wood. He had spoken to them and had felt a body in a sack carried over the neck of one of the horses. Aelward explained that he had not said anything before because he had been sworn to secrecy by the sheriff, John de Chesney, whom the Jews had bribed to keep this secret. The sheriff had died in 1146 and so Aelward was free to make his revelation. The story spread beyond Norwich, and similar accusations were made against the Jews in Gloucester in 1168, Bury St Edmunds in 1181, Bristol in 1183 and Worcester in 1192.³⁴

In 1168, the Jews of Gloucester and elsewhere had gathered to celebrate the circumcision of a boy from a prominent Gloucester Jewish family. At about the ninth hour on Saturday 18 March that year, a fisherman discovered a body floating in the River Severn. It was brought to the bank. A crowd was attracted and within a short time the monks of St Peter's and the citizens of Gloucester had gathered.³⁵ The boy's head was encircled with thorns and his feet tied together with his own girdle. When his clenched hands were examined 'it was believed or the signs indicated that tortures like crucifixion had been inflicted'. Further examination showed that 'he had been placed between two fires so that his whole body was burned' and that fat had been poured over him, like roasted meat. Burns covered his eyes, ears and face.

The condition of the boy's clothes provided similar confirmation. The onlookers said they 'bore the marks of presumed martyrdom', a new shirt that he wore was 'scorched off around him' and 'some 300 holes', were

found on his body. One witness saw and handled the victim's clothes and 'his sacred little body' and found his tunic in a similar state. On 19 March at sunset, a cortege marched in procession from the riverside to the abbey. The body was taken to a private place, washed and laid out, and on the morrow it was buried in the north-east chapel.³⁶ Once again it was alleged that the boy, who had been identified as Harold, had been hidden by the local Jewish community until all the Jews of England came together for the sacrifice. Once again the Jews were identified as the culprits and, although both cases were unproven, the Jews were blamed for the appearance of the dead bodies as well as the plague and other supernatural happenings. By the end of the twelfth century, there were two officially recognised shrines to boy martyrs who had reputedly been done to death by the Jews – those of St William of Norwich and St Harold of Gloucester.

Over 20 years after the discovery of Harold of Gloucester's body, the Jewish chronicler Ephraim of Bonn noted that, 'In the year of the creation 4950, Evil was brought upon Israel from heaven. For there arose a King in the Isle of the sea known as Angleterre . . .'³⁷ The King was Richard I and ironically it was an accusation of Jews giving the evil eye at his coronation that started a general massacre all over England. In 1190 Jew hatred was heightened by a surge of religiosity that accompanied crusading as well as a feeling of insecurity that accompanied the start of a new reign. Christians were feeling sensitive and were spiritually whipped up by both Pope and churchmen alike.³⁸ Richard's coronation was accompanied by anti-Jewish feeling and Jew hatred on a national scale. In 1189 a new stimulus and excuse for mass murder was created in London on 3 September. Leading Jews from all over England had travelled to attend King Richard's coronation and to pay their respects. Outside the ceremony their presence was clearly resented and led to the accusation of the evil eye: 'and bad men hastened to say that it was not allowed for the Jews to look on the King's crown.'³⁹ There were subsequent calls for the Jewish delegation to be banned from attending the ritual. This was accompanied by a rumour that the King had commanded the conversion of the Jews. It seems that this disturbance was not reported by the doorkeeper and the brawl turned

into a massacre.⁴⁰ Ephraim of Bonn's Hebrew account of the event blamed the doorkeeper for actively stirring up the situation and for banning the Jews from the ceremony and he even relished in the royal revenge that was taken on the doorkeeper, who was punished by being dragged through the streets until he was dead.⁴¹

In London, the massacre left 30 Jews dead and Jewish households burned to the ground. Whether annoyed at loss of revenue or simply at the lack of control, Richard took action. William of Newburgh, when he wrote of the coronation riots in London, illustrated the new king's reaction: 'He was angry and yet perplexed to know what was to be done in this matter . . . But the prince guaranteed peace to the Jews by an edict after the slaughter.'⁴² Yet it was too late. The many contemporary accounts of the ensuing massacres of *Shabbat ha Gadol* recognised the copycat effect of violence throughout the country. 'Other cities and towns of the country imitated the Londoners', wrote Richard of Devizes. 'and with equal devotion sent down their bloodsuckers with blood down to Hell.'⁴³ There were some exceptions; the Jews of Winchester were left unharmed because the citizens there were law-abiding:

Winchester alone spared her vermin, a people prudent and foreseeing and a city acting always civilly. It never did anything in a hurry, fearing nothing so much as to repent; it thinks of the end of things before beginning them. It did not want to vomit forth the load on its stomach by which it was opposed, and took care of its bowels in the meantime, modestly concealing the trouble, till an opportune time when she might once and for ever evacuate the whole mass of disease.⁴⁴

Yet the seed was sown and the ensuing massacres and violence spread northwards. Ralph of Diss acknowledged the spread and implications of the London massacre: 'Many of those who were hastening to go to Jerusalem determined first to rise against the Jews before they invaded the Saracens . . .'⁴⁵ Many other chronicles report the massacres that took place in the spring of 1190. We are left with the feeling of a series of intermittent risings against the Jews in the major towns where they lived. It is clear that

hatred swept up the country. There were early outbreaks during the first week of February 1190 in King's Lynn; on 6 February all the Jews who were found in their own houses in Norwich were butchered.⁴⁶ On 7 March many were slain during the fair at Stamford.⁴⁷ Government records refer to serious assaults on Jews at Colchester, Thetford and Ospringe in Kent.⁴⁸

Although chroniclers disagree on the date of the outbreak of violence at Bury St Edmunds, Ralph of Diss dates it to 18 March which he maintained was the peaceful Jewish festival of Palm Branches. For the Bury Jewish community it was far from peaceful and it is claimed that some 57 Jews were slaughtered.⁴⁹ At Bury St Edmunds Christian-Jewish relations had been marred by another ritual murder accusation. In 1181 it had been alleged that the Jews of Bury St Edmunds had crucified a young Christian boy called Robert.⁵⁰ The local chronicler, Jocelin de Brakelond, who had become a monk in the abbey of Bury in 1173, did not hint at the guilt of the Jews for the alleged murder and furthermore makes little reference to the accusation or the massacre. Certainly the presence of Jews in Bury had not been popular. In the town there had been an ongoing struggle about jurisdiction over the Jews between the abbot and the Crown. The Jews were not men of St Edmund's and under the abbot's jurisdiction but they were the King's men. It appears that now Abbot Sampson, who was himself deeply in debt to the Jews, took the opportunity to banish the Jews from Bury forever.⁵¹

William of Newburgh recorded one of the provincial massacres at Lynn in some detail. In Lynn the spark for the massacre was provided by a Jew who had converted to Christianity. The local Jewish community, 'thirsting for blood of a deserter and traitor', allegedly seized arms and attacked the new convert in the street, and he headed for the nearest church to shelter. But the 'madmen', as Newburgh called them, did not give up. They besieged the church and tried to break down the doors and drag the fugitive out for punishment. A clamour was raised by those inside the church and help was summoned. The shouting and noise alerted the Christian inhabitants for miles around. Many joined in the struggle but 'worked half-heartedly for fear of the King'. Their efforts were boosted by a group

of young foreigners who attacked the 'insolent assailants more stoutly'. The Jewish posse fled, a few were killed in flight and the Christian mob now turned on them and started to burn Jewish properties. Many other Jews were killed. The next day the mob killed a Jewish physician, a respected member of both communities, who had started to speak out against the murders. The gang of Christians seized him and put him to the sword. The group of young foreigners, loaded with booty, returned to their ships and went away before the King's officers began an enquiry. The inhabitants of Lynn blamed the whole affair on the young aliens who had got away.

At Stamford on 7 March 1190, at the annual fair, 'a number of youths who had taken the Lord's sign to start for Jerusalem who had come together from different provinces' were blamed with starting the massacre of the Stamford Jewish community. Once again it was easy to blame outsiders but certainly one chronicler alludes to a motive:

They were indignant that the enemies of the cross of Christ who dwelt there should possess so much when they had not enough for the expenses of so great a journey . . . considering, therefore, that they could be doing honour to Christ if they attacked his enemies, whose goods they were longing for, they boldly rushed upon them, nobody either of the inhabitants of the place or of those who had come to the fair opposing such daring persons and some even helping them.⁵²

Some of the Stamford Jews were slain, but the rest escaped by retreating to the castle. Jewish properties were pillaged and a great quantity of money was taken. Yet not all Christians took part and some, like the Bishop of Lincoln, were quick to put a stop to a rather strange martyrdom that took place in connection with the Stamford massacre. One of the plunderers, John, described as 'a most audacious young man', fled the scene of the crime and went off to Northampton where he deposited a part of his money with a landlord of an inn. The landlord murdered him and took the stolen money for himself. It was said that John's dead body performed miracles and many flocked to hear the tale, hoping to be cured, and crowded to his grave. It was Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, who heard of it

and immediately put a stop to the hysteria paid to what he considered to be a false martyr. Yet, even Bishop Hugh was unable to stop the carnage spreading to his own cathedral town of Lincoln.

From Stamford the violent attacks spread slowly, but surely, northwards. As another chronicler records:

The men of Lincoln hearing of what was being done to the Jews, seizing the opportunity and encouraged by these examples, thought that something should be attempted and gathering in a mob broke out into a sudden rising against their Jewish fellow citizens. But they (the Jews) rendered more cautious by knowing the fate or the terror of their fellows in various places, had betaken themselves with their money to the fortified part of the town. And so nothing much being done, though much investigation was carried on by the royal officials, that vain rising quickly subsided.⁵³

In Lincoln the blame was not put on the presence of foreigners or outsiders; the rising was the work of the locals. The fortified part of the town was the Bail, where Aaron of Lincoln and his family had settled. We know from surviving records the subsequent action that was taken against the perpetrators and that some of the Lincoln mob were townsmen and numbered among them wealthy merchants like Godwin the Rich, Reimbald of Wigford and William son of Warner, as well as craftsmen and other local artisans.

Despite the fear of the recriminations that might be taken by the representatives of the King, the violence and killings of *Shabbat ha Gadol* eventually reached York. York's townspeople, led by local knights, burst into the house of Benedict of York in Spen Lane. Benedict had been one of the Jewish delegation to the coronation in Westminster and subsequently he had been forcibly converted and then killed in London. The York rioters now killed Benedict's widow and children and set fire to his house. The York Jewish community took refuge in the castle and 'carried into it huge weights of their monies equal to the royal treasures'. The mob then set upon Josce of York's house in Coney Street. Some of the rioters also tried to baptise the Jews by force: 'those who refused to accept the sacrament of life, even as a matter of pretence, were butchered without mercy'.⁵⁴

The violent crowd even used siege towers against the Jews who had taken refuge in the castle. According to several chroniclers, the leader of the rabble was a holy man. Tradition has it that this bellicose monk was a member of the minor local order of Praemonstratensian Canons. He stood dressed, we are told, in his white surplice, which he considered to be as a coat of mail, and reiterated: 'Destroy the enemies of Jesus!' Before he went to join the attack and assist in battering the walls, he swallowed a consecrated wafer, but even this did not protect him from a rock thrown from the castle walls that struck and killed him. His death further enraged the mob. Besieged on all sides, the Jews then made a suicide pact, preferring martyrdom to conversion. Urged on by the exhortations of a visiting French Rabbi, Yomtob of Joigny, they set fire to the castle where they were sheltering.⁵⁵ Josce of York cut his wife's throat with his own hand and then dispatched his sons. Then Yomtob made a speech that echoed that of Eleasar at Masada, as reported by Josephus, and killed Josce and himself as other York Jews ended their lives.⁵⁶ Next morning at daybreak, when the besiegers gathered to deliver the final assault, the few Jews who had not killed themselves were persuaded to throw open the gates with promises of clemency if they converted to Christianity. As they ventured out they were set upon and massacred. Among all the chroniclers who reported the mass killings only one lone voice deplored the massacres. Ralph of Diss ended his account with the following: 'It can not be believed that so sad and fatal a death of the Jews can have pleased prudent men, since that saying of David so often comes to our ears – "Do not Slay them"'.⁵⁷

When he heard the news, Richard I took immediate action against those who had killed what he considered to be 'his' Jews. The reprisals on the York citizens, while perhaps not as drastic as the fate that met the doorkeeper of Westminster Hall at Richard's coronation, were severe. Mass anarchy and disobedience were not to be tolerated by a new King. On 26 March 1190, a messenger from London had arrived in Normandy to inform the royal court of the news. Richard immediately dispatched his new Chancellor, William de Longchamp, to England. He gathered a force and arrived in York finally on 3 May. By this time the leading perpetrators had fled.

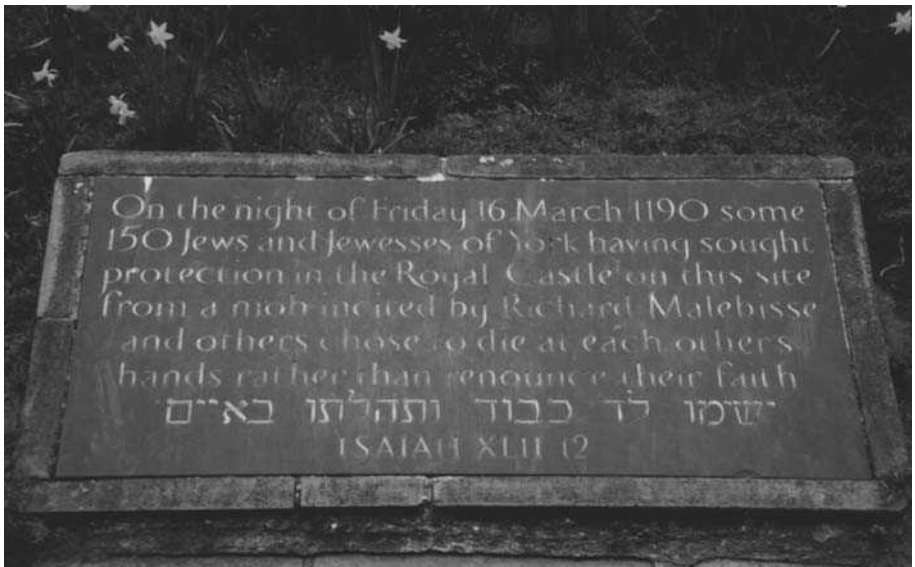
Immediately, Longchamp dismissed the sheriff and the constable of the castle and confiscated much land in and around the city. Naturally York's citizens denied that they had been involved, but 50 or 60 leading wealthy citizens of York were heavily fined. This time the blame was clearly based not on culpability but on wealth. The subsequent royal enquiry revealed the names of three prominent perpetrators: Robert of Ghent, Robert de Turnham and Richard Malebisse. All had fled the scene of the crime.⁵⁸

Chroniclers and other records confirm that all three had their own motives for the killings. Robert of Ghent had been indebted to Aaron of Lincoln and to a Jew called Brun of Stamford. Robert of Turnham had been indebted to Aaron of Lincoln. By marriage he was a member of the Fossard family, patrons of the parish church of St Crux in York and also owners of houses in Spen Lane, thus close neighbours of Benedict of York.⁵⁹ The clearest motive for the massacre came from Richard Malebisse or Richard the Evil Beast. Malebisse was indebted to Aaron of York and that may be why the rioters targeted the Minster and burned all the bonds that were owed to Jews. Malebisse had a mansion in the village of Acaster Malebis, just outside York, and a house at Copmanthorpe on the banks of the Ouse, even closer to York. His family had held lands in Lincolnshire and by 1182 he too was in debt to Aaron of Lincoln. For his part in the slaughter, Malebisse's estates were seized and his esquires, Walter de Carlton and Richard de Kukeney, were imprisoned. By 1193 Richard Malebisse was worming his way back to favour and paid £13 6s 8d for the restoration of some of his lands that had been seized because of his part in the 'killing of the Jews of York'. When John came to the throne, Malebisse returned to favour, and his lands were restored. Ironically, in 1198, Malebisse founded a Premonstratensian monastery in Lincolnshire, the same order as the monk who had whipped up the rabble on the night of the massacre.⁶⁰

The damage that was done to the York community was somewhat over-estimated by some of the chroniclers. The Jewish chronicler Ephraim of Bonn puts the number of Jews who died in Clifford's Tower at 150.⁶¹ Yet Jewish residence in York did not cease in 1190, as it did at Bury

St Edmunds. Barrie Dobson has shown that soon after the massacre at least some Jews returned to the city. Nor did the burning of the bonds and the massacre destroy all Jewish business. The heirs of Benedict of York, who somehow survived the carnage, paid the Crown £466 13s 4d for the right to have their inheritance and to collect their father's outstanding debts.⁶² By 1210, York was again a city inhabited by Jews but now they were under the protection of the Crown. The townspeople were punished with large fines that were used by the government to rebuild the castle as the symbol and tool of its authority. The rebuilding cost between 1190 and 1194 was £247 8s 5d, with £190 being spent on the castle within six months of the massacre.⁶³

The massacres and accusations were not to end at York. The Jewish communities rebuilt their lives, but were under constant threat of attack. Although there seems to have been no massacre at Winchester in 1190, the city was not a safe haven. In 1192, an allegation of ritual murder shattered



3 Plaque commemorating the mass suicide of over 100 Jews at Clifford's Tower in York in March 1190.

any hope of good relations in Winchester, which Richard of Devizes had described as ‘the Jerusalem of the Jews.’⁶⁴ An apprentice, on the advice of a French Jewish cobbler, went to England, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’, to seek service. He carried a letter of introduction to a member of the Winchester Jewish community. On his way to find employment he fell in with a boy of the same age and they were eventually offered work by a Winchester Jew. On Good Friday the first boy did not turn up for work. The second boy sought out the Jew and challenged him over the disappearance of his friend. There followed a barrage of accusations of as cannibalism and throat-cutting against the Jew and the final allegation of ritual crucifixion. The second boy tried to supply a witness and to have the Jew brought to trial. He failed because he was underage and the Jewish community purportedly paid off the judges.⁶⁵

The ritual murder accusations continued in the thirteenth century. In Lincoln, in 1202, two Jews were suspected of killing a child whose body had been found outside the city walls. At Stamford, in 1222, it was claimed that Jews played games that mocked Christianity.⁶⁶ In 1225, a jury in Winchester found two Jews guilty of murdering a child, four others were freed on a heavy bail. In the same year, a Winchester Jew was accused of killing a girl but was freed on pledge because it was later reported that the girl was still alive. In 1230, a Jewish boy went missing in Norwich and his disappearance, which once again was blamed on the Jewish community, led to a massive hunt. It also seems to have led to worsening relations between the Jews and their Gentile neighbours.⁶⁷ In 1232, some Jews were imprisoned at Winchester because they were held responsible for the death of Stephen, a one-year-old boy who had been dismembered, castrated and had had his eyes and heart removed. The accused were later freed, while the boy’s mother, who had also been arrested, was kept in prison.⁶⁸ In 1244, the body of a baby was found in St Benet’s cemetery in London. On examination it was found that there were marks on the body that were thought to be Hebrew words. The Canons of St Paul’s immediately seized the corpse and solemnly buried it near the high altar – another victim and a further accusation.⁶⁹ The spectre of irrational accusations and venomous

allegations still pursued the Jew. By the middle of the thirteenth century there were four shrines to alleged victims of Jewish ritual murder in existence. Yet until the mid-thirteenth century, with the possible exception of Norwich, no secular authority had ever investigated any of the allegations in any great detail.

The alleged murder of the boy Hugh of Lincoln received royal attention and an ensuing investigation that left behind the most copious evidence for any ritual murder allegation against the Jews. The evidence can be found in the chronicles, the governmental records, myth and even some actual material evidence. According to the monk-historian Mathew Paris, on 27 July 1255 the Jews of Lincoln stole an eight-year-old Christian boy called Hugh and sent invitations to other Jewish communities to join them in Lincoln. When they were gathered, a crucifixion was enacted, with Hugh as victim. A Lincoln Jew was appointed to play Pontius Pilate, and the boy was tortured, stabbed, crucified and disembowelled. When the boy had been missing for several days, his mother searched for him and was told that he had last been seen playing with some Jewish boys and entering the house of a Jew. She went into the house and found the boy's body lying in a well.⁷⁰ A local knight, John of Lexington, was present at the discovery and a confession was later made by a Jew called Copin. He claimed that the Jews could not get rid of the disembowelled body. They had buried it but it had been spat up again from the earth. Finally, they had dumped the corpse in the well where it had been discovered. Subsequently Copin was executed and 91 other Jews were taken to London under arrest. According to Matthew Paris, all the Jews were guilty and this was a premeditated murder as well as a full-blown conspiracy.⁷¹

The evidence of other chronicles shows slight variations. In the *Annals of Burton on Trent*, the murder supposedly occurred on 31 July. They blamed a Jew called Jopin as being responsible for the kidnap of Hugh, a schoolboy aged 9, towards sunset on 5 July. The boy was said to have been concealed for 26 days and starved. Finally, at a council of Jews made up of Lincoln Jews and others, it was determined that Hugh should be put to death. The Jews allegedly stripped the boy, flogged him, spat at him,

cut off the cartilage of his nose and his upper lips, finally breaking his jaw and his main upper teeth. They then stabbed him all over and lanced him in the side. The body was dumped in a well. It was eventually drawn out by a woman who had been blind for 15 years. Miraculously, contact with the body made her recover her sight. The body was then taken into the cathedral. King Henry III arrived in Lincoln and ordered the arrest of the whole Jewish community. John of Lexington forced a confession from Jopin and the other Jews were arrested and taken to London, where 18 were killed.⁷²

The diffusion of the legend of Little St Hugh perhaps owes more to popular ballads than it does to the chroniclers. An Anglo-Norman ballad retold the story and embellished it in 93 verses. It claimed that Hugh was kidnapped in Lincoln at the start of August, when there was a great gathering of Jews, by a Jew called Peitevin. The boy was stripped and tied up by Jopin. There then followed a ceremonial auction of the child to a Jew called Hagin for 30 silver pennies. After his purchase, Hagin pronounced the death sentence and pierced the boy's heart in two. The aftermath of the murder again retraced the difficulties of getting rid of the body and the miraculous healing of the blind woman. The plot was revealed to the authorities by a converted Jew called Falsim.⁷³ The transmission of the story was both wide and diverse. Over 60 different ballads exist in Scots, French and English. In a version sung in Shepherds Bush in 1872, the murder scene switched to Scotland. The ballad of the 'Jew's daughter' circulated widely in nineteenth-century folk music, spreading to America, with versions being sung in Philadelphia and Baltimore. A later version, performed in New York's Central Park in 1956, became the ballad of 'Little Harry Hughes'.⁷⁴

John de Lexington's part in the matter is confirmed by most of the sources. He was 'a man of learning, wise and prudent' and a member of Henry III's civil service, and had been a royal envoy to Rome, France and Scotland. He was also the brother of Bishop Henry of Lexington, who had been elevated from Dean to Bishop in 1253. John had lands in Laxton (Lexington), 15 miles west of Lincoln, which he had inherited



4 Late thirteenth-century illustration of ritual murder accompanying the story of Adam of Bristol.

from his older brother in 1250.⁷⁵ In 1255, he had been with Henry III on a journey to Scotland. By the time John and Henry III arrived in Lincoln on 4 October the body of St Hugh had been buried and work had probably started on a make-shift shrine.⁷⁶ John had only about 12 hours to investigate the case. He neither saw the body nor did he interview the 92 Jews who were subsequently arrested. After what was described as interrogation in 'diverse ways', a confession was obtained from a Jew called Copin, on which the case was judged.

Thus on 4 October 1255, Copin, a Lincoln Jew, was arrested, interrogated, probably tortured, charged with murder, dragged through the city behind a horse and finally hanged at Canwick. On his evidence alone some 91 other Jews were arrested and sent to the Tower. All south-coast ports were alerted to stop any Jews leaving the country. By 22 October the 91 Jews imprisoned in the Tower attended a hearing. On 22 November 18 Jews, who refused to plead guilty, were drawn through the streets of London before daybreak and then hanged on specially constructed gallows. The remaining 73 were reduced to 71 when one converted to Christianity and another, Rabbi Benedict son of Moses of London, accepted the verdict and paid a large fine. Benedict was later declared guiltless by Hugh's mother. At a retrial on 3 February 1256, the 71 were condemned to death as well as any other Jews who had consented to the murder. Finally, in May 1256, after the intercession of the Franciscans, the Dominicans and Richard of Cornwall, 71 Jews were released.⁷⁷

A shrine to St Hugh now graced Lincoln cathedral and the legend lingers on. For a short period it was quite popular with pilgrims. In 1277 the shrine received £21 3s 4d in oblations but only 6d by 1341, rising to 10 1/2d in 1420–1.⁷⁸ In 1791, St Hugh's coffin was opened. It revealed the skeleton of a 3ft 3in male child wrapped in lead. The metatarsals and carpals were unbroken and the rest of the bones were found to be intact, including the jaw bone. The bones bore no relation to the gory descriptions in the chronicles. However, innuendo and accusation had wreaked a vengeance on the Jews of Lincoln. Soon after the affair, which took the lives of at least 20 Jews, records that bear references to Lincoln Jews style

them as 'damned', 'hanged', 'fugitive' and 'outlawed', and in Hebrew, '*hakko-dosh*', or 'martyred'. For many years after, as a testimony to the witchhunt, Lincoln Jews signed their business deeds describing themselves as 'son of the martyred Vives or Moses'.⁷⁹

It was not rumour or innuendo but economic envy that produced even more Jewish martyrs during the open civil war of the baronial risings in 1258–66. This period saw the Jews being used as pawns by both sides. For financial reasons the Crown tried to protect its Jewish subjects while the indebted insurgents tried to destroy them. The general dislocation gave impoverished debtors the chance to liquidate their debts by attempting to destroy their creditors and the bonds and contracts that tied them. For different reasons the Jewish *archae* suddenly became a target for both sides. Simon de Montfort used the annulment of Jewish debts almost as a recruiting device. De Montfort's own feelings for the Jews were clear. He had already tried to run them out of Leicester with only limited success.⁸⁰ Now his adherents wreaked their own revenge. In the south-east in 1261, the Canterbury Jewry was attacked and many of its inhabitants were violently assaulted.⁸¹ In 1264, Gilbert de Clare, the Earl of Gloucester, captured the town and sacked the Jewry.⁸² According to Gervase, 'at this same time nearly all the Jews were destroyed and exiled'.⁸³ Gloucester's followers forcibly entered the house of Simon Pabley, the Christian chirographer, and stole the *archa*. The *archae* at Bristol and Bedford were also burned.⁸⁴

The disturbances also made some Jews attempt to save their assets. In Kent, Aaron of Sittingbourne took two fine linen mantles and cloaks and four silver buckles, with other valuables, and left them in two bags in the house of Alan and Dionisia of Sittingbourne. He locked them in a chest and took away the key. As troops who were headed for the siege of Rochester Castle moved into Sittingbourne, both Alan and Dionisia took the chest and their own valuables to the church 'where it might be safeguarded from the pillagers'. When the pillagers arrived, unknown armed men demanded that the townsfolk of Sittingbourne surrender Aaron to them or they would burn the town. Eventually Alan confessed that the Jew had gone but that his goods were in the church. The armed band entered

the church and took away Aaron's chest. A year later, in an accusation of theft, Dionisia was accused of having one of the stolen buckles. She claimed that Aaron's wife had given it to her for a loan of 4s 4d a week before Aaron had made his deposit in the chest.⁸⁵

Further despoliation occurred in the west when Robert de Ferrars, the Earl of Derby, stormed Worcester in February 1262 and seized the *archa*. Most of the Jews who lived in Worcester were massacred. The *archa* was subsequently taken to the earl's castle at Tutbury. When Prince Edward finally took Tutbury, after the fall of Northampton, he broke the *archa* open and sent the documents for safe-keeping to Bristol.⁸⁶ In the south, in 1265, Simon de Montfort junior, who was on his way to Kenilworth, attacked the Winchester Jewry.⁸⁷ In Easter week 1264, John fitz John, 'one of the most ruthless and vigorous of Earl Simon's henchmen', led the attack on the London Jews and is said to have killed Isaac fil Aaron, one of the chief Jews of the time, as well as Cok fil Abraham, with his own hands.⁸⁸ Many London Jews had their houses burnt and looted. The Jewish survivors of the attack, as well as the official records of the financial transactions of the London Jewry, were saved by the justiciar and the mayor and were subsequently sent to the Tower for protection.⁸⁹ Fitz John allegedly shared the plunder with de Montfort himself.

In 1265, John Dayville, the leader of a party of renegade rebel barons and referred to as the 'Disinherited', attacked Lincoln. The band had been sheltering in the Isle of Axholme to the north of Lincoln and now swooped on the city. The rebels entered the city and besieged the castle. Henry III sent his son, the Lord Edward, to deal with them. Unfortunately for the Jews of Lincoln, it was too late. The rebels had taken the opportunity to march down from the Bail and to sack the Jewry.⁹⁰ According to Walter of Hemingburgh, they entered the synagogue, tore up the scrolls of the Law, killed many Jews and, as a final gesture, seized all the bonds and charters belonging to the Jews and set fire to them.⁹¹ After the event, Henry III ordered 24 citizens of Lincoln to protect the Jews and their goods.⁹² The business records had been thoroughly destroyed. Almost as a last act, in 1266, the 'Disinherited', who had then been using Cambridge as a supply

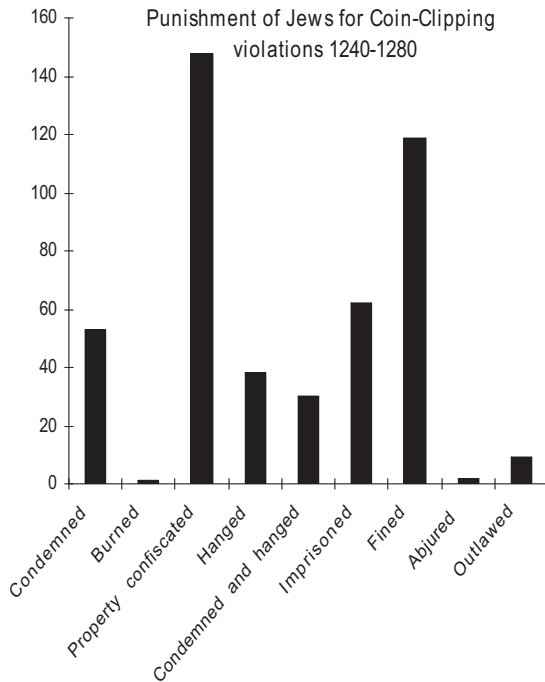
base, massacred some Cambridge Jews and took the *archa* to Ely.⁹³

The Jews depended on the protection of their royal masters. During the upheavals of the 1260s it is clear that Jews flocked into Oxford from the surrounding countryside for protection. After the baronial wars, the English Jewry was undoubtedly in a deplorable state.⁹⁴ At Wilton, the Jewish losses had been so severe that Henry III 'out of compassion' appointed a number of burgesses to be their guardians and defenders.⁹⁵ Henry had also ordered the citizens of York to protect their Jews for 'certain persons . . . threaten them touching their bodies and goods, whereby they fear grave peril'.⁹⁶ After the civil war and the dislocation there was a new royal policy and an attempt to protect the Jews and ensure that the royal business they facilitated was not affected. The burgesses of Bridport were ordered to restore the goods that they had seized from the Jews during the disturbances.⁹⁷

A decade later, Henry III's son Edward I, on his return from his Crusade, tried to address the Jewish question by issuing the Statute of the Jewry of 1275. This new approach to the Jewish problem was also a harbinger of mass arrests of Jews. Between 1275 and 1277 many Jews spent time in the Tower of London. Many Jews lived as a virtual community under the shadow of Hagin's tower.⁹⁸ A new accusation, a new pretext of a new crime committed by the Jews, was to turn the Tower into a place of mass execution. This time the charge was of debasing the coin of the realm, of clipping the King's coin. In February 1275, a young Jewess, Belasset of Lincoln, was married in Lincoln.⁹⁹ Three years later, in 1278, she was hanged by her neck, as were 293 Jews in London for allegedly clipping the coin.¹⁰⁰ In November 1278, many Jews were arrested for having clipped the coin. John of Oxnead claimed:

All the Jews no matter what condition age or sex were suddenly captured and imprisoned in castles throughout England under guard. Whilst they were so detained a thorough search of their houses was made and they found evidence of clipped money as a sign of their guilt.¹⁰¹

Another chronicler stressed that these mass arrests were made by night, and some Jews were hanged for coinage offences.¹⁰² Certainly the swoop on the coin-clippers and the Jewish community was thorough. In December 1278, all ports were put on alert for Jews and Christians smuggling clipped coins or ingots out of the country.¹⁰³ In January 1279, special justices were appointed to deal with the coin-clippers and their accomplices and those who had looted the empty Jewish houses. There was a lull in the trials and hangings during Easter 1279, but in May it became clear that Christians were trying to denounce Jews for coin-clipping. This led to a sudden change of policy that allowed imprisoned Jews to pay fines; those accused could, if they could afford to, make financial settlement with the Crown for their alleged crimes.¹⁰⁴ Over 600 Jews were imprisoned within the confines of the Tower and the Constable, Giles de Oudenarde, had to pay 30 foot-serjeants for guarding the extra influx of Jewish prisoners.¹⁰⁵ In late November 1279 the Crown directed its officials in charge of the purge to open the *archa* in 19 towns and to remove the bonds and



agreements of Jews who were 'lately condemned, fugitive or converted to the Christian faith'.¹⁰⁶ The various accounts about the events of 1278–9 show how many Jews suffered either arrest or hanging. Some idea of the increasing severity of the punishments can be seen from comparing the penalties imposed on Jews accused of coin-clipping between 1240 and 1280 with those penalties and hangings imposed in 1279. Of 481 Jews accused of coin-clipping during 1240–80, confiscation and fining seemed to be the more normal punishment.

Yet hangings and imprisonment became the norm for the late 1270s. The hangings of 1278–9 probably represented a worse and more terrifying attack on the Jewish population than the massacres of 1190. In a single day in London 293 Jews were hanged. Over 600 Jews were imprisoned at the Tower alone. Others were accused and hanged locally, their houses looted and deeds destroyed or passed to the royal treasury. The records became full of references to hanged or condemned Jews. This was an unprecedented attack that saw hatred and denunciation at its most virulent. It was not to be the last such onslaught.¹⁰⁷

The new hostility towards the Jews led to the revival of old accusations. In a narrative about Adam of Bristol, written in the 1280s and described as *fabula ineptissima* or 'very unfit or even silly', the theme of ritual murder was once again brought to the fore. The text is full of invective and contains much villany, vilification and hatred towards the 'murdering Jew'.¹⁰⁸ It encapsulates the antipathy towards the Jews as promulgated by the literate and aimed at the illiterate. It takes the form of a confession by Samuel, a Jew of Bristol, who divulged to his sister that he and his wife and son had ritually murdered a Christian boy.¹⁰⁹ As Samuel's confession went on, it appeared that he was also guilty of further murders.

One day, Samuel, with the offer of an apple, enticed a boy called Adam from the parish of St Mary Redcliffe into his house. Adam was subsequently given food and drink by Samuel's family. They then all attacked him. During the course of the attack they tortured him, cutting him with a dagger, beating him, making him swallow hot coals and then roasting him on a spit over the fire before finally nailing him to a cross. In terror and

anguish, Adam called on the Virgin Mary to help him. In deep contrast to the saintly boy, the villainous Samuel then murdered him while cursing Jesus and the whore Mary and spitting.¹¹⁰

As Adam was dying, a phantom voice in Hebrew told them to stop. Samuel's wife and son panicked. Samuel's wife pleaded with him that they should take the boy down and place him in bed. Samuel insisted that he remained on the cross and scoffed that perhaps Christ would come and save him. The wife then spoke with Adam and asked him what he had seen and heard when he had been in the fire. Adam described a vision of a beautiful woman who spoke English and who sat with him kissing him and comforting him in the heat of the fire. He also saw a little boy kissing his wounded hands and feet and saying, 'You are my beloved brother'. The Jewess asked whether the apparitions knew who had been responsible for his agonies. Adam replied that the little boy who was with him on the cross was Jesus of Nazareth, at which point a clear voice rang out announcing his name. At this point Samuel lost his temper, took out a dagger and stabbed Adam in his right-hand side through to the heart, as well as raging that even if Jesus appeared here and now he would crucify him as well.

A heavenly chorus of thousands of voices now filled the room. Samuel's wife declared that she had sinned and that she intended to be baptised to atone. Samuel denounced Christ as being *maleficus* and stabbed his wife four times. Samuel's son also declared that they had sinned and was also duly dispatched. Samuel then took Adam down from the cross and hid the body in the privy. By now both distraught and confused, Samuel announced that he would never crucify another Christian child. He covered the bodies of his wife and son and went to sleep. The cock crowed and Samuel, now needing to use the privy, saw a vision of a threatening angel armed with a burning sword, which prevented him from using it. Samuel ran to find his sister to confess.

Samuel's sister took control of the situation and told him that they needed to get rid of the bodies. Although Samuel urged against it, his sister now entered his house and was greeted by a marvellous light and fragrance emanating from the sewer. She insisted that Adam's body be moved from

the privy immediately. Samuel agreed and said he was willing to pay £26 13s 4d for the body to be removed and buried. His sister suggested that she could find a corrupt priest to do the deed for much less. They decided, in secret, to approach a priest and to concoct a story that Adam was their son, who had been crucified by other Jews. They also decided that they would bury Samuel's wife and son with all their belongings and claim that they had left the country.

After a long discussion, they decided to find a priest, but it was the Feast of the Assumption and all the clergy would either be busy or eating, drinking and feasting. She went into the town and found an Irish priest, who was on his way to Rome. The priest complained about the general absence of hospitality in Bristol. Samuel's sister invited him back to her house. The Irish priest had little grasp of English and did not recognise her as a Jewess but asked for food and for pork in particular. She claimed that she could not offer pork because pigs were leprous and ate human excrement but that she could give the priest and his entourage good locally produced beef and chicken. She gave the priest and his companions hospitality and the offer of a meal.

Once back in the house the priest, by now inebriated, blessed the food, made the sign of the cross and invoked the Trinity and seemingly did not notice Samuel in the background spitting on the floor three times. After eating, they all had more drink and the Jews' predicament was explained to the company. Just as it was time to sleep, the priest even propositioned Samuel's sister's Christian maid, who declined the offer as she was a virgin. When the household woke next morning, Samuel's sister suggested that they should all go to church to hear mass first. The priest declined and tried to bow out, saying that he would pray for his hostess and Samuel. His hostess offered him hard cash to sing a mass and the priest accepted. After mass, having agreed to a fee of £4 13s 4d to keep quiet and to help get rid of the body, the priest was led to Samuel's house by the maid.

On arrival the maid was astonished by the beautiful heavenly chorus coming from the house. Her mistress was quick to point out that it was heavenly angels singing for the soul of her sanctified, martyred son, Adam.

The priest was about to enter the house with two of his companions when two passers by informed him that he was about to enter a Jewish house. However the priest did not understand them and, in need of the privy, he entered Samuel's house. Just as he entered the latrine, the priest heard a voice that told him he was a sinner and must confess and do penance before entering. This was too much for him and he left the burial party standing at the door and ran off to find a local parish priest. The Irish priest found the local priest, who happened to be sitting in his garden with his wife. The two priests conversed in French and then went to the local church where the Irish priest made full confession and took absolution. The Irish priest then returned to Samuel's house.

While he had been away the burial party had experienced another vision. This time they had seen a woman and a child dressed in purple robes surrounded by a wonderful light. The priest again approached the privy with fear and trepidation and saw the sight of a thousand angels praising the Virgin Mary and her son. He was then instructed by an angel to make a coffin and to take the body of Adam back to Ireland for burial. But, in return, the angel demanded the conversion of Samuel and his sister. While the family did not convert, they were more than willing to get the body shifted. Samuel duly went to town to fetch wood to make a coffin. The priest, with the aid of three angels, made a coffin, laid Adam's body into it and carried it with great care to a ship that was waiting at the quayside. The priest was given further instructions by the angel that, after burying the body in Ireland, he should continue on pilgrimage to Rome and on his return should not try to find the grave, as God wished it to be hidden.

While such a story can be seen as reflecting attitudes towards Jews in the closing decades of their presence in England, it also does much to denigrate the priesthood and to amplify the holiness of Christianity by stressing and overplaying the supernatural powers of Christianity and visions. It demonises Samuel as the murderous Jew. It also engendered a 'vast and abysmal' hatred that stirred up and tore at people's minds.¹¹¹ It made a powerful story for both literate and illiterate, which once again singled out the Jews as villains. It rekindled and emphasised the idea of

ritual murder and the martyrdom of young Christian boys. Such a genre reappearing in the 1280s also carried with it the death knell for the Jews of England. The making of Christian saints led to the making of Jewish martyrs.

Christians and Jews

The Jews were controlled by the government, resented and hated by the general population, pushed to the fringe of society, and encouraged by Christians to provide a means to avoid usury. It was Jewish business technique and acumen that brought economic advancement to this country. In effect the Jews had helped to foster a revolution in the provision of capital in medieval England. Ironically for them, it was the nurturing of credit that was, in part, to be their downfall. Once Christians had both benefited from Jewish credit and had started to understand the intricacies of this financial revolution then they wanted to recreate it for themselves. However, the consequence of the lending and provision of credit had other disastrous side effects for the Jewish community and in many ways dictated and moulded the relationship between Jew and Christian.

Given the state of the economy at the turn of the thirteenth century, it can come as little surprise that two clauses about Jewish lending were included in Magna Carta by the rebel barons. The financial pressures that John had enforced on the Crown's debtors led to resentment and difficulties from some of those who had sought Jewish credit. However, there were many other, more immediate, mounting financial problems. It was customary for the debts of the father to become the debts of the son, as interest went on mounting. The barons referred to this fact in Magna Carta, and tried to limit this post-mortem transmission of liability for debt. The barons suggested that when a debtor died there should be an automatic moratorium on the interest on his debts. A second clause also tried to protect the widow and the children of someone who had died indebted to the Jews and to others.¹ There can be no doubt that these were sensible

suggestions but that is all they remained. It was too late and just as John had pressed his debtors and his Jews, so they had pressed theirs.² Indeed, because these clauses were actually seen as an invasion of the royal privacy they were omitted from the re-issues of the charter in 1216 and 1217.³ It is little surprise that indebtedness and particularly indebtedness to the King's Jews appeared again, among baronial requests later in the century.⁴

Such problems of mounting debts had come to crisis point in 1190–1 and 1215. Indebtedness had also made a change in the feudal checks and balances and now allowed various sections of society to aggrandise themselves by taking over debts that were secured with land. For the debtor this was more than just mortgage repossession – this was the total loss of his or her security. Until the mid-thirteenth century it was the Church that had generally supplied a bailout for those who were in debt. The monasteries could either supply money to help people pay the debt or in effect take over the debts while at the same time having the use and rights of debtor's original security, which was normally land. It was a solution that would allow wealthy institutions with liquid capital to aggrandise themselves with fairly small inconvenience. Under Henry III's government the relationship between Jewish businessmen and religious houses almost became a recognisable partnership.

Richardson identified 25 religious houses that were involved in the redemption of indebted lands between the reigns of Henry II and Henry III.⁵ During the period 1150–1250 it is possible to identify over 40 religious institutions that benefited from buying up land that had in effect been mortgaged to the Jews. Most of these transactions were evidenced by the issue of Jewish *starra* or simply noted in monastic cartularies up and down the country.⁶ Even those religious institutions that did not make use of the chance to buy up land were also becoming closely involved with the Jews. Canterbury Cathedral Priory borrowed directly from Jews as early as 1223; it also relied on Jews for ready cash when representatives attended fairs.⁷ A series of documents known as the Pollard Starrs shows Canterbury Cathedral Priory had started to dabble in what might today be called the 'repossession market'.⁸ The plight of a local landlord, Peter

de Bending, was so bad in the 1230s that over half a millennium later, a nineteenth-century clerical antiquarian, the Reverend Larkin, illustrated how in his words, de Bending had:

... became entangled step by step with those merciless money-lenders, who exacted an enormous interest, and were ever binding his estates more and more; till he was driven to alienate them all to the Priory of Christ Church Canterbury to pay off his debts and release him from his thraldom.⁹

In 1230, because of debt, de Bending mortgaged his manor of Westwell, near Ashford, to Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, in return for an advance of £171 17s and the manor of Little Chart, which de Bending was now to hold at rent. By January 1234, de Bending was £33 6s 8d in arrears with the rent for Little Chart; the priory in return for all rights to the manor of Westwell dissolved the debt. Still short of money, de Bending turned to Jewish financiers, and a little later, in 1234, borrowed £2 4s from Moses Crispin at the rate of interest of two pence in the pound per week. In November 1234, he borrowed £5 a year for the next ten years from Benedict Crispin at the same rate of interest. In March 1235, by two bonds he borrowed a further £19 from Jacob Crispin. All the loans were made on the security of de Bending's land and chattels. Still insolvent in 1236, de Bending mortgaged the manor of Little Chart to Bonami, a Jew of Canterbury, reserving the right of a quit rent of one pound of pepper a year. Bonami paid de Bending £200. Finally, in 1237, having mortgaged his property and with no means of paying, de Bending approached the priory of Christ Church and asked them, in return for his manor of Little Chart and another advance of £133 6s 8d, to release him from his debts. All de Bending's transactions with the Jews were paid off and the priory received *starrā* from Benedict and Jacob Crispin, Isaac fil Benedict and Jacob fil Isaac, Aaron Blundin, Joseph fil Moses and Moses fil Jacob, and Bonamicus and Cresselin of Little Chart.

Thus in a period of about seven years the Christ Church Priory had gained Westwell and Little Chart at a relatively cheap price and the Jewish

financiers operating from both Canterbury and London had received their debts and interest.¹⁰ While this particular case may not totally justify the Reverend Larkin's diatribe against the Jews, it clearly demonstrates the complexities of the local land market. Jewish businessmen may or may not have been responsible for Bending's initial indebtedness, but the priory gained two manors, Westwell and Little Chart. Over the next few years the priory also gained the land of Adam de Garewinton, near Adisham, by paying off his debts to Isaac fil Mayer, the land of Nicholas de Borne in Hildinge by paying off his debt to Benjamin fil Mayer, and it gained ten acres of land in Gare for paying off a debt of £6 13s 4d of Henry de Hok to Solomon fil Jesse.¹¹ A powerful informal sleeping partnership had been formed between monastery and Jewish financier whereby the Jewish moneylender could lend knowing that there was a good chance of a local monastery bailing out the debt if the debtor failed.

The pattern was the same elsewhere in the country. In 1237, the Priory of Durham paid off Thomas the Serjeant's debts of £6 to Aaron of York, which had been secured on his land in Northallerton and other places. Aaron issued a *starrum* to the Priory that guaranteed that he no longer had any claim on the debt or the land:

and if it happen that a charter, foot-piece, tally or any other instrument under my name and under the name of Thomas be found in or out of the *archa* of the Lord King, that it shall have no force and be of no value.¹²

Aaron also declared that he would enrol the quitclaim in front of the Justices of the Jews.¹³ In Sussex, the Praemonstratensian Abbey of Durford acquired lands from those who could not meet the loans that they had taken out from Jews. Geoffrey Cook and his wife Eve parted with first a croft and then 16 acres in Nutsted in return for a 2s rent and a lump sum of £13 6s 8d, 'to free the land from the hand of the Jews'. Another acre was later added to this by their son Guy. Similarly Peter Crespi and his wife gave up some of their land in Nutsted 'to get free from debt to the Jews' in return for a down payment of £10 13s 4d and half a pound of cumin.

William son of Otway gave the abbey two yardlands at Sunworth at a rent of 12s and another yardland on the road to Chalton at 4s rent in return for which 'the canons have given me, in my great need, to release me from the hand of the Jews £14 13s 4d and a palfrey and 40 ewes, 50 wethers and 50 lambs . . .'. The priory also gave his family a variety of gold and silver jewellery.¹⁴

The abbeys, priories and monasteries were able to choose the best land and make some extremely advantageous purchases. Such business meant that Jews were frequent visitors to abbeys to finalise or even initiate such transactions. There is evidence from the mid-west of England that the growing relationship between religious houses and Jews also led to the former actually trafficking in Jewish bonds. The ecclesiastical houses, while on the one hand condemning the Jews, were on the other quite happy to do business with them. Leo, a Jew of Worcester, was arrested for forcible entry into the Hospital of Worcester when he tried to get his 'partner', the Abbot of Pershore, to pay up.¹⁵ Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who was known to have allowed Jews to live on his estates and to have bought the exclusive right to collect the debts of another Jew in Gloucestershire, even used the local abbey of Tewkesbury to negotiate a loan on his behalf to finance his Crusade in 1248.¹⁶

It is clear that agreements over mortgages, paying off debts and dealing in Jewish bonds were not just confined to large debts or to religious institutions. Locals with an eye for gaining land might also provide another way out of Jewish debt for encumbered debtors. In Herefordshire in the 1230s Hugh Freman of Shelwick was in debt to the Jews. He was forced to grant his land in Shelwick to de Geyton for the sum of £3 6s 8d so that he could be acquitted of a Jewish debt.¹⁷ A little later he was forced to grant another five acres of land to Thomas de Geyton for £2 for another Jewish debt.¹⁸ In 1248, Philip de Kynemaesbur, who was indebted to the Jews, was forced to lease his land called Yondercumb to the Abbey of St Peter's, Gloucester, for a consideration of £6 13s 4d to pay off the Jews.¹⁹ Neither were such transactions confined to rural lands. In Hereford itself land was pledged to the Jews. Emma, the widow of Hugh le Taillur, was obliged to

release her land in the city to Isaac the Jew of Worcester.²⁰

Because of chance survival it becomes difficult to measure the problems caused by encumbered estates or even to attribute the original debt. In Cambridgeshire in the early thirteenth century, in the village of Barton, Hugh son of Ernald conveyed 12 acres to Walter the cook. In return Walter paid £6 13s 4d to the 'Jews of Cambridge' in order to acquit the said land. In 1253 in the same village John son of Adam of Barton granted a messuage with appurtenances plus eight acres in Barton to his son John, in return for a payment of £5 6s 8d, 'which he gives me so that I may be acquitted in the Jewry of Cambridge'.²¹

Individuals could also obtain encumbered estates and even control over debts owed to Jews. In 1267, Leo fil Preciosa, a London Jew who possibly operated from Hereford, sold all the rents and debts that he had contracted with James de Helyun in the county of Hereford to William de Chysulle. Leo also sold William the right to levy the debts on James de Helyun's land and even offered to help William collect them.²² Others who were indebted made arrangements that led to the granting of corrodies or pensions. Such was the agreement between the monks of Worcester and Alfred of Penn Hall. In about 1230 Alfred gave his consent to the sale of land that he had sold to Sampson Trien to the monks of Worcester. He officially released the monks from 2s owed to him annually by Sampson in return for £1 to enable him to meet his obligations to the Jews of Worcester. He also sold his mother's dower lands which were in the hands of the Jews in return for a crannock (quarter) of hard corn – half wheat, half rye – every six weeks and, as long as his mother was alive, a payment of 6s 8d annually and, after her death, 10s and the right for him to dwell in his house and croft that was his mother's dower. He also agreed that, on his death, the house would revert to the monastery.²³

The issuing of a quitclaim or a *starrum* or even a guarantee that land had not been used to secure an undisclosed debt became increasingly important in land transactions. In Cambridge in late 1253, Thomas de Ho, clerk, granted Peter de Wilburham and Sabina his wife a messuage in Cambridge in the parish of St Peter without Trumpington Gate next door to his croft,

in return for £1 and annual payments of 3s to the nuns of St Radegund and two pairs of white gloves to Thomas' representatives. Thomas promised to maintain the agreement 'against all people, Christians or Jews'. He also ensured that he provided a Hebrew *starrum* signed by Abraham fil Samuel that he was free from debt.²⁴

In Lincolnshire there was a growing market in the sale of mortgaged property to monasteries and other speculators for whom *starra* and similar guarantees were also considered to be important. Sometime in the 1220s, William of Barkwith, who had been indebted to Ursell fil Pucella, granted his lands, which comprised of three bovates with three tofts in Great Sturton and a further bovate that William the son of Gerard held from him, to the church of St Mary and the monks of Kirkstead. Kirkstead paid off William's debt to Ursell in return for his land and duly received a Hebrew quitclaim for the land from Ursell.²⁵ It may well be that the Jews actually wrote these Hebrew documents themselves. In what is described as an amateur example made by Diaia son of Miles in the 1230s, Diaia granted a release to Reginald of Bath, Parson of Great Paxton, of two acres



5 Quitclaim attached by an eight-pointed seal to a charter granting land near Tonbridge, Kent, between Walter of Colverholdene and Blanche his wife which had been obtained by William son of Godfrey the Brewer for £4 13s 4d in 1239. The Hebrew reads: 'I Jacob son of Aaron acknowledge that I release William the Brewer of two measures of land which they call acres which he purchased from Walter of Colverhode from the creation of the world unto the end thereof'.

of land in the fields of Great Paxton that had been taken from Thomas the son of William.²⁶ This economic relationship between the Jews and the local Lincolnshire monasteries, while once again unwelcome for the debtor, was successful for both other parties. However, such transactions were becoming notorious and a new clause became more and more common in Lincolnshire land transfers. It seems to have evolved between 1240 and 1260. The new clause forbade the recipient of the land to alienate the land to either Jew or religious institution. Examples are found in both rural and, more prominently, in urban transactions within the city of Lincoln itself.²⁷ It is even possible that in the city the townspeople might well have feared a Jewish takeover of lands, especially in the popular Jewish areas of St Martin's, the Strait, Brancegate and Michaelgate.

It was not only monasteries and local entrepreneurs who had started to benefit from Jewish finance.²⁸ The royal family took its share from the profits of Jewish lending, but also used their position for their own profit. They provided patronage and protection for several individual Jewish financiers. This handful of 'royal' Jews must have had a very direct relationship with the royal family and their officials. Edward I's uncle, Richard of Cornwall, used Jewish financiers and often seems to have intervened on their behalf.²⁹ Certainly he had a lot to do with encouraging the small number of Jews who, in the 1230s, were living on his lands at Berkhamstead.³⁰ He was able to raise some £2,000 of Jewish financial backing for a Crusade in the late 1230s, and had an *archa* established at his new castle at Wallingford in 1242, so that their deeds would be protected. When, in 1249, Abraham of Berkhamstead was in trouble and imprisoned in the Tower, it was Richard who intervened on his behalf.³¹ Eventually, Abraham became a 'royal Jew' and his debts were collected for Richard's own benefit. Richard also intervened to help save 21 Jews who had been accused of being involved with the alleged murder of Little St Hugh of Lincoln. However, Richard's slightly more favourable treatment of the Jews was not always mirrored by other members of the royal family.³²

Richard's sister-in-law, Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III, was antagonistic towards the Jews, yet benefited from the finance they

provided.³³ She was, as Margaret Howell has described her, 'a seasoned financial practitioner accustomed to quick exploitation of casual wealth and to large scale lending and borrowing'.³⁴ While she may have been full of antipathy for the Jews, she was prepared to receive payments from their profits. Eleanor of Provence's income came from her lands, which she had received as a dowry. She also boosted it by receiving 10 per cent on any voluntary fines over £6 13s 4d that were made to the Crown as part of what was known as Queen's Gold. While Eleanor was young, Henry III ensured that he collected and allocated the money to her. In 1237 such monies were used to buy jewels, to enhance her chamber at Westminster, and to help build a church for the Dominicans at Canterbury.³⁵ By 1240, the Queen had her own officials and started to take more control of her financial affairs, and by 1254 she even appointed her own officials. Such royal clerks handled the day-to-day running of her affairs. Occasionally the Queen was happy to actually receive payments in Jewish bonds taken directly from the *archae*. At other times, via her officials, she insisted on cash only. She had a growing portfolio of Jewish debts and showed favour to certain Jews, like the Evesque family of London, who helped and advised her.³⁶ Eleanor's attitude to the Jews changed suddenly in 1275. When Edward visited his mother early in that year she sought his permission to enter the convent of Amesbury and demanded the removal of all Jews from her dower towns.³⁷ Subsequently Jewish communities were moved on from Marlborough, Devizes, Gloucester, Worcester, Cambridge, Andover, Bath and Guildford. Eleanor was starting to prepare her own way to heaven – a journey that would take her another ten years.³⁸

Kings had their own experiences of the Jewish communities. They met with leaders of the Jewish communities and were at times forced to make judgements on Jews, just as Henry III had in the case of St Hugh of Lincoln.³⁹ The royal family's contact with their Jewish subjects was probably greater than that of most of the population. As a young prince, Lord Edward had grown up in a court that was only too well aware of its Jewish subjects. He found that financiers had their uses and borrowed from them quite early on. He also knew of the growing baronial hatred

for the Jewish financiers.⁴⁰ His brother, Edmund, had connections with some of the richer London Jews, and even had his own 'personal' Jew, the great London entrepreneur Aaron fil Vives.⁴¹

Eleanor of Castile, his Queen, had her own personal Jew, Cok Hagin or Hagin fil Deulecresse, who benefited from her favour and became known as the 'Jew of the King's Consort'. In 1275 he was effectively excommunicated from the Jewish community.⁴² It is, however, hard to understand why, in 1281, Eleanor of Castile recommended him for the position of Archpresbyter of the Jews.⁴³ She favoured other Jews too and seems to have dealt in particular with Jacob of Oxford and Hagin fil Magister Moses, who had been Archpresbyter in 1280.⁴⁴ She certainly profited from the Jewish communities: like her mother-in-law, Eleanor of Provence, her Queen's Gold was often paid to her in Jewish debts.⁴⁵ In 1281 she gained lands worth over £380 per annum from nine knights who were deeply indebted to London Jews. Over the years these unfortunate debtors had amassed debts worth over £3,996 13s 4d to Jews like Jacob of Oxford and Hagin fil Magister Moses. During a decade of dealing with the Jews, the Queen acquired these debts and now tried to liquidate them by taking over the debtor's lands in return for either making extra cash payments or in others by granting partial remission of the debts. She gained the manor of Burgh in Suffolk worth £30 per annum, the manor of Quendon in Essex worth £40, the castle of Leeds worth £30, the manor of Westcliffe in Kent worth £60, the manor of Nocton in Lincolnshire for a term of 14 years worth £60, as well as the manors of Torpeyl and Upton in Northamptonshire worth £80 per annum. From debts arising from payments of her Queen's Gold she also obtained the manor of Scottow in Norfolk worth £40, the manors of Westham, Fobbing and Shenfield, in Essex, and the manor of Longele, each worth £40 per annum. It is little wonder that Eleanor was later accused by Archbishop Pecham of acquiring land by 'utilising the whirlpools of Jewish usury'.⁴⁶

By the mid-thirteenth century, the long-term effect of Jewish lending with land as security meant that Jewish moneylenders had effectively become 'real estate agents'.⁴⁷ Land was security, but it was the rights of

ownership which led to problems when the debt could not be repaid. This is what had given the monasteries and the royal family the opportunity to expand their landholdings. Jewish business meant that land was being brought to the market and feudal rights were being capitalised.⁴⁸ This wheeling and dealing had serious consequences and impact on feudal land tenure and was producing a shift of lands from old hands to new.⁴⁹ More recently it has been observed that Jewish moneylenders introduced abbey, lay magnates, stewards and royal clerks to the opportunities of investment in the property of indebted knights.⁵⁰ Jewish lending allowed many opportunities for Christians to gain from the general indebtedness of others, be they clerics, nobles, merchants, cooks or parsons.

People in debt were grateful to be able to unload their debt to whoever would service it for them. There were also royal officials who saw opportunities. Between 1208 and 1234, the Braybrooke family used its position as sheriffs to gain a series of lands in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Their dealings have been recorded by a scribe who noted the details of the Latin *starra* negotiated with over 14 Jews who subsequently issued quitclaims on lands the Braybrookes had patiently and methodically acquired.⁵¹ Eleanor of Provence's favourite, Sir Geoffrey de Langley, gained several estates by shrewd investment. He took over estates from the d'Aubigny family, who lost their inheritance of lands, mills and rents centred around Bisseley to the south of Coventry. De Langley added to this when he took over the Stichivall estate to the south side of Coventry from the de Lucy's. In Derbyshire, the Willoughby family lost the manor of Ashover.⁵² It is significant that de Langley operated in an area where there was little monastic competition for the bad debts.⁵³ Such a transfer and loss of land through debt meant that the Jew and the new owners naturally became the target of bitter resentment. In a complaint in the Petition of the Barons of 1258 they remonstrated about lands mortgaged to the Jews and debts owing to the Jews being transferred to magnates who then refused to release the land.⁵⁴ It was such resentment that drove some of the knightly debtors to follow the reformist rebel earls in the 1260s.⁵⁵

By the middle decades of the thirteenth century, the role once played by monasteries in buying up debt-encumbered lands was open to many others. In the 1240s, Walter de Merton, a Chancery clerk who acted as a commissioner to examine the state of the royal lands in Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire, was able to start dealing in lands that were encumbered by Jewish debts.⁵⁶ He purchased the manors of Malden, Chessington and Farley from the royal escheators who held them during the minority of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester.⁵⁷ On 28 April 1240, in partnership with Peter Cuddington, Walter paid £100 to Aaron fil Abraham of London to free William Watevill from the debts that were secured on his lands at Malden and Chessington. Seven years later de Merton paid off another Watevill debt to Aaron of £58. Again, in 1247, he paid off Aaron of York to take on the lands of Thomas Amundeville at Stillington, County Durham, which he later used for his new foundation.⁵⁸

Cecil Roth once described de Merton as a shrewd businessman and certainly he went on adding to his portfolio as and when choice cheap possibilities opened up.⁵⁹ As a career civil servant and later as Edward I's Chancellor, de Merton was in a position that allowed him to aggrandise himself and to become what has been termed a 'capitalist clergyman'.⁶⁰ In the late 1260s, whether from piety or guilt, de Merton started to amass land in and around Oxford. He was later to become a munificent benefactor after gaining lands in both university towns.⁶¹ In Oxford he founded his house for scholars. In February 1267 he bought a house on the south side of Merton Street for £20 from Jacob fil Magister Moses of London. Jacob had originally purchased this 'buy-to-rent' house from the previous owner, Halegod, in 1263. In doing so Jacob had become a landlord for two aristocratic students, Anthony and Thomas Bek, who both later went into careers in the Church and also had their own dealings with the Jews. Subsequently, in about 1270, de Merton also bought a house in St Aldates for the 'poor scholars' of the King of the Romans.⁶² He had paved the way for providing an endowment in 1260 when Sir Stephen de Chenduit granted him the manors of Cheddington in Buckinghamshire and Ibstone in Oxfordshire. These deeds were accompanied by another surviving

starrum from Hagin of Lincoln and Manser fil Aaron stating that the lands were unencumbered. Until quite recently the living of Ibstone was still in the gift of the college.⁶³ In 1270 in Leicestershire, de Merton cleared the debts of Saer de Harcourt, which were owed to Cok Hagin fil Deulecresse, and obtained the manor of Kibworth Harcourt. He also paid off Cok Hagin (nephew of Jacob the Jew) for lands at Barkby by taking on and cancelling the debts of Robert Parcy. Elsewhere de Merton purchased Grantchester Mill and other lands in Cambridge from William Appleford by paying his debts to Samuel fil Ursell and Aaron fil Abraham. Such dealings did not go unnoticed. In March and April of 1264 there were attacks on his property in London.⁶⁴

Walter de Merton was capable of self-aggrandisement at the same time as spin-doctoring and forming government policy on the state of the lending market. In 1269 he may even have advised Henry III and the Lord Edward in preparing new legislation in response to baronial complaints. Concerned that too many annuities had been placed in circulation, the Crown now banned Jews from taking out new fee debts and limited the way in which Christians could sell these on.⁶⁵ In 1271, further legislation even forbade Jews to enjoy a freehold in manors, lands, tenements, fees or tenures of any kind. This effectively only left the Jews cash and commodities in which they could legally deal, and quite possibly resulted in higher interest charges on loans. The mandate also stipulated that all fee debts, lands and tenures that the Jews had made or negotiated before 1271 were to be discharged as quickly as possible and that the Christians involved were to pay off the principal only.⁶⁶ From the legislation itself it seems that the Jew was starting to be squeezed out of the credit markets.

De Merton had not only exploited Jewish lending but had shown the way to other Crown servants who could use their own shrewdness and inside information concerning royal business affairs to become both rich and influential. He had also paved the way for another Chancellor to amass an even larger portfolio. There can be no doubt that Robert Burnell was more a man of business than of religion. Salzman once described him as being 'practically a layman.'⁶⁷ His rival for the position of primate,

Archbishop John Pecham, even accused him of being under the influence of the merchants of Lucca. Burnell certainly knew the money markets of the time and how they operated. Any examination of his financial dealings shows that he was a man who could operate at high- and low-level finance. He was a man who could supply money. He was also only too familiar with the methods of both Jewish and Italian financiers, as well as being active in the land market. At his death, he had acquired estates in 19 counties. He held 82 manors spread over the whole country, with 21 in Shropshire alone and eight in Worcestershire.⁶⁸ Nearer London, he held 13 manors in Kent and Surrey, which extended from Woolwich to Sheen and Wickham – almost encompassing the whole of south London.⁶⁹

Burnell's connection with the Jews was a strong one and he certainly knew or had met many of the leading Jewish London financiers. One of his earliest dealings with Jews was in June 1267, when Master Elias Menahem granted him two yearly fees worth £31, together 'with the usuries and penalties'.⁷⁰ He was present when, in August 1272, Master Elias Menahem and Floria, his wife, came into the Exchequer and, in front of him and others, quitclaimed William de Hecham, a knight of Suffolk, of a debt of £70.⁷¹ In 1273, Burnell was even used as an agent by Benedict of Winchester for the Jew's tallage payment, which was secured by a promise of monies to help maintain Winchester Castle.⁷² In 1275 Hagin of Lincoln made a *starrum* or quitclaim in front of him and in the following year he was granted a licence to buy a debt of £20 that was owed to Isaac de Provincia by John de Lade.⁷³ Later in the same year, when Burnell had 'retired from court', he personally acknowledged 22 Jewish *starra* while he was staying at Beaulieu.⁷⁴ Indeed the individual relationship between Robert Burnell and Master Elias Menahem was so strong that the latter applied directly to the Chancellor for permission to have safe passage to go to France to treat the Count of Flanders, Jean d'Avesnes, for a malady that could not be treated locally.⁷⁵ Finally, in 1286, when Master Elias had died, the Exchequer was ordered to cancel some old debts owed by Richard de Coleworth to Robert Burnell and his brother Hugh, who were now tenants of the deceased Richard de Coleworth's lands in Essex.⁷⁶

Not all Christians who came into contact with Jewish finance as a third party were of such high status as the two Chancellors of the Exchequer. Exchequer clerks of lower status also learned how to use and abuse the possibilities offered by Jewish finance in order to aggrandise themselves. Several even took risks and fell foul of the law. Such was the case of William de Watford, who found himself in court. In July 1272, Guy of Rocheford brought a case in the Exchequer of the Jews over a false charter. Several royal officials, Robert of Fulham, William de Watford and William Pasket were accused of the forging of a charter. The forgery had come to light on the death of Pictavin fil Benedict le Jofuene, who owed the King £120. Pictavin's two son-in-laws, Pictavin Le Fort and Isaac of Northampton, had made a fine with the King in early 1272. Some worthless charters were sent into the Exchequer. The Exchequer demanded that all of Pictavin fil Benedict's debts be sent. Eventually some of his charters were sent in a strapped casket, which was sealed with Pasket's seal and delivered by Pasket himself and the two Christian chirographers of the London *archa*, John de Ferrun and John de Laufar. The casket contained 17 sealed charters and one unsealed charter in the names of Pictavin and John of Rochford for £90. It had been made in December 1239 but was written on new parchment, which had been trampled and trodden upon and covered with dust. Guy claimed that it was false.

The barons of the Exchequer called Watford and Pasket before them. They also examined John de Ferrun and John de Laufar, the Christian chirographers of the London *archa*, as well as the Jewish officials, Pictavin le Fort and Isaac de Northants, Aaron Crespin and Aaron's servant Sam. All were questioned separately about the charter in question. Watford claimed that because the Jewish Exchequer had been closed due to a dispute between the justice, Robert de Fulham, and the clerks of the Jewry over 4d, he (Watford) had placed the 17 charters in the casket with the strap. The strap had two pieces and he had placed his seal on the rear binding while William Pasket has sealed the front. Watford then took the casket home. He got his clerk to prepare a royal writ, which he sealed, telling the London chirographers to put the casket into the *archa*. He summoned Aaron, gave

him the casket and the writ, and told him to follow the instructions. Thus, he claimed, both he and Pasket were totally innocent.

The casket was apparently in the custody of Aaron and Sam for eight days. Aaron testified that he had received the casket unwillingly and only because of William de Watford's threats and that he had given it to his servant, Sam, to deliver to the Christian chirographers since he had to leave town then with his Lord Hagin. When Aaron received the casket it was sealed with William Pasket's seal and it had only one strap. The two Christian chirographers also testified to the fact that there had only been one strap and one seal. Aaron also added that when he had been summoned to pick up the casket both Pictavin Le Fort and Isaac of Northampton were present in Master William of Watford's lodgings. Eventually, it seems, justice prevailed and Watford later confessed to wrongfully sending the casket to the Jewish rather than the Christian chirographers and to tampering with the seals. He was sent to gaol.

Dealing in Jewish debts became one of Watford's ways of making money. He was summoned once again to face an investigation in the Exchequer of the Jews, this time at the behest of Peter le Marchaunt, son of Robert of Mapeldorham, in a case of trespass. Le Marchaunt claimed that Watford, in collusion with Benedict of Winchester, had placed an unsealed charter for £64, which had been made between Peter's father, Robert, and Elias fil Chera, in the treasury. The charter was subsequently withdrawn by royal writ and given to Benedict to put in the Winchester *archa*. Subsequently, Benedict had used this charter to gain possession of Peter's lands, tenements, rents and chattels in Mapeldorham, Oxfordshire, from 12 March to 7 June 1272. Benedict, who had been in possession of the land, had wasted his goods and done up to £100 of damage. The case was not proved and Watford disappeared but not without being described as 'an arrogantly contumacious clerk'.⁷⁷

One of the most notorious cases of forgery and misuse of Jewish debts was brought against Adam de Stratton in an enquiry into general corruption just a year before the expulsion of the Jews. Soon after his return from Gascony, on 13 October 1289, Edward issued a writ to his sheriffs

throughout England informing them that he had set up a commission to investigate the allegations against the corrupt officials of which his people complained. The sheriffs were to make their reports of injustice by 12 November 1289. For the following months a special commission of investigators was in session and sat at Westminster. The following enquiry investigated allegations against 13 Justices, 40 sheriffs, nine mayors, five escheators and 300–400 lesser culprits.⁷⁸

Subsequently, in 1290, Adam de Stratton was arrested for homicide, forging records, speculation, sorcery and other trespasses and enormities. According to differing accounts, his personal fortune, valued between £20,000 and £33,333 6s 8d, was seized.⁷⁹ Much of this was in old coinage and jewels, as well as in gold crowns. In addition, his lands and houses at Westminster were confiscated and his forfeited estates later raised the sum of £50,000. Apart from this booty, the case was made stronger because of various other findings. A bag of silk containing toe- and fingernails, human hair, the feet of both moles and toads and other *diabolica* was seized by a trustworthy Justice and sealed. However, Adam tampered with the seal and threw the incriminating evidence into a drain. He was later charged with contempt of court and convicted of sorcery and treason. After he was tried and found guilty, the Crown seized his lands and wealth, and he was banished from court. His life was only spared because he was a member of the clergy.⁸⁰

In order to acquire such wealth de Stratton had used his knowledge of Jewish finance, as in his acquisitions in Rotherhithe and Shenley in 1268, when he gave William de Ore £13 6s 8d and paid off a further £80 that the former owed to Aaron de La Rye of London.⁸¹ This was followed in 1269 by another payment of £13 6s 8d to John fil Saer and the liquidation of his debts in return for the whole manor of Shenley, which had been encumbered in debts to both Jews and Christians. De Stratton paid a large sum for clearing the debts. He paid £208 13s 4d to Hagin fil Magister Moses for an annuity for £20 that John owed him and also paid off a debt of £80 owed by John's father, Saer, to Benedict Crespin. To finally secure the manor Adam also had to pay off debts, owed by John, to two other

Christians. It cost him a further payment of £20 11s 8d to John Rosamond and £20 to Thomas de Leukenore. Thus at a price of £329 5s the manor of Shenley was finally acquired for Stratton's growing property portfolio.⁸²

By the late 1270s, many other Christians were involved in lending money. Their number included the Queen mother, the Queen, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as merchants, clerks, and even the King's baker.⁸³ Such lenders recorded their debts in recognisances that were recorded in advance so that they were assured of redress if their debtors failed and could then make a legal claim on the debtors' lands. Such recognisances were a way of minimising the risks of non-repayment. Such business techniques had been directly copied from Jewish practice and now were finally honed and legitimised by Chancellor Robert Burnell. In October 1283, Burnell took the accepted method of simple enrolment of debts a little further. He now set up an *archa* system for Christians, as well as a new method of registration. It was not mandatory to use the new system but it was a way of strengthening the reclamation of a debt. The new 'lettre de obligacioun' was later called a Certificate of Statute Staple.⁸⁴ With the Statute of Acton Burnell, which was subsequently amended by the Statute of Merchants, two years later, Burnell not only opened the doors to both overseas and native merchants to enable them to enrol their debts, but gave access to the lower clergy and other lenders of a lower social status.⁸⁵ The debts were now officially enrolled in registries and debt collection was guaranteed by a prejudged legal ruling entered into willingly by the debtor in case of default. It was indeed a bond with 'vicious teeth', as Richard Bowers has put it.⁸⁶ It can be of little surprise that the modified regulations laid down in the Statute of Merchants expressly state that this does not apply to Jews, for 'whom other arrangements will be made'.⁸⁷

The Jews, who now had direct Christian competition in the lending markets, still continued to try to find custom. It has been widely accepted that there was a marked change in the status of Jewish debtors between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁸⁸ While Aaron of Lincoln and the larger operators of the twelfth century had been able to lend to monasteries,

abbeys, kings, towns, sheriffs and officials, Jewish lending at such a high social level had declined by the late thirteenth century. By then, apart from a handful of plutocratic Jews, such as Elias Menahem, who were still able to lend to the knightly class and above, the majority of the Jews' debtors were now agricultural.⁸⁹ There is, for instance, a distinct contrast between the status of the debtors of the great Hamo of Hereford, which were almost 90 per cent from baronial and knightly families, and the debtors of the Jews of Cambridge, who were 42 per cent rural and agricultural. Other samples show that Jews lent to clerks, citizens, smiths, glaziers, goldsmiths, fishermen, carpenters, beadles, chaplains, marshals, parsons, rectors, butchers, tanners, vintners, mercers, masons, carpenters, tailors, shepherds, cutlers and franklins.⁹⁰ These were now to become the clients for Jewish lending, while the Italian *societas* were starting to make steady inroads on the higher-class debtors.⁹¹

The Jews had always made contact with rural debtors and were probably more travelled than some of their competitors. That they travelled is evidenced by references to special tolls that applied to Jews for crossing bridges. It is clear that while they travelled they came into contact with Christians. Gerald of Wales, although disapproving, talks of Jew and Christian jesting together while travelling.⁹² Large lenders like Elias Menahem, David of Oxford and Benedict Crespin of London travelled between Jewish communities and often did business on the way. They even deposited bonds in different *archae* up and down the country.⁹³ Local Jews such as Jacob of Brancegate in Lincoln, Abraham fil Deulecresse in Norwich, and Abba of Canterbury lent to debtors from much closer to home. From bonds deposited in various *archae* it is possible to see that most debtors came from within 12 to 19 miles of an *archa* town.⁹⁴

Jewish lenders had also established their own credit networks, which clearly involved some sort of relations with Christians. Abba, a Canterbury Jew, seems to have dealt exclusively with debtors from the Romney Marsh. Between 1270 and 1271 debtors from the Marsh owed the Jew of Canterbury debts worth £60. Such debtors came from small villages such as Woodchurch, Snargate, Snave, Newchurch and Burmarsh.⁹⁵

In Lincolnshire after 1275, it does not seem to have been too much of a problem for Jews to negotiate commodity repayments. Their debtors, who promised repayment in grain, come from areas that were predominantly cereal-producing. Likewise those Lincolnshire debtors who had promised wool to Lincoln Jews in return for advance payments came from good grazing country.⁹⁶

Thus the Jewish creditors were well aware of the local countryside and the Christians who lived there. Their client base was probably expanded and maintained by word of mouth. Between 1250 and 1270, Isaac Gabbay, a Jew of Lincoln, dealt with clients in a cluster of Lincolnshire villages such as Holme, Langton, Donnington and Stenigot to the east of the manor of Hackthorn. In the 1280s many inhabitants of Hackthorn itself made agreements with the Jews of Lincoln for commodities. Such commodities showed an expectation of price fluctuation as well as some preferences for particular commodities. In September 1285 Osbert son of William de Sotaban, and Geoffrey son of Alexander of Hackthorn acknowledged that they owed Jacob of Brancegate, a Lincoln Jew, 50 quarters of cereal priced at 6s a quarter. Geoffrey also made further agreements with Jacob of Brancegate: on 11 November 1285 he owed a further 30 quarters priced at 5s per quarter; in August 1287 he promised another 50 quarters priced at 4s a quarter; in February 1288 a further 20 quarters at 3s a quarter; in August 1288 he promised a payment of half a sack of wool priced at £4; in January 1289 he acknowledged that he owed £7 6s 8d.⁹⁷ Other debtors like Hugh and Richard, who were described as staying in Hackthorn, owed Jacob of Brancegate 20 quarters at 3s, 50 quarters at 5s, one sack of wool priced at £7 and one at £6 13s 4d. Similarly, Richard son of John of 'Keleseye', who was also described as staying in Hackthorn, owed Elias Gubbay 20 quarters at 5s in 1286 and 60 quarters in January 1287. Other members of the village owed further amounts.⁹⁸ These examples of rural indebtedness confirm that Jewish creditors not only had a good knowledge of the countryside but also of their creditors, as well as a shrewd understanding of expected prices. At times they were also prepared to make secondary loans, which would indicate some degree

of trust and confidence in the debtor's ability to pay. Elsewhere, Jews also visited and dealt with those who lived in remoter places. When in 1277, to expunge the debts due to him by James fil Gilbert, a knight, Abraham fil Deulecresse of Norwich, actually took a lease in Norfolk on the manor of Kelling (some 24 miles to the north-west of Norwich) for a period of ten years, he must have known the surrounding area and have had some contact with the Christians living there.⁹⁹

Although, as we have seen, there is evidence for single Jews or Jewish families living in rural areas after 1275, the majority lived in the towns. Most of the major Jewries were centred in the busiest parts of the towns, with enclaves or burial grounds on the outskirts. In this situation contact between Christians and Jews was probably greater than elsewhere.¹⁰⁰ While Jews were sometimes exempt from paying local taxes, they did come under local justice. In Hereford in 1282, Hagin the Jew was charged and fined 12d by the bailiffs for a transgression against the laws of the market. Jews were also made to pay for entering the town, as in 1285 when the two sons of Cok the Jew paid 2s for entry. Within the towns the Jews' legal status was protected. In Exeter it was deemed that, in a case between a Jew and a Christian, there had to be members of both denominations present.¹⁰¹ Jews hired and rented properties from Christians and to Christians. In Colchester, Robert de Elmham, a merchant, rented a shop from Elias of Colchester, while in Norwich Abraham fil Deulecresse rented a stall in the draper's quarter.¹⁰²

Such close contacts must have led to some dialogue between Jews and Christians. In the twelfth century Jews even took part in local politics in Canterbury. When the monks of Christ Church were blockaded for opposing the wishes of Archbishop Baldwin in 1187, the Jews threw food over the wall to the monks.¹⁰³ Members of the Jewish community attended the funeral of St Hugh of Lincoln in 1200.¹⁰⁴ Despite the attempts of bishops to enforce social segregation, it is clear that some Jews had Christian servants and even employed Christian nursemaids for their children.¹⁰⁵ Some Christians consulted Jewish physicians or wise men and there are indications that both these groups socialised, even though this was technically

not encouraged. As we have seen, there was an early continental Jewish rabbinical ruling concerning drinking. It was deemed that English Jewry were 'lenient in the matter of drinking strong drinks of the Gentiles and along with them', yet this was allowable '... as there will be great ill-feeling if they were to refrain from this'.¹⁰⁶ In Hereford in 1286 relations were so amicable that Christians were invited to a Jewish wedding. Although the Bishop of Hereford threatened any Christians who attended with recriminations, some ignored his threat. The Bishop thus claimed that his congregation had eaten, drank, played and jested with the Jews and had enjoyed 'displays of silk and cloth of gold, horsemanship, equestrian processions, stage-playing and sports and minstrelsy' that had accompanied the Jewish wedding feast. He suggested that those who had taken part should take absolution within eight days or be excommunicated.¹⁰⁷

At a higher social level, Elias Menahem, along with many of the 'royal Jews' and the Archpresbyters, was probably well known to powerful Christians in and around the royal court. Certainly Elias knew Edward's Chancellor, Robert Burnell, well and had even lent money to him. He had also lent to one of the Queen's yeomen. Elias was even once excused from paying tax by the intervention of Cardinal Ottobuono. Elias had met both the Justices of the Jews and their officials and had also lent to one member of the King's Exchequer. His dealings meant that he knew many leading knights and families in Essex, as well as in many other counties. Another well-connected Jew was Hagin fil Benedict, who made two agreements with Richard Folyot for an annual gift of a flying hawk and a beast of the chase. From this it might seem that Hagin was keen on hunting. Certainly this would bring him into the company of Christians and this also seems to have been the case in Essex in 1246, where Samuel the Jew hunted and ritually (in accordance with *kosher* laws) killed a doe in Panfield.¹⁰⁸

A rather unusual example of good relations between Jew and Christian is the admission of Benedict of Winchester into the merchant's guild of that city in 1268. Despite the fact that he could not take the usual vow, Benedict was admitted to the fraternity by the mayor, Simon le Draper. Benedict was a chirographer of the Winchester *archa* and must have come

into contact with many local dignitaries; Simon le Draper referred to him as 'our beloved and faithful friend and special neighbour'. It is well known that Benedict was an influential financier who had lands in the city and had claims on neighbouring lands as his security. Jewish financiers like Benedict also had cause to use and to consort with Christian attorneys and this type of relationship or partnership must have been mutually beneficial. Benedict was clearly a well known local figure.¹⁰⁹

Sometimes Jews were involved in crime with Christians. One well-known scribal drawing is recorded on an entry in the Forest Roll for 1277. It shows a Jew who is dubbed 'Aaron son of the Devil'. The original offence took place in December 1267 in Colchester. A doe was startled in Wildenhay woods by the dogs of Sir John de Burgh the Younger and fled past the city of Colchester towards the woods on the other side of the city. Some of the inhabitants of Colchester ran out of the city, and so worried the doe by their shouting that she ran through the double gate



6 Caricature of Aaron son of the Devil of Colchester wearing the tabula. Drawn in the margin of a Plea of the Essex Forest Roll, 1277.

and finally leaped over the wall and broke her neck. Among those who joined the chase were William Scott, Henry the Gutter, Henry the Toller, as well as Saunte, son of Ursel, Cok and Samuel, sons of Aaron, Isaac the Jewish chaplain, Copin and Elias. What compounded the crime was that Walter the Goldsmith, the local bailiff, and Robert the Toller, beadle of the city, and others carried off the game while the group who had pursued the doe were arrested. The forest authorities proceeded against all of them, and they were imprisoned and fined. Finally they were liberated on bail, whereupon Christians became surety for Jews, and Jews for Christians.¹¹⁰

There are many other cases of Jews and Christians committing crimes together. In 1272, Abraham Mouton, a Cambridge Jew, in order to bring purchase to bear on his debtor Geoffrey de Sawston, led a gang of Christians to Sawston and drove away four bullocks, two oxen and 106 ewes, which he kept until the latter had paid up a debt of £1 10s.¹¹¹ One night in Lincoln, Kocke Luctor and Hake fil Abraham, together with Thomas du Bayl and Margery of Nottingham, broke into the stall of Adam of Emplingham and carried off six measures of herrings to the house of Elias fil Benedict and his wife, Milla.¹¹² In Norfolk in 1286, Jews and Christians worked together in breaking and entering churches in Newton and Swainsthorpe and taking vestments, books and ornaments. The King even sent orders to the justices, saying that 'some malefactors and disturbers of our peace, both Jews and Christians with exceedingly wicked daring' had carried off sacred things and other goods worth £10 from Loddon Church by night.¹¹³

There were of course both Jews and Christians who were in conflict with each other. In 1286, Isaac of Suthwerk was accused of having killed Matilda of Worcester by the dead woman's daughter, Alice. Alice failed to appear at the hearing and a jury declared Isaac not guilty.¹¹⁴ In about 1285, Aaron of Worcester, his wife Blaka, and his son Isaac had killed Robert, the porter of Oxford castle.¹¹⁵ There were also Christians who became embroiled in internecine disputes. In 1258, Cresse fil Magister Moses charged John Ferrant with the assault of his brother, Hagin, in Colechurch Street, London. Ferrant had hit Hagin with an axe (up to its spike) causing

a wound two inches wide and three inches deep. Hagin fell to the ground as if dead. A crowd gathered and Ferrant fled through St Olave's graveyard to eventually seek shelter at the house of Elias le Eveske. Cresse charged Elias Le Eveske with instigating the attack and claimed that he paid Ferant £2, as well as sheltering him. Cresse also accused Nicholas de Waucy and his squire, Simon, Richard Smith of Northampton, and John of Forncett, Elias Le Eveske's man, as well as two Jews, Dyay of Kent and Pinchekoc Gruel of complicity in the attack.¹¹⁶

Jews and Christians were also victims together. In 1277, Licoricia of Winchester and her Christian servant, Alice of Bickton, were found murdered in their house in Winchester by Belia, Licoricia's daughter. A jury found one Ralph of Chesulle, a saddler of Winchester, guilty but he had fled. The coroner ordered Licoricia's chest and strong boxes to be kept under lock and key. Tempted by what they believed to be in the coffers, William of Chichester, clerk, and Thomas de la Mare from the sheriff's household, together with Lumbard fil Benedict, Jew of Winchester, and Abraham fil Benedict, a London Jew, entered the house and broke the locks of the strong boxes. William, Thomas and Abraham were all outlawed. Lumbard fil Benedict was subsequently hanged.

There are also many instances of Jews who were robbed and of corpses that turned up by the side of the road, in an alleyway or in the woods. In the early 1280s, Jocus of Guildford was travelling from Dartford towards Plumstead when he was assaulted and murdered. Subsequently, Jornin fil Abraham, Serjeant of the Tower of London, and two other London Jews, Aaron fil Elias and Moses of Dogstreet, carried his corpse by cart to London. When they reached Southwark the bailiff demanded a toll. He then ordered men to seize the cart, claiming that he had a right to 2s for each cart carrying dead Jews. A brawl ensued and some Christians were charged with having overturned the small cart, and having assaulted, beaten and maltreated the Jews, as well as having seized a tabard as payment for the toll. Eventually, a jury of six Jews and six Christians, which included Moses of Dogstreet, ruled that the Jews should not have to pay tolls and the Christians were to be arrested for trespass. The bailiff, who

could produce no documentary evidence for his claim to 2s, was also imprisoned for a time. Josce was finally laid to rest in London.¹¹⁷

Thus in the spheres of credit, conviviality and crime there were constant inter-relations between Jew and Christian. In the early part of the thirteenth century a quasi-partnership had formed between the monasteries and the Jews. This financially oriented rapport was later taken up by other Christians who realised the potential that indebtedness to the Jews might provide for them to gain. In pursuit of the more ordinary loans and transactions the Jews clearly travelled the countryside and hinterland outside the *archae* towns and would have known something of the possible landed securities that their potential clients might offer. When, after 1275, some Jews made advanced sale contracts in their forward loans on cereal or wool, they engaged with clients who either worked the soil or watched the flocks. However, the Jewish lender was forced time and again to compete as an equal as their Christian neighbours and former customers began to develop their own methods of lending.

The dynamics of the relationship between the two changed as the nature of business changed. At a richer level of society some Jews still even socialised with their Christian clients. Some clearly had special relationships with their royal protectors. At a lower level, when pushed together Jews and Christians committed crime together. Within the towns, both clearly lived together and socialised at levels that went beyond a pure business relationship. Although that relationship varied there must have been times when co-existence was not as bitter and tortured as perhaps it might be thought. However, such relations are difficult to analyse correctly as they were rarely documented.

Church and Synagogue

In compliance therefore with a Council assembled at London for the purpose of suppressing usury and its injurious consequences, and, as the members composing the assembly affirmed, of separating these goats from the sheep, the King gave his consent, doubtless with reluctance, to what was then and there propounded; and in obedience to the decrees of the council these rejected outcasts were doomed to disperse themselves, different ways, to quit England for ever and to perish by eternal misery in other lands till they should be entirely cut off.

With these words, John Ross, the author of the *Annales Lincolniae*, summed up the expulsion of the Jews from England on 1 November 1290.¹ It was as if the Church no longer wished or was able to separate the ‘goats from the sheep’. England had washed its hands of the Jews and the final exclusion had been made.

Both the antipathy and the anger of the medieval church towards the Jews are evidenced in contemporary depictions of the Church and the Synagogue. The Church is always portrayed as triumphant, sometimes confidently holding a miniature church, while Synagogue is always portrayed as broken and defeated. Synagogue is shown as being blindfolded and carrying a broken rod. This represented the old faith as having been conquered and replaced by the new. The triumphant Church had always been resentful of and even, at times, felt threatened by the old religion. It was more than eager and desirous to usher in the last days, and with them the total triumph of wholesale Jewish conversion.²

The conflict between Church and Synagogue was one that waxed and waned, depending on many other influences that drove the medieval

world. For many years the Church simply wished to keep the goats and the sheep separate and the Synagogue wished to cling to its own unique dogma and practice. Both sides were resentfully entrenched and embedded in their beliefs and traditions. In this theological tussle the Church stayed well ahead by taking the moral high ground. After all they alone were the true new faith and the Jews were passé. As time went on and as the Church became more insecure against other credos, the conflict changed into an attempt for total conversion and nothing less. The history of the struggle is clearly seated in the Crucifixion itself and ever since the Jews had been depicted as Christ Killers. Such was the position of the early Jewish colonists of England as far as the Church was concerned and this stigma of deicide remained until their final expulsion and beyond.

The Church mission against the Jews commenced by making attempts at discourse and trying to argue the efficacy of the true religion. This produced many tracts and theses about the supremacy of the Christian. It led to open debates and disputations in which the Church tried to prove that it alone was the true religion. Later the campaign moved towards a mission against the Jews, which first started with evangelism, encouragement and education.³ When this approach did not work the Church started a smear campaign with physical attacks on Jewish ritual and demands of conversion. Finally, when this failed, it moved towards physical rejection. In deep contrast, the Synagogue's resolve was merely hardened. In many ways it was a one-sided battle. Judaism did not openly proselytise for Christians nor, despite Christian propaganda, was there a world plan or policy to Judaise or to press the Christian back into the old fold.

Disputations were part of academic training in the infant universities or *studium generale* of medieval Europe. Debate and argument was a general training. Some discourses were delivered 'live' and just argued 'off the cuff'; others were written down as a basis for debate, while some were even fanciful and only involved the author imagining an argument and in effect just writing a script that was never actually delivered. Occasionally, the debate spilled over from the university into a public forum. There were times when this meant crucial developments for the world outside

academia. In the sixteenth century, the Leipzig debate between Martin Luther and Johann Eck was to be the herald of a cataclysmic split in Church thinking, which spilled over from formal debate and started a new sect of protestors. In the eleventh century, the debate between Lanfranc and Berengar over transubstantiation was in some ways a precursor to a debate on the very basic beliefs of the early modern church. Disputations had a great effect on shaping Church doctrine and dogma. At times, such disputations were keenly followed by a wider audience. Whether they were held in a Church synod or even in a secular court, they could be attended by eager nobles wishing to see which side would win the debate. It was to be in such a court in the 1090s that William II issued a direct and immediate challenge to the Church. A party of London Jews had brought gifts to the King; William II was pleased and then turned to the Jews, to the horror of the clergy present, and proposed an open debate between the two religions claiming that if the Jews won, he would convert to Judaism. Despite their horror, the Church won the day, as William II never converted to Judaism.⁴

For many of the eleventh- and early twelfth-century writers and debaters the Jews existed because, as St Augustine had written, they were 'our supporters in their books, our enemies in their hearts, and witnesses in their codices'. He likened the Jews to Cain, who had been cursed and marked by God for killing his brother. The Jews had after all kept the scriptures and were a witness to the truth of Christianity – they were the People of the Book. Yet there were strong feelings and emotions that they should be chastised and many saw the Diaspora as their punishment. St Bernard, who tried to stop the massacres of Jews during the preaching of the Second Crusade, claimed that the Jews had a twin function – that they preserved the record of God's prophecies in their books and that they were witnesses to their truth by their own degradation.⁵ To the Church, the Jews were a dichotomy. While Christianity's ultimate desire was to bring about a total conversion, they were happy to keep the Jews as an example of a misguided, out-of-date religion, which had accepted neither the Messiah nor the Virgin Birth and should live in slavery as a punishment for killing

Christ. Until the Church achieved total conversion, it had to ensure that the blind heresy, as they saw it, did not affect any of their members. In the eleventh and early twelfth century it was more a policy of containment. The Church wished to keep the Jews at arm's length, ready to be whipped in whenever the Second Coming arrived.

It was in this vein that much work sought to prove the supremacy of the Christian religion. An early example was the work of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster Abbey. About 1096 he wrote down his debate that he had had with what he called a Jewish 'friend'. The Jew had been educated at Mainz and had a good knowledge of the Scriptures. According to Gilbert, those present at the informal disputation had asked him to record it for posterity. The debate also triggered the conversion of one Jew, who immediately joined the Westminster community.⁶ This work was the start of a long genre of highly sophisticated and educated written works in which Christian theology is seen to be able to defeat Jewish Law. Another debate, which was recorded by Peter of Cornwall, the Prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate in London, was dedicated to Stephen Langton in 1208. It was in the form of a dialogue but this time between Peter and a Jew called Symon who was eventually won over to Christianity and became a canon of Holy Trinity. The closing chapters of Peter's work gave Symon instruction on the future state of man.⁷ We have no idea how many public or indeed private debates went on that were never recorded. Those that were recorded made good religious propaganda, which the Church could publicise.

Between the end of the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries there was a distinct and discernible change in the manner of such debates. Gilbert Crispin's tone was almost civil and as if arguing with an equal, whereas Petrus Alphonsi in his 'Dialogue' with a Jew (1108–10) displays all the zeal of a convert, and Peter the Venerable's attempts in the mid-twelfth century have more venom and violence in them.⁸ Peter the Venerable was among the first to directly attack the Talmud. He saw the Jews as obstinate and almost as a lost cause. He was, however, clear that they should be 'preserved in a life worse than death, like Cain the fratricide'. He felt that the 'blaspheming Jews' should have their money taken away so that it

could be used to help the conquest of the 'audacious Saracens'.⁹ Such a change is also noticeable in the works of Bartholomew of Exeter (1180–4) and Peter of Blois (1204).¹⁰

In the mid-thirteenth century the rhetoric of enmity between Church and Synagogue intensified from benign toleration to lambasting attacks on Jewish Talmudic practice. In 1239, a converted Jew, Nicholas Donin, presented his work on the Talmud in front of Pope Gregory IX. He submitted a series of broad allegations claiming that the Talmud actually sanctioned anti-Christian behaviour and that it was blasphemous and taught absurd doctrines.¹¹ Donin was dispatched to perform further research and to make a stronger case. The Pope, shocked by the findings, responded by sending letters to the Kings of England, France, Portugal and Spain ordering them to seize all copies of the Talmud and to deliver them to the Dominicans and the Franciscans.¹² It seems that only the French King took the call to arms seriously. In the early part of 1240, a grand disputation was arranged to be held in front of the royal court. The Talmud was on trial. Donin became the prosecution and to help him he even enlisted Rabbis as witnesses. Again he claimed that the Talmud encouraged Jews to despise, deceive, rob, and even murder Christians and that it contained blasphemous falsehoods, superstitions and puerilities, as well as passages disrespectful to God.

Donin targeted the Rabbis and Talmudists. The Rabbis, he claimed, had instructed the Jews to kill Christ in the first place. They ruled that the Jews should cheat and deceive Christians without blame, they called Jesus' mother an adulteress, spoke obscenely of Jesus, the Pope, the Church and Christianity, cursed the Church daily in their prayers and told the Jews that Christians were condemned to perpetual damnation.¹³ After hearing Donin's attack and an attempted defence by several Rabbis, the 'show trial' found the Talmud guilty and sentenced it to burning. The Jews later appealed to the papal court, which even suggested a compromise in that the offensive Talmudic passages should merely be deleted. The French King insisted that all Talmuds should be confiscated and in 1242 between 20 and 24 cartloads of Talmuds were ceremoniously burned at an *auto*

da fé in the Place de Grève in Paris. It has been estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 copies were thrown into the flames, which were fed for a day and a half.¹⁴ On 9 May 1244, Innocent IV wrote to the French King:

The wicked perfidy of the Jews, from whose hearts our Redeemer, has not removed the veil of blindness such as because of the enormity of their crime . . . [they are] ungrateful to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the abundance of His kindness, patiently expects their conversion . . . In traditions of this sort they rear and nurture their children, which traditions are called *Talmud* in Hebrew. It is a big book among them, exceeding in size the text of the Bible. In it are found blasphemies against God and His Christ, and obviously entangled fables about the Blessed Virgin, and abusive errors, and unheard of follies.¹⁵

In France, the Talmud was proscribed, and in the rest of Europe it was also outlawed. One of the main sources of Jewish life was now under threat. The way was now clear to perceive Jews as heretics.¹⁶ In order to realise this aim a unilateral attack between respective academics, popes, bishops, kings and the secular officials was required.

The Papacy still maintained the stance that the Jews were to be protected in servitude. It had for a long time made it clear that Jews were to be unmolested. It issued what became known as the Protection Bull, *Sicut Judeis*. First issued in 1120, it was subsequently re-issued with variations by 16 different popes throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It applied exclusively to those Jews 'who do not presume to plot against the Christian Faith'. It forbade Christians to baptise by force, to wound, kill or rob Jews. It also gave the Jews the right to celebrate their festivals without being disturbed 'in any way by means of sticks and stones'. It protected Jewish cemeteries from desecration and gave the Papacy the power of excommunication against anyone who defied the decree. It was frequently re-issued and on several occasions different popes raised different issues in it. For instance, Innocent III felt he should remind the holy exactly why the Jews should be preserved and made clear reference to St Augustine's views on the Jews. Issuing the bull even led to Pope Gregory IX being

accused of having been bribed by the Jews. Popes Innocent IV, Gregory X and Martin IV all mentioned the blood libel and stated quite clearly that Jews did not use human blood for their rites and were forbidden to come into contact with it.¹⁷ On one level the Papacy was not overtly suggesting outright conversion as a solution to the practice of the Jewish religion. However, should conversion happen then the Church would naturally defend the newly converted and rejoice.

The campaign against the Talmud had threatened the Jews' position and in some places it was enough to allow the mendicants to act as inquisitors and to follow up potential blasphemy on any pretext. Such a pretext came in 1267 when Clement IV issued the *Turbato Corde* bull and ordered the mendicants to be on the alert:

With our heart in turmoil [Turbato corde] we have heard, and we now recount, that exceedingly numerous reprobate Christians, denying the truth of the Catholic faith, have gone over, in a way worthy of damnation, to the rite of the Jews. This is realized to be the more reprobate in that thus the most holy name of Christ is the more heedlessly blasphemed by a kind of enmity within the family! . . . We command your organization that . . . you are to proceed against Christians whom you shall have discovered to have committed such things in the same way as against heretics; Jews, however, whom you shall have discovered inducing Christians of either sex into their execrable rite, before this, or in the future, these you are to punish with due penalty.¹⁸

The warning of the need for vigilance was re-issued to the Franciscans and the Dominicans in 1274, 1288 and 1290.¹⁹

The position of the Jews in early thirteenth-century England is adequately summed up by Robert Grosseteste. He was one of the earliest Hebrew scholars in England, and possibly even learnt his Hebrew from an Oxford Rabbi.²⁰ Grosseteste is reputed to have translated the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* as a missionary tract for the Jews; he also wrote *De Cessatione Legalium* in 1231 as another conversionist tract.²¹ In 1231, as Archdeacon of Leicester, he wrote to Margaret de Quinci, Countess of Winchester, displaying his knowledge of the Jewish people. When Simon

de Montfort tried to expel the Jews from Leicester, Margaret had offered them shelter on her estate. Grosseteste tried to advise her: 'For word has come to me that Your Excellency has arranged to gather together on your domain the Jews whom Lord Leicester expelled from his town to prevent their further pitiless and usurious oppressing the Christians dwelling there . . .' Grosseteste then traced the Jews' history from the destruction of the Temple to St Augustine and stated that the Jews were being held captive and punished for the crucifixion and would eventually obtain salvation on their conversion at the end of the world. He admitted that, since the Jews were the guardians of the Old Testament, it was the duty of lords to protect them from being killed and at the same time to use the severest measures to prevent them oppressing Christians with usury, and 'to see that they may gain their livelihood by lawful work of their own hands . . .' He repeated that 'the Jews were not to be indulged by Christian rulers so that they may oppress Christians with usury, and from that usury live in luxury and leisure, for that they have been appointed by the word of the Lord to the penalty of hard work'. He warned that rulers who 'receive a part of the usury which Jews had extorted from Christians live by robbery and mercilessly eat, drink and wear the blood of those whom it is their duty to protect . . .'.²²

Grosseteste had a firm but enlightened attitude towards the Jews. In order to try to remove the problems caused by students becoming indebted to Jewish creditors he founded an endowed loan chest at Oxford.²³ He also intervened in 1244 when Oxford students invaded the Jewry and sacked the Jews houses. Some 45 clerks were imprisoned, but Grosseteste appealed to Henry III and asked for permission to deal with the students himself. In effect he established the jurisdiction of the Chancellor of the University to deal with student affairs.²⁴ He clearly tried to keep a balance between the two religions.

Not all were as benign and enlightened as Grosseteste. Yet religious and general attitudes towards the Jews were changing.²⁵ For the majority of the populations, it was the Crusades that affected the change in attitudes towards the Jews. Men like Richard Malebisse had become so deeply

indebted that it seemed to them that there was no financial way out. It was desperation that drove many of the indebted to attack their creditors. The fact that the Church had promised Crusaders forgiveness of sins once the Kingdom of God had been established was certainly a powerful motivation to rally an army of Christ. Yet the fulfilment of such a miraculous promise was in the future. More immediate was the offer that the Church could make in the present. Such an incentive took the form of the Church declaring a moratorium on Jewish debts. This brought direct help to Crusaders and their families. The Church was repeatedly ordered by the Papacy to enforce moratoria and to delay payments with no interest.²⁶ In 1215–16, to prevent further massacres, Innocent sent a letter to the French clergy forbidding all Christians, especially Crusaders, to hurt the Jews or their families. The Crusades and debt were even in some cases responsible for local expulsions of Jews. The expulsion of the Jews from Brittany in 1239 by John the Red has been seen as a direct result of the preaching of the Crusade and of the Crusaders' exemption from the interest charged on their debts.

Although the Jewish religion had not presented a hugely antagonistic threat to Christianity, it was the sin of usury that provoked a harsher reaction from the Church. In November 1215, the problem of usury was addressed by the Fourth Lateran Council: 'The more the Christian religion refrains from the exaction of usury, the more the Jewish perfidy becomes used to this practice, so that in a short time the Jews exhaust the financial strength of the Christians . . .'²⁷ The subsequent canons went on to put a stop to relations between Jews who charged immoderate usury and Christians who were commanded to abstain from such commerce. In places where Jews lived segregation was to be enforced and Jews were banned from 'walking out' in public during the last three days of Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Usury continually dominated the business of the Church Councils. In 1227 at the Council of Narbonne, it was a major issue and it was decreed that Christians who entered into agreements with Jews were to be excommunicated. In 1240, at the Synod of Worcester, an early form of tacit money-laundering was stopped 'because it amounts to the same thing whether a man falls into the crime of usury by his own action

or through someone else, we forbid any Christian to entrust money to a Jew that he might lend it on usury under his own name'.²⁸ The campaign against usury came to a crescendo in the Council of Lyons in 1274, which made even having contact with or helping a 'usurer' punishable by excommunication.²⁹

With the exception of ritual-murder allegations and host desecration, conversion to Judaism and intermarriage were the two incidents that the Church feared most. In the 1220s in Oxford, a deacon from Coventry, who had probably come to enter the University, converted to Judaism. He had studied Hebrew and met, fallen in love with, and married a Jewess. Among the charges levelled at this young man was the accusation of stealing a consecrated wafer from a church and having thrown it in the filth. Naturally the wafer was miraculously saved by 'angelic hands'.³⁰ The event was reported by many chroniclers, like Mathew Paris, who had heard it from a witness. The young man 'ardently desired her embraces', but the Jewess was adamant that she would not return the embraces unless the deacon abandoned Christianity, allowed himself to be circumcised and embraced the Jewish faith. He did so and thus 'gained her unlawful love'.³¹

News of the illicit affair reached Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who demanded that the deacon be brought before him. According to Matthew Paris, after interrogation and after he was convicted, the former deacon confessed to even having taken part in a sacrifice with Jews. The archbishop and other prelates demanded that he return to Christianity. A crucifix was brought but the prisoner became angry, renounced the 'new fangled law', called Jesus a false prophet, and slandered Mary to the point that 'it could not be repeated'. Weeping at such blasphemies, Langton publicly deprived the convert of his clerical orders. The Sheriff of Oxford, Fawkes de Breauté, immediately took the deacon and dragged him away to a secret spot and cut off his head.³² In his second account, Paris has the deacon arrested along with two hermaphrodites, and hanged by the Sheriff.³³

There are, as always, varying accounts of this episode but the Church was unlikely to play down such accusations or ill-feeling laid at the door

of the Jewish communities by popular belief. What does emerge from the story is that a conversion, an enquiry, a public degradation and finally an administration of the death penalty took place. The converted deacon was not the only culprit to suffer at the hands of Archbishop Langton and others gathered at the Abbey of Osney during the Council of Oxford in 1222. The convert was arrested and dispatched by the King's bailiffs outside the town. Other prisoners were dealt with severely too. Another deacon was degraded for theft and a 'rustic' who had pretended to be Christ and who had pierced his hands, side and feet, together with a woman who had passed herself off as the Virgin Mary were sentenced to be walled up forever at Banbury.³⁴

Such a case and public recognition of a Christian consorting with a Jew strengthened the resolve of the clergy who were meeting at Oxford. They now rigidly enforced and implemented the decisions of Innocent III and the Third Lateran Council, particularly over segregation. Men like Richard Morins, Prior of Dunstable, who had attended councils both in Rome and Oxford, took their own action.³⁵ The fear of Christians converting to Judaism led to a tightening of existing restrictions. Christian women were banned from becoming servants in Jewish households, particularly if they lived in the Jew's house.³⁶ The *tabula*, which had been officially enforced in England from 1218, was reinforced and remodelled to be of a different colour from the outer clothing as well as two inches in breadth and four inches long. They also extended the wearing of it to Jewesses.³⁷ Langton now banned all Jews from entering churches and from keeping any of their property in churches.³⁸ The building of new synagogues was stopped and, in Langton's own diocese, he forbade anyone to have dealings with the Jews or to sell anything to them. He was followed in this by the Bishops of Lincoln and Norwich.³⁹ For the Church, segregation seemed to be the simple answer. Not only was the Church concerned with possible conversion to Judaism but also with intermarriage and sex. In 1257, at a council in Salisbury, Bishop Giles of Bridport thundered and complained that there were Jews having sex with married as well as single Christian women. The women were to suffer excommunication, and the only way

to deal with the Jews was to segregate them by enforcing the rules over 'distinctive dress'.⁴⁰

Yet it was not only the crusading ideal, fears of usury and of conversion to Judaism that heightened the religious witchhunt and changed attitudes towards the Jews. Perspectives and attitudes towards Jews were further changed by the arrival of the new orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The former were dedicated to teaching the faith and eradicating heterodoxy; the latter to the imitation of Christ, preaching to the laity, and, if necessary, suffering martyrdom. Both orders were geared to conversion and proselytising and both spread quickly within the towns.⁴¹ Both orders had papal backing and their members attended and infiltrated dominant positions in the universities. In 1221 the Dominicans quickly set up a base in Oxford, shortly followed by the Franciscans in 1224.⁴² The Dominicans immediately showed their intentions, planning a *Domus Conversorum*, or house for converted Jews, which they started to build ten years later. It eventually opened in 1232.⁴³ The Franciscans not only made an impact in Oxford but were quick to establish themselves in Cambridge. They found favour with Henry III, who, in 1226, gave them half of a stone house which had belonged to Benjamin the Jew in the marketplace at Cambridge.⁴⁴

Both orders had the clear aim that they should engage and get involved in the task of converting the Jews. They also took a special interest, not only in Jewish literature and custom, but in wider Jewish affairs. In Oxford, Friar Roger Bacon was given the responsibility of looking after new converts.⁴⁵ Both orders were involved in the Little St Hugh affair in 1255. Led by Brother John of Darlington, the Dominicans of London interceded over the mass arrests of Lincoln Jews. Darlington even secured a pardon for a converted Jew who took the name John, who was one of the accused. This caused rumours that the Jews had bribed the Friars and led to a temporary loss of revenue in alms.⁴⁶ In a further instance of involvement in Jewish affairs, Friar Henry of Wodstone managed to save a parcel of land (already acquired from the Jews) from being alienated from the Abbey of St Albans by Queen Eleanor. He also influenced the Giffard brothers, Archbishop of

York and Bishop of Worcester, to stop the Jews from holding freeholds in lands in their provinces.⁴⁷ There can be little doubt that the arrival of two orders who desired total conversion was a new force that the Jews now had to endure.

Possible early provision for the aid of converted Jews had been made in Bristol by setting up a *Domus Conversorum*. Converts had often been received and looked after in the local abbey or priory. Such must have been the case with the Jew who, in 1096, converted at Westminster after having been convinced by Gilbert Crispin. In Oxford, an early refuge was started to which Henry III contributed to a refoundation in May 1231.⁴⁸ Aid and money was given to Jewish converts from time to time. Peter des Roches, even during the interdict, made regular gifts of alms to converted Jews at Southwark, Marwell and Twyford. In 1220–1 he paid for the entertainment of Jews at Fareham.⁴⁹

In January 1232 Henry III founded the *Domus Conversorum* in London in New Street by the Temple, on the site of a former synagogue. Des Roches was a witness to the event and Bishop John of Ardfert consecrated the new foundation.⁵⁰ The King endowed it with the promise of a gift of £466 13s 4d for those Jews who turned to the Catholic faith. Regulations for the new house were laid down in a charter. There were to be two chaplains to take the services in a purpose-built chapel. The inmates were to live in houses on the site.⁵¹ Gifts and bequests soon helped to boost the promised funds, which had still not been received. In 1234, the Archbishop of York actively sponsored a convert's entry into the house.⁵² In 1238, des Roches donated £66 13s 4d to the house and, in 1242, Bishop Hugh of Lincoln made a bequest for Lincoln converts.⁵³ Although Jews would have to give up all they owned, they were to receive a payment of 1½ d a day for men and a flat rate of 8d a week for women.

Henry III's policy of encouraging conversion was something that he took seriously. In his Mandate of the Jewry in 1253 he included a clause that stated that no Jew should try to stop a fellow Jew converting. Although he probably never managed to honour his munificent original grant, he kept financing the *Domus Conversorum*. In 1242, £133 6s 8d was donated.

In 1244 he gave a silver-gilt communion cup and provided ornamented robes for the chaplains. The officials were well clothed and in one year £11 was expended on chasubles and copes as well as a tunic and dalmatic of rich material. In 1257, the royal tailors were commanded to provide 161 tunics for converts at Easter and at Christmas, of which 150 that year were the special gifts of the King and Queen and 21 outfits were given by the royal children.

Henry seemed to respond to, and take an interest in, individual converts. Isabella of London was given a russet brown tunic; Hugh and John, 'the king's Chaplains', were given special hoods.⁵⁴ Many of the converts, such as Philip of Reading in 1234, were baptised in his personal presence. Some were given the Christian name of John in honour of his father and others were called Henry. One such convert, Henry of Winchester, became a special favourite and was given the 'belt of knighthood'. Other converts were named after royal officials: one was called John de Plessitis after the Earl of Warwick, Constable of the Tower. Another even took the name Robert Grosseteste, after the scholarly Bishop of Lincoln. One was given the name of the papal legate, Otto. Another was named after Henry's Dominican confessor, John of Darlington.⁵⁵

From time to time, Henry ordered that some of the inmates should be sent out of the *Domus* in London to other religious houses. It is not clear what his precise intentions were. However, in early 1255, about 150 *conversi* were sent to various religious establishments with an official letter that required the houses to provide either food and hospitality for two years or, if the convert preferred, a daily allowance of 1½ d.⁵⁶ Some were sent as far away as Yorkshire and Denbighshire. Families were split up. The convert Robert Grosseteste was sent to St Swithin's, Winchester, while his wife, Matilda, and his son, John, were sent to Horton in Kent.⁵⁷ It may well have been that this was some sort of preparation for the new converts to re-enter the world outside the cloister. Certainly some converts remained in the London *Domus*.⁵⁸ Yet there were other instances of converts being placed elsewhere, like Warin and John in the 1240s, who were sent to Oxford to be under the tutelage of Brother Robert Bacon. They were paid

at the usual rate and also had robes provided for them.⁵⁹ Perhaps the most notorious convert outside the London *Domus* was Henry of Winchester, who not only involved himself in some rather dubious financial transactions but worked for the Exchequer.⁶⁰

On 17 May 1268 a religious procession marched along Fish Street in Oxford on its way to the churchyard of St Frideswide's Priory. In the procession were the majority of the parish clergy, sacristans, choristers, townspeople and students. Also marching within the body of the procession was the Chancellor of the University, Nicholas de Ewelme, who was due to give an annual university sermon. At the head of the procession a young clerk carried a crucifix. Many of the townspeople had stopped to watch the event as it passed by. As the procession was nearing its destination, a single figure darted forward, snatched the cross and pushed the clerk to the ground. He trampled on the crucifix and disappeared into one of the crowded main streets.⁶¹ When the commotion had subsided, the procession went ahead and the chancellor gave his speech. However, such an overt blasphemy could not go unavenged and once he had finished he was determined to find out who had dared to do such a deed.

The matter was investigated by the Masters of the University and the town officials. Some blamed a Jew. Prince Edward, who happened to be in Oxford at the time, hastened to Woodstock, where the King was staying, and informed him.⁶² After some days, action was taken and the Oxford Jews were ordered to hand over the criminal. They either did not know who the perpetrator was or would not name him, and thus, on the order of the Justices in Eyre, they were all rounded up and imprisoned until they had made amends. Eventually, the Jews were released, but were sentenced to bear the expense of a marble crucifix that was to be erected on the site of the attack and they were also to provide a small ceremonial silver crucifix to be given to the chancellor and scholars of the university to replace the broken one. The King made a special exception for two Jews, Jacob fil Magister Moses and Benedict, as they could prove they were not in Oxford on the day.⁶³ The citizens later rejected the proposed site as being too inconvenient and urged that the crucifix should be set up opposite the

Jewish synagogue. Henry III, however, finally ruled that the monument be set up in the quadrangle of Merton College, by the Church of St John.

As far as Henry was concerned, this was a matter of grave importance. This was the second major incident between townspeople and Jews during his reign. In the same year as he had reorganised and placed his Jewish *conversi*, he had been asked to rule on the alleged murder of Little St Hugh. Now, 13 years after the Lincoln murder, the very symbol of Christ had been insulted. According to the words used at the time, the insult had been carried out 'in contempt for the Cross of Christ and for the whole of Christendom'.⁶⁴ Both crosses were delivered by the Jews of Oxford in early 1269 and they were finally humiliated by Henry for desecrating the cross. As far as Prince Edward was concerned, the breaking of the cross by infidels probably had a far larger resonance because that summer he was planning to embark on his Crusade.⁶⁵

Edward was preoccupied with his Crusade between 1270 and 1274, but in 1275 he paid particular attention to the *Domus* and gave orders to enlarge it. New houses were to be built for the converts and they received a donation of £100.⁶⁶ In the Statute of the Jewry of 1275, Edward had ordered that all Jews above the age of 12 would pay a poll tax of 3d a head, and in 1280 he directed this towards the upkeep of the *Domus*.⁶⁷ On 10 May 1279, Edward decreed that all relapsed converts from Judaism were to be subject to the secular arm. In January 1280, he endorsed the Dominicans' wish for the forced attendance of Jewish communities at their sermons.⁶⁸ In 1280, 'in order that those who have already turned from their blindness to the light of the church . . . and those who still persist in their error may more willingly and readily turn to the grace of the faith . . .', he allowed the *conversi* to keep some of their goods and chattels to maintain themselves for seven years; the rest would be given along with any confiscated goods of dead Jews to the upkeep of the *Domus*.⁶⁹ He also expected 'those converts who are skilful to learn secular handicrafts and mysteries . . . to be maintained by their portions until they are able to support themselves by their work'. Unlike his father, Edward did not see *conversi* being supported by religious institutions but insisted that they

should make their own living in the world. The royal family still paid special attention to the conversion of their Jews. A Jewish convert, who took the name of Eleanor of St Paul, was baptised in front of Eleanor, one of Edward's daughters, as late as 1289.⁷⁰

Edward was making his own attempts to bring the Jews into the Christian fold. However, this was not enough for the new Archbishop of Canterbury, who was consecrated on 19 February 1279, while Edward was abroad. John Pecham, the 'intense scholar of Paris and Oxford turned overbearing Archbishop of Canterbury', had been the candidate of Pope Nicholas III over Edward's own candidate, Robert Burnell.⁷¹ For the Jews, this was an appointment that was to heighten the restrictions on their religion and their social and economic status, and to see major initiatives to bring their religion to heel. In July 1281, Pecham had secret discussions with the Bishop of London and was intent on stopping the building of a new London synagogue.⁷² On 2 November 1281, he wrote to the King complaining that it had come to his attention that certain converted Jews had gone back to Judaism 'like dogs to their vomit'. Subsequently, he requested that a full-scale enquiry take place and that the King should use his power to bring these relapsed *conversi* back to the true faith. In the interim, in August 1282, the Bishop of London was ordered to destroy all the synagogues in London except one.⁷³ The Master of the *Domus Conversorum*, John de Sancto Dionysio, was appointed to run the investigation, and by November 1282 he reported that he had found at least 15 men and women who had returned to Judaism. The Mayor and Sheriffs of London were ordered to arrest 13 of them. The victims had taken refuge in the London Jewry, where they were under the protection and jurisdiction of the Constable of the Tower of London. It may well be that one of them at least had sought refuge with Master Elias Menahem, one of the most influential members of the London community.⁷⁴ Not put off by this, Pecham persisted and wrote to the Chancellor, Robert Burnell, who claimed that if a writ were issued to the Constable of the Tower, this would compromise the Constable's relations with the London Jewish community. It seems that Pecham did not succeed in getting his arrests as, at

the Easter parliament of 1285, the clergy complained about the failure of the Crown to act against relapsed Jewish converts.⁷⁵

Pecham's tenacity was to be rewarded by papal support. In a change in papal policy towards the Jews in 1286, Pope Honorius IV sent letters to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York that targeted the behaviour of Jews in England: 'We have heard that in England the accursed and perfidious Jews have done unspeakable things and horrible acts, to the shame of our Creator and the detriment of the Catholic faith. . .'. He went on to condemn the continuing study of the Talmud, accusing the Jews of seducing converts with gifts, inviting Christians into their synagogues, keeping Christians in their households, using Christian wet nurses, and banqueting and feasting together, as well as publicly abusing and cursing Christians. He also questioned the loyalty of the English clergy by suggesting that they had done nothing about such abuses. When the bull reached England in early 1286, Edward had already embarked for Gascony.⁷⁶ The campaign against the Talmud was a new departure in England.⁷⁷

Some Jews had tried to stop conversions. In 1236, a Jewish child from Oxford, who had been baptised, was kidnapped by the community and smuggled away. Several Oxford Jews were arrested and handed over to the Constable and imprisoned. The convert was traced to Exeter, sent back and put in the care of Robert Bacon.⁷⁸ One of the converts, whom Pecham had tried to arrest in 1282, might have been Rose of Dorking, the wife of Abraham of Dorking who, in 1274, had been charged with eight other Jews for conspiring to abduct two Jewesses who had recently converted to Christianity and for threatening them with hanging if they did not reconvert to Judaism. One of them, Juliana, who refused to return to Judaism, was transported overseas by her captors, and only saved when a storm drove her ship ashore at Sandwich.⁷⁹ In 1290, the London Jews objected vehemently to the baptism of a Jewish boy in St Clement's Church because they had not given their permission.⁸⁰

As we have seen, there were cases of Christians turning to Judaism. Perhaps more unacceptable and worrying to the Church fathers was the case of a Christian who was kidnapped and circumcised. In August 1230,

a young boy, Odard son of Benedict, went out to play in the streets of Norwich. He was approached by Jacob, a Jew, who enticed him into his house where there were other Jews. The boy was circumcised and given the name Jurnepin. He was kept in the house for a day and a night and then released. He was later found wandering up the bank of the river by Matilda de Burnham. The boy was distraught and kept weeping, claiming that he was now a Jew. Matilda kept him overnight. Some Jews came to her house and demanded that the boy be returned to them.

Matilda had contacted the boy's father, Benedict, and he had secretly come into the house. He was reunited with the boy. However, the Jews then came in great numbers and demanded that they have the boy. Matilda would not hand him over and the Jews went away warning her that she should not give him pork to eat because he was a Jew. The Jews complained to the Constable of Norwich Castle, Richard de Fesingfeld, and the bailiffs that a Jewish boy had been kidnapped. The boy was taken for safe-keeping to the Official of the Archdeacon of Norwich and the coroners who later testified that he had been circumcised.⁸¹

In 1234 the boy's father, brought a case against the Jews. Accordingly, 13 named Jews were summoned. In the intervening period at least one Jew, Seniore, had been outlawed for the felony of circumcising Odard. His message in Norwich had been given to Benedict.⁸² In 1234, the case was heard in front of the Justices, the Prior of Norwich and representatives of both the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Witnesses were called and interrogated. Three Jews did not appear and, with the exception of Mosse fil Solomon, nine Jews were found guilty. The case was referred to the King, who decided that it was up to the Church to prosecute and take action. As a result, three Jews were hanged, others condemned and, the following year, the citizens of Norwich wreaked their revenge by attacking the Jewry and setting it on fire.⁸³

Some Jews showed their dislike of the attempts to convert them. In 1277, a Jew allegedly assumed the habit of a Friar Minor, preaching certain things in contempt of both the Christian faith and the Franciscan order.⁸⁴ At the request of Archbishop Kilwardby, Edward ordered that the ribald

Jew should perform a penance that had been imposed on him by the archbishop. Sampson, son of Samuel of Northampton, was arrested by the sheriff for having taken the habit of a Friar Minor and for preaching certain things 'in contempt of the Christian faith'. Kilwardby had convicted him and sentenced him to go naked for three days through the midst of the cities of Canterbury, Lincoln, London, Northampton and Oxford, carrying in his hands the entrails of a calf; the rest of the calf was to be flayed and placed on his neck. Although Sampson seems to have escaped the punishment, further similar persecution took place.⁸⁵ At Nottingham in 1278, a Jewess was charged with assault of Agatha, wife of Robert son of Nemek, and with assailing her with abusive words, scandalising her and all the Christian bystanders in the marketplace and spitting in her face.⁸⁶ At Norwich in 1279, Abraham fil Deulecresse was burnt for blasphemy.⁸⁷

The Jewish communities were self-contained. Cecil Roth commented that the '... universality, the intensity and the catholicity of the medieval Anglo-Jewish intellectual life, so far as we can trace it, were remarkable. These men were usurers from compulsion: they were scholars by taste.'⁸⁸ They had their guidelines and influences. Their books, both religious and cultural, were well read. Their *scholae* or synagogues set the tone for the community while their Talmudists interpreted their way of life by using the Torah, the Talmud and the Responsa, which allowed the flexibility to cope with anything that the Christian world outside might throw at them. They were now, however, the subject of a deeper scrutiny and censorship. On his death in 1244, David of Oxford's library was examined for 'books which were against the law' before his family were allowed to have them.⁸⁹ The close examination of Jewish literature must have meant that tight control was kept on writings that were of value to the community. It was the Talmud that was so vital to the survival of Judaism because of its flexibility and ability to find answers for all situations. The Talmud itself puts it succinctly: 'customs-annals-law', and 'everything depends upon local custom.'⁹⁰ As the Talmud came under open attack, the very lifeblood of the religious make-up of Jewish communities was threatened. As James Parkes observed:

It is evidence of the ruthless efficiency of the medieval Church that among the tens of thousands of medieval manuscripts which fill the libraries of Europe, America and Israel today there is only one complete medieval copy of the *Talmud*.⁹¹

It is little wonder that their laws and interpretations, as well as some of their written guidelines, probably went 'underground' or were merely maintained and shared orally in closed gatherings. The Jewish communities had their own rulings on usury and on conversion. Technically, usury was forbidden to the Jew. However, just as for Christians, there were times when it became necessary.⁹² It is true to say that, to an extent, they had been forced into usury. However, once the campaign against it reached its height then they were the first to suffer, while Christians benefited.

As regards the Christian hope of conversion in 'the last days', the Jews had maintained their own religion, which had lasted unbroken for many centuries. Nor did Judaism have any world plan in either the medieval or late modern era. It did not openly court converts and quite naturally disliked conversion of Jews to Christianity. The Jewish attitude to converts to Christianity was extremely varied and depended on each case and each community. Some communities had as much disregard for apostates as they had hatred for an informer.⁹³ A true apostate was regarded by the Jews as having died and was openly mourned. All familial relationships were broken off and inheritance rights were made void.⁹⁴ Yet there was some sympathy for forced converts and they were even prayed for, and it was incumbent on the community to assist them to escape from Christianity. Although it seems some Jewish communities had learned to interpret the Talmud in the context of their everyday surroundings, they also maintained rigid standards of mutual exclusiveness. Jewish orthodoxy meant adhering to a strict raft of rules and prohibitions that continued to separate the two religions.⁹⁵ Despite the attempts to demean, to convert and to deal with another religion in their midst, medieval Christians were just as unable as modern Christians to bring about a mass conversion. In many ways the cold war between the two religions became not only a war of attrition but also a stalemate. It was, as Barrie Dobson has observed,

always going to be 'a case study in religious intolerance founded on mutual ideological incomprehension'.⁹⁶

In England between 1066 and 1290 the Church changed its attitude towards the Jews. Matters that were argued and discussed in the disputations became accusations. The prevailing hatred of the Jew, which fired allegations of ritual murder and host desecration, only hardened attitudes. The Jews were no longer just to be punished by their Diaspora but were to be put to work and made to forsake usury. The impact of the Dominicans and the Franciscans brought with it a new mission and message of conversion. The attack on the Talmud in Europe, which finally manifested itself in England in 1286, also militated against the Jews. Men like Robert Grosseteste, who in the early thirteenth century were prepared to tolerate the Jews on their terms, were replaced by men like John Pecham, who wanted an immediate end to Judaism and a total conversion. Although the establishment of the *Domus Conversorum* did not accomplish the wholesale conversion, it represented the increased royal desire to convert the Jews. Events like the conversions to Judaism and the alleged blasphemies that took place only exacerbated the Church's dogma and determination. The goats remained separate from the sheep, while the sheep prepared to rid themselves of the goats.

Dissolution and Diaspora

In 1290 Edward I reversed a royal policy that had stood for over 200 years and ordered the total expulsion of the Jews from England. In line with other continental rulers he had already, in 1287, ordered the expulsion of the Jews from his lands in Gascony. Yet previous expulsions from France had in some cases often been little more than temporary suspensions. The precedent in England may well have been the expulsion by Henry III in 1240 of the Cahorsins, who were then readmitted in 1250, and again proscribed in 1251. Kings had in the past used expulsion or suspension as a tool to gather money in time of need. Naturally a foreign merchant relied on the goodwill of the monarch for protection, but he had to pay for it. In 1230 some Cahorsins were arrested at Northampton, the following year they and all French merchants were ordered to leave England unless they had licence to remain. In 1245 all the merchants of Siena, Cahors and Florence and elsewhere from all over the country were summoned to Westminster and ordered to provide £4,000. If they would not give it freely then a loan was to be negotiated and if they would not agree to this then they were to quit the realm. Threat of expulsion was merely a bargaining chip to raise money. Royal coercion was simply another way of raising cash.¹ It was thus permissible for royalty to use such pawns to increase the cash available on the Exchequer board.

To a ruler, it was part of medieval kingship to play cat and mouse with vulnerable groups and, in particular, with aliens and foreigners. It was, however, quite another thing to try to do this with royal subjects, like the Jews. In England the Jew had a special status and had always been treated separately by both Church and state. Towards the end of the thirteenth century Church and state buried their differences and became united in

one object, and that was to punish and redefine the role of the Jews within their respective spiritual and secular domains. There has been great debate among historians over the position of the Jews in medieval society and this ranges from the Jew being of slave or servile status to the Jew being of special status.

It has already been demonstrated above how in one sense the Jews were enthralled and regarded as slaves by Christian society. The Papacy repeatedly portrayed the Jews as serfs. In 1234 Gregory IX's *Decretales* claimed that Jews were subjected to perpetual servitude because they had crucified Christ.² The Jews were to be enslaved right up until the end of the world. While there is little debate over the Church's view of Jewish servitude, there is much debate over the exact social standing of the Jews in the secular world. Certainly the Jew was outside Christian society and different from aliens. As we shall see, in a sense, they defied any description because they were so different. Anglo-Saxon law said little about the Jews' standing. In England they were a royal import and therefore the Norman and Angevin kings were able to invent their status. The kings had 'a royal monopoly of jurisdiction' over their Jewish subjects.³

Thus for some, the Jews were owned by the kings. The pseudo-laws of Edward the Confessor saw them as Crown property, '... for the Jews and all theirs belong to the king. And if any detain anything of theirs, let the king ask their money back as if it were his own'.⁴ For others they were *ferae naturae* or 'beasts of nature', to be protected like royal swans in Tudor times.⁵ They have also subsequently been defined as 'the King's most exquisite villeins'.⁶ Certainly in most descriptions of the relationship between kings and Jews there is always an implicit element of exploitation. Simon Dubnow asserted that in both England and France '... the king, who considered the Jew's person and all belongings as his own property, harshly exploited the commerce-serf – and when the serf's services were no longer needed, he was driven from the country mercilessly'.⁷ For Joseph Jacobs, they were a 'sponge'. For Charles Gross, the Jewish Exchequer was an 'engine of extortion', while for Cecil Roth they were 'the King's Milch Cow' and *servi camerae regis* or serfs of the royal chamber.⁸ Others saw

them as the 'goose that laid the golden egg'.⁹ No matter what nomenclature has been used to describe the Jews and their position in society, the fact is that they were both at His Majesty's Pleasure and, later on, at His Majesty's Service.

The deterioration of their status and their relationship with the Crown precipitated the final expulsion.¹⁰ Edward I actually paid lip service to the relationship in his Statute of the Jewry in 1275, 'albeit he and his ancestors have received much benefit from the Jewish people in time past . . .'.¹¹ The Jews first arrival under William the Conqueror had been at royal invitation. He had treated them as royal subjects. His son, William II, seems to have merely seen them as a curiosity that could be useful to the Crown and that is how the relationship might have stayed if it had not been for the call to arms against the infidel which accompanied the Crusades. Henry I, like his father, tolerated the Jewish settlements in London and Oxford and again granted the community a charter, which, like preceding charters, was probably made to a single leading Jewish magnate as a sign of special favour.¹²

We know of the existence of two charters from Henry II's reign. His relationship with the Jews seems to have been a good one. In granting rights of burial outside London Henry recognised that the Jews had spread farther afield than either London or Oxford and had become a feature in many provincial towns. He also had a fair knowledge of Aaron of Lincoln's business acumen and clientele. Certainly he allowed Jews to conduct their financial affairs and was also happy to profit from tallaging them.¹³ Indeed, as we have seen, one chronicler even referred to the Jews' situation as 'an absurd arrangement'.¹⁴ Yet Henry II also insisted that they were his property, should be protected, and were present only by his favour. As we have seen, this was all to change with the coronation of Richard I.

At Rouen, on 22 March 1190, six days after the York massacres, Richard I granted a charter to Isaac son of Rabbi Josce 'and his sons and their men'. These Jews were allowed to live 'freely and honourably' and were to be allowed to have their legal cases judged and to swear on the Torah. They were granted burial and inheritance rights. They were also allowed and

expected to trade and lend money as they were granted permission to sell their pledges after a year and a day, to secure their debts after a debtor had died, and to have freedom of custom and tolls and modulation of wine, 'just like our own chattels'. They were also provided with protection. Richard's grant took its precedent from an earlier one: 'just as the Lord King Henry, our father, granted and by his charter confirmed to the Jews of England and Normandy'.¹⁵ Yet only six days before the granting of this charter, an assault had been committed on Richard's Jewish subjects at York. Even as the embers around Clifford's Tower finally turned to ash the King's authority had been flouted and the royal protection of his special subjects ignored, and this required a manifestation of royal power. York was punished. The Jews were subsequently protected and as we have seen, the Exchequer of the Jews was finally established.¹⁶

Even John, who, in 1210, taxed the Jews to the hilt, at other times protected them to the hilt. They were 'our proper chattel' and were to be guarded.¹⁷ The royal peace (such that it was under John) was not to be broken.¹⁸ In November 1199, he gave a special protection and a tallage exemption for Leo the Jew, 'our goldsmith'.¹⁹ In 1201, he reconfirmed the charters of the Jews in return for £2,666 13s 4d. The new charters were read to the Jewish community in front of the Bishops of London and Norwich.²⁰ There can be little ambiguity about John's relationship with the Jews: '... since the Jews themselves and all they have are the King's'. John protected his Jews because he knew that he could exploit them and that is exactly what he did. Yet the loss of Normandy in 1204 and its repercussions were also to affect the royal Jews. A sudden change of emphasis in John's attitude towards the Jews and their debtors can be seen in 1207, when he decided to collect the debts owing to Aaron of Lincoln.

From November 1207, John ordered that threats of confiscation for non-payment should be used on all Aaron's outstanding debtors. It had been accepted since the arrival of the Jews in England that the debts of a dead Jew belonged to the King. Now, according to Sir James Holt, John was trying to collect the debts of Jews who were alive as well as those who were dead. He threatened what amounted to a general foreclosure on Jewish

debts. There seems to have been some success, as the examples of Gilbert de Gant and Simon of Kyme show. Gilbert owed £1,000 in 1211 and this was reduced to £800 when he promised to pay it off in two years. Simon of Kyme was trying to pay off the debts of his father, including some that had been owed to the Christian moneylender William Cade, as well as those of Aaron of Lincoln. In 1211–12 Simon was found to owe £853 12s 4d capital and £419 11s 6d interest for Jewish debts. He agreed to pay off £1,000 in three years. John kept on pressing and, according to a surviving roll, other debtors were forced to compound payments for Jewish debts.²¹ Such debtors faced the threat of distraint and of royal land alienation. The blame and resentment for these dire circumstances, which were expressed in Magna Carta, fell partly on the Jews.

If this was not enough, John also demanded tallages from the Jewish community. In 1207, a tallage of £2,666 13s 4d was ordered, as well as a levy of one-tenth of the value of their bonds, of which the Jews were now ordered to furnish precise details.²² After his return from Ireland in 1210, John ordered the Bristol tallage, which demanded a further £44,000.²³ This caused major problems for the Jewish community as well as for their debtors. To aid collection, Jewish officials were nominated in each county to organise the seizure of debtors' lands.²⁴ John had turned the Jews into agents of the Crown whose new function was to become, in effect, royal tax gatherers. This, as Holt has shown, was not always easy and made the Jews even more unpopular. The difficulties some Jews had are demonstrated by a case where a Jew managed to get the local sheriff to help him collect a debt. In 1208–9 Mathew Mantel had pledged the manor of Stanton in Hertfordshire to Moses son of Brun. The Jew could not obtain full possession of the estate because Mathew's serjeant would not allow the men of the manor to swear loyalty to a Jew. Moses obtained a writ that directed the sheriff to give him full possession of the manor and the power to sell the stock and the chattels to service the debt. When the sheriff arrived at Stanton, he found only four oxen, six draught animals and no corn. He was also unable to find buyers for the animals. Thus even a Jew who had royal support in trying to claim his debt still found difficulty.²⁵

Subsequent proceedings against the Jews were severe, with a general order to imprison the leading Jews of each community.²⁶ This was noted by many contemporary chroniclers. The *archae* were closely inspected, yet the sum John demanded could not be collected. It was alleged that John now resorted to other ways of making his collections. Certainly there were threats, intimidation and possibly torture. Roger of Wendover, the only contemporary chronicler to carry the tale, related the story of the Jew of Bristol who had a tooth extracted daily until he eventually parted with a large sum of money. During the attempts to collect money some Jews, like Isaac of Canterbury and Abraham fil Abigail of London, were hanged.²⁷ According to one chronicler, Isaac le Gros had his eyes plucked out. Others were forced to purchase their pardons. Isaac fil Jurnet of Norwich was imprisoned and fined £666 13s 4d. He was forced to pay at the rate of 13s 4d per day.²⁸ The tallage was rigorously collected and the collection of arrears continued into the 1220s.²⁹ In 1215 John published an order that any poor Jews who had left the country because of their inability to pay the tallage assessed upon them should not be allowed to return unless they had paid their debt and a fine of £2 to the Treasury.³⁰ Contemporary chroniclers may well have been correct when in response to enquiries by royal officials they described Jews who 'died or crossed the seas'. John of Oxnead even spoke of an expulsion.³¹ It is not surprising that during the Magna Carta rebellion the Jews of London were seen as part of the system of royal oppression and attacked.³²

The reign of Henry III saw a repositioning of the Jews on both economic and religious fronts. Henry III personally took a delight in the conversion of the Jews, founding the *Domus Conversorum* in 1232, and thus it is little surprise that he and his bishops tried to segregate Jews from Christian society. They were on a mission towards mass conversion. This was also accompanied by several major adjustments about Jewish moneylending activities. In 1233 the Jews were commanded that 'No Jew shall remain in our kingdom save such as can serve the king and find good pledges of fidelity. Other Jews, who have nothing wherewith they may serve the king, shall leave the kingdom . . .'³³ The Crown now insisted that the Jews were

there to provide it with financial support when it needed it. The organisation and near complete collection of the 1240 tallage shows convincingly that the Jews were the Crown's business.³⁴ But a tightening of the social noose around the Jews came on 31 January 1253 with the Mandate to the Justices assigned to the custody of the Jews. The message was unequivocal and began with a threat.³⁵

Until 1253, Henry III had merely reconfirmed his grandfather's charter defining the Jews' position but his new approach was to redefine the relationship between Crown and Jew.³⁶ In 1253, in his Mandate to the Justices of the Jews, he redefined the conditions under which Jews could live. If they were not prepared to obey the royal command then it was also ordered that no Jew was to remain in England 'unless he do the King service'. The Mandate asserted that the Jews belonged solely to the Crown from the cradle to beyond the grave, and 'that from the hour of birth every Jew, whether male or female, serve us in some way'. Draconian social restrictions were also placed on the Jewish population. The building of any new synagogues was stopped and it was ordered that in all synagogues the Jews subdue their voices so as not to disturb Christians. Jews were now subject to paying parochial dues. Jews were forbidden to employ Christian wet nurses or servants and Christians were banned from eating or meeting with them. The sale of meat to Jews during Lent was forbidden. The Jew was banned from disparaging the Christian faith or entering any church or chapel except for the purpose of transit. Sexual intercourse between Christian and Jew was utterly forbidden and was now likely to carry a charge of bestiality. The *tabula* was now officially enforced by the state. Jewish colonisation was limited to the towns where they already lived, except by special licence.³⁷

The Jews were no longer in England by invitation with special privilege. They were now in England to be exploited and directed at the King's whim. In the following year, Henry III raised yet another enforced tallage on the Jews. In 1254, Henry had approached parliament for a loan. His subjects had refused and the barons of England told the King point blank that they had no intention of approving any further finance. Henry ordered his

brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, to raise the money that was required from the Jews who also denied him the money. The King's retort was that 'It is no wonder that I covet money, for it is dreadful to think of the debts in which I am involved . . . I am a mutilated and diminished king . . . I am, therefore, under the necessity of living on money obtained in all quarters, from whomsoever and in what manner so ever I can acquire it.'³⁸

In the deliberations that took place in 1254 the Jews begged to be allowed to leave the country. The Jewish community had appointed one of their senior Rabbis, Elias, to speak with the Earl. At the audience with Richard of Cornwall, Elias duly explained that if the Jews had it in their power to supply the King's money, it would no sooner be done but that the Jewish community could not supply the finance even if they were to sell their own skins. Elias went on to explain that such a demand on the Jewish community would be their utter destruction. On behalf of the community, he begged the earl to ask Henry III for his permission to leave England. At the end of his speech Elias fainted; it was some time before he came round. Richard of Cornwall's reply was that the King would not allow a mass departure of the Jews and, besides, there was nowhere for them to go.³⁹

The problem over the Jews' status was shelved during the baronial wars. The Jewries were, as we have seen, the target for vicious attacks as enraged debtors tried to destroy their debts. Yet, after the wars, Henry had to act to reconstruct the Jewish *archa* system and also to tackle the problems that were caused by the advent of the fee debt. This he did and his new provisions were delivered by his Chancellor, Walter de Merton, in 1269. This new statement of the financial role of the Jews was drawn up with the advice of the Lord Edward and other 'trusty lieges' and would probably have included Merton himself. Their deliberations put a stop to arranging fee debts and transferring them in the market that had sprung up around them except without special royal licence. The penalties for not conforming were severe. This prohibition was soon followed by another order in 1271, which carried a new thrust to it. It was issued ' . . . for the honour of God and the Catholic Church, the better ordering and increased prosperity of our land, and the relief of Christians . . .'. It paid lip service

to the fact that it had been issued on the advice of bishops, barons and nobles on the council. It clearly stated that no Jew was to have freehold on any property.⁴⁰

Prince Edward was in the midst of a Crusade when his father died. His return to England in August 1274 saw him address the problem and the status of the Jews. Like his father he was concerned with two main areas of their lives – conversion and their financial usefulness to the Crown. He made attempts to tackle the larger question of usury and launched an inquest into it.⁴¹ He also bolstered the government's attempts to contain Jewish settlement. In October 1274 the Sheriff of Shropshire was ordered to remove some Jews who had entered and were dwelling in Bridgnorth. This did not prove to be so easily done as subsequently the people of Bridgnorth requested that a letter be sent to the sheriff, ordering that he make an extent of a house belonging to the Jews in Bridgnorth, to which they had been returning despite an order that they be removed.⁴² In early 1275, Edward had allowed Eleanor to banish the Jews from Marlborough, Gloucester, Cambridge, Andover, Bath and Guildford. It was clear that Edward was prepared to treat his Jewish subjects in a very different way than his royal predecessors and it is even possible that he had been considering expulsion as early as January 1275.⁴³

Edward now implemented perhaps the most radical definition change to the status of the Jew. They were to be brought into line and made to give up usury. By October 1275 he had embarked on what has been called the 'Edwardian Experiment'.⁴⁴ In this, Edward wished to realise the suggestion made by Grosseteste several years before and to turn the Jews from their moneylending role into ordinary citizens who earned their living by labour or legitimate commerce. His Statute of the Jewry of 1275 was very clear about how he saw the Jews' status and also hinted that his motives were religious. He issued it for the '... honour of God and the common benefit of the people ...'. On several occasions the Jews were referred to as serfs and the expression 'whose serfs they are' or 'whose bond-men they are' certainly clarifies how Edward saw the Jews.⁴⁵ There was a hint of Edward's future intent in the fact that he allowed them to buy houses

and hold them on behalf of the King for a period of ten years or less, and he ended the Statute with 'and this licence to take lands to farm shall endure to them only for fifteen years from this time forward'.⁴⁶ These new demands on the Jews were accompanied by a regenerating of the *Domus Conversorum* and a continued campaign to convert the Jews. This desire was supported by making sermons given by the Friars obligatory for Jews to attend and by the witnessing of or promotion of individual baptisms of Jews.⁴⁷

Edward still regarded the Jews as a separate community that belonged to the Crown. While he was away in 1279, the Jews became the victims of what has been called the coin-clipping sting; many hundreds of Jews were hanged or imprisoned for allegedly clipping the coin. When he heard of what was happening Edward put a stop to the hangings. Still pressure remained to do something more drastic about the Jews' position in society. Some sources indicate that the people had already asked Edward I to expel the Jews in 1281 in return for a tax of a fifth.⁴⁸ In 1282, the vanquished Welshmen, the sons of Maredudd of Penliti, complained to Archbishop Pecham that among the English even the Jews were allowed to have their own laws.⁴⁹ In the summer of 1285, John Pecham launched an attack on the royal power and the Jews. In particular he asked the King to put a stop to Jewish malice and fraud and to sanction the Inquisition against Jewish apostates. The reply came from the King that 'as far as Jewish malice is concerned, he simply has lost all hope of coping with it'. In 1287, when a knight whose manor had been mortgaged to a Jew went to Gascony to seek a judgement from the King himself, Edward, according to several chroniclers, replied, 'but I grant to you and to all others in my kingdom an equal law so that I do not appear to favour a Jew rather than a Christian'.⁵⁰ Yet during the closing years of Jewish presence in England Edward I no longer favoured the Jews.

Events in Gascony in 1287 spelt disaster for both Edward and, ultimately, the Jews. In a freak accident on Easter Sunday, 7 April, Edward was standing in a room at the top of a tower in Bordeaux when the floor gave way beneath him. The King and his attendants fell some 80 feet and were

covered with rubble. Three knights were killed outright, others walked away, but Edward was found underneath a Gascon knight with a broken collarbone and severe bruising. He was so ill that it took him five weeks to recuperate. It may be that his deliverance inspired him to make another Crusade. On 12 May Edward once again took the cross and became a Crusader who now needed finance to realise his quest.⁵¹ Soon after his recovery, Edward officially expelled the Jews from Gascony. Meanwhile, in England, in mid-April, the English clergy had met at the Council of Exeter. Pecham, now armed with papal backing, urged them to act against the Jews. They once again enforced the *tabula*, and forbade Christians to work with, eat with or accept medicines from Jews. They restricted the Jews to their houses on Good Friday and even made them keep their windows shut, as well as banning the building of new synagogues.⁵² Yet on 2 May 1287, while Edward still lay ill in Bordeaux, all the Jews in England were imprisoned. For many Jewish families they must have thought that this was the end. Scratched on a wall in Winchester, a Hebrew inscription recorded a chilling reference to the mass arrests. The London Annals refer to Jews being brought to London by the cartload. During the Easter term, on 3 May, the sheriffs had been ordered to produce Jews from 21 different towns in front of the barons of the Exchequer to hear and do the King's command. The King's demand for raising an instant £12,000 was too much and only just over £4,000 could be supplied.⁵³ This was the highest amount the Jews had paid for over 40 years. In Gascony Edward was now in need of every last penny and in February 1288 even replied to a report that in order to avoid the new tallage in England, Josce fil Manser and Hagin of Weobley had hidden their goods and transferred some of their valuables abroad. He ordered that they should be found and captured wherever they might be.⁵⁴ Some Jews were still imprisoned as late as July 1289 for non-payment of the new tallage. An impoverished Jewess, Belia of Gloucester, complained to the King that she had nothing to live on and her sons and daughters were still in prison because of the tallage.⁵⁵

Having expelled the Jews from Gascony and having realised an immediate profit of just over £1,000, which was given to the Dominicans and the

Franciscans, Edward eventually returned to England on 13 August 1289.⁵⁶ In Gascony he left in place a mechanism to collect any further Jewish debts.⁵⁷ He was now ready to implement the new policy of expulsion in England. Although there is evidence that suggests that in England at least the so-called Edwardian Experiment had been partially successful, this was overlooked by Edward, who now needed an excuse for total expulsion. He was quick to justify his new policy and accused the Jews of not carrying out his orders for their new economic redirection as fully as they should. The final decision to expel the Jews followed quickly after Edward's return to England in 1290. It is more than likely that the royal circle surrounding the King had been considering such a move for some time.

In November 1290, the expulsion of Jews, whose forbears had settled in England almost two and a quarter centuries before and who had tried to make this country their home, was completed. The whole process took less than four and a half months. The final decision to exile the Jews was made in secret at Westminster sometime in June 1290.⁵⁸ Subsequently, instructions were issued to the sheriffs in the provinces ordering them to seal the *archae* for the last time.⁵⁹ They were to ensure that the local officials who were responsible for closing and sealing the *archae* had done so by 28 June.

The official edict of the expulsion of the Jews from England was issued on 18 July 1290, when writs were issued to the sheriffs, which informed them that it had been decreed that all Jews were to leave England by 1 November. It was left to the sheriffs to pass on the royal ultimatum to their Jewish charges. Once they had gone public the sheriffs were also to be made responsible for making sure the Jews were not ill-treated and to make a general proclamation stopping anyone from wronging or injuring the Jews. The sheriffs were also responsible for organising a safe conduct and passage for the Jews at their own cost towards London in order to cross the sea. Before they left, the Jews were to restore all pledges that Christians had lodged with them.⁶⁰ It is likely that the orders were read out in the synagogues and the Jews were told to prepare themselves. Although the *archae* were supposed to be closed on 28 June, at Devizes,

Solomon of Devizes registered a debt as late as 27 October and Lincoln Jews were still registering debts there in August and September 1290.⁶¹ Such late agreements were stored in several of the small deed boxes that accompanied many of the larger chests to Westminster.

Little is known about the return of goods that had been pawned to the Jews but there was certainly time for the Christians to reclaim them. Again, little is known of any violence and it may well be that the sheriffs managed to prevent any local disturbances. Similarly, there is no evidence of Jewish debtors banding together to steal or destroy the *archae* and all of them survived until after the expulsion. There is one recorded act of violence against the Jews while leaving the country, which is portrayed in an early fourteenth-century chronicle at the monastery of Rochester in Kent.

While this depiction might be the imagination of the chronicler, it may also reflect something he had witnessed that summer. In it three Jews who are wearing the *tabula* on their outer garments are driven out of England by a man with a makeshift club. One of the Jews is putting a hand up to protect himself. The outcome is not known but there is certainly violence present.⁶²



7 Jews being driven out of England in 1290, taken from a Chronicle written in Rochester.

During the summer of 1290, the Jewish communities organised themselves for their respective journeys to the coast. Not all Jews were expected to pass through London and, in late July, a safe conduct was issued to the bailiffs, barons and sailors of the Cinque Ports for peaceful passage of the Jews.⁶³ Some influential Jews managed to secure personal safe conducts from the Crown. On 8 August the citizens of the Cinque Ports were ordered to give Moses fil Jacob of Oxford, a Northampton Jew, a 'safe and speedy passage at moderate charges.'⁶⁴ He may well have travelled with a group of Jews. Such was the case with Bonamy of York, who had his son, Josceus, and other York Jews in his entourage when he was ready to leave on 24 August and was given the same protection by order of the King.⁶⁵ The York community received the protection of Archbishop John le Romeyn, who wrote to his diocese threatening with excommunication any who molested the Jews.⁶⁶ Other, more fortunate, Jews who had Christian patrons managed to procure special licences to sell their property. On 28 July, Aaron fil Vives, who had been the property of Edmund, the King's brother, managed to secure permission to sell his houses and rents in London, Canterbury and Oxford. In September, Edward I granted Cok Hagin, '... the Jew of his dearest consort Eleanor', the right to sell his lands in London to Robert de Basing for £166 13s 4d. Even extremely rich Jewish royal favourites had to join the other Jews in their exile.⁶⁷

After they had embarked to go into exile some parties of Jews became victims of violence. At Queenborough, in the Thames estuary, Henry Adrian, the captain of a ship transporting Jews from England, pretended that the ship had foundered on a sandbank and told the Jews to get off while it was refloated. He jumped back on board and shouted at them that they should call on Moses to help them. They drowned as the tide came in and Adrian made off with what few possessions the Jews had carried. He was eventually arrested and spent two years in Sandwich Prison for his murderous deed.⁶⁸ A similar piece of treachery may well have occurred off the north Norfolk coast. The Sheriff of Norfolk, William de Redham, reported that he had seized a ship found on the sea coast near Burnham in Norfolk. It was suspected that it was one of the ships that should have

carried Jews out of the kingdom. The crew had abandoned it save for one boy, who was to be brought to London. The boat, goods and chattels, which included a samite cloth valued at £1 6s 8d, a brooch worth 3s and an old hauberk worth 2s, were impounded and valued at £90 11s 10 1/2 d. A little later, part of a ship's boat and part of the rigging valued at £5 6s 8d were found at Weybourne.⁶⁹ After the expulsion, the only Jews to remain in England were those who had become Christians or those who perhaps remained as illegal immigrants. The number of converted Jews does not seem to have risen dramatically; but the records reveal nothing of those Jews who chose to remain illegally.⁷⁰

The reasons for the change in royal policy are multifarious. Even though the Edwardian Experiment had been partially successful and some Jews had emerged as successful merchants, some historians have argued that the Jews of England had been so greatly taxed that they were no longer useful to the Crown.⁷¹ It has also been argued that Edward banished the Jews in return for a vote of a large tax from his people.⁷² This picture of a grateful people and clergy conceding a tax because of a single popular move against the Jews has been adopted by Edward's most recent biographer. Yet it is still not the full explanation.⁷³

The decision to abandon the Jews was probably taken much earlier than 1290. It may even have been that Edward had dallied with the idea of expulsion as early as 1275 but that he had tried to solve the Jewish problem in another way with the Edwardian Experiment. Although it was a single royal decision to banish the royal Jews, it was also due to many influences, ranging from religious animosity, antipathy and angst. It was complicated by religious and social perceptions as well as political interests, and of course the bitterness and determination of Archbishop John Pecham that the Jews should be continually punished for the death of Christ.⁷⁴

Edward did not make much money out of the expulsion. Unlike his grandfather, King John, who had retrospectively tried to collect the debts of Aaron of Lincoln, Edward never pressed for his Jewish debts but merely recorded them. Indeed, financial profit from the debts of expelled Jews and their confiscated assets did not really directly benefit the King, who had

now retracted his protection of his Jewish subjects and abandoned them.⁷⁵ Yet Edward was still anxious to have a complete report of what the Jews had left behind them. The subsequent dissolution of the English Jewries was achieved quickly and efficiently. In early October 1290, orders reached the Sheriff of York and other provincial sheriffs to deliver the *archae* under safe and secure conditions to Westminster by late November. The sheriffs were also ordered to make a full enquiry in the town as to what properties the Jews held or inhabited, to whom they owed rent and other payments. The arrival of the 21 different *archae* that were brought in was meticulously noted and their keys duly deposited. In late November and early December the Treasury officials set about opening the *archae* and, under close scrutiny, made lists of all the bonds that were now in the King's hands.⁷⁶ Lists of bonds from 11 *archae* survive, although the bonds have long since been destroyed. It has been estimated that, in total, bonds and tallies representing debts worth an approximate face value of £20,000 were now in the King's hands. Yet Edward never pressed for them nor does he seem to have publicly annulled them. It was not until 1326 that a general pardon of Jewish debts was issued.⁷⁷

The survey of former Jewish properties took longer. Led by Hugh of Kendal, Edward's officials now began to list the properties. An estimated valuation was achieved by late December 1290. There were properties in 16 different towns worth a total of £1,835 13s 4d.⁷⁸ This was not yet a comprehensive valuation, as ownership of some of the properties had not been established or had been disputed. A house in Devizes and houses at Cambridge and Hereford were not included in the valuation. However, for the moment, Edward had at his disposal over 130 different properties, a few pieces of land and about a dozen shops to redistribute.

Most of the properties were concentrated in London, Lincoln, Canterbury, Hereford and Winchester. The quality and size of the properties varied. At York, for instance, it is quite clear from the large yearly value of £2 13s 4d that Bonamy of York must have had a rather luxurious house in Coney Street compared to the stall with one storey in Colchester that was shared between Dulcia and her son Pigge, worth 7s. The properties

at Northampton were also diverse. Moses fil Jacob had a messuage on Corn Row worth an annual value of £1 7s 8d. Pictavin fil Sampson had a messuage in the Sheep Market with rights of passage and a well-built house worth £1 1s 2d a year. Further down the range, Sara of London had a house in good condition with one storey and a cellar worth 13s 4d a year, and Gente, who was the wife of Sadekyn, had a cottage in very bad repair with a small yard, worth 6s a year.

Lincoln had a large and very varied set of properties occupied by Jews. One at least still remains today on Steep Hill. Some had been very substantial properties indeed. Floria, daughter of Josce, had 'a very good house with two shops and a beautiful door' in St Martin's parish. Master Benedict had three messuages in which he lived and also a well-built house in Brancegate with two shops and tenements. Hagin fil Benedict had a mediocre house, a messuage that was held by Garsy, a Jew, and a plot of land on which his kitchen was built. Many of the properties were in Brancegate. Manser of Brodsworth had two fairly substantial houses there, one of which was rented to a Christian, John of Norwich. Josce of Colchester had some good houses there which were well built, with two chambers. Elsewhere in the town, Josce Gubbay had 'a very good house' with a copse and six shops. Benedict le Gannok had two high houses well built and roofed with tiles. While there was a preponderance of gracious houses, some Jews, like Mansell of Tickhill, had lived in a small cottage in bad repair.

The returns from some towns, like Bedford, give the impression that the Jews had not lived there for some time. Pictavus, who had 'long since died', had two messuages in the High Street, which, according to the jurors, had passed to his two sons, Jacob and Benedict. It was noted that Benedict had been compelled to undergo baptism in the Isle of Ely and for more than 12 years Jacob had held the two properties. Then Jacob was hanged for felony and the messuages had finally escheated to the King. Similarly, in Cambridge, there are indications that some Jewish properties had lain empty or unoccupied for some years. Although the Jews had been expelled from Cambridge in 1275, Josce fil Saulot still had a house there in 1290.

In some places, Jews held more than one property. In York, apart from his own residence, Bonamy of York owned a second property in Coney Street in which another Jew lived, as well as property in Metsgate street and a rental income from a property in Feltergate.⁷⁹ In Canterbury, Abba of Doggestreet had three adjoining tenements. In Colchester, Sancte had several properties including three shops and a one-storey tenement which was formerly the synagogue, another shop and a rental income from a further tenement. The Nottingham jurors informed the sheriff that Moses of Clare had a messuage in Ipswich and one in Nottingham, and Vives of Suffolk had a messuage in Ipswich as well as a yard in the suburb of Ipswich. At Oxford, Sarah, the wife of Benedict Le Eveske, had a messuage with a hall as well as four shops in St Aldate's.

Some Jews had rented properties and some had rented their own out. In Hereford, Bonenfaunt fil Aaron of London had two shops and a tenement that he had rented for four years. At York, Sarah widow of Benedict, and her son, Josce, had a tenement that they had let to Agnes de Gra for a term of ten years, of which eight had elapsed. Josce fil Solomon of Marlborough had a tenement in Devizes that he had bought for a term of six years from William Chyverel for 6s 8d and 4s a year ground rent. By the time the Jews were ordered to depart from England only three-and-a-half years of the agreement had elapsed. Cok of Devizes possessed a tenement and also had a house for a term of 15 years. In 1290 only five years of the term had passed and Cok managed to sell his rights for the other ten years to Henry Lay, cobbler, from whom he had originally rented the house.

The sheriffs and the jurors were extremely thorough and enquired into who was owed ground rents as well as token rents and small payments such as a pound of cumin, a pair of gloves, a pound of pepper. However, at times, they found no answers. In the case of the synagogue at Nottingham, it was noted that the Jewish community paid 1s 4d to the annual payment to the Crown for Nottingham and 1d to the chief lords of the fee, '... who were unknown to the Jurors before whom the information was furnished'. These returns cannot represent all of the Jewish properties that now passed to the Crown. Even using a generous multiplier, such properties would

probably not house more than 500–600 people. There were of course other properties in major towns that had already been sold off during Edward's reign, particularly in the 1280s after the coin-clipping hangings. There were others that were perhaps rented on more private agreements and the jurors had not genuinely known about them. There were possibly those who knew that former Jewish properties were to pass into the King's hands and who took them over later, making no declaration. There were also some properties that may have exchanged hands for cash before the Jews left, which have left no official record.⁸⁰

Hugh of Kendal found it fairly easy to sell the more substantial houses.⁸¹ The disposal was undertaken quickly and by 27 December, a week after his appointment, Hugh had received £677 19s 4d as payment for property that had belonged to Jews. As further payments came in, Hugh began to pay off some royal debts. Just over £100 was immediately spent on King Henry III's tomb at Westminster, on glass windows in the royal palace and on general repairs. It was also noted that other potential buyers still owed amounts totalling another £941.⁸² By April 1291, 12 of them had made payments direct to the treasury amounting to £312; and Peter de Appleby had also paid £6 13s 4d for various ex-Jewish tenements in York.⁸³ Therefore, within six months, Edward had personally gained almost £1,000 from the sale of former Jewish properties. Hugh of Kendal certainly had to be persistent in chasing up the new owners to settle for their properties. In July 1291, Hugh wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and reminded him that he still owed £53 6s 8d for his purchases. As late as September 1294, William la Vavassur of Hazelwood still owed £46 13s 4d for property he had bought in York.⁸⁴

Most townsmen would probably have noticed the exchange of properties more than the absence of the Jews. Some new owners certainly managed to get some rather choice properties and thus were the ones who really gained from the expulsion. Their properties were now also guaranteed by the King by royal grant. Between 1291 and 1292 the King made 85 separate grants to new owners. In Cambridge, the mayor received one of the grants; in Northampton, William de Hamilton, the Archdeacon

of York, received another; in Lincoln, Robert le Venour, recently appointed Keeper of the Royal City of Lincoln, managed to secure two properties; in London, Isabella de Vescy bought an expensive property in Wood Street; in Canterbury, William de Somfeld, the Queen's tailor, received the synagogue. The Abbey of Chicksand bought property in London, the Abbey of St James bought property in Northampton, the Abbey of Newnham was granted property in Bedford, and Christ Church Canterbury received a grant of the majority of the Jews' property in that city. All of the property that had been confiscated in Oxford was sold to the Chancellor's brother, William Burnell.⁸⁵

Relatively little is known about the Jews who were dispersed from England. We know that a large group of 1,461 Jews were shipped from London to Wissant, 14 miles north of Boulogne. This party assembled in London, probably close to the Tower, and paid Ralph of Sandwich, the Constable of the Tower, a handling fee of £23 6s. Some 126 'poor Jews' were charged half the standard price of 4d per person. Subsequently some of these Jews from England joined the Paris Jewish community.⁸⁶ The tax returns from the Paris Jewry for 1292 show Abraham and Hermiete de Quant (Kent), Bonami Lenglois and his wife, Moses and his wife Rose, Belasset, Josce and Jorin, all either named 'l'englesche' or 'l'englois'. In 1296, similar returns reveal a Mahy de Quiquelarde (Cricklade), Moses de Fouleham (Fulham) and Symaan l'Englais. All these English refugees seem to have dwelt in two distinct areas of Paris: La rue Neuve and Latacherie.⁸⁷ It has been estimated that by the end of the thirteenth century a minimum of 7 per cent (and possibly as many as 20 per cent) of the 1,000 or 1,500 Jews in Paris were English immigrants.⁸⁸ Bonamy of York and his family also chose to settle in Paris. Even in exile, Bonamy tried to reclaim a large debt of £300 from Bridlington Priory by asking the Archbishop of York, John Le Romeyn, who was returning from the papal court at Rome, to claim it on his behalf. In 1291, in return for a payment of £100, Bonamy and his family received the right from Philip the Fair to settle where French Jews were accustomed to dwell.⁸⁹

The majority of English Jews must have gone into exile in France. Joseph

Shatzmiller has shown how some reached southern France. In 1311, a Moses Anglicus was accused of fraudulently keeping a deed belonging to a woman named Alasacia Rogerie of Manosque. He has also told the story of Simon de Cricklada (Cricklade) who was involved in a violent argument with a customer who had asked if he could satisfy his debt of 15s with a payment of 10s.⁹⁰ There is evidence that other Jews settled briefly in Amiens and Carcassonne. Although there is no evidence, it has been suggested that some may have fled to Scotland, Wales and even Ireland. There is slightly better evidence that some parties or families may well have gone to Spain, Savoy, Germany and even Gozo.⁹¹ Intriguingly, an English deed eventually found its way to Cairo, where it was discovered among the *genizah* documents there.⁹²

Although Edward was compared by one chronicler, using an Old Testament analogy, to having outdone the Pharaohs for ridding England of the Jews, a New Testament analogy may have been better suited to his actions of June 1290 – that he simply washed his royal hands.⁹³ Those Jews that left an England that had in the words of Meir of Norwich ‘. . . become a hell without light’ left their enslavement and preserved their dignity



8 Illustration of the Wandering Jew, Joseph Cartaphilus, from Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora II*. Cartaphilus is said to have told Jesus carrying the cross 'Go on quicker, Jesus! Go on quicker! Why dost Thou loiter?' to which Jesus is said to have replied: 'I shall stand and rest, but thou shalt go on till the last day.'

until their re-admission in 1660. On 1 November 1290, the medieval Anglo-Jews were, in the words of a scribe at the Council of London, 'a fugitive people exiled from England for all time, always a wretched people to wander anywhere in the world . . .'⁹⁴

Five hundred and sixty years later, one Jew returned to the small Lincolnshire hamlet of Hackthorn, some seven miles north of Lincoln, where his forbears had lent money to the local inhabitants. In 1850, the Church of St Michael's was being rebuilt and wooden furnishings had been commissioned for the interior. However, in the summer of that year, the proprietor of the business that was working on the decorations died and they became part of his estate. Subsequently, the furnishings became ten lots in a sale that was held on the 31 October 1850. At the sale a Mr Benjamin (described as a Jew of commanding stature) asked that the ten lots be put together. He purchased all of them saying, 'I offer £10 for the lot and where is the Christian who dare bid against me?' The furnishings, still in the church at Hackthorn, were saved by a Jew whose predecessors had been expelled from Lincoln on 1 November 1290.⁹⁵

Glossary

Ab	H. Jewish feast that commemorates both the destruction in 586 CE of the First Temple, originally built by King Solomon, and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.
Archa/ae	L. Ark or strong box in which deeds were kept.
Archpresbyter	L. Highest ranking priest or official.
Ark	E. Box, but in context of Judaism the place where the Torah scrolls were kept.
Ashkenazi	H. A Jew of Eastern European descent.
Auto da fé	S. An act of faith; a ritual of public condemnation.
Beth din	H. Jewish religious court.
Beth ha Midrash	H. House of Learning.
Beth ha Sepher	H. House of the Book – place of elementary learning.
Bethel	H. House of God.
Bursa	L. A common purse.
Calumus Draco	L. Dragon's Blood, a medicinal herb.
Capitula	L. The top of a written agreement.
Capitulum Judeorum	L. Chapter of the Jews. The Jewish Court or Beth din.
Charoseth	H. Literally paste made from apples, walnuts and cinnamon for Passover.
Chirograph	L. A hand-written document.
Communitas	L. Community.
Conversus	L. A Convert.
Cornutum Pileum	L. The spiked Jewish hat.

Damnum emergens	L. Penalty clause in which interest mounts.
Dayanim	H. A rabbinic judge.
Diabolica	L. Materials influenced by the Devil.
Diaspora	L. The Dispersal of the Jews from their homelands.
Domus	L. House.
Domus Conversorum	L. House of Converts.
Donum	L. A gift or tax given to a King as a tribute.
Fabula ineptissima	L. A very silly story.
Foetor Judaicus	L. Jewish smell.
Gabbai/Gabbayim	H. A Jewish sexton or sacristan.
Genizah	H. An archive for old documents or books.
Ghetto	I. C16th locked area of Jewish settlement.
Haftaroth	H. A reading from the Prophets following each lesson from the Torah in synagogue services on the Sabbath.
Hagaddah	H. A religious text that sets out the order of the Passover.
Hakkodosh	H. Holy name.
Hasid/Hasidim	H. A member of a Jewish mystical movement – a pious Jew.
Hazzan	H. Cantor.
Herem ha yishuv	H. A ban imposed on an individual to separate him from the other members of the Jewish community. Excommunication.
Instrumentum	L. A written agreement.
Inter est	L. Literally ‘that which is between.’
Kabbalah	H. A mystical aspect of Judaism.
Kahal	H. Governing body of the Jewish community.
Kashrut	H. Laws of dietary practice.
Ketubah/ketubboth	H. A Hebrew marriage agreement.
Kiddush	H. Blessing recited over the wine before the meal on the Sabbath.
Kosher	H. Fit for consumption.

Letter de obligacioun	F. Letter of obligation. Contract.
Lucrum cessans	L. A penalty that increases.
Maleficus	L. Evil. Malicious.
Masorah	H. Oral law or tradition as handed down.
Matzah	H. Unleavened bread.
Mazzuzah	H. Literally a parchment carrying an excerpt from the Torah (shema), which is fixed on a doorpost.
Mediocres	L. Those in the middle.
Megillah	H. The tenth Tractate of Mishnah, which deals with the laws of Purim and offers exegetical understandings to the Book of Esther.
Midrash	H. Referring to the not exact, but comparative (homiletic) method of exegesis (hermeneutic) of biblical texts. A commentary on Hebrew Scriptures.
Mikveh/mikva'ot	H. Jewish ritual bath to obtain purity. Used by men and women and also used for purifying utensils.
Minores	L. Those of smaller standing.
Minyan	H. A quorum of ten adult males for religious services.
Mort gage	F. Literally a 'dead gage'. A pledge for security of a loan.
Nadib/nadibs	H. A rich and influential member of the Jewish community. A patron.
Odaita	H. A Hebrew agreement.
Parnass/im	H. The governor of the synagogue.
Pastide	F. A pie.
Pes	L. The bottom of a written agreement.
pluma	L. Literally 'feathers'.
Presbyter	L. A leader or elder.
Purim	H. Jewish Festival that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman's plot

	to annihilate them, as recorded in the Book of Esther. According to the story, Haman cast lots to determine the day upon which to exterminate the Jews. Purim is celebrated annually on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar.
Rabbi	H. A religious teacher.
Rahash	H. Payments made to synagogue functionaries.
Responsa	H. A body of written decisions and rulings given by legal scholars in response to questions addressed to them.
Sacholim	H. A notice over a spring or mikveh stating that the water was from flowing water.
Scola	L. School or synagogue.
Servus Camerae Regis	L. A servant or serf of the royal chamber.
Shabbat ha Gadol	H. The Sabbath preceding Passover.
Shamash	H. An attendant, caretaker, custodian, or synagogue janitor.
Shema	H. A prayer found in Deuteronomy.
Shetar/shetaroth	H. A Hebrew quitclaim or business deed.
Shtadlan	H. An intermediary who represented interests of the local Jewish community, negotiating for the safety of Jews with the authorities holding power.
Societas	I. A society or company for transacting business.
Starrum/a	L. The Latin form of a Hebrew quitclaim or business deed.
Statutum de Judaismo	L. Statute of the Jewry (1275).
Studium generale	L. A place of general studies; an old university.
Tabulum/a	L. Badge of Ten Commandments.
Tahara	H. The purification procedure (cleansing) before burial.
Tallage	E. An arbitrary royal tax.
Talliator	L. An official who assesses the taxation capabilities

	of a community.
Talmud	H. Book containing the Jewish creed. A record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history.
Targum	H. An Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible.
Torah	H. The first part of the Hebrew Bible, the Pentateuch.
Tosafists	H. Medieval Rabbis who created critical explanations on the Talmud.
Vif gage	F. Literally a 'living gage'.
Vita	L. Saint's Life.
Yeshivah	H. A Jewish institution for Torah study and the study of Talmud. Advanced level learning.

E = English, F = French, H = Hebrew, I = Italian, L = Latin, S = Spanish.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CCR	Calendar of Close Rolls
CFR	Calendar of Fine Rolls
CPR	Calendar of Patent Rolls
Condition	Abrahams, B. L. (1896), 'Condition of the Jews of England at the time of their Expulsion in 1290', <i>TJHSE</i> , 2, 76–105.
Dobson	Dobson, R. B. (1974), <i>The Jews of York and the massacre of March 1190</i> , Borthwick Papers, 45, York.
Hillaby	Hillaby, J. (1993), 'Beth Miqdash Me'at: The Synagogues of Medieval England', <i>The Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i> , 44, 182–98.
Hyams	Hyams, P. R. (1974), 'The Jewish minority in Medieval England 1066–1290', <i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> , 26, 270–93.
Jacobs	Jacobs, J. (1893), <i>The Jews of Angevin England. Documents and records from Latin and Hebrew sources . . . for the first time collected and translated</i> , London.
JHS	<i>Jewish Historical Studies</i>
JMB	Skinner, P. (ed.) (2003), <i>The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary, and Archaeological Perspectives</i> , Woodbridge.
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
Lipman	Lipman, V. D. (1967), <i>The Jews of Medieval Norwich</i> , London.

<i>Misc JHSE</i>	<i>Miscellany of the Jewish Historical Society</i>
Mundill	Mundill, R. R. (1998), <i>England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262–1290</i> , Cambridge.
<i>PREJ</i>	Calendar of the Plea Rolls of the Jews
Rabinowitz	Rabinowitz, L. (1972), <i>The social life of the Jews of Northern France in the XII to XIV centuries</i> , New York.
Richardson	Richardson, H. G. (1960), <i>The English Jewry under Angevin Kings</i> , London.
Rigg	Rigg, J. M. (ed.) (1902), <i>Select Pleas, Starrs and other Records from the Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews 1220–1284</i> , Selden Society, 15.
Rokeah	Rokeah, Z. E. (2000), <i>Medieval English Jews and Royal Officials: Entries of Jewish interest in the English Memoranda Rolls, 1266–1293</i> , Jerusalem.
Roth	Roth, C. (1978), <i>A History of the Jews in England</i> , 3rd edn, Oxford.
RS	Rolls Series
SCBM	Loewe, H., Stokes, H. P. and Abrahams, I. (eds) (1930) <i>Starrs and Jewish Charters in the British Museum</i> , vols I–III, Cambridge.
Schofield & Mayhew	Schofield, P. R. and Mayhew, N. J. (eds) (2002), <i>Credit and Debt in Medieval England c.1180–c.1350</i> , Oxbow Books.
Stokes	Stokes, H. P. (1913), <i>Studies in Anglo-Jewish History</i> , Edinburgh.
<i>TJHSE</i>	<i>Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society</i>
TNA	The National Archives
WAM	Westminster Abbey Muniments

Money

To facilitate the understanding of the monetary system of the two centuries of Jewish presence in England between 1066 and 1290 all monies have been expressed in pound sterling.

To give some sense of modern-day monies I have drawn on the speculative work of the late Reva Brown and Sean McCartney, University of Essex. See Brown, R. B. and McCartney, S. (2003), 'The Internal Exile of Medieval English Jewry', *The Medieval History Journal*, 6, 64–5.

<i>C12/13th</i>	<i>C21st</i>
1d	£3.10
1s	£37.50
£1.00	£750
£5.00	£3,750
£10.00	£7,500
£100	£75,000
£1,000	£750,000
£10,000	£7,500,000
£100,000	£75,000,000

Thus Aaron of Lincoln's loans of £4,374 to Cistercian abbeys might equate to £3,280,500. Aaron of Lincoln's debts of £15,000 might equate to £11,250,000, although, in modern terms, his personal wealth has been valued elsewhere as being £21.6 billion (see *The Sunday Times* (2000), 'Richest of the Rich', magazine supplement, March, p. 8.). The alleged fortune confiscated from Adam de Stratton of £20,000 would equate to £15,000,000.

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Notes

Note to the Preface

- 1 Cecil Roth (1951) *The Jews of Medieval Oxford*, p. iii, cited in R. B. Dobson (1979), 'The decline and expulsion of the medieval Jews of York', *TJHSE*, 26, 34–52, p. 34, note 3.

Notes to Chapter 1: Colonisation and confinement

- 1 Pearl, E. (ed.) (1990), *Anglia Judaica or a History of the Jews in England by D'Bloissiers Tovey*, pp. 3–4.
- 2 Margoliouth, M. (1851), *History of the Jews in Great Britain*, 1, 9–15.
- 3 Dobson, R. B. (1974), *The Jews of York and the massacre of March 1190*, (Borthwick Papers, 45), p. 1. Hereafter 'Dobson'.
- 4 Singer, S. (1908), 'Jews and Coronations', *TJHSE*, 5, 112. Hyman, L. (1972), *The Jews of Ireland*, p. 2.
- 5 Applebaum, S. (1953), 'Were there Jews in Roman Britain?', *TJHSE*, 17, 189.
- 6 Dobson, pp. 1–2. Frantzen, A. J. (1982), 'The tradition of penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11, 30–2, 53.
- 7 Dobson, p. 2.
- 8 Susser, B. (1977), *The Jews of Devon and Cornwall from the Middle Ages until the twentieth century*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter, p. 2.
- 9 Amos 8.11–12. Applebaum, S. (1953), 'Were there Jews in Roman Britain?', *TJHSE*, 17, 198.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 11 Cohen, Joseph (1575), *Emek Habacha*, p. 12, cited by Jacobs, J. (1893), *The Jews of Angevin England*, p. 4. Hereafter 'Jacobs'.
- 12 Hyman, L. (1972), *The Jews of Ireland*, p. 3. Tairdelbach is the Irish name of Turlough O'Brien, King of Munster 1009–86.
- 13 Atkinson, E. G. (1912), *The Jews in English History*, p. 6.
- 14 Applebaum, S. (1953), 'Were there Jews in Roman Britain?', *TJHSE*, 17, 199–201.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 204. Susser, B. (1977), *The Jews of Devon and Cornwall from the Middle Ages until the twentieth century*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter, p. 3.
- 16 Loewe, H., Stokes, H. P. and Abrahams, I. (eds) (1930), *Starrs and Jewish Charters*

- in the British Museum*, vols I–III, vol. II, pp. 166–7, 203–4. Hereafter ‘SCBM’. Certainly William’s motto does seem to have been in usage as a cry used at the battle of Val-es-Dunes. Wace, *Roman de Rou* (dated c.1155–70) contains in part iii, lines 3,937–8, the following: ‘Guillaume crie “Deus aie!” c’est l’enseigne de Normendie’ (William shouted ‘God help’, that is the Norman battle cry). See Wace (2002), *The Roman de Rou*, trans. Burgess, G. S. with the text of Holden, A. J. and notes by Burgess, G. S. and van Houts, E., Societe Jersiaise, pp. 188–9. Kindly communicated by E. van Houts.
- 17 Golb, N. (1998), *The Jews in Medieval Normandy – a social and intellectual history*, p. 113.
 - 18 Hillaby, J. (1994), ‘The London Jewry: William I to John’, *JHS*, 33, 2. Roth, C. (1978), *History of the Jews in England*, 3rd edn, pp. 4–5, 271. Hereafter ‘Roth’. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 4, 317.
 - 19 Golb, N. (1998), *The Jews in Medieval Normandy – a social and intellectual history*, p. 114.
 - 20 Jacobs, pp. 7–8.
 - 21 Jordan, W. C. (1989), *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, p. 50.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
 - 23 Chazan, R. (1973), *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: a political and social history*, p. 15; see also pp. 16–7 for pledges.
 - 24 Hillaby, J. (2003), ‘Jewish Colonisation in the Twelfth Century’, in Skinner, P. (ed.), *The Jews in Medieval Britain*, p. 16. (Hereafter ‘JMB’).
 - 25 Jacobs, p. 64.
 - 26 Hillaby, J. (2003), ‘Jewish Colonisation in the Twelfth Century’, in JMB, pp. 18–19.
 - 27 Adler, M. (1937), ‘Medieval Jewish MSS. in the library of St Paul’s Cathedral, London’, *Misc JHSE*, 3, 15–21.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 21–5.
 - 29 Roth, p. 21. *Pipe Roll 1191–1192*, pp. 147, 203, 213.
 - 30 Adler, M. (1914), ‘The Jews of Canterbury’, *TJHSE*, 7, 21–2, 61. Gervase of Canterbury in Stubbs, W. (ed.), *Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, vol. 1, p. 45. *Chronicles of Canterbury*, 1, Rolls Series (hereafter ‘RS’) 72, 405. Jacobs, p. 93.
 - 31 Adler, M. (1914), ‘The Jews of Canterbury’ *TJHSE*, 7, 21–2, 61. *Canterbury Cathedral Library Charta Antiqua 770*.
 - 32 Johnson, C. (ed.) (1937), *Registrum Hamonis Hethe*, Canterbury and York Society, 48, 2. Jacobs, pp. 73, 90.
 - 33 Streit, K. T. (1993), ‘The Expansion of the English Jewish community in the reign of King Stephen’, *Albion*, 25, 177–92. Honeybourne, M. B. (1964), ‘The pre-expulsion cemetery of the Jews in London’, *TJHSE*, 20, 152–3.
 - 34 Lilley, J. M. *et al.* (1994), *The Jewish Burial Ground at Jewbury*, *The Archaeology of York*, 12, 306.
 - 35 Davies, R. (1875), ‘The Mediaeval Jews of York’, *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal*, 3, 53.
 - 36 Richardson, H. G. (1961), *English Jewry under Angevin Kings*, p. 11. Hereafter

- 'Richardson'. Jurnet of Norwich is also likely to have had a pied-à-terre in London.
- 37 Jacobs, p. 217.
- 38 Lewis, G. R. (1908), *The Stannaries: A Study of the Medieval Tin Miners of Cornwall and Devon*, pp. 233–8, particularly p. 237.
- 39 Adler, M. (1928), 'The Jews of Bristol in pre-expulsion days', *TJHSE*, 12, 124–5. For recent discussion see Fogle, L. (2007), 'The Domus Conversorum – the personal interest of Henry III', *JHS*, 41, 1–7 and Hillaby, J. (2009), 'A Domus Conversorum at Bristol?', *JHS*, 42, 1–5.
- 40 Adler, M. (1928), 'The Jews of Bristol in pre-expulsion days', *TJHSE*, 12, 129–30.
- 41 Susser, B. (1977), *The Jews of Devon and Cornwall from the Middle Ages until the twentieth century*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter, p. 11.
- 42 Hillaby, J. (1994), 'The ritual-child-murder accusation: its dissemination and Harold of Gloucester', *JHS*, 34, 81.
- 43 Lipman, V. D. (1984), 'Jews and Castles in Medieval England', *TJHSE*, 28, 1–19.
- 44 Hillaby, J. (1984), 'Hereford Gold: Irish Welsh and English land – the Jewish community at Hereford and its clients 1179–1253', part 1, vol. 44, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club*, 3, 363, 367–8. Hillaby, J. (1985), 'Hereford Gold: Irish Welsh and English land – the Jewish community at Hereford and its clients 1179–1253: Four Case studies', part 2, vol. 45, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club*, 1, 212. *CPR 1216–1225*, p. 157.
- 45 *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, RS 67 (1875–85), 3, 19. The original actually says creditors rather than debtors. Streit, K. T. (1993), 'The expansion of the English Jewish community in the reign of King Stephen', *Albion*, 25, 177–92.
- 46 Jordan, W. C. (1989), *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, pp. 18–22.
- 47 Chazan, R. (1973), *Medieval Jewry in northern France: a political and social history*, p. 64. Jacobs, pp. 75–6. Jordan, W. C. (1989), *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, pp. 31–4.
- 48 Turner, R. V. (2005), *King John: England's Evil King*, p. 95.
- 49 Atkinson, E. G. (1912), *The Jews in English History*, p. 8.
- 50 Abrahams, B. L. (1896), 'Condition of the Jews of England at the time of their expulsion in 1290', *TJHSE*, 2, 82. Hereafter 'Condition'. Richardson, p. 26.
- 51 Jacobs, pp. 272–3.
- 52 William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. Howlett, 1, p. 280.
- 53 Mundill, R. R. (1998), *England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion 1262–1290*, p. 56. Hereafter 'Mundill'.
- 54 Prynne, W. (1656), *A short demurrer to the Jewes*, London, p. 128.
- 55 Pearl, E. (ed.) (1990), *Anglia Judaica or a History of the Jews in England by D'Bloissiers Tovey*, p. 109.
- 56 Clanchy, M. T. (1979), *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, p. 69.
- 57 Adler, M. (1928), 'The Jews of Bristol in pre-expulsion days', *TJHSE*, 12, 212–15.
- 58 Rigg, J. M. (ed.) (1902), *Select Pleas, Starrs and Other Records from the Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews 1220–1284*, Selden Society, 15, xlix. Hereafter 'Rigg'.

- 59 CPR 1247–1258, pp. 439–40, 441–4. The National Archive (hereafter ‘TNA’) E/240/20; TNA E/401/43.
- 60 Richardson, p. 20.
- 61 Dobson, R. B. (1979), ‘The decline and expulsion of the medieval Jews of York’, *TJHSE*, 26, pp. 37–8. Parkes, J. (1962), *A History of the Jewish people*, p. 93. Gross, H. (1897), *Gallia Judaica: dictionnaire géographique de la France d’après les sources rabbinique*. Chazan, R. (1969), ‘Jewish settlement in northern France 1096–1306’, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 128, 41–65; Golb, N. (1985), *Les Juives de Rouen au moyen age: portrait d’une culture oubliée*.
- 62 Rabinowitz, L. (1972), *The social life of the Jews of northern France in the XII and XIV centuries*, p. 31. Hereafter ‘Rabinowitz’.
- 63 Hyams, P. R. (1974), ‘The Jewish minority in medieval England 1066–1290’, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 26, 271. Hereafter ‘Hyams’.
- 64 Roth, p. 72. Jews paid to live in some fairly remote places. In 1272, Jews from Bottisham and Holme paid to live there: Rigg, pp. 68–9. In 1272 there were at least two Jews living in Basingstoke, Hampshire: *PREJ1*, p. 277. Another paid to live there in 1273: *PREJ2*, p. 104. Hagin fil Isaac, *qui vocat* Benedict Bateman was also living in Basingstoke: *PREJ2*, p. 297. Another Jew paid to reside at Berkhamstead: *PREJ2*, p. 144. In 1275 Josce Bundy of Rayleigh in Essex was arrested for having dwelt there without a licence: Rigg, p. 82. In 1275 at least one Jew lived in Abergavenny, Wales: *PREJ2*, p. 144; Gross, C. (1887), ‘The Exchequer of the Jews in the middle ages’, *Papers given at the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition 1887*, pp. 188–90.
- 65 TNA E/101/249/10; TNA E/101/249/29; TNA E/101/250/4; TNA E/101/250/5; *PREJ1*, pp. 9, 150; *PREJ3*, p. 319; CCR 1272–1279, pp. 49–50; *Abbrevatio rotulorum originalium* (1767), 1, 243.; *Historia et cartularium Sancti Petri de Gloucester* (1863), 1, pp. xxxix–lii, 20–1; *Episcopal registers of Worcester – register of Godfrey Giffard 1268–1301* (1898), Worcestershire Historical Society, 15, introduction, xvi.
- 66 CPR 1281–1292, p. 116.
- 67 TNA E/101/250/5; TNA Justices Itinerant 1/1303 m. 63 dorse, kindly communicated to me by Dr Zefira Rokeah.
- 68 CPR 1258–1265, p. 442. Parker, R. (1979), *Men of Dunwich*, p. 151; *PREJ3*, p. 43. Mundill, R. R. (1991), ‘Lumbard and son: the businesses and debtors of two Jewish moneylenders in late thirteenth century England’, *JQR*, 82, 139. Mundill, pp. 286–90.
- 69 TNA E/401/75.
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- 71 Letters of Bishop Grosseteste (RS 1861), ed. Luard, H. R., pp. 33–7.
- 72 Levy, S. (1902), ‘Notes on Leicester Jewry’, *TJHSE*, 5, 34–42; Madicott, J. R. (1994), *Simon de Montfort*, p. 15.
- 73 Guttentag, G. D. (1977), ‘The beginnings of the Newcastle Jewish community’, *TJHSE*, 25, 2–3.

- 74 CCR 1231–1234, p. 446.
- 75 Allin, P. (1972), 'Medieval Southampton and its Jews', *TJHSE*, 23, 89.
- 76 CCR 1234–1237, p. 275.
- 77 Vincent, N. C. (1992), 'Jews, Poitevins, and the bishop of Winchester, 1231–1234', in *Christianity and Judaism*, Studies in Church History, 29, 122, 128, 131.
- 78 CCR 1231–1234, pp. 515–16.
- 79 CCR 1234–1237, pp. 20, 435.
- 80 CCR 1242–1247, p. 393.
- 81 CCR 1242–1247, p. 393. Denholm Young, D. (1947), *Richard of Cornwall*, pp. 30–1.
- 82 CCR 1242–1247, p. 149.
- 83 CPR 1258–1266, p. 153.
- 84 CPR 1258–1266, p. 613; see entry for Walerand in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 85 CCR 1272–1279, p. 50.
- 86 CCR 1242–1247, p. 130.
- 87 Salzman, L. F. (1968), *Edward I*, pp. 46–7.
- 88 Biles, M. (1968), 'The Indomitable Belle: Eleanor of Provence', in Bowers, R. H. (ed.), *Seven Studies in Medieval English History*, p. 129.
- 89 Mundill, R. R. (1993), 'The Jewish entries from the Patent Rolls', *JHS*, 32, 48.
- 90 Rigg, p. 95. Alexander, M. (1997), 'A possible synagogue in Guildford', in de Boe, G. and Verhaege (eds), *Religion and Belief in Medieval Europe*, pp. 201–12.
- 91 Mundill, R. R. (1993), 'The Jewish entries from the Patent Rolls', *JHS*, 32, 71. *Seventh report of the deputy keeper of the public records* (1846), p. 240.
- 92 *Statutes of the Realm* (1810), 1, 220–1.
- 93 Roth, p. 72.
- 94 Mundill, R. R. (1993), 'The Jewish entries from the Patent Rolls', *JHS*, 32, 58.
- 95 CCR 1279–1288, p. 241.
- 96 CCR 1279–1288, p. 256.
- 97 CCR 1272–1279, pp. 259–60, 362, 370, 376, 382, 385, 389. Mundill, R. R. (1990), 'Anglo-Jewry under Edward I: credit agents and their clients', *JHS*, 31, 1–21.
- 98 Richardson, pp. 20, 83. Hyams, p. 271.
- 99 Mundill, R. R. (2003), 'Changing fortunes: Edwardian Anglo-Jewry and their credit operations in late thirteenth-century England', *Haskins Society Journal*, 14, 83–5.
- 100 Parker, R. (1979), *Men of Dunwich*, p. 151.
- 101 *PREJ3*, p. 43.
- 102 TNA E/401/75.
- 103 Pugh, R. B. (ed.) (1978), *Gaol delivery and Trailbaston 1275–1306*, Wiltshire Record Society, 33, Devizes, 35.
- 104 Rokeah, Z. E. (1984), 'Crime and Jews in late thirteenth century England: some cases and comments', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 55, 102–3.
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- 106 *Calendar of Ancient Deeds*, 6876, 6920, 13421.
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Notes to Chapter 2: Jews and the economy

- 1 Myer Davis in the last century first drew attention to Aaron and his activities and claimed that he was '... doubtless the prototype for Sir Walter Scott's Isaac of York in *Ivanhoe*'. Davis, M. D. (1881), 'The Mediaeval Jews of Lincoln', *Archaeological Journal*, 38, 179.
- 2 Mundill, R. R. (2002), 'Christian and Jewish lending patterns and financial dealings during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in Schofield, P. R. and Mayhew, N. J. (eds), *Credit and Debt in Medieval England c.1180–c.1350*, pp. 42–3. Hereafter 'Schofield & Mayhew'. Roth, pp. 15–16. Bartlett, R. (2000), *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, pp. 346–60.
- 3 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 167–8.
- 4 Richardson, p. 117.
- 5 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 168, 174–9.
- 6 Richardson, p. 75.
- 7 Richardson, pp. 247–53. TNA E/101/249/1. This roll records Aaron's debts in the county of Rutland.
- 8 Richardson, p. 116.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 10 Hillaby, J. (2003), 'Jewish colonisation in the twelfth century', in JMB, pp. 26–8. Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 158–9.
- 11 Richardson, pp. 8, 62–3, 161.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 47–8.
- 13 Stenton, F. M. (1936), 'The road system of medieval England', *Economic History Review*, 7, 1–21. Hill, J. W. F. (1965), *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 173. Hill, J. W. F. (1975), *A Short History of Lincoln*, p. 37.
- 14 Hill, J. W. F. (1975), *A Short History of Lincoln*, p. 25.
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- 16 *Gesta Pontificorum Anglorum*, p. 312, cited by Hill, J. W. F. (1965), *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 173.
- 17 Hill, J. W. F. (1965), *Medieval Lincoln*, pp. 220–1. Davis, M. D. (1881), 'The Mediaeval Jews of Lincoln', *Archaeological Journal*, 38, 187.
- 18 Hill, J. W. F. (1965), *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 219.
- 19 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 162; Jacobs, pp. 108–9.
- 20 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 163.
- 21 Jacobs, pp. 79–80.
- 22 Nottingham Record Office, the Lassman Papers MSS 24, pp. 182–8.
- 23 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 159.
- 24 Jacobs, pp. 142–5.

- 25 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 169. Levy, S. (1899), 'Aaron's Debts', *TJHSE*, 3, 174–179.
- 26 Jacobs, J. (1899), 'Aaron of Lincoln', *TJHSE*, 3, 166. Jacobs, p. 272.
- 27 Pipe Roll 2 Richard I, pp. 153, 157.
- 28 *Gesta Henrici Secundi*, Benedicti Abbatis (1867), ed. Stubbs, W. (RS 49), 2, 5.
- 29 Mundill, R. R. (2002), 'Christian and Jewish lending patterns and financial dealings during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in Schofield & Mayhew, p. 45.
- 30 Condition, p. 82.
- 31 *The Sunday Times*, (2000), 'Richest of the Rich', magazine supplement, March, p. 8. Here Aaron's total wealth was reckoned at £21.6 billion.
- 32 Mundill, R. R. (1990), 'Anglo-Jewry under Edward I – credit agents and their clients', *TJHSE*, 31, 1–21. Mundill, R. R. (2000), 'Clandestine crypto-camouflaged usurer or legal merchant? Edwardian Jewry, 1275–90', *Jewish Culture and History*, 3, 73–96. Mundill, R. R. (2002), 'Christian and Jewish lending patterns and financial dealings during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in Schofield & Mayhew, pp. 52–4.
- 33 Parkes, J. (1938), *The Jew in the Medieval community*, pp. 294, 300–1.
- 34 Samuel, E. R. (1974), 'Was Moyses Hall Bury St Edmunds a Jews House?', *TJHSE*, 25, 45–7. Lipman, pp. 22–33, 111–12. Roth, C. (1934), *Medieval Lincoln and its Jewry*, pp. 19–21. Adler, M. (1914), 'The Jews of Canterbury', *TJHSE*, 7, 34. Urry, W. (1953), *The House of Jacob the Jew*, Canterbury. Allin, P. (1972), 'Medieval Southampton and its Jews', *TJHSE*, 23, 87–95.
- 35 Davies, R. (1875), 'The Mediaeval Jews of York', *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal*, 3, 53.
- 36 Manix, P. (2004), 'Oxford: Mapping the Medieval Jewry', in Cluse, C. (ed.), *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, pp. 407–8.
- 37 Condition, p. 90.
- 38 Clanchy, M. T. (1979), *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, pp. 95–6. Stokes, pp. 75–82. Jenkinson, H. (1911), 'Exchequer Tallies', *Archaeologia*, 62, 367–80. Jenkinson, H. (1925), 'Medieval Tallies, Public and Private', *Archaeologia*, 74, 289–351. Page 292 makes reference to the collection of 30 tallies of which nine show Jewish script.
- 39 Clanchy, M. T. (1979), *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, p. 72.
- 40 Stokes, p. 75.
- 41 Mundill, p. 57.
- 42 Baldwin, J. W. (1970), *Masters, Princes and Merchants: the social view of Peter the Chanter and his circle*, 1, 282–6. McLaughlin, T. P. (1939), 'The teachings of the Canonists on Usury', *Medieval Studies*, 1, 145–7. Parkes, J. (1938), *The Jew in the Medieval Community*, pp. 294–5.
- 43 Simpson, A. W. B. (1966), 'The Penal bond with conditional defeasance', *Law Quarterly Review*, 82, 392–422.
- 44 Westminster Abbey Muniments (hereafter 'WAM') Nos 6859, 6783 and 6784 have default penalties on them.

- 45 Common examples are abundant but particularly on TNA E/101/250/2 – E/101/250/12. See also WAM 6724. Simpson, A. W. B. (1966), ‘The Penal bond with conditional defeasance’, *Law Quarterly Review*, 82, 394–422. Postan, M. M. (1930), ‘Private financial instruments in medieval England’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial und wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 23, 26–75.
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