



Jews and crypto-Jews in sixteenth and seventeenth century England

Ariel Hessayon

Goldsmiths, University of London

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Abstract

There are many narratives, some old, some relatively recent, covering the presence of crypto-Jews and Jews in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I have tried, specifically with non-specialists and general readers in mind, to give an overview of that story here. Given this essay's origin as a public lecture commemorating the 350th anniversary of the tacit readmission of Jews to England in 1656, my account has a particular focus on developments during the English Revolution of 1641–60, though it is also positioned within a more ambitious grand narrative recounting the Jewish, crypto-Jewish and Jewish apostate experience in England from the Norman Conquest to the Restoration.

While I have drawn on my own research – notably on Judaizing, readers familiar with the material will see that my text is also greatly indebted to a number of important scholars in the field of Anglo-Jewish history; something fully acknowledged in the endnotes. Indeed, there is another story to tell, namely how from the mid-nineteenth century scholars of Anglo-Jewry, desiring acceptance within British society and the legitimization of their distinctive history, collectively constructed a narrative of gradual social assimilation and communal unity. But that these histories were themselves written against a background of religious and racial prejudice, exclusion, marginalisation, tensions and conflict, as well as the disturbing continuity of antisemitic tropes, is itself revealing. Intended as a companion piece to this article, my discussion of the evolution of Anglo-Jewish historiography will appear elsewhere shortly.

I. Debating the readmission of the Jews during the Protectorate

1. In June 1655 a newspaper reported that some Jews had been seen meeting in Hackney on a Saturday.* Because it was their Sabbath they were said to be at prayer, 'All very clean and neat in the corner of a Garden by an house, all of them with their faces towards the East; Their Minister foremost, and the rest all behind him'.^[1] This account, however, was probably false because there were as yet no openly practising Jews in England. In fact, it was not until September 1655 that Oliver Cromwell revived discussions about the readmission of Jews to England.^[2] This coincided with the arrival in London of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) who, accompanied by a Jewish merchant of Livorno named Raphael Supino, had come from Amsterdam 'to solicit a freedom for his nation to live in England'.^[3] During his stay, Menasseh lodged in the Strand 'over against the *New-Exchange*', perhaps at the house of Antonio de Oliveyra who may have been a Portuguese crypto-Jew – though this has been disputed. Menasseh was to recall that he was 'very courteously received, and treated with much respect'.^[4] Even so, letters written by a Royalist exile in Cologne claimed that because the Jews were 'a very crafty and worldly-wise generation' they were unlikely to settle in England at a time of such political uncertainty.^[5] He was to be proved wrong.

Menasseh ben Israel did not come to England as a stranger for among his numerous correspondents and acquaintances were academics, scientists, politicians, soldiers and churchmen including such eminent figures as John Dury, Henry Jessey, Nathaniel Homes, John Sadler, Oliver St. John, John Selden, Walter Strickland and Benjamin Worsley.^[6] Menasseh, moreover, was a renowned scholar and soon began receiving a number of learned visitors among them Ralph Cudworth, professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, Henry Oldenburg, future secretary of the Royal Society, Brian Walton, principal editor of *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* (1653–57) and Herbert Thorndike, who was responsible for the Syriac portions of the Polyglot Bible.^[7] Another person familiar with Menasseh was the chemist and physiologist Robert Boyle, who had visited Menasseh at his house in Amsterdam in the spring of 1648. Boyle regarded Menasseh as 'the greatest rabbi of this age' and on hearing of his arrival at London he went and spoke to him about Biblical Hebrew and the rites and customs of modern Jews.^[8]

2. On 31 October 1655 Menasseh waited outside the door as the Council of State sat in session. Menasseh hoped to present copies of his books to members of the Council and eventually a clerk went out to receive them. Among these books was probably a recently written work arguing the case for Jewish readmission

addressed to *His Highness the Lord Protector of the Common-Wealth* and entitled *The Humble Addresses of Menasseh Ben Israel ... in behalfe of the Jewish Nation* (1655).^[9] Two weeks later, on 13 November, Menasseh presented a petition written in French to the Council on behalf of the 'Hebrew nation' requesting:

1. To take us as citizens under your protection; and to defend us on all occasions
2. To allow us public synagogues in England and its dominions
3. To give us a cemetery to bury our dead
4. To allow us to trade freely in all sorts of merchandise
5. To elect a respectable person to receive our passports upon arrival and hear us swear an oath of loyalty to the Lord Protector
6. To allow our rabbis to settle internal disputes according to Mosaic Law, with right of appeal to the civil law
7. To revoke all laws against the Jewish nation, thereby enabling us to remain securely in England under the protection of the Lord Protector.

Objections, however, were raised immediately. For example, it was feared that some Christians might convert to Judaism, while having synagogues was considered scandalous to Christian churches. Some Londoners even suggested that their trade would suffer because of Jewish competition. In the end a number of conditions were attached which included barring Jews from public office and prohibiting them from having Christian servants. In addition, Jews were not permitted to mock the Christian religion, to profane the Christian Sabbath, to prevent efforts to convert them or to print anything in English against Christianity. The last restriction was cleverly worded since it enabled Jews to continue printing Hebrew books including the Talmud, which many continental Christians – especially Catholics – found offensive.^[10] After further discussion a conference was begun at Whitehall on 4 December to discuss Menasseh's proposals. Cromwell himself opened proceedings, which were attended by politicians, soldiers, clergymen, lawyers and merchants.^[11]

3. During several meetings, 'some more private, and some more publick' an important legal point was established: although Jews had been banished from England in 1290 there was no law – either of the land or ordained by God – forbidding their return. Consequently, Jewish immigration could be connived at, so long as it was expedient.^[12] Indeed, it was said to be economically advantageous for the nation as Jewish trading networks would lower the price of imports and provide new markets for exports.^[13] Furthermore, a theologian insisted that kindness to strangers – particularly Jews – was a religious duty. But the majority of the clergy, fearful of proselytism, were against readmission. Similarly, the antisemitic lawyer William Prynne insisted that now was 'a very ill time to bring in the Jews, when the people were so dangerously and generally bent to apostasy, and all sorts of novelties and errors in religion'.^[14] Nonetheless, it was observed that throughout the duration of the conference, which met until 18 December, Cromwell showed 'a favourable inclination towards our harbouring the afflicted Jews'.^[15] Perhaps, like some delegates, the Protector desired the conversion of the Jews to Protestantism. A few Englishmen went further, believing that the following year would see 'the fall of Antichrist' which, together with 'the Jews conversion' would herald the destruction of the world by fire and the beginning of the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth with his Saints.^[16] But the world did not end in 1656; not even after one sect caused thousands of pounds of damage when they deliberately burned a number of buildings in London.^[17] Instead, Jews were tacitly readmitted to England after a supposed absence of 366 years. Yet that is not to say that things were straightforward. The Whitehall Conference had ended without a definite conclusion. Moreover, according to the reports of two Italian envoys from Venice and Tuscany, the majority of English people opposed readmission.^[18] Clergymen prayed and preached against it as 'boldly' as they dared or else muttered 'softly'.^[19] Even John Dury, a fervent believer in the conversion of the Jews who had initiated correspondence with Menasseh over the whereabouts of the lost ten tribes of Israel, complained that Menasseh's demands were great. Indeed, Dury thought it was best to be wary of the Jews since they had 'wayes beyond all other men, to undermine a state'.^[20] Similarly, Captain Francis Willoughby, former Royalist governor of Barbados, declared that he was opposed to religious toleration if it meant living among those who rejected Christ.^[21] There were also pernicious stories circulating, which intermingled 'horrid' accusations revolving around the repulsive if familiar themes of deicide, blasphemy, blood, diabolism, magic and money. Thus it was alleged that Jews celebrated Passover by feasting on matzoth mixed with the blood of murdered Christians; that Jewish seed would adulterate Christian blood; that the Jews intended to purchase St. Paul's cathedral and convert it into a synagogue; that Jews had offered money for the Bodleian Library in Oxford, a beautiful room at Whitehall and Hebrew manuscripts in Cambridge University Library; that Jews were willing to hand over £500,000 for Brentford; that Jewish gold was being used to buy the support of wavering ministers; and that Jewish merchants were prepared to pay fantastical sums for the privilege of resettlement and endenization.^[22]

In light of this, Cromwell therefore reportedly proceeded with 'good advice and mature deliberation' ('warily & by degrees'), giving his implicit permission rather than openly declaring his position.^[23] At the same time Menasseh met with Nieupoort, the Dutch ambassador, to reassure him that he was not

scheming to get extra privileges for the Jews in Holland, only that he sought to turn Protestant England into a safe haven for those Jews fleeing from Catholic Spain and Portugal where the Inquisition operated.^[24] And then other events brought matters to a head.

4. On 13 March 1656 legal proceedings were begun against António Rodrigues Robles (c.1620–d.1688), a wealthy merchant of Duke's Place, London who was accused of being a Spanish national. As England was at war with Spain at this time the goods and property of enemy Spaniards were liable for confiscation. In his defence, Robles claimed that he was actually a Portuguese-born Jew from Fundão who had fled to Spain – possibly Seville or Madrid – with his family. There the Inquisition had murdered his father and tortured and crippled his mother. Robles, who at some point was 'cut across the face', escaped to the Canary Islands, where he changed his name, professed to be a Catholic and worked as a custom house official in the port of Santa Cruz on Tenerife. The depositions of a number of witnesses, a few of whom were Iberian Jews, together with the questioning of Robles himself, revealed that Robles, who had been living in England for four or five years, was married to a Portuguese woman of the 'Hebrew nation and Religion' yet had also been seen attending mass at the Spanish ambassador's house in London until about mid-November 1655. Furthermore, Robles was at that time uncircumcised; apparently after he was circumcised his foreskin was buried in accordance with Jewish custom, but his servant dug it up as a joke – much to Robles's displeasure.^[25] This business forced other members of London's secret Jewish community out into the open because many either had Spanish origins or had resided there. Accordingly, on 24 March Menasseh and six other men – Manuel Martinez Dormido (also known as David Abrabanel), Antonio Ferdinando (Abraham Israel) Carvajal, Abraham Coen Gonsales, Simon (Jacob) de Caceres, Domingo Vaez (Abraham Israel) de Brito and Isak Lopes Chillon – petitioned Cromwell for permission to practise Judaism privately in their homes, to go about unmolested and to have a burial place outside the City of London for their dead. Cromwell referred it to the consideration of the Council of State.^[26]

5. Meanwhile evidence continued to be taken in Robles's case and by mid-May he had his ships, merchandise and other property which had been seized restored to him. Even so, the Admiralty commissioners decided he was 'either noe Jew or one that walkes under loose principles, very different from others of that profession'.^[27] Then on 26 June 1656 the Council returned the Jews' petition to Cromwell, apparently without recording the details of their discussion. This is important because a few famous historians of Anglo-Jewry such as Albert Hyamson and Cecil Roth have argued that the Council responded positively to the petition but that the crucial document was subsequently lost or destroyed. Though sceptics like H. S. Q. Henriques, Moses Gaster, and more recently David Katz were correct to dismiss this as baseless speculation, 1656 is nevertheless now widely trumpeted as an irreversible moment that marked the gradual informal readmission of Jews to England.^[28] In fact, it needs to be emphasized that there was no Act of Parliament, no proclamation from Cromwell, no order from the Council of State either welcoming Jews to England or changing their legal status as a community from aliens (foreigners whose allegiance was due to a foreign state) to denizens (foreigners admitted to residence and granted certain rights, notably to prosecute or defend themselves in law and to purchase or sell land, but still subject to the same customs duties on their goods and merchandise as aliens). The only evidence we have suggests that publicly Cromwell remained undecided on the issue while, to quote the Tuscan envoy Francesco Salvetti, 'conniving in the meantime at religious exercise in their private houses, as they do at present'.^[29] If the Protector gave Menasseh a verbal assurance that Jews would be permitted to continue worshipping privately in their homes then this was not the same as allowing them to build a public synagogue. It was, however, in keeping with the spirit of certain clauses of the Instrument of Government of December 1653 which had extended religious toleration to those Protestant sects that did not disturb the peace. But if the actual purpose of Menasseh's mission was to gain official state approval for the readmission of Jews to England – rather than merely asking the authorities to turn a blind eye to their presence – then it must be judged a qualified failure.

6. For all these set-backs Menasseh was to suffer further still. In August 1656 the wardens of the united congregation of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam agreed to loan 'a scroll of the Law' to him. He appears, however, to have quarrelled with the leaders of the London community and was not chosen to lead their congregation. Instead Rabbi Moses Athias from Hamburg was appointed and the Torah returned. On 19 December Antonio Carvajal, who had been endenized, signed a twenty-one year lease for a brick tenement on Creechurch Lane which by March 1657 was being converted into a synagogue. In the mean time Menasseh, alone in a 'land of strangers', was forced to petition Cromwell for financial assistance. He was granted a state pension of £100 per annum and at least two quarterly payments of £25 were made to him. In September 1657 his only son Samuel died. Although negotiations had begun for acquiring a burial plot at Mile End in Stepney, Menasseh decided to return to Holland with Samuel's body. But on reaching Middelburg, where he had relatives, Menasseh died. Samuel was buried there while Menasseh was laid to rest in the Jewish cemetery at Oudekerk near Amsterdam.^[30] In September 1658 Cromwell followed them to the grave. It was during his Protectorate that theological considerations – the necessity of converting the Jews before Christ's reappearance – and, to a much lesser extent, economic advantages had overcome widespread hostility to tacit readmission. With his death the tiny Jewish community, which had been considered under his personal protection, was once more exposed to

full-blown prejudice. Before exploring their fate during the twilight of the English republic and at the dawn of the Restoration of Charles II, however, we need to trace the long-term developments that culminated in the Resettlement.

II. From the Norman Conquest to the Expulsion of 1290

7. The question of when Jews first came to England has been debated by historians for more than three centuries.^[31] They have noted that Jews were referred to by Bede in his biblical commentaries, in seventh- and eighth-century ecclesiastical decrees, as well as in a law of Edward the Confessor – unless this was an interpolation. Even so, the evidence we have suggests that Jews arrived in significant numbers after the Norman Conquest, emigrating from Rouen and probably settling in London about 1070.^[32] Moreover, if later seventeenth-century sources are correct, there were Jews at Cambridge in 1073 and Oxford in 1075. This is certainly possible for the Domesday Book of 1086 mentions a man named Manasses living at Oxford.^[33] By the mid-twelfth century an important community had been established at London in the area now known as Old Jewry, with smaller if sometimes densely populated Jewish neighbourhoods at Lincoln, Norwich, Gloucester, Northampton, Winchester, Cambridge, Oxford, Bristol, Colchester, York, Bungay, Thetford and elsewhere. Like Castile and Aragon, where there was no legislation requiring them to dwell within a walled quarter, urban Jews lived among rather than separated from Christians. Although we lack precise figures, modern estimates of the size of medieval England's Jewish population at its peak range between 3,000 and 5,000. Following mass emigration and conversion to Christianity in the 1250s, however, this number fell sharply. So much so, that by the 1280s the adult Jewish population may have been fewer than 1,200.^[34] This was considerably less than the 17,511 or 16,511 or 15,060 Jews that various chroniclers, antiquaries and polemicists reckoned were expelled in 1290.^[35]

We know that English Jews were described as physicians, goldsmiths, soldiers, vintners and fishmongers, and that a significant number were merchants and scholars. Royal charters issued by Henry II and confirmed by his successors granted them freedom of residence, passage, the right to possess and inherit land, loans and property, as well as nominal judicial privileges.^[36] With time, however, Jews generally became associated with lending money at interest because the Papacy condemned usury as a sin (Exodus 22:25–27, Leviticus 25:35–37, Deuteronomy 23:19–20, Luke 6:35); Church councils later compared it to homicide, sodomy and incest.^[37]

8. Unfortunately, the history of medieval English Jewry contains many instances of religious persecution. In 1189 the Archbishop of Canterbury recommended that Jews should not attend Richard I's coronation at Westminster for fear of witchcraft. When they were sighted bringing presents to the new King a riot ensued during which some were murdered, one forcibly baptized and their London homes looted and burned. The following year, a mob led by barons, clergymen and soldiers recruited for the Third Crusade massacred most of the Jewish population of York. Similar pogroms were perpetrated at Lincoln, Dunstable, Colchester, Lynn, Stamford, Thetford, Ospringe and Bury St. Edmunds – from where, at the abbot's instigation, Jews were expelled. Afterwards there were expulsions from Leicester in 1231, Newcastle in 1234, Wycombe in 1235, Southampton in 1236, Berkhamsted in 1242, Newbury in 1244, Derby in 1263 and Marlborough, Gloucester, Worcester and Cambridge in 1275. Added to this was the imposition by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 of distinctive clothing on Jews; a piece of saffron-coloured fabric in the shape of the two tables of the law. Though initially not widely observed, this regulation must be seen in the context of increasingly aggressive preaching by Dominicans and Franciscans; the foundation in 1232 of a House for Jewish Converts (*Domus Conversorum*);^[38] and severe anti-Jewish legislation proclaimed in 1253 and renewed with the Statute of *de Judaismo* in 1275.^[39] Furthermore, during the Baron's Wars of 1263–67 Simon de Montfort's supporters killed Jews and destroyed their properties in London, Canterbury, Worcester, Ely and Northampton. Rumours even circulated that Jewish women accepted baptism to save themselves from rape. According to contemporary accounts in 1278–79 Edward I had about 290 Jews indicted, convicted and executed in London for coin clipping. Equally horrific were accusations of ritual murder, notably following the disappearance of William of Norwich just before Easter 1144. Similar charges were made at Gloucester (1168), Bury St. Edmunds (1181), Winchester (1192, 1225, 1232), Norwich (1230), London (1244) and Northampton (1279). But the most famous case was the alleged crucifixion of Hugh of Lincoln in 1255, which resulted in the execution of nineteen Jews.^[40]

9. Several reasons have been suggested for why Edward I expelled Jews from England in 1290.^[41] Observers variously attributed it to the influence of the Queen Mother, baronial complaints in Parliament and advice from the King's council. Among modern historians the traditional view was that the Crown benefited financially: since Jews were legally the King's property debts due to them became payable to him. Yet the contrary has also been maintained: once Jews were barred from usury in 1275 their wealth declined and consequently they became less useful to the Crown as a source of revenue through taxation. This argument is supported by the growing importance of foreign financiers, above all Lombards, Cahorsins and Gascons, upon whom Edward I became increasingly dependent for borrowing money.

Nonetheless, it must be noted that after 1275 Jews – particularly in Norwich, Lincoln and Canterbury – were still engaged in usury disguised as trading in grain and wool. Indeed, some scholars think the practice was so widespread that Edward's response was to force Jews from out of his realm.^[42] Moreover, there is a European dimension to consider: King Philip Augustus of France had driven Jews from his lands in 1182 (only to readmit them in 1198); Edward himself had expelled Jews from Gascony in 1287; while Jews were also expelled from Anjou and Maine in 1289.^[43] Precedents had been set, but monarchs do not live forever.

III. From the Expulsion of 1290 to the expulsions of the 1490s

10. Following Edward I's death six Jews led by a physician or Rabbi named Master Elias returned to England pleading for readmission. Although unsuccessful, there is a tradition that Jews secretly re-established themselves in England until their discovery in 1358.^[44] Similarly, for much of the fourteenth century, Jews were periodically ejected from French territory – usually by royal edict – only to be readmitted; once to recover Jewish debts; once in return for large payments to the Crown and on condition that they did not practise usury; once to help pay an enormous ransom.^[45] Therefore it is no surprise to learn that we have fragmentary evidence for the presence of Jews or people of Jewish origin in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In 1290 more than eighty Jewish converts to Christianity were living in the building provided for them in London (the *Domus Conversorum*). Though food and winter fuel appear to have been scarce many chose to remain and by 1308 over fifty were still there. Indeed, it was not until 1356 that the last known survivor on English soil of the pre-expulsion community, Claricia of Exeter, died.^[46] Another interesting example was John of Bristol, a converted Jew who taught Hebrew at Oxford around 1323.^[47] Furthermore, a Jew named Hagin was baptized at Nottingham in June 1325 and as Walter of Nottingham later became chaplain of the *Domus Conversorum*.^[48] Also noteworthy are the handful of Lancashire deeds from 1298, the 1320s and 1331 witnessed by John le Ju, Hugh le Jew and Thomas le Jew. As Thomas was a parish clerk it is likely that these men were either converts to Christianity or descendants of apostates.^[49] Moreover, Edward III granted one Johannes de Chastell (John of Castile?) an annual income in 1356 for renouncing Judaism.^[50] Similarly, in 1389 Richard II gave money to a former Jew of 'Cicilia' (Sicily or Cilicia?) recently baptized into the Christian faith and christened Richard after his royal godfather.^[51] The following year one John Berkyng, 'who was lately a Jew' and 'understood incantations', used his 'magic art' to discover who had stolen two silver dishes from the Duke of York's house in Fleet Street, London. However, he unwisely implicated the Duke's sergeant, resulting in his arrest, imprisonment, a severe beating and legal proceedings.^[52] In 1391 a physician and surgeon known as Charles le Convers received royal protection that extended to his servants and property.^[53] The next year Richard II pensioned another baptized Jewish convert, who took the name William Piers.^[54]

11. In October 1410 Richard Whittington, twice former Mayor of London who would become immortalized in the legendary story of Dick Whittington and his cat, obtained license to have a Jewish doctor attend his sick wife. The Jewish physician's name was Sampson of Mirabeau (probably in Vaucluse), and though granted permission to stay in London for one year his patient died before this elapsed.^[55] On 27 December 1410 Henry IV issued a safe-conduct for Elias Sabot (Elijah ben Shabbetai), an important Jewish doctor from Bologna. He arrived with a retinue of ten servants and was granted royal protection for two years.^[56] In February 1412 Henry IV naturalized another physician, David de Nigarellis of Lucca. He may have been of Jewish origin and was afterwards made Warden of the Royal Mint.^[57] In October 1421 during the reign of Henry V an Italian apothecary named Job and his son John settled in England. They too were naturalized, but only after submitting to baptism. Even so, they were not among the four residents of the House for Jewish Converts recorded that year.^[58] It was not only Jewish medical practitioners, however, who travelled to England. About 1468 a Portuguese adventurer arrived. Upon converting to Christianity, he took the name of Edward Brampton. Christened after his godfather Edward IV, for whom he fought, Brampton later served Richard III before returning to Portugal in March 1485 to negotiate a marriage for the recently widowed and, as events transpired, last Plantagenet king of England.^[59]

IV. The Tudor period

12. These various cases illustrate why people of Jewish birth or origin were sometimes discovered in England between the Expulsion and the accession of the Tudor dynasty. Conversion from Judaism to Christianity ensured shelter and occasionally brought financial reward. Jewish physicians, moreover, seem to have been highly valued. Yet small-scale Jewish emigration to England was not economically motivated but rather a consequence of the expulsion of Jews from parts of the Italian Peninsula – Perugia in 1485, Vicenza in 1486, Parma in 1488, Lucca and Milan in 1489, Florence in 1494, and Naples in 1496; from Mediterranean Islands – Sardinia and Sicily in 1492; from Provence in 1498; and from Iberian soil – Castile and Aragon in 1492, Portugal in 1497, and Navarre in 1498.^[60] The majority of these Jews fled

and over roughly the next century and a half dispersed to North Africa (Cairo, Ceuta, Fez, Larache, Orán [expelled 1669], Tangiers, Tlemcen, Tunis);^[61] the Balearic Islands (Ibiza, Majorca); the Aegean Islands (Crete, Rhodes); France (Bayonne, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nantes, Rouen, Toulouse);^[62] the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Antwerp); the Italian States (Ancona, Ferrara, Livorno, Mantua, Ragusa, Rome, Turin, Venice); Bohemia (Prague);^[63] Poland;^[64] the Ottoman Empire (Adrianople, Constantinople, Gaza, Hebron, Jerusalem, Safed, Salonika, Tiberius); India (Bombay, Cochin, Goa, Ormuz);^[65] the East Atlantic Islands (Canary Islands);^[66] West Africa (Senegal);^[67] the Caribbean (Barbados, Curaçao, Jamaica);^[68] North America (New Amsterdam); Mexico (Acapulco, Campeche, Mexico City, Veracruz);^[69] Brazil (Bahia, Pernambuco [expelled 1654]);^[70] Surinam;^[71] and Peru.^[72] Among the few Jews of this early-modern diaspora who made their way to England were several unnamed Spaniards,^[73] and Elizabeth of Portugal, who was admitted to the Domus Conversorum in 1492.^[74] Others may have reached Ireland for it was claimed that a physician named Fernandes had been born there. He has been identified with Pedro Fernandes, a successful London medical practitioner.^[75] Besides these individual instances Jews participated in a significant episode of English history as advocates of Henry VIII's divorce. Hence from 1530 Italians with Jewish backgrounds such as the rabbi, physician and Kabbalist Elijha Manahem Halfan and particularly the Venetian convert to Christianity Marco Raphael, were consulted by the King's solicitor in an effort to prove from Leviticus that Henry's marriage to Katherine of Aragon – the widow of his brother Arthur – had been unlawful.^[76]

13. Further European events also played a part in bringing Jews to England. Thus it has been estimated that between 1388 and 1520 more than ninety German-speaking towns, cities and territories – including Linz (1421), Vienna (1421), Cologne (1424), Dresden (1430), Speyer (1435), Augsburg (1440), Bavaria (1442, 1450), Erfurt (1458), Mainz (1470), Bamberg (1478), Würzburg, (1488), Heilbronn (1490), Mecklenburg (1492), Pomerania (1492), Halle (1493), Magdeburg (1493), Lower Austria (1496), Carinthia (1496), Styria (1496), Nuremberg (1499), Ulm (1499), and Regensburg (1519) – expelled Jews.^[77] Moreover, Johann Gutenberg's invention of movable printing type enabled the enemies of Judaism to mass-produce well-known anti-Jewish libels and circulate them to larger audiences than ever before. Among the most fanatical of these pamphleteers were Ulrich Zasius, a professor of civil law, and the apostate Johannes Pfefferkorn. Zasius defended the forced baptism of Jewish children and advised Christian princes to expel Jews from their territories.^[78] Pfefferkorn attacked supposed Jewish blasphemies, proposed confiscating all Hebrew books except the Scriptures, burning the Talmud and converting Jews.^[79] In the same vein, Johannes Eck, a professor of theology and leading defender of the Papacy, repeated allegations of Jewish ritual murder, claiming to have placed his own fingers in the wounds of a child killed by Jews. He even denounced Jew-lovers as products of the Reformation.^[80] This was certainly inaccurate for Martin Luther, who had hoped to convert Jews to a purified church, caught the vicious mood as well. He wrote a bitter tract *On the Jews and their Lies* (1543), and preached a sermon against those 'miserable and accursed people' the day before his death.^[81] Among the exceptions to these waves of German anti-Jewish sentiment was Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse, who supported several proposals for tolerating Jews in Kassel, even rejecting advice from Protestant theologians like Martin Bucer on the matter.^[82] Afterwards the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V not only condemned ritual murder trials but also reaffirmed previous imperial and papal privileges granted to Jews, placing all Jews in the empire under his personal protection.^[83]

14. The picture in Iberia was even grimmer. Spanish poets from the twelfth to the fifteenth century had generally depicted Jews negatively as avaricious, treacherous deicides, combining these conventional racial slurs with an emphasis on the strangeness of Jewish laws and customs.^[84] In 1391 the Jewish quarters of Castilian and Aragonese cities were sacked, their inhabitants massacred and survivors forced to convert to Christianity. Known variously as *conversos* (Spanish for turncoats or converts), *judaizantes* (secret Jews), *marranos* (probably derived from the Arabic term for stranger and meaning pigs or swine in Spanish), or *Cristianos nuevos* (New Christians), they were permitted to take up public office and with time a number became prominent in the royal administrations of Castile and Aragon. Though wealthy New Christian families intermarried with the Castilian nobility the sincerity of their new-found beliefs was soon questioned by Old Christians. This resentment became violent and atrocities were perpetrated against New Christians at Toledo (1449, 1467), Sepúlveda (1468), Córdoba (1473), Jaén (1473), Montoro (1473), Segovia (1474), and Valladolid (1474).^[85] To prevent New Christians from reverting to Judaism the Inquisition was established in Castile in 1478. Although Jewish sources, particularly rabbinic documents – which were mainly concerned with questions of marriage and inheritance of property – tended to regard New Christians as willing apostates rather than forced converts, the earliest phase of the Spanish Inquisition was clearly directed against them.^[86]

In Portugal, by contrast, there were comparatively few New Christians until 1497, when the remnant of Portuguese Jewry was baptized *en masse*.^[87] However, following an inflammatory sermon preached at Lisbon by a Dominican on Easter Sunday 1506 more than 2,000 New Christians were massacred over several days and their bodies, according to a contemporary chronicle, burned on a bonfire.^[88] New Christians were later accused of causing an earthquake and their situation became even more dangerous

in 1536 when Pope Paul III relented to political pressure and issued a bull establishing the Inquisition in Portugal.^[89] That same year Charles V granted New Christians permission to settle in the Netherlands. Although the Inquisition had already been established there, its principal target was Lutherans rather than crypto-Jews. Overcoming the difficulties of emigrating from Portugal, where their property was liable for confiscation, some New Christians eventually reached Antwerp. Others, however, were either detained by customs officials or interrogated at Middelburg. In 1541 two New Christians were burned alive there for refusing to accept that Christ had been crucified by Jews. The religious beliefs of the new arrivals at Antwerp were also investigated and an Imperial decree issued preventing further Portuguese immigration. Despite sixty-five arrests and a hastily rescinded Imperial order of 1549 declaring all recent Portuguese New Christian immigrants impenitent Judaizers, there were an estimated 800–900 Portuguese New Christians living at Antwerp by the mid-sixteenth century.^[90]

15. Among the earliest New Christian settlers in Antwerp was a merchant named Diogo Mendes (Bemveniste), whose extremely wealthy elder brother Francisco was a key member of a consortium that had purchased the rights to import pepper and spices from the Indies to Portugal. In 1537 Francisco Mendes's widow Beatriz de Luna (the future Grácia Nasci) together with her daughter, sister and two nephews departed Lisbon on an English ship bound for London. Eventually they sailed to Antwerp, arriving by late February 1538.^[91] Judging from this and other incidents there seems to have been an organized network for transporting Portuguese New Christian refugees to the Netherlands. Using the spice trade as cover they headed initially to an English port where they awaited news of the situation at their destination. If this was unfavourable they usually disembarked at Southampton and then proceeded to London.^[92] While the length of their stay varied, we know of several New Christian merchants and physicians resident in England during Henry VIII's reign. Nor was the Crown blind to their presence, for about Christmas 1541 'certayne parsons suspectid to be Jues' were apprehended and their goods inventoried. The Imperial ambassador observed that even if they fully confessed, their freedom would come at a price. During the investigation the prisoners appealed to João III of Portugal and Maria, Regent of the Netherlands, who interceded with Charles V to secure their release. As the same family alliance (João was Charles's brother-in-law and Maria his sister) had intervened when Diogo Mendes was charged at Antwerp with secretly practising Judaism, it is likely that their financial affairs were bound up with the fortunes of these crypto-Jews.^[93] Likewise, when the Portuguese New Christian Henry Alvaros (Alvarez?) had his money and merchandise seized by two officials from Exeter because he was 'supposed to be a Jewe', he obtained a testimonial from Antwerp – confirmed by the Imperial ambassador – asserting that he was reputedly a Christian. This was presented at Hampton Court in January 1546.^[94]

16. Portuguese New Christians, of course, were not the only foreigners in Henrician England. Besides the famous portrait painter Hans Holbein there was a group of musicians active at court between the 1520s and early 1540s. Drawn from Iberia and particularly northern Italian towns and cities like Bassano, Milan, Vicenza and Venice, they included viol and sackbut players. Though several scholars have ingeniously suggested that some of these musicians – notably Ambrose Lupo, the five Bassano brothers and Mark Anthony Galliardello – were crypto-Jews or of Jewish origin, the evidence is inconclusive.^[95] Nonetheless, in 1550 we learn of Dr Arnande or Ferdinando Lopus, a physician and foreigner accused of Judaism, who had escaped being burned alive in Portugal. Despite pleas on his behalf by the Imperial ambassador and several Privy Councillors, he was sentenced for his 'naughtie lyving and develish practises' to ride through the streets of London in a cart wearing a striped hood before being banished from the realm.^[96] Furthermore, in 1556 a Portuguese surgeon living in Bristol was denounced for observing an important Jewish fast (*Yom Kippur*),^[97] while in 1575 four Portuguese New Christians resident in London were accused of deliberate sacrilege.^[98] Also noteworthy is the case of Joachim Gaunz, a Prague-born Jew and mining engineer dwelling at Blackfriars who in 1589 was apprehended following an apparent conversation with a minister in Hebrew. Gaunz was charged with blasphemously denying Jesus Christ to be the son of God and expelled.^[99]

17. A more successful figure was Dr Hector Nuñez, a Portuguese-born New Christian who was made a fellow of the College of Physicians and Royal College of Surgeons. From surviving correspondence – especially with Queen Elizabeth's spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham – it is clear that Nuñez became involved in intelligence gathering, receiving letters in cipher from Iberia concealed within cargoes of wine, raisins, cochineal, figs and wax. Nuñez was also engaged in covert diplomatic activity, trying to secure an Anglo-Ottoman alliance against Spain and promoting the cause of the exiled Don Antonio to the Portuguese throne, which had been claimed by Philip II of Spain following his victory at the battle of Alcantara in 1580.^[100] Moreover, according to depositions taken before the Inquisition at Lisbon and at Madrid in 1588 – the year of the Spanish Armada, Nuñez was not acting alone but in concert with several crypto-Jews. Based in London, where they publicly attended Lutheran churches, listened to sermons and took communion, this group was connected by marriage alliances, secretly observed Jewish rites and had ties with a clandestine synagogue in Antwerp. Among them was Benjamin George (Gonsalvo or Dunstan Añes), a freeman of the Grocers' Company, spice trader, financial agent of the Portuguese pretender Don Antonio and father-in-law of Dr Rodrigo Lopez.^[101] An importer of aniseed and sumac, Lopez was appointed Queen Elizabeth's chief physician about 1586. Within a year he seems to have been bribed and

turned into a Spanish agent. Following Walsingham's death in 1590 Lopez became embroiled in a power struggle between rival intelligence agencies headed by Lord Burghley – which utilized a number of crypto-Jewish merchants – and the Earl of Essex. At Essex's instigation Lopez was arrested in January 1594 and examined about his part in an alleged plot to poison Elizabeth. A signed confession was extracted under torture and a guilty verdict obtained on the opening day of his trial. Then along with two supposed Portuguese accomplices Lopez – portrayed as 'worse than Judas himself' – was executed.^[102]

18. Yet the two most famous Jews of Elizabethan England appeared only on stage as villains – and neither was English.^[103] Written in 1589 or 1590, performed in February 1592 (if not before), though not published until 1633, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* had a Machiavellian figure as its central character: Barabas. Named after the New Testament thief and murderer whom the Jews saved from crucifixion instead of Jesus (Matthew 27:16–26, Mark 15:7–15), Barabas has been regarded by one critic as representing an inversion of qualities associated with both Job and Christ. Certainly his nose and diet are mocked, while there is an allusion to his odour – a repulsive smell known as *foetor judaicus*, which Jews were believed to emit. In addition, he is depicted as a deceitful, avaricious, Christian-hating usurer; a poisoner of wells, murderous physician and suspected crucifier of children. At the play's conclusion Barabas suffers a terrible death, boiled in a cauldron – a traditional image of hell.^[104] Revived to coincide with Lopez's trial, Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* together with *The Jew of Venice* – a lost play probably derived from Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* (Milan, 1558) – influenced Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Arguably completed after August 1596, this featured Shylock; a malicious, vengeful Christian-hating usurer who is seen as a kind of devil and likened to a dog. Critics have noted that the Jewish characters' names are adapted or taken from Genesis 10–11 and that the word 'Jew' is used 58 times (variants occur an extra 14 times).^[105] Furthermore, Shylock's famous remark 'If you prick us, do we not bleed' (III.i.59) has been interpreted as an allusion to the commonplace belief that Jewish males menstruated.^[106] Unlike Barabas, Shylock escapes death but only for the baptismal font.

V. The early Stuart period

19. In 1607 Sir Thomas Sherley the younger, a pirate and adventurer recently returned to England after having been captured, imprisoned and tortured by the Turks, proposed a project to James I.^[107] Sherley planned to settle Jews in Ireland, claiming they would willingly pay an annual tribute for the privilege. He also suggested granting Jewish merchants permission to trade within English ports in exchange for payment of a fine. But rather than profiting at the Jews' expense, Sherley was dispatched to the Tower of London for infringing the Levant Company's trading monopoly with the Ottoman Empire.^[108] About two years later, according to reports by the Venetian envoy, several Portuguese crypto-Jewish merchants were accused of Judaism and swiftly expelled from England. This may have been connected with a patent supposedly granted Thomas Howard, first Earl of Suffolk for discovering Jews, 'which made most of the ablest of them fly out' of the kingdom (unless the exiled Royalist army officer who recalled this detail had misremembered Suffolk's profitable role as a commissioner for banishing Jesuits and seminary priests).^[109] Even so, Jewish converts to Christianity remained. These included Jacob Wolfgang, a reader at the Bodleian Library,^[110] and Paul Jacob, who petitioned James I 'true King of the Jews' for money.^[111] By contrast Jacob Barnet, a Hebrew teacher at Oxford, fled the day before he was to be baptised at St. Mary's church. He was taken into custody and subsequently expelled in November 1613.^[112] Also noteworthy is the case of Samuel Palache, envoy of the Sultan of Morocco to the States-General of the Dutch Republic and a member of the Jewish community of Amsterdam. In 1614 having docked at Plymouth with three captured Spanish ships he was arrested and accused of piracy by the Spanish ambassador. Palache was tried in the Court of Admiralty, declared a Moroccan subject at war with Spain and released.^[113] Some months later a Jewish trader had his cargo of sugar seized and temporarily impounded in a warehouse.^[114]

20. Although a few crypto-Jews of Iberian origin seem to have escaped detection or resettled in London during the remainder of James's reign,^[115] English merchants, sailors and travellers continued having commercial dealings or encounters with Jews overseas, particularly in Venice and the Ottoman Empire.^[116] Moreover, there was another significant development during this period: Judaizing.^[117] First known to have been used in 1582, the verb Judaize means to follow Jewish customs or religious rites. One notable instance of this phenomenon was the Somerset-born separatist minister John Traske. His early teaching emphasized Old Testament legalism and though a Christian he kept Jewish dietary laws, observing the Sabbath on Saturday. Traske was periodically imprisoned in London as were his wife and several followers.^[118] Another woman was committed to the new prison at Clerkenwell in September 1648 for claiming to be a Jew and having children circumcised. She may have been the widow of a disciple of John Bull and Richard Farnham; two artisans (possibly Colchester weavers) who allegedly claimed to be both 'great prophets' and the two witnesses foretold in the Revelation of Saint John.^[119] Further examples indicate that Judaizing was particularly – though not exclusively – associated with radical Protestant sects. It can generally be viewed as an offshoot of mainstream puritanism which had a tendency to fragment when internal doctrinal conflicts could not be resolved through accepted methods of

mediation and reconciliation.^[120] Moreover, it must be set in context: after the Reformation speculation increased about the timing of the second coming of Christ and the nature of his messianic kingdom on earth, which he would reign over for a thousand years before the Last Judgment. Known as millenarianism, this belief rested upon the interpretation of portents such as earthquakes, comets and eclipses, and sacred texts – especially the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah; the epistle of Paul to the Romans; and the Revelation. Although millenarians failed to agree on what these omens and scriptures meant, the role that the Jews would play in the divine drama began to dominate their discussions.^[121]

VI. The English Revolution

21. Following the outbreak of Civil War, it was rumoured in March 1643 that certain Amsterdam Jewish merchants had been persuaded to purchase and export the goods of Londoners who had remained loyal to the Crown and defaulted on their payments of the Parliamentary assessment. This, however, was denied.^[122]

Besides these activities there were other significant developments. Thus elements within the rank and file of Parliament's military forces became increasingly radicalised. With the growth of gathered congregations that had separated themselves from the Church of England, notably the Independents and Baptists, as well as the emergence of popular political movements such as the Levellers, there was concerted pressure through pamphleteering, petitioning and debates to introduce liberty of conscience.^[123] A few, like the General Baptist and future Leveller leader Richard Overton, even called for religious toleration to be extended to Jews.^[124] Furthermore, Parliamentary army chaplains preached millenarian sermons that helped instil the belief that the victorious soldiers had acted as providential instruments upon earth. Regicide stoked the fires of apocalyptic expectation further still as pseudo-Christ, prophets and prophetesses – prominent Judaizers among them – took to the streets proclaiming the end of the world and 'many other wonderful Things'.^[125]

Though Jesus failed to reappear, there were purported sightings of his legendary contemporary the Wandering Jew.^[126] Competition was provided by Jewish converts to Christianity, particularly the apparently Polish-born Eleazar ben Isaiah (baptised as Paul). Arriving at Dover in June 1652 with his companion Abraham ben Samuel (baptised as Peter), Eleazar thereafter made a profitable living by denouncing Jewish beliefs as ignorant superstitions and proclaiming Jesus Christ to be the true messiah.^[127] Conversely, Thomas Ramsay, a London-born Jesuit agent of Scottish parentage, was circumcised at Rome and masqueraded as Joseph ben Israel, a Jew of the tribe of Judah from Mantua. Initially received by the Baptist deputy-governor of Newcastle and afterwards on his recommendation by the Baptist congregation at Hexham, whose minister baptized him, Ramsay was nonetheless exposed in June 1653 as a false Jew. He was subsequently arrested as a suspected 'Romish priest' and imprisoned at the Gatehouse in London, remaining there about six years.^[128]

22. Meanwhile, in September 1644 Antonio Montezinos (c.1604–1648), a Portuguese New Christian and explorer also known as Aharon Levi, had visited Menasseh ben Israel at Amsterdam. Recently returned from an expedition to the Americas, Montezinos recounted an encounter with Indians in the kingdom of Quito province (modern day Ecuador) who had informed him that they were Jews descended from Reuben, one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Menasseh admitted that there was 'no demonstration' which could 'manifest the truth' of Montezinos's account. Even so, he found:

no opinion more probable, nor agreeable to reason ... that the first inhabitants of America, were the ten Tribes of the Israelites, whom the Tartarians conquered, and drove away.^[129]

The news spread rapidly within the Dutch Republic, but more slowly to England where in January 1647 plans were published for establishing a University in London.^[130] As the conversion of the Jews to Christianity was thought to be imminent it was considered desirable that clergymen converse with them in Hebrew when they returned to Palestine from their captivity in the East. Accordingly it was proposed that one College be for the 'Conversion of Jews and Advancement of Oriental Language-Learning'.^[131]

On 5 January 1649 a petition was presented to the General Council of the Army at Whitehall requesting the repeal of the 'inhumane cruel' Parliamentary 'statute of banishment' made against the Jews and their readmission on the Dutch model. Apparently favourably received, it was nonetheless deferred as the Council turned to urgent political matters.^[132] That summer reports began circulating in London concerning the apparent discovery of Jews in America.^[133] Responding to his correspondents' requests for further information Menasseh wrote a long letter about the ten tribes, which he subsequently expanded into a treatise in order to gain the favour of his Gentile associates in England.^[134] By December Menasseh had fixed upon the title of his forthcoming work – the Hope of Israel (Jeremiah 14:8) – declaring:

our Israelites were the first finders out of *America* ... I thinke that the ten Tribes live not onely there, but also in other lands scattered every where; these never did come backe to the second

Temple, and they keep till this day still the Jewish Religion, seeing all the Prophecies which speake of their bringing backe unto their native Soile must be fulfilled.^[135]

23. Written in Spanish in seventy-two sections, the manuscript of Menasseh ben Israel's celebrated *Esto es Esperança de Israel* was printed at Amsterdam with a dedication to the wardens of the Talmud Torah (the united congregation of the Sephardic community in the city) dated 16/26 January 1650.^[136] It appears that a Gentile was provided with a corrupt text and entrusted with the task of preparing a Latin translation. The result, however, was an unfaithful rendering of Menasseh's original Spanish which was published with a dedication to the English Parliament and Council of State as *Hoc est Spes Israelis* (Amsterdam, 1650). This Latin edition seems to have been available in England about March and plans were soon afoot for an English translation as well. Though Menasseh eagerly sent a list of corrections and additions to the Latin text, these errata arrived too late to be of use to the English translator. Consequently, the first English edition *The Hope of Israel* (1650) contained all the uncorrected errors of the Latin version together with some additional mistakes made by the translator. Accordingly a 'corrected and amended' second English edition of *The Hope of Israel* appeared in 1651.^[137] *Hoc est Spes Israelis* made 'a great Noise in Europe'. On the continent the work was refuted by Gentile scholars who gave little credit to the opinions of 'the wisest and most Learned Jews' in such matters, for it was reasoned that if they did 'not believe *Jesus*' they would easily believe lies and impostures.^[138] In England the book had been handed out to several members of Parliament by the summer of 1650, while the English translation seems to have had a wide circulation. The response, however, was largely discouraging. Hence one MP thought it the work of a converted Jew, another prayed for the Jews' conversion, while far away in Rhode Island it was interpreted as a sign that the Jews were about to accept Christ as the Messiah.^[139] Little wonder that two years later Menasseh's efforts remained unrewarded by Parliament.^[140]

24. In May 1652 war broke out between England and the Dutch Republic. Despite hostilities the Council of State issued a passport to Menasseh in November permitting him to enter the country. Praised for his learning and 'good affection to the State', another pass was sent to Menasseh in December. A further one followed in September 1653.^[141] Even so, since the beginning of 1651 Menasseh had been seeking Queen Christina of Sweden's patronage. His correspondence with her librarian Isaac Vossius reveals Menasseh's willingness to purchase rare Hebrew books for Christina and dedicate one of his better known works to her. The books Menasseh bought, however, were only partly paid for on Christina's behalf, while her librarian fell out of and then returned to favour. But in June 1654 Christina abdicated in favour of her cousin Karl Gustavus putting an end to Menasseh's dream of becoming an agent for the scholar Queen. It is also noteworthy that an undated though most likely earlier proposal to settle Hamburg Jews in Gothenburg had failed.^[142] So when an Anglo-Dutch peace treaty was signed on 5 April 1654 Menasseh immediately turned his attention once more to arguing the case for Jewish readmission to England.

VII. Jews in England after the death of Oliver Cromwell

25. Thus we return to where we left off. In 1659 a group of London merchants petitioned Cromwell's son and successor demanding the expulsion of Jews and seizure of their trading profits.^[143] With the Restoration of monarchy in 1660 antisemitic voices became more strident for that same year the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London asked Charles II to recommend the enactment of Parliamentary legislation that would expel Jews and close 'the door after them'.^[144] The following year Thomas Violet, 'The Great Trappaner of England' and London goldsmith, published *A Petition Against the Jewes* (1661), in which he recommended destroying synagogues, suppressing Jewish religious rituals, ransoming and banishment. But the roughly hundred and sixty strong Jewish community fought back. Violet's proposals were condemned and his reputation attacked.^[145] Moreover, in December 1660 the principal Jewish merchants petitioned Charles II desiring continued residence in his dominions. At the Privy Council's recommendation the House of Commons then discussed measures for protecting Jews.^[146] Ultimately, however, the Jews' fate rested with Charles II and like Cromwell he showed himself favourably disposed. The reason probably dates to his exile at Bruges, for in September 1656 he had instructed Lieutenant-General John Middleton to negotiate with some leading Amsterdam Jews. Assuring Middleton that Menasseh's mission to Cromwell had been undertaken without their consent, they may have secretly contributed money to the depleted royal treasury in return for the promise of Charles's protection on his accession to the English throne. This seems a plausible explanation for why Charles II granted Jews religious toleration.^[147] Although a few notable advocates of Jewish readmission had been regicides, Cromwell's public stance made things easier for the King: there was no Parliamentary statute to invalidate, no proclamation to annul. Indeed, he too avoided grand gestures in favour of small measures. Hence instead of an act of Parliament Charles II denizenized forty-eight Sephardic Jews during his reign.^[148]

26. We would do well to remember that there was no consensus about religious toleration during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Although the last person burned at the stake for heresy in England had been Edward Wightman at Lichfield on 11 April 1612,^[149] the published writings of blasphemers and seditious – if not their bodies – were still consigned to the flames in public book burning rituals that

resembled Protestant *Auto da Fé*s by proxy.^[150] Effigies of the Pope were also set on fire annually from the early 1670s on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession.^[151] Moreover, seventy-five Catholics were executed between 1604 and 1680.^[152] As for Ireland, in 1641 an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 Protestant settlers were massacred by Catholics. In reprisal Cromwell's troops slaughtered more than 2,500 soldiers, a few civilians and all the Catholic clergy they could identify at Drogheda.^[153] Between 1542 and 1736 perhaps as many as 500 people were executed for witchcraft in England; of these more than 100 were hanged in the Home Counties.^[154] Furthermore, an Act of August 1650 against blasphemy prescribed six months imprisonment for a first offence – a more lenient sentence than the death penalty decreed by Mosaic Law and an Ordinance of May 1648. All the same, blasphemers were, in exceptional circumstances, bored through the tongue with a hot iron.

We must never forget that religious persecution happened in the past – especially now that we have to yet again confront antisemitism both in its explicit guises and insidious disguises. Both are equally repugnant.

Notes

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[1] *Perfect Proceedings of State-Affaires*, no. 297 (31 May – 7 June 1655), p. 4714.

[2] Lucien Wolf (ed.), *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell. Being a reprint of the pamphlets published by Menasseh Ben Israel to promote the re-admission of the Jews to England, 1649–1656* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1901); L. Abrahams, 'Menasseh ben Israel's mission to Oliver Cromwell', *Jewish Quarterly Review* (hereafter *JQR*), o.s., 14 (1901–02), pp. 1–25; N. Osterman, 'The Controversy over the proposed readmission of the Jews to England (1655)', *Jewish Social Studies*, 3 (1941), pp. 301–28; M. Wilensky, 'The literary controversy in 1656 concerning the return of the Jews to England', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* (hereafter *PAAJR*), 20 (1951), pp. 357–93; M. Wilensky, 'Thomas Barlow's and John Dury's attitude towards the Readmission of the Jews to England', *JQR*, 50 (1959), pp. 167–75; I. Schorsch, 'From Messianism to Realpolitik: Menasseh ben Israel and the readmission of the Jews to England', *PAAJR*, 45 (1978), pp. 187–208; David Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603–1655* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 158–89; D. S. Katz, 'Anonymous Advocates of the Readmission of the Jews to England', *Michael*, 10 (1986), pp. 117–42; David Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), pp. 115–19; Eliane Glaser, *Judaism without Jews. Philosemitism and Christian Polemic in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 113–29.

[3] Sheffield University Library (hereafter SUL), Hartlib Papers (hereafter HP), 4/3/2A; British Library, London (hereafter BL), Add. MS 4365, fol. 277v; George F. Warner (ed.), *The Nicholas Papers. Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State*, Camden Society, n.s., 40, 50, 57, 3rd series, 31 (4 vols., London, 1886–1920), vol. 3, pp. 44, 63; C. Roth, 'New Light on the Resettlement', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (hereafter *TJHSE*), 11 (1928), pp. 118–26.

[4] SUL, HP 4/3/2A; *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* (hereafter *CSPD*), 1655, p. 336; Wolf (ed.), *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission*, pp. 103, 144; L. Wolf, 'Menasseh Ben Israel's study in London', *TJHSE*, 3 (1899), pp. 144–50; cf. W. S. Samuel, 'The Jewish Oratories of Cromwellian London', *Miscellanies of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (hereafter *MJHSE*), 3 (1937), p. 51.

[5] *Historical Manuscripts Commission* (hereafter *HMC*). *Various Collections* (1903), vol. 2, p. 352; M. Wilensky, 'The Royalist Position concerning the Readmission of Jews to England', *JQR*, 41 (1951), pp. 397–409; Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 199–201. [6] Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter Bodl. Lib.), MS Selden supra 109, fol. 378; SUL, HP 4/1/26B, 4/2/5A–6B, 44/5/1A–2B, 44/5/3A–4B, 44/5/5A–B; E. G. E. van der Wall, 'Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Durie', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 65 (1985), pp. 60–63; Wolf (ed.), *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission*, pp. lxxx–lxxxii, 77, 111, 137, 143.

[7] L. Fuks and R. Fuks 'Menasseh Ben Israel as a bookseller in the light of new data', *Quaerendo*, 11 (1981), p. 39; A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg* (10 vols., Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965–75), vol. 1, pp. 123–27; Richard Parr, *The Life Of*

the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher, Late Lord Archbishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of all Ireland. With a Collection of Three Hundred Letters (1686), p. 618 [Letter CCXCVII]; CSPD 1655–56, pp. 366–67.

[8] Menasseh ben Israel, *De Termino Vitæ; Or The Term of Life* (ed. T. Pococke, 1700), sig. a4; Thomas Birch (ed.), *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle ... To which is prefixed the life of the author* (6 vols., London: J. & F. Rivington, 1772), vol. 2, pp. 280, 301, vol. 5, p. 183; BL, MS Harleian 7003, fol. 179v, printed in Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio and Lawrence Principe (eds.), *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle* (6 vols., London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), vol. 1, p. 104 (where, because of a mistranscription, the date is given incorrectly as November 1651).

[9] CSPD 1655, p. 402.

[10] CSPD 1655–56, pp. 15–16, 20, 23; Bodl. Lib., MS Eng. hist. e.308, pp. 38–39; Wolf (ed.), *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission*, pp. lxxxiii–lxxxv; H. Adler, 'A Homage to Menasseh ben Israel', *TJHSE*, 1 (1893–94), pp. 44–45; H. S. Q. Henriques, 'The Jews and the English Law. IV', *JQR*, o.s., 14 (1902), pp. 693–94; Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (3rd edn., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 161; Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 202–05.

[11] Roth, *History of Jews in England*, pp. 162–64; Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 190–231; Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 121–32.

[12] [Henry Jessey], *A Narrative Of the late Proceeds in White-Hall concerning the Jews* (London: L. Chapman, 1656), pp. 2, 8–9; Thomas Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.* (7 vols., London, 1742), vol. 4, pp. 308, 321, 343; Worcester College, Oxford, MS Clarke 27, fol. 150; Alan MacFarlane (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616–1683* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1976), p. 358; 'The Proceedings about the Jews in England in the Year 1655', in *Two Journeys to Jerusalem* (London: Nathaniel Crouch, 1704), p. 172.

[13] D. Patinkin, 'Mercantilism and the readmission of the Jews to England', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8 (1946), pp. 161–78; E. Samuel, 'The readmission of the Jews to England in 1656, in the context of English economic policy', *TJHSE*, 31 (1990), pp. 153–69; E. Samuel, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Re-admission of the Jews to England in 1656', in Edgar Samuel, *At the End of the Earth. Essays on the history of the Jews in England and Portugal* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 2004), pp. 179–89.

[14] William Prynne, *A Short Demurrer To the Jewes Long discontinued Remitter into England* (London: Edward Thomas, 1656), sig. A3v.

[15] [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 10.

[16] [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 8; [William] H[ughes], *Anglo-Judæus, or the History of the Jews, Whilst here in England* (London: Thomas Heath, 1656), p. 51; cf. Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, trans. Moses Wall (2nd edn., 1652), pp. 53–54; E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn* (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), vol. 3, p. 158. [17] Ariel Hessayon, 'Gold Tried in the Fire'. *The Prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 380–84.

[18] BL, Add. MS 27,962 O, fols. 536, 538; BL, Add. MS 27,962 P, fol. 2r; *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (hereafter *CSP Venetian*), 1655–56, pp. 160–61; Roth, 'New Light on the Resettlement', pp. 126–32, 137–42; cf. Michael Roberts (ed. and trans.), *Swedish Diplomats at Cromwell's Court, 1655–56: the missions of Peter Julius Coyet and Christer Bonde*, Camden Society, 4th series, 36 (London, 1988), pp. 215, 221, 224.

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