

JEWISH EXCLUSIONS: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HISTORIANS AND THE EXPULSION OF ENGLAND'S JEWS

Ben Dew,¹
University of Portsmouth

I. Introduction

In June 1290, Edward I made the final decision to banish England's Jews. Writs were issued on the 18 July of the same year, and by November the entire Jewish population had been expelled, principally to France. As a result, the existence of a community which could trace its origins to the reign of William the Conqueror was brought to an abrupt end.² Discussion of English Medieval Jewry has been a longstanding feature of historical writing on Norman and early-Plantagenet England and, as a consequence, an extensive historical literature has emerged. The paper that follows surveys this body of work in order to provide an account of a previously underexplored subject: the contribution to debates made by Enlightenment-era historians.³ My principal concern is with four works of history two of which are specifically concerned with economic affairs. Adam Anderson's hugely ambitious Historical and Chronological Deduction of the History of Commerce (1764), provided an account of the development of international trade from the earliest times to the present.⁴ John Sinclair's History of the Public Revenue (1785-90), meanwhile, was conceived as 'the first attempt at financial history on an enlarged scale' and sought to develop a complete analysis of British approaches to taxation.⁵ The other

¹ benjamin.dew@port.ac.uk

² For accessible, modern accounts of the expulsion, see: Robin R. Mundill, The King's Jews: Money, Massacre and Exodus in Medieval England (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Richard Huscroft, Expulsion: England's Jewish Solution: Edward I and the Jews (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2006).

³ Hume's attitude to England's Jews is the only aspect of the topic to receive attention, and the discussion here has been very general. See: Robert Palter, 'Hume and Prejudice', Hume Studies, 21:1 (1995), 3-23. See also: Richard H. Popkin, 'Medicine, Racism, Anti-Semitism: A Dimension of Enlightenment Culture' in G.S. Rousseau ed. The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 405-442. The key account of the complex relationship between Jewishness and the European Enlightenment is: Adam Sutcliffe, Judaism and Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Useful discussions of medieval and early-modern accounts of England's Jews are to be found in the works by Sophia Menache, James Shapiro and Eliane Glaser referred to below.

⁴ Adam Anderson, An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce, from the earliest accounts to the present time, 2 vols (London, 1764), 1: v. On Anderson, see: Mark Salber Phillips, Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 161-162.

⁵ John Sinclair, The History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire, 3 parts (London, 1785-1790).

two works, while showing a marked interest in commerce and finance, provide more wide-ranging narrative discussions of English history: William Guthrie's General History of England (1744-51) and David Hume's History of England (1754-1762).⁶ These texts have been chosen to illustrate the paper's principal argument: a growing interest in the economic aspects of history from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards led to a re-evaluation of the role Jews had played in English society. As part of this shift, the images of greedy usurers and coin-clippers that dominated medieval and early-modern narratives were replaced by accounts of industrious, cosmopolitan tradesmen. However, while this change was a product, in a sense, of a more tolerant view of non-Christian religious groups, attitudes towards the expulsion itself remained highly ambivalent.

The discussion is divided into two parts. The first delineates, with rather broad brushstrokes, some of the main features of medieval and early-modern historical writing concerning the expulsion and the events leading up to it. The second, in a little more detail, situates the work of my four historians in this context.

II. Medieval Chroniclers and Tudor and Stuart Historians

The earliest discussions of English medieval Jewry are to be found in the chronicles authored by contemporary monks. These works, perhaps most significantly the writing of Roger of Hoveden, Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris, provided discussions of both the measures used by the authorities to manage the Jewish population, and the various incidents which arose when regulations were flouted.⁷ Such accounts, as was customary in the chronicle tradition, were recycled by later authors, and they went on to form the basis of the commentaries contained in the major Tudor and early-Stuart histories by authors such as Polydore Vergil, John Foxe, Raphael Holinshed, John Stow and John Speed.⁸ Key to these works was an association between England's Jews and illicit financial practices, most significantly usury. Thus the authors of the Holinshed Chronicle (1577, 1587) explained that Jewish usury was practised 'to the undoing of manie an honest man', while Speede noted that, in the reign of Edward I, the Jews had 'by

⁶ William Guthrie, A General History of England, 4 Vols (London, 1744-1751); David Hume, The History of England, 6 vols (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985). Guthrie's discussion of England's Jews comes in the first volume of his history (published in 1744). Hume's account is to be found in what were to become volumes one and two of his history; as Hume wrote his history 'backwards' – beginning with the Stuart volumes and concluding with the pre-1485 volumes – these parts of the text were the last to be published and emerged in 1761 and 1762.

⁷ Roger of Hoveden, The Annals of Roger of Hoveden, Volume 2, part 1 tr. Henry T. Riley (Felinfach: Llanferch, 1997); Roger Wendover's Flowers of History, 2 vols, ed. J.A. Giles (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849); Matthew Paris, The Chronicles of Matthew Paris, ed. Richard Vaughan (London: Alan Sutton, 1984); Matthew Paris, English History: from the Year 1235 to 1273, 3 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853).

⁸ Polydore Vergil, Anglia Historia, ed. Dana F. Sutton, philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/. This edition of the text is based on the 1555 version of the text; John Foxe, Actes and monuments of matters most special and memorable, happening in the Church (London, 1583); Raphael Holinshed, The First Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande 2 vols (London, 1577); The First and Second Volumes of the Chronicles, 3 vols (London, 1587); John Stowe, A Summarie of the Chronicles (London, 1575); Survey of London (London, 1598); John Stow and Edmund Howes, Annales, or General Chronicle of England (London, 1631). A useful discussion of attitudes towards the history of England's medieval Jews in this period can be found in: James Shapiro, Shakespeare and the Jews (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 46-55

their cruel usuries had [...] eaten [the King's] people to the bones.⁹ Frequent references were also made to the Jews' role as, in the words of Speed, 'the ordinary Clippers and defacers of [the King's coyne] and the forgers of Seales and Charters.'¹⁰ Attempts to palliate such criticisms are generally only to be found when historians compared Jewish practices with those of other pariah groups. Thus, Matthew Paris, a frequent critic of the Church authorities in Rome, observed that while usury was a sin, at least the Jews offered more agreeable terms than the Pope's money-lenders the Cahorsins.¹¹ In making such claims, it should be emphasised, Matthew, and those who later utilised his work, were not so much defending the Jews as using contemporary assumptions about their sharp practices for polemical purposes. The fact that, in the words of the militant Protestant John Foxe, 'the very Iewes [were] crying out' against the Cahorsins, was conclusive evidence of their treachery.¹²

Considerable attention was also given to Jewish outrages against Christians and Christianity. The most widely reported incidents were the so-called 'blood-libels', the accounts of ritualistic attacks on Christian children. Again, Mathew Paris' work is of central importance. His *Historia Major* provided accounts of various such incidents including the circumcision and attempted crucifixion of a Christian boy by Norwich's Jews in 1230, the recovery in 1240 of the body of a crucified Christian boy whose corpse had been inscribed with Hebrew characters, and the martyrdom of little Hugh, a Christian boy kidnapped in Lincoln and later tortured and crucified.¹³ This sort of material was frequently and uncritically repeated by later writers. Vergil labelled the Norwich incident 'a horrible crime committed by the Jews' and went on to describe how:

that dregs of humanity [...] secretly kidnapped a little boy and fed him for an entire year, so that when Easter came around, as if to disfigure our religion with a new disgrace, they might crucify him. But a few days before they would have shed his innocent blood, these worst of butchers were accused and convicted of their crime and paid the deserved penalty.¹⁴

Holinshed's version is very similar:

[The] Iewes of Norwich, [...] had stolen a yoong child, being not past a twelue moneths old, and secretlie kept him an whole yeare together, to the end that

⁹ Holinshed, *Chronicle*, (1577) 4: 482; (1587) 6: 121.

¹⁰ John Speed, *The Historie of Great Britaine under the Conquests of ye Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* (London, 1611), p. 625

¹¹ Matthew Paris, *English History*, 3: 47-8.

¹² *Acts and Martyrs*, I: 325-6.

¹³ For the Norwich incident, see: Matthew Paris, *English History*, 1: 277. Roger of Wendover, Paris' principal source for material from 1235, places the same incident in 1235. See: *Roger Wendover's Flowers of History*, 2 vols, ed. J.A. Giles (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 2: 602. As Sophia Menache has shown, the incident appears to have occurred in 1230. The allegations made by the boys' father surfaced in 1234/5 and the Jews deemed responsible were executed in 1240. See: Sophia Menache, 'Matthew Paris's Attitudes towards Anglo-Jewry', *Journal of Medieval History* 23:2 (1997), 139-162. The London incident is discussed in Paris, *English History*, 2: 21-2. The martyrdom of 'little Hugh' is to be found in *English History*, 3: 138-40.

¹⁴ Vergil, *Anglia Historia*, Henry III, paragraph 17, philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/. This edition of the text is based on the 1555 version of the text. See also: Foxe, *Acts and Martyrs*, I: 327.

he might (when Easter came) crucifie him in despite of our sauuiour Iesus Christ, and the christian religion. The matter as it happened fell out well for the lad: for within a few daies before that those curssed murtherers purposed to haue shed this innocents bloud, they were accused, conuicted and punished, whereby he escaped their cruell hands.¹⁵

Underlying these accounts, it perhaps need hardly be said, was a belief that the fervent and debased religious beliefs of the Jews rendered them an explicit threat to England's Christian culture.

A concern with Jewish acts of perfidy did much to shape narrative accounts of Anglo-Jewry. Writers did not, however, gloss over the violence that Jews had suffered at the hands of the Christian population. By far the most significant incident was sparked by the coronation of Richard I in 1189. When London's Jews, who had been banned from attending events surrounding the ceremony, attempted to give the new King presents, a riot ensued in which both the persons and property of the Jewish population were attacked.¹⁶ This event prompted a wave of further incidents in Lincoln, Stamford, Norwich and, most tragically, York where the entire Jewish population of around a hundred was wiped out.¹⁷ While some historians saw the Jews' punishment as at least partially merited, most extended sympathy to the victims and criticised their perpetrators.¹⁸ Samuel Daniel, for example, writing in 1618, lamented the 'miserable slaughter', while the 1587 edition of Holinshed added a new paragraph which attributed the 'pitifull distresse' of the Jews to the actions of Richard, whose 'violent example' had inspired the 'peoples furious and unbridled pronesse to crueltie.'¹⁹ Such material was supplemented by repeated censure of the high taxes and arbitrary levies issued by England's monarchs against the Jewish population. For Matthew Paris, the 'avaricious thirst' of Henry III ensured that money was 'extorted from the Jews to such a degree that they appeared to be entirely and irreparably impoverished.'²⁰ Daniel, meanwhile, maintained that Jewish estates had been 'continually ransackt' while Holinshed pithily observed that the King had 'fleeced the Jewes to the quick.'²¹

In relation to the expulsion itself, things are a little more complicated. Contemporary chroniclers generally dealt with the incident in a single sentence, providing neither praise, criticism nor explanation for the King's actions. Many later writers took the same approach. Holinshed, for example, observed: 'It was also decreed, that all the Iewes should auoid out of the land, in consideration whereof, a fifteenth was granted to the king, and so héervpon were the Iewes banished out of all the kings dominions, and neuer since could they obtaine any priuilege to returne hither againe.'²² Similarly, Stow commented that Edward 'banished all the Jewes out of England, getting

¹⁵ Holinshed, *Chronicle* (1587), 6: 219.

¹⁶ The key source for the coronation is Roger of Hoveden, *Annals*, pp. 119-120.

¹⁷ For the York incident, see: Hoveden, *Annals*, pp. 137-139.

¹⁸ Speed, for example, saw the action against the Jews as 'a presage, that this *Lion-hearted* King (as his by-name *Ceur-de-Lion* did import) should be a specall destroyer of the enemies of our Saviour.' Speed, *Historie*, p. 530.

¹⁹ Samuel Daniel, *The Collection of the History of England* (London, 1618), p. 96; Holinshed, *Chronicle*, (1587) 6: 119.

²⁰ Paris, *English History*, 3: 340.

²¹ Daniel, *Collection*, p. 140; Holinshed, *Chronicle*; (1587) 6: 252.

²² Holinshed, *Chronicle* (1587), 6: 285.

them to beare their charges til they were out his Realme, the number of Jewes then expelled, were xv.M parsons.²³ In her discussion of thirteenth and fourteenth-century accounts, Sophia Menache has attributed this approach to the chroniclers' complex relationship with the Jews.²⁴ While these authors were willing to propagate anti-Jewish stereotypes, they were aware of the financial benefits which the cheap mortgaged property obtained through Jewish connections brought their monasteries. As a result, they showed a reluctance to fully vindicate Edward's actions. In relation to Tudor historians the situation seems more straightforward. Given the multiple tales of usury, coin-tampering and child murder writers employed prior to discussion of the expulsion, the implication of such accounts was clear: despite the oppressions they had suffered, Jewish crimes merited such a response from Edward. A number of writers went on to make such claims directly. Polydore Vergil conceived of the Jews' removal as an act of religious purification, whereby Edward had sought to separate the 'sheep' from the 'goats.'²⁵ Vergil's only regret was that the Jews had not been persuaded to leave their literature behind which, he claimed, was vital for the preservation of Christian secular life. For Speed the expulsion was a part of Edward's more general plan to undermine corruption and revive England's fortunes. The Jews were expelled 'to purge England from such corruptions and oppressions, as under which it groaned.'²⁶ Within medieval and early-modern writing, therefore, it is possible to identify a spectrum of opinion ranging from the ambivalence of the earliest accounts to the implicit and explicit support for Edward's actions shown by later historians. However, while some discussions drew attention to the avaricious concerns which led Edward to act, the extant literature offers very little criticism of the expulsion itself.²⁷

III. The Eighteenth-Century Debate

Enlightenment-era historians utilised medieval and early-modern chronicles extensively in their accounts. The writing of the period, however, was also shaped by new approaches to both source material and historical narrative. In relation to the former, the key development was the publication of a series of antiquarian accounts based, in whole or part, on England's state archives. Three such works were to exert a longstanding influence on ideas about medieval Jewry: William Prynne's Short Demurrer on the Jews from 1656, a highly polemical account written to oppose the plans developed by Oliver Cromwell to readmit Jews to England; Thomas Madox's History of the Exchequer, chapter six of which was devoted to the 'Exchequer of the Jews', the body charged with regulating the taxes and legal affairs of the medieval Jewish population; and D'Blossiers Tovey, 1738 Anglia Judaica, the first complete published history of England's Anglo-Jewish community.²⁸ Such texts, as we shall see, encouraged methodological innovations and

²³ Stow, Summarie, p. 229.

²⁴ Sophia Menache, 'Faith, Myth, and Politics: The Stereotype of the Jews and Their Expulsion from England and France', The Jewish Quarterly Review, 75:4 (1985), 351-374 (357-358).

²⁵ Polydore Vergil, Anglia Historia, Edward I, paragraph 7.

²⁶ Speed, Historie, p. 650.

²⁷ For discussions which emphasise Edward's avarice, see: Speed, Historie, p. 160; Daniel, Collection, p. 160.

²⁸ William Prynne, A Short Demurrer to the Jewes, 2nd edn (London, 1656); Thomas Madox, The History and Antiquities of the Exchequer of the Kings of England, in two periods (London, 1711), pp. 150-178; D'Blossiers Tovey, Anglia Judaica: or the history and antiquities of the Jews in

provided important information for later writers regarding the practices of medieval government. With regard to narrative, the most important shift was an increased concern with processes of long-term cultural change. As J.G.A. Pocock has argued, eighteenth-century historians came to structure their work around ‘the enlightened narrative’: the story of the transformations through which the shared civilization of ‘manners and commerce’ that characterised contemporary Europe had emerged out of the ‘barbarism and superstition’ of the medieval age.²⁹ Such a focus meant that commerce was increasingly conceived of as the key marker of modernity, and as a result, assessing the level of commercial development achieved by past societies became one of the historian’s key tasks. Moreover, whereas earlier writers had understood commerce as an aspect of statecraft, a series of actions performed by a monarch to promote or retard trade, the historians of the eighteenth century viewed it as a social phenomenon.³⁰ As such, economic advancement was conceived of as a product of a ‘commercial spirit’ which, at some point in Europe’s modern history, had come to shape the moeurs and manners of the populace.

To an extent the antiquarian approaches and the ‘narrative of Enlightenment’ could work in concert with one another. Indeed, enlightenment ideas of economic development were, in many ways, a direct product of the methodological innovations of seventeenth-century antiquarians. One of the key effects of serious research in antiquarian affairs was a growing awareness of the fundamental ‘otherness’ of the past. These ideas are neatly summarised by John Madox in a passage which foreshadows the more famous observations of L.P. Hartley:

When a Man, though a Native of this Island, comes fresh to peruse a systeme of Antiquities, or a piece of Ancient History of the same Island, he is like one newly landed in a Strange country. He finds himself in another climate. He observeth many things strange and uncouth in Language, Laws, customs, and manners.³¹

This conception of the past helped to transform attitudes to Jewish history. A modern historian it came to be believed, could not simply accept the word of the strange and uncouth monks who had authored the chronicles; rather he needed to carefully weigh up which elements of the accounts from contemporary observers could be trusted and which could not. In relation to medieval Jewry, this ensured that while the records of anti-Jewish riots were still taken seriously, accounts of supposed crimes committed by Jews were not. Thus Hume referred to the idea that Jews had ‘crucified a child in derision of the sufferings of Christ’ as an ‘improbable and absurd accusation’, while Anderson noted that ‘they were accused of, and sometimes cruelly treated for, Crimes which it is probable they never committed, occasioned by the Violence of a bigoted Clergy, the Ignorance of the Laity.’³² Accusations concerning Jewish financial practices were treated in a similar

England (London, 1738). For Prynne, see: Eliane Glaser, *Judaism without Jews: Philosemitism and Christian Polemic in Early-Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).

²⁹ J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume 2: Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 20.

³⁰ On this issue, see: Ben Dew, *Commerce, Finance and Statecraft: Histories of England, 1600-1780* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

³¹ Madox, *History of the Exchequer*, p. vi.

³² Hume, *History*, 2: 69; Anderson, *Deduction*, 1: 133.

manner. What is perhaps most noteworthy here is the philological emphasis on the changing meaning of the term usury. Anderson, observed that ‘it is needless again to note here, that the Word *Usury* in those Times, and long after, meant no more than barely the *Use* or *Interest* taken for the Loan of Money.’³³ Hume agreed arguing that it was ‘the prejudices of the age [that] had made the lending of money on interest pass by the invidious name of usury.’³⁴ The high interest rates of the period meanwhile, Hume contended, were a product not of the greed of Jewish money-lenders, but ‘the general barbarism of the times and men’s ignorance of commerce.’³⁵

Such discussions of the guiltlessness of the Jewish population were supplemented by new and more detailed accounts of the failings of England’s monarchs. Antiquarian archival research had uncovered multiple new examples of the various extortions exacted upon the Jewish population, particularly by Henry III and Edward I. Madox’s work was key here, but even William Prynne, a relentless critic of all aspects of Jewish life, noted that England’s monarchs had ‘proved to be the Jews [sic] most unsatiable, merciless, perfidious, tyrannical Exactors, Fleecers, Oppressors, Taxmasters, Tormentors.’³⁶ As a consequence, he concluded, ‘England was little better than a second Aegypt and our Kings and their griping Officers nothing else but so many new *Phaeroahs* and Aegyptian Tax-Masters.’³⁷ Later writers developed this theme with a good deal of enthusiasm. Guthrie maintained that Henry III’s attitude to Jewish taxation was fundamentally ‘void of humanity’, while for Anderson the English court had ‘fleeced’ the Jews at pleasure.³⁸ Hume labelled such measures ‘barefaced acts of tyranny and oppression’ and provided seven separate examples from Madox’s Jewish chapter to support his claim.³⁹ Taken in sum, therefore, the key effect of Enlightenment-era accounts was to alter the balance of narratives regarding medieval Jewry. While references to Jewish greediness are still to be found, discussions of Jewish crimes were generally downplayed, and through an engagement with antiquarian sources, increased attention was given to examples of monarchical extortion.

These ideas were supplemented by new claims about the nature of Jewish economic life. The chroniclers as we have seen maintained that the medieval Jews derived their wealth from usury and coin-clipping. In the eighteenth century, however, the Jew was increasingly conceived not as a petty money-lender, but rather as a successful international merchant. This suggestion was first formulated with, it should be emphasised, no reference to archival sources, by D’Blossiers Tovey:

For, as the *Jews* understood Trade better than our own Merchants, (from the general Correspondance they held with their Brethren, in all Parts of the World,) and (from managing their Traffick as it were by a *common* Stock) were able to under-sell them; no one car’d to by [sic] anything of a Christian.⁴⁰

³³ Anderson, *Deduction*, 1: 93.

³⁴ Hume, *History*, 1: 378.

³⁵ Hume, *History*, 2: 68.

³⁶ Prynne, *A Short Demurrer*, 2: 128.

³⁷ Prynne, *A Short Demurrer*, 2: 132.

³⁸ Guthrie, *General History*, 1: 768; Hume, *History*, 1: 133.

³⁹ Hume, *History*, 1: 483.

⁴⁰ Tovey, *Anglia Judaica*, p. 80.

Similar claims were then taken up and expanded by numerous other writers. Guthrie argued that: 'the experience of the Jews in foreign countries opened channels of commerce, which few or no English of those times had either genius or spirit to attempt.'⁴¹ Sinclair, meanwhile, imagined an international Jewish network which had dominated the trade of northern Europe 'from the period of the Norman invasion, to the establishment of the Hanseatic league.'⁴²

It is not difficult to establish the origins of this sort of argument. From the latter part of the sixteenth century onwards Jews had come to play a key role in international commerce entering, as Jonathan Israel has shown, into 'into several crucial east-west transit, colonial, and precious-metal trades.'⁴³ Such successes led to the emergence of what Benjamin Braude has labelled 'the myth of the Jewish economic superman', the idea that the cosmopolitan-connections of the Jews had enabled them to achieve complete dominance over international trade.⁴⁴ At one level, therefore, eighteenth-century writers simply took a contemporary stereotype about Jewish economic practices and projected it back into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, what is most noticeable here is not the otherness of the Jews, but rather the striking resemblance of Jewish practices to the values that, as eighteenth-century writers conceived of things, underpinned European commercial modernity. Indeed, the medieval Jews were, in a sense, not so much supermen, but rather conventional modern Englishmen. In Hume, this idea is implicit. 'This people', he argued, had gained possession of England's 'ready money' as a result of their 'industry and frugality.'⁴⁵ These qualities, which contrasted sharply with the 'idleness and profusion' of the rest of the populace, had, Hume contended, been key to England's economic development.⁴⁶ As he noted in his 1752 essay 'Of Interest' a low interest rate was a 'sign almost infallible of the flourishing condition of a people' and that it 'must proceed from an encrease of industry and frugality, of arts and commerce.'⁴⁷ In the work of William Guthrie, the association of the Jews with English commercial modernity was dealt with explicitly. The Jews were:

perhaps the main, though secret, causes of that uncommon affluence of coin which then prevailed in England, and that universal spirit of commerce which afterwards distinguished her.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Guthrie, *General History*, 1: 576.

⁴² Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, 1: 26.

⁴³ Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 256.

⁴⁴ Benjamin Braude, 'The Myth of the Sephardi Economic Superman' in Jeremy Adelman & Stephen Aron (eds) *Trading Cultures: The Worlds of Western Merchants: Essays on Authority, Objectivity and Evidence* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. 163-191. See also: Francesca Trivellato, 'Images and Self-Images of Sephardic Merchants in Early Modern Europe and the Mediterranean', in Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (eds) *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 49-74 (p. 66).

⁴⁵ Hume, *History of England*, 1: 378.

⁴⁶ Hume, *History of England*, 1: 378.

⁴⁷ David Hume, 'Of Interest', *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1985), p. 303, p. 299.

⁴⁸ Guthrie, *General History*, 1: 576. Guthrie does not provide any explanation of the means by which these processes took place.

Such examples demonstrate the synchronicity between the emergence of new forms of commercial and financial history, and the growth of a more sympathetic attitude towards England's Jews. It is, however, necessary to add two caveats to such an argument, which constitute what might be labelled 'limits' to economic arguments for toleration. First, of the four writers surveyed, Hume is the only one to develop a specifically economic case against the expulsion. His key assumption was that the expulsion had been designed to reduce usury. Such a move, however, was pointless – borrowing was a necessary part of any culture – and ill-managed; ultimately, the practices of the Italians who took over the money-lending trade were less 'open and unexceptionable' than those of the Jews.⁴⁹ The incident, as a result, was evidence that, despite Edward I's merits as a lawmaker, his commercial statecraft had been shaped by 'the prejudice of the times.'⁵⁰ Sinclair was also critical of the banishment, but conceived of it not as a product of Edward's economic ignorance, but rather of his personal moral failings. Indeed, for Sinclair, in expelling the Jews the King had prioritised personal financial gain over any other consideration. As such, the incident 'impresses us with no very favourable idea of [his] humanity.'⁵¹ Guthrie, despite his considerable praise for Jewish commerce, focused his account around an attempt to exonerate Edward of any real crime. The Jews he argued, were, most probably, not expelled; rather the increasing regulation of their financial practices led them to petition to be allowed to leave.⁵² Moreover, the King's decision to seize the fleeing populace's moveable goods was 'necessary' as it 'prevented a great part of the nation's wealth from falling into the hands of those, who were thenceforth to be deemed foreigners.'⁵³ Such details, Guthrie concluded, 'took off the odium' from an act which might, on first reflection, appear 'inexcusable.'⁵⁴ Anderson, meanwhile, was broadly supportive of Edward's actions. While he remained sceptical about claims regarding Jewish coin-tampering, and drew attention to the Jews' expertise in commerce, he concluded that the Jews 'brought on [their] own banishment through their 'insatiable thirst of gain.'⁵⁵ Taken in sum, therefore, these accounts demonstrate that positive representations of Jewish economic life did not necessitate a negative view of the expulsion. Indeed, the concern for the economic interests of the English state that underpin all the accounts discussed could be used to show the benefits of both greater and lesser degrees of toleration.

My second and final point relates to the wider consequences of eighteenth-century accounts of Jewish trade. The positive ideas about the commercial practices of the Jews that emerged in eighteenth-century histories were rooted in a fixed and, in a sense, narrow view of Jewish identity. Through projecting modern ideas about Jewishness on to the medieval past, Jewish modes of living were presented as fundamentally unchanging. At the same time, concerns on the part of historians with the origins of their own economic values, accompanied by a scepticism about the accounts of Jewish beliefs contained in the chronicles, led writers to present the Jews not as the adherents of a faith, but rather as the followers of a particular approach to commerce. As a result, the actions

⁴⁹ Hume, *History of England*, 2: 77.

⁵⁰ Hume, *History of England*, 2: 75.

⁵¹ Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, p. 66.

⁵² In making such a claim, Guthrie is drawing on the work of Edward Coke: *The Second Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (London, 1642), pp. 506-7.

⁵³ Guthrie, *General History*, 1: 910.

⁵⁴ Guthrie, *General History*, 1: 910.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *Deduction*, 1: 133.

and significance of the Jewish population came to be understood in almost entirely economic terms. This sort of connection was, of course, to prove a deeply damaging one in later Jewish history.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The classic account of Jewish economic identity is Werner Sombart's, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, tr. M. Epstein (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1982), first published as *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, 1911. For an illuminating discussion of Sombart's work and its relationship with earlier attitudes to Jewishness, see: Adam Sutcliffe, 'Anxieties of Distinctiveness: Walter Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* and the Politics of Jewish Economic History', in Rebecca Kobrin and Adam Teller (eds), *Purchasing Power: The Economics of Modern Jewish History* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 238-258.