

## Jews in Medieval England

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We've Been There:  
Jewish Communities from Around the World  
25 February 2018



## The Norman, Angevin, and Early Plantagenet Periods (1066 – 1290)

Battle of  
Hastings as  
portrayed in the  
Bayeux Tapestry



Coin of  
William the  
Conqueror

## Ashkenazi Prayer Book England c. 1200

Corpus Christi College,  
MS 133, Oxford

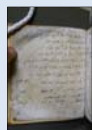
Blank pages at the end,  
written by a Sephardi Jew,  
recording (in Judeo-Arabic)  
debts owed to him by a  
variety of Christian dignitaries



Corpus Christi College (Oxford), MS 133  
List of debtors in Judeo-Arabic

-fol. 358v-

1. The year commencing first of July
2. first
3. all that I have since being here in England
4. from the Bishop of Exeter one mark, twice
5. also from the Bishop of Bath half a mark
6. also from the Count two and a half marks, twice
7. also from William Chesille three marks five and a half marks
8. from the Bishop of Winchester five marks, twice
9. from the Walter And Lusa half a mark, twice
10. half a mark
11. from Ran Brynner five and also Bath
12. from Walter Gervase paid - undated numeral - also Chesille - one mark
13. also from Ouchery - 7 - during one year, five marks
14. also Chesille - half a mark - also Count - half a mark



Corpus Christi College (Oxford), MS 133  
List of debtors in Judeo-Arabic



-fol. 349v-

15. half a mark
16. all that I received from Stillingen - 7 - at first from John Gherney
17. Ouchery - 7 - payment - undated numeral - 7
18. also from Stillingen - 7 - in his way to Norwich, one mark
19. also from Stillingen - 7 - by order of his clerk two marks, twice
20. also I received by the way of the Henry from the above named Stillingen - 7 - one mark
21. and payments 5 - 7 -
22. and marks - undated numeral - 7 and payments 5 - 7 - all this received during a year

## CATALOGUE

### ANTIQUITIES, WORKS OF ART

HISTORICAL SCOTTISH RELICS

DESCRIBED IN THE MUSEUM OF THE

Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

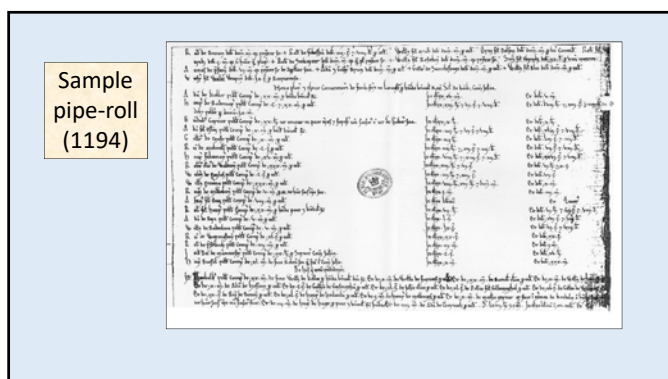
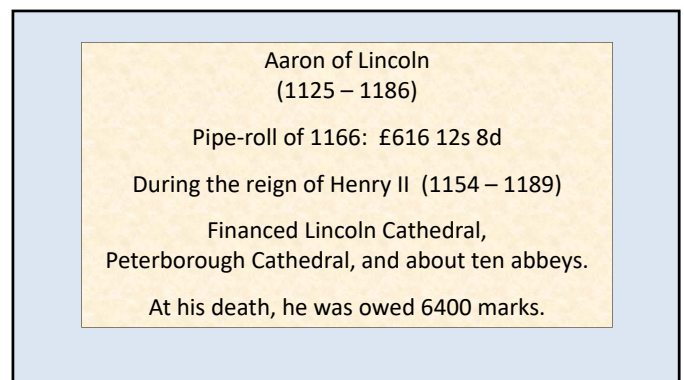
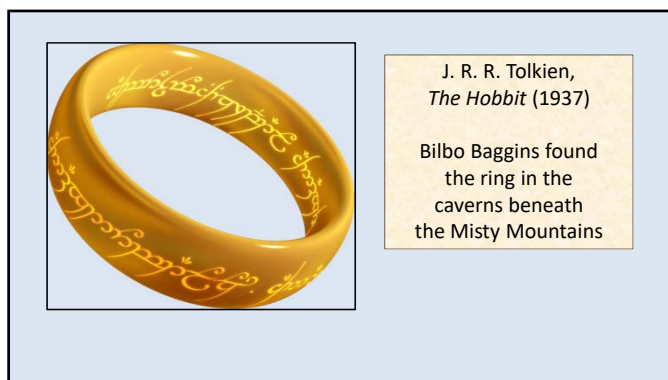
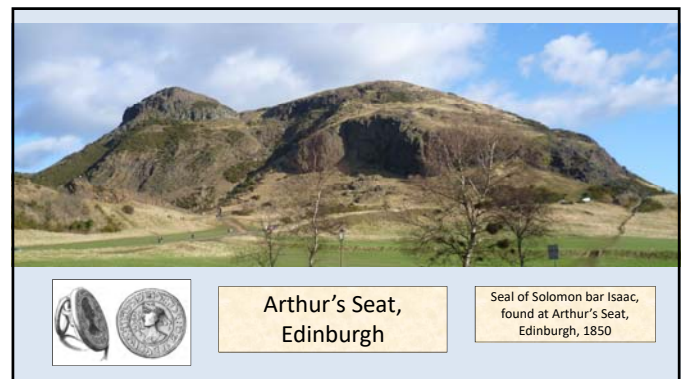
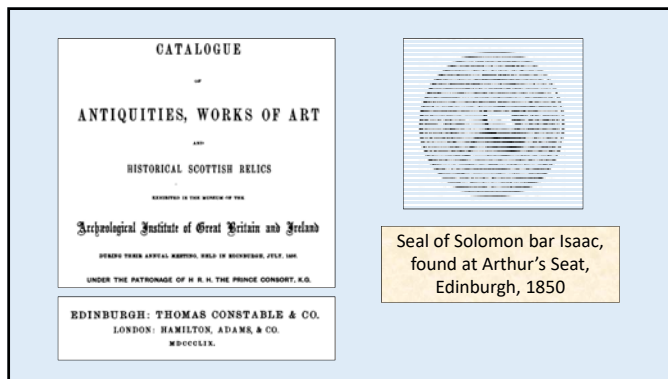
BEING THEIR ARTIFACTS, HELD IN EDINBURGH, JULY, 1850.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF H. R. H. THE PRINCE CONSORT, R.O.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE & CO.  
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO.  
MDCCCLX.



Seal of Solomon bar Isaac,  
found at Arthur's Seat,  
Edinburgh, 1850





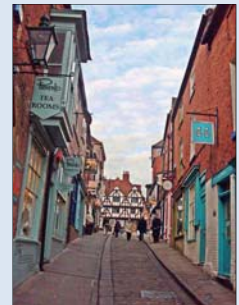
12th-century house  
Lincoln



Jews House and Jews Court



Jews House and Jews Court, Steep Hill, Lincoln



Lincoln Cathedral  
Built 1088 – 1311,  
with money  
borrowed from  
Aaron of Lincoln



Lincoln Cathedral  
Tallest building in  
the world  
1311 – 1549  
525 feet






Lincoln Cathedral

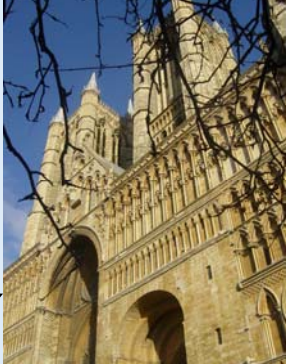
Tallest building in the world  
1311 – 1549  
525 feet



Great Pyramid of Khufu  
480 feet

Lincoln Cathedral Nave




Lincoln Cathedral West Front

**Two clauses in Magna Carta (1215)**

10. If anyone who has borrowed from the Jews any amount, large or small, dies before the debt is repaid, it shall not carry interest as long as the heir is under age, of whomsoever he holds; and if that debt falls into our hands [if the Jewish creditor dies and the king takes over his bonds], we will take nothing except the principal sum specified in the bond.

11. And if a man dies owing a debt to the Jews, his wife may have her dower [dowry] and pay nothing of that debt; and if he leaves children under age, their needs shall be met in a manner in keeping with the holding of the deceased, and the debt shall be paid out of the residue, saving the service due to the lords. Debts owing to other than Jews shall be dealt with likewise.



Magna Carta, Lincoln Cathedral  
(one of four extant copies)

Medieval Latin *starr* < שְׂטָר *šəṭar*

“A legal document, especially one of release or acquittance of debt.”

*O.E.D.*: 1614 J. Selden *Titles of Honor* 328  
“Whence the word *Starrum* or *Starre* for Acquittances or written testimonies of Contracts is vsd.”

Abraham ibn Ezra

1089 – 1168

Spain > North Africa > Egypt > Israel > Italy  
> Provence > Normandy > England  
(London and Oxford)

Abraham ibn Ezra

יסוד מורא *Yesod Mora* “The Foundation of Fear”

Philosophical Treatise, written for his pupil,  
Joseph ben Rabbi Jacob of Mandeville

Postscript: “Between Jerusalem and this island there is a difference of four hours as regards the time of sunrise.”

אגרת שבת *Iggeret Shabbat* “Sabbath Epistle”

Both written in London, 1158

Tosafot, writing in northern France, in the 12th century, refer to the “great sages of Norwich, Oxford, and York.”

One is known by name:  
Rabbi Isaac of Norwich



Medieval Hawking or Falconry, practiced by kings and aristocrats, and by Rabbi Isaac of Norwich

How did the Jews refer to England in Hebrew?



How did the Jews refer to England in Hebrew?

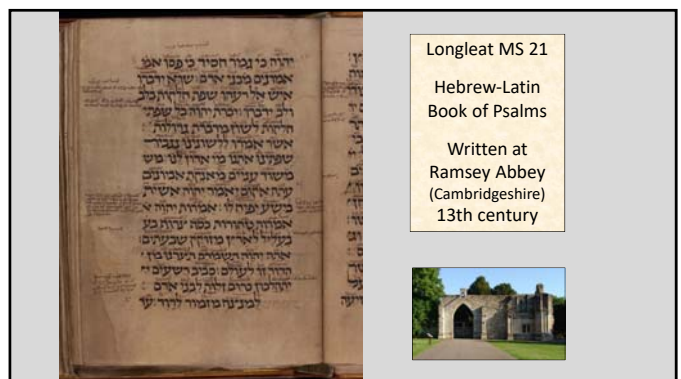
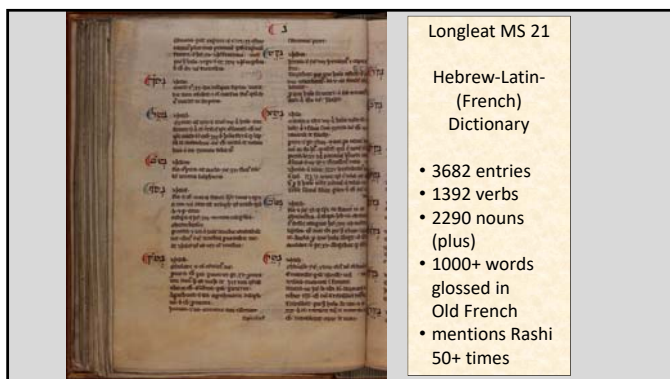
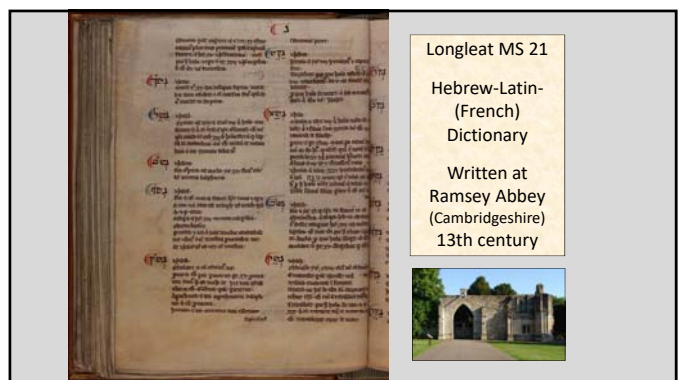
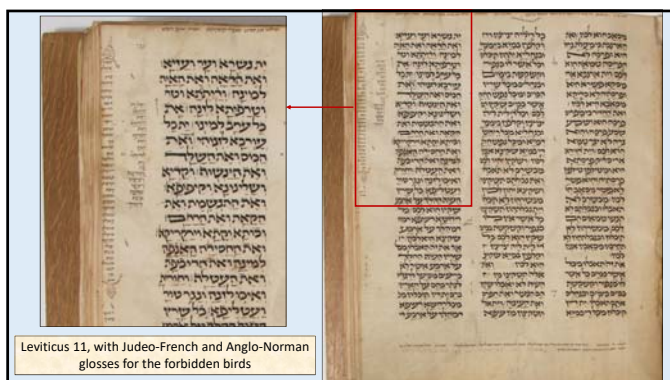
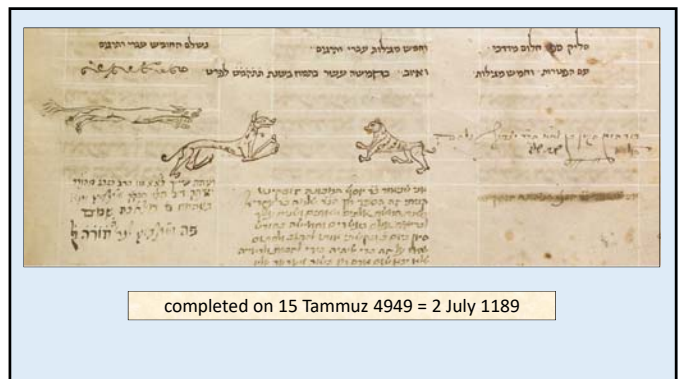
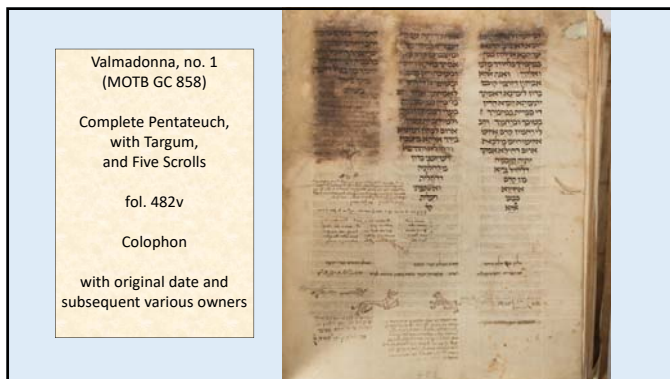
האי קצה הארץ  
הנקראת אינגלטריה  
“The island at the edge of the earth called Angleterra”



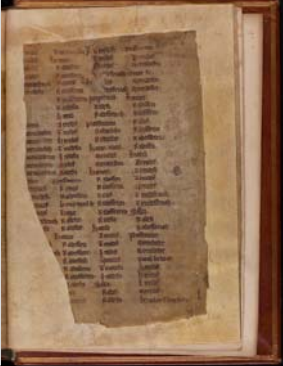
Valmadonna, no. 1 (MOTB GC 858) – Complete Pentateuch, with Targum, and Five Scrolls



Valmadonna, no. 1 (MOTB GC 858) – Complete Pentateuch, with Targum, and Five Scrolls









Longleat MS 21

- Grammatical Tables, appearing both in Hebrew and in Latin transcription






Longleat House  
Warminster, Wiltshire  
Home of the Marquess of Bath  
built 1580




York  
Best preserved medieval city in England

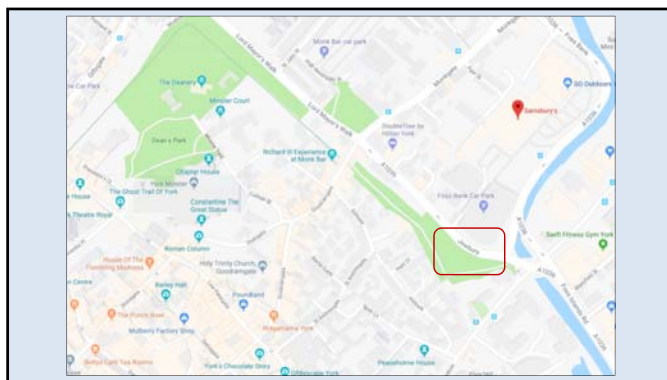
Map of Jewish Communities in Medieval England

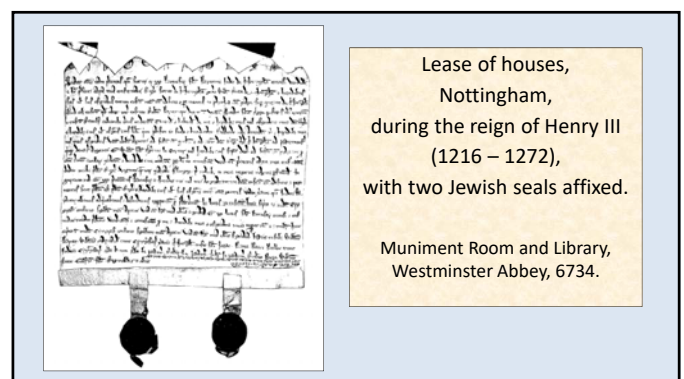
York, England



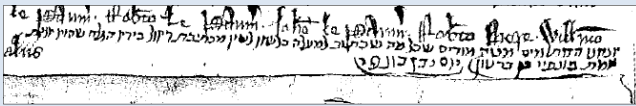
Jewbury  
On the edge of the city of York, England





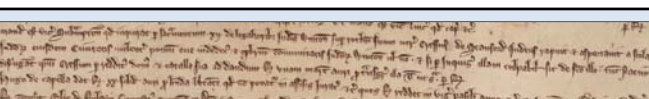
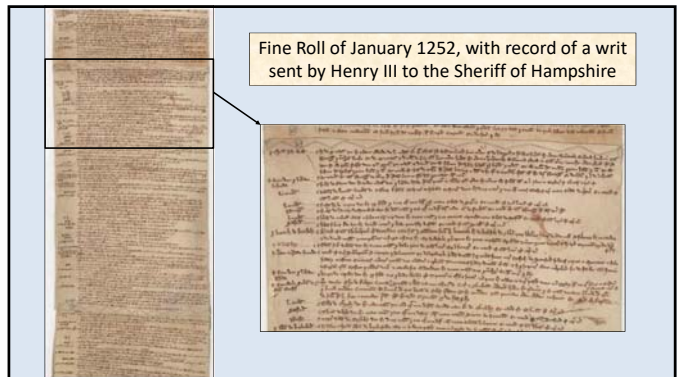


Lease of houses, Nottingham,  
during the reign of Henry III (1216 – 1272)



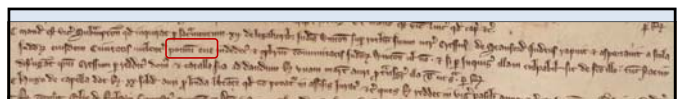
"We the undersigned acknowledge that everything that is written in the Latin tongue in the writing of Raoul Bedah the priest is truly correct. Bonefay ben Barton and Yosi ben Bonefay."

Fine Roll of January 1252, with record of a writ sent by Henry III to the Sheriff of Hampshire



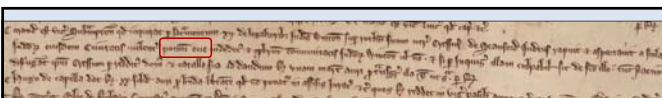
*Mandatum est vicecomiti Suhampton' quod inquirat per sacramentum xii. de legalioribus Judeis Winton' super rotulum suum utrum Cressus de Stanford Judeus rapuit et asportavit a scola | Judeorum eiusdem civitatis violenter **pomum eve** inde decus et oprobrium communitatis Judeorum Winton' vel non. Et si per Inquisitionem illam culpabilis sit de facto illo, tunc statim | distringant ipsum Cressum per redditus, domus et catalla sua ad dandum Regi unam marcam auri pro transgressione illa. Teste ut supra. per Regem.*

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Order to the sheriff of Hampshire to inquire by the oath of twelve of the more law-worthy Jews of Winchester by their roll whether Cressus of Stamford, Jew, violently seized and took away the **apple of Eve** from the synagogue of the Jews in the same city to the shame and opprobrium of the Jewish community of Winchester. If, by that inquisition, he shall be found guilty of that deed, then they are to distrain Cressus immediately by his rents, houses and chattels to give one mark of gold to the king for that trespass. Witnessed as above. By the king.



<http://frh3.org.uk/content/month/fm-12-2011.html>



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Hebrew tombstone  
fragment  
Northampton

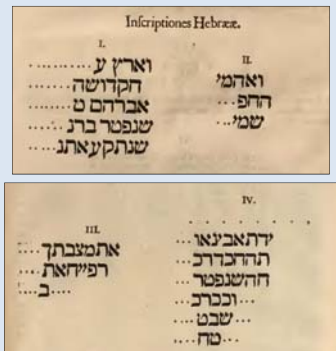
discovered c. 1840,  
re-discovered in the  
Northampton Museum, 1972

זאת מן-  
החבר  
שלמה-  
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Four Hebrew tomb inscriptions from London (now lost), collected by John Selden, c. 1640, then published by Humphrey Prideaux, *Marmora Oxoniensa* (Oxford, 1696), pp. 310-311.



The image shows four Hebrew tomb inscriptions arranged in a grid. The inscriptions are in Hebrew script and are numbered I, II, III, and IV. The text of the inscriptions is as follows:

I. וארץ ע... הקדושה... אברהם ט... שנפטר ברנ... שנתקעאתנ...

II. ואהמי... הדפ... שמי...

III. אתמעבתך... רפיהאת... ב...

IV. יתאבנא... תהדכרכ... חהשנפטר... וככר... שכט... טח...

Ewer, c. 1250


Found by a fisherman in a brook in Suffolk in 1696

הנדר יוסף בן הק"ר יחיאל . . .


"The vow (which) Joseph son of the Holy Rabbi Yehiel . . ."

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

10" high | 30" round




Map of Jewish Communities in Medieval England

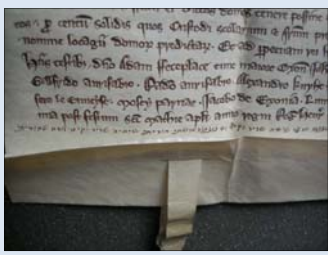



Merton College, Oxford, established 1262

Seal of Jacob the Jew



Deed in Latin, recording the sale of land by Jacob the Jew, to Walter de Merton, with summary statement in Hebrew.

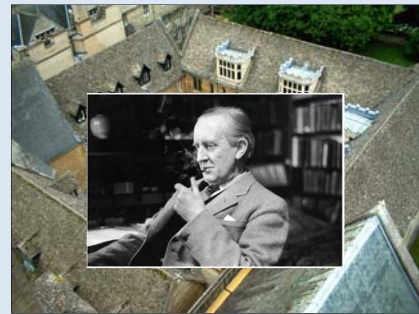



Merton College Library

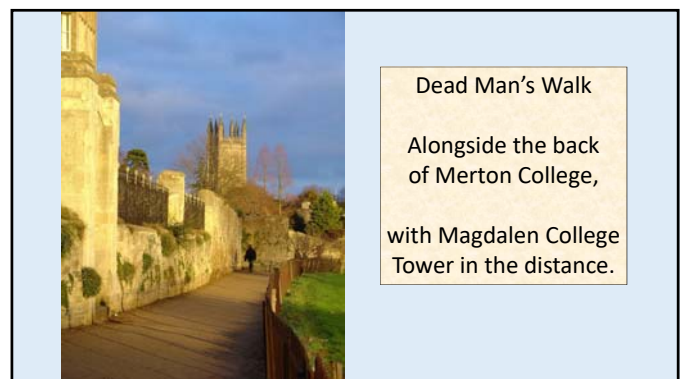
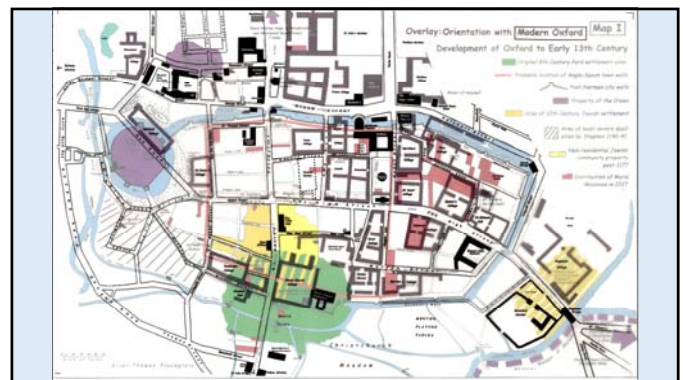
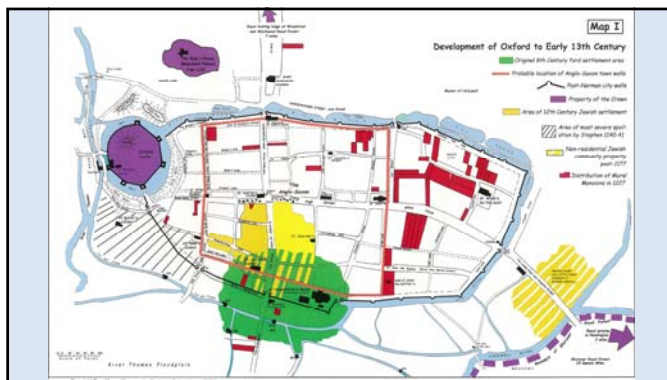




Merton College, Oxford, established 1262



J. R. R. Tolkien, professor at Merton College





Oxford  
Botanic  
Garden



Beneath this garden lies a medieval cemetery.

Around 1000 the Jews of Oxford purchased a water meadow outside the city walls to establish a burial ground. In 1021 that land, now occupied by Magdalen College, was appropriated by the Bishop of St John, and a small section of wasteland, where this memorial lies, was given to the Jews for a new cemetery.

An ancient footpath linked this cemetery with the medieval Jewish quarter along Great Jewry Street, now St Aldates. For over 800 years this path has been called Tondeman's Walk, a name that bears silent witness to a community that contributed to the growth of this City and early University throughout the 12th and 13th centuries.

In 1290 all the Jews were expelled from England by King Edward I. They were not permitted to return for over 300 years.

May their memory be blessed

יהא זכרונם לברכה



Oxford Botanic Garden  
July 2017

### Lachrymose History

- Blood libels: Norwich (1144), Lincoln (1255)
- Massacre of the Jews of York (1190)
- Expulsion under Edward I (1290)

No Jews in England: 1290 – 1657

### Blood Libel

originates in England,  
then spreads to rest of Europe

1144 – Norwich

1168 – Gloucester

1171 – Blois (France)

1255 – Lincoln

(mentioned by Chaucer, "Prioress' Tale,"  
*The Canterbury Tales*, c. 1390)

Blood  
Libel  
(woodcut)







York  
Best  
preserved  
medieval city  
in England

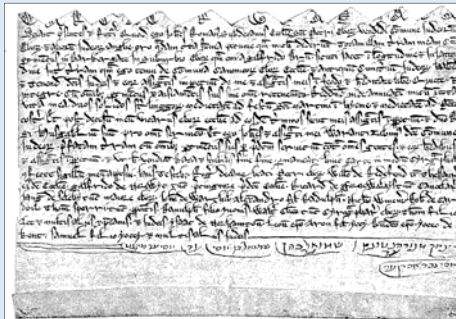


Clifford's Tower – York, England  
Massacre of the Jews – 1190



On the night of Friday  
16 March 1190, some  
150 Jews and Jewesses  
of York, having sought  
protection in the royal  
castle on this site from  
a mob incited by  
Richard Malebisse and  
others, chose to die at  
each other's hands  
rather than renounce  
their faith.

ישימו ליהודה כבוד ותהלתו באיים יידי:  
May they give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.



York Minster Library

Vicars Choral  
Deeds 22

Deed of Sale from  
the sub-dean of the  
Cathedral to the  
Jews of York so that  
they may expand  
their cemetery.

c. 1230

1290 – Expulsion  
of the Jews  
by Edward I  
(r. 1272 – 1307)

Jews readmitted 1657

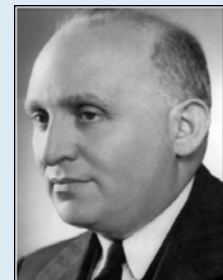


Ghetto and Emancipation  
By Salo Baron

Reprinted from the 1938 issue of  
The Museum of Jewish  
Art, New York City

Ghetto and Emancipation  
Shall We Regret the Traditional View?  
By Salo Baron

Salo Baron (1895 – 1989)





1290 – Expulsion  
of the Jews  
by Edward I  
(r. 1272 – 1307)

Jews readmitted 1657



And yet Hebrew learning continues and flourishes:

- Ralph Niger, archdeacon of Gloucester (c. 1140 – c. 1217)
- Roger Bacon, polymath (c. 1214 – c. 1292)
- John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (served 1327 – 1369)
- Adam Easton, Cardinal (1328 – 1397)
- Laurence Holbeach, Benedictine monk (14th century)
- Thomas Gascoigne, Vice-Chancellor, Univ of Oxford (1404 – 1458)



Corpus Christi  
College Oxford



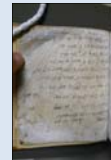
Founded 1517, with its  
*biblioteca trilinguis* (Erasmus, 1519)

Ashkenazi Prayer Book  
England c. 1200

Corpus Christi College,  
MS 133, Oxford



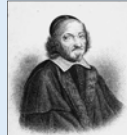
Blank pages at the end,  
written by a Sephardi Jew,  
recording (in Judeo-Arabic)  
debts owed to him by a  
variety of Christian dignitaries



English Reformation – 16th Century



William Tyndale  
(1494 – 1536)



Myles Coverdale  
(1488 – 1569)

Robert Wakefield  
(d. 1537)  
Thomas Wakefield  
(d. 1575)

The Geneva Bible  
(1560)



Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge (1540)

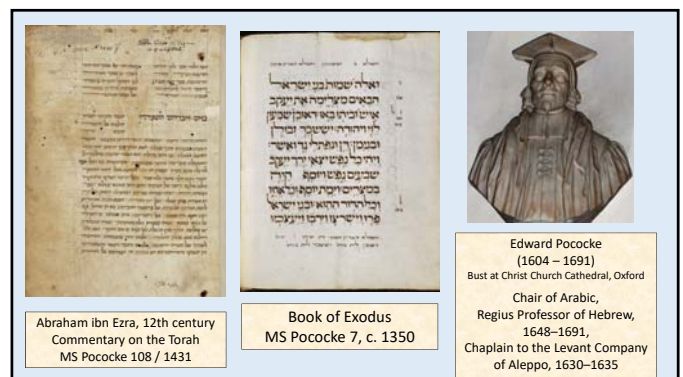
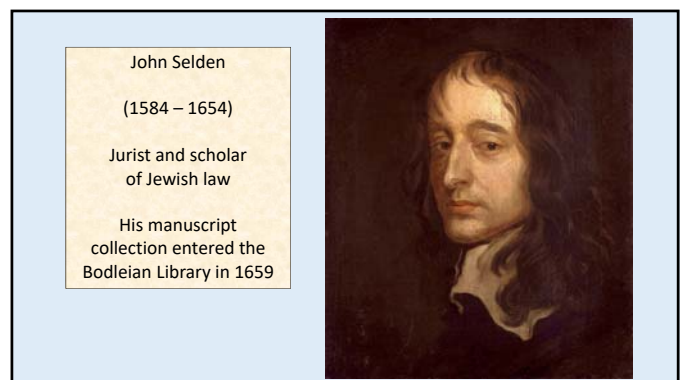
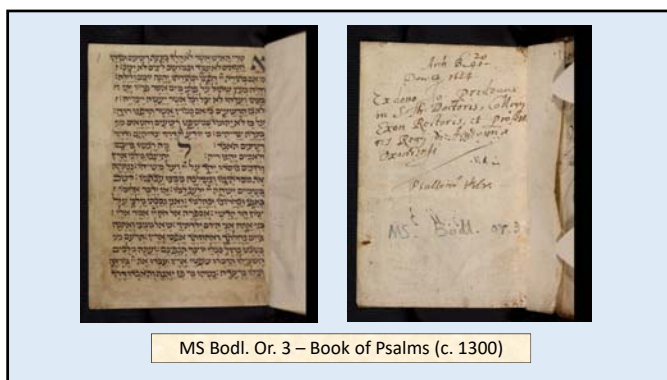
Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford (1546)

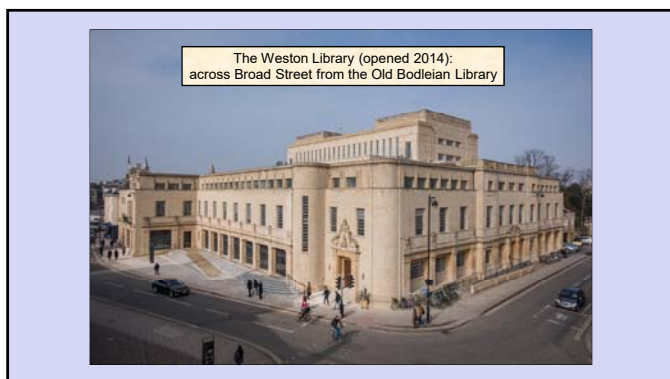
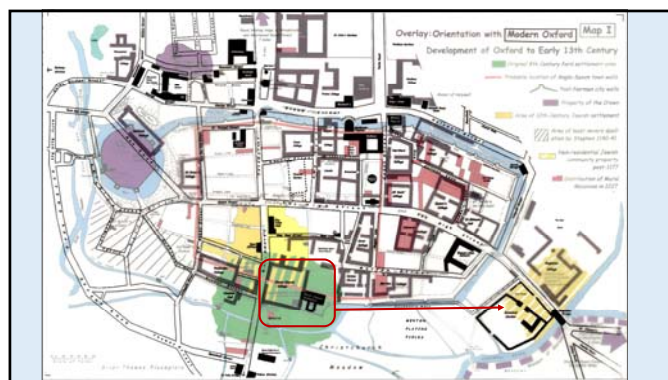
Antoine Rodolphe Chevallier (1523 – 1572)



Thomas Bodley  
(1545 – 1613)











Cambridge  
University  
Library  
(C.U.L.)



Cambridge – July 2017

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Rutgers University  
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25 February 2018

