

organization ideas and arguments to make sense of the past. Hoppit's preference is laudable as long as new and alternative ideas emerge from the full consideration of the data. Statements like that in chapter 6, "that localities and regions came to bear the imprint of different types of specific economic legislation and that these were sometimes pretty easily enacted, but sometimes not" (179–80), certainly exhibit a judicious tone. But they at best leave the significance of such a judgement unspecified or—at worst—state the obvious. If simple counting is Hoppit's tribute to the political arithmeticians of old, his book is part homage to the hesitant legislators they sought to influence.

William Pettigrew
 University of Kent
w.pettigrew@kent.ac.uk

KATHY LAVEZZO. *The Accommodated Jew: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016. Pp. 374. \$65.00 (cloth).
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The stereotype of the wandering Jew, characterizing a diasporic people constantly on the move, fitting in nowhere, representing dispersal and instability, is quite familiar and dates to the seventeenth century. But according to Kathy Lavezzo, its opposite, the grounded, static Jew, tied to his home, domesticity, and privacy, is much older. The association of the Jew with the built environment, specifically stone, flourished in English anti-Semitic texts from the early medieval period through the seventeenth century. *The Accommodated Jew* is the object of this fascinating study brought to life through the vivid analysis of well-known texts by the Venerable Bede, Chaucer, John Marlowe, and John Milton, coupled with authors less well known to non-specialists but important in substantiating and contextualizing the cultural context. Lavezzo's invigorating and original readings of these texts is complemented by maps and images that make her interpretations visible to her readers and reveal the connections among these varied sources as well as their contradictory implications.

Lavezzo demonstrates that the English correlation of the Jew with the built environment existed before the first hysterical and unfounded accusations of ritual murder or boy martyr libel in Norwich in 1144. And these anti-Semitic beliefs did not rely on the presence of Jews in England: they began before Jews first came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066 and they persisted after the expulsion of the Jews by Edward I in 1290. These anti-Semitic "fictions," Lavezzo claims, "at times enjoyed real world agency, affecting the lives of historical Jews" (6). Lavezzo argues that the analysis of these texts "teaches us about the heterogeneity of Christian notions of identity and interaction, and the presence of contingencies and entanglements that give us some hope for the future" (7). These anti-Semitic fantasies afforded their authors and the cultures that produced them a means by which to navigate their relationship with England's emerging mercantile culture and urban commerce.

Lavezzo's focus on the spatial manifestation of these anti-Semitic texts gives her book its coherence and its power. The comparison of Jews to stone attributes to them stubbornness, imperceptiveness, and inhumanity. Like hard, insentient stone, Jews were considered immovable, carnal, fleshly. These texts dilate on the hidden, secretive, and dangerous Jewish domestic as the site of supposed Jewish anti-Christian violence like attacks on the host and the statue of Mary, desecration of the crucifix, and ritual murder. The analogy opens a discussion of Jewish resistance to Christian teachings and conversion, a Jewish materialism and literal interpretation that closes off the Christian message and precludes the realization of Christian hopes for supersession.

Lavezzo opens the book in the Anglo-Saxon period with an examination of work by the Venerable Bede (673–735) and the poet Cynewulf. Each of these writers struggles with the proximity of Christianity and Judaism while asserting the certainty of Christian supersession. Beside their admiration for ancient Israel and their jealousy of biblical Judaism's intimacy with the divine, each condemns Jewish carnality and materialism. Lavezzo's reading brings out the authors' denunciation of worldly behaviors and values they observe around them in a society as yet uninhabited by Jews.

Subsequent chapters focus on post-Conquest England, in which a small but prominent Jewish community lived. In chapter 2 she examines Thomas of Monmouth's ritual murder libel in twelfth-century Norwich. Again, Lavezzo reads her texts with a keen eye for the way they depict the Jewish home as a hidden space of secrecy and violence. Ultimately her interpretation shows that these writings are fraught with anxiety about urban space and its disorderly, criminal, and uncontained nature.

The next three chapters examine Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*, Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (1461), and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1589). These texts, produced after the expulsion of the Jews from England, retain their preoccupation with and their suspicion of Jewish spaces, associating them with filth and corruption. In addition to their anti-Semitic themes, Lavezzo's readings demonstrate quite clearly how the Jew functioned as a construct through which English culture negotiated its growing commercial economy and worried over the implications of money, profit, and trade for Christian unity, purity, and spirituality. In the final chapter she revisits the seventeenth-century debates about readmission and the profound ambivalence they express about the presence of Jews in England. Alongside the explicit appeals for and against readmission by Menasseh ben Israel and William Prynne, Lavezzo puts John Milton's closet drama *Samson Agonistes* (1671). The Coda features Charles Dickens, the infamous Fagin, and a correspondence between Dickens and the Jewish woman, Eliza Davis, who bought Dickens's home. Davis criticized the author's anti-Semitic depiction and may have influenced the portrayal of the Jewish character in a subsequent Dickens novel.

Lavezzo's book is full of surprises. Just as her reader thinks she's landed on a singular interpretation, Lavezzo takes a turn to complicate and problematize her reading and provide yet another line of argumentation that showcase the authors' multivalent use of the Jew as a palimpsest. Many of the texts criticize problems of urbanization, crime, commercialism, and greed, problems with England's larger society that have very little to do with Jews. These "Representations of the accommodated Jew thus reveal both an offensive politics of rejection and an ideological embrace of the Jew as a tool for accommodating the English to their messy urban materialisms" (248).

Lavezzo makes a powerful claim that rather than offering imaginative resolutions to historical problems, literary texts "offer complex intensifications of that very problem," in this case presenting it as a "multidimensional, irresolvable ambivalence of both Jews and Christians endeavoring to understand identity along spatial lines" (247). Here Lavezzo makes an insistent argument for the relevance of literary texts and the powerful force their analysis can bring to our understandings of culture and society. At this time, when we face so many multidimensional, irresolvable problems Lavezzo's book reminds us of the importance of humanistic inquiry and the ways it can help us understand or at least ask pressing questions of the cultural artifacts we produce and consume.

Dana Rabin
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
drabin@illinois.edu