The origins of this paper are twofold: an interest in the way in which religious discourses were established and deployed rhetorically in seventeenth-century England; and a life-long habit of using Donne as a lens through which to view 17th century culture. From Donne’s sermons one can usually identify the hotly contested words of his society’s religious discourse. And, in fact, his sermons uncover his century’s obsession for applying religious labels of exclusion and opprobrium, while they expose stress points in the English Church of the early 17th century resulting from that institution’s rhetorical formation in opposition to competing Christian confessions. Foremost among these, of course, is Catholicism, but the anti-papist label alone is not sufficient to explain the temper of the Jacobean pulpit. By the Jacobean period, the anti-papist rhetoric that had defined the institution as initially ‘not-Catholic’ had to make room for censure of home-grown enemies – puritans, Arminians, Calvinists, recusants, separatists. Anti-papist sentiments expressed in sermons came to be allied with anti-Arminian rhetoric, marking the association between Arminian doctrines of universal grace and the Catholic emphasis on human will in salvation. During this time the term ‘puritan’ also became a rhetorical pejorative.

Anti-Arminian and anti-puritan rhetoric, as violent as it was, however, was directed towards those within a Protestant communion. Anti-sectarian comments, while never as sustained or extensive, occurred in published sermons across the religious spectrum. James’s own published rhetoric had cast papists and puritans (or, more accurately, recusants and non-conforming puritans) as polar opposites, in order to separate extremists from the majority of conforming members of the Church of England. Donne, whose vision of the Church of England was inclusive, adopted the puritan-papist rhetoric modeled by King James to exclude only the most extreme separatists, allowing the possibility of salvation,
Jeanne Shami

unlike many of his contemporaries, to an unusually broad number of variously conforming consciences.¹

Donne’s own rhetorical strategies – especially when set against those of more conventional preachers – reveal his dissatisfaction with these controversial languages of exclusion, his suspicion of identity politics, and his vision of an inclusive institutionalized religion for England. Donne typically seizes the rhetorical initiative, effectively dismantling the power of contested polemical terms of exclusion, and replacing them with definitions that are tactically inclusive – both politically and ethically. Whether that inclusive vision extended beyond Protestantism to embrace Jews (however understood by Donne) remains to be determined, but this paper will begin to explore how at least one of Donne’s sermons reveals the pressures that its Jewish roots placed upon the early-modern Church of England. Moreover, it will place those comments in the context of his other published comments on Jews and Judaism, particularly as these developed in his sermons.²

What has been elided in discussions of the character of the Jacobean pulpit is how Donne and other divines defined their religion in relation to Judaism, and the degree to which anti-Jewish rhetoric and thought informed their vision of the institutional identity of their Church. Given the origins of Christianity in Judaism and the early modern reliance on

¹ See my John Donne and Conformity in Crisis in the Late Jacobean Pulpit, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 30-1, 80-9; D. Doerksen, Conforming to the Word, Lewisberg 1997, p. 22. Daniel Boyarin argues that both Church Fathers and Rabbis contributed to the development of ‘heresiology’, the practice of establishing religious identity by distinguishing between who was in and who was out. He notes as well that there is ‘a real dysmmetry between a reading of that difference from within Christianity or from within Judaism. While Christianity finally configures Judaism as a different religion, Judaism itself … refuses to make that call, so that seen from that perspective the difference between Christianity and Judaism is not so much a difference between two religions as a difference between a religion and an entity that refuses to be one’, Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity, Philadelphia 2004, pp. 7-8.

² I am aware of Achsah Guibbory’s caution that inclusive language was not necessarily tolerant, and endorse her practice of reading sensitively to interpret religious difference. ‘It would be wrong’, she says, ‘to think that the emphasis on unity or the perception of a universal religious impulse necessarily entailed a charitable reading of religious difference. We should not misread a seventeenth-century vocabulary of inclusion as expressing late twentieth-century ideas of tolerance, pluralism, and diversity’; Ceremony and Community, Cambridge 1998, p. 108.
the traditions and scholarly expertise of Jewish scholars, this is a large gap in current scholarship, a fact recognized by Bernard Glassman as early as 1975, but unheeded nonetheless. As Achsah Guibbory has observed: ‘The virulently anti-Catholic rhetoric of militant Protestant discourse is well-known, but the anti-Judaic rhetoric is less well recognized’. Of course Judaism posed many problems – both polemical and confessional – for post-Reformation English divines. These problems included bitter controversy over Biblical interpretation of texts from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, shared by both Christians and Jews. Crucially, many reformers recognized and valued Jewish linguistic and interpretive traditions, even as they used that knowledge to advance metaphorical and prophetic interpretations of texts that Jews understood literally and historically. Chanita Goodblatt has done more than any other scholar to enrich our understanding of John Donne’s standing as one such Christian Hebraist. In her reading, Donne’s preaching intertwines Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, often evoking the ‘authority of Jewish exegesis’. Other problems were posed by controversies over church ceremony. Early-

3 B. Glassman, in Anti-Semitic Stereotypes Without Jews, Detroit 1975, writes: ‘It is unfortunate that the students of this period of history have failed to appreciate the importance of Christian sermonic material in understanding the image of the Jew in the mind of the English people. Throughout the period of time covered in this book [1290-1700], sermons were an important means of shaping public opinion’ (p. 10). Glassman concludes that Catholics, Anglicans, and puritans alike ‘repeated from their pulpits the stock anti-Jewish sentiments of the past. In many instances the Jews were mentioned only indirectly to emphasize the superiority of some Christian principle. Yet, the cumulative effect of these derogatory references was considerable, especially as this blended into an already rich anti-Jewish folklore’ (p. 153).


modern controversies over ceremony exacerbated anti-Jewish sentiment primarily by associating Judaism with the carnal idolatry of Roman Catholicism. As Achsah Guibbory explains: ‘Defenders of ceremony [like Donne, Herbert, Herrick] emphasized the continuity between the Jewish temple, with its priestly service, and the ecclesiastical order and worship of the English church. Puritan critics of ceremonies, however, drew a sharp line between the supposedly “carnal” Jewish worship, with its material altars and sacrifices, and the spiritual Christian worship in the temple of the heart’.7 With evidence such as this indicating that Donne used Jewish sources and respected their ceremonies, Chanita Goodblatt’s question becomes all the more pressing: ‘How can Donne’s often anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic attitudes be reconciled with his constant use of their knowledge?’8

Although many historical moments might show how Donne adopts or transforms prevalent anti-Jewish sentiments in his work, I will focus in this essay on one occasion in 1621 involving the lawyer Sir Henry Finch, Bishop William Laud, and possibly John Donne. The incident involved an extraordinary document – written by Finch but published anonymously – predicting the restoration of the Jews to a temporal homeland, the culmination of what some historians have called an unmistakable philo-Semitic tendency in English religious and intellectual life in the early 17th century.9 Anxiety over pro-Jewish tendencies – expressed amidst a general lack of experience with Judaism or practicing Jews – is evident in numerous prosecutions for Judaizing that occurred just prior to the incident I am about to describe.10 The charge of Judaizing had broader applications than simply to Saturday-Sabbatarians, and although it probably originated in ‘the simple desire

7 Guibbory (above, n. 2), pp. 74-75.
8 Goodblatt (above, no. 5), p. 236.
10 Shapiro (above, n. 4), p. 42, claims that the view that there were no Jews in England is a myth, but a powerful one. He gathers the arguments and archival sources relating to this subject in pp. 68-76. Donne’s friend, Thomas Coryate, for example, expressed no surprise at encountering an ‘English Jew’, one Dunstan Ames (or Anes) on his travels to Constantinople. Ames had been born in London and lived there until he was thirty (Shapiro, p. 71), part of a Portuguese Marrano circle well-established in London.
to return to the purest possible forms and sources of God’s worship’,¹¹ could be carried to limits that made mainstream Christians anxious. Francis Kett, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for example, was burned alive in the castle ditch at Norwich in 1589 for his claim that Jesus, a good man, was currently in Jerusalem gathering the faithful and that all God’s people should join him there.¹² In fact, numerous prosecutions for Judaizing occurred just prior to the incident I am about to describe. As late as 1612, two so-called Arians died at the stake for teaching views that approximated Jewish views on the nature of God. Thomas Fuller claimed that the Book of Sports was issued in 1617 to suppress the ‘dregs of Judaism’ forced upon Christians from the popular pulpits.¹³ And James I worried that ‘fanciful conceit[s] savouring of Judaism’ were flourishing at Cambridge in 1619.¹⁴ The followers of the puritan, John Traske, went so far on the path of literalism that they were imprisoned in 1618-20 on the charge of Judaizing.¹⁵ Traske subsequently published a tract recanting his views of the Sabbath and the distinction of meats, stating that ‘for my part I have resolued, for time to come, to leaue Kingdomes to the guidance of Kings themselues, and Churches to the gouernment of Chiefe Church-men’.¹⁶ As Katz has observed, however, ‘The Traskites and the official

¹² Prest, p. 109. Franz Kobler, ‘Sir Henry Finch (1558-1625) and the First English Advocates of the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine’, Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society 16 (1951), p. 106, notes that Andrew Willet’s Latin tract on the Restoration of the Jews, the first known one by an English author, was written in response to this execution. Willet, unlike Kett, rejected the idea of Israel’s earthly restoration and dismissed as fable the reunification of the lost tribes of Israel. Willet, and after him Thomas Draxe, saw ‘conversion’ as the essence of this calling of the Jews. Thomas Draxe, in The Worldes Resurection, or the generall calling of the Jewes, London 1608, looked forward to the conversion of the Jews in the last days but not to their recovery of the Holy Land.
¹³ T. Fuller, The Church-History of Britaine, London 1656, 10:76.
¹⁵ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, in: N. E. McClure ed., The Letters of John Chamberlain, Philadelphia 1932, laments the ‘number of foolish followers he hath in this towne and some other parts’ (2:65), and reports that James himself followed their case, and was amused by their view that it was unlawful to eat black puddings (2:140n).
reaction to their Judaizing opinions provided the first public forum for a debate on the literal interpretation of the Mosaic law and the nature of Christian-Jewish relations in over three hundred years.17

The incident to which I want to turn – an incident with political as well as confessional ramifications – centers upon a work by Sir Henry Finch, a zealous protestant layman whose tutor at Cambridge, Laurence Chaderton, had encouraged him to study Hebrew. Finch, sergeant-at-law to James I, and author of two legal texts, published his most controversial work – and his last – *The Worlds Great Restauration, or, The Calling of the Jewes* in March of 1621.18 The work was published anonymously by William Gouge, who alleged that Finch had not identified himself as author out of modesty. Prest speculates that ‘it was the disasters suffered by the Protestant cause in Europe during the opening stages of the Thirty Years War, and the desire to influence the Parliament called in January 1621 that finally emboldened Gouge and Finch to authorize the printing’ of this volume.19 The volume of scriptural exegesis foretold the imminent return of the twelve tribes of Israel to the Holy Land and the establishment of a universal Judaeo-Christian empire. In this book, based on literal interpretation of key biblical prophecies, Finch emphasized that the Jews will set up not ‘the legall ceremonies, but … the true spirituall worship and seruice of God’.20 Moreover, the regathered Jews will be ruled not by ‘Christ the Lord’ (p. 160) but by ‘a gouernour which the Iewes shall haue set vp from among themselues, opposed to a forraine gouernour’ (p. 163). Kobler notes that Finch’s biblical exegesis of the prophecies ‘betrays the accuracy of a trained legal mind’.21 Consequently, Finch is adamant that these apocalyptic hopes ‘are not allegories’, but meant ‘really and literally of the Iewes … Wherefore wee need not be afraid to averre and mainteyne that one day they shall come to Ierusalem againe, be

17 Katz (above, n. 9), p. 18.
18 While the work was published in 1621, it had been entered in the Stationers’ Register fifteen months before. See Prest (above, n. 11), p. 111 and n. 2.
19 Prest, p. 112.
20 H. Finch, *The Worlds Great Restauration*, London 1621, p. 102. Further references are from this edition and will be indicated in parentheses within the text of the essay.
21 Kobler (above, n. 12), p. 113.
Kings and chief Monarches of the earth, sway and gouerne all, for the glory of Christ that shall shine among them’ (pp. 6-7). It is clear that Finch intended all of this to be understood literally of an ideal Jewish kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital; as he says: ‘Where Israel, Judah, Tsion, Jerusalem, &c. are named in this argument, the Holy Ghost meaneth not the spirituall Israel, or Church of God collected of the Gentiles, no nor of the Jewes and Gentiles both (for each of these haue their promises seuerally and apart) but Israel properly descended out of Iacob’s lownes’ (p. 6). As Kobler concludes: ‘The perfect theocracy, the ideal of the epoch, is here visualized and projected by the theological lawyer into a redeemed Palestine’.22

Finch’s book addressed two audiences: fellow puritans who could identify with the millenarian hopes of the Jews, and the Jews themselves, to whom he promises ‘gates … made of pearles and … streeetes of pure gold. All the Kings of the Gentiles shall bring their glory into thy citty, and fall downe before thee’ (sig. A3'). To his fellow puritans, the book was intended to offer spiritual comfort and expectation, even as the religious backsliding of the Israelites was offered as a cautionary tale to Protestants harking back to Catholic ceremonies: ‘Their sinnes, first, consociating with strangers and making a mixture of their religion with the superstitions of the Gentiles. They neither hold them to the sincerity of Gods service, nor to the meere toyes and fooleries of the heathen; but frame to themselves a mingle mangle out of both’ (p. 207).23 Significantly, Finch’s tract marked ‘the break with the practice of ascribing the curses of the prophecies to the Jews but the blessings to the Christians and the Church. It means that Jewish history is again understood as a unity stretching from the biblical times until the present

22 Kobler (above, n. 12), p. 115.
23 In his sermon on the Feast of the Circumcision, Jan 1, 1625, Donne ties backsliding, circumcision, and idolatry by arguing that circumcision was a ‘Sacrament’ given by God ‘to defend them thereby against dangerous alliances, which might turn their hearts from God’. He speaks specifically here of the commandment against ‘foraigne Marriages, or any company of strange Women’, a practice that God foresaw would lead to ‘that extreme Idolatry, that grosse idolatry, which that Nation would come to’. See The Sermons of John Donne, G. Potter and E. Simpson eds., 10 volumes, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1959-62, 6:192. Further references to Donne’s sermons are taken from this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text of the essay. In Conformity in Crisis (above, n. 1), pp. 259-60, I discuss this sermon in the context of negotiations for a French match for Charles.
Jeanne Shami

and future days. The Jews living in the Diaspora are being looked upon as a distinct nation, the destinies of which are firmly determined in Scripture and ruled by the same divine purpose as in the biblical era. Above all, their final deliverance will consist in their spiritual redemption and incidentally in their restoration to the Land of Israel’.24

However, the explicitly dangerous political resonance of the tract, perhaps more than its pro-Jewish Biblical commentary, attracted a third, unintended audience: James I. Finch denounces intemperate princes, ‘who by their grauity and wisedome should bee the stayes, and proppes of the common wealth’, and the King himself, who ‘quaffes as well as they and ioineth hands with beastly drunkards … [who] ought to make clean the commonwealth … But hee sitteth still and letteth all alone’ (p. 206).25 Finch’s book was condemned by Convocation and the High Commission (for subversion and for being ‘too servilely addicted to the letter’),26 and its author briefly imprisoned in the Fleet. According to a contemporary joke, he ‘so enlarged the future amplitude of the Jewish State that thereby he occasioned a confining to himself’.27

The consequences for Finch were not, in fact, severe. Despite the fact that Finch was imprisoned without trial, Prest finds the official reaction ‘surprisingly restrained’.28 After a brief time in prison, Finch made a formal written disavowal of this opinion, was released from prison after some weeks, and resumed his law practice, remaining king’s serjeant (his patent renewed at Charles I’s accession) and serving as legal adviser to the newly appointed Lord Keeper, Bishop Williams.29 Gouge, in fact, suffered a more extensive jail term of nine weeks.30

25 T. Fuller, A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, London 1650, book 5, chapter 3 says of Finch: ‘His expressions (indiscreetly uttered, or uncharitably construed) import[ed], that all Christian Princes should surrender their power as homagers to the temporall supreme Empire of the Jewish nation’ (p. 194).
26 Quoted in Prest (above, n. 11), p. 114.
27 Fuller (above, n. 25), book 5, chapter 3, p. 194.
28 Prest, p. 114.
29 Prest emphasizes that Williams’s appointment of Finch showed that lawyers were increasingly able to insist on their professional autonomy, ‘distinguishing both the code they professed and the manner in which they practised it from all other areas of human concern’ (p. 115).
The controversy sparked by Finch’s treatise led to polemical focus on the Jews and their restoration in London in the spring and summer of 1621. On a Bill concerning the Sabbath, the House of Lords asked that the name be changed to the Lord’s Day on the grounds that ‘People do nowadays do so much incline to take hold of words of Judaism, as did lately Traske and his adherents’. Sir Edward Coke spoke in Parliament on this bill, arguing that the name be amended to the Lord’s Day because ‘many were inclined to Judaism and dream that the Jews shall have regiment and kings must lay down their crowns to their feet’. Finch’s tract was uppermost in the minds of John Pym and Sir Thomas Barrington as well, the latter even referring to ‘the Jews ruling over the world’. Joseph Mede, despite his own attraction to the millennial ideas published there, reported that James felt threatened by the prospect of the Jews bearing rule in the land of Judah. Although he thinks that belief in this prospect might be a sin, Mede assents to it. Moreover, he quotes ‘verbatim’ (as he claims) those passages from Finch’s tract that disturbed the King. John Prideaux, Regius professor of divinity at Oxford, made a learned assault upon the book in a Latin discourse entitled ‘De Judaeorum Vocatione’. Kobler translates its opening as follows: ‘It is known to nearly all, how, amidst our other calamities, Judaism has lately prevailed, to the disgrace of divines and the scandal of the weak. Three opinions are flying about on the subject:

31 E. Coke, Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons, in 1620 and 1621, Collected by a Member of that House, Oxford 1766, 2:97, May 24, 1621.
32 Kobler, p. 117.
33 Kobler, p. 117.
34 J. Mede to M. Stuteville, April 17, 1621, in: T. Birch ed., The Court and Times of James I, London 1849, 2:250-51: ‘The Jews, and all Israel, shall return to their land and ancient seats, conquer their foes, have their soil more fruitful than ever. They shall erect a glorious church in the land of Judah itself, and bear rule far and near. We need not be afraid to aver and maintain, that one day they shall come to Jerusalem again; be kings and chief monarchs of the earth; sway and govern all, for the glory of Christ that shall shine amongst them. And that it is Lactantius saith, lib. vii., chap. 15: “The Romans’ name (I will speak it, because it must one day be) shall be taken from the earth, and the empire shall return to Asia. And again shall the east bear dominion, and the west be in subjection”. In another place: “Asia and Egypt, all those large and vast countries, the whole tract of the east and south, shall be converted to Christ; the chief sway and sovereignty remaining with the Jews. All nations shall honour them”. Some say, “the king says he shall be a pure king, and that he is so old he cannot tell how to do his homage at Jerusalem”’.

37
Jeanne Shami

that of the madmen, who think that the legal ceremonies ought to be recalled, that of the dreamers, in whose brains a Jewish monarchy-throne and the frame of a temple are floating; that of the zealots, who looking shortly for I know not what sublimated doctrine, and doctors more than angelical and seraphic from them (the Jews) when converted’.35 From there Prideaux went on to ridicule the idea of a Jewish restoration as ‘part of the scheme of a Jewish supremacy’,36 and on June 19, William Laud condemned this messianic promise in a sermon commemorating the king’s birthday. What Chamberlain dismissed as an ‘ydle conceit’ full of ‘many foolish and fantastical (yf not impious) opinions’,37 had nonetheless gained the attention of some of the most important figures in the political, legal, and ecclesiastical establishment.

William Laud comments specifically on the issue of a Jewish homeland and on Finch’s tract in his sermon on Psalm 122: 6, 7: ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; let them prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walles, and prosperity within thy Palaces’.38 Laud undoubtedly chose the text for the support it gave to the absolute integration of Church and State: ‘Therefore when you sit downe to consult, you must not forget the Church: And when we kneele downe to pray, wee must not forget the State: Both are but one Jerusalem … And both so neere allied, that the one, the Church, can neuer subsist but in the other, the Common-wealth’ (p. 5). Laud’s text also commends prayers for both State and Church, and, specifically, prayers for peace. Praying for peace with all men even includes praying for the impossible, he says – conversion of heathens, Turks, Jews, Heretics, schismatics, and superstitious men. Laud’s list clearly identifies Jews as outside the spectrum of religious belief and practice acceptable within the Church of England, guilty by association with these other despised groups.

Laud’s digression on Finch occurs within this polemical context. The Jerusalem that Laud has figured as the perfect integration of Church and State, and epitomized in the person of James I – ‘our Salomon’ –

35 Kobler, p. 118.
36 Kobler, p. 118.
37 Chamberlain to Carleton (above, n. 15), 2:391.
38 W. Laud, A Sermon Preached Before His Maiesty, On Tvesday the nineteenth of June, at Wansted. Anno Dom. 1621, London 1621. All references are taken from this version and will be included in parentheses in the text.
who was ‘borne to vs, and for the good and wel-fare of both State and Church’, is contrasted with Finch’s ‘strange Jerusalem. Not the old one, which is literall in my text … nor that which succeeded it, Jerusalem of Iew and Gentile conuerted: for which wee must pray. But a Jerusalem of gold and precious stones … which shall be built for them againe vpon earth in greater glory than euer it was’ (p. 23). Laud finds Finch’s prophecies for the Jews unimaginable. ‘So it is not now sufficient that the Iewes shall be (in Gods good time) conuerted to the faith of Christ … But these conuerted Jewes must meet out of all Nations: the ten Tribes, as well as the rest, and become a distinct, and a most flourishing Nation againe in Jerusalem. And all the Kings of the Gentiles shall doe homage to their King. Good God, what a fine people have we here? Men in the Moone’ (pp. 23-24). The claim is so ludicrous to Laud that he dismisses it as not worth a ‘settled confutation’ (p. 25). He does not desire prayer for this Jerusalem, and cites Jeremiah 19:11 (I will breake this City and this people, as one breaks a Potters vessel, that cannot be made whole again) as his proof that this earthly Jerusalem will never happen and is not meant here (p. 25). Laud adds that it is against received judgment that the New Jerusalem will be a Church upon earth, of Jew or of Gentile, and challenges the status of Jews as a distinct people since their Babylonian captivity. For Laud, the Jewish mingling of theirs with other religions, is not reversible: ‘No: they degenerated, and liued mixed with other Nations that captiued them, till not onely their Tribes were confounded; but their name also vtterly lost, for almost two thousand yeeres since’ (p. 26). Contemptuously, Laud quips that he ‘cannot tell here whether it be Balaam that prophesieth, or the Beast hee rode on’ (pp. 26-27). However, his greatest scorn is reserved for the vain belief that the King of the Gentiles will serve the King of Jerusalem. He says that the hatching of such monstrous opinions will make the papists triumph, concluding that they, at least, ‘keepe the Frensie locked vp: and we publish it in Print’ (p. 28). Laud concludes this digression by leaving Finch and his Jesuit supporters ‘to out-dreame the Iewes’ (p. 28).

Whether Donne contributed to this cultural moment is less certain. Nabil Matar has suggested that Donne’s two-part undated churching sermon for the Countess of Bridgewater can be assigned to 1621,
based on the first sermon’s content: the restoration of the Jews.\textsuperscript{39} Potter and Simpson were undecided as to whether the sermons were preached in 1621 or 1623, both possible years, in which the Countess of Bridgewater had given birth (5:13-15). But, Matar sees this sermon as contributing directly to controversy sparked by Finch’s tract, thereby joining ‘the London ecclesiastical chorus that was repudiating Finch’s opinions’.\textsuperscript{40} In the sermon Donne argued that God’s gift of the land of Canaan to the Israelites had been conditional on obedience, and urged the impossibility of this feared kingdom of the Jewish messiah. For Matar, ‘the affirmation that the Jews were too sinful to establish a monarchy superior to England and Scotland bluntly undercut the millenarian proposal’ of Finch’s book.\textsuperscript{41} That the churching occasion did not lend itself readily to such a discussion confirms for Matar that Donne was using the sermon for political advancement. According to Matar, ‘Donne knew that preachers with ecclesiastical power served as defenders of the Anglican establishment; he also knew that a criticism of Finch could advance his career. And in 1621, Donne was looking for suitable employment: he had returned a year earlier from Germany and was in London seeking church appointment’.\textsuperscript{42}

While it is possible to argue that the subject matter and its treatment make the 1621 date credible, neither Potter and Simpson, nor Matar, has untangled how the occasion of the Countess’s churching, where presumably one sermon would have been preached, became the two sermons on the text we now have. In the Folio, the heading (preached at the churching of the Countess of Bridgewater) was attached only to the second sermon, the one which applies to Christians in particular, and which makes specific mention of the churching occasion. So the question of when the first one was preached – the one that treats of a Jewish homeland – is worth asking. Potter and Simpson think that the Jewish part of the exposition (which makes up the entire first sermon) was probably condensed for the preaching occasion, since it was not suitable to the event. Even if that were true, however, the question

\textsuperscript{40} Matar, p. 448.
\textsuperscript{41} Matar, p. 448.
\textsuperscript{42} Matar, p. 448.
remains of when and why Donne expanded those paragraphs into the long exposition we now have.

Donne’s interest in the topic of the restoration of the Jews to a temporal homeland subsequent to their conversion is evident already in several sermons preached earlier in the year. On February 16, 1620/21, preaching before the King at Whitehall on 1 Timothy 3:16, for example, Donne exposes the Jewish error regarding the ‘mystery of godliness’ which is supposedly ‘without controversie’. Of the belief that God was manifested in the flesh, Donne writes: ‘The Jews believe it not at all’, a fact that Donne links directly to their present condition. As he explains: ‘Since out of their Prophets they confess, that when the Messias shall be manifested, they must for a time suffer many calamities in this world; if their Messias should be manifested now … what could they suffer? They say they must suffer banishment; … whither shall that Nation be banish’d, which is already in banishment and dispersion? … let the Jews shew me a State, a Kingdom, a Common-wealth, a Government, Magistrates, Judicatures, Merchandise, and Armies; let them shew something to loose for a Messias, and then let them look for a Messias’ (3:212-13). A sermon preached on Trinity Sunday at Lincoln’s Inn that year reiterates that ‘I may know that there is a Messias promised, and yet be without comfort, in a fruitlesse expectation; The Jews are so in their dispersion’ (3:269).

If, in fact, Donne’s sermons are responding to Finch, their contribution is both more serious and more engaged than Laud’s trivializing and derogatory comments. Both of Donne’s sermons are preached on Micah 2:10: ‘Arise and depart, for here is not your rest’. The first treats the question of ‘rest’ as it applies literally and historically to the Israelites, while the second applies this interpretation to sinners in future ages, and then the consummation of all – the rising at the general judgment. In the first sermon, Donne interprets the text with regard to the Jews literally. The word ‘arise’ is a rebuke for the fact that they have fallen from their former dignity. The same word also shows that though they remain secure and stubborn in their sins, God will not allow them to rest in this false contentment. For Donne, the phrase ‘for here is not your rest’ also shows a continuation of God’s anger to them; the word ‘for’ reveals the inexorableness of his decree. So their rebuke is aggravated, first, in that they lose their hard-won
Jeanne Shami

rest, and secondly in that ‘they must have no Rest, Here; not there; not in the Land of Promise it selfe’ (5:186).

Unlike Laud, Donne takes seriously the special covenant between God and the Jews, a contract ‘in the familiariety of a particular Religion’ sealed at first with ‘temporall blessing’. But, it is here that Donne speaks directly against the Zionist vision of Finch’s text by adding that despite God’s exceptional tolerance of their ‘spirituall fornications’ and his many blessings and promises to the Jews, God did not raise them here to restore them to their former dignity (5:187). According to Donne, the Jews departed into captivity worse than the one they now endured, and suffered God’s heaviest judgment: ‘And therefore when God threatens here, that there shall be no rest, that is, none of his rest, he would take from them their Law, their Sacrifices, their Religion, in which he was pleas’d, and rested gratious towards them, he will change their Religion’ (5:193).

The ‘rest’ lost to the Jews is both historical and spiritual, according to Donne: the loss of a homeland as well as loss of good conscience, what Donne calls ‘the testimony of their consciences, that they had perform’d their part, their Conditions, so, that they might rely upon Gods promises, of a perpetuall rest in the Land of Canaan’ (5:194). Donne here inserts the notion of a conditional contract, one that absolves God of injustice in breaking his oath that their inheritance would be permanent, and places responsibility for the apparent breaking of this oath on the Jews themselves, who failed to meet the condition of obedience, and who are denied both literal and spiritual ‘rest’ as a consequence. This is how the first sermon ends. ‘This then was their case; God had sworne to them an inheritance permanently there, but upon condition of their obedience’ (5:196).

The second sermon readily applies this situation to that of the Christian sinner, but, perhaps not surprisingly, the hopelessness of the situation of the Israelites is inverted. The sinner is told to arise and to leave off his habit or bed of sin, because carnal rest conduces not to that ‘better rest’ (5:199) which God has ordained for him. Whereas to the Jews this call to arise and depart was the heaviest vexation, a departure into a ‘heavy captivity’, (5:197) for the sinner it is God’s mild way of rebuking: ‘by bidding them arise, he chides them for falling, by presenting the exaltation and exultation of a peacefull
conscience, he brings them to a foresight, to what miserable distractions, and distortions of the soul, a habit of sin will bring them to’ (5:201). The call to arise is a call to depart from sinful actions into habits contrary to those. And though even for the sinner who rises from his sins there is no rest in this world, he can look forward to ‘that Hierusalem’ which is promised in the resurrection. Shapiro comments on Donne’s treatment of ‘rest’ in this sermon that it is connected to the fate of the Wandering Jew, one of the cultural traces of a legend that made its way into England as early as 1612. As he puts it: ‘Donne extrapolated from this scriptural verse the lesson that the Jews are condemned to wander, never to resettle in their homeland’.43 Using this example, Shapiro observes: ‘The Wandering Jew stood for the whole Jewish nation: unassimilable, unchanged, living witness to the historical truths of Christianity, an example of the severity of the punishment the Jews had suffered for rejecting Christ, condemned to wander until the end of time’.44 While for the Jews, ‘no rest’ is taken literally to mean continual dispersion and guilt, then, for Christians no ‘rest’ is taken metaphorically to mean no ‘resting’ in a habit of sin – in fact, no ‘rest’ means resurrection and eternal life.

Finch’s tract, then, is a treatise of visionary Zionism, but also a polemical critique of the Jacobean church and state. Laud’s is an extended defense of the Church and State, and only secondarily a contemptuous response to Finch’s heretical predictions. Like a contemporary sermon by John Wall,45 Laud’s sermon makes ‘Jew’ stand in for all things ‘other,’ all those of a ‘Jewish’ disposition, ‘heretics’ who include ‘shufflers in religion’, ‘Priests, Hypocrites, Jesuites, and Impostors; Romanizing Iewes, Iudaizing Romans’, all of whom ‘come as nere as Antichrist to the Diuell’ (sigs. C2’-C3’). Wall derides these metaphoric and literal Jews for the things they share: the ‘multiplicitie of their vaine traditions; they have many fables, and these seek many inventions,’ the fact that ‘they are vagabounds over the whole Earth’ and are ‘dispersed through euery Nation’ and many other common traits (sig.

43 Shapiro (above, n. 4), p. 177.
44 Shapiro, p. 178.
45 J. Wall, The Watering of Apollos, London 1625. All quotations are taken from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
C3\'). By the end of Wall’s sermon, these Jews in fact modulate into idolatrous papists. And this is also the thrust of Laud’s sermon.46

Then we have Donne. Donne’s sermon, because it denies the possibility of a temporal kingdom of the Jews (for their idolatrous disobedience), might be paraphrased to coincide with Laud’s sermon rather than Finch’s tract, to stress that no historical ‘rest’ for the Jews is prophesied. However, if in fact it can be dated to coincide with this controversy, its tone and rhetorical exposition are very different, revealing Donne’s characteristic moderation and modifying Shapiro’s claim that Jews were always depicted as ‘other’ in early modern England. It is typical of Donne, for example, to refer to Jews not as outside salvation history, but as at its origins, thereby invoking a relatively benign, but nonetheless condescending and imperialistic version of Christian universalism, with its concomitant erasure of Jewish faith and identity in a grand providential scheme that leads, inevitably, to Christ.47 In doing so he follows a teleology that leads, naturally for him, from Jewish law to Christian gospel. Occasionally, Donne refers to Jews and Gentiles as two ‘glorious Hemispheres of the World’ (7:78). Typically, however, Donne understands salvation history as a

46 See my Conformity in Crisis (above, n. 1), p. 242. Shapiro (above, n. 4), cites Donne’s sermon suggesting that the proximity of Jews to Catholicism over time ‘had contaminated Judaism with papist practices’ (p. 19). Donne is referring specifically to the Jewish custom of prayers for the dead, which savours of the ‘misdevotion, and left-handed piety’ of the Gentiles (7:169).

47 I would like to thank Greg Kneidel for his insights on this subject, and for his willingness to think some of these issues through with me. I have learned a great deal about the coercive and imperialistic aspects of Christian universalism, even in its most tolerant forms, from these discussions, and from L. Lampert’s Gender and Jewish Difference From Paul to Shakespeare, Pittsburgh 2004; J. R. Lupton’s Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology, Chicago 2005; and D. Boyarin, A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity, Berkeley 1994. Boyarin states this point clearly when he writes: ‘What will appear from the Christian perspective as tolerance, namely Paul’s willingness – indeed insistence – that within the Christian community all cultural practice is equally to be tolerated, from the rabbincic Jewish perspective is simply an eradication of the entire value system which insists that our cultural practice is our task and calling in the world and must not be abandoned or reduced to a matter of taste. The call to human Oneness, at the same time that it is a stirring call to equality, constitutes a threat as well to Jewish (or any other) difference. While it is not anti-Semitic (or even anti-Judaic) in intent, it nevertheless has had the effect of depriving continued Jewish existence of any reality or significance in the Christian economies of history’ (p. 32).
progression from nature, through the Jews, to Christianity: in another sermon, he uses the metaphor of feeding to make this point: the law of nature, he says, ‘works as a break-fast; for though there be not a full meale, there is something to stay the stomach, in the light of the nature. The second, that which God did for the Jewes in their Law, and Sacrifices, and Types, and Ceremonies, is as that Dinner, which was spoken of in the Gospel, which was plenteously prepared, but prepared for some certaine guests, that were bidden, to that Nation, and no more. … But in the third meale, Gods plenteous refection in the Christian Church, and means of salvation there’ God calls men to sup with him, and to come to his marriage supper of the lamb in heaven’ (7:301).

In many places, Donne calls the Jewish Law a schoolmaster, and contrasts Jewish ‘School-boys, always spelling and putting together Types and Figures’ with Christian graduates ‘come from the school to the University, from Grammar to Logick, to him that is Logos it self, the Word’ (8:351). While undoubtedly condescending, Donne’s comments, unlike Laud’s, do not position the Jews rhetorically or logically with heretics, Turks, and heathens, those who had only ‘a dark law, without any comment’. But unlike Christians, who have ‘the law of liberty’, the Jewish law is still ‘dimme’ and constraining. As Donne asserts: ‘The Jew’, he says, ‘had this liberty, a Law, and a Law that involv’d the Gospel; but then the Gospel was to the Jew but as a letter seal’d; and the Jew was but as the servant, who was trusted to carry the letter, as it was, seal’d, to another, to carry it to the Christian’ (8:351). Katz tells us that ‘Most Englishmen, if they thought about Jews at all, saw them as an ancient people who provided a “type” fulfilled by Christ’s mission on earth’, and Donne is no exception.48

The moderation of Donne’s contribution to the discourse of Jewish nationhood or homeland in 1621 is particularly apparent in his sustained focus on the spiritual rather than the political implications of his text. Laud’s reaction to Finch is as much a reaction to the political challenge posed by that treatise as a biblical interpretation of the texts. Its dismissive and contemptuous treatment of the notion that Jews could ever recover a homeland, handled in a digression rather than in a full-fledged refutation of the scriptural grounds, treats the idea and those who hold

48 Katz (above, n. 9), p. 100.
it as fantasies of the man in the moon. Donne, while he agrees with Laud that ‘here is not your rest’, grounds his interpretation on biblical and historical rather than on overtly political grounds. That Donne hoped to gain preferment from King James for this sermon, however, is not credible. First, there is no evidence that Donne was seeking preferment at this time. Furthermore, the sermon is not outspoken enough in its political support for James or for ecclesiastical authority (as is Laud’s). Nor is it likely that James would have heard or read it.

But, in the end, this sermon and others in which Donne comments on Jews show him to be conflicted in his attitudes. Donne did not use the term ‘Judaizer’ or its derivatives. Coleridge, however, was shocked to find Donne perpetrating the absurd slander that Jews ‘alwayes keep in readinesse the blood of some Christian, with which they anoint the body of any that dies amongst them, with these words, “If Jesus Christ were the Messiah, then may the blood of this Christian avail thee to salvation”’ (6:332). Donne finds in this ‘barbarous and inhumane custome’ a kind of ‘conditionall acknowledgement’ (6:332) that the coming of Jesus was the prophesied ‘fulnesse of time’ of his text (Galatians 4:4,5). Shapiro notes: ‘In Donne’s example, ritual murder serves both as threat to and confirmation of Christianity’, and cites evidence that this story was maintained well into the 20th century.49 Chanita Goodblatt argues that a consideration of the wider cultural anxieties about Jews and ritual murder, possibly evoked by the plague that was ravaging London, can partially temper the astonishment of Donne’s editors and readers. Jews were believed, since 1348, to have poisoned wells, causing the Plague to spread in Europe, a story that is repeated throughout the Middle Ages and well into the early modern period.50 She also circumscribes the significance of this ‘blood libel’ by noting its absence in Donne’s other plague sermons or in any other extant sermons.51 What is apparent, however, is that Donne’s accusation

49 Shapiro (above, n. 4), pp. 107, 100. A google search finds Donne’s version of the story – unique among historical accounts – in a current Egyptian anti-Semitic website.

50 See F. Fenselstein, Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830, Baltimore 1995, p. 38, for an account of the persistence of this and other stereotypes into the 19th century.

51 Goodblatt (above, n. 5), p. 230. In Masculinity, Anti-Semitism and Early Modern English Literature, Aldershot 2004, M. Bilberman suggests that Donne’s sonnet

46
here is as much a challenge to Jewish obstinacy in interpretation as to their rituals or practices, and is part of his Christian universalist understanding of the place of the Jews in God’s providential plan. What seems to have irked him specifically in this passage is that the Jews refused to admit that ‘His [Christ’s] person, his actions, his passion so distinctly prophesied, [were] so exactly accomplished, as no word being left unfulfilled, this must necessarily be a fullnesse of time’ (6:333). Kneidel observes that Donne’s use of the libel is not topical but a part of the structure of Christian universalism, moving from Jew, to Gentile, to Christian. So, the Jewish blood libel gives way to the Gentiles’ massacre of the Innocents (6:334), and then finally to the blood of Christ, spilled ‘in Execution’ of the ‘heavier law, then Jews or Romanes, the Law of his Father, and his owne eternall Decree’ (6:342). Significantly, Donne alters the libel so that it refers to final salvation more than daily ritual.52

Even when one understands that Donne’s comments can be subsumed into a Christian universalist framework, however, it is impossible to extenuate these comments, especially when it appears that Donne is using them as much for rhetorical flourish as for matter of fact. Coleridge attempted to bury these comments as part of the cultural context in which Donne preached (‘the unsifted mass of their erudition’). But even with that he cannot forego lamenting ‘that a man like Donne should have imposed on himself such a set of idle tales’ or ‘that he should have attempted to impose them on others’. He finds the whole affair both incredible and ‘melancholy’.53 And if we had only this kind of comment, we would have to conclude that Donne’s anti-Jewish attitudes were thorough and profound. Most comments, however, are

‘Spit in my face, ye Jewes’ shows him becoming ‘the instrument of his Jewish killers’ salvation’ (p. 78). Bilberman goes on to say that ‘between Donne and Coleridge Christianity changed. The consolidation of heterosexuality within the culture impeded men’s intense identification with Christ and their desire to demonize the Jew’ (p. 79). Earlier he had argued that Donne constructs a Christian devotion that is ‘utterly masculine’ (p. 78) within a premodern subjectivity that is sexually ambiguous and androgynous, as Debora Shuger has shown. See her The Renaissance Bible, Berkeley 1994, p. 191. The similarity between treatments of Jews and of women is the subject of Lampert’s book (above, n. 47).

52 G. Kneidel, private communication, 23 February 2006.

Jeanne Shami

more ambivalent. In a sermon on the Feast of the Circumcision, January 1, 1624/5, for example, he refers to circumcision as a frivolous, obscene, incommunicative, and needless practice, but in the next breath as a ‘stigmaticall marke’, a ‘Sacrament’ of the Jews (6:192). Shapiro emphasizes that for Donne and others like him ‘circumcision once again veers perilously close to the idea of a (partial) sexual castration and emasculation’.54 And perhaps this explains the ambivalence with which Donne discusses this practice, both as ‘absurd and unreasonable’ and as a sacrament signifying ‘dignity’ (6:193). Elsewhere, Donne reiterates this sacramental view of ‘circumcision’ (10:104) and uses ‘circumcision’ rather than ‘concision’ as a positive term to express the kind of moral distinctions necessary for salvation and the good of the Church, but distinct from the tearings of the body of divinity (through controversy), of the garment (in ceremonial disputes), and of the conscience (by cutting ourselves from the spirit of comfort ‘as may make the way to heaven too narrow for thee, or the gate of heaven too strait for thee’ [10:118]).

Again, at the dedication of the Lincoln’s Inn Chapel, Donne shows the continuities between this particular chapel and the ceremonies of both the Jews and the Christians of the primitive church to support the appropriateness of ceremonies in consecrated places. Where Jews emphasized the discontinuity between the testaments, according to Guibbory, ‘Ceremonialists [including Donne] stressed the continuity between the Old Testament types and their antitypes’.55 Donne, however, makes it clear that the ceremonial law of the Jews is deadly in that it denies Christ to be the Messiah (5:152). Interestingly, however, Donne speaks of the ceremonial law as one that applied to ‘us’ before the coming of Christ, thereby stressing once more the continuity with Jewish traditions even as he stresses the superiority of the way of the cross: ‘He put us after [our fall] into another way, over thorny hedges and ploughed Lands, through the difficulties and incumbrances of all the Ceremoniall Law’ contrasted with ‘the Crosse of Jesus Christ … that is our way now’ (2:180). And, as Achsah Guibbory has shown, Donne’s sense of God’s expansiveness, the infinite number of souls saved (6:161), sometimes extends to some ancient Jews who lived

54 Shapiro (above, n. 4), p. 120.
55 Guibbory (above, n. 2), p. 33.
before Christ, and even some later Jews whom God may bring in ‘one by one’ (6.162) though we discern not the ways and the means. The 144,000 who shall be saved, Donne notes more than once, is not to denote ‘a certain and finite number’ of Jews to be saved, but to signify ‘the greatnesse of that number, to declare the largenesse of Gods goodnesse to that people’ (8:40). An undated Whitsunday sermon reiterates that while God does not mean literally that he would have ‘all’ saved, he does mean ‘some of all sorts, some Men, some Women, some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poore’, that is, ‘some of all sorts’ (5:53).

Nonetheless, for Donne, Jews are always seen as grammar-school boys to the Christians’ university graduates, their Law a ‘dinner’ to the Christian sacramental banquet. They are subsumed as part of Christian history, even as their special status as God’s chosen people is acknowledged and its loss lamented. And, Donne refers only rarely to contemporary rather than to historical Jews. When he does, it is to speak of the lamentable condition in which they exist in their dispersion: ‘I may truly say of the Jewes Affliction, he that knoweth them, is ignorant of nothing that this world can threaten. For to that which the present authority of the Romanes inflicted upon them, our Schools have added upon their posterities; that they are as slaves to Christians, and their goods subject to spoile, if the Lawes of the Princes where they live, did not out of indulgency defend them’ (5:243). His 1622 Gunpowder Plot sermon emphasizes the ‘utter devastation, and depopulation, and extermination, which scattered that nation, soon after Christ, to this day, (and God and no man knows, for how long,) when they who were a kingdome, are now no where a village, and they who had such Kings, have now no where a Constable of their owne’ (4:243).

What the sermons surrounding the occasion of Henry Finch’s vision of a temporal Jewish homeland reveal is that it is unwise to generalize broadly about early-modern attitudes to Jews or to Judaism expressed in sermons. As with polemical discourses, there is a spectrum of responses that needs to be identified and interpreted. Moreover, although anti-Jewish rhetoric frequently collapses into anti-Catholicism, as it does with Laud, this is not always the case and more work certainly

Jeanne Shami

needs to be done on the distinctions as well as the similarities between these two modes of discourse.\textsuperscript{57} Nor has the book been closed on how sermons – as opposed to polemical treatises – including those by Christian Hebraist and ceremonialist John Donne, used Jewish knowledge and traditions to establish Christian religious and political institutions in the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Such a study is both timely and necessary, and might shed more light on the ways in which the early-modern English church constituted its unique institutional identity by negotiating the uneasy relationships with its origins.

\textsuperscript{57} Shapiro discusses the steady stream of Renaissance polemics collapsing Papists and Jews, beginning with Luther’s marginal gloss on Galatians that ‘the Papists are our Jews which molest us no less than the Jews did Paul’ (above, n. 4), pp. 21-2. When arguments were being marshaled regarding the readmission of the Jews into England, William Prynne maintained that ‘under pretext of Jews, we shall have many hundreds of Jesuits, Popish priests, and friars come over freely into England from Portugal, Spain, Rome, Italy, and other places, under the title, habit, and disguise of Jew’, \textit{A Short Demurrer to the Jews}, 2 pts., London 1656, part 1, pp. 72-73.