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Austin, Kenneth. The Jews and the Reformation

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The name and writing most often associated with the Jews during the Reformation is that of Martin Luther and his vitriolic 1543 treatise, *On the Jews and Their Lies*. As Kenneth Austin demonstrates in his comprehensive study, *The Jews and the Reformation*, the story of the Reformation's impact on Europe's Jews encompasses far more than Martin Luther. Austin emphasizes that Reformation era attitudes toward Jews should be studied within their historical context rather than "from the ends to which they were put several hundred years later" (xiii). In eight meticulously researched chapters, along with a brief introduction and conclusion, Austin offers a pan-European analysis of Jewish-Christian relations and examines how these relations were shaped by the diverse and changing attitudes, policies, and priorities of church and state. His detailed portrait draws upon a wealth of sources and goes beyond the well-known leaders of the Reformation to examine lesser-known figures such as the Anabaptist Hans Denck and Luther's colleague turned radical, Andreas Karlstadt.

Austin masterfully analyzes Reformation attitudes toward the Jews in all their geographical and confessional complexity, including how these views influenced the study of Hebrew language and Jewish learning. Despite their many differences, theologians and church authorities of different confessions all regarded the Jews as their common point of reference. Each sought to make a case for their own authority as "rightful successors" (xxiv).

Austin launches his discussion with a controversy that occurred on the eve of the Reformation regarding Hebrew language and learning that pitted humanist Johannes Reuchlin against the converted Jew Johann Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans. Humanists like Reuchlin pursued a new engagement with Hebrew learning, but as Austin notes, this engagement extended to only a small minority of Christian scholars. Meanwhile, in the eyes of most Christians, Jews continued to be seen as a threat. They were often the scapegoat when tragedy struck, as in the murder of a child. It was far easier to blame the outsider Jew than to seek the murderer among one's Christian neighbors. Yet, persecution of the Jews could only extend so far since their role in the unfolding of salvation continued to be seen as essential. The tension between protection and persecution which characterized the Church's attitude before the Reformation would continue in different forms as the Reformation progressed.

In Spain and Italy, the Catholic Church employed the differing techniques of Inquisition and ghettos. In Spain, persecution by the Inquisition threatened even those Jews who had converted, the *conversos*, who were suspected of still secretly practicing Judaism. In Italy, ghettos served to separate Jews from Christian society and to protect them from Christian attacks. In Venice, the ghetto afforded Jews the possibility of safely practicing their religion even as Christian theologians and rulers debated the economic benefits of tolerance over the perceived spiritual danger. Meanwhile, in both Catholic and Protestant confessions, the conviction grew that biblical interpretation required learning Hebrew. As a result, "almost 300 different Hebrew grammars, dictionaries and concordance were published in the period between 1500 and 1560" (39).

Jews initially regarded Martin Luther as an ally. That, of course, would change as the Evangelical Reformation progressed and Jews refused to convert, and as new sects, such as those led by Andreas Karlstadt and the Sabbatarians in Moravia and Silesia introduced what Luther regarded as "Judaizing" tendencies. Jews frequently found themselves caught in the middle not only between Protestants and Catholics, but between Protestant sects as well.

Austin underscores the complexity of the Reformed attitude toward Jews and Judaism. On the one hand, especially as Calvinists in France experienced persecution at the hands of the Catholic monarchy, they claimed an identity as the New Israel, adopting Old Testament names and furthering the

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study of Hebrew learning in reformed academies. Yet, John Calvin also condemned Judaism, writing in his commentary on the Book of Daniel, "I never saw the least speck of godliness, never a crumb of truth or honesty, nor even discerned any common sense in any Jews whatsoever" (83).

The Tridentine reformers sought the conversion of the Jews while concentrating on bringing Protestants back into the fold. Catholic attitudes varied depending on the pope with some granting greater protections and rights than others. Beginning in 1543, the Church initiated in Rome, and then in other Italian cities, the *domus catechumenorum* ("house of converts") to prepare Jews for baptism. For Jews, ever changing policies, sometimes tolerant and even welcoming, and frequently the very opposite, meant living with constant uncertainty. Jews existed on the "fault lines," seeking to "cause as little offence as possible" (139). Yet, despite their efforts, false accusations were always a threat, from the blood libel that carried into the Reformation era to new charges of practicing magic. Jews could also be caught in the crossfire of social upheaval as occurred during the Fettmilch Uprising in Frankfurt when the ghetto of some 2,000 people was attacked and its inhabitants forcibly expelled, although they were later readmitted when the rebellion was suppressed.

Austin concludes that Jews were in a very different position at the end of the seventeenth century than at the beginning of the sixteenth. Major Jewish communities existed in cities such as Prague, Venice, and Amsterdam. France and England, which had expelled Jews, had begun to permit their return. Yet, tolerance was limited at best and could end abruptly as occurred in Prague in 1745. Nonetheless, the Reformation brought greater interest in studying Hebrew and engaging with Jewish scholarship. This new engagement with language and scholarship contributed to what Austin describes as a "process by which Jews gradually became more familiar to Christians" (211). At the end of the sixteenth century, and indeed for much longer, familiarity would not mean accepting Jews as equals. As Austin concludes, "The Reformation had made Europe a religiously pluralistic society, but the place of Jews was far from secure" (213). By virtue of its analytical breadth and depth, Austin's work now constitutes the standard on this complex topic.

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Madl, Claire, Petr Pisa, and Michael Wögerbauer, eds. Buchwesen in Böhmen 1749-1848. Kommentiertes Verzeichnes der Drucker, Buchhändler, Buchbinder, Kupfer- und Steindrucker

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Over the last decades, book history has served a broad front of historians. The granular analysis of how print markets disseminated ideas and shaped the discourses of public life has recast discussions on civil society, nation building, *Öffentlichkeit*, and various strains of identity formation. Historians of Central Europe will therefore welcome *Buchwesen in Böhmen 1749–1848*, an annotated inventory of approximately 800 firms in the Bohemian region during a watershed century for the publishing industry. Bracketed between Theresian reforms and the Revolutions of 1848, the book trade came of age. Publishers and book-dealers embraced print matter as a saleable commodity, catering to both established and new readerships with an expanded array of print matter. Although "mass print" would wait for a later age, this "century of

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