

HIAS Primary History post-1066 resources.

Enquiry 2: What does the story of Licoricia of Winchester reveal about the medieval world?

Steps 3 & 4

Team name (optional)

Who might these people be?



In 2022 a new statue was unveiled in Winchester. It depicts Licoricia and Asher. It stands on Jewry Street in Licoricia's home city of Winchester.

Can you spot:

1. a **tallage** demand from the king held by Licoricia?
2. the **dreidel** held by Asher?
3. Why do you think Licoricia of Winchester was chosen as the statue by the Jewish community today?



Think: What would it look like today if we were to '*love our neighbour*'

- at school,
- in our society?

On the plinth of my statue is written
"love your neighbour as yourself".

This comes from the Hebrew and Christian Bible. It is also a teaching shared by Muslims.



The **plinth** contains the verse
Love your neighbour

Step 3 what happened to Licoricia and the Jewish community in England.



Draw an arrow to the correct part of the statue.

1. Licoricia, a medieval Jewish woman.
2. Asher, her son.
3. A toy dreidel.
4. A tallage demand from the king for money.
5. The plaque saying, “love your neighbour as yourself”.

This comes from the Hebrew and Christian Bible.
It is also a teaching shared by Muslims.

How did the story of Licoricia and her son Asher end?

Our enquiry question

What does the story of Licoricia of Winchester reveal about the medieval world?

Step 3

We are going to read the last part of Licoricia's story to find out what happened to Licoricia and the Jewish community in England.

We will also discover why it is difficult for historians to find out about Licoricia and learn about the historical records historians used to make claims about her story.

Step 4

Visitors to Winchester want to know more about the people in the statue!

You will use your knowledge to write or even make a **podcast** to share with listeners what historians know about Licoricia and Asher.



Step 3

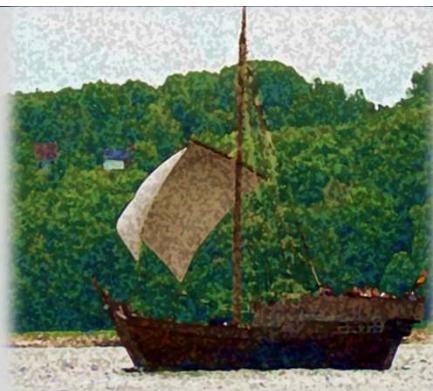
Look out for examples of problems and dangers that people faced in the medieval period.

Write a **D** next to any dangers people face

Let's read p11-12 of the
Licoricia story booklet
together to find out if
Licoricia was right to be so
worried about her family
and Jewish community.

Asher's farewell

English channel 1290



- 1 **Asher looks back across the sea to England.** His mother's fears were justified.
- 2 Licoricia is dead and he is being forced to leave the kingdom of his birth. He thought of the life he
- 3 had lived there. England had become more and more dangerous since he was a little boy. He
- 4 shuddered when he thought of his mother lying murdered on the floor of their house next to her
- 5 Christian servant back in 1277. Alice had stayed with the family despite the new law forbidding
- 6 Christians to work for Jewish families. He misses the encouragement they would have brought
- 7 him today. He is dismayed that the man accused of her murder was never caught. Licoricia
- 8 would be heartbroken to learn that prejudice against non-Christians grew worse after Henry's
- 9 death, Asher thought. Henry's son Edward was a ruthless king and Asher had lived through
- 10 frightening new laws against Jewish beliefs. Meeting in a **synagogue** was banned, then even the
- 11 freedom to follow Jewish beliefs at home was banned by 1282 at the request of Church leaders.
- 12 Pressure to convert to Christianity grew more intense as all Jewish people were forced to listen
- 13 to talks by the Church.

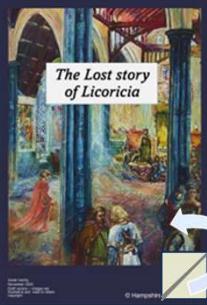
- 14 **As the cold sea air brings tears to his eyes,** Asher feels a wave of anger wash
- 15 over him. Did Edward not know that Jewish people would not betray their God and give up who
- 16 they were? He is angry that in this year of 1290 King Edward had given all Jewish people a
- 17 dreadful choice, to **convert** to be a Christian or leave the country! It was no surprise to Asher that
- 18 almost all Jewish people had refused to convert and were now banished from England forever!
- 19 They preferred to lose everything rather than become Christian. Asher is glad that his mother did
- 20 not live to see her community treated like this. His feet were sore. Thousands of people, like Asher
- 21 had been forced to walk to the south coast taking only what they could carry. They were travelling
- 22 by ship to northern Europe, hoping to find a new home. Asher's house and possessions had been
- 23 taken by the new king. But Asher knows King Edward cannot take away the knowledge he
- 24 has learned. He would build a new life. He dreams of finding a home where his family can be safe.



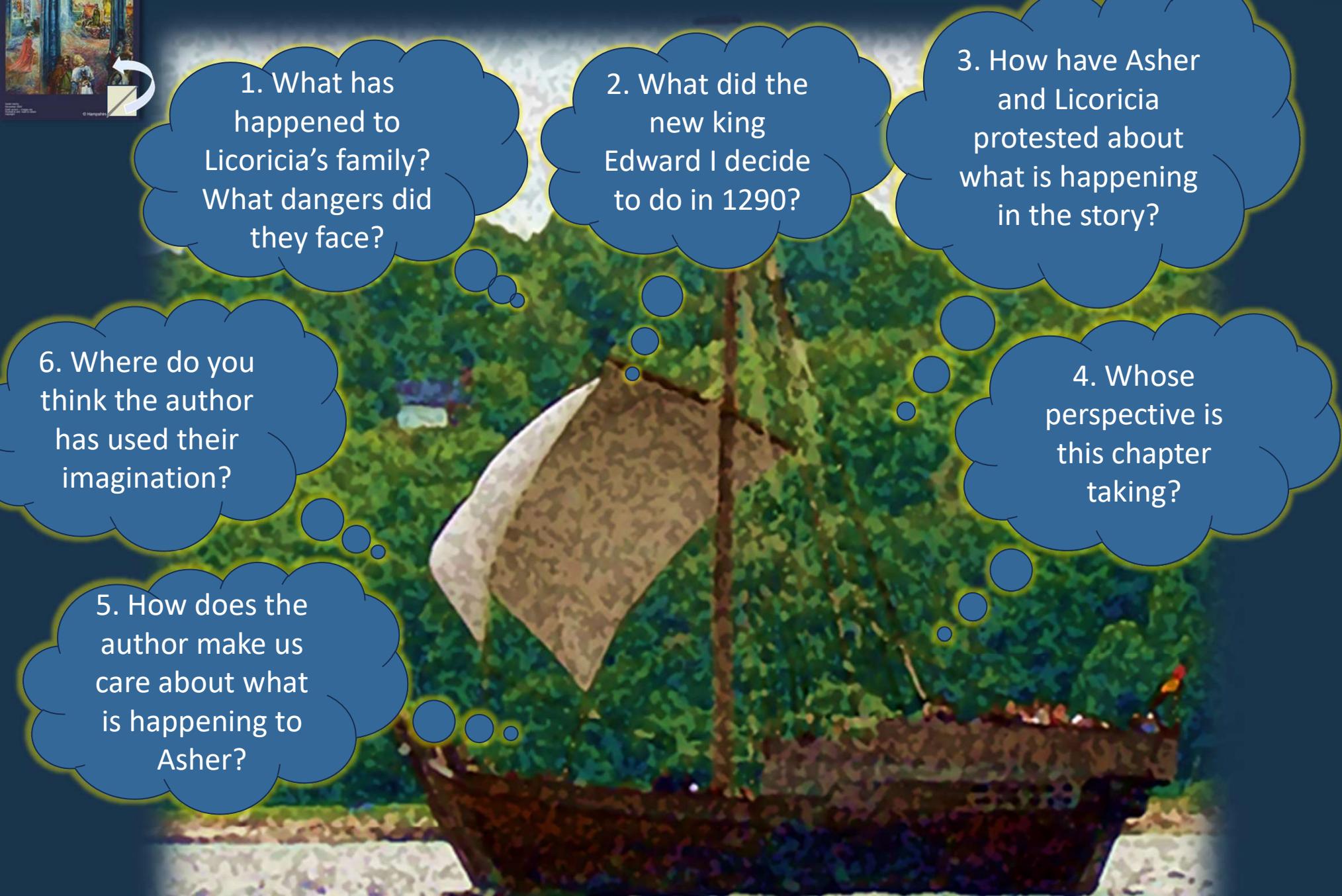
24 **Asher watches the English shore disappear.** He would not return but he had
25 left his mark at Winchester castle 3 years earlier. He remembers being arrested with the whole
26 Jewish community in 1287. King Edward had demanded another large tallage. He wanted to force
27 payment from these people, who by now were very poor. As a prisoner, Asher felt powerless.
28 He could not stop the king treating people this way, but he wanted to do something to make his
29 voice heard. He knew what to do. He could see what others had already done. He would write on
30 the castle walls, there in the South Tower. This would be his **protest**. It would leave written
31 evidence that he existed, that he mattered, that Jewish people had been **oppressed**. He began to
32 scratch, letter by letter. He used a date in the Jewish calendar, writing in **Hebrew** so only Jewish
33 people could read it. The last line said,
34 *'All the Jews of the land of the isle were imprisoned. I, Asher inscribed this.'*

35 **'You must always choose life'**, these words are **etched** into Asher's memory.
36 Licoricia had taught her family this important bible verse from the Old Testament. They had faced
37 many challenges in their lives and learned to survive and rebuild. The family had survived another
38 **civil war**. Simon de Montfort had taken over Winchester and deposed the King. Jewish homes
39 were attacked but Henry III's son Edward had defeated the rebels. Licoricia's family had rebuilt
40 their business before his mother had been brutally murdered in her home. No-one really knows
41 why she had been killed but Asher had heard that news of her death had reached Germany,
42 reported in a Jewish Chronicle. Asher will follow the example of courage shown by his mother.

43 **Asher looks across the grey sea to the shores of France.** This is where
44 he must start his new life. He trusts that God has plans for his life and his family. He will not
45 give up. He will choose life!



Let's get inside the story and think!



Step 3 what happened to Licoricia and the Jewish community in England.



Draw an arrow to the correct part of the statue

1. Licoricia, a medieval Jewish woman.
2. Asher, her son.
3. A toy dreidel.
4. A tallage demand from the king for money.
5. The plaque saying, “love your neighbour as yourself”.

This comes from the Hebrew and Christian Bible. It is also a teaching shared by Muslims.

Answer these questions about the story

1. Give 2 examples of dangers that Jewish families faced at the time of Edward I

- _____
- _____

2. What did Edward decide to do to the English Jewish community in 1290?

3. Whose perspective is the story written from? _____

4. Give one example of where the author has used their imagination to write the story:

2. Give one example of where the author has used facts in their story.



I am a Jew
I am a Jew, a Jew I shall remain.
Even if I die of hunger
I will not surrender...
I will never be ashamed...
I shall always be oppressed
I shall always live again.

From a poem by František Bass (Aged 11)
He died in 1944 at Auschwitz in Poland.

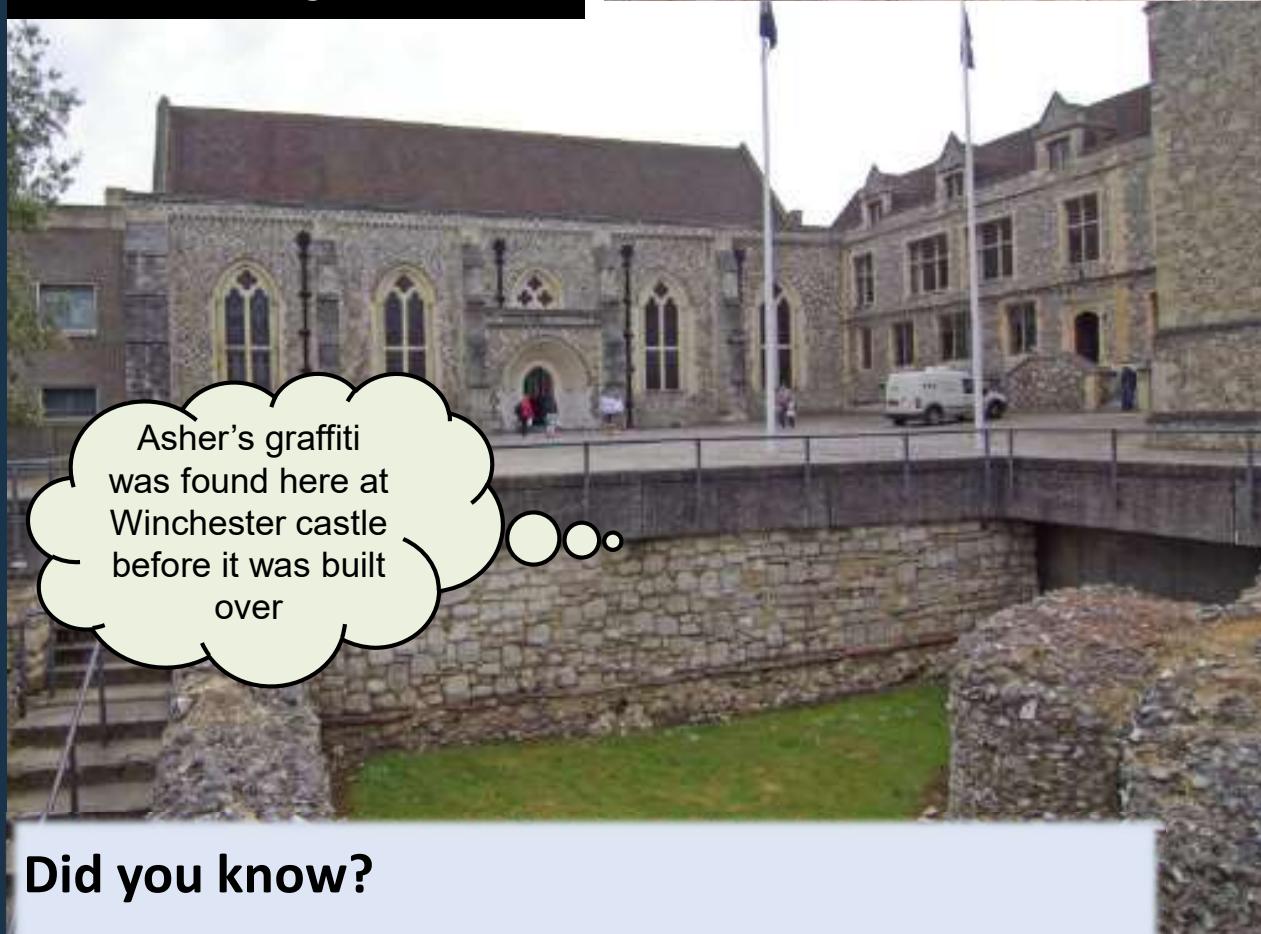
An 11 year old boy like Asher was taken from his home country (nation) Czechoslovakia along with his Jewish community in 1944. His name was František.

German Nazis had taken over most of Europe and rounded up all Jewish people and imprisoned them in concentration camps. Sadly, like many other Jews he did not survive.

Like Asher he left behind his words. His poem gives us an idea of how Asher might have felt.

How certain are historians about Asher's graffiti?

Winchester Great Hall and Winchester Castle ruins



Did you know?

At times of attack Jews would make the dangerous journey to Jews' Tower at the castle as the king promised his protection. But they were also imprisoned there by kings to make sure their families paid the tallages.

Going deeper.

This is a photo of **graffiti** carved into the walls of the West Gate where people were imprisoned next to the castle. Similar graffiti was found in the castle ruins.

Asher's graffiti was examined and **recorded by historian Patrick Junius** in the **1600s**. It said,

All the Jews of the land of the isle were imprisoned. I, Asher inscribed this.

Historians can't be certain that the graffiti was written by the son of Licoricia.

Historians think it is possible because the name Asher was so unusual and the date given fits the time of Edward I's 1287 tallage. We know Licoricia's son Asher owned houses on Jewry St. in Winchester.

Why is it difficult for historians to find out about Licoricia?

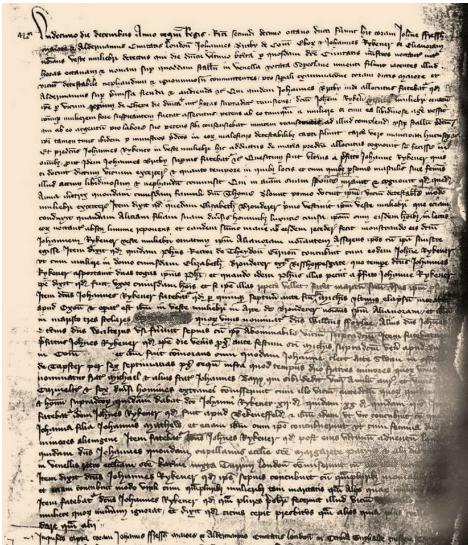
Historians find out about medieval people from old documents called **records or sources**. Together they are the **source record**.



Most of these are kept safe in places called **archives** where historians can visit. Some records did not survive or are lost.

In the medieval archives it is harder to find records about people who were not as powerful as kings, queens and nobles.

What kinds of historical records can historians use to find out about Licoricia and her Jewish community?



The King expected his men to keep written records of his money. The man in charge of financial records was the **Exchequer**.

Taxes, fines and loans were recorded on the **Exchequer Rolls**.

Other **Rolls** recorded people who were on trial and were punished for crimes.

Some records of tallage payments and loan payments were written on bits of wood called **tally sticks**. Some were kept on **chirographs**.

Medieval tally sticks from Hampshire



Can you spot Licoricia's name on this chirograph in the National archives?

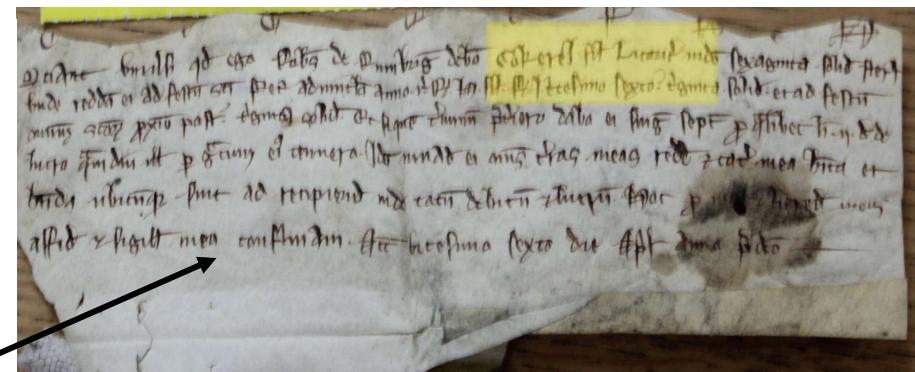
(It is spelt *Licorice*)



King Henry III asked that all records about Jewish tallages, Jewish property and loans made by Jewish financiers be locked in a big archa chest!

The king owned the Jews and wanted to know what money he could take from them.

Records could be stolen or destroyed so they were put in the royal **archa** chest to protect them



Listen to what Historian Dr Toni Griffiths says about how historians know about Licoricia.



... Think. What was missing in the records? What don't historians know?

Much of the information we have about the Jews in medieval England comes from **records about money and taxes**, and this is how we know about Licoricia. She was not a queen or a member of the government, but what makes her important is that **her name was recorded** and those **documents survived**.

Like other Jews in medieval England, we **do not know much about Licoricia's everyday life, such as where she was born, when she got married, exactly how many children she had, or how old she was**. Yet, Licoricia was **exceptional** within the medieval Jewish community and so, is an important person in medieval Jewish history.

Although there are **no images of her in the historical records**, a statue of how she is imagined to have looked like is in Jewry Street, Winchester.



Learn to talk like a historian! ⏪

Historians make claims based on the evidence they find. The problem is that sometimes there is not enough evidence to say they know something for certain. So how do historians write their account when evidence is harder to find?

We might say...

I know it's true
...

I am not sure but
probably ...

It might be true ...

I don't know ...

certain

uncertain

Historians are **certain** ...
It is **known** that...
Records show...

Historians think
it is likely that

Evidence suggests
it is possible that...
It may....

A lack of evidence
means **historians**
cannot be sure about

There is **no evidence**,
so historians **don't**
know...

Historians would say...

How certain are the claims about Licoricia's daily life made by historian Suzanne Bartlet?

Your challenge:

Can you sort the claims made by historian Suzanne Bartlet on the next slide placing them along this line of certainty?

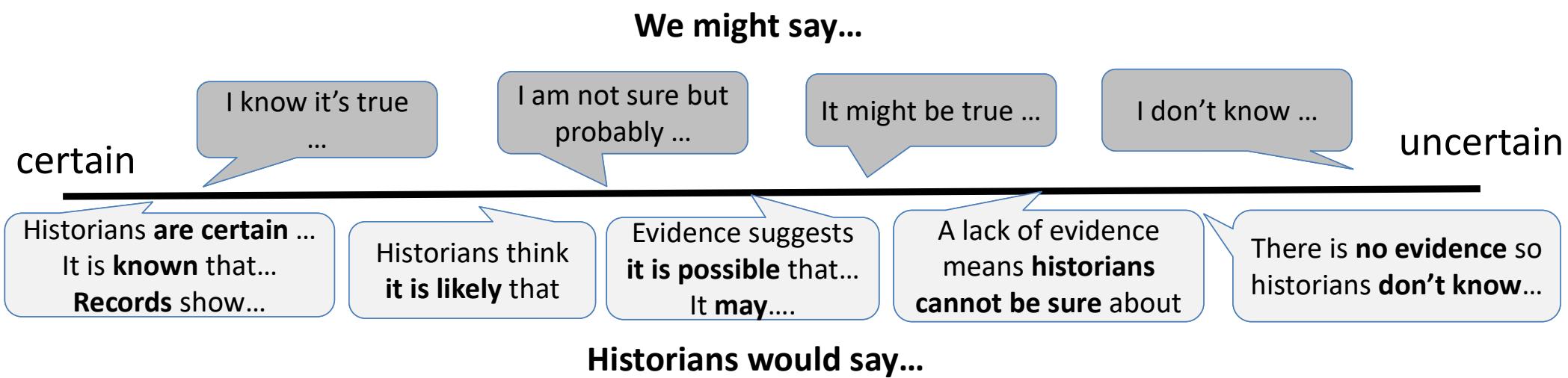


How certain is historian Suzanne Bartlet in these claims about the daily life of Licoricia of Winchester?

1. We have very little information about Licoricia's daily life. We shall probably never know when or where Licoricia was born or if she had brothers or sisters. There is no evidence of when she married. We can only guess when her first husband died.	2. We can trace her unusual name. It shows up clearly in records . They show she is in Winchester in 1234. She is a young widow with three sons. She has her own business.	3. Licoricia is known to have taken long journeys. She travelled on horseback or more probably a special cart. She would have to have protection from attack when travelling on business. A trip to London would take 3-4 days.	4. Licoricia may have been able to read languages like Hebrew and Latin, but she spoke French in the King's court. Her friends where she lived spoke English. She may have been taught to write too as Jewish girls were educated.
5. Letters from the King show the king helped to make sure David was free to marry Licoricia, which he probably did in 1242. There is evidence that in February 1244 Licoricia was taken to the Tower on her husband's death. Licoricia was kept in the tower until September 1244.	6. She might have lived in the house in Winchester that had the synagogue in the garden. We know this was owned by a Jewish man before. It might have had a garden and a courtyard with animals. It would have been a stone house with a cellar.	7. She moved back to Winchester after David died. As David had worked for the king so did Licoricia. She was in and out of court whenever Henry was present at Winchester. The court certainly employed her for the money they needed.	8. The Jewish community asked her to speak to the king for them. Licoricia certainly appeared in court very often.
9. Licoricia's family lived in Winchester. Records show her son Benedict lived on the corner of Jewry Street in Winchester. He was a spice-seller and traded in wine and wool. He sometimes rented out his house. People paid the rent in spices like pepper.	10. There is a written record that Benedict's Christian friends accepted him into a guild. He was probably the only Jewish person to have been in a guild.	11. The dress of Jews and Christians was much the same. The problem is there is only one picture of an English Jewish woman. She is wearing a coif (a cap covering the back and sides of your head). Lists of Jewish clothes in the records describe robes of richly covered velvets and decorated girdles (belts).	12. Licoricia survived the Baron's War against the king. She is still in the records but not much after the war. In 1277 Licoricia and her Christian servant Alice were murdered. It is recorded that they were found by a woman named Belia, Licoricia's daughter, at her mother's house in Winchester.



Line of certainty



Step 3 What do historians know about Licoricia from the source record?

Early life before 1244

1. By 1234 Licoricia was living in Winchester as a widow with at least 3 sons. We don't know what house she lived in.
2. By 1240 She had built a business to support her family and became one of the most successful businesswomen in Winchester. Men mostly ran businesses in medieval England.
3. By 1242 She met and married David of Oxford, financier to the King. The king helped David to get a divorce so he could marry Licoricia.
4. David and Licoricia lived in Oxford had a son called Asher. In 1244 David died and Licoricia was taken to the Tower of London.

5. Historians know this is what David's house looked like in Oxford. It is likely Licoricia lived there with him. Her house in Winchester was probably built of stone for protection.



David of Oxford's house

6. We don't know what she looked like but historians can work out what she might have dressed. This research was used to create this sculpture and the statue.



13. It is likely that Asher and other members of Licoricia's family were forced to leave England when Edward I forced all Jews to leave in 1290.

14. Historians think it is possible that Asher wrote on the walls of Winchester castle in 1287. This was the time Edward I locked up all Jews to make them pay a large tallage.



Other graffiti at the West Gate

Later life after 1244

7. King Henry took their Oxford House. There is evidence Licoricia moved back to Winchester. Historians are confident she lived on Jewry street but not about which house she lived in.
8. Most of the money taken from Licoricia by the King when David died was used to build the shrine of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey.
9. She became the financier to the king, helping the king borrow money for his building projects and wars in France.
10. She was a confident lawyer and spoke up for her Jewish community defending them in court.
11. She survived the civil war when Jewish houses and business records in Winchester were attacked. Laws against financing and the Jewish religion made life very difficult after this.
12. She was found stabbed to death in 1277 with her Christian servant. Her daughter Belia found her. They did not find who murdered her. A German Chronicle reported her death.

Use your knowledge to complete these sentences

1. Historians are **certain** that Licoricia _____
2. Historians think it is **likely** that _____
3. It is **possible** that _____
4. There is not enough evidence to be sure that _____
5. Historians **don't know** _____

Step 4

Visitors to Winchester want to know more about the people in the statue!
Your challenge is to **make a podcast** to share with listeners what historians know about Licoricia and Asher.



Did you know?

King Charles visited the statue with some Hampshire school children. Why is it important Jewish people in medieval England are not forgotten?



People want to know:

- Her interesting story
- What her story tells us about medieval world and the power and peril people experienced in medieval Britain in the 13th Century
- What historians really know about her from the historical evidence.

Look at the photo from the unveiling of Licoricia's statue.

.. Think. Who might these visitors be?



Leaders of different faiths came including leaders of the Jewish, Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Quaker, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and Bahai communities.

.. Think. Why are these leaders standing together?

They hope the statue will encourage others to be kind and respectful to each other, accepting people who have different beliefs.

Today, faith leaders, including the Catholic Church, speak out against prejudice.

Did you know?

There are many different faiths and Churches in England today. People are free to have their own beliefs.

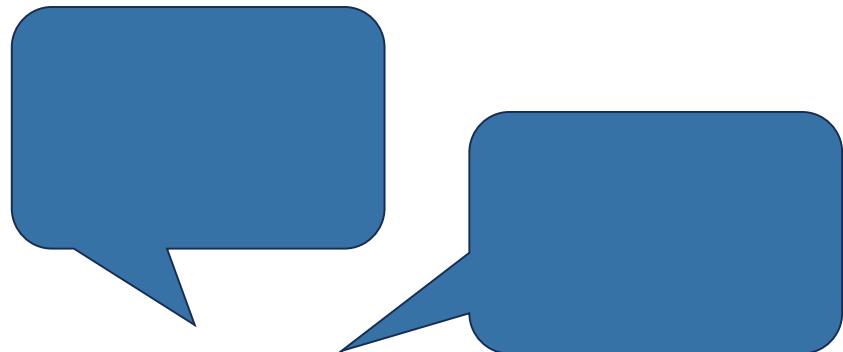
Sadly, there are still some people who still treat others badly because of their beliefs or backgrounds.



Let's think and start to plan our history podcast

What parts of the story of Licoricia and the other Jewish people living in medieval England do you think it is important to tell?

Share your ideas.



Listen to this podcast



Henry III

4 minutes

<https://youtu.be/7Pp7mR4a0Co>

What makes a good podcast?

-
-
-
-
-

Podcast planner

1. Introduction. Start your podcast introduction by describing Licoricia. Use these comments by historians to help you grab the listener's attention.

Tough as nails, twice **widowed** ... who survived three spells in the Tower of London only to be murdered.

Simon Schama 2013

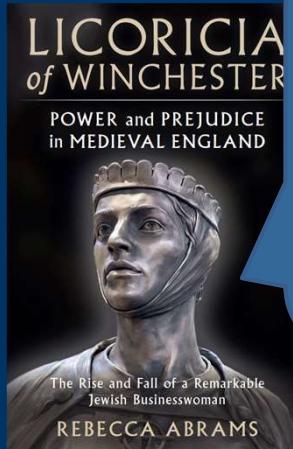


The *most important* Jewish woman in medieval England.
Robert Stacey 2009



Courageous, strong minded and strong willed, she was an astute and able businesswoman, a powerful **matriarch** and a leading member of Winchester Jewry.

Rebecca Abrams 2022



Licoricia gives an impression of what it was like to be a woman in a small **persecuted** group, living at a time when relationships [between Jewish and Christian people] grew worse.
Suzanne Bartlet 2015

Because she had such a good relationship with the king, she was also able to talk to the king on behalf of other Jews, if they were in trouble. The towns and cities of medieval England were home to a **diverse** range of different people doing different kinds of work, and until 1290 this included Jewish men and women. They are just as important as their Christian neighbours.

Dr Emma Cavell 2022

Your script planner for the podcast on Licoricia of Winchester

1. Introduction. Describe who Licoricia was.

2.. Describe the statue on Jewry Street in Winchester close to where she lived.

3.Give some facts about the Jewish community.

Why did Jewish people move from France? What jobs did they do that helped English society?

Give examples of the rules and Christian beliefs that made their life difficult.

What happened in 1290 at the end of the story?

4. Tell the story of Licoricia. Where did she live?

What problems did she face? How did she end up in the Tower of London?

How did she end up working for the King of England, Henry III? Explain that she spoke up for other Jewish people to the king.

5.Use your sentences to explain what historians know for certain and what they don't know.

Historians are **certain** that ...

Historians think it is **likely** that...

It is **possible** that ...

There is not enough evidence to be sure about ...



What have you learned about the medieval world?

Draw an arrow to match up the heads and tails of these sentences

Medieval kings travelled from place to place with their noblemen and royal household...

...royal castle or residence to visit at Christmas.

Winchester Castle was King Henry's favourite ...

...to rule their kingdom and foreign lands.

The Catholic Church and most Christians at the time were prejudiced against Jewish people and ...

...believed Christians and Jews should be kept apart.

The Catholic Church was a powerful...

...many trades and jobs were banned for Jews.

Jewish people were an important part of English society. For example, they traded in goods ...

.... like spices, wines, gems and metals from faraway places like China and India.

Jews worked as doctors, midwives and lawyers but ...

...raising money for the king to fight wars, build castles and cathedrals.

Only 1% of Jewish people like Licoricia worked as financiers. They played an important role in...

...organisation led by the Pope.

Jewish people had migrated from France to England...

... from England forever. Asher is likely to have left with them.

In 1290 king Edward I banished Jews ...

...after the Norman kings invaded.

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Page 4 Photo of plaque by S.Herrity.

Page 2-6, 10, 11 19-20, 23 Photos of the statue of Licoricia and Asser and the photos of the unveiling ceremony with the religious leaders in attendance are kindly provided by the Licoricia of Winchester Appeal charity.

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McKay / Great Hall, Winchester.

Photo of **graffiti at Winchester West Gate** taken by S Herrity

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Page 13 The photo of a medieval chest with modern locks at St Peter and St Paul's church Salle Norfolk

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The photo of a chirograph taken at National Archives by W Carver.

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Your script planner for the podcast on Licoricia of Winchester

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Why did Jewish people move from France? What jobs did they do that helped English society?

How did the king and the Church make the lives of Jewish people worse in the way they used their power?

What happened in 1290?

4. Tell the story of Licoricia. Where did she live?

What problems did she face? How did she end up in the Tower of London?

How did she end up working for the King of England, Henry III where she was able to speak up for other Jewish people?

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