

The Attitudes of Chaucer, Marlowe and Shakespeare towards the Jews as expressed in The Prioress's tale, The Jew of Malta, and The Merchant of Venice

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Abstrak

Chaucer, Marlowe and Shakespeare all three wrote about the Jews in their respective times. Chaucer wrote about the Jews as they appeared to him and his contemporaries in the fourteenth century, Marlowe presented the Jews to us they were regarded by his contemporaries in the sixteenth century and Shakespeare too considered the position of the Jews in the same century as Marlowe, since the two later play wrights were contemporaries, Much, however, had happened in the period separating Chaucer from Shakespeare. Chaucer lived in an exclusively Roman Catholic age. The Pope still had power over both the English monarch as well as the English subject. An Englishman, therefore, owed allegiance to both the king and the Pope; one ruled over the temporal state, the other over the spiritual state. This was the state of affairs when Chaucer wrote his Prioress's Tale. Here he clearly showed his (and also his contemporaries') dislike of the Jews. The Jew was the enemy of the Church; he was an outlaw because he violated the law of the Church which prohibited the lending out of money on interest...