

Traumatic Pasts, Plural Presents

Fig1



Fig1 - Plaque indicating mounds (motte) of the two medieval royal castles of York – both potential sites of the massacre.

Fig2



Fig3



Fig4



Fig4 - Memorial plaque on the bottom of Clifford's Tower.

On the night of Friday 16 March 1190, some 150 Jews and Jewesses of York, having sought protection in the royal castle on this site from a mob incited by Richard Malebisse and others chose to die at each other's hands rather than renounce their faith.

- The inscription on a memorial plaque on the bottom of Clifford's Tower in York tells a very straightforward story. For my MAs thesis, I interviewed people living in York today about the relevance of this massacre. In addition to widespread awareness of the event, people offered diverse viewpoints and deep insights into the event. Even though most had only an elusive idea of what happened, they brought up expansive questions about it –

Why did it happen? Why is it important? Are similar things happening today – to whom? What are the links between separate historical events? Should suffering or flourishing be the focus of our remembrance of the Jewish community of York?

- The questions echo different approaches in scholarship. This might give us a view of the direction of public participation in history making – broadening and diversifying the scope of history and moving from simple stories to a plurality of narratives, which can include a wide-ranging set of actors, rather than a homogenous elite.

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