

Sietske van der Veen (Huygens ING Institute)

Upward social mobility strategies of Jewish Dutch in the Dutch Biography Portal (1880-1940)

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, life in the Netherlands changed profoundly. Possibilities for social climbing came within reach of more people than ever before. This also applied to the Jewish Dutch minority, which constituted almost 2 percent of the total population around 1880. The following decades, up until the German invasion in 1940, provided Jewish Dutch with novel opportunities as well as limitations for their individual life strategies. The interconnectedness between the subsequent (upward) social mobility of Jewish Dutch in this period and their level of integration in society is interesting. However, the question arises if one indeed leads to the other, and if a causality always works in the same direction. The historiography is in any case divided over the extent of Jewish integration.

Especially for those Jewish Dutch who reached a high(er) social status, little systematic, large-scale research has of yet been done to determine to what degree they conformed to (upward) social mobility and integration patterns that were put forward by scholarly literature. Which individual life strategies defined the development of upward social mobility of high(er) social status Jewish Dutch between 1880 and 1940, and the level of their integration in Dutch society, in their historical context? This question lies at the heart of my PhD project, which is part of the larger research project 'Against the current', an initiative of the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands (Huygens ING) and the International Institute of Social History (IISH).

In this first stage of my project, I will focus on 445 prominent Jewish Dutch, born between 1850 and 1920, against the backdrop of mainstream gentile society. To research their individual life strategies I will use their personal details concerning the social mobility domains of work, place of residency, education, marriage and family, and association and committee membership, present in biographies in the online Dutch Biography Portal (BioPort), hosted by Huygens ING. I am currently setting up a database for this group with the object-oriented database tool Nodegoat, that allows me to build my own data model and filter, visualise and analyse my data through networks, time and space. Themes I find particularly interesting within the broader scope of my project are Jewish women, Jewish Dutch in the Dutch East Indies, Jewish Dutch in the *mediene*, and their contemporaries in France, Germany and (especially) Britain.

Joris Kok (IISG)

Social Mobility of Jewish Diamond Workers in Pre-war Amsterdam

Despite the Emancipation Decree in 1796, the Jewish Dutch remained segregated both socially and occupationally. The Jews in Amsterdam lived in different streets, shopped at different stores, and married predominantly among themselves. In most of the nineteenth century, this Jewish community was poor and saw few chances for upwards occupational mobility. At the end of the century, however, the Amsterdam economy recovered from its long stagnation, the

diamond industry soared after the discovery of diamond fields in South Africa, and social distances declined gradually. Aggregated sources, such as occupation censuses, create a picture of social mobility for the overall Jewish community, but are not able to inform us about the micro-level determinants of changes. Due to a lack of individual-level sources, the historiography has mostly discussed the community as a whole. In this dissertation project, however, the aim is to study the Jewish community and its developments at the micro-level. The main source will be the membership- and apprenticeship cards of the General Diamond Workers' Union (ANDB). At its peak, this union had around 10,000 members, and the industry has been said to serve a quarter of the Jewish community in Amsterdam.

The membership cards, of which there are over 20,000 for the period 1894-1941, provide crucial information regarding occupation, career progression, date of birth, address(es), allowing us to study occupational changes at the individual level. Additionally, the apprenticeship cards give us information about their parents' occupations, living address(es), and date of births for over 7,500 of the diamond workers from 1904 to 1941. Contrasting the dominant force in the industry, the Jewish diamond workers, with the non-Jewish diamond workers creates an important comparison which contextualises the Jewish experience. To further understand the differences between this societal minority group and the Gentile population, life courses of 800 diamond workers born between 1873 and 1922 will be gathered and compared with 717 life courses of Jewish workers outside of the diamond industry, as well as the general population of Amsterdam as available in the HSN for this time period.

Altogether, this dissertation project – part of a larger KNAW-funded project in cooperation with Huygens ING – aims to discover new insights regarding the social mobility of the Jewish Dutch community of Amsterdam, as well as its interrelation with the processes of assimilation and integration.

Donald Weber (AMSAB ISG)

A World of Diamond: Diamond Workers in Belgium, The Netherlands and France, 1895-2000

The international cultural heritage project *A World of Diamond: Diamond Workers in The Netherlands, Belgium and France, 1895-2000* collects, describes and disseminates the dispersed heritage of the international diamond workers during the twentieth century. The project studies and tests pilot strategies to digitally aggregate, improve and disseminate the digitized documents, images and testimonies of the worlds of diamond workers.

The projects works in two ways to accomplish this goals. First, we involved the international diamond workers community organising three collections days in 2019 in Antwerp, Saint-Claude and Amsterdam, connecting direct witnesses from the diamond community with their cultural heritage and collecting through oral history the remaining gaps in the written history about their past.

Furthermore, we launched two pilot strategies for a better dissemination of cultural heritage. Because much of this cultural heritage is already available in a digital format, we can explore new and unseen opportunities. We tested a number of new and highly advanced OCR and HTR technologies with samples of the archival heritage material in order to convert

handwritten text and structured data to a digital format. Although the digital files and their metadata have been online for some time, much more powerful services have been developing lately. We aim to apply several IIF technologies that would allow users not just to view images but also to zoom, crop, rotate and so on, and IIF compatible API services for making metadata and text layers available not just through a catalogue but also as linked data.

Finally, at the end of the project we want to share our findings with the community of cultural heritage institutions in an expert workshop.

A very important international aspect to this project is the reconstruction of the mobility of the diamond workers, not in the least Jewish workers, by connecting membership cards of several diamond workers unions. As a result the process of the delocation of the industry from Amsterdam to Antwerp will probably be seen in another light.

Thomas Verbruggen (University of Antwerp)

Non-European Jewish itinerant traders in Belgium and beyond (1880-1930)

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of increasing global interconnectedness, fostered by the introduction of continental railroads, intercontinental steam shipping lines, and telegraph networks. This transport and communication revolution resulted in increasing mobility and migration levels and a democratisation of long-distance migration in Europe and beyond as a growing number of people from more modest backgrounds tended to move over longer distances (Hoerder 2002; Moch 2003; Bade 2003; Hatton and Williamson 2006; Lucassen and Lucassen 2009). So far, historians studying migration in this period have predominantly focused on the established migration systems from eastern to Western Europe, from Europe to the Americas, and between border countries. Partly due to the applied methodologies, most researchers are also extremely biased towards analysing movements that result in settlement, in other words immobility.

A focus on the multi-local livelihoods of itinerant groups who moved outside established migration systems would improve our understanding of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century migratory change by shifting the attention from settlement to mobility and from stable migration systems to the dynamics of migration processes. This paper introduces a new project on non-European itinerant traders in Western Europe and pays specific attention to the migration paths of the Jews amongst these itinerants and the long-term effects of their mobile lives on their life trajectories.

Amal Ihkan (University of Antwerp)

The identity of Moroccan Jews living in Belgium and The Netherlands

“Do Moroccan Jews exist?” is a question frequently asked during conversations about this research topic. It seems a contradiction, but in fact it is the reality. Although they are a minority group, the literature about this subject is sufficiently broad. Multiple studies exist regarding aspects such as Moroccan Jewish communities, Moroccan Jewish culture and identity. The

latter is a research area not entirely explored. Several studies exist about the Jewish, national and religious identity among Jews. Yet, the Moroccan---Jewish identity remains a gap within this area. Considerable research exist concerning Moroccan Jews around the world, especially in countries with large communities such as France, Israel, UK, Canada and US. Due to a small community, the topic of Moroccan Jews living in Belgium and The Netherlands remain uninvestigated. Contributing to this research field, we explore the meaning of Moroccan---Jewish identity among Moroccan Jews residing in Belgium and The Netherlands. Through 7 in---depth interviews we analyse the meaning of the Moroccan---Jewish identity among the respondents. As this research question contains several aspects, such as origins, upbringing, migration, identity and religion, the questions during the interviews were divergent. For example: *“How would you describe yourself on an identity level?”*, *“What does Morocco means to you?”*, *“Do you consider yourself as being religious?”*, *“Do you see religion as something separated from your Moroccan background?”*, *“Which elements of the Moroccan Jewish culture do you still apply nowadays?”*, *“What elements of the Jewish culture would you pass on to your children?”*, ...

The study shows that 1) Moroccan identity and Jewish identity are two separated identities 2) being traditional Jewish is more important than being religious Jewish 3) the Moroccan identity is less dominant than the Jewish identity 4) influencing factors are experiences, having kids and the residence. In short, the meaning of the Moroccan---Jewish identity is broad, complex and diversified.

Dagmara Budzioch (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, T. Taube Department for Jewish Studies, University of Wroclaw)

Selected issues of decorated Esther scrolls production in the 17th – and 18th century Amsterdam.

The Jewish communities flourishing in Amsterdam in the 17th and 18th centuries played a highly important role in the production of Jewish books as well as in Jewish books trade. Printing houses active in the city issued a significant percentage of Hebrew books produced at the time. However, besides printed books, the city was also one of the leading centers of the production of decorated Esther scrolls and my presentation will be devoted to this rarely discussed aspect of the Jewish book production.

It is believed that this genre of Hebrew decorated manuscripts emerged in the second half of the 16th century in Italy, whereas their earliest examples in Amsterdam appeared only in the 1640s and they are works of Shalom ben Mordechai Italia, Mantua-born artist and engraver. From the point of view of the techniques used in the Amsterdam Esther scrolls production, they can be divided into two groups. The first of them includes lavishly decorated scrolls whose borders were executed solely in a pen and brown ink; their rich and differentiated ornamentation includes foliage, elaborate acanthus leaves, *putti*, satyrs, animals that create the background for landscapes and figurative scenes depicting the Book of Esther narrative. To the other group belong mass-produced manuscripts decorated with printed borders (only very few of them are painted) in which the Hebrew text of the Book of Esther was inscribed by a scribe.

It is still impossible to determine in which printing houses they were printed and who were the artists of their decorative schemes; however, some of them prove the high artistic skills of their makers. They also include a number of motifs only some of which are directly related to the Purim story. The majority of Amsterdam decorated scrolls were created in the period between ca. 1641 and ca. 1725 that was the peak of their production in this part of Europe. During the presentation I will discuss selected examples of these manuscripts, show mutual influences in their ornamentation and suggest possible sources of inspiration frequently borrowed from outside Jewish communities. I will present also some features typical for the scrolls produced in this part of Europe such as scenes based on *midrashim*, carved ivory cases, and the belts of decorative fabric stitched underneath the membranes. The speech will also briefly outline the intellectual and social climate of the city that unquestionably influenced the production of the decorated *megillot Esther* in Amsterdam (e.g. presence of the Esther theme in the Dutch painting of the Golden Age, presence of the *conversos* in the city, the city as a leading center of Hebrew printing).

Juan Lorenzo Castro (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

Sephardim of Antwerp; financial connectors of the Hispanic Monarchy XVI-XVII centuries

At the end of the 15th century, the arrival of spices by the opening of maritime trade routes between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean remodelled European trade. In this restructuring process, Antwerp appeared as the commercial node par excellence, which united: Portuguese spices, Central European silver and copper, and English cloths. In this same city, a powerful community of Portuguese merchants was born, nurtured by families of Sephardic origin, coming from successive diasporas from the Iberian Peninsula; families with connections at European and transoceanic scale. Contemporaneously, Antwerp, within the Seventeen Provinces, was integrated into the Habsburg Empire, until the beginning of the revolts of the northern Seven Provinces.

In my presentation, following the research of J.C. Boyajian, J.C. and N. Broens, I focus on clarifying the relationship that was formed between a large core of businessmen, mostly Sephardic and Portuguese, between Antwerp and the Court of Madrid. This happened within the political framework of a polycentric Empire, a monarchy of urban republics, as conceptualized by Manuel Herrero. This was a favourable model for commercial diasporas, in which the Sephardim played an important role as mercantile and financial connectors, mainly between the Iberian Peninsula and the Southern Provinces.

The main topic of this investigation revolves around the intensification of the relationship between Sephardim and the Court of the Hispanic Habsburgs, during the accession of Portugal and its dependent territories under the scepter of the “felipes”, and how, after consecutive attempts, the Portuguese businessmen entered the service of the Crown. This relationship was stimulated in the decade of the 20s, by the resurgence of the Eighty Years’ War and the increasing utility of the city of Antwerp as a receiving centre for remittances of

silver and redistribution of supplies. It is here that my analysis of the role of these Sephardic agents will focus upon.

Wolfgang Schellenbacher (Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance (DÖW), Vienna)

Mapping Transnational Data on Austrian Refugees in Antwerp prior to Deportation

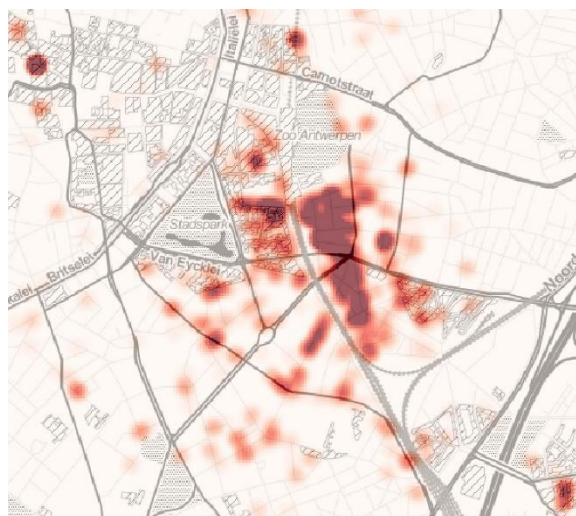
“First, I came to Antwerp. That was such a liberation – being free. One didn’t think at all that Belgium could also be occupied one day, that war would continue, we just wanted to be free, we had a flat.”¹- Ester Tencer

Ester Tencer, a Jewish communist resistance fighter, fled Vienna to Belgium in January 1939. Here she describes her first impression living in “Lange Leemstraat”, Antwerp, after almost a year in Vienna during the Nazi regime.

Following the “Anschluss” of Austria to Nazi Germany in March 1938, approximately 135,000 Austrians considered Jewish according to the Nuremberg Laws, fled abroad. For thousands of these refugees Belgium was a stop on the way to other countries of exile, but 1800 Austrian Jews who remained in Belgium were later deported by the Nazis and murdered in the Holocaust – many of them from Antwerp.

In 1943 Ester Tencer’s family was imprisoned and deported from Mechelen to Auschwitz. Since Ester Tencer had moved into a different flat outside the Jewish area in Antwerp she was able to remain hidden for another year. The example of the Tencer family opens research questions such as: Did Austrian refugees settle in areas where there was already a high concentration of Jews? Did residency in certain areas delay deportation?

In recent years spatial studies in Holocaust research and the visualisation of Holocaust-related spatial data have shown how considering space and place – while not eschewing chronology – provide a framework and approach that offers new insights into the Holocaust.² Kazerne Dossin (KD) and the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) have collaborated on an experimental project which created visualisations of data from KD, data on Holocaust victims matched with the victim databases of the DÖW and geo-coding. A digital representation of this mapped data makes it possible to show the areas of residence of approximately 900 Austrian Jews in Antwerp and compare them with maps created by KD for Jewish residences of Antwerp during WWII. This paper will show how this was made possible and how this spatial data can deepen the understanding of the spatial dimension of the Holocaust in Antwerp as well as the life stories of Austrian Jewish refugees in Antwerp like Ester Tencer.



Last places of residence of Austrian Jews in Antwerp in 1940

1 Interview with Ester Tencer at the DÖW (Collection “Erzählte Geschichte”, No. 232, 1984).

2 See especially: Anne K. Knowles, Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, (Bloomington&Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014); Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, (London – Oxford – New York – New Delhi – Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2016).

Dorien Styven (Kazerne Dossin)

Left Behind in Antwerp: Jewish Families affected by the Forced Labour, 1942-1944

From June 13, 1942 until September 12, 1942, 2,252 Jewish men from Belgium were summoned for forced labour in the North of France, both in the French Ardennes in Les Mazures as to the Atlantic Wall at the coast. The large majority of these men were from Antwerp. Indeed, six of the nine convoys of Jews from Belgium to Northern France left from Antwerp on 13 June, 14 and 18 July, 5 and 14 August and 12 September. 1,526 men, 67.7 percent of the total of 2,252, lived until their deportation in Antwerp. When they were taken away, they left behind their spouses, children, parents and further family and friends. This presentation seeks to pull out of the shadows the fate of these men as well as the lives and fates of the families of those who had been taken as slave workers. The obligatory labour of their men meant a huge transition from being part of the pre-war society to existing on the margins until they, too, were rounded up and murdered. Our research explores ways to advance our knowledge by mapping the affected persons and families via GIS tools. It wishes to explore timing of deportation of the slave labourers as well as the timing of arrest of their family members whom remained at home. How do their survival or death rates correspond to the average percentage for Jews in Belgium? Can we still reconstruct their history via

interviews, archives, photos or other objects? Into what extent can we measure a false feeling of safety?

This project merges several elements. Firstly, it builds upon Laurence Schram's research on the Dossin barracks and on Jews from Belgium, deported via Drancy and Mechelen. Secondly, it brings together existing research on the OT-labour from Jews from Belgium in northern France. As such it will summarize what the role of the Association of Jews in Belgium, the so-called "Judenrat", of the Belgian authorities and of German services was. Thirdly, it actively seeks to collect further information and evidence on this topic to further document how the families left behind managed and which challenges they faced. The output of the project should be easily accessible online and accessible to a wide audience. It is extremely important for future generations to learn more about the victims, to understand the complexity and the deceptive structures put up to trick its victims and their surrounding society. This history and the stories told have a great resonance today. Both educators and their students as well as victim families and the wider public will be offered information and tools to study and understand how discrimination, racism and a genocidal regime shattered ordinary lives.

Jan Maes (Kazerne Dossin/ Stichting voor de Eigentijdse Herinnering)

The German Greiferin Helga Zweig, alias Marion Dubois. The story of a Jewish Jew Hunter at work at the Brussels Sipo-SD

In 2014 I presented a work in progress at the Seventh Contact Day of Jewish Studies on the Low Countries with the title "The Mission among the Jews" by the Reformed Church of Sanderusstraat in Antwerp (1932-1948)". This research will be published in 2020 by the Stichting voor de Eigentijdse Herinnering/Fondation de la Mémoire Contemporaine as a book in Dutch : "De ster en het kruis. De Gereformeerde Jodenzending in Antwerpen en Brussel (1931-1948)". In a report of the Dutch neo-Calvinist missionary among the Jews Roelof Bakker an 18-year old Jewish girl, Helga Zweig, is mentioned. In 1946 Bakker and his colleague Paul Jocz visite her in the prison of Vorst. She had betrayed her parents who were arrested, brought to the *Sammellager* Casern Dossin in Mechelen deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on transport XXIII. After having denounced her parents she started working for the Sipo-SD of Brussels as a "Greiferin", a Jewish Jew Hunter, also tracking down and denouncing members of the resistance and young men who tried to avoid forced labour in Germany. She focused on artistic groups gathering in bars, restaurants and dancings. On September 15, 1944 she was arrested and on August 29, 1945 was sentenced to death by the Military Court. On December 28, 1945 this sentence was changed into life imprisonment. This presentation is based on the Immigration Office files on Helga Zweig and her parents, her criminal file, the files about her when she was imprisoned and her "moral" file. Some of the central research questions that will be addressed: who was this girl; what did she do; how did she do it; why did she do it; how did she behave as a prisoner; did the years in prison make here aware of what she had done; what

happened to her after she was released from prison on July 5, 1951, and put over the border with Germany?