

## Abstracts 12<sup>th</sup> Contact Day Jewish Studies on the Low Countries

### Lawrence Rabone

*Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel's Transconfessional Messianism: the result of a fusion of Marrano and millenarian and influences*

In this presentation I will contextualise the Messianism of Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) in both a Marrano and millenarian context in a comparative study that charts how the intensity of his fervent Messianism changed over time.

After establishing the current scholarly debate in the field of Messianism, with engagement with Scholem's thesis, I will look at Menasseh's relationship with Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508), whose great-great-granddaughter Menasseh married. I will explore similarities and differences between their Messianism and their beliefs in the regathering of the Lost Ten Tribes and give some possible historical and contextual reasons for this. I will also note the importance of the Book of Daniel to both Menasseh and Abravanel.

I will also show how Menasseh's Messianism cannot merely be seen in an intra-Jewish vacuum but will briefly compare Menasseh's belief in the regathering of the Lost Tribes with the belief of John Owen (1616-1683) in the recalling of the Jews through reference to the restoration of the Jews in a couple of his sermons.

I will then bring together the Marrano and millenarian influences on Menasseh that I have established by showing their relative influence upon both Menasseh's Conciliador, particularly volume I (1632) and The Hope of Israel (1650). By comparing Menasseh's first publication with one of his later ones, I will show that Millenarian influences led to a development in his Messianism over time.

I will then conclude by arguing that contextualising Menasseh's Messianism within his Marrano and millenarian theological context is the best way to understand the political events leading up to the unofficial readmission of the Jews to England in 1656. I will also argue that Menasseh's Messianism can be identified as both political and transconfessional.

### José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim

*Between Antwerp and Amsterdam: Manuel Levy Duarte (1631-1714), businessman in the Baroque Letters of Manuel de Leão*

The Stadarchief of Amsterdam keeps in its collections a very peculiar correspondence sent in the late 1690s by Manuel de Leão to the powerful businessman Manuel Levy Duarte, being both in Antwerp or Amsterdam.

Manuel Mendes Levy Valle [Duarte] was born in Amsterdam in a family linked with jewel trade. However, we knew that he was also very interested in the world of the arts, since he invested in the purchase of paintings by famous authors, and perfected his role as a courtier through his contacts with Amsterdam's literati, as Manuel de Leão.

According to Harm den Boer, Manuel de Leão came from Portugal a few years before he wrote, in Portuguese, a panegyric datable of 1693 and printed in Amsterdam, dedicated to Antonio Lopes Suasso: *Certamen das musas*. However, in 1688, his *Trivmpho Ivsitano* was published in a 'clandestine' edition by David de Castro Tartás in Brussels,, what means that he most likely resided first for a few years in the Netherlands before moving to Amsterdam.

This unpublished and strikingly stylistic set of letters sent by Manuel de Leão to Manuel Levy Duarte reveals not only a tumultuous relationship between patron and artist, but also how Antwerp

was a favorite city for these businessmen and artists of Amsterdam, who nevertheless never ceased to be immersed in the culture and values of the Iberian Peninsula.

Indeed, we can glimpse in this dialogue in which the present voice is only that of Manuel de Leon, as at the end of the 17th century the city of Antwerp continues to be a fundamental turntable for these men of Amsterdam in their tortuous relations with London, the Iberian World and the colonies, even when it emerges as a backdrop of an inexorable tragedy.

### **Karin Hofmeester**

*A Brilliant Legacy: 125 years General Diamond Workers Union (ANDB)*

In my talk I will give a brief introduction to a multi-faceted project on the General Diamond Workers Union (ANDB). On 18 November 2019 it is exactly 125 years ago that diamond workers in Amsterdam organized themselves in the General Diamond Workers Union (Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerker Bond, ANDB).

It was the first union in Europe to establish an eight-hour working day and a week of holiday. It set up a fund that paid benefits in case of strike, sickness, pregnancy and disability. It even had a pension fund. Apart from this legacy, there is also a material legacy: the union stressed the intellectual and cultural development of its members. The union had its building – De Burcht - designed by the famous Dutch architect H.P. Berlage and consciously kept a very rich archive that is now held by the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam and completely digitized.

To celebrate the legacy of the ANDB there will be a website with information on all ANDB members, an exhibition in the Jewish Historical Museum, a presentation in De Burcht, a book based on new research to be presented on 18 November as well as debates and city walks.

### **Huibert Schijf**

*Apprentices of The General Dutch Diamond Worker's Union (Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerker Bond, ANDB)*

The Dutch trade union created an apprentice system in the early twentieth century. Apprentices followed a practical education under the supervision of experienced diamond workers. A separate administration was kept to administer the progress and success of the apprentices. The so-called apprentice-cards offer unique information how the young men and women were already imbedded in the diamond industry because two important characteristics were noted: profession and membership of a parent (usually the father) and whether there were brothers and/or sisters who were also members of the Union. In my short presentation I will discuss both aspects.

### **Daniël Metz**

*Diamantgracht. Connections between the Amsterdam Diamond Industry and the Jewish Community*

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century on the diamond industry has had a big influence on the social structure of the Amsterdam Jewish community. That connection became even stronger in the age of industrialisation, when literally thousands of Jews found a living in the diamond industry or trade. Particularly on the Nieuwe Achtergracht, a now quiet Amsterdam canal, numerous remnants can be found that give an idea of the close relationship between this industry and the Jewish community. Alongside former polishing factories and the Diamond Exchange we find schools, medical facilities and cultural venues, varying from religious to secular, and from Zionist to socialist. By mapping

these institutions and the people involved, related to either the diamond industry or Jewish life, this street gives us an indication how the two were intertwined.

### **Marleen van den Berg**

#### *No House of their Own: Jewish possessions during the Second World War*

On May 14th, 1940 the German bombing of Rotterdam destroyed the heart of the historical city center. 25.479 buildings were completely or partially demolished. Almost 80.000 people became homeless. It is assumed that a large number of all these buildings belongs to Jews. And in connection with that also a large number of the people who became homeless were Jewish. Certainly 1192 people out of the 20.887 persons who moved to other cities by June 15th 1940, were Jewish (a number of 5,7%). Suppose that this percentage also applies to the total number of homeless people, 4486 Jews would have lost their homes, out of a total Jewish population of 13.000, so about 1/3 of the Rotterdam Jewish population would have been affected by the bombing. The Rotterdam city council decided to take drastic measures with regard to the owners of the demolished property and the properties that were located in the bombed area. In the following years, the Jewish house owners were also affected by German expropriation measures.

In this paper I want to investigate what consequences the bombing and the regulations of the municipality of Rotterdam had for the Jews in Rotterdam. Were they better off than Jews in other cities or did the Germans also get a grip on the municipal expropriation measures, to the detriment of the Jews?

The investigation into the purchase of rights and the legal restoration of Jews in Rotterdam is an important addition to the existing historiography of the persecution of Jews, both on local and national level. By studying the situation in Rotterdam and comparing it with other cities, mutual differences come to the fore and it is possible to determine more precisely what influences local circumstances had on the policy pursued. Research into the restoration of rights is also important from a broader national and international perspective, as a form of transitional justice. This applies both to the restoration of rights at the time – after the war – and to the investigation into the way in which these processes proceeded like the present one.

### **Aalt Smienk**

#### *Abraham Kuyper, De Standaard and the Framing of Jews and Antisemitism*

Much is already written about the opinion on Jews of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920, the former Dutch prime minister. Most of these studies reflect on Kuyper's position based on three of his publications: *De Joden onder de Christenen natiën* (1875), *Liberalisten en Joden* (1878) and the chapter 'Het Joodsche probleem' from the book *Om de Oude Wereldzee* (1907). Based on the similarities between the opinions in these publications one would assume that Kuyper's view on Jews and antisemitism didn't change much in the almost thirty years between the last two publications.

However, my research on the framing of Jews in Dutch newspapers shows a change of opinion in *De Standaard*, Kuyper's newspaper, during the period 1890-1900. So if a change of opinion can be found in the newspaper how does that correspond with the assumption of stability in Kuyper's view on Jews and antisemitism? This will be my main question: Are the changes in the opinion in the news reports between 1890-1910 only visible in the newspaper *De Standaard* or also in the contributions made by Kuyper to the newspaper. Kuyper's contributions can be distinguished by the sign of the tree asterisks also known as his 'drie starren'.

This research is focused on the news reports in *De Standaard* between 1890 and 1900. This period is interesting because of the many news reports on the actual events concerning Jews and antisemitism, such as, the restriction of rights of Jews in Eastern Europe, particularly around 1891, the Dreyfus affair (1894-1906), the elections of Karl Lueger as Mayor of Vienna (1897) and the first international congress of the Zionist movement in Basel 1897. Did these events influence the opinion of *De Standaard* or Kuyper during that period? When did the change occur and is there a specific news event which triggered the change. Do these findings have consequences for the general assumptions on Kuyper opinion Jews and antisemitism?

### **Ludo Verbist**

*Border History. Assistance for Persecuted Jews*

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the fate of Jews at the Green Border during the Nazi regime in Europe. In this part of study, we will take a closer look at the assistance of persecuted Jews on the Belgian/German border.

Hitler was elected Reich's chancellor and National Socialism became more influential in the daily lives of the German population but also in the daily lives of the Jews. These people felt what National Socialism means for their future, so they attempted to flee the terror of the Nazis via the Belgian border in order to be safe.

Some ventured to attempt, but the closer the year 1935 came, the risk to attempt to flee became higher and higher. If they wanted to flee from Germany, they needed assistance of a well-organized lifeline to cross the border.

Such a lifeline could hide the refugees, prepare false passports so they could cross the border without any problems, guide the refugees through fields and forests until the place where the refugees would be picked up by a local (Belgian) member of the lifeline.

Some organisations have been set up by volunteers and the amount the refugees had to pay, was humane and just enough to cover the costs of the operation. Of course there were other organisations who abused the situation of the Jews to gain as much money as possible, even then the refugees were not sure that they reached Belgium or that they would be handed over to the Belgian Gendarmerie.

This presentation proposes a new overview of the current status of the research so far. Based on testimonies of smugglers and children who made the border crossing illegally and who survived the war because they were hidden in a convent in Herve near Liege, this presentation points out the difference between smugglers with humanitarian intentions and those whose intention it was to gain as much money as possible.

### **Laurence Schram**

*Holocaust Negationism, Where the Extremes Meet*

During the Second World War, the Nazis sought to implement the "Final Solution". They pursued the systematic extermination of the Jews of Europe through various measures, including ghettos, the Einsatzgruppen, concentration camps and killing centers. About six million Jews were annihilated. Although much of the evidence was destroyed by the Nazis, a multitude of key sources have been preserved which establish the factuality of the Judeocide.

However, as early as 1948, the year of the establishment of the State of Israel, negationism had already developed. This new variant of antisemitism shared no link with any actual scientific

approach. It remains a perverse and malicious ideological manipulation, pursuing objectives shared by extremist movements.

I propose to analyze the developmental phases of this ideology, from 1948 to today, from its birth, in France, to its current globalization, as well as the motives that bring together very different people, some even opposed to each other, in the same hatred of Jews. My contribution will focus on how and when this phenomenon manifested itself in the Low Countries/Belgium.

### **Lieke Schrijvers**

#### *Gender and Giyur: New Jewish Women in the Netherlands*

This paper is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork among new Jewish women in the Netherlands in relation to their self-conceptions of gender and sexuality, as part of my PhD research. Becoming Jewish is a process of self-making that often impacted the daily lives of my interlocutors to a great extent. The women who became Jewish later in life all experienced their conversion, or *giyur*, as demanding, life altering and at times difficult, partly because of the relation of dependency between *giyur* candidates and rabbinical courts. From conversion studies, I therefore follow the conceptualization of conversion as an embodied, emotional, cognitive, and performative process. Methodologically, this has been mainly informed by lived religion and cultural anthropology. The women had various motivations to pursue a *giyur*, but for all this included a reconfiguration of kinship bonds and history, implementation of Jewish traditions such as Shabbat rest and keeping kosher, and negotiations of their role as Jewish woman. Recently, scholars of gender and Judaism, like Orit Avishai and Lynn Davidman, have pointed to precisely the importance of including gender as category of critical analysis in the study of contemporary Jewish lives. My research thus combines conversion studies, Jewish studies, and the study of gender and sexuality to shed new light on the current academic debates on gender in Judaism, and more broadly on contemporary Jewish conversions. The particular focus of my study is on the negotiations of gender scripts and sexual ethics among women who were socialized in a secular environment, but chose to join Judaism for a variety of reasons. I interviewed women in different Jewish denominations. I will first show whether, and how, my interlocutors experience changes in gender norms and roles. Whereas orthodox women often have a view of gender as 'complementary difference', reform women tend to borrow from liberal frameworks of equality. The second part of the paper focuses on the ethnographic material on three contested and gendered Jewish practices, namely participation in shul services, observance of the *niddah*, and questions of motherhood and matrilineal descent. Based on this material, I argue that notions of gender and sexuality influence the whole process of conversion, from first attraction to continued learning, implementation and practicing of a Jewish life. As such, *giyur* is not understood as a mere spiritual, or national-legal process, but rather as embodied, sexual and gendered.

### **Veerle Vanden Daelen**

#### *Orthodox Survivors and Allied Troops in Immediate Post-War Antwerp*

British Allied forces liberated Antwerp on 4 September 1944. American, Canadian and Polish troops followed in their wake, engaging in a battle to defend this strategic Western European port city, which fell under severe bombings from October 1944 through March 1945. During these months, a few hundred Jews who had survived the war in hiding in the city left their hiding places. Jewish life, which had been officially erased from the city by the Nazi regime and its collaborators, reorganized

itself. Sources about this period from Jewish survivors are scarce and difficult to trace but include diaries, letters and testimonies of Jewish troops. Such sources are often serendipitously identified in different archives.

During this period, it was very often the Jewish soldiers from amongst the Allied forces who would assist local Jewish communities, not only with the most urgent basic care but also with helping to organize the first observances of Jewish holidays after liberation. Letters and communication networks were used to help Jewish survivors, many of whom had been left without news of relatives for months and years, reconnect with their families and launch further searches. The writings and personal letters of Allied troops relate the dire situation of the surviving Jews, their hardships and urgent needs, and the characteristics of Jewish life. These documents not only provide important information, but also form a kind of outsider as well as insider view on Jewish life in the immediate post-liberation period. Indeed, having been disconnected from the hardships, persecutions, robbery and genocidal regime to which fellow Jews fell victim to in Europe, their reactions were ones of shock and horror, especially when their reports preceded the liberation of the camps in the East. At the same time, Jewish members of the Allied forces were often the first to understand the needs of Jewish survivors as concerned their religious and cultural traditions and were able to establish connections between the isolated survivors and the international Jewish community.

### **Richard Menkis**

*Canadian "Liberators" in Belgium and the Netherlands: towards an "entangled" history*

In 1950, a group of Toronto Holocaust survivors issued a call for a local historical commission. Its major purpose would be to collect testimonies and other evidence of wartime experiences to aid in the trials for war criminals and to remember lost families and communities. Perhaps the survivors were being somewhat strategic, and trying to draw the non-survivor community into the plan. But from other evidence, it more likely reflects a special relationship in Toronto (and elsewhere) between survivors and those allied soldiers. It was a relationship that still resonated years after the end of the war. But how did that enmeshed relationship take shape?

As described in the proposal for the panel, the experiences of the liberating armies and the survivors in Belgium and the Netherlands—especially who emerged from hiding—have received scant attention. Moreover, the studies of "liberation" have tended to be from the perspective of either the "liberator" or the "liberated". This paper will examine the encounters of Canadian soldiers with survivors who emerged from hiding and those who were "liberated" at Westerbork. This paper does not aim to tell one story in depth, but rather to advocate for the method of writing an entangled history. An examination of multiple perspectives informs us, for example, of both early attempts to offer consolation and meaning *and* the reactions of the listeners. On two occasions, we have descriptions by Chaplain Samuel Cass of sermons he delivered and his reasoning behind those sermons, and reactions to them. Multiple perspectives on a single event can demonstrate how the different actors brought their own agenda to the encounters and their representation. We will explore this aspect by an analysis of a Canadian army newsreel of the cleanup of a desecrated synagogue in Nijkerk, and the response of a Dutch diarist. Canadian sources (correspondence, official diaries of military units) in addition to interviews with survivors can corroborate that the experiences of liberation could, in fact, mean tensions and misunderstandings between soldiers and survivors, as when the Canadian "liberated" Westerbork.

Because of the mandates of both museums and archives, national perspectives have prevailed. This paper will demonstrate the necessity of multiple perspectives, and calls for collaborative work in Canadian, American, Belgian, Dutch and possibly Polish archives.

### **Bieke Van Camp**

#### *Dutch Concentration Camp Survivors and the Kochany Phenomenon: History and Testimony*

"From the depth of memory rises a magic word: Kochany...", term that in Polish means "beloved" or "sweetheart." With these words, the concentration camp survivor Dora Klein (Klein: 2001, 229) describes one of the lesser studied phenomena of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps. First of all, this paper will consider deportation as a social experience and the category of the "deportees" as social groups with its (relative) capabilities of adaptation (Goffman: 1968). Despite the fact that the repertoire of contention to which the deportees can resort is extremely heterogeneous, the search for femininity, in order to distinguish oneself, in order to attract a possible protector from the male camps, to attract the attention of the guards... is one of the survival mechanisms that seems to stand at the very heart of the concentration camp experience of multiple female deportees. Based on the study of 40 early and late testimonies (20 of which are testimonial accounts of women) I will thus investigate the kochany phenomenon in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps as described by Dutch Jewish deportees.

Through this case study, the general aim of this paper is to explore how sensitive subjects are described in early and late testimony: how do women portray these men-women encounters? What narrative strategies do they resort to? The origins of the witnesses (country of birth; social origin); the modalities of their testimonies; what sense the witnesses attribute to their survival... are all elements that seem to be determinant to what can or can't be described in their testimonial accounts.

### **Nicoletta I. Fotinos**

#### *The Ethics of Survival: A Case Study of Prisoner Physician Dr. Lucie Adelsberger (1895- 1971)*

Even though prisoner physicians in Nazi concentration camps have been recognized in Holocaust historiography as sources of information on coerced human experimentation and exploitation of prisoner labour, their memoirs and testimonies have not been studied systematically as sources of information on the choices faced between survival and the duty of care, let alone that experiences of female prisoner physicians have been singled out for closer examination within Holocaust Studies. This case study presentation will seek to compare and contrast the pre and (post)war dilemmas narrated and choices arrived at in the 1945/46 NIOD testimony and published memoir of Dr. Lucie Adelsberger entitled, *Auschwitz, Ein Tatsachenbericht: Das Vermächtnis der Opfer für uns Juden und für alle Menschen* (Berlin: Lettner-Verlag, 1956), which was composed almost ten years later (1954 – 1956).

Renowned German-Jewish Immunologist and Allergist Adelsberger wrote down her memoir in Amsterdam whilst awaiting emigration to the United States where she hoped to continue her medical career and pursue research opportunities which has been offered to her in the prewar period. In May of 1943 Adelsberger had been arrested by the Gestapo in Berlin and was initially sent to Auschwitz where she was employed as a prisoner physician before being moved to Ravensbrück (January 1945) and eventually ended up in Neustadt-Cleve where she was liberated on 2 May 1945.

## **Filipe Amaral Rocha de Menezes**

*Anne Frank and Michel Laub: diaries and daily violence*

*The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), also known as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, is one of the most interesting reports of the Shoah. Elaborated from the manuscripts of a German Jewish adolescent refugee in Holland, during a Nazi persecution, the book is a great reference for world literature, especially for the Literature of Testimony. *The Diary of a Fall* (2011), the autobiographical novel by the Brazilian writer Michel Laub, revolves around three generations of a Jewish family: the narrator's grandfather, driven by the experience of having been arrested in Auschwitz; the narrator's father, who carries the bitter memories of his father's suicide when he was only fourteen years old; and the son, the narrator, who carries with him the guilt of having purposely caused an accident that injured a classmate and its consequences, when he was a teenager. The Literary Diary as a genre, here in debate, emerged from a monologue text whose creation was the only reader, actually, it has a bit of communicative and literary characters, elements that are not anymore considered. From this genre emerges the notion of *Autofiction*, or even self-writing (fictions about the self), such as memories, diaries, reports, autobiographies, fictions about the self, a true autobiographical constellation, a bivalent, ambiguous, androgynous genre in which the author questions reality and himself, that it is the full in its essence, but a construction that operates within and out of the fictional text in the same life. Two Diaries, Two Children, fictions about the Holocaust: from the comparison of the these two works in diary format and their positioning of their approaches and distances, we intend to observe the change of texts, the observation of the Shoah by the child: one who lived the persecutions and related hers daily events, and the one who receive the inheritance of destroy, of the shattered family.

This work falls within the scope of the doctoral research entitled *In the bestiary of the concentration camps, the reports of the survivors: Primo Levi, Art Spiegelman and Yoram Kaniuk*, developed at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Lyslei Nascimento and research internship at the University of Antwerp, under the guidance of Professor Dr. Christiane Stallaert.

## **Alex Williams**

*"Who is able to feel like Anne Frank?" Mass Tourism and the Narrativ Problem of Identification in the Anne Frank House*

On a daily basis, thousands line up in front of Anne Frank's last hiding place, a picturesque canal house on the Prinsengracht 236 in Amsterdam. Though not a memorial site *in stricto sensu* – such as the Hollandsche Schouwburg (unknown to most foreigners) – this modestly sized museum has attained the status of being an emblematic Holocaust site, attracting almost as many visitors as Auschwitz-Birkenau. As a site of trauma, however, it is often overlooked – and to a certain extent obfuscated – that the Anne Frank House constitutes an enigmatic elision between a place of contemplation and a touristic experience. It is precisely the latter characteristic of the museum which, ineluctably, poses a particular narrativ problem *vis-à-vis* [over-simplified] identification in order to learn about the Holocaust.

Although the Anne Frank House needs to contend with international visitors with little prior knowledge of the Holocaust, the museum's premise serves as a convenient gate-way to tell Anne Frank's story – and by extension the Holocaust itself – by means of identification with a single victim. This narrativ approach, however, effectuates a problematic 'idiopathic identification' – a process whereby the Other is taken into the self on the basis of a (projected) likeness, so that the other



'becomes like' the self. In effect, one almost 'becomes' Anne frank as features that are similar are enhanced in this process; features that remain irreducibly other are cast aside or ignored.

This paper posits that it is precisely this narrational approach which should be circumvented as it not only effectuates a certain over-simplified identification with one particular victim but additionally, as Jean-François Lyotard points out, risk creating a verisimilitudinous sense of closure where one "will appeal to human rights, crying out 'never again,' and that's it! The event is taken care of." To counter these proclivities, this paper shall argue that the focal point should lie on heteropathic identification. Here, the self-doing the identification takes the risk of – temporarily and partially – 'becoming' (like) the other. This is both exciting and risky, enriching and dangerous, and affectively powerful. By utilising various controversial artworks by Zbigniew Libera and Ram Katzir, it shall be corroborated how a heteropathic identification may be realised which, in turn, effectuates what Dominick LaCapra terms 'empathetic unsettlement' – a barrier to closure in discourse which places in jeopardy harmonising or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme events from which we attempt to derive reassurance or a benefit.