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Jonathan Israel, Reinier Salverda, eds. *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500-2000).* Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002. vi + 338 pp. $96.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-12436-3.

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In his introduction, Jonathan Israel states that this book is a work of both connaissance and reconnaissance. The connaissance is represented by the recent synthesis published in Dutch in 1995 and in English translation in 2002 as *The history of the Jews in the Netherlands* to which many of the authors of this collection contributed. Israel believes that this fresh broad synthesis, while correcting errors and myths of the past, will stimulate new research into the history of Jews in the Low Countries. A reconnaissance of what forms and paths that research may take was the purpose of a conference held in London in June, 1997, from which this book derives.

In his introduction, Israel explains the book's organizing principles. It is neatly truncated into Early Modern and Modern by the impact of the French Revolution on the old United Provinces after 1795, which brought to an end a two-century-long history of Jews as a legally distinct and largely self-governing minority. The history of modern Dutch Jewry is overshadowed by the Nazi occupation of the country in 1940 and the subsequent segregation and deportation of Dutch and refugee German Jews to the extermination camps. The thorough efficiency of this operation resulted in a dramatically higher proportion of Dutch Jewry being liquidated than of any other Jewish population of western or central Europe. In and around these events, the various authors raise questions about the integration and assimilation of Dutch Jews, the variety and distinctiveness of the various Jewish communities that came to reside in the Netherlands, and discuss some of the literary and cultural creations of the Dutch community.

Despite a claim to a broader geographical area (the Netherlands, Belgium, and the former Dutch Colonies), these essays are almost exclusively devoted to the northern Low Countries, the area now occupied by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and more particularly to the city of Amsterdam. The exception is the valuable essay by Ludo Abricht on Antwerp, itself a precursor and analogue of Amsterdam. A second interesting fact about the collection is the pairing of essays around a common theme or individual, as in the case of Baruch Spinoza, or the authors Anne Frank and Marga Minco. Yet despite this narrow focus, the history of Dutch Jewry is so complex and varied as to call into question the use of a singular noun.

Before the modern period, the history of Jews in the Netherlands was the story of two communities: the Sephardim, who came to Amsterdam as part of the Portuguese business diaspora and remained when Portugal became inhospitable; and the Ashkenazim who arrived as overland migrants beginning in the mid- to late seventeenth century. While distinct in language and reli-

gious custom, early-modern Dutch officials, as the article of Arend Huussen relates, legally recognized only a single Jewish community whose members were given a kind of autonomy within the majority Dutch, Calvinist populace. Interestingly, this separateness was more privileged and far-reaching than that granted to minority Catholic and dissenting Protestant groups. Separateness also brought exclusion, however, for in Amsterdam it was impossible for a Jew to participate fully in civic life–to join a guild, for example. In demographics, too, there was unity and diversity, as the article of Hurbert P. H. Nusteling describes. Using some innovative methodology, he argues that the Sephardim were more numerous than previously believed, reaching some 5,000 (exclusively in Amsterdam) by around 1735. In the course of this century they were passed in number by the Ashkenazim, who remained in the majority for the rest of the Ancien Regime.

>From law and population in early modern Amsterdam, the next essays move into the social, family, and intellectual life of the predominant Sephardic community. Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld investigates the practice of poor relief within the Sephardic community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a result of both their autonomy within Amsterdam and the long-held belief and practice of welcoming refugees into their midst, the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish congregation long contended with the problems of poor relief. These were compounded over time by an influx of refugees, especially after 1640, when approximately a quarter of Sephardic families received aid, until 1750 when an astonishing 50 percent received relief. Financing poor relief was a considerable challenge, given that pauperization was directly the result of an overall decline in the economic fortunes of the community as a whole. A variety of forms of taxation, reform, attempts to encourage migration, and interminable debates resulted. Ironically, these all had the effect of encouraging the wealthy and the young to leave Amsterdam, abandoning the old and indigent behind. The best intentions sometimes result in the worst social policies.

Yosef Kaplan shifts our view to what he argues was a moral panic in the eighteenth-century Sephardic community: one resulting from social distress of very serious proportions caused by the rise of romantic love in marriage. This is the threat of eros that convulsed the community. Kaplan argues that ideas of the European Enlightenment, among them the ethos of erotic love, came to profoundly change the marriage and family practices of the Amsterdam Sephardic community by the late eighteenth century. The starkest indication of this is in the rapidly falling birthrate, which he argues is proof that marriage had ceased to be in the main procreative and had instead become the outlet for erotic and emotional desires. Interestingly, Kaplan concludes as he began by seeing in social and family crisis the broader challenge and threat of Cartesianism.

Issues of ideas and society are also developed in two intriguing essays devoted to Baruch Spinoza, approaching him in slightly different yet complementary ways. Jonathan Israel argues that the making of Spinoza the philosopher was at least in part the result of the unmaking of Spinoza the businessman. Spinoza's expulsion from the Synagogue, which inaugurated his philosophical career, is only explicable to Israel when viewed in the context of the failure of the family business in 1655. Spinoza thus renounced both commerce and religion in his embrace of philosophy. Odette Vlessing, like Jonathan Israel, is dissatisfied with the conventional explanations for Spinoza's turn toward philosophy. As an archivist, she herself turned to contemporary records and found a clue in the documents resulting from Spinoza's father, Michael's, bankruptcy. It seems that Baruch, though of age and having assumed responsibility for his father's business, later petitioned Amsterdam's civil authorities for release from his father's debts on the grounds that he was a minor. This was contrary to custom in the Jewish community, and became a source of considerable embarrassment for its ruling council. Spinoza was placed under a ban by the council and labeled a heretic not for his ideas but for his reckless disregard for his financial and social responsibilities. But far from restraining him, these actions precipitated Spinoza's final break with his community.

The last three essays in the book's first section are devoted to issues of art and language in both the Gentile and Jewish communities of Amsterdam. Alan Cohen investigates the relationship of Rembrandt with members of the Amsterdam Jewish community. Scholarly consensus states that Rembrandt had meaningful personal ties with individuals in this community, who either posed for his paintings or advised him about the Old Testament scenes he portrayed. Cohen goes deeper into the issue, focusing particularly on Hebrew lettering depicted in *Belshazzar's Feast* and *Moses and the Tablets*. He concludes that Rembrandt must have had close and personal relationships with leading intellectuals among the Jewish community, in particular with Menasseh ben Israel and/or close colleagues of his. Hetty Berg discusses an aspect of the history of eighteenth-century Yiddish theater in Amster-

dam, specifically the career of Jacob Dessauer, author, director, and performer. Dessauer worked to professionalize Yiddish theater in the late eighteenth century, breaking with the custom of the Jewish Purim play, and he also responded to Enlightenment currents of thought. This led to his company's adoption of Dutch after 1814 in line with the Emancipation decrees and William I's language policy. Berg sees Dessauer as an entertainment pioneer, who helped pave the way for the leading role Jews were to play in the development of the entertainment industry in the Netherlands. Marion Aptroot picks up on the use of language by Ashkenazic Jews in post-Emancipation Amsterdam. There was a good deal of debate in the Jewish community about the use of Dutch and German and their relationship to Yiddish, which Aptroot sees as indicative of widespread political and social upheaval. Debate resulted in division between a new group of liberals and an old group of traditionalists. The liberals sought to adopt Dutch in their synagogue and embraced German as a language of high culture. But this remained a minority movement among Amsterdam's Jews, who continued to use Yiddish as their primary language of communication.

Modern Dutch Jewry is the subject of part 2 of the book, which in reality encompasses chiefly the twentieth century, and whose history stands very much in the shadow of the Holocaust. Inevitably, explaining this catastrophe occupies many of the authors, who find important preconditions to the events of the 1940s in the immediately preceding decades. J. C. H. Blom writes of Jews in the Netherlands from 1870 to 1940 and sees a dual trend in that history: one of integration and assimilation on the one hand and isolation and segregation on the other. The period of assimilation occupied roughly 1870-1920 and was marked by rapid economic and social change throughout the Netherlands including the Jewish community. New opportunities opened for many Jews: some chose to integrate into mainstream Dutch society, becoming thoroughly secular. Others chose to maintain their own Orthodox traditions in the same neighborhoods (mostly in Amsterdam) that had long been exclusively Jewish if not officially a ghetto. Most fell in between these extremes. Yet however thoroughly integrated into Dutch society, Jews continued to be identified and kept at a distance from the center of Dutch social life, and anti-Semitism, though rare and covert, continued to exist. The crises of the 1930s brought back the issues of Jewish otherness, both because of the large influx of German Jewish refugees and the actions of Dutch Jews to negotiate refugee resettlement with Dutch authorities. In a deadly irony, Blom concludes, it was the combination of assimilation and exclusion that made Dutch Jews so particularly prone to the Nazi occupiers' policies. Like their fellow Dutch citizens, Dutch Jews largely went along with German occupation, rendering them less alert to the particular dangers it posed for Jews. Jewish leadership in the Netherlands also failed to note any change, continuing their habits of negotiation and compromise when dealing with German authorities. Selma Leydesdorff takes up the issue of Jewish integration in the Netherlands, in particular the rosy picture of easy and slow integration, which was traditionally the accepted one. While not denying considerable integration of Jews into Dutch society, particularly in comparison with elsewhere in Europe, it is when looking at the Dutch working class that Leydesdorff sees what she labels a still migrant-like community. Even though this community did not speak Yiddish, their Dutch was not quite Dutch either. This difference in language was matched by certain forms of behavior including dress and personal habits. Dutch Jews knew that these made them ineligible for certain jobs and professions, which in turn encouraged the growth of a Jewish economy. The diamond and certain forms of the textile industry became particularly Jewish. Thus even without a tradition of anti-Semitism, the Netherlands was never a country that absorbed Jews to the extent that they were indistinguishable from ordinary citizens.

The remaining chapters in the book necessarily relate to the experience of German occupation and its aftermath. Peter Romijn gives a brief sketch of the interaction between the persecutors, the persecuted, and their environment. The necessary steps for first the isolation and then removal of Dutch Jews were taken in good order, employing the full administrative apparatus of the Dutch state and municipal governments. These included registering all Jews and their property, issuing them new identity cards, stamped with a black J, gradually excluding Jews from economic and social life, steps that Romijn calls driving a wedge between Jews and non-Jews in the Netherlands. Even the February Strike of 1941 in which many of the Dutch protested anti-Jewish policies was only a relatively weak sign of protest. Thus when the deportations started, German policies had succeeded in so thoroughly isolating their Jewish victims and so intimidating Dutch citizens that no effective resistance was possible. Chaya Brasz's chapter serves as a reminder that there is a post-war Jewish history in the Netherlands, albeit one deeply marked by the experience of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. Brasz sees two periods to this history; the first involves the imme-

diate post-war years and the 1950s, the second begins in the 1960s and extends to the present day.

After the end of the war and the first attempts at reconstruction of Jewish life by those who survived, Zionism and the expectation of emigration to Israel dominated the Dutch Jewish community. Emigration, however, never became a mass movement, reaching only 565 in the peak year of 1949. Lack of care and energy in rebuilding a particular Dutch form of Judaism meant in practice the importation of ideas and practices of Reform and Lubavitch Jews. Conflict then between Liberal and Orthodox communities tended to mark the period down to the early 1970s, which explains the failure of Dutch Jews to form an umbrella organization to represent their interests until 1996. Meanwhile, the Netherlands changed from a land of Jewish emigration to one of Jewish immigration, especially immigrants from Israel, who by some estimates now make up 25 percent of all Dutch Jews. Thus Brasz finds in the face of contemporary Dutch Judaism the mixture of old and new communities, free to be distinctly Jewish in the truly tolerant, variegated society of the contemporary Netherlands.

The two last essays can also be divided into war and post-war literary evocations of Jewish life in the Netherlands. The first by Gerrold van der Stroom discusses Anne Frank against the backdrop of the controversy surrounding the publication of the complete and unabridged diaries in 1986. Van der Stroom worked as an editor of the Critical Edition and discusses the history and marketing of the various autobiographical writings left by Anne Frank. The intent of the Critical Edition was to lay to rest accusations that Anne Frank's diary was a forgery perpetrated by her father, Otto. It is true, however, that Otto edited together parts of two versions of his daughter's diaries to form the international bestseller bearing the title *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.* These three versions (a, b, and c) are set apart typographically in the Critical Edition so that the reader can see how the texts are related. Thus the issues of the diary's authenticity have been laid to rest once and for all. But what of the dimensions of Anne Frank's achievements as a writer? Van der Stroom is frankly troubled that Anne has emerged as a saint and martyr, thanks largely to her de-Judaized depiction by Hollywood and Broadway, and is not appreciated as a writer. He argues forcefully that in fact Anne is a great writer who just happened to die young under monstrous circumstances. He is hopeful in seeing others come to the same conclusion and adopting her work into the canon of great world literature.

The author Marga Minco is an interesting analogue to Anne Frank. A Holocaust survivor, not a victim, an author first in middle age and not adolescence, Minco remains a little-known voice outside of the Netherlands, absent even from the Holocaust Museum's bookstore. Though told in fiction, Minco's work is very much about memories of the German occupation in which she employs irony to capture in prose the ineluctable fate of the characters. While describing various forms of irony, Johan P. Snapper, this essay's author, demonstrates that the ultimate ironic twist of Minco's fiction is the struggle for normalcy and cheerfulness by characters who the reader knows are doomed. The unvoiced irony here of course is that while Anne Frank's work is not about the Holocaust and is well-known, Minco's devastatingly effective, minimalist evocations of Holocaust and the post-Holocaust Netherlands remain little appreciated.

Collections of this sort always get a little out of hand despite the best intentions of the strongest-willed editor. No coherent program for future research emerges from these essays in fact. Instead there is a sense of energy and possibility in areas that once seemed settled and certain. And that seems to me to mark a successful book indeed.