



MICHAEL GREEN

AN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE:

Portrayal of Jews
in Dutch French-Language
Periodicals (1680–1715)

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¹ A much-shortened version of this book has been published as “The View of Huguenot Journalists on Jews and Other Religions in their Periodicals in the United Provinces, 1680–1715”, in *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia*, vol. 15 (2017): 25–46. This project was written with the support of the Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Research and Dialogue (FIIRD), and Levant Foundation at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and partially reworked and expanded at the University of Lodz, Poland, within the framework of IDUB grant.

INTRODUCTION

Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

Interreligious and intercultural dialogue has many shapes and features, and can be traced through various historical occurrences. One can think of our own time, when such initiatives are widespread – be it between Christians and Muslims, Muslims and Jews, or between cultural representations of them.¹ When examining the historical context, such dialogue is not immediately evident when considering religious minorities and the dominant majority, as our assumption is that there ought to be an active initiative to make this dialogue happen. Yet, such dialogue happens when two cultures or religions meet. While the “other” was frequently perceived as a threat, often a dialogue with it was actually initiated, without being recognised as such. The Reformation offers us a lesson in this, as it was Lutheran preachers who created the support necessary for the newly-formed religious movement against the old Catholic ways by engaging in conversation with the rulers of various German principalities. Such dialogue and exchange happen when the boundaries set by the religious and cultural communities, and individuals from these communities, are transgressed, thus allowing those coming from outside to gain access to them. Our focus in this book is on two particular religious communities from the early modern period.

Some hundred years after the Reformation, French Huguenots, having been persecuted for their faith in their motherland, migrated (and more often fled) to the United Provinces.² Coming from a country where only the Catholic religion was accepted and from which Jews had already been expelled in 1306, and arriving into a country which could be called “tolerant”, makes Huguenots an interesting case for exploration. Although the body of Huguenot migrants consisted mostly of poorer, poorly-educated people, in this book my focus is on Huguenot intellectuals due to the change in their perception of the Jews and other cultures and religions, and because, contrary to the majority of their compatriots,

¹ Deutsche Historische Institut, with branches in capitals like Moscow and Paris, or the Maison Française, Russkiy Dom, and other similar institutions, would be a good example of this.

² As well as religious persecution, there was an important economical reason for emigration, as shown in D. van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700*, Farnham, 2015.

they left evidence of their opinion in writing. It is therefore particularly interesting to observe the Huguenot journals and gazettes, edited by Huguenot intellectuals living as immigrants in a country where various religious confessions were tolerated, and specifically their attitude towards the Jews. Did they become more accepting towards Jews, who were not held in high regard in France? Our focus here is on the years 1680–1715, in which there was a mass immigration of Huguenots into the United Provinces of the Netherlands. The timespan is important, because within a generation they started to lose their Huguenot identity, and could no longer be seen as “newcomers”.³ Yet the French-language journals and gazettes mention not only Jews, but also Muslims, and natives of various newly-discovered lands as well as places as far away as Siam and China. These depictions will allow us to better assess the image of the Jewish people in our sources.



Illustration 1: Anonymous, *Kaart van de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden* (Map of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands), ca. 1702.

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³ On the Huguenot refuge see: M. Yardeni, *Le refuge protestant*, Paris, 1985; M. Yardeni, *Le refuge huguenot: Assimilation et culture*, Paris, 2002; M. Magdalene, R. von Thadden, *Le refuge Huguenot*, Paris, 1985; H. Bots and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (eds.), *La révocation de l'Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies 1685: Colloque International du Tricentenaire Leyde 1–3 Avril 1985/The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Dutch Republic: International Congress of The Tricentennial Leiden 1–3 April 1985*, Amsterdam, Maarsen, 1986; M. Greengrass, “Protestant Exiles and Their Assimilation in Early Modern England”, in *Immigrants and Minorities*, 4 (1985): 6–81.

The focus on intellectuals, who were not necessarily scholars, is not incidental, as it is mostly they who left written evidence of their views, as part of their participation in the Republic of Letters, and in the non-scholarly press. Until now, most research has focused on the views of Huguenot men of letters in relation to the Jews. An important book on the topic was published several years ago by Myriam Yardeni, in which were examined several of the best-known Huguenot journals, such as the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, *Histoire des ouvrages des savans*, and *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, of Pierre Bayle, Henri Basnage de Beauval and Jean Le Clerc respectively⁴ Yardeni's work is particularly central for understanding how Huguenots, although distinct from the largely anti-Jewish Catholic mentality in France, were not unified in their opinions about the Jews. The ambivalent attitude towards the Jews by these authors and their contemporaries is shown throughout the book: while some Huguenot views could be regarded as pro-Jewish (or "philosemitic" as Yardeni puts it), others had a strong or milder, anti-Jewish character. Building on the findings of Yardeni, who examined the attitudes of French Calvinist scholars in their written output, I do not intend to argue against these conclusions, but to check whether this tendency can be seen in the journals and gazettes of the lower scholarly ranks in the United Provinces, which were also produced in French by Huguenots. At the same time, I will expand this examination into a comparison with Islamic cultures, China and the Kingdom of Siam which are also referred to in these periodicals. While Jews and Judaism, and Islamic culture, are referred to as a religious group, China and Siam are seen first of all as "heathens", and therefore referred to as a separate group to those who belief in monotheism, which makes them a possible point of reference for our discussion.

⁴ M. Yardeni, *Huguenots et Juifs*, Paris, 2008. This book, originally published in Hebrew (1998), gives an excellent overview of the problem of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the early modern period, as well as reflecting on the contributions made to this phenomenon by the views of Luther and Calvin. See also: M. Yardeni, *Anti-Jewish Mentalities in Early Modern Europe*, Lanham, MD., 1990; M. Yardeni (ed.), *Les Juifs dans l'histoire de France*, Leiden, 1980; M. Yardeni, "New Concepts of Post-Commonwealth Jewish History in the Early Enlightenment: Bayle and Basnage", in *European Studies Review*, 8 (1977): 245–258; M. Yardeni, "La religion de la Peyrère et le "Rappel des Juifs", in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 51 (1971): 245–259; M. Yardeni, "Millénarismes protestants et tolérance des Juifs en France au XVII^e siècle", in *Homo Religiosus. Autour de Jean Delumeau*, Paris (1997): 658–664; C.A. Pater, "Calvin, the Jews and the Judaic Legacy", in *In Honor of John Calvin, 1509–1564, Papers from the 1986 International Calvin Symposium McGill University*, E.J. Furcha (ed.), Montreal (1987): 256–295; Ch. Grell (ed.), *La République des Lettres et l'histoire du judaïsme antique: XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles*, Paris, 1992.



Illustration 2. Johannes Jacobsz van den Aveele after Philip Tidemann, *Joodse symbolen en personen uit de Bijbel* (Jewish symbols and persons out of the Bible). Title page for the book: Wilhelmus Goeree, *Voor-bereidselen tot de bybelsche wysheid, en gebruik der heilige en kerklyke historien*, vol. 2, Amsterdam, 1690.

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Moreover, modern scholarship distinguishes between two kinds of Jews as perceived by early modern people (Biblical Jews in various incarnations, and contemporary early modern Jews), but is this really the case?⁵ As we will see below, the attitude towards Jews was much more diverse than might appear. In the following chapters I will demonstrate that we can in fact see at least four different classifications of the Jews by early modern authors. These include, in addition to the two mentioned above, the “Fallen Jews”, those who, having failed to recognise Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Son of God were leading a pitiful existence, their “Old” Testament having been replaced by the New. The fourth category is of Jewish Rabbis, who were so incompetent that they could not interpret the Bible correctly. The nuances in attitudes towards the Jews can be explained from, among others, the perspective of privacy, and this will be the guiding thread throughout the whole book.⁶ To provide the reader with sufficient information on these rather diverse topics, in the following parts of this introduction I will focus on the historical background of the Huguenots and Jews, the Huguenot (and these who tried to pose as such) journals and gazettes as part of the Republic of Letters, and (of particular relevance to the second part of this book) early modern notions of privacy, as these are directly connected with how Jews were portrayed in the lay gazettes.

Historical Background

The Huguenots

To begin with, let us briefly get acquainted with Huguenot history, which has been widely written and rewritten in the past thirty-seven years since 1985, which was the 300-year anniversary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.⁷ The Edict of Fontainebleau, which ended the somewhat relative

⁵ See for example: Y. Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, A. Aronsky (trans.), Oxford (2012): 39–43, 115, 162–164; E.J. Holmberg, *Jews in The Early Modern English Imagination: A Scattered Nation*, Farnham, Burlington (2011): 11–13.

⁶ One can also think of a fifth category of Jew: the eschatological Jews, i.e. those that will be present at the End of Days – a notion that was particularly present in the ideas of Huguenots and Reformed Dutchmen. However, this category is not readily seen in the sources that I analyse here. See for example of this fifth category, see the work of M. van Campen, *Gans Israël: Voetiaanse en coccejaanse visies op de joden gedeurende de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw*, Zoetermeer, 2006.

⁷ On the Huguenots, see in addition to the books mentioned in note 3: É. Labrousse, *‘Une foi, une loi, un roi ?’: Essai sur la Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes*, Geneva, 1985; R.A. Mentzer, A. Spicer (eds.), *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World 1559–1685*,

religious freedom that the Huguenots, a Calvinist religious minority in France, had enjoyed, symbolised the end of an era. Ever since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, France had been home to followers of the Reformers. Their situation varied: if at first they had been somewhat tolerated, towards the 1570s their situation became very bad. Two factions fought each other in the so-called Wars of Religion, which lasted between 1562 and 1598. The situation exploded in 1572, when on St Bartholomew's Day, circa three thousand Huguenots were killed in Paris on the orders of King Charles IX (1550–1574).⁸ It was only in 1598, when Henry IV (1553–1610) signed the Edict of Nantes, that the Huguenots were finally allowed to practise their religion on certain conditions (such as not openly displaying their faith in Catholic towns). They were granted the right to have their own churches (outside city centres and only in specific areas) and schools. As a result, many Huguenot academies and *collèges* (the French equivalent of modern-day high schools) appeared as an alternative to Catholic ones, which were often held by the Jesuits who had a strong proselytising agenda.⁹ Yet throughout the seventeenth century, especially after Louis XIV's (1638–1715) majority, the situation of the Huguenots began to deteriorate. By late 1670s and early 1680s the anti-Huguenot movement was clearly visible at the Court. Huguenots were losing their rights and political

Cambridge, 2002; R.A. Mentzer and B. van Ruymbeke (eds.), *A Companion to the Huguenots*, Leiden, 2016; C. Sample Wilson, *Beyond Belief: Surviving the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France*, Plymouth, 2011; E. Israel's Perry, *From Theology to History: French Religious Controversy and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, The Hague, 1973; Bots, Posthumus Meyjes, *La révocation de l'Édit de Nantes*; Ph. Benedict, *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600–1685*, Aldershot, Burlington, 2001.

⁸ See: A. Jouanna, *The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: The Mysteries of a Crime of State*, Manchester, 2015; D.J. Appleby, *Black Bartholomew's Day: Preaching, Polemic and Restoration Nonconformity*, Manchester, 2007; R.M. Kingdon, *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres, 1572–1576*, Cambridge, Mass., 1988.

⁹ On Jesuit schools, see: D. Julia, "Entre Universel et Local: le Collège jésuite à l'époque moderne", in *Paedagogica Historica*, 40 (2004): 15–31; M. Péronnet, "Les établissements des jésuites dans le royaume de France à l'époque moderne", in *Les jésuites parmi les hommes aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Clermont (1985): 463–479. See also: H.C. Bernard, *The French tradition in education: Ramus to Mme Necker de Saussure*, Cambridge, 1970 [1922]; R. Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education: Its History and Principles Viewed in the Light of Modern Educational Problems*, St Louis, Mo., 1903; On Huguenot public education, see: M. Green, *The Huguenot Jean Rou (1638–1711): Scholar, Educator, Civil Servant*, Paris, 2015, see chapters 1, 4, 5; K. Maag, *Seminary or University? The Genevan Academy and Reformed Higher Education, 1560–1620*, Aldershot, Burlington, 1995; L.J. Méteyer, *L'Académie protestante de Saumur*, Paris, 1933; J.-P. Pittion, *Histoire de l'Académie de Saumur*, online edition, no date. [Accessed 10 August 2011. <http://archives.ville-saumur.fr/am_saumur/app/03_archives_en_ligne/01_academie_protestante/presentation_academie.pdf>].

positions. Academies were closing down and many of the Huguenot scholars had to emigrate in order to make a living.¹⁰ In October 1685, Louis XIV finally revoked the Edict of Nantes, effectively banning the exercise of Calvinism in France. Huguenots were obliged to convert to Catholicism under threat of either death or life sentence to the galleys. Many Huguenots fled France to neighbouring Protestant countries, with the biggest centres of Refuge being the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the German States, and England. In the United Provinces, according to various estimations, the number of refugees varied between fifty-to one hundred and twenty thousand.¹¹ A more accurate number is impossible to calculate due to the difficulty in tracing these refugees, who often changed names by translating them into the language of their new country, and who on many occasions moved from one city or country to another, and even returned to some of their previous stops.

Huguenot Refuge in the United Provinces of the Netherlands

The Huguenot Refuge had several important centres in the United Provinces which had been created long before the Revocation of 1685 by refugees of the first wave in 1572 (following the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day) and by subsequent immigrants who arrived throughout the seventeenth century, following either local persecution in various French cities and towns or by invitation from the Dutch.¹² In the United Provinces the Huguenots were received rather well because they shared the Calvinist faith with the local population. The Dutch Reformed Church, though not an official church, had privileged status. The situation of the Catholics in the United Provinces was worse than that of the Huguenots, because they experienced limitations on their daily lives.¹³ The so-called Walloon Churches, where services

¹⁰ On the economic reasons for the Huguenot emigration, see: Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*. See also Green, *The Huguenot Jean Rou*, chapter 2.

¹¹ W. Frijhoff, "Uncertain Brotherhood: The Huguenots in the Dutch Republic", in *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, B. van Ruymbeke, R.J. Sparks (eds.), Columbia (2003): 128–171; Yardeni, *Le refuge protestant*, 66. See also: O. Stanwood, *The Global Refuge. Huguenots in an Age of Empire*, New York, 2020.

¹² The latter was usually the case for Huguenot scholars, such as the theologian André Rivet (1572–1651). See: H.J. Honders, *Andreas Rivetus als invloedrijk gereformeerd theoloog in Holland's bloeitijd*, The Hague, 1930; A.G. Opstal, *André Rivet: Een invloedrijk hugenoot aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik*, Hardewijk, 1937. For an account of the emigration of the Huguenots, see: C. Chappell Lougee, *Facing the Revocation: Huguenot Families, Faith, and the King's Will*, New York, 2017.

¹³ See: Ch.H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*, Cambridge, Mass. (2008): 150–155. See also a detailed account of the limitations on Catholic worship: A.-J. Gelderblom, J.L. de Jong, M. van Vaeck (eds.), *The Low Countries as*

were conducted in French, were established by the first wave of refugees, which included also refugees from the Southern Netherlands. They were frequented not only by the French-speaking migrants but also by the local elite.¹⁴ This created a bridge between the newcomers and the Dutch, as these churches had not only a religious function, but played an important societal role, serving as a meeting place, where one could establish important contacts for finding a job, a place to live, hear the news, etc. The most important centres were The Hague, Rotterdam, Leiden, Amsterdam and Utrecht, but there were Huguenots in many other places, such as Leeuwarden and Groningen.¹⁵



Illustration 3. Abraham Bloeteling, *Blauwbrug te Amsterdam* (Blue bridge in Amsterdam), ca. 1663–1690.

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a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs, Leiden, 2004; C. Lenarduzzi, *Katholiek in de Republiek. De belevingswereld van een religieuze minderheid 1570–1750*, Nijmegen, 2019.

¹⁴ See: E. Bezzina, “The Practice of Ecclesiastical Discipline in the Huguenot Refugee Church of Amsterdam, 1650–1700”, in *Emancipating Calvin Culture and Confessional Identity in Francophone Reformed Communities. Essays in Honor of Raymond A. Mentzer, Jr.*, K.E. Spierling, E.A. de Boer, R. Ward Holder (eds.), Leiden (2018): 148–174; Frijhoff, “Uncertain Brotherhood”.

¹⁵ On the Huguenots in the United Provinces, see: Bots, *La révocation de l'Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies*; G.C. Gibbs, “Some Intellectual and Political Influences of the Huguenot Emigrés in the United Provinces, c. 1680–1730”, in *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 90 (1975): 255–287.