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Making Jews Dutch

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Chapter four

Self-labelling and othering: Images of the Jew

[...H]ow it would carry unpleasant and tragic consequences if I would shave my beard; every power in Amsterdam and Holland knows I have worn it since my childhood.¹

In a letter to a reform-minded friend, Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam Samuel Berenstein writes the above defense of his facial hair. The beard was the identity marker of Berenstein's position; it signaled his devoutness, his commitment to Judaism, and his religious leadership in the community. Shaving would send the message that he would relinquish his Jewish standards in order to obtain worldly recognition. The beard was not merely a religious observation, but proof of his stature and Jewishness. Jews themselves viewed it either as an important signal of one's commitment to Judaism or as a mandatory religious rule. However, the beard was also critiqued. Non-Jews and the *maskilim* regarded the beard as a sign of Jewish backwardness, associating it with Eastern European immigrants and a strict adherence to the Jewish religion. The beard epitomized Jewish maladjustment. In spite of these negative associations, many Jews saw the beard as a sign of religiosity and credibility. The beard is just one example of how Jews identified themselves.

This chapter identifies various modes of response in the way Jews labelled themselves. Visibility to Jews and fellow citizens was pivotal. Some old identity markers such as the beard and observance of the dietary laws were shared by the orthodox and the *maskilim* alike, while a dispositive such as military service became an identity marker for the *maskilim*.

Jews and non-Jews actively engaged with Jewish recognizability. The formation of images of the Jews constructed and legitimized governmental policy. Moreover, citizenship for Jews altered Jewish self-perception as well as how Jews were perceived by those outside the community. In a response to the (budding) emancipation of the Jews, non-Jews portrayed a wide variety of Jewish images. This chapter discusses the new, emerging images of the Jew as citizen as well as the enlightened regeneration discourse that constructed an image of the backward Jew, a victim of prejudice,

¹ ACA, 1241-48.

persecution, and discrimination, images that displayed the Jew as inherently 'other'. These new discourses on the Jew influenced and legitimized governmental reform of the Jewish communities. But this was not a one-sided process; the interaction between negative and positive discourses on the Jew also contributed to processes of self-labelling. Jews did not merely reject pejorative and well-known Jewish representations but used them as building blocks for their own identity. Both the Dutch Jewish communities and their (Gentile) surroundings thus contributed in closely interrelated ways to shaping the Jewish image. As such, the construction of the Jewish image is a continuing process, revealing Jewish agency and reflectiveness in shaping their own identities in a secularizing environment.

1. The Jewish self-image

In the Jewish emancipation narrative, the break with tradition is an important step towards social acceptance and juridical equality.² Removal of distinctive Jewish features, such as clothing and hairstyle, are seen as forerunners of integration. Secularization in this meta-history is thus prefaced by the adoption of Western dress.³ Dressing according to the latest fashion, however, does not inevitably signal assimilation and religious decline. Fashionable dress is, after all, a matter of social mobility. This is especially striking considering the fact that a large number of Dutch Jews were poor and lacked proper clothing. This poverty was apparently so ubiquitous that in 1813 the Amsterdam municipality forbade Jews to go around naked.⁴ Moreover, the protocols (*pinkasim*) only rarely documented warnings against the adoption of 'modern' fashion.⁵

There is no necessary connection between assimilation and the abandonment of Jewish dress. Jews wore the same clothing as others. A book from 1758 listing and

² See for instance Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*; Feiner, *The Origins of Jewish Secularization in Eighteenth-Century Europe*; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History*; Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750*.

³ The loss of religion and the abandonment of traditional clothes was a development which Israel believed was spurred by disappointment in Judaism, brought on by the exposure of the false messiah Sabbatai Zvi in the seventeenth century. However, Israel does not clarify what exactly the traditional Jewish costume was. Furthermore, Israel also fails to distinguish between the costumes of the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim. Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997), 277–278.

⁴ One can wonder however, whether this decree was based on a real situation or merely reinforced the already prevailing image of Jewish incivility. For the decree, see Salvador E. Bloemgarten, "De Amsterdamse Joden gedurende de eerste jaren van de Bataafse Republiek (1795–98) II," *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 2 (1967): 62.

⁵ Protocolbuch I, 143, 144; Protocolbuch II, 243.

describing criminal Jews does not mention a distinctive Jewish style of dress.⁶ The Dutch juridical archive likewise records no black garb or sidelocks (*peyes*) as distinctive Jewish features but only wigs and dark hair and eyes.⁷ Therefore, the idea that the adoption of foreign dress was an ongoing trend in Jewish integration into Dutch society is contested by the lack of distinctive Jewish clothing.⁸ Although Dutch Jews were not discernible by a specific style of dress, looking Jewish and behaving in a Jewish way remained important aspects for the construction of a Jewish self-image. As a matter of fact, conspicuous Jewishness, however it may have been variously defined by different Jewish factions, was pivotal for their self-image.

The Jewish beard

Notwithstanding the absence of Jewish attire, some male Jews, especially scholars, rabbis, and devout Jews, were recognizable by their beards. Because of this distinctive feature, Nicolaas Hoefnagel, an author of satirical periodicals, pejoratively dubbed Amsterdam Jewry the “bearded nation,” a sarcastic word play on the political autonomy of the Jewish community before 1796.⁹ The Jewish beard custom resulted from the biblical prohibition to shave the corners of the face or to touch the skin with a razor (Lev. 19:27). Local variations in interpretation caused many different beard styles throughout Europe. For instance, some scholars were of the opinion that the ruling only referred to razors and permitted trimming the beard with scissors.¹⁰ Others interpreted the ruling kabbalistically, connecting the beard to divine grace, believing that through each separate beard hair godly energy was channeled. Isaac Luria (1534–1572), founder of the Lurianic Kabbalah, was known to keep his hands off of his beard in order to

⁶ J.J. Bierbrouwer, *Beschrijving van verdagte joodse dieven* (Cassel, 1758) and C.P.T. Schwenchen, *Notizen über die berüchtigsten jüdischen, Gauner und Spitzbuben, welche sich gegenwärtig in Deutschland und an dessen Gränzen umhertreiben nebst genauer Beschreibung ihrer person. Nach Criminal-Akten und sonstigen zuverlässigen Quellen bearbeitet und in alphabetischer Ordnung zusammengestellt* (Marburg, Cassel, 1820).

⁷ Florike Egmond, “Contours of Identity: Poor Ashkenazim in the Dutch Republic,” in *Dutch Jewish History III*, edited by Joseph Michman (Assen, Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1993), 213.

⁸ Notwithstanding the lack of evidence, the perception of the Ashkenazi Jew as someone dressed in traditional clothing is strong. In an analysis of the etchings of Bernard Picart, Samantha Baskind describes the Ashkenazim as wearing traditional clothing and the Sephardim as dressing according to the latest fashion, while in fact both of them wear similar clothing. The only difference between them is that the Ashkenazi bride wears a marriage belt. Samantha Baskind, “Bernard Picart’s Etchings of Amsterdam Jews,” *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 2 (2007): 49–50. Cf. Alfred Rubens, *A History of Jewish Costume* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 204–211.

⁹ van Cleeff-Hiegentlich, “Eerlyke smousen – Hoe zien die ’er uyt myn heer?” 60.

¹⁰ Mishnah Mak 3,5, Sifra, Kedoshim 6.

prevent hairs from falling out.¹¹ Generally, kabbalists avoided touching their beards and kept lost beard hairs in their prayer books. The ex-assistant conservator of the Library Rosenthaliana, Bianca Oortwijn, regularly complained to me about the appearance of beard hairs in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jewish prayer books. The custom of preserving beard hairs was thus also common in Amsterdam.¹²

In particular, the beard identified Eastern European Jewish immigrants, as they were accustomed to growing facial hair. The custom of Polish Jews to let their facial hair grow was influenced by both the beard fashion in Eastern Europe and by the Hasidim who attached a special kabbalistic meaning to beard hairs. A Huguenot diplomat in London observed in 1729 that “if one saw a Jew wearing a beard...one could be certain that he was either a rabbi or a very recent immigrant.”¹³ In addition, in a *purimshpiel* (1798) from Amsterdam, the Polish character, pretending to be a Hasidic miracle-working rabbi, speaks about his beard: “What? Shall I shave my beard? I am not an Ashkenazi *mamzer* [bastard]! My beard, which I have grown with wisdom, shall I shave? My enemies will not survive that!”¹⁴ It was apparently so extremely funny and outrageous to shave one’s beard that his enemies would die from laughing. He contrasted the beard fashion of Polish Jews with the clean-shaven faces of German or Ashkenazi Jews and by calling the latter bastards; thus he placed them outside of the Jewish framework.

The beard was, however, also a common Jewish feature in the Ashkenazi community.¹⁵ During many Jewish Holidays, such as the intermediate days of Sukkot and Passover, as well as during periods of mourning, Jews were prohibited to shave. In the predominantly observant Jewry, this ruling, at least temporarily, resulted in the appearance of facial hair. Not wearing a beard was a transgression, or at least a sign of one’s immorality, a view which can be found in a letter to the chief rabbi of Amsterdam, Moses Löwenstamm. In the letter, the writer complained about the immoral conduct of a fellow Jew. According to the writer, this man seduced a widow into a forbidden sexual

¹¹ Elliott Horowitz, “Beard,” <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Beards>.

¹² I would like to thank Bianca Oortwijn for sharing this information with me. Serendipity is indeed found in unexpected places.

¹³ Cited by Elliott Horowitz, “The Early Eighteenth Century Confronts the Beard: Kabbalah and Jewish Self-Fashioning,” *Jewish History* 1–2 (1994): 109.

¹⁴ Fuks, *All is Well*, 7.

¹⁵ See for instance several reprinted etchings in Gans, *Memorboek. Platenatlas van het leven der joden in Nederland van de middeleeuwen tot 1940*, 318, 319, 322, 323, 328, 335, and 345.

relationship and to the writer's great horror had been seen "without a beard and with the sides [of his face] shaved." The complainant had failed in leading the transgressor to the right path, and he asked if the rabbi could intervene.¹⁶ Unfortunately, the response of Moses to this letter is unknown. The letter shows that a clean-shaven face was connected with irreligiosity and immorality. Moreover, shaving was regarded as a deviation from common Jewish conduct, and the letter shows how disturbing such behavior was for some Jews.

A clean-shaven face was associated with modernity. Beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the beard gradually fell out of fashion in Western Europe, developing from the van Dyke beard, a then-popular stiletto beard, to a clean-shaven face, which came to symbolize the civilized West.¹⁷ The association of shaving with being modern is particularly striking in the portraits of Dutch *maskilim*. Dressed in the latest fashion and without a beard, they look confidently modern. The faces of *maskilim* such as Jonas Daniel Meijer, Hartog de Hartog Lemon, and Samuel Elias Stein resembled the clean-shaven faces of the Sephardim. Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787), a Dutch Sephardic Jew, connects the Sephardic outward appearance with sophistication and cosmopolitanism and accordingly praises their shaving and dressing habits. "The manners of the Portuguese Jews are also very different from the rest, the former have neither beards nor anything peculiar in their dress. The rich among them vie with the other nations of Europe in refinement, elegance and show, and differ from them in worship only."¹⁸ Even though the Kabbalah was highly admired by many Sephardim, they refrained from attaching a kabbalistic interpretation to the beard and opted instead for a beardless face.

Sometimes the more trimmed the beard was, the more inclined the wearer was to Enlightenment thought. For instance, the portrait of Chief Rabbi of Zwolle H.J. Hertzveld

¹⁶ ACA, 1241-466.

¹⁷ Peter the Great was well aware of the power of appearance and issued a royal decree in 1698 that all state officials were obligated to shave. In 1705 his decree was further extended to include all citizens. The social message of the beard and its connection to the Western lifestyle did not go unnoticed by other political leaders. Instead of coercing all of the population into a modern outlook, they opted for a firm distinction between Jews and Christians. Thus, in 1705 the Jews of Königsberg were prohibited to remove their facial hair, and in 1748 Frederick the Great of Prussia ordered that all married Jews should wear a beard. The beard was here transformed into an important, coercive Jewish identity marker. Cf. E.V. Ansimov, *The Reforms of Peter the Great: Progress through Coercion in Russia*, trans. J.T. Alexander (M.E. Sharpe: New York, 1993), 218–219; Elliott Horowitz, "The Early Eighteenth Century Confronts the Beard: Kabbalah and Jewish Self-Fashioning," *Jewish History* 1–2 (1994): 108–109.

¹⁸ Cited by Horowitz, "The Early Eighteenth Century Confronts the Beard," 110.

shows a short, trimmed beard with only some hair on the sides of his face, while his moustache is almost completely absent.¹⁹ Hertzveld clearly modeled his beard according to the latest fashion in men's facial hair, where the sides of the beard were prominently grown. However, the portrait of the likewise Enlightenment-inspired Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam Samuel Berenstein shows a luxuriant beard with no sign of trimming or cutting.²⁰ Clearly the dispositive of the beard fashion did not develop according to the lines of 'conservative' or 'progressive' thought, but entangled various secular and religious discursive strands.

Samuel Berenstein's beard

Shaving or wearing a beard was an important Jewish identity marker, signaling someone's adherence to one of the many currents in the Jewish world. In a lengthy letter in 1813, Samuel Berenstein addresses the issue of someone in the Jewish community who had recently shaved his beard.²¹ Throughout the letter, this person is called S.²² Berenstein knew the letter's recipient through his work at the Jewish seminary. In the letter, Berenstein elaborates on the meaning of the beard, its place in Judaism, and his own personal feelings concerning the clean-shaven face of S., showing his proclivity towards the *Sturm und Drang* movement. Struggling with his role as the religious conscience of the community, Berenstein is torn between maintaining their friendship and setting a moral standard. The internal conflict shows the increasing politicization and polarization of the interpretation of Jewish law, in which the beard functioned as a metaphor for conservatism.

Berenstein begins his letter with an exposé of different opinions in Jewish sources concerning the beard. "I shall explain my reasons and you can judge my conduct," he tells his fellow scholar in the "theological institution," to which the letter was addressed.

Shall we judge by our Law that all shaving of the beard should be forbidden, according to the law in the book [Lev.] 19:17 and according to the priestly law 21:5? Yes, it is

¹⁹ Picture in Wallet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders*, 169.

²⁰ Picture in Wallet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders*, 102.

²¹ ACA, 1241-460.

²² It appears from the letter that the person was part of the same religious institution as Berenstein. I suspect that he is referring to the Hebraist Samuel Israel Mulder (1792-1862).

true the law only says you shall not damage the corners of your beard. However, shaving should be forbidden, particularly as the great sages are in doubt as to where exactly the corners of the beard are; therefore the God-fearing absolutely do not touch their beard with a razor. So, if we take the law literally, shaving of the beard is totally forbidden.

He concludes that the Talmud does “not forbid shaving itself but rather the use of a razor.”

Berenstein further proposes a kabbalistic defense of the beard. “Only the Kabbalah or secret science recommends the observance of wearing a beard,” Berenstein expounds as he refers to a century-old dispute between the writers of *Be'er Esek* (R. Shabbtai Baer, d. 1674) and the writer of *divrei Yosef* (R. Yosef Ergas, 1685–1730).²³ The latter “explains extensively that the ones who remove their beard attach credence to the Talmud and that the commandment [not to remove their beard] is only applicable for the kabbalists.” Berenstein recalls here a well-known debate between Rabbi Baer and Ergas about the question of whether Rabbi Menachem Azariah de Fano (Rama m’Fano, 1548–1620), heir to Lurianic Kabbalah, wore a beard or not.²⁴ Berenstein continues, “[A]lthough the Portuguese made many of their regulations according to the Kabbalah, I unfortunately have no knowledge of the Kabbalah or secret science,” and he complains that he never met a person who could transcend the explanation beyond its textual description. Here, Berenstein distances himself from reading the commandments through the lens of the Kabbalah and shows his hesitance about giving an extra spiritual meaning to the biblical ruling. Moreover, it displays his dislike of irrational knowledge and shows his proclivity toward Enlightenment thought.

After reviewing the scholarly debate, Berenstein reveals that, according to him, the beard is a conditional Jewish commandment. He “respects the man with a beard as much as the man without a beard” and clarifies that “people wearing it could be ignorant and people who do not could be great scholars; one could not tell.” He does not automatically presume that a beard is a prerequisite for either scholarship or correct

²³ In this letter, Berenstein is in doubt how to spell *esek* (עֶסֶק) as he also writes it as *gnesek* with the typical Sephardim use to pronounce the Hebrew letter *ayin*.

²⁴ Cf. <http://seforim.blogspot.nl/2006/08/jews-beards-and-portraits.html> (accessed 16-11-2012); Horowitz, "The Early Eighteenth Century Confronts the Beard," 95–115; and also by Horowitz, "On the Significance of the Beard in Jewish Communities in the East and in Europe in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times," *Pe'amim* (1994): 124–148 [in Hebrew].

moral conduct. By regarding the beard as optional and granting the right to personal interpretation of Jewish law, Berenstein displays an open-mindedness that, compared to his father-in-law Moses Löwenstamm, with his emphasis on *machmeir* (strictness), sounds surprisingly enlightened.²⁵

In the second part of the letter, Berenstein addresses an issue quite common in the German countries, namely the progressive assimilation and conversion of German Jewry as a means of obtaining civil rights and acceptance in upper-class circles.²⁶ Berenstein considered the removal of conspicuous Jewish features, such as the beard, in order to acquire a better position as betrayal. “I judge totally differently the man who wore his beard for many years and suddenly removes it, only to gain worldly benefits... How could I respect him, someone who does not care about the general opinion?” Berenstein continues, “[E]ven though I would not condemn this behavior, and would treat him with respect, I would jeopardize the love and respect of my community, which I need so badly.” In other words, his personal position becomes questionable if he respects S.’s choices. The pressure of public opinion, which apparently was in favor of keeping the beard, compelled Berenstein to condemn the behavior of S.

Moreover, Berenstein positions himself as a moral leader. “Would my behavior and thinking not have the greatest influence on their moral conduct?” Berenstein rhetorically asks, defending the community’s favoring of the beard. “Because [the community] ha[s] the opinion that S. committed a great crime, [in my support] I would be guilty of their moral corruption.” Since the community regards the shaving of the beard as a criminal act, he cannot side with S., as this would mean he would permit deviant behavior. It appears that many people in the community still regarded violation of Jewish law as a criminal act, even though the letter was written 20 years after the Ashkenazi community lost their punitive powers. The community still expected that transgression of Jewish law was to be punished, and consequently Berenstein succumbed.

Berenstein argues that the welfare of the community should take priority and that he, therefore, must sacrifice his friendship with S.

²⁵ ACA, 1241-460.

²⁶ For an analysis of personal motives for Jewish conversion to Christianity, see Herz, *How Jews became Germans: the History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin*.

The pleasure that I had in being acquainted with him would have overcome my disapproval. The habit of conversing with him about important scientific issues has made him dear to me. Only this publicly coming forward, which has so many important and dangerous consequences, obliged me to distance myself from him. Nevertheless, I cannot hate him, and will always have the highest regard for his virtues and knowledge. Unfortunately, out of carefreeness, persuasion, and seduction, he took a plunge that could mark him for all of his life... Thus, I had to distance myself from him for the benefit of the not-so-enlightened part of me.

However, Berenstein is willing to welcome his friend back if he repents. "Even though it is painful to me, it is possible that after his behavior has been corrected, there will be a time that I will have the power to approach him again. But now I have to give the world proof of how much his wavering displeases me."²⁷ Public figures like Berenstein and S. had a moral responsibility to demonstrate proper religious conduct for the Jewish community. Even the slightest leniency in observance was not a personal matter but had become politicalized; removal of a visible Jewish identity marker signaled the adoption of a different set of values. By prioritizing public opinion over his own religious authority, Berenstein's actions betray a shift in power from the learned to the public. In this case, the community demarcated the boundaries between right and wrong.

Berenstein's motivation to ignore and distance himself from S. was not based solely on textual religious obligations. He feared jeopardizing his moral leadership and image. Moreover, he felt compelled to set a moral example, and being on friendly terms with S. would send the wrong message. Apparently Berenstein not only regarded the beard as a religious obligation, he also identified with it. For him, the sheer idea of having to go without it horrified him and deeply touched his perception of Judaism. He was, for better or worse, a symbol of Jewishness, and his position compelled him to wear a beard. Unluckily for his friend S., this meant that Berenstein sacrificed their friendship in order to maintain his moral image. Although Berenstein welcomed many enlightened initiatives, the shaving of the beard was a step too far.

For Jews, the beard signaled their adherence and commitment to a particular group. Yet each specific group attached different, sometimes overlapping and contradictory meanings to it; in the dispositive of the beard, both secular and religious

²⁷ ACA, 1241-48.

discourses knotted in various ways. For instance, for some the absence of the beard signaled one's adoption of Enlightenment thought, while others considered its absence a religious transgression or merely a Sephardic custom. Kabbalists regarded the beard as an instrument of connection to the Divine Spirit, while Berenstein used his beard to show his commitment to the Jewish community. Others considered the beard a sign of ones 'backward', Eastern-European background. Thus a traditional identity marker such as the beard triggered a phletora of Jewish responses. As these cases show, the responses and meanings attached to the beard departed from the lines of either 'orthodox' or 'enlightened', 'modern' or 'traditional', or even 'observant' or 'non-observant'.

Eating as a Jew²⁸

Embracing traditional identity markers was not a response uniquely characteristic of the orthodox faction. In the case of eating kosher, both the orthodox and the *maskilim* identified their Jewishness with the Jewish dietary laws. Throughout the history of the Ashkenazi Jewry in Amsterdam, the meat hallmeat hall symbolized the intertwining of Jewish and civil law. The meat hallmeat hall combined the Jewish sense of community, economic interests, and Jewish law. It was the only kosher meat hallmeat hall and the community's main source of income. The transition of the Jews from foreigners to citizens ended the monopoly of community-run institutions such as the meat hallmeat hall. Well after the formal abolition of the *parnasim's* power to enforce a kosher diet on the Jewish population, observance of the dietary rules continued to be an important aspect of being Jewish. Not eating kosher was a visible sign of one's disbelief, and it demarcated for many the boundaries of their Jewish identity.²⁹ Consequently, *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) and the meat hallmeat hall's management became polemical focal points.

Before 1796, the *parnasim* required the Ashkenazim to purchase meat at the community meat hallmeat hall. Meat bought elsewhere was considered unkosher (*treyfe*) and the *parnasim* punished offenders severely from 1649 onwards with fines and bans. Transgression of Jewish law, the *parnasim* believed, was a "stumbling block for

²⁸ Parts of this paragraph were previously published in Tsila Rådecker, "Uniting and Dividing: Social Aspects of the Eighteenth-Century Ashkenazi Meat Hall in Amsterdam," *Zutot* 1 (2010): 81–88.

²⁹ Rådecker, "Uniting and Dividing," 82.

the prosperity of the Jewish community” and was therefore an offense against the whole community.³⁰ The case of Tsadok Abraham in 1740 serves as an example of the *parnasim*’s exceptionally harsh rulings. Tsadok was caught eating and selling non-kosher meat. The latter transgression, selling *treyfe* meat, caused many other Jews to sin and so provoked the wrath of the Lord. The sad coincidence of the death of one of his children was used by the *parnasim* as a punishment. They refused to bury his child until he repented of his sins.³¹ This example shows that the *parnasim* sometimes went out of their way to protect the virtue and income of the community.³²

The meat hallmeat hall was an important source of income for the *parnasim*. For every pound of meat, one five-cent piece (*stuiver*) was taxed. This was a high tax rate compared to the kosher fat price of 25 cents a pound. Compared to non-kosher meat, which had a price that ranged between 10 and 15 cents a pound, kosher meat was not only expensive but also heavily taxed.³³ A study by D.M. Sluys shows that for the years 1742–1743 the *parnasim* made 23,948 guilders in profit on meat taxes. The following year the profit increased to 27,907 guilders, an enormous sum compared to the average wage of one guilder per day for an unskilled laborer.³⁴ However, these profits were not for personal use; most of it went straight into the poor relief funds. The need for the *parnasim* to levy taxes on meat was a result of the poverty of the Ashkenazim. Because of the high number of Ashkenazim on poor relief, the *parnasim* were in constant need of money in order to provide for the structural monthly allowances for the poor (*kitsves*), for the distribution of *matzes* during Passover, and for peat in the winter months. Since the majority of Jews living in the Jewish quarter lacked a taxable income, the *parnasim* had to use indirect taxation on kosher food to sustain the community.

During the eighteenth century, congregants attacked the *parnasim* for the way they handled the finances, and modern scholars tend to agree with this criticism.³⁵ The

³⁰ See for example Protocolbuch II, 7.

³¹ See Protocolbuch II, 64. Cf. Sluys, “Het halwezen bij de Joodsche gemeenten te Amsterdam,” 118. According to him, the child was buried on 20 November 1740 at the cemetery in Zeeburg.

³² For more on the delayed burial, see chapter five.

³³ Sluys, “Het halwezen bij de Joodsche gemeenten te Amsterdam,” 103, 173, and 181.

³⁴ Ibid, 153. For wages in the early modern period in Amsterdam, see H. Nusteling, *Welvaart en Werkgelegenheid in Amsterdam 1540–1860* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), 252.

³⁵ Marco van Leeuwen, “Arme Amsterdamse joden en de strijd om hun eigen integratie aan het begin van de negentiende eeuw,” in *De Gelykstaat der Joden. Inburgering van een minderheid*, edited by Hetty Berg (Amsterdam 1996); Judith Bellifante, “The Ideal of Jewish Tradition Versus the Reality of the Jewish Poor,” *Studia Rosenthalia. Tijdschrift voor joodse wetenschap en geschiedenis in Nederland* 1 (1996); S.E.

maskilim from the *naye kille* especially condemned the manner in which funds for the poor were raised. They considered the taxes on meat unfair because they made no distinction between the rich and the poor.³⁶ Furthermore, they accused the *parnasim* of being corrupt by taking advantage of their monopoly and selling inferior meat to the poor.³⁷ Consequently, the *Diskursn* of the *naye kille* concentrated their critique on the meat hallmeat hall. For example, comments made in the *Diskursn* indicate that the best cuts were only sold to the rich: “the breast, the ribs, the shoulder. The poor man doesn’t live to see them.”³⁸

According to the *naye kille*, the manner in which the *alte kille* butchered the animals was a deviation from Jewish tradition. The *naye kille* ridiculed the *alte kille*’s *shokhtim* (ritual slaughterers) for their mishandling of the cattle and their clumsy behavior. The mocking is full of allusions to sex, common in many *Purim* plays (*purimshpieln*), especially when referring to men handling cattle.³⁹ Thus Yankev satirizes the *alte kille*’s slaughterers:

The *parnasim* said that Herts Purim-ponem [Carnival-face] should go out and slaughter, but Leyzer Peyger and Zalman Shoukhet should go with him. So a *kriye*, [ritual of tearing clothes as a sign of mourning], I mean a trio [threesome], of *shokhtim* went out: a feeler, a groper, and a thruster. This is the explanation: the feeler, Leyzer Peyger, in order to take care of the knife; the groper, Zalman, in order to check if the cattle are fat; the thruster, our teacher, the Rabbi Herts Purim. Those three arrived at Kasper Zomerkamp’s in the Elandstraat. Our teacher and rabbi, Yoel the porter, was there with all the other porters and peelers. Herts Purim-ponem said: “Porter, hold the head. I want to slaughter.” But the others didn’t want to. Herts gave a butcher’s boy a blow, so he held the head. Purim-ponem starts to slaughter, and instead of the blessing he says: “Oh, oh I hit him.” But the butcher’s boy says: “Stinker, mean man, do

Bloemgarten, “De Amsterdamse Joden gedurende de eerste jaren van Bataafse Republiek (1795–1798),” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 1 (1968); D.M. Sluys, “Hoogduits-joods Amsterdam van 1635 tot 1795” in *Geschiedenis der joden in Nederland*, edited by H. Brugmans and A. Frank (Amsterdam, 1940).

³⁶ Fair distribution of the poor tax on meat also inspired Mendele Moyker Sforim in 1869 to write a play about the tax on meat and the corruption of the community officials regarding its distribution to the poor. See *Di Takse*, in *Ale Verk, V: Di Takse; Entdekung fun Vohlin; A Shtodt in Mizrekh-vant* (Warschau, 1914).

³⁷ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*.

³⁸ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the community*, 34.

³⁹ Evi Butzer, “Die Anfänge der jiddischen purim shpiln in ihrem literarischen und kulturgeschichtlichen Kontext” (Buske, 2003), 155.

you want to be a slaughterer? You have killed it but you've made it *treyfe!*" And the boy goes and cuts the windpipe and the gullet. Only then does the cow start to bleed.⁴⁰

Besides references to sexual behavior, the anecdote adopts a literary device of the *purimshpil*, namely inversion of the 'social order', or turning the world upside down.⁴¹ Reversal is used as a polemical tool to parody the *alte kille's* administration of kosher butchering (*shechitah*). Consequently, everything is turned upside down, as the *shokhtim* transgress almost every rule of the *shechitah*. They injured the cow and failed at cutting its neck with one stroke; therefore they made the meat unfit for kosher consumption.⁴² According to the writers, the *alte kille* behaved in a manner that was unkosher and demonstrated ignorance of Jewish law, a claim often made in the *Diskursn*.⁴³

The *alte kille*, in its turn, accused the *naye kille* of transgression. According to its members, the *naye kille* sold unkosher meat and violated the Jewish dietary laws. The separation between secular and religious authority enabled the *naye kille* to establish their own meat hall. This annoyed the *alte kille* and also reduced their income. Not surprisingly, the *alte kille* constantly accused the *naye kille* of transgressing Jewish law. Criticism was directed either at the *naye kille's* mismanagement or at individual *naye kille* members. For example, in the *Diskursn* of the *alte kille* the characters Gumpel and Yankev accuse Dovid Kurlander, the head of the *naye kille's* meat hall, of corruption. They charge him with eating the best pieces of meat while selling the inferior cuts to the customers.

"The maid of a rich man from your *naye kille* has told me that they often had to throw meat out into the water last summer because they couldn't swallow it." Yankev: "They don't have to do that anymore. Mr. Kurlander has taken care of that. Because he was afraid that the meat would – God forbid – become spoiled (because it is, alas, in very

⁴⁰ In Jewish ritual slaughtering, the animal should be healthy without signs of defects and the butcher should cut the veins of the neck quickly in one blow with the use of a very sharp knife. As the story indicates, the cow wasn't slaughtered according to the Jewish regulations.

⁴¹ Ahuva Belkin, "The 'Low' Culture of the Purimshpil," in *Yiddish Theatre: New Approaches*, edited by Joel Berkowitz (Oxford/Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003), 40.

⁴² Injured and crippled animals are unfit for Jewish consumption, and the knife of the *shokhet* should be razor-sharp so it will immediately cut through the veins.

⁴³ For instance, in the *Diskursn* the *alte kille* is often ridiculed for their supposed ignorance. Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*, 158, 160, 210, 242, 244, 250, 252, 278, 280, 290, and 324.

little demand), he has eaten it himself. Namely, he hasn't wronged the poor. He has only eaten the choicest meat, poor thing."⁴⁴

In another *Diskurs*, Kurlander appeared again in a fictitious list of upcoming plays as *The Great Meat Scoffer from Kurland*.⁴⁵ Although many accusations made in the *Diskursn* should not be taken seriously, this accusation had a solid basis because the *naye kille's* community records mention his fraudulent conduct.⁴⁶

Personal attacks on well-known members of the *naye kille* were a rewarding subject. Besides general accusations of *naye kille* members as scum and lowlifes, the violation of Jewish dietary laws, according to the *alte kille*, underlines their turn away from Judaism. Interestingly, the German *maskilim's* flirtation with the Sephardic lifestyle is also parodied in yet another allusion to an imaginary play in the *Diskursn*:

Next Friday, 16 Shevat 5558 [2 February 1798] a company for the club Adas Kourakh [Rebellions] will perform in their theatre: *Arnoldus, or: The Great Crook* a play in very many acts, by Mr. Haker. Afterwards: *The Slanderer*, a play in 3 acts by Mr. de Jong. To conclude, an Allemande will be danced by Signor D...Hes and Signora R... de Jong. N.B. The foreigner Johann Friedrichsfeld will seek the recommendation of the esteemed audience for *The Slanderer*. Begins at 4 o'clock exactly.⁴⁷

On this topic, Gumpel remarks, "I would like to know whether they've sung *Tsur mushelo akhalnu* at their meal."⁴⁸ Here Gumpel makes a wordplay on the Sabbath hymn, "the rock from which we have eaten" (*tsur mishelo akhalnu*), and turns it into "the mussels [*mushelo*] from which we have eaten." Mussels are, of course, not kosher. The persons accused of eating non-kosher meat were all members of the *naye kille*, such as *manhig* Aaron Hakker and David Friedrichsfeld. The writers Christianized their names in order to indicate that the person in question adopted too many Christian manners, turning David into Johan and Aaron into Arnoldus. The pun on the original Jewish name was intended to expose the non-Jewishness of the *naye kille* members.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 266.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 384.

⁴⁶ ACA, 714-2362 Notulen van de directeuren 1804-1808, 5-6.

⁴⁷ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*, 310.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The writers also charged the *naye kille* members for their assumed leniency towards the Jewish dietary laws. Thus, when the character Anshel asks for something to eat, Gumpel immediately replies, “Why don’t you take a slice of bread with butter and meat? You’re with the *naye kille*, aren’t you?”⁴⁹ In a fictional theatre announcement, the writers emphasize the *naye kille*’s supposed transgression of the dietary laws as the announcement divulges: “the audience will be served meat and milk, capons with butter, sausage with cheese, as well as crabs, oysters, the best pork, and more such dishes.”⁵⁰ The array of *treyfe* food was intended to ridicule the *naye kille*’s leniency towards *kashrut*.

Accusations of religious transgression were a powerful polemical tool in the *Diskursn*. Before the Emancipation Decree, any violation of *kashrut* was punished with fines and excommunication. But with the Emancipation Decree, the *parnasim* lost their punitive powers and could no longer force the Jewish population into religious observance. As the *naye kille* members were considered supporters and instigators of this decree, the connection with leniency toward Jewish law was easily made.

How important the observance of *kashrut* was and how deeply the split between the *naye* and the *alte kille* divided the Ashkenazi Jewry is exemplified in a complaint from 1819. More than eleven years after the forced unification of the communities, some Jews still connected the *naye kille* members with the violation of *kashrut*. In a letter, Benedictus Jacobs van Lier complains to the chief rabbi of Amsterdam, Berenstein, that he had seen Abraham Memram, former baker for the *naye kille*, eat shrimp while remarking, “They are much tastier steamed.” Other Jews supported van Lier’s claim and affirmed that they had often heard Memram make comments “irreligiously and unfavorably about the Jewish religion at the meat hallmeat hall located at the Deventerhoutmarkt.” They therefore requested his excommunication. In a snappy answer, Berenstein reminds the complainants that excommunication was only possible with the *parnasim*’s permission. Furthermore, he considers the accusations false; Memram was a member of the Sephardic community and he never violated any regulations. The fact that the complainants directed their request to the ‘outsider’ director-general of the *Staatszaken der Hervormden* really annoyed Berenstein.⁵¹ Jewish

⁴⁹ Jewish dietary laws forbid the simultaneous or consecutive consumption of meat and milk products.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁵¹ SCIA, inv. 1819 October–December.

leaders still struggled with their loss of authority, while the Jews had already found their way to secular administration.

Apparently, the transition to a Jewish community without punitive powers was not internalized. Members of the Jewish community still sought punishment for what they considered very disruptive behavior, and Berenstein also abided by the disciplinary tool of excommunication; he was mainly concerned with who was authorized to excommunicate. Even twenty years after the formal separation between civil and religious authorities, religious social control continued to be a community concern. The idea of religious observance without coercion remained alien to the *alte kille*, while the *naye kille* embraced this restricted role of religion in the public sphere. Although both camps differed in their attitudes toward the privatization of religion, they still used the same religious power structures. As such, one can see through the example of the *kashrut* the changing discursive formations of Judaism and the introduction of new elements, such as the idea of religion without authority. As will become apparent in the next section, the *maskilim* actively integrated secular discourses on citizenship and freedom of religion into their Jewish identity.

The Jew as soldier

In addition to the religious and physical aspects of Jewish identity, the question of Jewishness in relation to the state became important. This was fostered by the new political constellation of the Batavian Republic, which required of its citizens active political and military participation. Military service functioned as the dispositive of citizenship. In the *maskilic* invention of the Jewish citizen, it became an essential part of Jewishness. Proof of the compatibility of Jewish life and state citizenship focused especially on the issue of bearing arms on the Sabbath. The willingness of Jews to set aside the Sabbath's rest symbolized and functioned as a litmus test of Jewish loyalty to the state. The *maskilim* actively incorporated the military aspects of citizenship into their version of Jewishness. Moreover, they regarded joining the Civil and National Guard as a means to acquire civil rights and social acceptance. By showing the Jewish community's support for the nation, they assumed that emancipation would soon follow. Accordingly, *Felix Libertate* members published a plethora of writings proving their support for the Batavian Republic and pushing for civil rights. For instance, Bromet distributed two brochures urging the Jewry to join the National and Civil Guard, and the

printer Joachim from Emden published a pamphlet entitled “A Conversation between Uri and Hirsh,” which included a Yiddish translation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Not everyone, however, welcomed the efforts of *Felix Libertate* to acquire civil rights. According to the chronicler Wing, their efforts were a final, futile attempt to convince “ignorant” and “stupid” Jews to become a “God-denier and desecrater of the Sabbath.”⁵²

The use of Jewish sources to legitimize and construct national Jewishness characterized much of the *maskilic* response, and Bromet accordingly tried to prove the permissibility of bearing arms on the Sabbath with reference to the Talmud.⁵³ A salient detail in his plea was the examples he used of his life as a slave trader and plantation owner in Dutch Surinam.⁵⁴ He recalls the punitive expeditions of Jews against runaway slaves and states, “In those Jewish military expeditions that have been very successful, it is impossible to accurately observe the Sabbath and many other commandments. However, all of the expeditions in the jungle are being observed without comment or disapproval by Jewish scholars.”⁵⁵ According to Bromet, the slave hunts in Surinam sufficiently demonstrated that bearing arms and observance of the Sabbath were perfectly compatible.⁵⁶ The same argument also occurs in the *Diskursn*. “Now you tell us: In the West Indies Jews have [the right to bear] arms.”⁵⁷

Bromet was oblivious, like the majority of his contemporaries, to the similarities between the deplorable juridical state of the Jews and that of the slaves. His example of the Jewish slave hunt on the Sabbath as proof that Jews sometimes subordinated Jewish law for the ‘common good’ underscores the idea that some were indeed more equal than others. Bromet’s view obviously excluded slaves from citizenship. Ironically, others also regarded the Jews as ineligible for the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Or as Gogel, first minister of finance of the Batavian Republic and the Kingdom of Holland,

⁵² Roest, “Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795–1812.”

⁵³ Lemon Bromet, *Brieve van H.L. Bromet ... ten betooge dat de wapening der Jooden, zelfs op den Sabat, voor de vrijheid in den burgerstaat en de defensie van het land, volgens haare wetten, geoorloofd en geboden is*.

⁵⁴ Surinam was a colony of the Dutch Republic. Many ‘impoverished’ Sephardic Jews were sent to the colonies. See also Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare among the Portuguese Jews in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Oxford/Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 41–46.

⁵⁵ Lemon Bromet, *Tweede brieve aan alle leden derzelve societeit, 26 March 1795*.

⁵⁶ Salomon Bloemgarten, “De Amsterdamse Joden gedurende de eerste jaren van de Bataafse Republiek (1795–98),” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 1 (1967), 86. Cf.

http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN_1780tot1830/lemmata/data/Bromet (accessed on 13-09-2012).

⁵⁷ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*, 108.

wrote in 1794 to the newly installed French government: “Almost all Jews are extremely fanatic and they hardly deserve to be admitted in the class of citizens, until they have proved they are worthy of that glorious name. They belong [to] the Orange party and do not deserve to be patriots, who have a burning desire for revenge.”⁵⁸

Notwithstanding the non-Jewish resistance, *Felix Libertate* members sent their theological justification for bearing arms on the Sabbath to the Amsterdam municipality. They expressed their irritations about the stubbornness of the chief rabbis of both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities, who succeeded in preventing the proclamation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. In emotional and high-flown language, typical of the Batavian Revolution, they blamed the rabbinate for “playing an evil role” in frustrating the proclamation. They had even printed the Declaration in “vulgar Yiddish.”⁵⁹

However, after the Emancipation Decree of 1796, Jewish military participation was still lacking. Therefore, the *Diskursn* devoted large sections to demonstrating the religious consonance of Jewish military participation. “Don’t we find in our Torah how one has to behave when going to war? And in the Prophets, our Jewish kings: didn’t they fight? And weren’t there Jews who were soldiers, captains, and officers? And why wouldn’t this be possible nowadays too?”⁶⁰ Maimonides, a much-cited author by the *maskilim* because of his efforts to reconcile philosophy with religion in his *Guide for the Perplexed*, affirmed the compatibility of the Jewish religion and arms in his *Mishneh Torah*. The *maskilim* heralded Maimonides as a modern Jew who proved that being an observant Jew and a participating member of society were not contradictory. This mixture represented for the *maskilim* a model and a proof of their (religious) reforms and solution to the Jewish question. “[It] is not only not forbidden, but absolutely allowed to take up arms in order to save one’s city and country. Enough has been written about it in the *Yad khazakah*.”⁶¹ The *naye kille’s* explicit use of the Jewish religious power structure legitimized Jewish military service as well as constructed the image of the *maskilim* as operating firmly within the boundaries of Jewish law.

⁵⁸ Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780–1830* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 164.

⁵⁹ Protocolbuch IV, 142.

⁶⁰ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*, 100.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 394.

Besides defending Jewish compatibility with military service, the *naye kille* also displayed their loyalty and commitment to the state. “There can be no better proof to the world that one is a good citizen and that he supports his country and his city than with a rifle. As soon as one obtains the rifle and swears the oath (and keeps it), he performs his duty and demonstrates that he’s willing to risk his life and his property for his brothers.”⁶² Being a participating member of society, in their view, would lead to juridical equality and be a ticket to social acceptance. “If he does all that, nothing remains of all that are called rights in a country that can deny him. In due course, because he has held his position honestly and faithfully, he’ll be accepted into the highest classes.”⁶³ Their quest to prove to the outside world that the Jews were loyal and inherently the same as non-Jewish citizens characterized many *maskilic* endeavors as they engaged with the pejorative representations of the Jew as ‘other’ and disloyal.

However, enlistment was only open to loyal Jews of the new revolutionary order. The *maskilim* used the dispositive of military participation to enhance their power and legitimize their version of Jewishness. As a result, the admittance policy constructed a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Jews according to *maskilic* doctrine. “There are enough good, honest, right-thinking people among the Jews, and why should they be excluded? But to give it to everybody is also impossible. Just think of Herts Oliveyong and his brothers – may their name be blotted out.”⁶⁴ They defended their selection by pointing at the possible benefits for a military participant, such as citizen’s rights. By only allowing the *maskilim* to take up arms, they constructed military service as a means of distinction. Only important and influential Jews would be eligible for military service. Military service thus served as a sign of Jewish loyalty and citizen’s commitment.

[W]hoever gets the right to bear arms can use it as proof of his importance and can benefit from it. And if he ever wants to ask the Government for something or other, he can say: “I am a Citizen of the Batavian Republic who keeps watch and serves, and gives property and life for my city and fatherland.”⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., 390.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 392.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The selection thus made military participation not only an important identity marker, it also confirmed the idea of bad Jews, who were not worthy of juridical and social equality.

Some *Felix Libertate* members had apparently already joined the civil militia, and during the first service at the *naye kille's* synagogue, according to Wing, they defended their members against the 'curious' mob waiting outside. "Now many curious people gathered in front of Katz's house, which caused a commotion, and some of the civil militia, who belonged to the party of the New Community, aimed a rifle [at them]."⁶⁶ Thus the animosity between the *naye* and *alte kille* was not only expressed in the *Diskursn* verbally but also physically. This constant threat of riotous uproar characterized the Jewish quarters, known for their large proletariat and easily antagonized population.⁶⁷

Years later, in 1798, *Felix Libertate* members assisted the civil militia during a patrol. Apparently they continued to carry arms and assist the local power. The conspicuous display of weaponry by *Felix Libertate* members also shed light on their overall youth as they 'intentionally' annoyed and attacked Jews. This provocative action reveals the tension between the literate and the students (like *Felix Libertate* members) on the hand and the unskilled and uneducated Jewish mob on the other hand. It furthermore exposes how the Dutch Jewish community was divided along social and economic lines.

A civilian captain named Dunselaar walked around with his sword drawn at Marken (Valkenburgerstraat) and the Houttuinen and terribly struck some of our fellow Jews. However, he got what he deserved. The Jewish residents of these streets overpowered him and snatched away his sword. The club members [of *Felix Libertate*] who assisted him also received heavy blows and rushed off to their holes.⁶⁸

Aided by the revolutionary regime, *Felix Libertate* members found themselves confident in their newly gained power. Moreover, it shows that the bearing of arms was not

⁶⁶ Roest, "Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795–1812," 34.

⁶⁷ See for instance the Jews employed by officer Papagaay in order to halt the mob, who wished to plunder his house. Joseph Michman, *Dutch Jewry during the Emancipation Period: Gothic Turrets on a Corinthian Building 1787–1815*, 5–10.

⁶⁸ Roest, "Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795–1812," 64.

merely a sign of loyalty to the new nation-state but that it signified the victory of the renewed Judaism over the old.

However, many Jews were reluctant to join the civil militia, especially given the random raids in the Jewish quarter. The militia consisted predominantly of patriots, who had already caused many disturbances in the Jewish quarter since the revolt of 1787. Quite often, Wing recalls the patriots roaming around the neighborhood, hitting Jews and destroying their merchandise.⁶⁹ Moreover, the patriots violently entered the synagogue on several occasions.

When [the civil militia and patriots] arrived to proclaim, something strange came over them and they started to terribly strike our fellow Jews. They entered the synagogue armed and walked around the *bimah* [elevated platform] and hit the persons present and arrested others without reason. When they arrived at Marken (Valkenburgerstraat), they hit a Portuguese Jewish residential so hard that he was assumed dead. They took him to a magazine at Katteburg. After a while, however, he came to, but he had to remain at home for several weeks. In addition, many poor Jews were battered and captured. Later, the *parnasim* went to the government and made sure they were released.⁷⁰

Economic motives also contributed to the Jews' unwillingness to join the militia. First, the militia's equipment, such as weaponry and clothing, was expensive. Every missed exercise or drill resulted in a fine, and because the drills were held on Wednesdays and on the Sabbath, the observant Jew had to pay a fine every week. Thus the costs for clothing, equipment, and fines probably exceeded the payment received for participation. Furthermore, Jewish employment in trade interfered with the drills. This is a point made in the *Diskursn* of the *alte kille* when Gumpel wonders how he could stand guard while travelling. "[B]ut I don't know what to do about the night watch, because I would have to go to the city."⁷¹ And later on he cries out, "What kind of Jew involves himself in such matters? I travel for my livelihood throughout the country."⁷²

⁶⁹ For instance, *Ibid.*, 2, 3, and 64. Cf. Leo Fuks, *De zeven provinciën in beroering. Hoofdstukken uit een Jiddische kroniek over de jaren 1740–1752 van Abraham Haim Braatbard* (Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, 1960), 106–122, especially 109.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷¹ Michman and Aptroot, *Storm in the Community*, 468.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 470.

The reluctance of Gumpel reflects the view of the majority, who regarded the militia as something unsuitable for Jews.

Despite *Felix Libertate's* media campaign, the National Guard excluded Jews, even after the Emancipation Decree. The reason given for their exclusion was supposed Jewish disloyalty.

The Jews cannot [join the guard] because their centuries-old humiliated status doesn't make for a reasonable image of liberty. In general, their warmly demonstrated affection and zeal for the house of Orange, which was clear even after the revolution, contributed to the hatred of the newly recovered patriot militia because of their shameful behavior towards the patriots since the year 1787. All this led us not to trust them with weaponry.⁷³

According to the National Guard, the former Jewish political alliance with the house of Orange prevented them from fulfilling their civil duties. The newly acquired liberty was, in their eyes, freedom from the former political bonds and hence a choice for the revolution. Their reluctance to support the revolution, their alliance to the house of Orange, and their unheroic history excluded the Jews from military participation and fostered the image of the dishonorable Jew. Despite the efforts of *Felix Libertate* members, the majority of the Jews as well as the National Guard regarded Jews as unfit for military participation. Their different historical experience and their questionable loyalty were the main reasons the National Guard excluded them from their ranks, while many Jews depicted military participation as something entirely unjewish.

Jewish conscription

Oblivious to the widespread Jewish resistance against military service, the Batavian Republic nonetheless started recruiting among the Jewish population. Recruiting probably resulted from a shortage of voluntary labor. The supposed unjewishness of the military, the poor career prospects, and the hard life as well as the lack of proper food and clothing contributed to the Jewish reluctance to enlist.⁷⁴ Unsurprisingly, Jews and

⁷³ Dagblad Municipaliteit Amsterdam, 14 February 1798, 297–280. Also in other Dutch cities Jews were not admitted into the civil militia.

⁷⁴ Johan Joor, *De Adelaar En Het Lam: Onrust, Opruiing En Onwilligheid in Nederland Ten Tijde van Het Koninkrijk Holland En de Inlijving Bij Het Franse Keizerrijk (1806–1813)* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche

non-Jews alike resisted forced conscription.⁷⁵ The chronicler Wing meticulously reports on involuntary recruitment among Jews.

On 6 September 1799, the citizens, including Jews, had to march to Muiden and Naarden. Because some citizens did not want to march, their comrades were ordered by their officers to bring them forcibly if necessary. Even a young man named Koshman ben Isaac Rintel, who could not march because of an unknown disease and was in possession of a physician's statement, received notification. If he did not join voluntarily, he would be conscripted the next day, Saturday, with military force. What choice did he have? And so he went. Also, the citizens tried to fetch Zanwel [Samuel] ben Abraham Kanter. However, he helped himself and fled, no one knows where to.⁷⁶

As it appears, the prospects were so poor that some Jews tried to escape military service and ignored the eventual consequences of deserting the army. Months later, the government started to recruit again, now with the help of two Jews who would enlist the young men. This recruitment failed, however, and most of the young Jewish men were exempted from participation.⁷⁷

Years later, in 1809, King Louis Napoleon abandoned the idea of equality in the army and acknowledged the special status of the Jews. Apparently discursive constellations shifted in favor for the particularistic aspects of Judaism. A propaganda brochure, printed in both Yiddish and Dutch, urged the Jews to join the special Jewish Corps. The universal ideal had made way for Jewish particularity. The *parnasim* and the High Consistory warmly welcomed this initiative, since they regarded Jewish conscription as a solution for the growing number of poor Jews.⁷⁸ The person responsible for enlisting the Jews was Jacob Marcus, and within two days he had already enlisted eighteen adolescents. According to Wing, he was of the "lowest sort."⁷⁹ Jews on poor relief were obliged to enlist their children if they wanted to keep their allowance. Recruiters visited each synagogue in order to convince the Jews to join the Corps.⁸⁰

Leeuw, 2000), 180–184. Cf. Jaap Meijer, *Problematiek per post. Brieven van en over Joden in Nederland. Verzameld en toegelicht* (Amsterdam: Joachimstal, 1949), 32–33.

⁷⁵ Joor, *De Adelaar en het lam*, 259, 260, 283–379.

⁷⁶ Roest, "Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795–1812," 68–69.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The increase in poverty among the Jewish population was due to the general economic decline as a result of the Napoleonic wars and the loss of the Ashkenazi community's monopoly on the selling of kosher meat, which financed the poor relief funds.

⁷⁹ Roest, "Uittreksel Uit Eene Kronijk van de Jaren 1795–1812," 107.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 108–109.

Furthermore, the king issued a decree guaranteeing every Jew the possibility of religious observance. Wing nevertheless heaped criticism on the Jewish Corps and the king's efforts.

We have a good king, but he is badly influenced by wicked and evil Jews. When Jews start doing such things, acting as Christians in language, concerning our doctrines, as well as regarding the military and more of these things, what will become of us Jews? Ay, ay! Woe to the eyes that have seen. Woe to the ears that have heard! In the present days, the verses of the book of Lamentations can be applied: "her adversaries have become the head" (Lam. 1:5).⁸¹

A couple of days later, Chief Rabbi Moses Löwenstamm gave a sermon stressing the compatibility between the observance of Jewish law and the military. Likewise, the chief rabbi of the Sephardi community, Rabbi Daniel Cohen d'Azevedo, gave a sermon promoting the Jewish Corps, which was translated into Dutch, printed, and distributed.⁸² According to Wing, many Jews avoided the synagogue, while others left during the sermon. "Nobody dared to say a word."⁸³ Löwenstamm's approval of the Jewish Corps was probably forced, as in an unpublished sermon he condemns Jewish conscription. In this draft sermon, probably meant to be proclaimed on a Sabbath, Löwenstamm stressed the importance of religious observance and allegiance to the king. He questions the possibility of observing Torah, in particular *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws), during military service and lists pragmatic arguments for the incompatibility of religious observance with enlistment in the Jewish Corps.⁸⁴

Löwenstamm's refusal to permit Jewish conscription contradicts his father's (Rabbi Saul) earlier approval in 1782 of enlisting Jews into the Navy. At that time, the Dutch Republic had started a fourth war with England (the English War 1780–1784). The *parnasim*, in accordance with the Admiralty of the Dutch East India Company, drafted specific Jewish regulations, including *kashrut*, prayers, and the exclusion of work on the Sabbath and High Holidays. Moreover, Chief Rabbi Saul blessed sailors personally,

⁸¹ Ibid., 111. For the Jewish conscription riots in 1811, cf. Joor, *De adelaar en het Lam*, 180–184.

⁸² Daniel Cohen d'Azevedo, *Leerrede, uitgesproken in de gemeente der Hollandsche Portugeesche Israelieten te Amsterdam, den weleerwaarden heer Daniël Cohen d'Azevedo, ten tijde van het middag-gebed, op Sabbat den 23 Menachem 5569, of den 5 van Oogstmaand 1809. Uit het Portugeesch vertaald* (Amsterdam, 1809).

⁸³ Roest, "Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795–1812", 112.

⁸⁴ ACA, 1241-480.

wishing them a safe voyage.⁸⁵ As long as the Sabbath and *kashrut* were observed, Rabbi Saul had no objections against Jewish military service.

Years later, the context had changed profoundly. Contrary to Jewish participation in the Navy, which had provided an economic opportunity for poor Jews, enlistment of Jews into the civil militia and the Jewish Corps became entangled with discourses on citizenship and the elevation of the Jews. These discourses in turn legitimized the blending of military service with Jewish tradition. This highly politicized context triggered Chief Rabbi Löwenstamm's rejection. Interpretation of the Jewish law was no longer confined to the scholarly realm; the theological justification was a political tool in the hands of the *maskilim* and their opponents alike.⁸⁶

Many Jews widely supported Löwenstamm's resistance against active military participation.⁸⁷ Despite Chief Rabbi Löwenstamm's 'false' supporting letter, double payment, and extensive propaganda efforts, the Jewish Corps did not attract Jewish participants, and in 1809, only one year after its inception, the king disbanded the battalion due to a lack of interest.⁸⁸ Despite the efforts of the *maskilim*, the government, and even the chief rabbi, Jews refused to enlist in the Jewish Corps. For many, the prospects of a (petty) military career countered their ideas of Jewishness and a decent income. As we have seen, both the orthodox and the *maskilim* strategically used the dispositive of military service to enhance and legitimize their power structures.

3. Perception of the Jews by non-Jews

In this changing political constellation, discursive strands on citizenship entangled with negative attributions of meaning to Jews. The granting of citizenship to the Jews did not eradicate old stereotypes, and prejudices continued to persist. Various historians acknowledged this and pointed to the slow process of integration of the Jews as a result of discrimination, distinguishing between juridical and social acceptance.⁸⁹ For instance,

⁸⁵ J.S. Da Silva Rosa, *Bibliographie der Literatur über die Emanzipation der Juden in Holland* (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1912), nr. 27. Cf. Michman, *Dutch Jewry during the Emancipation Period*, 184–191.

⁸⁶ Not surprisingly, Chief Rabbi Löwenstamm's ruling closely followed the rising orthodoxy of Hatam Sofer with his famous adage, "everything new is forbidden by Torah" (*kol chadash asur min hatorah*).

⁸⁷ Michman, *Dutch Jewry during the Emancipation Period*, 198. Notwithstanding this resistance, some Jews supported conscription. Cf. Meijer, *Problematiek per post*, 28–31.

⁸⁸ For doubts about the authenticity of Löwenstamm's supporting letter, see J. Zwarts, "De gefingeerde brief van R. Jacob Mozes Löwenstamm (1809)," *De Vrijdagavond* 5 (7 December 1928): 156–58.

⁸⁹ For Dutch governmental discrimination against Jews, see Sonnenberg-Stern, *Emancipation and Poverty: the Ashkenazi Jews of Amsterdam, 1796 - 1850*. Cf. Joseph Michman, Hartog Beem and Dan Michman,

many associations, such as the *Felix Meritis* and the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen*, refused to admit Jews, and until the mid-nineteenth century Jews could not become members.⁹⁰ Social mobility and political integration were likewise slow. Karin Hofmeester defined the nineteenth-century Dutch Jewish exclusion as both “mild und gemäßigt...verschleiert und heimlich.”⁹¹ According to her, the hidden character of anti-Semitism was due to the treasured Dutch self-image of itself as a tolerant nation. Moreover, an all-too-open dislike of Jews contradicted notions of good taste and was unbecoming in Calvinist culture, which still held the Jews in high esteem as “people of the book.”⁹²

Discourses portraying the Jews as greedy, filthy, noisy, and dishonest continued throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Besides these negative representations, other more positive images of the Jew, based on toleration and equality, also developed. Both the negative and the positive images of Jews sprung from the same changing political context, namely the entrance of Jews into Dutch society. Interestingly, both imaginaries regarded the Jews as inherently different and maintained a firm boundary between the two cultures.⁹³ In that respect, the positive depiction also employed the image of the stereotypical ‘other’.

The Jew as citizen

Jews continued to be perceived as alien or at least different from mainstream society. This came to the fore especially during the Batavian Revolution. The discussions of the

Pinkas. Geschiedenis van de joodse gemeenschap in Nederland; Wallet, Nieuwe Nederlanders; Michman, Dutch Jewry during the Emancipation Period; Hetty Berg, ed., De Gelykstaat der Joden. Inburgering van een minderheid (Amsterdam/Zwolle: Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam & Waanders Uitgevers, Zwolle, 1996).

⁹⁰ Cf. Hanou, “Joden en Nederlandse genootschappen 1750–1850;” Merel Stikkelorum, “De joodse gelijkberechtting en de ‘verlichte’ praktijk. De Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen onder de loep 1796–1798,” in *Een veelzijdige verstandhouding. Religie en Verlichting in Nederland 1650–1850*, edited by Ernestine van der Wall and Leo Wessels (Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2008), 358–73.

⁹¹ Karin Hofmeester, “Antisemitismus in den Niederlanden im 19. and 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Ablehnung – Duldung – Anerkennung. Toleranz in den Niederlanden und in Deutschland. Ein historischer und aktueller Vergleich*, edited by Horst Lademacher, Renate Loos, and Simon Groenveld, *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur Nordwesteuropas* 9, z.d., 604. Cf. Meijer, *Problematiek per post*, 67–70; Berg, *De Gelykstaat der Joden*.

⁹² Hofmeester, “Antisemitismus in den Niederlanden im 19. and 20. Jahrhundert,” 604, 606.

⁹³ Karin Hofmeester makes a similar observation in her analysis of Jewish parliamentary representatives in the Netherlands, as they were regarded as representatives of the Jews and not of the Dutch population in general. Karin Hofmeester, “Jewish Parliamentary Representatives in the Netherlands, 1848–1914: Crossing Borders, Encountering Boundaries?” in *Borders and Boundaries in and around Dutch Jewish History*, edited by Judith Frishman (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2011).

newly installed National Assembly regarding Jewish eligibility for citizenship show the entanglement of discourses on citizenship and Jewishness. One reason to withhold citizenship from the Jews was the idea that the Jews already belonged to a nation.⁹⁴ Moreover, contemporaries stressed their different lifestyle as proof of their separateness; they were foreign. Some members rejected Jewish participation or were at least uncertain about citizenship for Jews. They referred to the question of double loyalty, namely the idea that Jews could not be loyal to both the nation and their religious group. Others instead stressed the enlightened idea of inclusiveness, considered Jews equal and thus entitled to citizenship.

With the creation of nations throughout Europe, the establishment of the modern concept of citizenship, and the formation of corresponding identities, the question of who belonged and who was excluded from the nation became relevant. Demarcating the boundaries of nationhood and creating an identity in opposition to the 'other' formulated the outlines of citizenship. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, being openly anti-Jewish contradicted enlightened notions of toleration and such views were therefore not openly expressed.

In the course of 1795, many patriotic pamphlets appeared, arguing for the emancipation of the Jews. Jews, the patriots adduced, were equal human beings as well as part of the nation and should therefore be granted full citizenship. In their idiosyncratic style, zealously saturated with revolutionary rhetoric, the patriots produced a positive image of the Jew, an image of the Jew as a companion, a brother, and a fellow citizen. In one pamphlet J.S. Hespe (1757–1818), the only Christian member of *Felix Libertate*, urges the Dutch population to grant the Jews emancipation. He considered them equal and therefore entitled to the same citizen rights as Christians. To withhold them from their legal rights was contrary to the Christian religion, and reasons for doing so were based on false assumptions.⁹⁵ Therefore, he supported “equality, liberty, and fraternity in matters of armament, voting, and representation of his good and able Jewish fellow citizens.”⁹⁶ He rebukes those patriotic societies who excluded

⁹⁴ Many contemporary Christian theologians regarded the Jews as a separate Hebrew nation, as described in the Bible. Cf. Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010).

⁹⁵ J.C. Hespe, *Gelijkheid, vrijheid, broederschap. J.C. Hespe aan 't Volk van Holland en bijzonder aan de burgerij van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Hendrik Gartman, 1795), 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11–12.

Jews from participation and denied them their civil rights. For Hespe, everyone was “equal in respect to liberty and fatherland, regardless of their religion.”⁹⁷

A brochure written by the patriot Jan Krap (1755–1797) likewise promotes the idea of the citizen-Jew. In *De Joden Zijn Onze Medeburgers* (The Jews are our Fellow-Citizens), Krap attempts to eliminate prejudices and negative attitudes towards Jews. “The sun of liberty should not only heat, but also enlighten – her radiations should chase away the veils of prejudice, caused by ignorance and fed by religion and hypocrisy, sustained under the authority of force.”⁹⁸ For Krap, depicting the Jews as fellow-citizens was a moral obligation. In order to establish a more positive attitude towards the Jews, he refutes various old prejudices, such as “the deceitful Jew.”⁹⁹ Granting the Jews emancipation and regarding them as equal participants in society contributed to moral elevation:

Well, fellow citizens... accept the Jews as fellow citizens, let them share in those rights in which the Almighty wants every human equally to take part! Do we back up our representatives in their intention to destroy those hateful laws, which exclude a considerable portion of our fellow citizens from society? Let us begin to grant every Jew civil rights and the trust that we show to each other; we shall win hearts, advance society, and good consequences shall crown our righteous deeds.¹⁰⁰

The same patriotic zeal in promoting Jewish citizenship can also be found in literature. For instance, the illustrious nineteenth-century writing duo Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker and Agatha Deken reiterated Hespe’s point of view that a different religion was nevertheless compatible with love for the fatherland. Moreover, their poem reflects the idea of a universal religion. All religions, according to this view, worship the same deity, and only their customs differ. In this sense, the Jews are as morally inclined as the Christians. Therefore, it is erroneous and wrong to condemn the Jews, as they essentially worship the same God and are like Christians.

Yes brothers to your intuition

⁹⁷ Ibid., 12–13.

⁹⁸ Jan Krap, *De joden zijn onze medeburgers (der vergadering van de provisioneele representanten des volks van Holland toegewijd en aanbevolen)* (Dordrecht: Jan Krap, 1795), 3.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 6–9.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 15.

The fatherland's position
From prejudice desists
The Jew is also a patriot
And in the service of one God
We are all co-religionists.¹⁰¹

A novel by Adriaan Loosjes (1761–1818) also promotes the idea of the citizen-Jew. A young woman and an old widow discuss the position of the Jews during a boat trip. The old widowed clergywoman constantly cites her late husband, who, to the horror of the young woman, objected to the presence of Jews. At one point, when the young girl is ready to burst with annoyance, especially after a young Jewish boy helped the clergywomen out of the boat, the young woman snaps “that it was especially the nation [the old woman] despised which helped her first.”¹⁰² The main character, Susanna Bronkhorst, displays the ideal of the enlightened spirit; she is tolerant towards others, eager for the civic improvement of the less privileged, and uses arguments to sustain her beliefs. Her appreciation of the Jews fits within the enlightened tendency to regard the Jews as human beings with inalienable natural rights, and thus as fellow citizens.

However, not everyone regarded Jews to be on equal footing. Before the realization of the Emancipation Decree of 1796, many questioned Jewish loyalty and eligibility for citizenship. For instance, Ijsbrand van Hamelsveld (1743–1812)—preacher, professor, and later chairperson of the Dutch National Assembly in 1797—questions the desirability of full Jewish citizenship. According to him, the Jews belonged to a separate nation and had a distinct and incommensurable lifestyle. Moreover, he believed that too many differences interfered with fraternity. Distribution of equal rights could only befall the like-minded.

Can one grant fraternity to a foreign nation, which lives among us like strangers, which now will be equal with our own, native nation? This question gains importance in relation to the Jews, [and is] even more important the more their morals, laws, and

¹⁰¹ Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker en Agatha Deken, *Gedichten en liedjes voor het Vaderland* (Den Haag: Isaac van Cleef, 1798), 143.

¹⁰² Cited in: Jaap Meijer, *Rationalisme/Romantiek/Risjes. Het joodse type in onze literatuur 1800–1850* (Heemstede, 1978), 23.

customs separate them from other nations, so that fraternization of this nation with other nations seems impossible.¹⁰³

Too many differences hindered socialization and comradeship with Jews.¹⁰⁴ Citizenship was, according to van Hamelsveld, therefore reserved for the native Dutch people. His view resembles both the common Christian theological conception of the Jew as a member of the Hebrew nation¹⁰⁵ as well as the pre-modern conception of citizenship, wherein a *poorter* or burgher either inherited or purchased his citizenship.¹⁰⁶ For van Hamelsveld, the Jews were clearly excluded because of their minor civil contribution and their history. In van Hamelsveld's *The History of the Jews*, he stresses the Jews' separateness.¹⁰⁷ "The Jewish people have been expelled from their fatherland and independence: as a free people, liberated among the nations, across the whole world, dispersed; but they nevertheless remained a separate nation, through all centuries until our time, unmingled with other nations."¹⁰⁸

Next to the creation of a Dutch identity, a recurrent discourse developed, namely the question of double loyalty. Could the Jews as a nation observe both religious and state law? This question is at the heart of the Grand Sanhedrin, summoned by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1806, wherein Jewish scholars had to mediate between adherence to the Jewish religion and state support. The Grand Sanhedrin had the difficult task of compromising between the two and solving the question of double loyalty. Not surprisingly, later scholars—especially the orthodox—rebutted their recommendations, such as the approval of intermarriage.¹⁰⁹ In addition, in the Netherlands the question of

¹⁰³ Citation in NA, *Dagverhaal der Handelingen van de nationale vergadering representeerdende het volk van Nederland*, nr. 140, Thursday 4 August 1796, reprinted in Meijer, *Tussen verstrooiing en verlichting. De historiografie der joden in Nederland. Eerste fase*, 45.

¹⁰⁴ Van Hamelsveld also distrusted the Jews because of their alliance with the house of Orange. See *ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁵ For an excellent overview of the arguments of German theologians, see Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*.

¹⁰⁶ The burgher was an established member of society and participated in the civil militia (*schutterijen*). Privileges accompanied citizenship, and only citizens could become members of guilds. Being a burgher was an honor meant for citizens who by seniority or economic achievement proved their worth to the city. Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, transl. by Diane Webb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 158–161.

¹⁰⁷ Because of van Hamelsveld's emphasis on nationalistic aspects, Jaap Meijer concludes that his interpretation of the history of the Jewish people would have suited the Zionist Assembly held three hundred years later. Meijer, *Tussen verstrooiing en verlichting*, 51.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in *ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Kooij-Bas, "Nothing but Heretics."

double loyalty appeared in the political arena and was one of the obstacles to the granting of juridical equality.¹¹⁰ The politician, mathematician, and physician Henri van Swinden (1746–1823), for instance, postulated the idea that Jews still awaited the coming of the messiah, which would lead them to their holy ‘homeland’, Palestine.¹¹¹ The eschatological future received in this respect a nationalistic interpretation. Or in other words, __messianic expectations blended within the discursive constellation of Jewishness, nation(-building), and loyalty.

Almost fifty years later, the entrance of Jews into society was still not self-evident. Although the Jews had gained juridical equality, they were generally excluded from social and political life. It took almost fifty years after the election of Hartog Bromet and Lémon de Lémon until Jews were represented in Dutch politics. In 1849, Henry Michel Godefroi was elected to Parliament, and in 1860 he became the minister of justice. For some Christian politicians such as Groen van Prinsterer, the ‘otherness’ of the Jew threatened Dutch Christian identity, and he questioned the desirability of Jewish emancipation. In a private letter to Isaac da Costa from 1851, he explains that he refrains from addressing ‘the Jewish question’ in his journal *de Nederlander* but nonetheless willingly tolerates the Jews.

A small word on the Jewish question; my opinion can be concisely summarized. The granting of political rights to Jews in a Christian state has in my eyes always raised objections. Now that everything has happened, I do not wish that their rights should in any way be taken from them. However, and I believe we should strive for this, political emancipation cannot be granted or enforced in the spirit and according to the principles of 1795, or 1798, or March 1848.¹¹²

Van Prinsterer envisioned a Christian nation-state, built on Christian principles, and in his vision of a modern state the Jews were strangers, excluded from partaking because of their religion. Moreover, they jeopardized Christian identity, which was for van Prinsterer, a strict Calvinist politician, an essential element of the state.

¹¹⁰ Salvador Bloemgarten is of the opinion that special circumstances, such as a temporary radical regime rather than a wholehearted support of Jewish citizenship, fostered the Emancipation Decree of 1796. See for instance Bloemgarten, *Hartog de Hartog Lémon, 1755–1823. Joodse revolutionair in Franse Tijd*, 57–70.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹² Reprinted in Meijer, *Problematiek per post*, 63.

The blending of discourses on nation, secularity, citizenship, and the ideals of the French Revolution with Christianity resulted in the rejection of the Jews as citizens. It fostered and reinforced the portrayal of the Jew as 'other'. This otherness was negatively as well as positively displayed. It resulted in rejecting Jewish access to society or pitying the Jews for their deplorable state. Advocates of citizenship for Jews used it to demonstrate their own tolerance and open-mindedness, while opponents constructed their own identity in opposition to the Jew. Either way, years after the Emancipation Decree, the Jewish citizen was not self-evident.

The coarse Jew

Jewish otherness also came to the fore in their misapprehension of social etiquette. The Jews lacked civility, acted loud and obnoxious. This image emerges, for instance, in a literary description of the course of events in the synagogue by the enlightener and patriot Willem Kist (1758–1841) in his debut novel *Uit het Leven, Gevoelens en zonderlinge Reize van den Land-Jonker Govert Hendrik Godefroi van Blankenheim tot den Stronk*. "Heavens above! said the Baron, blocking his ears with his fingers, "what a shouting! People will break. Look at the secretary, how black and blue this friend becomes in his face, look! With both hands he is holding his neck and ears in order to scream louder."¹¹³ This depiction of the uncivilized Jew resembles the image created by Hoefnagel, wherein the Jew apparently seems incapable of lowering his voice.

The stereotype of the loud screaming Jew probably derived from Dutch Jewry's dominant occupation, namely (petty) trade.¹¹⁴ Jews predominantly worked as peddlers and street vendors, hawking their goods with blaring praises, a habit which, at least in Amsterdam, violated city regulations. During the eighteenth century, the *parnasim* warned the community members continuously to refrain from calling their prices aloud. Especially Jodenbreestraat, a main traffic artery notorious for traffic jams, was dense

¹¹³ Willem Kist, *Uit het Leven, Gevoelens en zonderlinge Reize van den Land-Jonker Govert Hendrik Godefroi van Blankenheim tot den Stronk, Eerste Deel* (Haarlem: François Bohn, 1800), 226. Cf. Meijer, *Rationalisme/Romantiek/Risjes*, 26–27. For biographical information, see Gerardus Petrus Maria Knuvelder, *Handboek tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandse letterkunde 3* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Malmberg, 1977), 230–231.

¹¹⁴ This occupational structure continued well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cf. Hetty Berg and Thera Wijsenbeek-Olthuis eds., *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant: joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland, 1796–1940* (Amsterdam: Joods Historisch Museum; NEHA, 1994).

and overcrowded.¹¹⁵ Not surprisingly, the stereotypical image of the noisy, rowdy, and obstructive Jew in connection to his employment appeared and reappeared in various descriptions of Jews.¹¹⁶

For instance, in a letter to his parents the great statesman, politician, and drafter of the Constitution of 1848, J. R. Thorbecke (1798–1872), accuses the Jewish lawyer S.P. Lipman (1802–1871) of being a “Jew and a loudmouth from Amsterdam.”¹¹⁷ The immediate cause for the pejorative characterization of Lipman was his book on the political history of great European nations.¹¹⁸ Thorbecke considered the book of little worth, and he was surprised that it attracted civilized readers, although he admits that it is “a popular book written for layman, and therefore it does not need the requirements of a work of history.”¹¹⁹ He also condemns the book. “It bothers me, and you cannot blame me, that among us someone dares to embark with unwashed hands on such an important task; that one can write on diplomacy with sloppiness, as if one translates a novel for a bookstore, and yet again be praised for it.”¹²⁰ According to Thorbecke, an uncivilized Jew such as Lipman should refrain from embarking on a task that was clearly only intended for people with a certain kind of demeanor; Lipman was obviously too coarse and insensitive for the fine art of writing history, let alone formulating an opinion on import state matters.

Other Dutch politicians and scholars show a similar dislike of Lipman. However, it is hard to say whether this image was due to his Jewish or his Amsterdam background, or whether these characteristics simply blended. The minister J.G. Verstolk assesses the writings of Lipman as “written in a highly heated spirit, which is nowadays common

¹¹⁵ Rådecker, *Schuld en Boete in Joods Amsterdam. Kerktucht bij de Hoogduitse joodse gemeente 1737–1764*, 38–40. Jodenbreestraat was also an important traffic artery during the nineteenth century . See the letter of J.D. Meyer to D’Alphonse, 13 April 1811, in H.T. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*, vol. 6 (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1911), 1125.

¹¹⁶ For an analysis of the untrustworthy, hawking Jew, see M.J.P.M. Weijtens, *Nathan en Shylock in de Lage Landen. De Jood in het werk van de Nederlandse letterkundigen uit de negentiende eeuw* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1971), 31–36.

¹¹⁷ J.R. Thorbecke, letter to his parents, Leiden, 11 December 1830, in G.J. Hooykaas and J.C. Booyman eds., *De Briefwisseling Van J.R. Thorbecke*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 69.

¹¹⁸ See S.P. Lipman, *Geschiedenis van de staatkunde der voornaamste mogendheden van Europa, sedert der val van Napoleon tot heden*, vol. 1 (1813–1820) (Amsterdam: Brest van Kempen, 1832).

¹¹⁹ Letter of J.R. Thorbecke to Groen van Prinsterer, Leiden, 19 October 1832, in G.J. Hooykaas and J.C. Booyman, *De briefwisseling van J.R. Thorbecker*, 342.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 343.

among the Dutch from the North.”¹²¹ The professor of law H.W. Tydeman (1778–1863) refers to Lipman pejoratively as “that little Jew Lipman.”¹²² Apparently Lipman had a bad reputation, because the salesperson H.J. Swarth explains, “His moral reputation is not very good: people blame him for being more engaged with despicable than with good matters.”¹²³ Scattered throughout this personal correspondences appears an image of a Lipman who displays maladjusted behavior and social blunders in the upper circles. Years later, the same type of criticism also befalls the Jew Samuel Sarphati (1813–1866), a prominent figure in the development of social health care. According to the historian H.J. Koenen, he was “one of those figures who are not satisfied with their social rank.”¹²⁴ Apparently, Jews lacked proper etiquette and misread the social codes.

Jews rarely succeeded in being accepted by the upper class. Reasons for their slow acceptance in society were the prevailing notion of the inevitability of one’s social status and a dominant Protestant stamp, especially noticeable in friendly societies.¹²⁵ Old prejudices and a strong sense of the elite’s group identity fostered the maintenance of the established order and disturbed the acceptance of Jews in the higher echelons of society. Together with unexpressed social codes of behavior, this contributed to an image of the Jew as one who deviated from the norm.¹²⁶

The Jew in need of regeneration

In addition to the representation of the Jew as a stranger, a more favorable regeneration discourse on the Jew appeared. This image was based on the Enlightenment notions of toleration and equality. The positive depiction, however, did not alter or repudiate the negative stereotypical images of the dishonest Jew. On the contrary, the apologetics for the Jew postulated by various authors further enhanced the stereotypical image of the

¹²¹ Letter from Verstolk to Falck, 3 December 1830, in Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken Der Algemeene Geschiedenis*, 338.

¹²² Letter from H.W. Tydeman to the conservative politician G.K. van Hogendorp (1762–1834) 24 November 1830 Ibid., 328.

¹²³ Letter from H.J. Swarth to G.K. Hogendorp, 3 November 1830, see *ibid.*, 268.

¹²⁴ Letter from H.J. Koenen to Isaac da Costa dated 26 August before 1844, reproduced in Meijer, *Problematiek per post*, 68.

¹²⁵ Boudien de Vries, “De joodse elite in Amsterdam 1850–1900: oude en nieuwe rijkdom,” in Berg, *De Gelykstaat der Joden*, 82, 90.

¹²⁶ Social mobility depends as much on education as on knowing the social norms and codes of the social group one aspires to join. For an analysis of this principle, see the doctoral research on the social mobility of working-class children from the 1960s and 70s after their university degree. Mick Matthys, *Doorzetters. De betekenis van de arbeidersafkomst voor de levensloop en de loopbaan van universitair afgestudeerden* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2010).

Jew.¹²⁷ Historical context and development explained and justified the Jew's unfavorable aspects. Ironically, the attempt to explain the undesirable aspects of the Jew with positive discourses on toleration and equality blended with older stereotypes and stabilized the negative attribution of meaning to Jewishness. As a result, the contextualization of the Jew's undesirable aspects sustained popular pejorative ascriptions.

In enlightened apologetics for the Jews, the lack of economic opportunity, exclusion from various crafts, and discrimination explained Jewish incivility and proclivity towards dishonest occupations. Jewish dishonesty, it was claimed, resulted from their historical experience, which excluded them from an honest way of living. Abbé Grégoire articulates this vision in his famous *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs*. In this essay, which follows the biblical narrative of paradise, paradise Lost, and paradise regained, Grégoire put forward his solution: the regeneration and thus redemption of the Jews.¹²⁸ Grégoire postulates that the historical context of the Jews contributed to their undesirable situation. As he explains, "some Jews are usurers; almost all of them possess a distrusting, carnal character. This is the inevitable result of suppression, which has haunted them for so long."¹²⁹ As this citation shows, dishonesty was not part of the Jewish essence but a consequence of past hardships and exclusion.

Historical experience rather than human nature created one's proclivity towards good or bad behavior, and Grégoire continues to compare the Jewish situation with that of the slaves, "who, with a good education, good laws, free conduct, and above all religious principles, would be humans."¹³⁰ Both slaves and Jews could be turned into God-fearing, reasonable human beings. Grégoire's emphasis on circumstantial causes echoes Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (1748). In this philosophical tractate, Montesquieu blames the slave system for the slave's stupidity and passivity; the system

¹²⁷ Cf. Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*; John Toland, *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland, on the Same Foot with All Other Nations: Containing also, A Defence of the Jews Against All Vulgar Prejudices in All Countries* (Dublin, Ireland: The Manuscript Publisher, 2013).

¹²⁸ Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815*, 107–108.

¹²⁹ Translated from the Dutch version. Grégoire, *Nieuwe bedenkingen over de Joden, en bijzonderlijk over die van Amsterdam en Frankfort, door den heer Gregoire, oud bisschop van Blois, senator, enz*, 4.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

prevented the slave from developing into a moral human being.¹³¹ According to Grégoire, Jews and slaves were both victims of their historical experience.¹³²

Like Montesquieu, Grégoire believes that oppression morally corrupts the oppressor: slave-owners are “hasty, severe, choleric, voluptuous, and cruel” because of their “unlimited authority over [their] slaves.”¹³³ Moreover, Grégoire believes that Christians deteriorated morally because of the unfavorable conditions of the Jewish community. Withholding civil rights from Jews and making a juridical distinction between Jews and Christians was contrary to Christianity. “How despicable and criminal are those who mock the dignity of the human race in the Israelite. Christian prosecutors did not read the Gospel, which is a crime; indeed, it is certain that they did not observe it.”¹³⁴ For Grégoire it was a Christian requirement to treat the Jews as equals; any deviation from this principle was against the teachings of Paul, who advocated “belief, hope, and charity.”¹³⁵

Wolff-Bekker and Deken employ a similar historical justification for Jewish insidiousness. Their hardships and exclusion from honorable professions condemned Jews to earn their living in (petty) trade.

How our human heart yearned for God,
Because of an all-to-unfavorable lot;
Those poor Jews and Jewesses, they
Breathlessly and wrecked,
Gasping, heavily packed,
To earn a living, they convey.

There are a thousand sources of provision
That will never give you admission;
Trade is your only option.
It deserves our sympathy,
If you, by liability,

¹³¹ Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *Complete Works, vol. 1 The Spirit of Laws [1748]* (London: T. Evens, 1777), 312, 315, 320.

¹³² Unsurprisingly, he explicitly mentioned how he welcomed the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which abrogated the slave trade. Grégoire, *Nieuwe bedenkingen over de Joden*, 27–28.

¹³³ Montesquieu, *Complete Works, vol. 1.*, 311.

¹³⁴ Grégoire, *Nieuwe bedenkingen over de Joden*, 25–26.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

In addition, in this case circumstances such as exclusion from various professions caused Jewish misconduct. Like Grégoire, Wolff-Beker and Deken do not question the dishonesty of the Jews itself; they merely justify Jewish misbehavior on the basis of discrimination. In other words, society and therefore historical circumstances are to blame for Jewish delinquency. By historically explaining the negative characteristics of Jewry as whole, they enforce and sustain the negative Jewish stereotypes. Furthermore, their historical justification displays their civility and tolerance more than it helps to correct or alter pejorative depictions of the Jews. Thus, the historical apology for the Jews unwittingly sustained the negative stereotype of the dishonest Jew. As we have seen, despite good intentions, the Jew was objectified and used as a means to display one's own civility and privileged status.

4. Conclusion

In the changing discursive formations of the Jew at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jews disagreed on what being a Jew entailed. Was a Jew recognizable as a citizen or as an observant Jew? Jewish modes of response ranged from adopting to refuting the new national identity markers. Despite these power struggles, Jewish conspicuousness continued to be viewed as an essential aspect of Jewishness. Both the orthodox and the *maskilim* identified with traditional identity markers. This was the result of employing the same religious power structures and strategically using dispositives to establish their own take on Judaism.

In addition to the stabilization of conspicuous religious identity markers, the *maskilim* advocated the image of the Jew as soldier and citizen. They actively entangled the discourses on nation(-building), citizenship, and the Jewish religion in their idea of Jewishness. For them, being Jewish was also being part of the fatherland; they propagated the idea of the citizen-Jew and denied the otherness of the Jew. The dispositive of military service further divided the Jews and created the boundaries of appropriate Jewish behavior, which went beyond the confines of religious observance. The *maskilic* response and efforts to substantiate secular law with Jewish sources

¹³⁶ Wolff-Bekker and Deken, *Gedichten en liedjes voor het Vaderland*, 133.

created the Jew who identified with the state; they labelled themselves as Jewish citizens.

The blending of old stereotypes and new discourses on equality, tolerance, and citizenship stabilized the depiction of the Jew as 'other'. Moreover, positive discourses on the Jew legitimized the negative attributions of the Jew as uncouth, deviant, and dishonest. Jewish conspicuousness was an important element in processes of self-labelling and othering. Despite efforts from within and outside the Jewish community to establish and legitimize the Jewish citizen, many Jews regarded themselves—as did the outside world—as other and different. As such, the blending of religious discourses with discourses on citizenship established both the Jew as other and the Jew as citizen. These processes of self-labelling and othering demonstrate how the dispositive of citizenship affected and constructed the new (hybrid) Jewish identities.