

English Summary

This book is the culmination of a long-term project to provide a comprehensive collection of bookplates that belonged to Dutch Jews or Jews who came to the Netherlands, be it as refugees or due to other circumstances. Our examination of private and public collections, antiquarian books and published sources yielded a total number of 1,747 bookplates of 1,393 individual owners. They have all been reproduced and annotated in this volume, which also pays special attention to the more than 600 artists or designers who were either commissioned to produce these bookplates or who made them for themselves. The story of the Jewish bookplate in the Netherlands is presented in depth in six separate contributions to Part II.

From the sixteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century, bookplates were typically used by the aristocracy or the upper bourgeoisie, both in the Jewish world and outside of it. With the ownership of books becoming more common in the twentieth century, the bookplate also rose to prominence, reaching a peak in the 1930s. As a result, the bookplate lost most of its heraldic features and became more personalized, to such an extent that bookplates can be regarded as a type of ego-document. They gave Jews an almost unprecedented opportunity to express their Jewishness to the outside world through the symbols in their bookplates. For one of our predecessors, Philip van Praag, the use of such symbols defined the essence of a 'Jewish bookplate'. Following researchers like Abraham Horodisch and Philip Goodman, we regard all bookplates by Jewish owners as Jewish bookplates. Bookplates can be studied from various angles: biographical, historical or aesthetic. A combination of these three seemed the most fruitful approach.

The volume opens with an extensive introduction describing the history of the Dutch bookplate tradition and the remarkable role played by Jews. To orient the reader, a few distinct topics that are regularly referred to in the volume are introduced here. One of them is the problem of libraries looted by the Nazis. Soon after the war ended, the Americans took measures to trace the rightful owners of books, also on the basis of bookplates. This process is still not completed, as a number of books and bookplate collections formerly in Jewish ownership are still missing. The present volume may serve as a tool to help recover such looted books and collections.

The introduction is followed by three separate parts, the first one of which is documentary in nature, including reproductions of all the bookplates that have been collected in this volume, together with an entry describing both bookplate and owner as fully as possible, so that the bookplate(s) of each individual owner can be confidently interpreted. Each entry also includes information on the year of origin, the original format, the graphic techniques used, the artist or designer, the publications in which the relevant bookplate has been reproduced and – if possible – the book in which it was found. Together, these entries reflect three centuries of Jewish culture in the Netherlands in a way that is not only comprehensive but often also surprising. They reflect such aspects as the pride felt by some Sephardi Jews with regard to their aristocratic descent, the campaign for emancipation, the passion for books, intellectual and artistic leanings, religious convictions, the Zionist ideal or the suffering caused by discrimination and persecution. With regard to the latter, this volume may also be seen as a small monument commemorating the owners and artists who fell victim to the Shoah.

The second part of the volume contains six separate contributions. The first one offers a brief description of the Jewish population in the Netherlands from the seventeenth century onwards and highlights a number of themes that emerged while researching the owners of the bookplates. They include professions, male-female relationships, pastimes, the background of the refugees and survivors of the Shoah. The second contribution sketches the historical background of the 169 refugees among the Jewish bookplate owners. The emphasis here lies on the German bookplate tradition as it evolved from the end of the eighteenth century, which is also the time when Jews, inspired by the emancipatory ideal of the Enlightenment, began adorning their books with bookplates. This contribution also focuses on the role played by the Zionist movement in popularizing the distinctly Jewish bookplate in Germany. At the same time bookplates were also part of the campaign to protect a more traditional Jewish identity, or on the contrary reveal the urge towards full assimilation. The third contribution contains a survey of all Jewish symbols either present or conspicuously absent. Each symbol is discussed in detail and placed in a historical context, thus explaining how and why ancient symbols were able to acquire an altogether new role in the twentieth century, with a focus on bookplates issuing from Zionist circles. The fourth contribution collects and systematically examines the textual elements in the bookplates. They include puns on owner's names, personal mottos and aphorisms, often derived from passages in the Hebrew Bible or in Hebrew literature, though most notably from a range of religious, philosophical or literary

sources. The fifth contribution focuses on 75 artists or designers and discusses them in greater depth than was possible in the entries presented in the documentary part. This contribution pays special attention to the way bookplate designers responded to the issue of a distinctly Jewish art that was supposed to help preserve and reinforce a national culture as envisaged by the Zionist movement. The role book culture played in the artist's decision to concentrate on the production of bookplates is likewise examined here. Finally, a survey of the complete bookplate production of each artist is presented. The sixth contribution contains an extensive bibliography of publications on Jewish bookplates published in the Netherlands and abroad. Its international character helps to bring into focus the worldwide interest in the Jewish bookplate that has existed from the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the diversity of angles from which this phenomenon has been studied. The bibliography can thus be read as a brief chronicle of the use of the bookplate in Jewish circles.

The third and concluding part of the volume contains a list of all artists and designers featured in the volume, a key to the bookplate entries, an account of the method used, a survey of sources consulted, explanatory notes on a number of recurring themes, a glossary of terms, a list of abbreviations and a survey of bookplates not included for various reasons.