

Morten Thing

The Cobbler of Jerusalem in Denmark

In Danish Ahasverus is called the "cobbler of Jerusalem" or "the eternal Jew." In English he is called "the wandering Jew." The myth about the man who refused or perhaps even struck Jesus most likely has a long oral history before we find the first written reference in a manuscript from the 1220s. A German pamphlet from 1602 establishes the myth and secures its position as one of the most productive in western mythology. The article traces the myth through a long series of Danish texts that have dealt with the myth or used it in a literary context from 1631 to 1992. The analysis shows a wide spectrum of reuse of the myth. Even though the German pamphlet from 1602 perhaps had an anti-Judaic origin, it is not possible to see the use of the myth as an expression of anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism. It is rather its loosely structured character, that makes it possible to attach so much meaning to it and which again makes it attractive to so many authors.

Karin Sandvad

They Enriched Denmark

The Dictionary of Danish Women's Biography (Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon) was published in 2000/2001. The three volumes of the dictionary include approximately 1900 biographies of Danish women who have made substantial contributions to Danish society in different fields or who were among the pioneers that paved the way for women's citizenship. A little over 40 of the women included in the dictionary were of Jewish descent -some came from well-established Danish-Jewish families, others came to Denmark through marriage to a Dane or because of political persecution in their country of origin. The Jewish women who were born in Denmark were mostly well off but a common characteristic for Jewish women born in Denmark and the Jewish immigrant women were, that they were well educated. This is most likely due to their traditional Jewish backgrounds where education has had a high priority. Most of the women are found in the fields of pedagogy, science, the arts, theatre and philanthropy. The Jewish women, however, are not represented in nursing, politics or the labour movement. Through their international social and familial networks, these Jewish women have made important contributions to the development of Danish culture and science.

Herbert W. Levysohn

An Account of a Single Case Story During The Persecution of Danish Jews

The story is an account of the experiences of a young Jew from the time Denmark was placed under martial law on August 29, 1943 at 4.00 o'clock in the morning till he moved in with his family in Stockholm after his successful flight to Sweden. Already at 6.00 o'clock the same morning that martial law had been declared, his father was arrested by the Germans but his family was never told the reason for the arrest. Shortly

thereafter rumours that persecution of the Danish Jews was imminent became so persistent that the Levysohn family -now consisting of his mother, his sister Kate and Herbert himself -had to leave their home. His mother and sister hid briefly at a rest home before they managed to escape to Sweden. Herbert described how he managed to hide in Denmark by moving from place to place with the help of good friends. After a failed attempt to cross the Sund from Gilleleje, he had to go back to Copenhagen where he succeeded in getting passage with a small fishing vessel from Skudehavn. The crossing was dramatic with an overly nervous skipper who wanted to call at Malmoe harbour but gave up in favour of Landskrona where the vessel ran aground and the engine stopped. After a series of difficulties they finally reached the island of Hven. From here they sailed to Landskrona where he was reunited with his mother and sister. Herbert W. Levysohn's account is an interesting source because it possibly is the only known document about these events that was written down just after they took place. The description is therefore very emotional and characterized by rage against the Nazis, gratitude to all the people who had helped; caring for his family and deep sorrow about the uncertainty of his father's fate. This manuscript has been handed over to the Royal Library by the Levysohn estate's executor Henning Pedersen.

Michael Sterll

Nathaniel Wallich

In his time the botanist Nathanael Wallich (1785-1854) was internationally well known. His impressive publication on the flora of India was received everywhere with great acclaim. Today Nathanael Wallich is almost forgotten. His achievements did not pale with time but were put aside by the changing concept of science in the late nineteenth century. But Nathanael Wallich was also Jewish. His and his family's connection with the Jewish community in Denmark barred any hope of a university career. On the other hand, the most Honourable East India Company fully recognized his qualifications. When finally the official Denmark recognized his achievements it was, on the other hand, without reservations. The article presents not only an unusual life story but furthermore Wallich's achievements in his field, emphasizing his rootedness in the concept of science of the early nineteenth century.