Abstract:

“Jews and Judaism in 17th Century German literature. Jews on stage – The Jew of Venice by Christoph Blümel and Horribilicribrifax Teutsch by Andreas Gryphius”

Jews and Judaism are a rather marginal phenomenon in German literature of the 17th century. Nevertheless, the study of texts that deal with Judaism is important for two reasons: First, the enormous effectiveness of literature can be illustrated in these texts and thus anti-Jewish stereotypes and accusations. An example for this is the Jesuit drama "About the holy three-year-old child Andreas". Second, Jews and Judaism are represented in different ways in 17th century texts. Even though most of these texts project anti-Jewish designs of the Jew, there are also texts in which a more tolerant, impartial dealing with Jews and Judaism is being tested. This thesis contradicts the current opinion that Lessing and Gellert were the first who introduced “positive Jews” in literature in the 18th century. An in-depth analysis of the literature of the 17th century shows that – albeit sporadically – there are already some positive designs of Jews and Judaism. Thus, the spectrum ranges from extreme anti-Jewish to tolerant and open-minded constructions. This thesis is illustrated by two dramas: “The Jew of Venice” by Christopher Blümel, a travelling-theater-play, and the school-comedy-play “Horribilicribrifax Teutsch. Wehlende Liebhaber” by Andreas Gryphius.