



Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800

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This wide-ranging narrative explores the role that Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews played in settling and building the Atlantic world between 1500 and 1800. Through the interwoven themes of markets, politics, religion, culture, and identity, the essays here demonstrate that the world of Atlantic Jewry, most often typified by Port Jews involved in mercantile pursuits, was more complex than commonly depicted.

The first section discusses the diaspora in relation to maritime systems, commerce, and culture on the Atlantic and includes an overview of Jewish history on both sides of the ocean. The second section provides an in-depth look at Jewish mercantilism, from settlements in Dutch America to involvement in building British, Portuguese, and other trading cultures to the dispersal of Sephardic merchants. In the third section, the chapter authors assess the roles of identity and religion in settling the Atlantic, looking closely at religious conversion; slavery; relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims; and the legacy of the lost tribes of Israel. A concluding commentary elucidates the fluidity of identity and boundaries in the formation of the Atlantic world.

Featuring chapters by Jonathan Israel, Natalie Zemon Davis, Aviva Ben-Ur, Holly Snyder, and other prominent Jewish historians, this collection opens new avenues of inquiry into the Jewish diaspora and integrates Jewish trade and settlements into the broader narrative of Atlantic exploration.

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