This book offers the first in-depth treatment of Jewish images of and behavior toward Blacks during the period of peak Jewish involvement in Atlantic slaveholding. Based on a wide range of sources in several languages, many previously unexplored and unpublished in English, it addresses some basic scholarly questions: What do primary sources tell us about relations between early modern Blacks and Jews? What do Jewish sources, textual and archival, convey about Blacks? To what degree did Jewish behavior toward slaves take shape under the influence of Jewish law? What does the Jewish legal tradition say about slavery and behavior toward slaves? Is there a connection between Jewish textual attitudes toward Blacks and Jewish behavior toward them? If so, how do the two inform each other? Attempting to move beyond interethnic polemics, the book constructs a cultural and social portrait of Jews – mostly Sephardic – amid a larger socioeconomic context, one from which Jews differed little, their religious Otherness notwithstanding.

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Abbreviations

AHR  American Historical Review
AJA  American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati, OH)
AJH  American Jewish History
AJHS American Jewish Historical Society (Waltham, MA)
ANTT Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo (Lisbon)
b.  ben / son of
B.T.  Babylonian Talmud
CAHJP Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (Jerusalem)
EJ  Encyclopedia Judaica
GAA  Gemeente Archief Amsterdam
HAHR Hispanic American Historical Review
JQR  Jewish Quarterly Review
J.T.  Jerusalem Talmud
NA  Notarial Archive
NWIG  Nieuwe West-Indische Gids
PAJHS  Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society
R.  Rabbi
SR  Studia Rosenthaliana
TJHSE Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England
WIG  West-Indische Gids