

IN: *African Journeys to Judaism*, ed. Maria Brettschneider, Edith Bruder, and Magdel LeRoux  
(Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019)

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### RECAPTURING JEWISH ROOTS IN CABO VERDE: CHANGING DIASPORIC IDENTITIES

ALMA GOTTLIEB

#### Introduction

The diasporic history of the Jewish people famously includes journeys by generations of Sephardis departing from the Iberian Peninsula and moving west to the Americas and east across Europe and into Asia; but even those extensive travels do not exhaust the seas crossed by this early—and frequently globe-trotting—people. The Cabo Verde islands, located some 350 miles off the coast of Senegal, offer a uniquely riveting space from which to explore Jewish histories. How, when, and why did Jews find themselves on these islands in the north Atlantic?

The journey begins a few decades before Columbus' seafaring voyages would compel cartographers to redraw maps of the known world. In 1456, European navigators landed on the archipelago they would misname "Cape Verde". If most of the islands were anything but green (and, indeed, largely devoid of vegetation), they were entirely empty of *human* habitation. Strong winds and sea currents alone, however, did not bring emboldened sailors here. A variety of historical forces converged to propel Europeans to explore new spaces, open up new markets, endeavor to convert new "heathens", and find new sources of inexpensive labor to cultivate new crops in those new lands.<sup>1</sup>

As it happened, although ecologically inhospitable to both humans and other animals (due, especially, to unpredictable rains and frequent droughts, among other natural conditions) the Cabo Verde islands proved ideally situated economically for Europeans—although not for Africans—for two opposing reasons. Located between Africa, Europe, and South America, the islands quickly attracted European merchants lured by the rapidly developing trans-Atlantic trade in goods—and, increasingly, in humans. Geographically, Cabo Verde proved a convenient stopping-off point while awaiting favorable winds to propel sailing ships. Economically, sailors took advantage of this layover space to stock up on necessary provisions (and, later, crew members) for the long water crossing. The islands quickly became the most active *entrepôt* for kidnapped Africans before being sent off on the infamous Middle Passage.<sup>2</sup> With all these arrivals of people from many ports of call, the archipelago became populated by a blend of people from Catholic, Jewish, and indigenous African religious traditions. Indeed, it was, arguably, here that the world's first systematically "creolized" population was created. As such, as the historian Toby Green suggests, Cabo Verde may be the place where we humans became modern—disturbingly, as part of the expansion of that most inhuman of activities, the trade in humans-as-commodities.

At the same time that the recently-uninhabited islands quickly became an unlikely maritime crossroads, they nevertheless retained an aura of exotic safety for adventurous Europeans—existing, as they did, far from any mainland. As a result, their very remoteness also made the islands attractive to those wishing to hide from any people, institutions, or states looking to do them harm. Prime among such fugitives were Jews fleeing growing anti-Semitism in Iberia.

Just as the Cabo Verde islands began to be populated in the 1460s, anti-Semitic tendencies were intensifying in Spain and Portugal, culminating in catastrophe for Jews. The very year that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella sponsored Columbus' voyage across the Atlantic in search of a western sea route to India, the same royal couple also issued an edict expelling all Jews from their country. Of course, opening up new sea routes would result in communicating with many new people in lands previously unknown to Spaniards. It seems perplexing—and bitterly ironic—that this expansion of social worlds on one (international) register was counterbalanced by a drastic

constriction of social worlds on another (domestic) register. Did the Spanish-Catholic soul somehow lack the cognitive or emotional ability to maintain “others” in the domestic space, if they were to embrace (or, at least, have relations with) multiple new “others” abroad? Such conjectures must await further discussion elsewhere. Here, it will suffice to note the uncanny coordination of dates in what became a momentous year for Christian Spaniards. At once, 1492 saw Spain making enormous (and enormously expensive) efforts to contact “others” across the seas and, at the very same time, enormous (and enormously violent) efforts to evict “others” in their midst.

Four years later, a complicated political relationship uneasily linking Iberia’s two nations impelled Spain to pressure Portugal to enact the same policy targeting Jews. While Portuguese navigators were famously starting to circumnavigate the globe and initiate new trade relations everywhere, the Portuguese crown was pressured by their Spanish neighbors (on threat of invasion) to produce its own Edict of Expulsion against all Jews who opted to remain Jewish.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the simultaneous, and contradictory, addition *and* subtraction of social ties with “others” claimed Christian Portugal as well.

In both countries, any Jews who rejected exile and chose to remain were required by the state to convert to Christianity;<sup>4</sup> however, that status proved problematic in the extreme, as these converts were dubbed with the stigmatizing title of “New Christians.” This newly-created category immediately made its bearers suspect, potentially accused of not being fully-dedicated Christians. Accusations of secretly observed Jewish practices encompassed the gamut of traditional Judaism, whether circumcising male infants, lighting candles on Friday nights, avoiding eating pork, observing Jewish holidays such as Passover, or any other ritual practice. Anyone suspected of any such activities was subject to arrest—and, often, torture, sometimes followed by execution by being publicly burnt alive at the notorious (and appallingly named) *autos-da-fé* (“acts of faith”). The joint church/state-sponsored institution that implemented this systematic persecution became known as the Inquisition; it lasted legally from 1478–1834 in Spain and from 1536–1821 in Portugal.<sup>5</sup> Alongside this draconian legal and military apparatus arose a veritable culture of mistrust, contributing to some three centuries of horror for anyone accused of being Jewish (“Judaizing”).<sup>6</sup>

In such a grim environment, tens of thousands of Jews fled both nations.<sup>7</sup> Their travels in one direction across Europe to Turkey and beyond, and in the other direction to the Americas, are well known.<sup>8</sup> A small number, however, chose to relocate not to Amsterdam, Thessaloniki, or Curaçao but, rather, to one of nine small islands off the coast of West Africa.

Admittedly, the proportion of Iberian Jews heading for Cabo Verde, rather than to other destinations more commonly sought at the time, was low. The converse, however, was also true: the first generations of Europeans who settled on the previously uninhabited archipelago of Cabo Verde included a very high proportion of Jews.<sup>9</sup> As the Inquisition raged in Portugal, former Jews, whom the church/state alliance had forced to convert to Catholicism (with varying levels of sincerity), continued to live in terror of being denounced. This condition of abject fear encompassed both those who continued to secretly practice Judaism and those who had genuinely renounced their former religion but whose Jewish ancestors were known to neighbors. Accordingly, both secret Jews and descendants of former Jews continued to flee Portugal for Cabo Verde (among other destinations) for the first two hundred years of the islands’ settlement. Those Jews who selected Cabo Verde as their destination, rather than one of the welcoming cities of Eurasia (especially Amsterdam and Istanbul), or the exciting allure of the Americas still being explored by European “discoverers”, must have had a certain kind of temperament. The historian Tobias Green conjectures that these Jewish refugees must have been especially adventurous. He also suggests that they may have been especially inclined towards participating in the developing trans-Atlantic trade opportunities and/or perhaps less spiritually devout than their co-religionists who fled to other cities where active Jewish communities existed.<sup>10</sup>

The numbers of “New Christians” fleeing Portugal no doubt slowed as the Inquisition itself became less virulent; yet, while the Inquisition was weakening in the terror it produced, other forces operating elsewhere were pressing down on Jews, in ways with which Jews were, unfortunately, all too familiar from other historical eras. From the early nineteenth century, and lasting for nearly a hundred years, Jews living in Morocco ended up as scapegoats for growing internal political troubles. As their ancestors had done before from the Iberian Peninsula (and from Israel, long before that), Jews fled persecution in Morocco for any other safe space available to them. Popular destinations included Gibraltar, the UK, Portugal, and the Americas; but once again, for about a century (lasting from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century), Cabo Verde drew a small proportion of these refugees. Although no practicing Jewish community existed on the archipelago (for reasons to be explained below), it is possible that the islands may have been known by these Moroccan Jews from oral history and family records. That is, one “pull” factor may be that they might have been aware of former Jewish families who had earlier fled Iberia for Cabo Verde.

Today, many Cabo Verdeans both on and off the islands are (re)discovering the Jewish history of their nation, their families, or both. What might we learn about expanding understandings of self, as Cabo Verdeans (re)discover new components of personal identity, family traditions, and national history? What might this singular Sephardic historical engagement instruct us about other Sephardic experiences elsewhere in Africa?

## Oppression, Assimilation, and Memories of Origins

Knowledge of the Jewish history of Cabo Verde varies tremendously, both among individuals living on the islands and those in the diaspora. We begin with the case of Cabo Verdeans who have no knowledge that Jews ever lived on the archipelago. This unfamiliarity is at once bizarre *and* understandable.

It is bizarre because, as already mentioned, the early population of the archipelago likely included a very large proportion of Jews. Today, any Cabo Verdean with roots in that early era may well have some Jewish ancestors; however, few descendants of these early Jews know of their Sephardic ancestors. Several factors account for this knowledge gap. At the technical level, archival records are scattered, fragmentary, and multilingual from this early era. To date, only one trained scholar has comprehensively engaged with these globally situated archives to reconstruct a sociological portrait of the first two centuries of Jewish residents of Cabo Verde.<sup>11</sup>

A second reason concerns the early religious constitution of the archipelago. From the beginning, the new island society replicated the very anti-Semitism of the mainland home that its Jewish refugees sought to flee. Tragically, beginning in 1551, the Inquisition legally followed Jews from Iberia to the islands, where some “New Christians” (*cristãos novos*) were accused by Catholic neighbors of continuing to practice Jewish rituals (“Judaizing”). Of those accused, some were denounced to spies, sent back to Lisbon, and tried in the Inquisition’s brutal courts.<sup>12</sup> The dream of the islands as a “safe haven” for Jews quickly dissolved, and those who had hoped they might securely practice their religion would soon have discovered their misjudgment. In response, some signed onto Catholicism (the state religion), at least in name, to become “crypto-Jews”; others converted to Catholicism with varying degrees of sincerity, although they and their descendants were long classified by their suspicious neighbors as “New Christians.” Either way, the islands’ Jewish history became officially erased very soon after Jews arrived. Memories of crypto-Jewish practices survived indirectly, through some quotidian customs—and, more directly (if clandestinely), through some families’ whispered oral histories; however, this history became discursively submerged, never to be taught in school curricula nor celebrated via public holidays.

Oral histories suggest that many of these formerly Jewish families frequently intermarried with one another, while others married “old Christians”. In both scenarios, though, the children of virtually all marriages were nearly always baptized in the Catholic church.<sup>13</sup> Through such habits, many Jewish customs were forced to go underground and, ultimately, disappeared. Still, other Jewish practices remained, as misunderstood remnants of former traditions no longer recognized as such.

And so, we arrive at the bizarre situation we find today. It is well summarized in the words of the nation’s most illustrious living writer, Germano Almeida:

Well, all the Jews in Cabo Verde have died. But many, many Jews came to the islands and married Cabo Verdeans and had children with Cabo Verdeans. So, although they’ve all died, they mixed with us, and they are part of us. (Personal communication, April 4, 2007)

Almeida’s comment applies aptly to the descendants of these early Jewish settlers; however, it applies less fittingly to the later group of Jewish migrants: those who arrived from Morocco, fleeing that nation’s political and economic crises, and their associated anti-Semitism, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Living descendants of these more recent arrivals include many prominent leaders in contemporary Cabo Verde, including the country’s first democratically elected prime minister (Carlos Alberto Wahnnon de Carvalho Veiga) and many others. Both for this reason, and because some of these families’ descendants retain living memories of their Moroccan ancestors from a couple of generations back, Cabo Verdeans who are aware of the Jewish presence in the archipelago are more likely to know about this more recent wave of immigrants.

In short, this island nation contains a uniquely complicated, multi-leveled history of Jewish presence since the inception of its continued human occupation. That history, however, is only beginning to be adequately documented, publicly acknowledged, and privately incorporated into personal identities.

## Identity and Current Ways of Living

What are the consequences of the nation’s Jewish history for the lived experiences of Cabo Verdeans today? Perhaps the most surprising discoveries come from observing the extent to which many Cabo Verdeans today (both on and off the islands) incorporate components of Jewish tradition into their daily lives—while identifying as Catholics

(or, in fewer cases, Protestants) and lacking knowledge of the Jewish origins of these practices. Such habits include lighting candles on Friday nights; wearing jewelry with six-pointed stars (including anklets on newborns); avoiding eating pork (on the part of a surprising number of Cabo Verdeans), despite the ubiquity of pork in Portuguese dishes that form a foundation of Cabo Verdean cuisine; and the *nodjadu* style of funeral common in Cabo Verde, which bears many similarities to the common Jewish funeral custom of “sitting shiva” (in contrast to West African funeral customs common on the mainland). Moreover, for many contemporary Cabo Verdeans both on the islands and in the diaspora, secular components of daily life that likely have Jewish origins include common Sephardic family names (especially those derived from words for plants and animals); an entrepreneurial spirit perhaps nurtured by centuries of anti-Semitic exclusion from many government, farming, and other careers across Europe; and a common commitment to a literacy-based learning style, and education in general, that distinguishes these communities from the respect for oral traditions and learning styles that characterizes many mainland West African societies.

If the Jewish origins of these habits are unknown to many contemporary Cabo Verdeans who perpetuate them, other Cabo Verdeans are now developing awareness of the Jewish foundations to their customs, and some have decided to engage actively with that religious and cultural heritage. Among these Cabo Verdeans, some grew up knowing of their (sometimes whispered) Jewish ancestry, while others have only recently become aware of it.

This expanding (re)discovery of Jewish parentage now takes many forms. Some Cabo Verdeans are researching the genetic foundations of their Jewish lineage through DNA tests. Online, lively conversations now abound concerning how to interpret DNA test results, and at least one “DNA Cousins” meet-up has attracted Cabo Verdeans who have discovered each other through their own DNA tests reported on genealogical websites. Other Cabo Verdeans are using social media, historical websites, and archives and other scholarly resources to research their Jewish history.

In the United States, the largest concentration of Cabo Verdeans resides in the New England region (especially the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island). Here, a group has created a community Passover Seder that has been held annually in Boston since 2006. At this Seder, which now attracts about one hundred Cabo Verdeans and one hundred American Jews every year, many Cabo Verdeans encounter Jewish ritual (and in some cases, White, American Jews) for the first time. The seating plan intentionally promotes conversations that produce curiosity about possible Jewish ancestry on the part of the Cabo Verdeans. On leaving the event, some feel inspired to pursue further knowledge. Many now return regularly and are beginning to feel camaraderie with their Jewish table-mates.

Another influential event was a ritual rededication of a Jewish cemetery held in the Cabo Verdean capital of Praia (on the island of Santiago) in 2013. The event was organized by the Cape Verde Jewish Heritage Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to calling attention to the archipelago’s Jewish heritage, especially by restoring degraded tombstones of Jews on several islands.<sup>14</sup> The ritual event rededicating the graves in Praia attracted a small but passionate number of Cabo Verdeans from on and off the islands. From this initiative emerged a new, local NGO, formed by Cabo Verdeans eager to further preserve and publicize the archipelago’s Jewish heritage.

Moved by participation in these and other events, some Cabo Verdeans with Jewish ancestry are testing out particular Jewish practices. Some men try on the traditional skullcaps known as *kippahs* or *yahrmulkes* at appropriate times; some try out ways to observe the Sabbath; some begin wearing a Jewish star or displaying a menorah on their mantelpiece; some read books about Jewish history and display them on their coffee tables; and some blog about their newfound knowledge and practice, tentatively performing their new identity in a more public setting. A small number are becoming more committed to their Jewish identity by joining a synagogue, considering themselves fully practicing Jews, and sometimes undergoing the rigorous, formal process of conversion to Conservative or even Orthodox Judaism.

## Conclusions

Within Jewish scholarship, an enormous body of literature has long existed addressing the question: “Who is a Jew?”<sup>15</sup> The simple answer of the Orthodox rabbi typically proposes that anyone with exclusively Jewish ancestry through the maternal line may consider her/himself a Jew.

The modern era, however, raises many challenges to this bio-genealogical approach. New community organizations and scholars now attract Jewish groups outside the simplistic dual division of “Sephardic” and “Ashkenazi” Jews that has dominated mainstream Jewish studies for too long.<sup>16</sup> As such, new questions and research paths arise. The present study forms part of a new scholarly trend recognizing a buried history of Jewish activities across the African continent, as attested by other contributions in this volume.<sup>17</sup>

At a broader level, scholars of memory now point to the cultural and political foundations that characterize not only remembering but also forgetting.<sup>18</sup> Adding Cabo Verdeans—and other Africans with documented but partially or even fully forgotten Jewish ancestry—to the conversation allows new questions concerning race and identity to be raised in this contemporary moment of re-thinking geo-religious borders and those who currently experience—and re-

evaluate—the effects of their historical crossings.<sup>19</sup>

## Works Cited

- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. "The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth." *American Economic Review* 95, no. 3 (2005): 546–79.
- Adas, Michael. *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Benbassa, Esther, and Aron Rodrigue. *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14th-20th Centuries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000 [1993].
- Benedictow, Ole J. *The Black Death, 1346-1353: The Complete History*. Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2004.
- Bruder, Edith. *The Black Jews of Africa: History, Religion, Identity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Corcos, Alain F. *Who is a Jew? Thoughts of a Biologist: An Essay Dedicated to the Jewish and Non-Jewish Victims of the Nazi Holocaust*. Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark, 2012.
- de Jong, Ferdinand, and Michael Rowlands, eds. *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007.
- Egerer, Claudia. "Ambivalent geographies: the exotic as domesticated Other." *Third Text* 15, no. 55 (2001):15–28.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Memory against Culture: Arguments and Reminders*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Fagan, Brian. *Fish on Friday: Feasting, Fasting, and the Discovery of the New World*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008.
- Gerber, Jane S. *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. New York, NY: Free Press/Simon and Schuster, 1992.
- Gillis, J. R. *Islands of the Mind: How the Western Imaginary shaped the Atlantic World*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Gottlieb, Alma. *Africa across the Seder Table: Jewish Identity in Cabo Verde and Its Diaspora*. Book manuscript in preparation, n.d.
- Green, Tobias. "Fear and Atlantic History: Some Observations Derived from the Cape Verde Islands and the African Atlantic." *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Europe, Africa and the Americas* 3, no. 1 (2006): 25–42.
- Green, Tobias. "Masters of Difference: Creolization and the Jewish Presence in Cabo Verde, 1497-1672." Ph. Dissertation, Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham, 2007.
- Green, Tobias. "Building Creole Identity in the African Atlantic: Boundaries of Race and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Cabo Verde." *History in Africa* 36 (2009):103–25.
- Green, Tobias. *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear*. London: Macmillan/New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 2009.
- Green, Tobias. "Beyond Culture Wars: Reconnecting African and Jewish Diasporas in the Past and the Present." In *African Athena: New Agendas*, edited by Daniel Orrells, Gurminder K. Bhambra, and Tessa Royon, 139–55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Green, Tobias. "Building Slavery in the Atlantic World: Atlantic Connections and the Changing Institution of Slavery in Cabo Verde, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries." *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 32, no. 2 (2011): 227–45.
- Green, Tobias. "Memories of Slavery, Ethnicity, and Forced Labour in Greater Senegambia." *Mande Studies* 16–17 (2015): 169–86.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1941/1952].
- Kamen, Henry. "The Mediterranean & the Expulsion of Spanish Jews in 1492." *Past and Present* 119 (1988): 30–55.
- Kaplan, Josef. *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie. *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Kedourie, Elie, ed. *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1992.
- Litvin, Baruch. *Jewish Identity: Who is a Jew? David Ben Gurion's Query to Leaders of World Jewry and Their Responses*. Edited by Sidney B. Hoenig; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. edited by Jeanne Litvin. Brooklyn, NY: KTAV Publishing House, 2012.
- Mark, Peter, and José da Silva Horta. *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Martins, Jorge. *Portugal e os Judeus: Volume I – Dos primórdios da nacionalidade à legislação pombalina*. Lisbon: Veja, 2006.
- Mokyr, Joel. *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Noel, James A. "The Age of Discovery and the Emergence of the Atlantic World." In James A. Noel, *Black Religion and the Imagination of Matter in the Atlantic World*, 15–35. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2009.
- Oum, Aomar. *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Paine, Robert. "Columbus and Anthropology and the Unknown." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1 no. 1 (1995): 47–65.
- Parry, J. H. *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement, 1450-1650*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.
- Ray, Jonathan S. *After Expulsion: 1492 and the Making of Sephardic Jewry*. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2013.
- Routt, David. "The Economic Impact of the Black Death." EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. Economic History Association. July 20, 2008. URL <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-economic-impact-of-the-black-death/>. Accessed August 20, 2018.
- Sapega, Ellen W. "Remembering Empire/Forgetting the Colonies: Accretions of Memory and the Limits of Commemoration in a Lisbon Neighborhood." *History & Memory* 20 no. 2 (2008): 18–38.

Sloan, Dolores. *The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal: Survival of an Imperiled Culture in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2009.

Vilches, Elvira. *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. *History of Sephardic Jewry, XIVth-XXth Centuries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000.

Zohar, Zion, ed. *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2005.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> This complex and extended historical moment was surely overdetermined, governed by multiple factors interacting in complicated (and sometimes contradictory) ways. For an emphasis on the role that Atlantic traders played in stimulating economic and political development during this period, see Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, “The Rise of Europe: Atlantic Trade, Institutional Change, and Economic Growth,” *American Economic Review* 95, (2005): 546–79. For discussion of the economic impact of the bubonic plague and its creation of a demand for new labor markets in and beyond Europe, see Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346-1353: The Complete History* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2004), and David Routt, “The Economic Impact of the Black Death,” *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert Whaples, July 20, 2008. Accessed August 20, 2018. URL: <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-economic-impact-of-the-black-death/>.

On the ways in which gold impelled expansionist dreams, see Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010); for an emphasis on the role played by technological and scientific advances in developing maritime exploration, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), and Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

For a focus on religious factors in stimulating international exploration by European navigators, see James A. Noel, “The Age of Discovery and the Emergence of the Atlantic World,” in *Black Religion and the Imagination of Matter in the Atlantic World*, James A. Noel (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin’s Press, 2009), 15–35; for an emphasis on the “yearning for the unusual, the wish to escape one’s everyday surroundings”, see Claudia Egerer, “Ambivalent Geographies: The Exotic as Domesticated Other,” *Third Text* 15, no. 55 (2001): 15–28, and Robert Paine, “Columbus and Anthropology and the Unknown,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1, no. 1 (1995): 47–65; for the conceptual impact of islands, in particular, on European thought, see J. R. Gillis, *Islands of the Mind: How the Western Imaginary Shaped the Atlantic World* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

For multileveled analyses citing technological, economic, political, and religious motives, see, for example, J. H. Parry, Part 1, in *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement, 1450-1650* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), and Brian Fagan, *Fish on Friday: Feasting, Fasting, and the Discovery of the New World* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008).

Finally, for an example of how contemporary memory reinterprets the eras of early global navigation by European sailors compared with more recent soldiers fighting colonial wars, see Ellen W. Sapega, “Remembering Empire/Forgetting the Colonies: Accretions of Memory and the Limits of Commemoration in a Lisbon Neighborhood,” *History & Memory* 20, no. 2 (2008): 18–38.

<sup>2</sup> For a cogent synopsis of the mutual impact of the growing slave trade on both Cabo Verde and the Americas, see Tobias Green, “Building Slavery in the Atlantic World: Atlantic Connections and the Changing Institution of Slavery in Cabo Verde, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries,” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 32, no. 2 (2011): 227–45.

<sup>3</sup> For one discussion of this era in Portuguese history, see Jorge Martins, *Portugal e os Judeus: Volume I – Dos primórdios da nacionalidade à legislação pombalina* (Lisbon: Veja, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Although the Spanish Order of Expulsion did not mention conversion as an alternative to expulsion, scholars of this period generally agree that “There can be no doubt whatever that conversion rather than expulsion was the primary objective of the Catholic monarchs” -- Henry Kamen, “The Mediterranean & the Expulsion of Spanish Jews in 1492,” *Past and Present*, no. 119 (1988): 37.

---

<sup>5</sup> Scholarship about the history of Sephardic Jews both before and after the twin Edicts of Expulsion from Spain and Portugal is now robust; for a few key works, see: Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000 [1993]); Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York, NY: Free Press/Simon and Schuster, 1992); Josef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Elie Kedourie, ed., *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992); Jonathan S. Ray, *After Expulsion: 1492 and the Making of Sephardic Jewry* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2013); Dolores Sloan, *The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal: Survival of an Imperiled Culture in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Jefferson, NC/London: McFarland, 2009); and Zion Zohar, ed., *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Tobias Green, *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Precise figures are impossible to ascertain, due to ambiguous or missing records. Earlier claims of one hundred and fifty thousand refugees following the two expulsion orders were disputed by Kamen, who estimated the figure to be closer to forty thousand to fifty thousand. Henry Kamen, "The Mediterranean & the Expulsion of Spanish Jews in 1492," *Past and Present*, no. 119 (1988): 44.

<sup>8</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *History of Sephardic Jewry, XIVth-XXth Centuries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Tobias Green, "Masters of Difference: Creolization and the Jewish Presence in Cabo Verde, 1497-1672" (PhD Diss., Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of one case, see Tobias Green, "Building Creole Identity in the African Atlantic: Boundaries of Race and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Cabo Verde," *History in Africa* 36:103-25 (2009).

<sup>13</sup> I have recorded some intriguing exceptions to this normative expectation; I explore their unique circumstances elsewhere – Alma Gottlieb, *Africa across the Seder Table: Jewish Identity in Cabo Verde and Its Diaspora* (book manuscript in preparation, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup> This organization was founded by Carol Castiel, an American Jew who first became aware of the Jewish origins of some Cabo Verdeans while working for a foundation in New York. The organization she created has now attracted significant funding from donors, and attention from the Cabo Verdean government (<https://capeverdejewishheritage.org/>).

<sup>15</sup> For some recent, conflicting accounts, see, for example, Joyathan Boyarin, *Thinking in Jewish* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Alain F. Corcos, *Who is a Jew? Thoughts of a Biologist: An Essay Dedicated to the Jewish and Non-Jewish Victims of the Nazi Holocaust* (Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark, 2012); Meryl Hyman, "Who Is a Jew?" *Conversations, Not Conclusions* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publ., 1998); Morris N. Kertzer, *What Is a Jew? A Guide to the Beliefs, Traditions, and Practices of Judaism that Answers Questions for Both Jew and Non-Jew*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Touchstone/ Simon and Schuster, 1993 [1953]); and Baruch Litvin, *Jewish Identity: Who is a Jew?* ed. Sidney B. Hoening, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition ed. Jeanne Litvin (Brooklyn, NY: KTAV Publishing House, 2012). By contrast, for a warning of the risks incurred in delineating Jews from others, as exemplified by the Inquisition and the Third Reich, see Tobias Green, "Beyond Culture Wars: Reconnecting African and Jewish Diasporas in the Past and the Present," in *African Athena: New Agendas*, eds. Daniel Orrells, Gurminder K. Bhambra, and Tessa Roynon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 147.

<sup>16</sup> Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Two important recent works of scholarship are Edith Bruder, *The Black Jews of Africa: History, Religion, Identity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> A selective list includes: Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ferdinand de Jong and Michael Rowlands, eds., *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007); Johannes Fabian, *Memory against Culture: Arguments and Reminders* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Tobias Green, "Memories of Slavery, Ethnicity, and Forced Labour in Greater Senegambia," *Mande Studies* 16–17 (2015); Maurice Halbwachs [1941/1952], *On Collective Memory*, transl. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press,

---

1992); Aomar Oum, *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Tobias Green, “Beyond Culture Wars: Reconnecting African and Jewish Diasporas in the Past and the Present,” in *African Athena: New Agendas*, eds. Daniel Orrells, Gurminder K. Bhambra, and Tessa Roynon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 139–55.

### Acknowledgments

A much shorter version of this chapter was first presented at the Third Conference of the International Society for the Study of African Jewry—ISSAJ, “The Surge of Judaism across Africa, the African Diaspora and Asia in the Twenty-first Century” (November 10–11, 2015, Museum of Jewish History and Art, Paris). A short piece derived from that talk appeared as “The Jews of Cape Verde,” in *Jews from Elsewhere*. I am grateful to audience members at the original conference for their thoughtful questions and comments, and to Edith Bruder for the invitation to expand on that talk for the present publication.

The research that forms the foundation for this contribution was supported by the US National Endowment for the Humanities, the European Commission/US Department of Education, and several units at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (European Union Center, Research Board, and International Programs and Studies). I am grateful to each of these agencies and organizations for their financial support.

Most importantly, I am indebted to the many Cabo Verdeans and American Jews who have contributed their time, expertise, memories, and opinions to this project. All interpretations are my own.

