



## Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe

Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman edited by Richard I. Cohen, Natalie B. Dohrmann, Adam Shear and Elchanan Reiner

### DESCRIPTION:

David B. Ruderman's groundbreaking studies of Jewish intellectuals as they engaged with Renaissance humanism, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment have set the agenda for a distinctive historiographical approach to Jewish culture in early modern Europe, from 1500 to 1800. From his initial studies of Italy to his later work on eighteenth-century English, German, and Polish Jews, Ruderman has emphasized the individual as a representative or exemplary figure through whose life and career the problems of a period and cultural context are revealed.

Thirty-one leading scholars celebrate Ruderman's stellar career in essays that bring new insight into Jewish culture as it is intertwined in Jewish, European, Ottoman, and American history. The volume presents probing historical snapshots that advance, refine, and challenge how we understand the early modern period and spark further inquiry. Key elements explored include those inspired by Ruderman's own work: the role of print, the significance of networks and mobility among Jewish intellectuals, the value of extraordinary individuals who absorbed and translated so-called external traditions into a Jewish idiom, and the interaction between cultures through texts and personal encounters of Jewish and Christian intellectuals. While these elements can be found in earlier periods of Jewish history, Ruderman and his colleagues point to an intensification of mobility, the dissemination of knowledge, and the blurring of boundaries in the early modern period. These studies present a rich and nuanced portrait of a Jewish culture that is both a contributing member and a product of early modern Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

As director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Ruderman has fostered a community of scholars from Europe, North America, and Israel who work in the widest range of areas that touch on Jewish culture. He has worked to make Jewish studies an essential element of mainstream humanities. The essays in this volume are a testament to the haven he has fostered for scholars, which has and continues to generate important works of scholarship across the entire spectrum of Jewish history.

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