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**Trivellato, Francesca; Halevi, Leor; Antúnes, Catia (eds.), *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, 279 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-937918-7. 22€. E-book, \$18.**

*Introduction: The Historical Comparative Study of Cross-Cultural Trade.* 1. Religion and Cross-Cultural Trade: A Framework for interdisciplinary Inquiry. 2. The Blessing of Exchange in the Making of the Early English Atlantic. 3. Trading with the Muslim World: Religious Limits and Proscriptions in the Portuguese Empire (ca. 1480-1570). 4. The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean: A Form of Cross-Cultural Trade between Southern Europe and the Maghreb (sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries). 5. Reflections on Reciprocity: a Late Medieval Islamic Perspective on Christian-Muslim Commitment to Captive Exchange. 6. Cross-Cultural Business Cooperation in the Dutch Trading World, 1580-1776: A view from Amsterdam's Notarial Contracts. 7. Trade across Religious and Confessional Boundaries in Early Modern France. 8. Coins and Commerce: Monetization and Cross-Cultural Collaboration in the Western Indian Ocean. 9. Crossing the Great Water: The Hajj and Commerce from Pre-Modern Southeast Asia. 10. African Meanings and European-African Discourse: Iconography and Semantics in Seventeenth-Century Salt Cellars from Sierra Leone. *Contributors. Index of names. Subject Index.*

*'Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900'* analyses the mechanisms that led to the advancement of long-distance trade during the second millennium through contributions from a number of international experts. The main storyline of the book is the relationship between trade and religion in the areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, in a period in which the shipbuilding industry was in constant development. In addition to long-distance trade, one of the threads of the book is the coexistence of different cultures and 'fides' in the same city, territory or state and their relations through trade. In this way, attention is drawn to contradicting concepts, particularly when the protagonists undergo exchanges with, in many cases, members of a different religious community. This leads some authors to think about the concepts of 'us' and 'them'- the "infidels" and "captives"- and the theoretical conception of law and its practical application, as well as the delimitation of the actual margins of peaceful coexistence in a context of

global interrelationships. This also leads us to consider attitudes of tolerance and flexibility and -in the field of international trade -risk, conflict and a much more dangerous image of local trade. Attention is also given to the assessment of various markets and trades, and the study of risks involved in trading both near (jewelry or other products of wealth) and far (the trade routes of fabrics and spices). Associated to this, the work highlights the essential purpose of trade: the movement of goods and currency. Special attention is therefore paid by several of the authors to payment mechanisms and the formalization of transactions using bills of exchange, currency exchange and a host of other solutions at a time when there was no international monetary unit (many territories had yet to monetize at all) and the consequent language barriers.

Formally, the book consists of a must-read introduction by Francesca Trivellato, which serves to familiarize us with the main concepts of market and religion, uniting them to sketch an outline of overseas trade from the Middle Ages to the modern world. At the same time, the methodology that continues throughout the ten chapters of the book is explained; putting in parallel the different geographical and temporal realities in order to illustrate the evolution of processes of commercial development throughout history and the influences on cultural transfers and religious thought. In the first chapter, Leonor Halevi reflects on three essential points: trade between Muslims and Catholics as a way to create peaceful relations between communities; the coexistence of different cultures and religions in a given space and the details of their relationships through market exchanges, and finally; the questioning of the approaches of historiographical schools that

have had tended to assume certain traders to be believers of either faith. David Harris takes the reins on the second chapter and reflects on the religious nature of English trade in the Atlantic; while in the third chapter we also examine the religious obstacles to trade between cultures and, at a broader level, between Christians and Catholics through the Portuguese empire in their time of greatest expansion from 1480 to 1570. This is complemented by the following section, directed by Wolfgang Kaiser and Guillaume Calafat, experts in European encounters during the age of expansion, reflecting on trade dynamics in the Mediterranean. With their unique insights we gain a much more accurate perspective of the true business relationships between Christian Mediterranean states and North Africa; essentially two opposing worlds whose commercial relations were much more common than at first you may think.

Despite this, we are dealing with two different realities, in a process of uneven development and with different needs. Confrontation was very common as a result. Hence in the fifth chapter, in addition to the dangers of the elements of large-scale trade, we look at conflicts, looting and the institutionalization of piracy as a means of enrichment but also as a demonstration of power and superiority. From there, the remaining four chapters provide an overview of trade during the early modern period, especially in Germany, France, the Indian Ocean and the trade in Asia that was essential for the dynamic expansion of European manufacturing. In all cases, the authors take us beyond the economic particularities, the nature of transactions and transport used for the realization, and address essential concepts such as cultural exchanges. The authors reflect on the value of

goods as a representation and demonstration of the respect between ambassadors of countries, of exoticism and of the persuasive power of goods. It is also necessary to bear in mind that the work delves into the legal and political mechanisms designed to regulate trade at a time when it was growing slowly and progressively, leading to an increasingly connected world; in other words the starting point for the phenomena of globalization in which we are immersed today.

Without oversimplifying, *‘Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900’* offers a wide and profound overview of world trade during the Middle, Early-modern and Contemporary Ages. It does so from economic, religious, anthropological and social perspectives, perfectly fulfilling the objectives set both by the editors and by the different researchers involved in drafting. Their rich contributions confirm their mastery of both the primary and secondary sources essential for historians of world cultural and commercial transfers.

In summary, this is an entertaining, well written and above all well-documented book, essential for anyone seeking to advance their knowledge of the history of trade, and a must read for any historian of economics.

**Francesca Trivellato**, Professor of History at Yale University (US). Her previous work focused on Venetian glass manufacturing, including a book, *Fondamenta dei Vetrai: Lavoro, tecnologia e mercato a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Rome: Donzelli, 2000), as well as on a variety of topics relating to craft guilds, merchant networks, and Jewish commercial activities. She is currently writing a book on the history of credit in late medieval and early modern Europe, in which she unearths a forgotten and yet influential legend about the alleged invention by medieval Jews of marine insurance and bills of exchange –the two foundational instruments of European financial capitalism. Also, she is co-editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Jewish History*.

**Leor Halevi**, Associate Professor of Law at Vanderbilt University (US). From many years he studies the interrelationship between religious laws and social practices in various contexts. He is the author of *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2007), for which he won four awards: The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award, given by Phi Beta Kappa for a notable scholarly contribution to our understanding of the cultural and intellectual condition of humanity; the Albert Hourani Award given by the Middle East Studies Association for year's best book in the field; the Medieval Academy of America's John Nicholas Brown Prize; and the American Academy of Religion's Award for Excellence in the Category of Analytical-Descriptive Studies.

**Catia Antúnes**, Associate Professor at Leiden University Institute for History (NL). She's interest for cross-cultural business networks during the Early Modern period has developed into a broader research profile about free agency and empire building in the Netherlands in comparative perspective with other Western European Empires. From February 2014 is expanding her research into a new interdisciplinary field of research. Together with maritime archaeologists, climatologists and environmentalists, a consortium of European scientists and private stakeholders will be looking into factors surrounding wood usage, exchange and depletion of forestry resources in Europe in historical perspective.

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