

# Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy

Medieval Lecture Series  
St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT:

**Come and enjoy cheese and pastries, relaxed conversation, and a discussion on Phillip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish spy.**

**WHEN:** Thursday, 26 January 2017, 4:30-6:00

**WHERE:** St. Jerome's University, SJ2-1002  
Reception: 4:30  
Lecture: following the reception

**WHO:** Dr. Flora Cassen



In the bitter sixteenth-century conflict between the Spanish and Ottoman empires, both sides relied on espionage. For Jewish men like Simon Sacerdoti (c.1540-1600), whose home had fallen to Spain, expulsion by King Philip II (1527 – 1598) was a very real risk. But Sacerdoti, scion to one of Milan's wealthiest Jewish families, had direct access to high-level information from the enemy Ottomans, information that was of great value to Philipp and to Spain. Sacerdoti, thus, found himself serving a king and an empire with a long history of harming the Jews, while spying on the Ottomans, a far more tolerant power. This talk explores Sacerdoti's actions and motivations and shines new light on early modern diplomacy and espionage, and on the place of the Jews in a time of competing empires and loyalties.



**Flora Cassen** is Assistant Professor of History and Van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. Her forthcoming book with the University of Cambridge Press, *Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy: Politics, Religion, and the Power of Symbols*, examines the roots of anti-Judaism through a study of discriminatory marks that the Jews were compelled to wear in 15<sup>th</sup> – and 16<sup>th</sup> C Italy.

This is the third event in the 2016 – 2017 *Medieval Lecture Series*. The lecture series highlights the forty-five-year history of Medieval Studies on our campus. It promotes communication, encourages collaboration, and enhances the interdisciplinary heart of Medieval Studies.

Steven Bednarski & David Porreca  
Co-Directors, Medieval Studies

