



## “Rethinking Muslim-Jewish Relations: Reflections on Late Ottoman Realities”

Dr. Julia Phillips Cohen, Vanderbilt University

Thursday, September 20, 5:00-6:30pm

Judaica Suite, Smathers Library (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

This lecture examines the shifting place of Jews in Ottoman society during the empire’s modern reform era. At the start of this era, Jews were largely absent from government positions and major debates in the empire. Within a matter of decades, Ottoman Muslims and Jews alike regularly referred to Jews as a model community, or *millet*—as a group whose leaders and members knew how to serve their state and were deeply engaged in Ottoman politics. Charting the dramatic reversal, this talk explores what the process of becoming a model community in the multi-lingual, multi-religious Ottoman empire entailed during its final half century of existence. What kind of work, alliances, compromises and sacrifices did the process involve? How did Ottoman Jews find themselves in a position to claim “model minority” status? And what did this mean for their evolving relationship both with the Ottoman authorities and with their neighbors of different faiths?

Julia Phillips Cohen is an Associate Professor in the Program in Jewish Studies and the Department of History at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of the award-winning *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford University Press, 2014) and co-editor of the award-winning *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2014). Her new book project explores Sephardi Jews’ evolving relationship to Spain following the expulsion of 1492.



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