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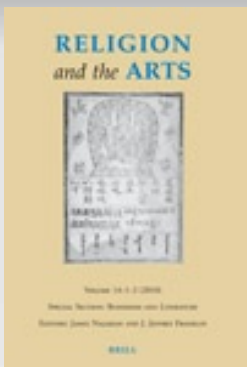
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Shakespeare's Grand Deception: *The Merchant of Venice*—Anti-Semitism as "Un

the Catholic-Protestant Problem



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Considering the notion of poetry in Early Modern drama as a veil for political commentary during a perilously censored period, this article examines Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in its previously ignored historical context while providing a brief overview of the play's anti-Judaism to show how the play's anti-Judaism affects reader response. Within an emerging new vein of Dissident Theory, this article overlooks historical facts in England's troubled Reformation history, this essay provides an alternate interpretatic

how Shylock haunts our interpretations of the play, which is not, as this essay's title suggests, so much about the one as found in the Catholic-Protestant crisis, as *crisis* it undoubtedly was. This reading offers a measured departure by exploring the play *poststructurally* as the site of a metaphoric, performative conversion where Shakespeare ironically to convey a coded message about the moral incoherence in popular Christianity—specifically concerning *Christian* identity as seen in forced conversions and the complete violation of the basic tenets of mercy and justice Christianity as Shakespeare saw it practiced.

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