**Don Isaac Abravanel: A Historical and Intellectual Biography**

Don Isaac Abravanel was one of the greatest leaders and thinkers of Iberian Jewry in the aftermath of the expulsion. A merchant, banker, and financier of the nobility, a scholar versed in both Christian and Jewish writings, a preacher and exegete, a prominent political figure in courts of Christian monarchs and in the councils of Jewish communities, Abravanel was a complex and fascinating figure, a mixture of light and dark, a mirror into the spirit of the Early Modern Era. He was a traditionalist with innovative ideas, a man with one foot in the Middle Ages and the other in the Renaissance, a capitalist who viewed economic activity as a blessing from God and a new path to be adopted by the rulers of his era. At the same time, he was an erudite scholar and an avid collector of books, and he maintained close connections with Jews and Christians alike. Forging together these diverse influences, he created a monumental exegetical opus. Abravanel was thus a transitional figure, defined by an age of contradictions. But it is these very contradictions which make him such an important personality at the dawn of Jewish modernity. This book’s three sections reflect Abravanel’s life in three cultural milieus – Portugal, Castile, and post-expulsion Italy, all the while analyzing his major literary accomplishments in each period. Piecing together the biographical, historical, and philosophical facets of Abravanel’s complex character – the good along with the bad – this book presents the story of one of the great founders of Jewish modernity.