

Diplomacy, Alliances, and Slavery in the Eighteenth Century

In his new book, *Unbounded Jews: The Game of Denmark and Morocco in the Eighteenth Century*, Bent Blüdnikow tells a fascinating story of Jewish adventurers and merchants who, in the eighteenth century, challenged national borders, prejudices, and slavery. The Moroccan family clans Sumbel and Buzaglo bring new insight into the forces that have shaped modern Denmark and Europe.

In 1753, Denmark became the first European country to sign a trade and peace treaty with Morocco. But it was dangerous to be one of Sultan Abdallah's closest advisors. The Jew Samuel Sumbel, who was responsible for Morocco's relations with the European powers, was repeatedly threatened with his life by the Sultan himself. To protect his family, Sumbel placed his enormous fortune in royal Danish securities. In 1752, he was granted an audience with King Frederik V.

In 1777 Samuel Sumbel presented the European nations, including Denmark, with a radical proposal to abolish slavery – a proposal that could have changed the course of history and ended slavery even then. However, the proposal was never implemented and is largely unknown in Danish history.

Bent Blüdnikow has unearthed many more unknown and colorful stories from the archives. Among them is the story of Sumbel's son Joseph, who after his father's death traveled to Copenhagen to secure the family fortune. Wearing a turban, robe and a jeweled saber, Joseph renounced visiting brothels and appeared as a prophet of a new religion of virtue for pagans, Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

Unbounded Jews provides an in-depth account of the lives of cosmopolitan Jews across three continents, showing that although Jews were often despised and lived in poor conditions, Moroccan Jews could move freely and play significant roles in society.

The book is simultaneously published in Danish.

Bent Blüdnikow is a journalist, writer, and reviewer for a national Danish newspaper. He is a historian and a former employee of the Danish National Archives. He has authored numerous books on the subject.

Unbounded Jews. The Game of Denmark and Morocco in the Eighteenth Century will be published on September 30 2024. Hardback, richly illustrated, suggested retail price €47. Find more information [online](#), or contact editor Rikke Kensinger at rk@gad.dk.