

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910778697303321
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Titolo	Between empires [[electronic resource]] : Brazilian sugar in the early Atlantic economy, 1550-1630 // by Christopher Ebert
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden ; ; Boston, : Brill, 2008
ISBN	1-282-39914-4 9786612399145 90-474-4277-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (224 p.)
Collana	The Atlantic world, , 1570-0542 ; ; 16
Classificazione	15.85 15.70
Disciplina	382/.4566410981
Soggetti	Sugar trade - Brazil - History - 16th century Sugar trade - Brazil - History - 17th century Sugar trade - Europe, Northern - History - 16th century Sugar trade - Europe, Northern - History - 17th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [195]-203) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction -- Portuguese trade with northwestern Europe -- Sugar, institutions and politics -- Merchants and merchant networks -- The cost of shipping -- Transactions and risk management -- Illegal trade -- Supply, demand, prices and profitability -- Conclusion.
Sommario/riassunto	This study examines the wholesale trade in sugar from Brazil to markets in Europe. The principal market was northwestern Europe, but for much of the time between 1550 and 1630 Portugal was drawn into the conflict between Habsburg Spain and the Dutch Republic. In spite of political obstacles, the trade persisted because it was not subject to monopolies and was relatively lightly regulated and taxed. The investment structure was highly international, as Portugal and northwestern Europe exchanged communities of merchants who were mobile and inter-imperial in both their composition and organization. This conclusion challenges an imperial or mercantilist perspective of the Atlantic economy in its earliest phases.