

Apostasy and Jewish identity in high Middle Ages Northern Europe: 'Are you still my brother?'

Simha Goldin



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The attitude of Jews living in the medieval Christian world to Jews who converted to Christianity or to Christians seeking to join the Jewish faith reflects the central traits that make up Jewish self-identification. The Jews saw themselves as a unique group chosen by God, who expected them to play a specific and unique role in the world.

This study researches fully for the first time the various aspects of the way European Jews regarded members of their own fold in the context of lapses into another religion. It attempts to understand whether they regarded the issue of conversion with self-confidence or with suspicion, and whether their attitude was based on a clear theological position, or on issues of socialisation. It provides a better understanding of how the Jews viewed their own identity while living as a minority among the Christian majority, whose own self-confidence become steadily stronger throughout the tenth to the fourteenth centuries until they eventually ousted the Jews completely from England, France and large parts of Germany.

The book will primarily interest students and lecturers of Jewish/Christian relations, the Middle Ages, Jews in the Medieval period, and inter-religious research, but will also appeal to a much wider readership.

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