



Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750

Elisheva Carlebach

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This pioneering book reevaluates the place of converts from Judaism in the narrative of Jewish history. Long considered beyond the pale of Jewish historiography, converts played a central role in shaping both noxious and positive images of Jews and Judaism for Christian readers. Focusing on German Jews who converted to Christianity in the sixteenth through mid-eighteenth centuries, Elisheva Carlebach explores an extensive and previously unexamined trove of their memoirs and other writings. These fascinating original sources illuminate the Jewish communities that the converts left, the Christian society they entered, and the unabating tensions between the two worlds in early modern German history. The book begins with the medieval images of converts from Judaism and traces the hurdles to social acceptance that they encountered in Germany through early modern times. Carlebach examines the converts' complicated search for community, a quest that was to characterise much of Jewish modernity, and she concludes with a consideration of the converts' painful legacies to the Jewish experience in German lands.

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