

The Law of the Other: Converts and Gentiles in the Eyes of Seventeenth-Century Istanbul Rabbis

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“The Law of the Other: Converts and Gentiles in the Eyes of Seventeenth-Century Istanbul Rabbis” explores individual interactions between Jews and Muslims documented in rabbinic *responsa*, scholarly opinions that resolve conflicts within the framework of Jewish law. These *responsa* are typically presented in a question-and-answer format and written in a complex Hebrew with Aramaic influences. “The Law of the Other” places interreligious interactions within an historical context and will lend us a better understanding of the environment and shared culture that took place among Jews and Muslims in the early modern Ottoman Empire. “The Law of the Other” also deals with interactions between Jews and Jewish converts to Islam, who in the eyes of the Jewish law are still considered Jewish. The project asks whether this group of converts is treated differently than people who were born Muslim, both within the theoretical Jewish law and the practical, historical reality. Finally, “The Law of the Other” asks whether it is possible to isolate the reality from theoretically-based *responsa*.

Chapter Sections of Forthcoming Thesis Paper

Chapter 1: Jews and Gentiles

Chapter 2: Jews and Converts

Chapter 3: Istanbul Jews and Jewish Outsiders



A sample of a responsum. Photographed at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies



A close-up of a historical casing for a Torah scroll. Housed in the Jewish Museum of Istanbul.



Interior of the Ahrida Synagogue, a historical synagogue that thrived in seventeenth-century Istanbul.

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