

Lawrence

Jethro and the Jews

Jewish Biblical Interpretation and the Question of Identity

In *Jethro and the Jews*, Beatrice J. W. Lawrence examines rabbinic texts that address the biblical character of Jethro, a Midianite priest, Moses' advisor and father-in-law, and the creator of the system of Jewish jurisprudence. Lawrence explores biblical interpretations in Midrash, Targum and Talmud, revealing a spectrum of responses to the presence of a man who straddles the line between insider and outsider. Ranging from character assassination to valorization of Jethro as a convert, these interpretive strategies reveal him to be a locus of anxiety for the rabbis concerning conversion, community boundaries, intermarriage, and non-Jews.

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