Record Nr. UNINA9910463253703321
 Autore Schmitt Jean-Claude <1946->

Titolo The conversion of Herman the Jew [[electronic resource]]:

autobiography, history, and fiction in the twelfth cenutry / / Jean-

Claude Schmitt, translated by Alex J. Novikoff

Pubbl/distr/stampa Philadelphia, : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003

ISBN 0-8122-0875-7

Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (318 p.)

Collana The Middle Ages Series

Altri autori (Persone) NovikoffAlex J

Disciplina 248.2/46092

Soggetti Christian converts from Judaism

Electronic books.

Germany Biography

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Note generali Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph

Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references and index.

Nota di contenuto Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction -- Chapter 1. Fiction and

Truth -- Chapter 2. Medieval Autobiography -- Chapter 3. The Dream and Its Interpretation -- Chapter 4. Conversion to Images -- Chapter 5. Baptism and Name -- Chapter 6. "A New Era of Conversion" -- Conclusion -- Extract from the Vite of Codfried Count of Connecture.

Conclusion -- Extract from the Vita of Godfried, Count of Cappenburg (c. 1150-1155) -- Herman the Former Jew: Short Work on the Subject

of His Conversion -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index --

Acknowledgments

Sommario/riassunto Sometime toward the middle of the twelfth century, it is supposed, an

otherwise obscure figure, born a Jew in Cologne and later ordained as a priest in Cappenberg in Westphalia, wrote a Latin account of his conversion to Christianity. Known as the Opusculum, this book purportedly by "Herman, the former Jew" may well be the first autobiography to be written in the West after the Confessions of Saint Augustine. It may also be something else entirely. In The Conversion of Herman the Jew the eminent French historian Jean-Claude Schmitt

readers. Where some have seen it as an authentic conversion narrative, others have asked whether it is not a complete fabrication forged by Christian clerics. For Schmitt the question is poorly posed. The work is

examines this singular text and the ways in which it has divided its

at once true and fictional, and the search for its lone author-whether converted Jew or not-fruitless. Herman may well have existed and contributed to the writing of his life, but the Opusculum is a collective work, perhaps framed to meet a specific institutional agenda. With agility and erudition, Schmitt examines the text to explore its meaning within the society and culture of its period and its participation in both a Christian and Jewish imaginary. What can it tell us about autobiography and subjectivity, about the function of dreams and the legitimacy of religious images, about individual and collective conversion, and about names and identities? In The Conversion of Herman the Jew Schmitt masterfully seizes upon the debates surrounding the Opusculum (the text of which is newly translated for this volume) to ponder more fundamentally the ways in which historians think and write.