The People of the Book

The Politics of Writing in Jewish Modernity

The expression "people of the book", that became a standard metonymy for the Jews firstly in the Islamic orient, was appropriated in Judaism in order to interpret the fundamentally disposition to define oneself by writing, by literature. The expression turned out to be a strong and ambiguous key of self-construction and self-affirmation of Jewish writing especially in the changing historical, cultural and political contexts of modernity. The lecture analyses the manifold, even controversial appropriations and interpretations of the "people of the book" in the cultural and political self-constitution of Jewish modernity between Liberalism and Zionism.