A few pieces of information exist on the history of Byzantine Jewry in Islamic and Eastern Christian sources. In modern research these documents are usually considered marginal when compared to Jewish sources or Greek Byzantine ones, and are consequently accorded only limited attention. Furthermore, they are evaluated without any reference to the literary context in which they were produced. More concretely, they have not undergone the recent process of literary criticism that has occurred in the case of Byzantine sources on Byzantine Jews, as well as in the field of Byzantine-Islamic relations. The purpose of the present study is to reassess the contribution of these sources to our knowledge of Byzantine Jewry in the light of recent methodological approaches that accord importance to the construction of alterity as a means for the construction of a self-image.

After presenting the necessary methodological considerations (in section 1), I shall offer a general typology of the image of the Jews in Islamic and Eastern Christian sources (in section 2). In the last section I shall discuss the forced baptism of the Jews by Emperor Leo III as a case study for examining the potential contribution of Eastern non-Byzantine sources to the study of Jewish Byzantine history.
I. Methodological Considerations

In the past few decades, Byzantine studies have undergone a significant methodological shift. Side-by-side with the ongoing efforts to increase the amount of textual and archaeological evidence of the history of Byzantium and the efforts to interpret this evidence for a better knowledge of Byzantine history, a growing tendency to study the mechanisms of representation produced within the Byzantine world and their functions has appeared. Studies have included the shifting conceptions within Byzantine society, as well as the dynamic views of otherness in Byzantium. Particularly relevant to the present essay are studies of Byzantine views of the Jews living within the empire. Prior to the methodological shift, studies of Byzantine Jewry sought to penetrate the reality of Jewish life in Byzantium. Current approaches, however, seek to portray the image of Jews as it emerges in different literary genres and corpora—both Christian and Jewish—and to evaluate the function of that image within each genre, and the contribution of that image to our knowledge of the authors, rather than of Jewish life in and of itself.

A parallel methodological shift has also been made with regard to Muslim-Byzantine interactions, that is, both Muslim attitudes...