



JEWISH IDENTITY AMONG THE IGBO OF NIGERIA: Israel s Lost Tribe and The Question of Belonging in the Jewish State

Daniel Lis

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Among the 20 to 30 Million Igbo people in Nigeria, there s a widespread belief that the Igbo originated in ancient Israel. Recently a number of Igbo Jewish communitites have been established in Nigeria. Although some Igbo have made their way to Israel, the Israeli public is largely unaware of the fact that there are in addition 20 to 30 Million Igbo people in Nigeria that have been called by some The Jews of West Africa . Igbo Jewish identity has significant political implications for Nigeria as well as Israel. This book offers for the first time an in-depth study and a genealogical history of the Igbo s long-time and controversial narrative of a possible Jewish origin and thereby engenders a new reading of Igbo history. This interdisciplinary research monograph describes different layers of identity and shows step by step throughout the last 250 years of Igbo history how Jewish identification has been part of Igbo identity and cultural practice. The book then shows the place of the Igbo in post-Biafran Nigeria and how in the ethnically and religiously fractured state, the Judaizing Igbo encouraged by parts of the Jewish world - increasingly orient themselves towards normative Judaism. The author finally provides new ground for the discussion of how Jewish identity is constructed in the age of globalization and the state of Israel. Provides a treasure-trove of well-documented information concerning the Jewish identity of Nigeria's Igbo, their relationship to the State of Israel, and their tragic recent history. Prof. Jonathan D. Sarna, Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University A compendium of well-crafted incisive analysis of the historicity of the Jewish theory of Igbo Origins, the work opens up a new vista in the emerging globalization of Igbo studies. Thus Daniel Lis by this work has proved that the study of the Jews as a distinct people cannot be complete without the further insight into the Igbo question. Dr. N. Tony Nwaezeigwe, Acting Director, Centre for Igbo Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria An excellent, fascinating,original and well documented study of the Igbo. No other book examines this subject in such depth. Dr. Arye Oded, African Studies,The Hebrew University of Jerusalem A meticulously researched and documented study that greatly advances understanding of the history of Jewish identification and practice among the Igbo in Nigeria and in contemporary Israel. An essential contribution to the budding literature on Judaism and Jewry in West Africa. Prof. William F.S. Miles, author of Jews of Nigeria: An Afro-Judaic Odyssey Daniel Lis, from the Institute for Jewish Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland, is one of the foremost researchers on Jewish identification among the Igbo. Chika Oduah, for CNN

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