Acknowledgements

It all started about a decade ago with a couple of what might have been insignificant episodes. And so I am grateful to family, friends and colleagues who persuaded me not to dismiss these two incidents as mere anecdotes but to see them as the makings of a story. When Muslim immigrants in Europe were asked questions pertaining to ghettoisation, to parallel societies, facets of voluntary (and sometimes enforced) segregation, their adherence to their sending countries' cultures and traditions while avoiding their European receiving countries' languages, norms and codes, the answer given amounted to something like this: Have you come across a group of people who were more German than the Germans than German Jews? Did their acculturation and loyalty help them during the World War II? So, why bother integrating?

The second incident related to a rhetorical question raised during an academic conference. It seemed to me grossly improper, macabre and a bitter attempt at humour. The speaker asked, 'Why are there so many Muslim immigrants in Europe?' Then came his reply, 'Because of the Jews!' Why? The then Europe that exterminated its Jews in the Second World War now needs to accept and tolerate all who come, and pursue politically correct behaviour towards 'the others' and their 'otherness', including Muslim immigrants.

Indeed, these two anecdotes with their improper questions, which prompted improper answers, made a surprising connection in my mind, combining disparate phenomena: Muslim immigration, the Jews' loyalty, despite their bitter history, to their varied nationalities and the background setting of the 'European' context. In their simplicity, both pronouncements would suggest that there are no nuances within either grouping and that the many different camps would automatically become homogenous when they find themselves living on the Continent. Such reductions to the lowest denominator would suggest mere stereotypes, and not multifaceted people. Yet, when the 'triangle' of mainstream Europeans, Muslim immigrants and European Jews and Jewish histories were investigated and researched, a multi-layered 'story' surfaced, with all its incredibly complex, interwoven textures and colours from which this book takes its shape.

The story has to include the Holocaust and other aspects of European–Jewish histories. Equally important are present-day elements like ritual Muslim halal and Jewish kosher animal slaughter, male circumcision and traditional and religious attire such as the Muslim *hijab* and the Jewish skullcap, as well as the repercussions in Europe of the social, political and military events taking place in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Islamic State and the ripple effects of the Arab Spring. The frequent references made to the ‘triangle’ at the root of our project show that the historical and intertwined contemporary three-way European Christian–Muslim–Jewish encounters shown in our findings greatly affect the realities on the Continent. (The ‘triangle’ is often written in inverted commas as a shorthand form of reference to the threefold storyline in the book, and all italicised phrasing in the book’s quotations is this author’s, unless otherwise specified in an endnote).

As alluded to above, I am most thankful to those who encouraged me to undertake the research, to those who contributed oral and written knowledge, to those who supported the research materially and financially, to those who agreed to talk and gave good advice and to those who encouraged me not to give in to failures and mishaps on a very long journey. Throughout the text and in the endnotes, I have taken care to thank you all by name. In particular I am most thankful to David Brauner of Jerusalem, whose thoughtful editing guided my impossible manuscript through many revisions to become this book; to Joan Hooper for her thoughtful and proficient final proofreading; to Fern Seckbach whose mindful, incisively compiled index is the key to our book; to Tony Mason, Dee Devine and Robert Byron of Manchester University Press for their professional encouragement and support; to anonymous readers whose insightful comments helped to improve the manuscript; and to Nitza, Amos, Hagai, Shira, Liam, Alon, Carmel and Hila, who have endured – and survived – the spiritual, almost physical presence of *all* Europeans, Muslim immigrants and Jews in their houses for the last decade.

Amikam Nachmani, January 2017
Jerusalem and Bar-Ilan University