

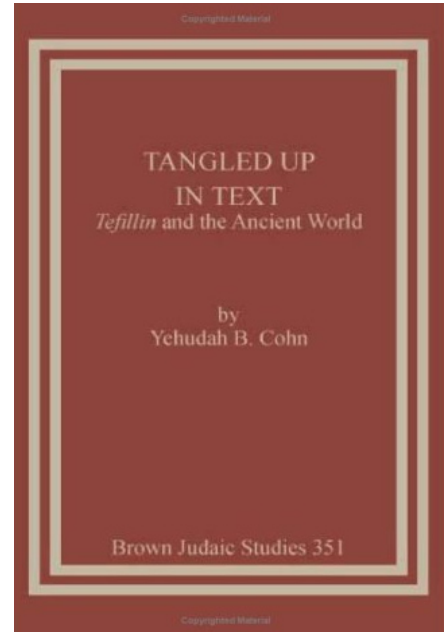


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Tangled Up in Text: *Tefillin* and the Ancient World

By Yehudah B. Cohn

This book locates the Jewish *tefillin* ritual within the cultural matrix that engendered its origins and development, with particular focus on the reception history of relevant biblical passages, the archaeological evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and detailed investigation of rabbinic literature to the third century C.E. All these sources are evaluated against the backdrop of comparative data for the use of magical amulets in the ambient Greco-Roman world, in the light of which the author demonstrates that tefillin originated and persisted as popular protective amulets, and were an invented tradition of the Hellenistic era. His conclusions are used to explain why the practice developed as it did, to clarify its distinctive features and to analyze its meaning in the early rabbinic period.



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