The Aggada of the Bavli and Its Cultural World

Geoffrey Herman and Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, editors

Essays that explore the rich engagement of the Talmud with its cultural world

The Babylonian Talmud (Bavli), the great compilation of Jewish law edited in the late Sasanian era (sixth–seventh century CE), also incorporates a great deal of aggada, that is, nonlegal material, including interpretations of the Bible, stories, folk sayings, and prayers. The Talmud’s aggadic traditions often echo conversations with the surrounding cultures of the Persians, Eastern Christians, Manichaens, Mandaeans, and the ancient Babylonians, and others. The essays in this volume analyze Bavli aggada to reveal this rich engagement of the Talmud with its cultural world.

Features:

- A detailed analysis of the different conceptions of martyrdom in the Talmud as opposed to the Eastern Christian martyr accounts
- Illustration of the complex ways rabbinic Judaism absorbed Christian and Zoroastrian theological ideas
- Demonstration of the presence of Persian-Zoroastrian royal and mythological motifs in talmudic sources

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