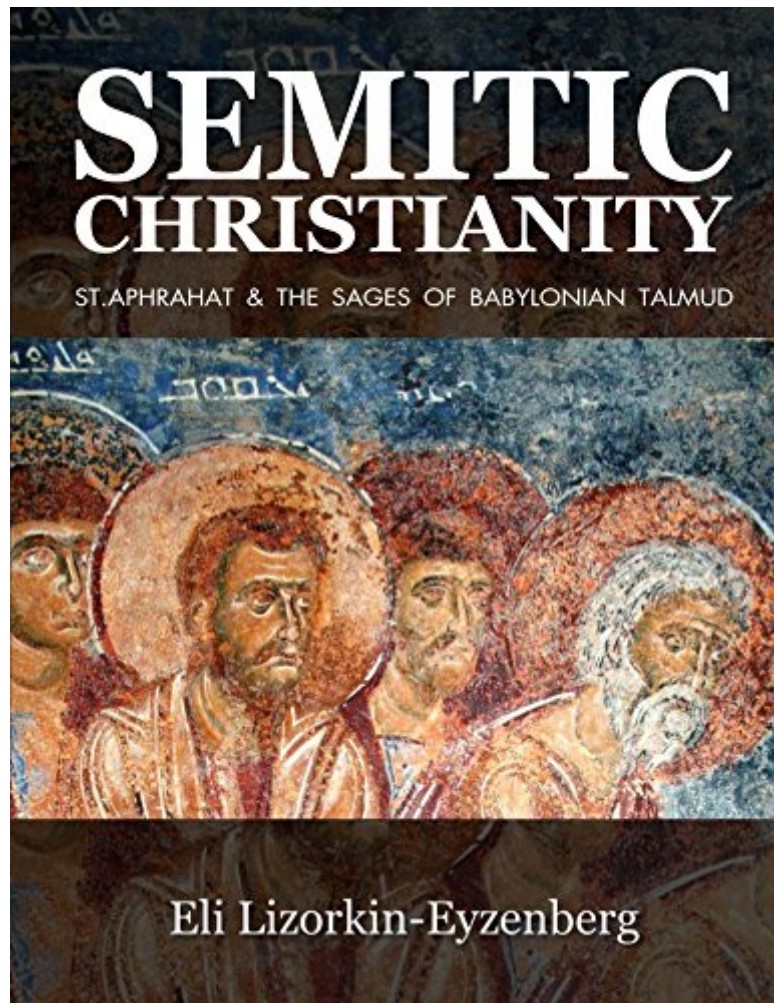


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Semitic Christianity: St. Aphrahat & The Sages Of Babylonian Talmud



Synopsis

This is a reading for serious students of Church and Jewish history. It is based on my Ph.D. dissertation at Stellenbosch University on the history of Jewish-Christian polemics. There I reconstruct the fourth-century polemic between sages of the Babylonian Talmud and a local Semitic Christian community. In this work, I compare what St. Aphrahat (who writes in the language of the Babylonian Talmud) with what Jewish sages had to say concerning 5 key topics (circumcision, prayer, Passover, kashrut and fasting). Regarding the nature of Aphrahat's encounters with the Jews, this book provides a set of additional or secondary conclusions that concern a variety of topics such as the nature of Jewish missions to (Jewish) Christians and Aphrahat's treatment of the Christian Pascha/Passover in relationship to the idea of the Christian Sabbath.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Highly recommended for theological skilled readers and the theology student. Church father Aphrahat (c. 285-345 CE) is one of the most fascinating representatives of so-called Semitic Christianity. Aphrahat's writings written in the environment of Mesopotamian Judaism afford us a unique look at a Christianity largely unaffected by the Roman and religious developments. This study concentrates on reconstructing a Christian-Jewish conversation in Northern Babylonia, the home of Aphrahat and his Christian followers, as well as a significant strong and influential Jewish

community. Despite that, they were enemies, the Jews were honored, because both communities often rebelled against Rome – the archenemy of Persia – and they all spoke Aramaic. From Aphrahat's work "Demonstrations" it appears that he himself belonged to a protomonastic Christian community called Sons of the Covenant. To reconstruct the conversation the writer studied the subjects from Demonstrations in a systematic manner with the sages of the Babylonian Talmud. To reconstruct the conversation the writer studied the subjects from Demonstrations in a systematic manner by comparing with the same topics as we find them in the sages of the Babylonian Talmud. In a very precise analysis the writer treated the demonstrations of Aphrahat on circumcision, prayer, or avoiding certain foods (kashrut), the Passover sacrifice, and fasting. The writer shows where Aphrahat's demonstrations are in agreement with the Sages of the Babylonian Talmud or is in disagreement. At the last makes the writer distinction in "disagreement by omission" and "disagreement by confrontation". With this study the writer gives a major new impulse to the study of Aphrahat compared to the rabbinical writings.

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