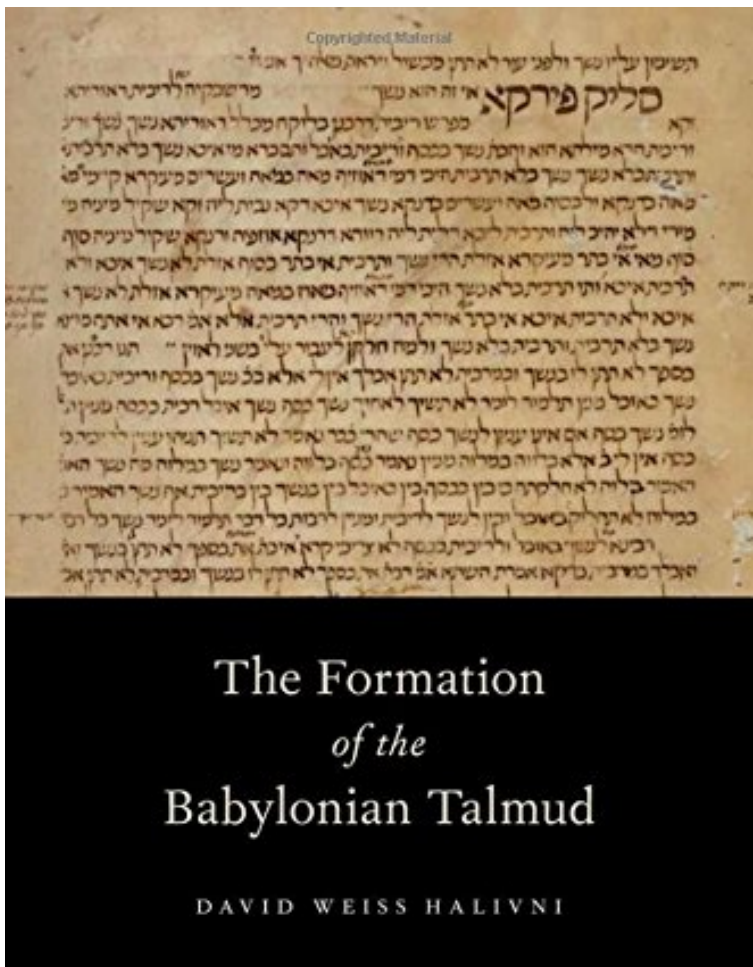


The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud

David Weiss Halivni

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David Weiss Halivni : The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well worth the effort - And only the beginning for those who live in the sea of Talmud By C. D. Hoffman Rabbi Dr Halivni is recognized as one of the greats of academic study of rabbinic literature. His works - both those for the educated layman and his purely academic elite "Sources Tradition" - are works of both intense scholarship and a deep religious devotion to Talmudic study. The reader of this book can

approach it as Dr Livni's testament to his life's work and be satisfied that he's been granted access to some of the most advanced thinking in the study of ancient texts of contemporary scholars. Or the reader can go one great step further. The sources which are quoted are mostly traditional talmudic material; most who study this material will not even have heard of Dr Halivni, and far fewer will ever have been exposed to his work. However, for those who toil daily in the study of Talmud, this book can be a great liberator and mind expander. They - particularly the most advanced of them - can take the book and its sources and truly study it. The sources are mostly all in "their wheelhouse"; but viewing with Halivni's contemporary scholastic lens, they may well come alive. For those who are deep into the study of Talmud "l'shma" - for its own sake - this book can be a truly mind-expanding experience. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Dr. David Shluker excellent 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating By J. Socher Fascinating summary of a lifetime's work in investigating the origins of the Talmud. I would love to see a learned critique of the theories presented but few are probably qualified to respond.

David Weiss Halivni's *The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud*, originally published in Hebrew and here translated by Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, is widely regarded as the most comprehensive scholarly examination of the processes of composition and editing of the Babylonian Talmud. Halivni presents the summation of a lifetime of scholarship and the conclusions of his multivolume Talmudic commentary, *Sources and Traditions (Meqorot umesorot)*. Arguing against the traditional view that the Talmud was composed c. 450 CE by the last of the named sages in the Talmud, the Amoraim, Halivni proposes that its formation took place over a much longer period of time, not reaching its final form until about 750 CE. The Talmud consists of many literary strata or layers, with later layers commenting upon and reinterpreting earlier layers. The later layers differ qualitatively from the earlier layers, and were composed by anonymous sages whom Halivni calls *Stammaim*. These sages were the true author-editors of the Talmud. They reconstructed the reasons underpinning earlier rulings, created the dialectical argumentation characteristic of the Talmud, and formulated the literary units that make up the Talmudic text. Halivni also discusses the history and development of rabbinic tradition from the Mishnah through the post-Talmudic legal codes, the types of dialectical analysis found in the different rabbinic works, and the roles of reciters, transmitters, compilers, and editors in the composition of the Talmud. This volume contains an introduction and annotations by Jeffrey L. Rubenstein.

"Halivni provides a new timetable of the writing, editing and redaction of the Talmud and certainly affects our understanding of the formation of the Talmudic canon... This book will be of great interest to any student of the Talmud." -- Association of Jewish Libraries sA lucid, helpful, and altogether gripping translation and condensation of Halivni's multi-volume Hebrew work, *The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud*... Editor Jeffrey Rubenstein is a master explainer, and as with his own important and crystalline books on the Talmud, ensures Halivni's thought is clear and well footnoted. This is not a breezy read. It is better, a challenging one. -- Tablet One cannot underestimate the scale of what Halivni has accomplished... The sheer magnitude of the material that one must master before attempting a grand theory of the Talmud is mindboggling [Rubenstein] formulates Halivni's highly complex theory in a manner that can be understood even by someone who has never read a page of Talmud. It is worthwhile for anyone even peripherally interested in the field of Rabbinics to read this introduction. -- The Talmud Blog "Jeffrey Rubenstein's new English translation of David Weiss Halivni's *Formation of the Babylonian Talmud* is a tremendous step forward in advancing the accessibility of critical Talmudic study. Professor Halivni's dedicated efforts toward rethinking our understanding of the composition of rabbinic texts, and the Babylonian Talmud in particular, has helped to revolutionize the field... Rubenstein's expert translation not only navigates the precision of the original Hebrew but presents a flowing style that is easy to follow." -- The Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization "David Weiss Halivni is one of the world's preeminent Talmudists, and Jeffrey Rubenstein has done a real service in making Halivni's pioneering analyses accessible to a new audience. For anyone interested in the formation of the Talmud, this is the book." -- Shaye J.D. Cohen, Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy, Harvard University "This volume brings to the reader a systematic statement of the results of more than a half-century of pioneering Talmudic research by Professor David Weiss Halivni. His work has literally changed our understanding of the evolution of the Talmud in Late Antiquity. This volume will open the eyes of scholars and students to the complex inner literary-historical dialectic that produced this classic of Jewish and world civilization." -- Lawrence H. Schiffman, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Yeshiva University; Ethel and Irvin A. Edelman Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University "David Weiss Halivni's revolutionary theories on the formation of the Babylonian Talmud and his critical methodology for distinguishing early and late sources have profoundly shaped the course of academic Talmudic studies in America and abroad. In this clear and elegant English translation, readers encounter a consummate Talmudist whose views on the crucial role of the *Stammaim*, based on detailed analysis of vast swaths of text, transformed a field and continue to occupy a central place in the critical study of the Bavli." -- Christine Hayes, Weis Professor of Classical Judaica, Yale University "A must read [for advanced students of rabbinics]. It will be indispensable for academic and religious libraries that cater to such students... Highly recommended." -- CHOICE About the Author David Weiss Halivni was ordained in 1943 as rabbi at the yeshivah of Sighet, Romania, at

the age of fifteen. When his town was seized by the Germans in March 1944, he was sent first to Auschwitz, and then to the Wolfsberg and Ebensee (Mauthausen) concentration camps. He was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. Professor Halivni became a naturalized US citizen in 1952. He received his doctorate from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1958. He has taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Columbia University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Bar-Ilan University, and Harvard Law School. Jeffrey L. Rubenstein is the Skirball Professor of Talmud and Rabbinic Literature in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies of New York University. He received his Ph. D. from the Department of Religion of Columbia University. His books include *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods* (1995); *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition and Culture* (1999), *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud* (2003), and most recently, *Stories of the Babylonian Talmud* (2010). Dr. Rubenstein has written numerous articles on the Jewish festivals, Talmudic stories, the development of Jewish law, and topics in Jewish liturgy and ethics.