



# Migrating Tales: The Talmud's Narratives and Their Historical Context

*Richard Kalmin*

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*Migrating Tales* situates the Babylonian Talmud, or Bavli, in its cultural context by reading several rich rabbinic stories against the background of Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Mesopotamian literature of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, much of it Christian in origin. In this nuanced work, Richard Kalmin argues that non-Jewish literature deriving from the eastern Roman provinces is a crucially important key to interpreting Babylonian rabbinic literature, to a degree unimagined by earlier scholars. Kalmin demonstrates the extent to which rabbinic Babylonia was part of the Mediterranean world of late antiquity and part of the emerging but never fully realized cultural unity forming during this period in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and western Persia.

Kalmin recognizes that the Bavli contains remarkable diversity, incorporating motifs derived from the cultures of contemporaneous religious and social groups. Looking closely at the intimate relationship between narratives of the Bavli and of the Christian Roman Empire, *Migrating Tales* brings the history of Judaism and Jewish culture into the ambit of the ancient world as a whole.

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