

Teppler

Birkat haMinim

Jews and Christians in Conflict in the Ancient World

One of the intriguing questions in the study of the period of the re-formation of Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple is the identity of a group which appears in hundreds of Talmudic sources from those days - the minim. It is clear that most of these sources reflect different facets of the polemic between Judaism and Christianity, which were both engaged in establishing their identities. This book concentrates mainly on the second century CE, and includes two basic questions: the question of the earliest text of the twelfth blessing of the central Jewish prayer composed at that time, Birkat haMinim; and the question of the identity of those minim who are cursed in this blessing. In the first section of the book, Yaakov Yanki Teppler analyzes the blessing itself. In the second section, which concerns the question of its principal objects, he sets out on a quest for the characterization of the minim, using all the hundreds of sources which deal with them. Having united these two sections in one framework, a proposal is made as to the identity of the minim. This proposal should provide a coherent basis for further research on this subject, laying a firm foundation for understanding the processes of separation between Judaism and Christianity in this stormy and fascinating period.

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