

[Aramaic Incantation Bowls and Social History: The Case of Slaves and Demons](#)

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The Babylonian Talmud is the principal surviving literary source for the Jewish communities in the Sasanian empire (3rd to 7th centuries AD). As a result, scholarship has primarily focused on the rabbinic elite represented in and responsible for the Talmud. However, hundreds of Jewish magical amulets written on bowls provide access to the unknown lives and practices of Jews in the very cities in which the Babylonian rabbis flourished. These magical texts may serve as a rare vantage point from which to reconstruct the social and cultural history of Jews in the Sasanian empire. This lecture will focus on slavery and enslaved individuals in the Sasanian empire through their appearance in the Aramaic incantation bowl texts. In addition, the speaker will point to evidence that connects slaves with the demonic in the magic bowls and in other magical sources, through texts and in imagery.

Dr. Avigail Manekin-Bamberger is a senior lecturer in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her research focuses on the social and cultural history of Jews in antiquity, with a special emphasis on Jewish society in the Sasanian Empire and ancient Jewish magic.

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