יחוסי תנאים ואמוראים

המאה הי״ד

Yiḥuse Tana'im va-Amora'im

Genealogies and biographies of the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud

14th century

An exact copy of the original codex

What you are holding is an exact copy of a 14th-century manuscript of Yiḥuse Tana'im va-Amora'im — "The Genealogies of the Tana'im and Amora'im" — a medieval reference work that gathers what was known about the lives, lineages, and characteristic teachings of the sages of the Mishnah (Tana'im) and the Talmud (Amora'im) into a single ordered handbook.

Works of this kind were the medieval study aid by which a serious Talmudist learned the people behind the page: who taught whom, who disagreed with whom, who lived in which generation, which sage stood behind which characteristic position. Long before the Soncino or the ArtScroll, this is how a learner came to know the rabbinic biography that animates the give-and-take of the Gemara.

As a textual witness this manuscript belongs to a small surviving family of medieval biographical compendia — sister-works to the Seder Ha-Dorot tradition that would later crystallize in print. Each surviving copy preserves slightly different selections and orderings.

The original manuscript is held at The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.



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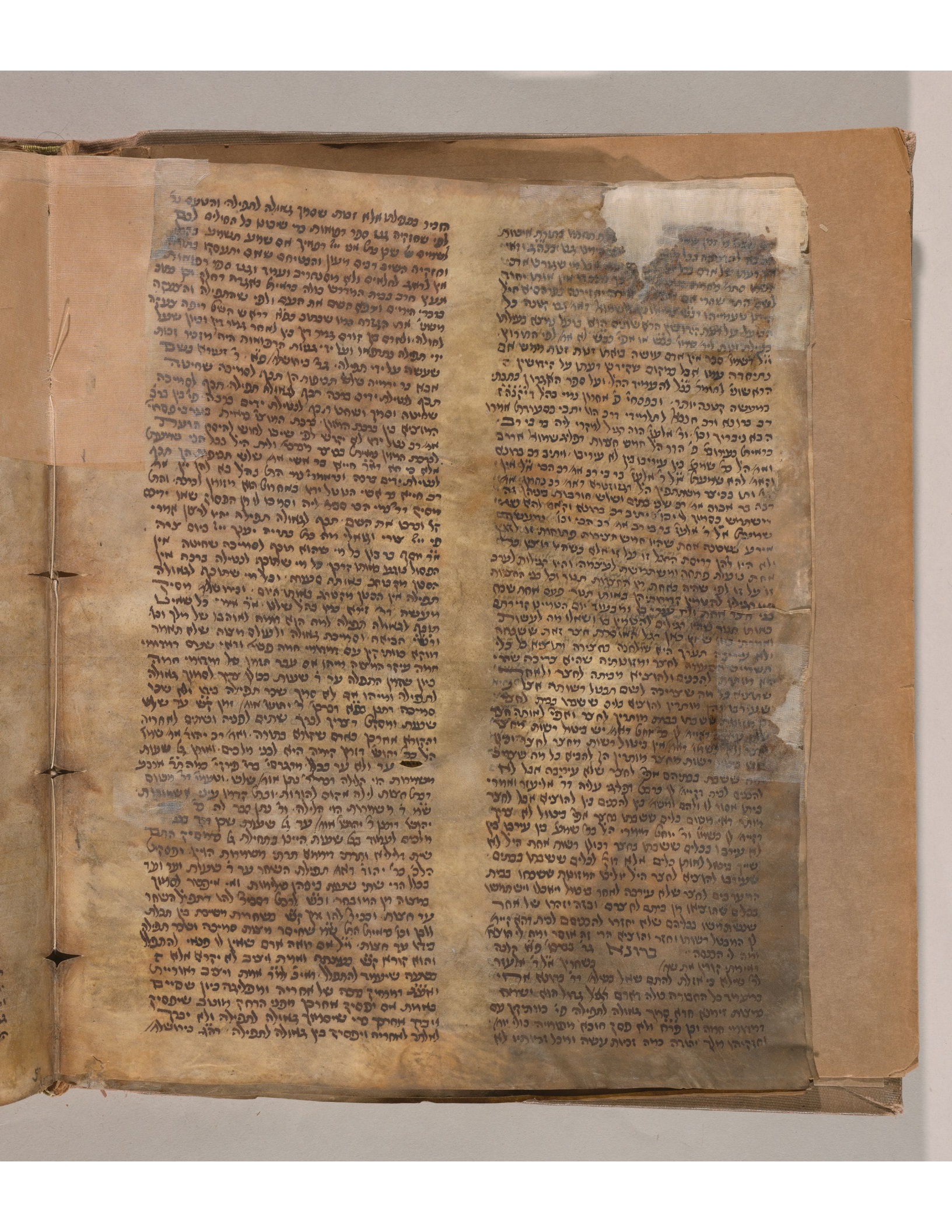
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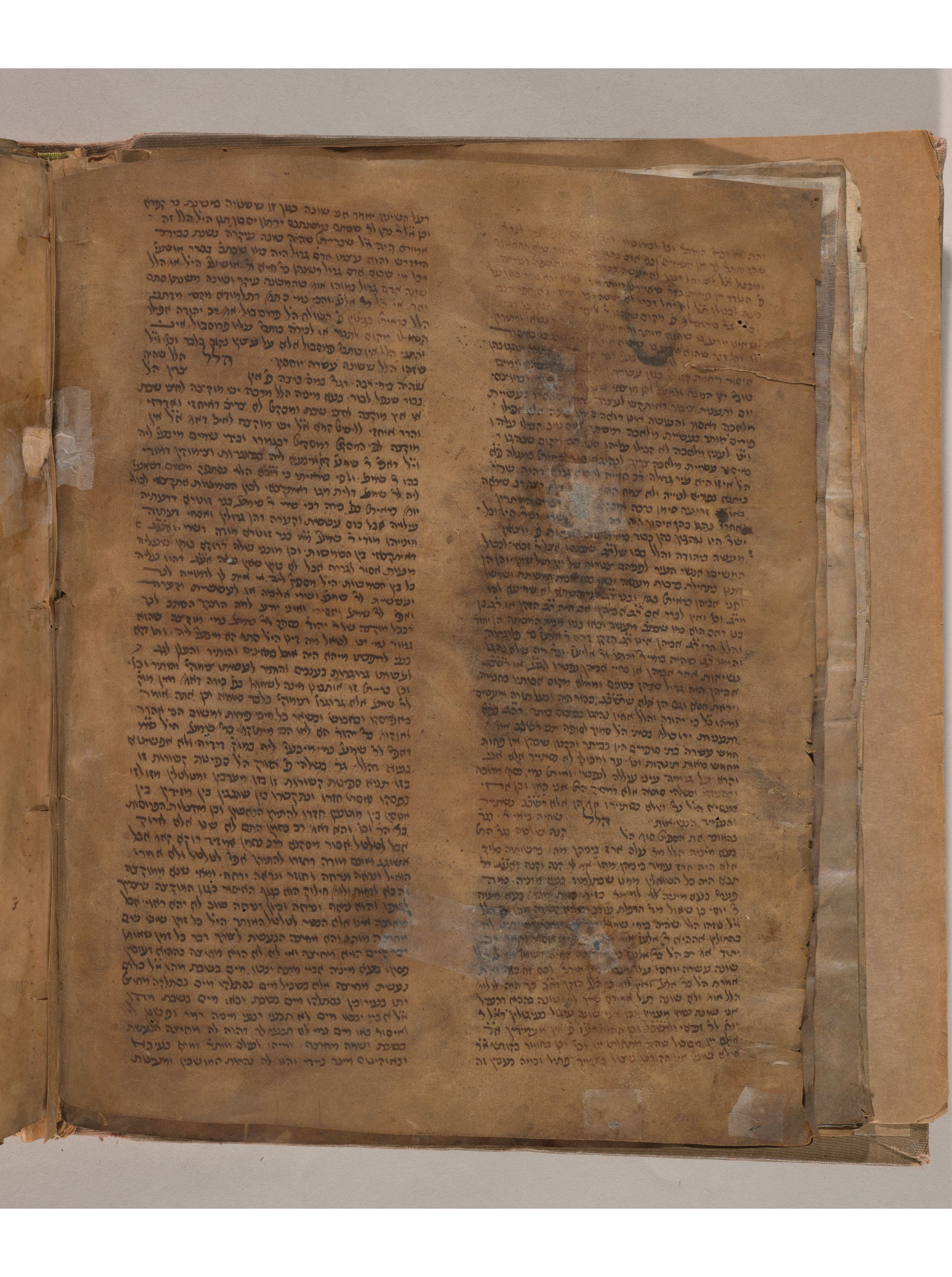
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Among this year's acquisitions there are 16 manuscripts written on parchment; the most important of these is a bulky folio volume of 180 leaves written in two columns and containing an alphabetical onomasticon of Tannaim and Amoraim, composed by Judah ben Kalonymos of Spires in the last decade of the twelfth century. It was probably copied circa 1200. The only known later copies of this work are the two in the Bodleian Library. The earlier of these was copied for publication, perhaps in the seventeenth century, and was given the title *Yihuse Tannaim we-Amoraim*. It is considered an outstanding monument to the learning and critical gifts of the author and one of the greatest contributions of the mediaeval German school to Talmudic studies. The author determines the period of the scholars and subjects their statements to a lengthy critical examination. It has been stated that, if complete, this work would be the best introduction to the Talmud. Unfortunately the introduction, the first letter (alef) and the beginning of the second letter are missing. There is a gap between "gimel" and "he" and the manuscript breaks off in "kaf." The gaps in this Ms. also occur in the Oxford copies in which the letter "kaf" is missing altogether. This manuscript belonged to a German synagogue which was destroyed in November, 1938; by a stroke of good fortune, it had been saved and brought to this country.

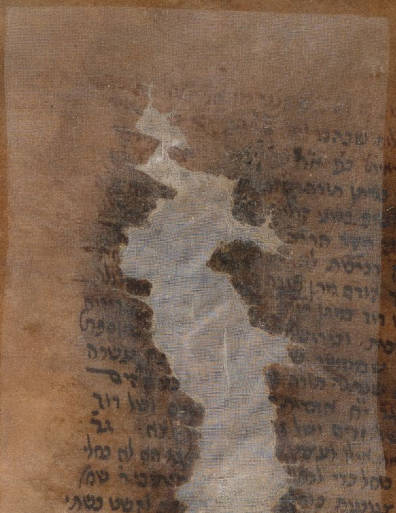


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