Symbolic Interpretations in Ethiopic and Early Syriac Literature

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DESCRIPTION:
The palimpsest of Ethiopian Christianity reveals the possible impact and influence of several hands: Judaic, Egyptian, and Syrian. This book investigates the influence of Syrian Christianity upon the trajectory of Ethiopian Christianity, proposing that many of the so-called 'Judaic' practices may have arisen through interaction with Judeo-Christian Syriac Christianity, rather than from an Old Testament context, exploring Ethiopic and Syrian literary links using Ge'ez, Amharic and Syriac sources to show how Syrian and Ethiopic traditions relate. The symbolic motifs of the Ark and the Cross, as well as the perception of Paradise are explored in Ethiopic hymnody or Deggwa of St Yared, the andemta Bible commentaries, and the national epic, the Kebrä Nägäst, compared with Syriac works of the fourth century Syriac theologian-poet Ephrem, his later devotee Jacob of Serugh, and the earlier Syriac Odes to Solomon. The material common to Ethiopic and Syriac literature demonstrates the complexity of the Judeo-Christian thought-worlds from which they derived, implying more nuanced influences than have previously been postulated.