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978-1-107-02301-7 - Early Christian Monastic Literature and the Babylonian Talmud

Michal Bar-Asher Siegal

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Early Christian Monastic Literature and the Babylonian Talmud

This book examines literary analogies in Christian and Jewish sources, culminating in an in-depth analysis of striking parallels and connections between Christian monastic texts (the *Apophthegmata Patrum* or *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*) and Babylonian Talmudic traditions. The importance of the monastic movement in the Persian Empire, during the time of the composition and redaction of the Babylonian Talmud, fostered a literary connection between the two religious populations. The shared literary elements in the literatures of these two elite religious communities shed new light on the surprisingly inclusive nature of the Talmudic corpora and on the nonpolemical nature of elite Jewish-Christian literary relations in late antique Persia.

Michal Bar-Asher Siegal is the Rosen Family Chair in Judaic Studies in the Goldstein-Goren Department of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She is a graduate of the Talmud Department at Hebrew University in Jerusalem (BA, MA) and the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University (PhD). She was a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica at Harvard University, and she held a joint postdoctoral Jewish Culture in the Ancient World Fellowship at Haifa, Bar Ilan, and Tel Aviv Universities. Her articles have appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Jewish Studies*, *Aramaic Studies*, *Harvard Theological Review*, *Zion*, and *Shenaton leHeqer haMikra*.

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Acknowledgments

This book is a product of its time. Learning rabbinic literature side by side other late antique texts has been a growing and productive academic trend, and I was fortunate enough to enjoy the fruits of this *zeitgeist*. The understanding that a Talmudic page does not exist in a vacuum, and one needs to look outside that page to understand its conception, evolution, and reception, rightly stands at the heart of recent studies, this one included.

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