

“Michal Bar-Asher Siegal’s book is an excellent piece of work. In it, she develops a methodology for detecting the presence of Christian monastic material in the Babylonian Talmud. With this methodology, Bar-Asher Siegal offers a sophisticated discussion of textual parallels – including how to avoid the common scholarly disease of ‘parallelomania’ and naïve arguments that move from the existence of parallels to genealogical relationships and influences. She adds to our growing realization that the quarry from which the Babylonian Talmud drew its sources is much larger than we previously thought, even demonstrating that the Bavli is a valuable resource for the diffusion of Christian monastic literature in southeastern Mesopotamia in late antiquity.”

– Richard Kalmin, The Jewish Theological Seminary

“This book is a solid work of scholarship on the Babylonian Talmud. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal’s central thesis is that Talmudic literature – especially stories of the sages, but also maxims, sayings, and ethical teachings – has been influenced by monastic literature. Bar-Asher Siegal demonstrates this through close comparison of Talmudic and monastic sources, revealing such striking parallels that it strains credulity to claim the ideas and motifs developed independently. Throughout the book Bar-Asher Siegal breaks new scholarly ground in revealing the connection between rabbinic and monastic literature. This study should be of interest to scholars of Talmud, early Christianity, the history of rabbinic Judaism, and ancient Christian literature in general.”

– Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, New York University

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