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	Sommario/riassunto	Virtually from its redaction about the sixth century A.D., the Babylonian Talmud became the rabbinic document par excellence. Through its lens almost all previous canonical rabbinic tradition was refracted. Study and mastery of the Talmud marked one as a rabbi, a ""master."" This book examines the character, use and social meaning of the formalized rhetoric which pervades the Babylonian Talmud. It explores, first, how the editors of the Talmud employ a consistent and highly laconic code of formalized linguistic terms and literary patterns to create the Talmud's (renowned) dialectical, anal