

Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev

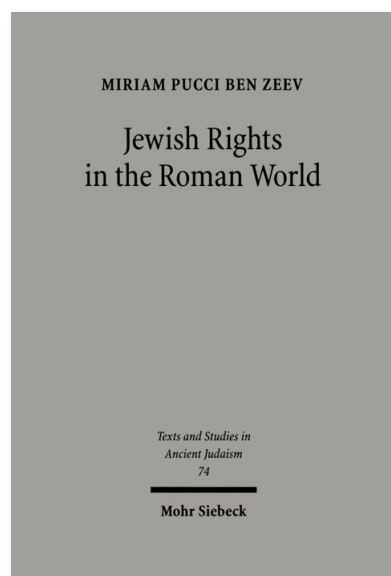
Jewish Rights in the Roman World

The Greek and Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius

[Jewish Rights in the Roman World]

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Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev presents the Greek texts, accompanied by translation and philological and historical annotation, of the Greek and Roman documents dealing with the Jewish rights quoted by Josephus Flavius. These documents are of utmost importance for the definition of the rights enjoyed by the Jews, both in Judea and in the diaspora, in the first century BCE and in the first century CE. They also shed light on the relationship between Palestinian Jewish leadership and diaspora communities, and on the complex and often otherwise unattested relations between the Jews and the Greeks in diaspora communities such as those of Asia Minor, Egypt, Cyrenaica and Dora on the Palestinian coast. The problem is that of assessing the historical value of these documents, which has often been challenged in view of Josephus' apologetic purposes and in view of the textual corruptions, fragmentary state and chronological mistakes they display. Their legal value and their meaning in the context of Roman policy towards the Jews, too, are a matter of controversy in contemporary scholarship. Did the Jews' rights have a permanent validity in the historical period under consideration? Did they apply to all the Jews or only to the specific communities mentioned in the documents? Are we allowed to consider the Jewish rights as privileges vis-à-vis those enjoyed by other peoples living under Roman government? This is the first attempt to answer these questions by viewing Josephus' documents in their historical context, comparing both their formal features and their content with those of contemporary inscriptions and papyri. This comparative evidence related to the rights bestowed by the Romans upon other peoples is relevant not only for the possible authenticity of Josephus' documents, but also for our understanding of their legal and chronological value, and allow us to determine how 'special' the Jewish rights may be regarded.



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