

Aharon Oppenheimer

Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi

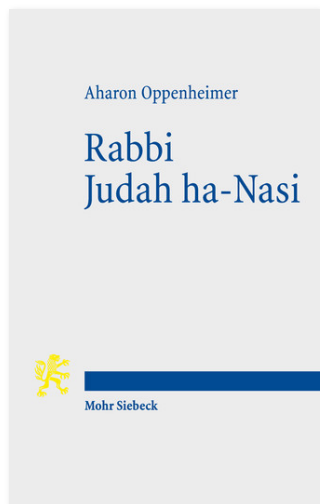
Statesman, Reformer, and Redactor of the Mishnah

[Rabbi Jehuda ha-Nasi. Staatsmann, Reformier und Redaktor der Mischna.]

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The patriarch Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi headed the independent Jewish leadership institutions in Roman Palestine at the turn of the second and third centuries CE. He conducted the affairs of the patriarchate with a high hand, was renowned for his learning and behaved like a kind of anointed king. He was also incredibly rich, a consummate politician, and close to the Roman authorities. He made *taqqanot* (reforms) in the light of circumstances, and tried to cancel *mitzvot* (religious regulations), such as the regulations about *shemita* (not using the land in the sabbatical year), which entailed hardship for the Jews of his time. He was ahead of his times in his humane and liberal decisions. Rabbi completed the redaction of the Mishnah and thus gave the Jewish people the work that is second in importance only to the Torah, although by so doing he put a brake on the development of the oral law. Aharon Oppenheimer attempts to present Rabbi Jehuda ha-Nasi's character and his life as well as examining the significance of his work for his own generation and succeeding ones.

Aharon Oppenheimer (1940–2022) 1993–2000 editor of »Zion – a quarterly for research in Jewish history«; 1996–2000 Sir Isaac Wolfson Professor of Jewish Studies at Tel Aviv University; currently Professor emeritus of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University.



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