

Stuart Miller

Sages and Commoners in Late Antique 'Erez Israel

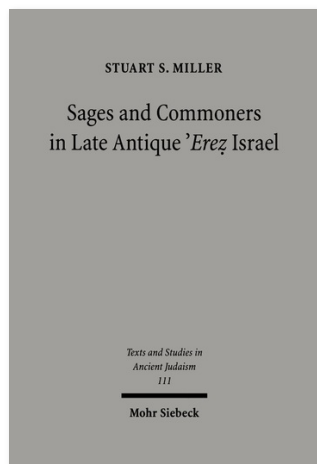
A Philological Inquiry into Local Traditions in Talmud Yerushalmi

[Weise und Bürger im spätantiken Israel. Eine philologische Untersuchung der lokalen Traditionen im Talmud Yerushalmi.]

Published in English.

Stuart S. Miller addresses a number of issues in the history of talmudic Palestine that are at the center of contemporary scholarly debate about the role rabbis played in society. In sharp contrast to recent claims that the rabbis were a relatively small and insular group with little influence, this book demonstrates that their movement was both more expansive and diffuse than a mere counting of named rabbis suggests. It also underscores some of the dynamics that allowed rabbinic circles to spread their teachings and to ultimately consolidate into an effective and productive movement. Many overlooked terms and passages in which rabbis and the members of their circles appear in the Talmud Yerushalmi are investigated, and special attention is given to the identity of persons who are collectively referred to after their places of residence («Tiberians,« »Sephoreans,« »Southerners,« etc.) While the results confirm the insular nature of the interests of the rabbis, they also point to the definition and coherence that this insularity provided their movement. Therein lies the secret of the »success« of rabbinic Judaism, which never depended upon sheer numbers but rather on the internal strength and sense of purpose of rabbinic circles. Subjects that are considered include: rabbinic »households,« the identity of the *'ammei ha-'arez* and their relationship to the rabbis, village sages and their connection to urban rabbis, and the venue of rabbinic »teachings,« »instructions,« »expositions,« »pronouncements,« and stories.

Stuart Miller Born 1953; 1980 Ph.D. at New York University; Professor of Hebrew, History and Judaic Studies at the University of Connecticut.



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