

Alan Appelbaum

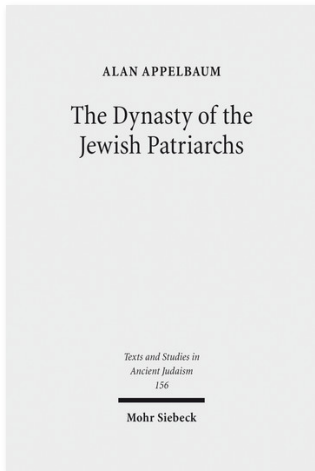
The Dynasty of the Jewish Patriarchs

[Die Dynastie der jüdischen Patriarchen.]

Published in English.

The Patriarchs of the Jews were remarkable not only because they governed much of Palestine in late antiquity, collected taxes from and sent emissaries to Jews across the Roman Empire, acted as the representative of both Palestinian and diaspora Jewry to the Roman imperial government, and achieved great prominence in Roman society. They were remarkable also because they led the Jews for more than two centuries while maintaining the Patriarchate as a family affair. This book is the first examination of the Patriarchate as a hereditary dynasty, a series of men in a specific social structure rather than an institution or office. Alan Appelbaum draws on Jewish, Christian and pagan sources, including Roman law, which has not previously been utilized as it is here. To uncover the origins of the Patriarchate's dynastic features, the author starts by considering when and how the position and the roles of the Patriarchs began. Using comparative material about succession to high office as a framework, he then examines available sources to reconstruct the dynasty of the Patriarchs and the relationships among them Patriarch by Patriarch, providing data about actors and events as well as about the Patriarchate's dynastic structure. In the course of this examination, Appelbaum makes the first sustained inquiry in over a century into the supposed Davidic and Hillelite ancestry of the dynasty, and refutes the claim that there were two Patriarchs named Judah Nesi'ah. Finally, he compares the Patriarchate to other real and supposed dynasties in order to locate it among the various family arrangements of its period.

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