Rabbinic Judaism in the Making

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PREFACE

This book has been in preparation for many years. It is preceded by a number of monographs pertaining to both the history of the Halakhah and, to a lesser degree, the history of the talmudic period. If the treatment of some phases of legal history is too brief, the reason may be that a fuller and satisfactory discussion of them is found elsewhere. On the other hand, a few phases of Jewish legal history are dealt with in greater depth here as they have not previously been treated fully or satisfactorily. These chapters may be of particular interest to specialized scholars, whereas the book as a whole should be of more general interest. In order to facilitate the use of the book also by non-talmudists, most of the Hebrew and Aramaic sources are translated. Available translations were used, but with modifications. Many of the sources—e.g., Tosefta, Palestinian Talmud—appear here in English for the first time. Whatever the shortcomings of the book, it is unique in that it demonstrates for the first time in English how the development of Jewish legal tradition was directed and implemented by the Pharisaic and rabbinic leadership from the earliest times to the end of the tannaitic period, ca. 220 C.E.

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and particularly to Dr. Elias L. Epstein for a meticulous linguistic scrutiny of the text. I owe the greatest debt to Dr. Samuel Sandmel for negotiating the publication of this volume and to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus for furthering its publication. The often difficult task of preparing the manuscript for print was in the hands of Mrs. Rissa Alex. Hearty thanks to her and her staff of devoted assistants, Mrs. Helen Lederer, Mrs. Betty Finkelstein, and others.

Less tangible but most decisive in encouraging me in my work was my wife, Manya. Dr. Henry Guttmann, my brother, expressed his views on some important phases of Jewish history which greatly helped in clarifying them. Nonetheless, all the encouragement and assistance would have been in vain were it not for the foundation in Jewish and cognate learning given me by my beloved teachers, and especially by my father, Prof. Michael Guttmann of blessed memory.

A.G.