



Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and the Foundation of Jewish Political Thought

Joseph Isaac Lifshitz

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This book is a scholarly examination of the political thought of Rabbi Meir (Maharam) of Rothenburg, the most important thirteenth century German Rabbi who was associated with the Pietist movement of the period. From the Maharam's responsa on community matters, a coherent political thought emerges that exercised nearly unprecedented influence on European Jewish communities up to the Jewish Emancipation. Rabbi Meir's extremely sophisticated attempt to balance the demands of the community against those of the individual was facilitated by a characteristic three-tiered structure to his political thought: concrete legal rules supported by value-laden legal principles built upon his general religious ideology. Through a systematic analysis of the Maharam's political thought, Isaac Lifshitz offers an original contribution to Jewish studies, political theory, and the study of legal philosophy. By considering the legal and theological underpinnings of one of Medieval Jewry's most influential figures, it also makes a contribution to the history of ideas in the Medieval period.

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