

Sectarian and Religious Mov'ts; Rise of the Bible

October 23, 2006

- Major Judaeen sects of 2nd T period
- Reprise: End of the Bible/Birth of the Bible
 - Canonization and its implications
 - Birth of the Bible: A post-classical culture

Notices, Housekeeping

- Midterm next Monday
 - 30% multiple choice
 - 20% identifying primary sources
 - 50% cluster identifications
(percentages approximate; actual exam may differ slightly)
- Comments on Jaffee, *Early Judaism*

Major Judaeen Sects of Second-Temple Period

- Classical sources identify Three
 - Pharisees
 - Saducees
 - Essenes
- Josephus: Also a "fourth philosophy" (from 6 CE)
- Dead Sea Sect, generally identified with Essenes (but questioned by many)
- Sects seem to emerge in Hasmonaeen era
Religious crisis of 160s, Hasmonaeen usurpation of high priesthood, and Hasmonaeen temple policies may have precipitated
- Scripture (i.e., canon, text, interpretation) is part of the apparatus of sectarian difference



Canonization and its implications

- Uncertain (and competing) boundaries for “Bible”
- Implications: Judaism in a post-classical age



Uncertain (and competing) boundaries for “Bible”

- Book of Ben Sira, Prologue (“Law, Prophets, other books”) possibly earliest reference to 3-part division
- Josephus: 5 Books of Moses, 13 Books of History by the Prophets (to 6th Cent. BCE), 4 Books of Poems
- Qumran (Dead Sea Sect)
 - 4QMMT: Torah, Prophets, David, and other writings
 - Sect seems to include as authoritative texts not in Tanakh
- Christian Bible (Hellenistic Jewish?): Willing to extend beyond the 6th Century BCE (Sira, Maccabees, etc.)



Birth of the Bible: A post-classical culture

- Text of the Bible: Consolidation and Competiton
- Bible and Literary Productivity
- Bible and Communal Identity
- Bible and Sectarianism



Text of the Bible: Consolidation and Competiton

- A period of textual fluidity. Includes some “inner-biblical interpretation”
- Consolidation to a few “standard” forms by 2nd C. BCE (Dead Sea Scrolls)
- Text and competition (examples)
 - Samaritan interpolations re Mt. Gerizim
 - *Later*: Christians vs. Jews on Isaiah 7:14



Bible and Literary Productivity

- Retelling
 - *Jubilees*
 - *Testaments*
- Imitation
 - *Temple Scroll*
 - “apocryphal” psalms, other *pseudepigrapha*
- Commentary
 - Qumran *Peshet*
 - Philo’s philosophical commentaries
- Source for themes of new works or genres
 - *Enoch*
 - *Joseph and Aseneth*
 - Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* (Exodus)



Bible and Communal Identity

- Josephus, Philo, others brag about the superiority (and priority) of Torah
- Bible as source of consolation or inspiration (Daniel 9, and the 70 years of Jeremiah 25:11-12)
- 1 Maccabees: Physical torah as object to destroy as part of persecution



Bible and Sectarianism

- Examples regarding biblical text (discussed earlier)
- Qumran *Pesher* (= interpretation): *Biblical prophecy systematically read to refer to the specific experiences of the group* (=“righteous of Israel”)
- Legal interpretation as divisive
Example: “day after the sabbath” and date of Pentacost/Shavuot
