Sectarian and Religious Mov’ts; Rise of the Bible

October 23, 2006

- Major Judaean 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 Judaean Sects of Second-Temple Period

- Classical sources identify Three
  - Pharisees
  - Sadducees
  - Essenes
  
  Josephus: Also a “fourth philosophy” (from 6 CE)
- Dead Sea Sect, generally identified with Essenese
  
  (but questioned by many)
- Sects seem to emerge in Hasmonaean era
  
  Religious crisis of 160s, Hasmonaean usurpation of high priesthood, and Hasmonaean 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 Competition
- Bible and Literary Productivity
- Bible and Communal Identity
- Bible and Sectarianism
Text of the Bible: Consolidation and Competition

- 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
  - Testamentum
- Imitation
  - Temple Scroll
  - "apocryphal" psalms, other pseudepigrapha
- Commentary
  - Qumran Pesher
  - 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