JUDAISM – EARLY CHRISTIANITY – Gnosticism – Islam

Judaism

General ★ groups – Pharisees – Samaritans

1710 Eckart Otto, Jüdische Sekten als Familienunternehmen. Zur Frage der Ursprünge des rabbinischen Judentums


1711 Steve Mason, Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History

Some scholars in recent years have asked whether Ioudaioi and its counterparts in other ancient languages are better rendered “Jews” or “Judaeans” in English. This essay puts that question in a larger frame, by considering first Ioudaismos and then the larger problem of ancient religion. It argues that there was no category of “Judaism” in the Graeco-Roman world, no “religion” too, and that the Ioudaioi were understood until late antiquity as an ethnic group comparable to other ethnic groups, with their distinctive laws, traditions, customs, and God. They were indeed Judaeans.


1712 Markus Cromhout, Religion and covenantal praxis in first century Judeanism

This article indicates how the two cultural features of religion and covenantal praxis helped foster or shape Judean ethnic identity in the first century CE. It focuses on socialization into the three social domains of the Temple, the synagogue and the home. In these domains, Judean ethnic identity was dominated by the requirements of the Torah. At the same time the presence of Romans, the Herodians and the Gentiles within the ancestral land helped shape Judean identity as well.

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1713 Margaret H. Williams, The Use of Alternative Names by Diaspora Jews in Graeco-Roman Antiquity

In contrast to Palestine, where the use of nicknames and other forms of alternative name by Jews has been extensively studied, little scholarly attention has been paid to the behaviour of Diaspora Jews in this area of onomastics. This paper aims to fill that gap by collecting and analysing all the available evidence, most of it epigraphic. It is shown that contrary to popular belief, the use of alternative names by Diaspora Jews was relatively rare. It
was also largely different in form from that found in Palestine, as it arose out of different social circumstances and was a response to different social imperatives.

Grant Macaskill, Priestly Purity, Mosaic Torah and the Emergence of Enochic Judaism

This article questions Boccaccini’s claim that the founders of Enochic Judaism rejected and polemicised Mosaic Torah (see IZBG 46:1064). This evidence is found in the fact that one stratum of the Book of the Watchers (which is, in Boccaccini’s reconstruction, foundational to Enochic Judaism) reflects a concern over priestly exogamy that is dependent on a particular halakhic strategy, seen elsewhere in Second Temple Jewish texts and itself derived from the Torah. Further evidence is noted for Torah being assumed as a standard before it is considered what this might mean for a reconstruction of a hypothetical Enoch group. It is suggested that the Book of the Watchers came into being, in part at least, in response to an inadequacy in Torah as a means of establishing purity boundaries.

Reinhard Pummer, The Samaritans and Their Pentateuch

According to earlier scholarship, in the fifth or fourth century BCE a group of priests were expelled from Jerusalem, took the Pentateuch with them, and subsequently established a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim. This reconstruction is no longer held valid by specialists today. They insist that northern Israel continued to be inhabited by some Israelites even after the demise of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE, and that these had a hand in the formation of the Pentateuch. One should acknowledge the fact that thus far, scholarship fails to come up with an explanation for the close similarity between the Samaritan and Judean forms of the Pentateuch.

Daniel Boyarin, Semantic Differences; or, “Judaism”/“Christianity”

Prior to Christianity, the term “Jew” was an ethnic appellation, in the same sense as “Greek”, the term to which it was most often opposed. The category became only meaningful in a purely religious sense when countered with a new opposing term, namely “Christian”. Judaism as a religion (as opposed to a culture of which cult was an inextricable component) only occurred when Christianity separated religious belief and practice from Romanitas – cult from culture. The construction of Judaism and Christianity as mutually exclusive religions was the work of proto-orthodox Christian heresiologists and likeminded early-Jewish rabbis.


One of the major obstacles to presenting a more balanced assessment of Jewish-Christian relations in the 2nd century CE is the virtual absence of Jewish literary sources for the period. Though Jews figure prominently in the writings of the 2nd century Church Fathers and later Christian Apologists, it is becoming increasingly evident in scholarship that these texts portray Jews in a tendentious manner, often reveal more about Christian