Introduction to the Apocrypha

Torah in Motion
January–March 2021
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Recommended books:


Class 1: Introduction: The History of the Second Temple Period I
- The History of the Second Temple Period I
  - Historical Timeline: Jewish life under Persia, Greece, and Rome
  - When did Judaism become an “ism?”
  - Sectarian Life: Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees
  - The Dead Sea Scrolls

Class 2: Introduction: The History of the Second Temple Period II
- What are the books of the Apocrypha?
  - The Concept of Canon and the Latest Biblical Material
  - What were Greeks and Romans Writing About Jews?

**Read for upcoming class: Judith, Greek Esther, Tobit (in Coogan and Brettler)**

Class 3: Novellas: Judith, Greek Esther, Tobit

** Read for upcoming class: Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Azariah (in Coogan and Brettler)

Class 4: Legends of Biblical Heroes: the Daniel Stories

** Read for upcoming class: 1 Maccabees 1-4; 2 Maccabees 1-8

Class 5: Historical Records and Historical “Records”: 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees

**Read for upcoming class: Ben Sira 42–51

Class 6: Wisdom Literature: Ben Sira and 4 Maccabees
TIMELINE:

BCE

200: Judea transitions from being under Ptolemaic control to being under Antiochid control

175: High Priest Simon II dies, and conflict breaks out between supporters of his son Onias III and Jason (Onias’ son was probably the founder of the temple at Leontopolis)

164: Judea gains autonomy from the Greeks; Hasmonean dynasty begins

63: Pompey invades Jerusalem; Judea now controlled by Roman client kings

62-61: Preconsul of Asia Minor, L. Valerius Flaccus, seizes foreign funds designated by diasporan Jews to be sent to the Jerusalem Temple

59: Cicero delivers a speech defending Flaccus

c. 20: Philo of Alexandria is born

CE:

6: Judea becomes a province of Rome

c.32: Jesus is crucified by the Romans

37: Josephus is born

38-41: Riots against the Jews in Alexandria, supported by Flaccus the governor and largely ignored by Gaius Caligula the emperor

40: Philo writes Embassy to Gaius

67-70: Jerusalem riots; Temple destroyed by Romans

115–118: Jewish uprisings throughout the Roman Empire; Trajan dispatches Lucius Quietus to quell the rebellion. This marks the end of Alexandrian Jewry. Tens of thousands of Jews are killed throughout the Empire.

132–135: Bar Kokhba revolt: Jews expelled from Jerusalem (which Hadrian had renamed Aelia Capitolina); Rabbinic community moves to Yavneh and the Galilee

200: Mishnah edited and likely completed

6th century: Babylonian Talmud edited and redacted (it will still be subject to small revisions over the next three centuries)