

Sectarianism in Early Judaism
Sociological Advances

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SUMMARY

The multiplicity of definitions for what is considered a 'sect' in early Judaism has become the topic of much debate. Chalcraft offers a clear understanding of the definition of Max Weber and provides a detailed explanation of Weberian sociology and how it has been misunderstood and overlooked in recent studies related to sectarianism. In addition, seven other studies related to this sociological phenomenon are included in this volume which provides an overview of the sociological approaches of Bryan Wilson, Ernest Troeltsch, Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, as well as Mary Douglas.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Vielfalt an Definitionen darüber, was im frühen Judentum eine 'Sekte' ausmacht, wurde zum Thema vieler Debatten. Chalcraft bietet ein klares Konzept der Definition Max Webers sowie eine ausführliche Erläuterung der weberianischen Soziologie und wie diese in neueren Studien zum Sektentum übersehen oder missverstanden wurde. Darüber enthält der Band sieben weitere Studien über dieses soziologische Phänomen, die einen Überblick über die soziologischen Ansätze von Bryan Wilson, Ernst Trölsch, Rodney Stark und William Bainbridge, sowie von Mary Douglas geben.

RÉSUMÉ

La multiplicité des définitions de ce que l'on nomme «secte» au sein du judaïsme ancien fait l'objet de nombreux débats. Chalcraft expose de façon claire la définition adoptée par Max Weber et apporte une explication détaillée de la sociologie webérienne, montrant qu'elle a été mal comprise ou négligée dans les études récentes consacrées au phénomène sectaire. Sept autres études ayant trait au phénomène sociologique des sectes sont incluses dans ce volume qui présente un survol des approches sociologiques de Bryan Wilson, Ernst Troeltsch, Rodney Stark et William Bainbridge, ainsi que de Mary Douglas.

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Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Chalcraft takes as his point of departure the clarification of the sociology of Max Weber. In the first of three separate essays devoted to this topic, he contends that Weber is often misunderstood and frequently overlooked in relation to modern sociological studies of sectarianism. After providing a rich understanding of the development of Weberian sociology, he then offers an example of Weber's approach to sectarianism in relation to the Pharisees and Essenes from his volume *Ancient Judaism*. Following this example he applies this model to the Qumran community – something Weber was never able to do in light of the

later discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Chalcraft's contention is that Weber's sociology of sects developed over time and should not be confined to the overly simplistic 'church-sect' typology that is frequently evoked and then forgotten. In these three essays Chalcraft does a brilliant job of illuminating the development of Weber's sociology of sects and offers fresh insight into how these ideas can be applied to modern studies of sectarianism in relation to Qumran studies.

The second part of this volume includes seven separate studies related to sectarianism by various leaders in the field of ancient Jewish sects from the Second Temple period and Qumran in particular. Lester Grabbe offers a survey of the many Jewish groups in the Second Temple period noting that all, even the Pharisees and Sadducees, can be properly identified as sects. Philip Davies takes a more limited approach, focusing primarily on the Qumran community and noting that there may have actually been two sects reflected in the Qumran texts. His emphasis is on both the formation of these groups and the Judaism from which they arose. Piovanelli relies largely on Wilson's sect types and suggests that the earlier reform movements of the Enochic literature and *Jubilees* ultimately lead to the formation of the more distinct Qumran sect. Eyal Regev focuses on the issue of atonement among the Dead Sea sectarian documents and follows the model of 'tension' with the outside world of Stark and Bainbridge as constitutive of a sect. Cecilia Wassen and Jutta Jokiranta compare the D (*Damascus Document*) and S (*Community Rule*) traditions and compare their findings with Stark and Bainbridge's model of *antagonism, separation and difference* and conclude that D also reflects a sectarian community. Finally, Baumgarten suggests that these social-scientific models may not be in any way accurate for our understanding of ancient Jewish sects.

While Chalcraft intended to uphold and further promote the use of Weberian sociology in the study of the Qumran community, the latter seven essays predictably do what he hoped to correct; that is, they refer to Weber very briefly, if at all, and then default to Wilson, Stark and Bainbridge, and other more modern sociological approaches. Moreover, in many cases these essays either utilise more modern definitions of a sect or develop their own, thus defeating the purpose of working toward a more unified approach. However, this does not detract from the value of this volume but only demonstrates the complexity of the sociological phenomenon. For anyone interested in sectarianism in early Judaism this volume is a must read. Chalcraft's explanation of Weber's sociology is invaluable and the other essays will bring one well into the discussion of sectarianism in a clear and concise manner.

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