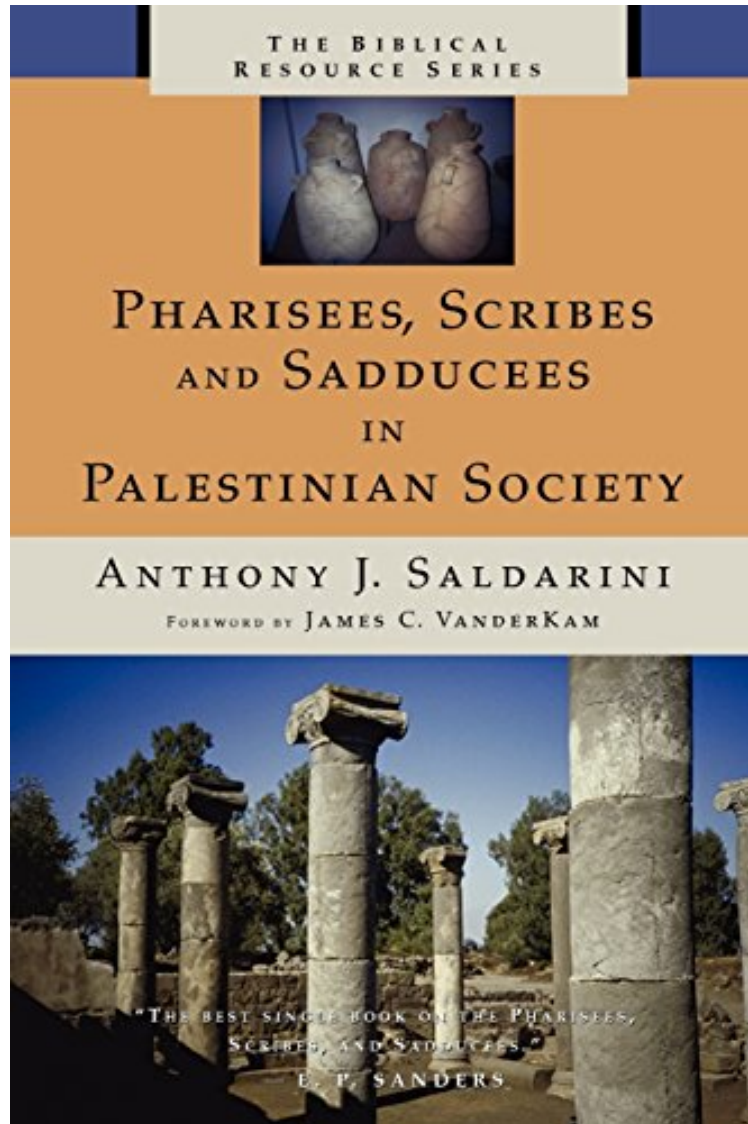


Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society (Biblical Resource)

Anthony J. J. Saldarini

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#957955 in Books Anthony J Saldarini 2001-03-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.02 x .79 x 5.981, 1.19 #File Name: 0802843581356 pages Pharisees Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society Biblical Resource | File size: 28.Mb

Anthony J. J. Saldarini : Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society (Biblical Resource) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society (Biblical Resource):

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Unexpected and ImportantBy ReadalotsAnthony Saldarini's

"Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society" (2nd ed. 2001) is not what I expected. From the various reviews I encountered prior to its reading I thought this text would be more informative about the backgrounds, doctrines, geographical settings, and popular (or unpopular) support for these three religio-political groups. Rather his work herein provides an interesting sociological study (attempted with only 1st century information) for the three groups. Saldarini approaches this subject from sociological view. His point is to suggest that Palestinian Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees of the 1st century should be considered away from modern sensibilities and habits. In short, moderns (and presumably post moderns) will learn more about the world of late antiquity by not projecting modern interpretation upon it. Saldarini accurately shows that there are only two 1st-century witnesses to the three groups: Josephus and the New Testament. He believes the Pharisees and Scribes to be "retainers" (upper class workers who perform necessary governmental/religious functions) while the Sadducees are member of the elite aristocracy (providing, in part, the highest level of Jewish society). He understands Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter, to be an "artisan" (p. 150-151) and finds foundational basis for Jesus conflict with the superior classed three groups (Jesus' humble origins and his move to change their power base inflames the groups against him). Saldarini's interpretation is interesting and imaginative. His 308 pages (paperback) are thorough and well documented (with footnotes). An interesting, but brief, 2-page chronology opens the book and helpful 5-page "Glossary of Sociological Terms" appears just before the index. Curiously, Saldarini speaks only briefly about the Essenes and the "fourth philosophy group" (presumably Josephus' "Zealots"). These two groups also had significant influence in 1st century Palestine and warrant additional study. Perhaps Saldarini's most intriguing point is (on page 139-140) that Paul of Tarsus is best identified with the Pharisaic way of life and not necessarily as a Pharisee per se. This bold suggestion takes root for him in that fact that Paul does not appear in the New Testament with the characteristics of a Pharisee or a "retainer" (he is not a member of the governing class, he is a Jerusalem out-sider from distant Tarsus, and Paul's difficult life as a missionary is not rhetorical and unlike the Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees he worked hard- as an artisan leather worker). Saldarini assumes a certain level of reader familiarity with his subject (his writing style is somewhat technical and aimed for the serious student or reader). "Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees" is an important study. It is recommendable to all students of late antiquity, New Testament scholars, rabbinic students, and serious socio-historians. 28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. Foundational work By Fr Kurt Messick Anthony J. Saldarini is a professor in the department of theology at Boston College. A prolific author, he is also an interesting and engaging speaker. I had the privilege of attending one of his lectures at a Biblical Archaeology Society seminar in Florida a few years ago (in conjunction with the AAR/SBL convention), and since have done my best to follow all of his writing. It is as interesting, accessible, scholarly and thorough as was his presentation. This volume, 'Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach', is actually a re-issue from 1988. The first edition had considerable impact in the field, and this reissue makes that work generally accessible and affordable for the 'average' reader (and poor, struggling student!) interested in Scroll scholarship. This book is divided into three main sections: 1 - Palestinian Society, 2 - The Literary Sources, and 3 - Interpretation and Synthesis. I will cover each of these in turn.

--Palestinian Society--Saldarini first explores the problem of defining and dealing with Jewish groups in Palestine of the first century. There is a paradox that seems to have come up in scholarship, in that the more that is learned (particularly in the case of the Pharisees), the less clear an understanding we seem to get of who these groups really are. Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees (the three primary groups Saldarini address -- which, by the way, are not universally recognised groupings, nor the only groupings possible) include aspects of religion, politics, education, and economics. This section begins by looking at the sociological methods used in the book. Social science theory is generally used in three ways: heuristically (to generate questions), descriptively (to fill in the gaps in knowledge), and as explanation (with causal and relationship systems worked out). There are problems with this approach, which includes (but is not limited to) a decidedly western bias, a lack of understanding of religious aspects as religious truth (even in possibility), and a strong tendency toward individualism and self-interest as opposed to motivations that go beyond self. Saldarini sets definitions and parameters about class, religion, power, and social interactions that set the discussion for the rest of the book. The next chapter explores agrarian and city aspects, both in a Palestinian and a Roman Imperial context, which overlap in variously complementary and conflicting patterns. Finally, Saldarini discusses social relationships in villages, cities, and social strata that hold the society together. Addressing concerns (such as honour/shame and patron/client considerations) that affect the motivations and underlying pressures, Saldarini leads into a discussion that addresses the literary evidence we have for making such conclusions.

--Literary Sources--This is the largest section of the book. Three primary sources are explored: the writings of Josephus, an historian who wrote in the late first century C.E., the New Testament, and rabbinic literature, including mishnaic and talmudic writings. Josephus is a controversial figure, given his possible collaboration with Romans against the Jewish people (of whom he spent the rest of his life writing and defending). He wrote various books, including War, Antiquities, and his own Life. Saldarini interposes discussion of the history of Palestine from the time of the Maccabees to the end of the first century C.E. as reconstructed by scholars with how it is presented in the works of Josephus, concentrating on his descriptions of actions, beliefs and relationships of the groups in question. From the New Testament, Saldarini first explores the writings of Paul (as the earliest of NT writings). Interestingly, Saldarini

notest that `Paul is the only person besides Josephus whose claim to be a Pharisee is preserved, and he is the only diaspora Jew identified as a Pharisee.' Paul cannot be read (in historical context) uncritically, for he does not (nor does he pretend to) present Pharisees or any other Jewish group in an objective light. Paul writes with an explicit purpose (likewise, Josephus must be read critically, for while his bias is less explicit, it is present). Likewise the material in Acts has a bias, and cannot be taken as objective history in the modern sense of what a history is. Saldarini then explores the gospels (and the book of Acts in more specifics as a volume related to Luke), looking at the ways in which Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees are described in each of the four, identifying key issues and descriptions. Again it is stressed that these are not objective descriptions or social locations. In looking at the rabbinic sources, Saldarini examines the sources around Hillel and Shammai, the pre- and post-destruction of the Temple issues, and different viewpoints from modern scholars. These sources are important in connection with other sources, but there are serious difficulties in using them as the sole basis from which to derive much information about identity and relationship of the Jewish groups.--Interpretation and Synthesis--This section is the 'payoff', so to speak -- this is where the research and definition come together. Saldarini devotes a chapter to each of the three groups, beginning with scribes, then Pharisees, and finally Sadducees. Saldarini brings in evidence from Greek and Roman sources as well as Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources to put the Palestinian culture in a broader context of trade and Empire. Palestine being at the crossroads of many trade routes, there are many factors that influence the development and understanding of the society. While not all scholars agree with Saldarini's conclusions and connections, the field is definitely enriched with this volume, and the fact that it has been reprinted -- few scholarly works are reprinted -- in an affordable form will make this more accessible to a wider audience who may further engage the discussion of the sociological composition of Palestine at a critical junction in history -- the time of the beginnings of both Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. The Ideal Introduction to Pharisees and Sadducees By Eibert Tigchelaar Anthony Saldarini's 1988 important monograph on the Pharisees, Scribes and Pharisees (discussing the references to and treatments of those groups in Josephus, the New Testament and Rabbinic Literature) is still one of the best in the field and should be read by any student or scholar interested in the topic. This paperback includes a foreword in which Jim VanderKam sketches the contents and merits of Saldarini's book. VanderKam also shortly discusses the post-1988 scholarship on the topic, including the new insights which the Dead Sea Scrolls composition 4QMMT adds to the relation between Pharisees, Sadducees (and the Qumran 'sect'). Therefore, this highly readable book together with the foreword constitutes an excellent introduction for those starting their reading, and is an ideal starting point for New Testament or Early Judaism undergraduate and graduate classes on groups and movements in Early Roman Palestinian Society.

Widely praised in its original edition and now part of the Biblical Resource Series, this volume offers a superb discussion of the role of the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Jewish society. Applying a sociological approach to the biblical and literary sources, Anthony Saldarini accurately portrays these three most prominent groups of educated leaders in Jewish society and describes their relationship to other Jewish social movements from 200 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. Featuring a new foreword by James C. VanderKam, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* will remain a standard point of reference for the continuing study of Judaism and Christian backgrounds.