A Research Guide for Intertestamental History

A research guide is an introduction to researching a topic. It lists the best introductory sources to help you start your research, but it is not a comprehensive bibliography of the topic. Reference works include encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, and almanacs; they are available in the reference section. Books in circulation are in the library stacks, and they may be checked out. Call numbers are places to check in the library for further research. Subject headings are suggested terms to use when searching the library catalog. Periodicals are published regularly, and they are usually indexed. Electronic resources are subscription databases available from the library’s website. Websites are recommended sources available free online. Other resources are places in the Mack Library that you can check for further research. Please ask a reference librarian for further help.

Scope

The intertestamental period, also called the second temple period, is the time between the writing of the last Old Testament book and the beginning of the events described in the New Testament. This period saw the translation of the Septuagint, the establishment of the Roman Empire, and the continued spread of Hellenistic culture, and developments within Judaism such as the writing of a large body of Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works and the development of the Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene sects. New Testament scholars study the period primarily to learn about the culture in which the New Testament was written and to understand the influences on early Christianity from Judaism and Hellenistic or Roman religions.

Because this topic is so broad, only the most basic sources have been included in the research guide. Included are works on archeology, the Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, early Judaism, Greco-Roman religion, and New Testament history. Further works can be found by consulting the library catalog under the suggested headings or by browsing the suggested call numbers.

Reference Works


A one-volume, concise overview of archaeology in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.


A collection of all the Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, translated into English, with introductions and explanatory notes.


A collection of all the pseudepigraphal writings, translated into English, with introductions, explanatory notes, and bibliographies.


The most authoritative general reference work on Jews and Judaism. (Similar encyclopedias can be found by browsing REF 296.)


A history of the intertestamental period.

Contains length articles, including articles about the history of Judaism and themes relevant to the intertestamental period. Check both the table of contents and the index.

REF 296.03 Ox2

Contains articles about religious leaders, texts, and concepts.

REF 296.15503

A comprehensive guide to the content and history of the Dead Sea scrolls. Each article includes lengthy annotated bibliographies.

REF 922.96 C73

A basic source for biographies. Search alphabetically, or check the thematic index (439).

REF 930.03 En197

Though its articles are very brief and though its coverage is not comprehensive, this encyclopedia does provide basic information for some of the intertestamental period.

REF 933 J775r

A concordance to Josephus’s works, in Greek. Contains definitions of each word as used.

REF 933 Sa17

This handbook explores the relationship between early Judaism and early Christianity from both the perspective of rabbinic studies and the scholarship of the New Testament.

REF 933.003 N42

The most comprehensive reference work on the archaeology of the Holy Land. This encyclopedia is organized primarily by location, listed alphabetically. This work deals almost exclusively with the Holy Land itself, not with the Middle East generally. A copy is also available in the stacks at the same call number.

REF 939.4 Ox2

Though most of the articles in this encyclopedia deal with topics outside the intertestamental period, some will provide valuable information about the archeology of that era. Check both the index (5:461) and the synoptic outline of contents (5:451).
# Books in Circulation

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<tr>
<td>225.95 B275 1989</td>
<td>Barrett, C. K, ed.</td>
<td>The New Testament Background: Writings from Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire That Illuminate Christian Origins</td>
<td>A collection of primary sources relevant to the beginning of Christianity, including excerpts from Roman historians, papyri, inscriptions, Greek philosophers and poets, Gnostic literature, mystery religions, Jewish historians, rabbinic literature, the Qumran community, Philo, Josephus, the Septuagint, the Targums, and apocalyptic literature. Includes explanatory notes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>225.95 K819</td>
<td>Koester, Helmut</td>
<td>History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age</td>
<td>This introduction to Hellenistic religion is arranged topically, covering such themes as society, economics, education, language, literature, philosophy, Judaism, and the Roman Empire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>229.061 D4608</td>
<td>DeSilva, David A.</td>
<td>Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance.</td>
<td>An introduction to the Apocrypha, which provides a commentary and guide to each book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>270.1 F381b 1993</td>
<td>Ferguson, Everett</td>
<td>Backgrounds of Early Christianity. 2nd ed.</td>
<td>Perhaps the most detailed and comprehensive introduction to the Jewish and Greco-Roman background of the New Testament. Includes discussions of political, social, cultural, intellectual, and religious history.</td>
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<tr>
<td>270.1 Sk17</td>
<td>Skarsaune, Oskar</td>
<td>In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity.</td>
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Includes a brief history of Judaism and Hellenism and discusses the influence of Judaism on Jesus, the early church, the canon, Christology, conversion, baptism, worship, calendar, and Eucharist.


An introduction to intertestamental Judaism intended for a layman or a beginning student. The discussions are straightforward and assume no prior knowledge. Includes helpful bibliographies for further reading.


Includes a history of the second temple era, an overview of Jewish literature in the intertestamental period, and a discussion of Jewish religious life. Also includes a helpful bibliography.


A detailed examination of Jewish literature. Contains a length bibliography (603–53).


Perhaps the best introduction to the intertestamental literature. Works are discussed in roughly chronological order, rather than by genre. This work does not contain selections or extended quotations from the sources discussed. It does include helpful bibliographies.

**Call Numbers and Subject Headings**

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<td>Judaism—History —Post-exilic Period—Sources</td>
<td>Sadducees</td>
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**Periodicals**

*Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. Chicago: American Society of Church History, 1932–. Quarterly. ISSN: 0009-6407.

A peer-reviewed journal with occasional articles about the intertestamental times and Christianity. Indexed in Academic OneFile, Expanded Academic ASAP, General OneFile, and ProQuest Discovery.
Intertestamental History


A peer-reviewed journal with occasional articles about the intertestamental times and Christianity.


A peer-reviewed journal with occasional articles about the intertestamental times and Christianity. Indexed in Academic OneFile, General OneFile, and Expanded Academic ASAP.


A magazine with popular treatment of subjects in biblical archeology.

Electronic Resources

ATLAS: ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials

An index of religious periodicals; often includes the full text. Check ATLAS for journal articles and book reviews on historical topics.

Websites


This site offers links to online texts, articles, websites. Under the resource index, check “Second Temple and Talmudic Era” and the associated subgroups. Also browse by item type.


This website contains the complete contents of the 12-volume Jewish Encyclopedia, originally published 1901–1906.