

Class 5a

HOW TO DIG FOR EVIDENCE: LITERARY & ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

Historical Problems With the Christian Evidence

The NT texts are not transparent records of what Jesus said and did

- Proofs
 - The gospels conflict with one another
 - Where identical, they are not independent witnesses
 - The authors are biased, and they admit it
- Consequences
 - we have to allow that later beliefs affect the story
 - we have to discern how later historical events influence the story

Historical Problems With the Christian Evidence

- Tendencies in the developing tradition
 - new gospels fix problems in the "old" ones
 - new material gets added to burnish some characters' reputations
 - words, phrases and passages are added to address questions and controversies that develop in the early church
 - stories are added to ground developing traditions about Jesus

Specific Details that Develop

- the Pharisees get lumped together with Jesus' enemies
- the Romans get blamed less, the Jews more, for Jesus' death
- Jesus' death is increasingly explained in terms of the destruction of the Jewish temple and the loss of the war
- Jesus' messianic identity, as well as the assertion of his divinity, are emphasized more as time goes on
- the need develops to explain the Gentile mission
- early apocalyptic teachings are reinterpreted when the end *doesn't* come

Rules for Reconstructing Jesus (a.k.a. Criteria of Historicity)

- The Issue: If the gospels aren't exactly historical, how do we discern what is historical in them?
- Rules or criteria: do these fit the passage?
 - Early (or even eyewitness) testimony
 - Embarrassing or awkward
 - Multiply attested in independent witnesses
 - Discontinuous with earlier Jewish or later Christian tradition
 - Historically plausible*
 - Consistent with Jesus' crucifixion*
 - Orality and form

* Applies more to events and reconstructions of Jesus than to sayings

Orality & Form

- Conventions of oral preaching
 - short, pithy sayings
 - images and metaphors from daily life
 - rhythm and rhyme
- Typical oral teaching "forms"
 - aphorisms
 - parables

Our Father

Ahbah
Father
 Yitqadahsh shemahk
Holy (is) your name
 Tay-the malkootahk
May it come your kingdom
 Lachmahnah dee misteyah hahb
Our bread for day this
 Lahnah yomah denah
To us today give
 Ooshebooq lahnah chobaynah
Forgive us our debts
 Kedee shebaqnah lechayahbaynah
As we forgive our debtors
 Weh-ahl ta'aylin ahnah lenisyon
And do not lead us to the test

APPLYING THE RULES TO THE EVIDENCE

Applying the Rules

Which criteria does this saying satisfy?

Criteria of Historicity	Luke 11:17-20
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> early/eyewitness	<p>Every government divided against itself is devastated, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan is divided against himself—since you claim that I drive out demons in Beelzebub's name—how will his domain endure? If I drive out demons in Beelzebub's name, in whose name do your own people drive (them) out? In that case, they will be your judges. But if by God's finger I drive out demons, then for you God's imperial rule has arrived.</p> <p>parallels in Mark 3:24-26, Matt 12:25-28</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> embarrassing	
<input type="checkbox"/> multiply attested	
<input type="checkbox"/> discontinuous with Jewish or Christian ideas	
<input type="checkbox"/> oral character or form	

Applying the Rules

Which criteria does this saying satisfy?

Criteria of Historicity	Luke 16:13
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> early/eyewitness	<p>No man can be a slave to two masters. No doubt that slave will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and disdain the other. You can't be enslaved to both God and a bank account!</p> <p>parallels in Matt 6:24; Gos. Thomas 47:1-2</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> embarrassing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> multiply attested	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> discontinuous with Jewish or Christian ideas	
<input type="checkbox"/> oral character or form	

Applying the Rules

Which criteria does this saying satisfy?

Criteria of Historicity

~~early eyewitness~~

~~embarrassing~~

~~multiply attested~~

~~discontinuous with
Jewish or Christian ideas~~

oral character or form

Luke 14:28-30

[Jesus addressing disciples] "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.'"

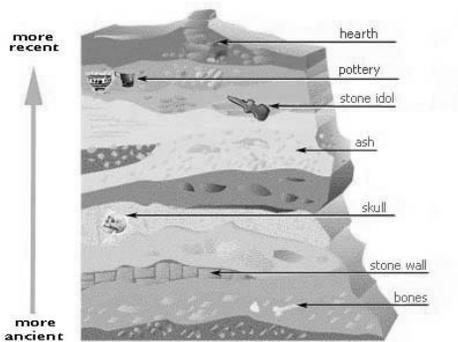
Archaeological Rules

The Importance of a Controlled Excavation



Archaeological Rules

Stratigraphy



Archaeological Rules

Provenience & Analogy

