

Institutionalization: Canon and Liturgy

March 24, 2006

- **Reminder:** *Passion of the Christ*
Wed., March 29, 0302H Hornbake Library
- Sources
- Local tradition, division, and consensus
- Canonization
- Liturgy

Sources for development of Christian Canon, Liturgy

Canon

- Muratorian Canon
- Comments in Church Fathers

Liturgy

- "Church Orders"
 - Didache
 - Didascalia
 - Apostolic Tradition
- "Apologies"
 - Justin Martyr
 - Tertullian
- Other writings by Church Fathers

Local tradition, division, and consensus

- Common **tradition**
 - Scripture (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible)
 - Jesus tradition (although contents might differ)
- Serious local **differences**
 - Matthew circulated in Syria; Luke, perhaps John in Asia Minor
 - Different traditions about practice, meaning of Eucharist
- Construction of **consensus** (emergence of proto-orthodoxy?)
 - On canon and liturgy (with subsisting differences)
 - Process predates, but is hastened by, Christianization of empire (4th Century)



Canonization

- **Canon:** An approved list of books that are meant for liturgical purposes.
- Current “New Testament”
- **“Current”** list first attested as such by Athanasius, Festal Letter, 367
- Evidence of ancient manuscripts and earlier Church Fathers
- Reasons for canonization?



Current “New Testament”

Gospels and Acts	Paul	“Catholic Letters”	Revelation (Apocalypse)
Matthew	Romans	James	Revelation
Mark	1, 2 Corinthians	1, 2 Peter	
Luke	Galatians	1, 2, 3 John	
John	Ephesians	Jude	
	Philippians	Revelation	
Acts	Colossians		
	1, 2 Thessalonians		
	1, 2 Timothy		
	Titus		
	Philemon		
	Hebrews		



Evidence of ancient manuscripts and Church Fathers

- Manuscripts reflect alternative collections (e.g., Codex Sinaiticus, earliest complete NT, mid 4th C)
- “Muratorian Canon” (2nd C?) possibly earliest list
 - already reflects traditions of gospel authorship (“differences make no difference”)
 - accepts *Wisdom of Solomon*, Apocalypses of John **and Peter**
 - *Shepherd of Hermas* too recent to be included though it should be read
 - Note categories: “[*Shepherd*] should be read but it cannot be published for the people in the Church ...”
- Eusebius (4th C) divides into Recognized, Disputed (including Apocalypse, etc.), and Spurious
- Earliest full attestation of “our” list: Athanasius, 367

Codex Sinaiticus
Includes: *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Epistle of Barnabas*



Reasons for canonization?

- Growing density of interaction between communities, paired with growing institutionalization
- Common “perceived threats,” e.g., Marcion and other “heresies”
- **Marcion:** 2nd C. teacher who rejected Jewish God and Bible for a purged and Luke and Letters of Paul
- Attempt of some factions to gain control over what the collective was doing (=growth of “proto-orthodoxy”)
- Accelerated with Christianization of Empire

Liturgy

- Again, earliest sources point to diverse local **practices** and **interpretations** of those practices. E.g. Baptism (Bradshaw)
 - Syria: “Christological” (anointing, receiving Spirit as in Christ’s baptism)
 - Rome, North Africa: “Soteriological” (sharing in Christ’s passage from death to resurrection)
- Again, drift toward commonality (esp. in 4th C and later: Bradshaw and McGowan), for some of the same reasons
- Possible sources for ritual models: Jewish practices, meal practices of associations, etc., Bible (i.e., OT) and Christian “myth” (as it crystallizes in NT)



Significant ritual occasions

- Baptism — increasingly formalized (season, practices, words, officiants)
- Eucharist — eventually ritualized rather than actual meal
- Lord's Day — Note that church meetings divide the “enlightened” from non-baptized, frequently men from women, etc.
- Easter — question of date
- Other days
