

Institutionalization: Liturgical and Communal Spaces

March 30, 2006

- The case of Baptism in North Africa
- Evolution of Christian communal and ritual space

The Passion of the Christ

- Are there elements in the movie that do not appear in the Gospels?
- How would you characterize these elements? (Are they, e.g., poetic license, theological argument, or close reading of underlying meanings in the text?)
- Would you recommend this as required viewing for a course on early Christianity or the historical Jesus?

The case of Baptism in North Africa

- "Ritualizing" of baptism—purpose built pools or fonts
- Baptism and communal identity
 - **Tertullian** vs. the "Cainites"
 - NB: Apostolic warrant (Acts of Paul and Thecla)
 - **Cyprian** on schisms resulting from persecution and lapse
- Baptism, sin, and the nature of Christian membership
 - Augustine: Theology of sin and baptism provides rationale for infant baptism
 - Nature of community changes when infant baptism is normative: from community of saved to community with room for backsliders
 - Dispersal of baptizing authority (to priests not bishops)

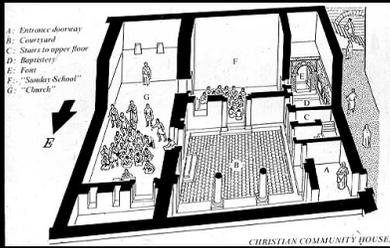
 **Evolution of Christian communal and ritual space**

- Terminology and developments
 - House church: Meetings in an existing room
 - Domus ecclesiae: Modification of space for liturgical use
 - Aula ecclesiae: A formal hall used for Christian gathering
 - Basilica: A standardized monumental plan (L. M. White: Generally post-Constantine)
- A comparative case (synagogues)
 - Stobi
 - Sardis
 - Priene

 **House church**

 **Domus ecclesiae**

Dura Europus Church (pre-ca 250)





Dura Europus Church
Baptistry

 **Aula ecclesiae**

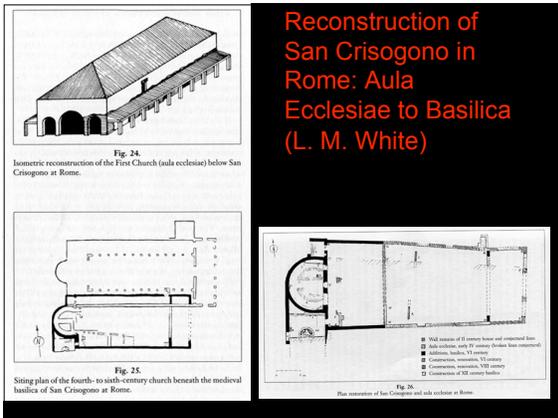
- Adaptation and monumentalization
- Porphyry, *Against the Christians*
"But the Christians, imitating the construction of temples, erect great buildings in which they meet to pray ..."
- Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 8.1.5
"Or how could anyone describe those assemblies ... as well as the remarkable concourses in the houses of prayer? They erected from their foundations churches of spacious dimensions in every city"

Basilica

- An aisled hall, typically with an apse at one end, where (in the Roman use) a magistrate held court
- As a standard Christian architectural form, generally a post-Constantine development (L. M. White)
- A possible pre-312 Christian basilica?
Deposition of Paul of Samosata as Antioch

Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., 7.30.9

- Paul of Samosata's excesses
"... The *bema* and lofty throne that he built for himself, not as a disciple of Christ, but as the ruler of the world, and with a *secretum* [a magistrate's chamber in the tribunal] which he has and even calls it."
(Transl L. M. White)





Synagogue at Stobi

- Third century or about 300 (?)
 "I Tiberias Claudius Polycharmos [gave] the houses to the holy place along with the *triclinium* [=banquet hall] and its *tetrastoa* [=perhaps colonnaded atrium?] out of the household accounts However [I retain] ownership and disposition of all the upper chambers for myself ... and for my heirs for life"



