

From Stories to Canon

RLST 152 Introduction to New Testament History and Literature
Dale B. Martin

Papias, (ca. 60-130), Bishop of Hieropolis in Asia Minor (modern western Turkey)

Justin Martyr (ca. 100- ca. 165), lived in Rome, considered himself a “philosopher” of Christianity; wrote “apologies” (i.e. defenses) of Christianity, and other works.

Marcion (died ca. 160), native of Sinope in Pontus (northern part of what is now Turkey, on the Black Sea), was in Rome by about 140; excommunicated by the Roman church in 144; developed his own “canon” of New Testament texts; established a movement of churches that long survived in different parts of the Mediterranean.

Tatian (ca. 160), student of Justin Martyr, but later active in the East. Also wrote “apologies” for Christianity. Author of the Diatessaron. Later considered a heretic.

The Muratorian Canon (ca. 170-190? Or fourth century?)
Includes: The Wisdom of Solomon; Apocalypse of Peter (as well as of John).
Excludes: Hebrews, one letter of John. Rejects the Shepherd of Hermas and other “gnostic” books.

The Easter Letter of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (367): first instance of precisely our list. He does list Paul’s letters *after* the general or “catholic” epistles.

Canon of Mommsen (ca. early 4th century):
Includes: Matthew Mark, John, Luke.
Excludes: Hebrews, James, Jude.
It argues that the number of books must be exactly 24 because Revelation 4:10 has 24 “elders” in God’s throneroom.

Codex Sinaiticus (ca. 350)
Includes: the Letter of Barnabas, The Shepherd of Hermas
Excludes: Jude

Codex Claromontanus (6th century)
Includes: Matthew, John, Mark, Luke; Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Acts of Paul, and the Revelation of Peter.
Excludes: Philipians, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Thessalonians.