

The Origins of the New Testament Canon: Issues, Problems, and Possibilities

#3: The Artifacts of Canon: Manuscripts as a Window into the Development of the New Testament

Introduction: Importance of the 'Physicality' of the New Testament

I. The Quantity of Early Manuscripts

A. New Testament Manuscripts: 60+ (2nd and 3rd centuries)

B. 'Apocryphal' Manuscripts: 17 (2nd and 3rd centuries)

C. Implications on the Literary Culture of Christianity:

1. Shows the "bookish" nature of the early Christian faith
2. Shows that Apocryphal texts were not particularly favored

II. Early Manuscript Collections

A. The Gospels

1. Examples: P75, P4+64+67, P45
2. Significance of the Gospel Titles

B. Paul's Epistles

1. Examples: P46, P30, P49+65, P92
2. Significance of the Pauline Titles

C. Other New Testament Books

1. Revelation: P18, P47, P98, P115, and 0308
2. Single books: James (P20, P23, P100), 1 Peter (P125), 1 John (P9), and Jude (P78)
3. P72: Composite Codex, include 1&2 Peter and Jude
4. 0232: Codex including Hebrews plus all the Catholic Letters

III. The Early Christian Use of the Codex

A. Why Did Early Christians Prefer the Codex?

B. The Content of Early Christian Codices

C. "And above all, the parchments" (2 Tim 4:13)