

II. Christianity

- Patristics and Orthodox Churches ■ Medieval Times ■ Reformation Era ■ Modern Europe and America ■ New Christian Churches and Religious Movements

A. Patristics and Orthodox Churches

1. Patristics. The history of liturgical books is a story not only of codification, but also of the standardization of liturgy, comprising texts, genres, and rites, as well as book-types. Late antique liturgical texts exist either on papyri and other writing materials (the survival of which implies considerable contingency and is mostly limited to Egypt) or through secondary copies and translations; significant discoveries (such as the still unpublished euchologion of the Aksumite collection, an extensive Ethiopic witness to late antique Alexandrian liturgy) keep appearing. While the concrete liturgical context of the earliest prayers and hymns on papyri remains uncertain, liturgical formularies are transmitted in pseudapostolic church orders (*Didache*, so-called *Apostolic Tradition*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, *Testamentum Domini* etc.) and probably mirrored in narrative texts, above all the apocryphal Acts of Apostles (Thomas, John etc.), which in rare cases are confirmed by external witnesses (P.Kellis 1). Mystagogies from the later 4th century CE describe rites

and occasionally quote texts which are somehow in line with liturgies of medieval manuscripts.

From the same period come indications of regulative tendencies and the earliest direct material evidence of incipient standardization as well as enduring diversity and continuous evolution. Best documented is the history of Eucharistic anaphoras (directly accessible is especially the Alexandrian liturgy attributed to Mark the Evangelist, beginning with 4th/5th cent. P.Strasb.gr. 254); wherever surviving early testimonies or comparative analysis affords insight into the development of a formula, the increasing elaboration involves the integration of doctrinal formulas and biblical quotations. Most papyri are too fragmentary to reveal the greater codicological context, and the majority of them are not actual books but rather single sheets of papyrus with only one text or a short sequence. Some transmit liturgical formularies along with other, non-liturgical texts, e.g., P.Monts.Roca inv. 126–181, which comprise prayers for various occasions as well as a Greek and a Latin hymn in a codex with a personalized selection of mostly non-liturgical texts. Comprehensive orders and clearly demarcated book-types have been preserved only in medieval manuscripts. The categories remain fluid throughout history, but the papyrological evidence already attests the separate copying of the prayers of the presider, the diptychs, litanies, and interjections of the deacon (occasionally inserted among the prayers), and the hymns of the singer.

The denomination “book of prayers” appears in Coptic papyri in the 7th century CE for a book which probably contained all liturgical prayers for the service of the presider, as can be observed already in the corpus of prayers attributed to bishop Sarapion (of Thmuis) in a medieval miscellaneous manuscript which possibly transmits a 4th-century collection. The earliest surviving book with Roman presider’s texts, the 7th-century Verona Sacramentary, is a compilation of libelli probably having circulated independently beforehand and thus shedding light on the prehistory of the Sacramentary as such. Whereas prayers preserved on papyrus display a tendency to be copied into libelli or codices, hymns appear more frequently in isolation or in short sequences on separate sheets of papyrus which served immediate performance needs.

The emergence of proper liturgical texts of all kinds (orations, pericopes, chants) is intrinsically linked to the evolution of the liturgical year and the establishment of festal cycles from the later 4th century CE on. Whereas the liturgy of Jerusalem is well-documented by the Armenian and Georgian lectionaries (in fact, rather Kanonaria-Synaxaria codifying dates, stations, readings, chants, and sparse rubrics) and Hymnal (Tropologion, translated in the Older Georgian Iadgari), homiletic evidence and the few patristic witnesses ascribing the

redaction of reading and chant propers to particular clergymen of the 5th to 7th centuries CE demonstrate the process of gradual standardization of such liturgical orders in other places (see also “Liturgy,” “Lectionary,” and “Sacramentary”). Identifying concrete patristic authors in later liturgical material is methodologically problematic, if not impossible; the age of texts codified in medieval manuscripts mostly indeterminable. The dissemination of the liturgy of powerful centers, especially Rome and Constantinople, led to the supersession and suppression of other rites often disappearing after their first available codification.

2. Orthodox Churches. While the liturgy of Jerusalem is documented since the later 4th century CE, Egyptian traditions survive on papyri since the same period, and Syriac lectionaries emerge from the 6th century on, liturgical books of the Byzantine liturgy and other Oriental rites exist only from post-patristic times. Political and historical discontinuities, not least in the Iconoclast and Crusader period, the interplay between center and periphery, repeated exchange between Palestine and Constantinople, and the diversity of cathedral and monastic usages contribute to the complexity of Byzantine liturgical documentation. Most notable are the book-types of the Euchologion (presider’s book) and of readings (Gospel, Praxapostolos, Prophetologion); Synaxarion and Menologion codify festal liturgies of Saints, Psalter, and Horologion the Liturgy of the Hours. Monastic liturgy is ordered by the Typikon; hymnographic material is organized according to liturgical time (Oktoechos-Parakletike, Triodion-Pentekostarion, Menaion) or chant genre (Sticherarion, Kontakarion, Kanonarion).

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Harald Buchinger and Ágnes Tóthné Mihálykó