Index of Key Terms

Various subjects seem to have arisen repeatedly during the course of this study. This was the case when reviewing the historical research (Part I) and in our own study into the historical canon process up to approx. 221 BCE (Part II). Highlighting the recurring themes in which the canon grew and operated is an important part of this study. Where possible, the same terminology was used to refer to these themes. Usually it occurs in different but similar expressions, which indicates how the themes shift, change and overlap yet remain related to one another despite this. Here we see what is most characteristic of the canon process. It is an evolution that remains the same throughout its various metamorphoses.

The following list of key terms is intended as an instrument to aid study of the canon process’ twofold development, continuity and discontinuity, by following the evolution of the recurrent themes. The list is introduced by four sections summarising the study with the focus on the main themes in the history of the canon study (I) and earliest stage of the canon process’ formal (II) and intentional (III) development within the Israelite faith community (IV). This provides some context for the following index of key terms. The marks in the index refer to the notes only.

I. The History of Canon Study

Current study of the canon, which receives its impetus from Canonical Criticism, participates in the paradigm shift occurring in the broader literature on the Bible and esp. in the study of the OT. The trends in canon study can thus each be situated in a history that they seem to continue, however critical they may be of it. The canonical criticism evaluation of prior study in classical biblical criticism is based primarily on the erosion of the canon as a result of Atomism and drastic historicisation by the History of Religion to which biblical criticism increasingly exposed the biblical text.

This explains the twofold tendency in the methodology that characterises the current canonical movement. On one side, the canon movement interlocks with the general and consistent turn toward the biblical texts (Textgemäss it is text-compliant) as now prevails in current exegesis. Hence its intense invocation of literary study, text-immanent methods, its preference for Redaction Criticism and those, like the scribes (Writing), who now work creatively and interpretively with the text as Reader (user). Hence their preference for the history of the reception (Rezeptionsgeschichte) and operation of tradition (Wirkungsgeschichte). It can be seen that partly due to their zeal to highlight the Intertextuality and Schematisation in the context of the Holistic approach, the canonical movement’s Scriptocentric tendency ultimately derives from ideological (Ideology) reasons. This can, but need not necessarily, lead to exegetical derailment as in Post-critical exegesis and the factual, if not theoretical, tendency to ignore the Oral Tradition.

In its response to the History of Religion’s historicising, which long tended to dominate classical biblical criticism, the canon-oriented literature, driven by Canonical Criticism, puts up a good show in its own exegetical approach. It, with the Revisionists and Minimalists, carried mistrust of biblical historiography to an extreme, esp. with regard to the pre-exilic period, and this as a result of the failure of previously defended Hypotheses on the amphictyony of the twelve tribes and everything to do with ancient Israel. However, their reservations regarding biblical history proved to exceed by far the concern for a dependable
historiography and ultimately to find its breeding ground in a theological dogmatic Ideology where it was rooted in the fundamental hermeneutical (Hermeneutics) issue. This is evident from its rigid approach to biblical historiography. Because they strove for absolute Certainty, with as condition absolute proof and an impossible demand for a total Reconstruction based on primary external Sources, they felt obliged by the purported lack of evidence to ignore completely the oldest periods of Israel’s history, with as result an irresponsible demolition.

Moreover, because of the Dehistoricising and generalising (Generalisation) that the biblical text underwent during the exilic and post-exilic periods, the literature on the canon felt obliged to devote attention exclusively to the later Stages of the Canon Process and the later addition to the biblical text, esp. its Final Shape. This led to the obvious preference for a synchronic (Synchronicity) rather than diachronic (Diachronicity) approach. Giving little room to Tradition History and more to the history of the text’s reception (Rezeptionsgeschichte) and operation (Wirkungsgeschichte), making biased use of the Comparative Method and Archaeology, undervaluing Sociology and the broader Context, and esp. the events, and linking dogmatic scepticism to dogmatic optimism are evidence of Inconsistency in applying criteria, mainly when arguing for a late Dating, and a striking acquiescence to a-historical tendencies. As we said, all this can only be explained from the researchers’ Ideology and inherent understanding (Vorverständnis), which, for our subject, has been inspired by a dualistic Dialectic since Barth. Among the things this implies is a rejection based on the Scripture Principle of everything modernistic since the Enlightenment and all that resembles Natural Theology, which obviously involves a preference for Salvation History rather than the History of Religion and General History.

As correction to these trends in the literature, this study had to start with addressing the question of Hermeneutics. The insights derived from this could be used to design a more accurate research method that, thanks to its versatility, could cope with the restrictions imposed by literary research. It could attempt to preserve the balance between Synchronicity and Diachronicity, between particularity and Diversity, Continuity and Discontinuity, narrow Context and broad Context, the canon’s earlier and later Stages, and between Dogmatics and history. Moreover, it had to use Archaeology, the Comparative Method and esp. Sociology responsibly since the Canon Process is a long-term Current in which the Community was intensely involved. During the study, it was unavoidably intended that Hypotheses would be formulated that would attempt to attain the greatest possible certainty without aiming at a total Reconstruction of the Canon Process or to lapse into dogmatic optimism. In this regard, it was impossible to ignore the Bible as historical source (Historicity).

II. The Formal Evolution of the Canon Process

As late entrant to the cultural development found among the surrounding peoples (Umwelt), Israel was long dependent on borrowings from these people. In the earliest period, this was done orally. Confirmation is found in the apodictic and casuistic oral Legislation in the Torah, in the unsurpassed Storytelling, the Preaching of the original prophets, the forms of address found in the Dtr’s Paraenetic style and in Instruction. The explains the ample place of the system of customs in the Canon Process, the design of a common Constitution and the development of institutions (Institutionalisings) such as the Cult. This also explains the importance of the Centralisation and purification of the Cult as a defence against Syncretism, as well as Israel’s rather late use of Writing. Only gradually were its mastery and general use encouraged and this primarily due to normative (Norms) considerations and because of the growing need for updating and revision. This is also the reason for the importance given to events (Historicity), faithfulness to Sources such as the prophets’ legitimating (Legitimating)