

Before and After Matthew

E Bruce Brooks
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

In this paper, I will argue that the Didache is a growth text, that it makes contact with Matthew only at the end of its formation period, and that its core is best understood if it is related to the period *before* Matthew and Luke: the time of Mark and of other texts which seem to reflect a pre-Resurrection form of belief and practice which I have elsewhere called Alpha Christianity. Since at several points my exposition departs from current scholarship on the Didache, it may assist readers (and avoid many separate and complicated footnotes later on) if I begin by briefly introducing some of the considerations that lie behind those departures.

1. Prolegomena

These are a set of mutually consistent solutions to problems otherwise solved by many, bearing upon the existence and nature of a Christianity arising before Paul, and persisting during his lifetime and afterward.

Growth Texts. Not all texts are written at one sitting, and authority texts in particular are likely to extend themselves over time, in order to remain valid under changing conditions. One physically obvious example is the Gortyn law code from early Crete, literally cut in the stones comprising the walls of the room in which law cases were heard, but with two extensions at the end, the second of which is in a different “hand” than the preceding text.¹ The Gospels, which evidently aspire to tell the truth about Jesus in narrative form, are in their nature authority texts, and for John in particular, a three-stage composition process has recently been proposed by von Wahlde. These and like extensions are not corruptions in the usual scribal sense, and they are not forgeries; they are an integral if later part of the text, and reflect continued management of that text by its original author (or, if we envision a school or municipal text, by its original proprietor or his successors). I propose in this paper to consider the evidence for the Didache as a growth text.

Mark. That Mark is a growth text² is readily shown by considering its interpolations, many of them signaled by the fact that they interrupt the context, that when they are removed, the context closes up to make a perfectly consecutive text, and that the interpolations themselves can be combined, on the basis of similar content, to make plausible accretion layers. Mk 14:28 and 16:7 are of this type.³ In each case, the verse following ignores the verse in question and addresses a comment or responds to a situation in the verse preceding. The two passages are related (the second refers back to the first), and thus form a layer of their own. What they add to the previous story is not the forthcoming appearance of Jesus to the disciples in Galilee, which was already implicit in the

¹ For a complete description, see Willetts **Gortyn** (1967); for the addendum, especially 4, 27, and 78.

² A complete if tentative reconstruction was presented in Brooks **Structural** (2006); see now Brooks **Resurrection** (forthcoming).

³ Noticed by Holtzmann (1901, 174), Lohmeyer (1937, 312), and Grant (1951, 879); more guardedly by Taylor (1956, 549). The insecurity of these interruptive passages in context passes without comment in many recent commentaries. This I attribute to the Zeitgeist (the same is true of all canonical NT texts), and not to any defect in the evidence.

narrative, but Jesus' *foreknowledge* of that appearance. I take this as an instance of the progressive divinization of Jesus, a process easily seen in the Four Gospels taken together,⁴ but which, as these interpolations show, is also in progress *within Mark itself*. The characteristic of the earliest Christianity is that it lies at the beginning of this trajectory, and divinized Jesus not at all.

Other passages in Mark that have been convincingly analyzed as layered include the Markan Apocalypse (by Taylor)⁵ and the Markan Passion Narrative (by Yarbrow Collins).⁶ The latter reconstruction ends at Mk 15:38, and thus does not include the Resurrection.⁷ Notice also that the Atonement doctrine (the salvific value of Jesus' death) is later in Mark than the Resurrection doctrine: whereas the Resurrection has been thoroughly worked into the text, the Atonement doctrine is exiguous: it appears in only two passages, Mk 10:45 and 14:24b, both of which may be removed without detriment (in the latter case, arguably with benefit) to the context. Stratified Mark thus contains a sort of archaeological history of the evolution of early Christian thought.⁸

Mark is usually dated to after 70, by interpreting Mk 13:14 as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the army of Titus. But desecration is not destruction, and this passage (with its clear reference to Daniel 11:31, and thus to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes)⁹ is more plausibly taken as referring to the threatened desecration of the Temple by Caligula in the summer of 40.¹⁰ When a Gospel writer wishes to portray the army of Titus besieging Jerusalem, the result is likely to read more like Lk 21:20, which in that Gospel replaces the parallel Mk 13:14. The latest firm terminus post quem in Mark is the reference to the execution of James Zebedee by Herod Agrippa I, probably in 44, which is predicted in Mk 10:39. There is no reason *in the text* to date any of Mark after c45, and the majority of Mark would then have been earlier. As a whole, then, Mark

⁴ For a brief account, see Brooks **Trajectories**.

⁵ See Taylor **Mark** 636-641, and further Brooks **Apocalyptic**.

⁶ I should add that Yarbrow Collins prefers to call the earlier form the Pre-Markan Passion Narrative, whereas I consider it to be an early state in a continuous process of additions to Mark, and thus *within* the Markan formation process.

⁷ Yarbrow Collins **Mark** 819 and preceding commentary. For an independent argument that the Resurrection is not original in Mark, see Kirby **Empty Tomb**. The Resurrection predictions in Mark evidently stand or fall together, and the second of them (Mk 9:30-32) is in conflict with Mk 9:33 as to whether Jesus talked with his disciples on the way, or did not do so, and had to ask afterward what they had been saying. Of the two, it is the latter which makes better sense in the immediate context. It follows that 9:30-32, and with it the other Resurrection predictions, are late in Mark.

⁸ A common response to evidence for interpolation in Mark is the Edwards "sandwich" thesis. The prize example of this supposed authorial structure is the Woman with the Flow of Blood, Mk 5:24b-34, interrupting the Jairus' Daughter narrative, Mk 5:22-24a and 35-43). Of this and all the "sandwiches," Edwards 215 observes, "Almost always the insertion is the standard by which the flanking material is measured, the key to the interpretation of the whole." A similar, and stronger, statement could be made of an interpolation, whose purpose is to update the "flanking material." The point of the Jairus story was the power of *Jesus* to heal. The point of the inserted Woman story is quite different; it is the power of *faith in Jesus* to heal, even without the personal intervention of the historical Jesus (Mk 5:34, "And he said to her, Daughter, *your faith has made you well*"). By inserting this story, Mark updates what had been merely a story of Jesus, and directly addresses the concerns of the churches of his own time.

⁹ The reference to Daniel is made explicit in the Matthean version of this passage, Mt 24:15.

¹⁰ This has often been pointed out. It may be the basis of the Paschal Chronicle's assigning to Mark the date 40, and the early tradition, expressed at the end of several uncial manuscripts, that Mark was written in the 10th year after the Ascension, which on some views about the chronology of Jesus would again give 40. Among more recent treatments, see for example Crossley **Date** 29f. The threat was removed by the death of Caligula in January 41, so that Mk 13:14 can only have been written in 40. This is one of two passages in Mark for which an absolute terminus post quem can be determined. For the other, Mk 10:39, see below.

belongs to the early, not the middle, period of Early Christianity. Given the evident similarity between certain Didache passages and Matthew, scholarship on the Didache has naturally focused on Matthew, sometimes to the extent of excluding Mark and other seemingly early texts from consideration. I propose in this paper to bring Mark (and the also early Epistle of James) back into the picture.

Luke. This text is also stratified, as is most easily seen in the passages which occupy different positions in the narrative from their counterparts in Mark, and create inconcinnities in their new positions. These can only have been relocated at a later point during the formation of the text.¹¹ One of the most obvious is the Nazareth episode (Lk 4:16-30), in which Jesus's hearers demand that he do wonders such as he had done at Capernaum, but at this point in the present Lukan narrative, Jesus *has not yet been* to Capernaum.

In his Gospel and also in the Acts, Luke takes a highly revisionist view of Paul. Paul's most characteristic doctrine is probably the Atonement, asserted with typical vehemence in Paul's last letter, Romans 3:20-24 and, with the example of Abraham, in 4:1-3. Luke in his Gospel suppresses the two Markan passages in which this doctrine occurs, and in Acts, he never shows Paul as preaching that doctrine.¹² It was apparently Luke's intention to transmit both Jesus tradition and later Christian history in a form which would be more suitable for the future than the actual facts. Among the more upsetting of those facts was the bitter exchange between Paul in Romans and the last addition to the Epistle of James,¹³ which in 2:20 holds Paul's doctrine of faith (in the Atonement) up to scorn ("Do you want to be shown, you foolish fellow, that faith apart from works is barren?"), and in 2:21-24 goes on to refute Paul's example of Abraham, arguing that Abraham was an instance of deeds, not merely of faith ("Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?"). These disputes among Christians were probably divisive, and Luke may have felt that some sort of peace needed to be achieved within Christianity, so as to save energy for the conflicts which it was experiencing from outside. I propose in this paper to bring this conflict between Paul and earlier Christianity into sharper perspective.

Matthew. Mt 24:15 repeats without modification Mk 13:14, with its Caligula desecration prediction;¹⁴ the text thus does not appear to be aware of the Titus destruction of 70 (which *is* unmistakably reflected in the parallel Lk 21:20). The final state of Matthew is thus most plausibly dated *before* 70, and the final state of Luke *after* 70. The impetus for composing both may well have been the deaths of the major Apostles Paul (probably in 60, since the two years of virtual freedom in Rome mentioned in Acts 28:30-31 may be an instance of the consistently pro-Roman stance of Acts)¹⁵ and Peter (probably in 64, the first year of the Neronian persecution). These, not to mention the other turmoils of the time, could have suggested the need for a new account of Jesus

¹¹ See Brooks **Prolegomena** (2006) and Brooks **Acts-Luke** (forthcoming). The latter argues for a three-stage composition process for Luke, the second and third of which correspond to a two-stage formation process for Acts.

¹² It is mentioned only in Acts 21:28, as part of Paul's farewell to the Ephesians, but as a personal idea of Paul's, not as something which Luke represents him as preaching to the churches.

¹³ For this stratification, see Brooks **James**.

¹⁴ It may be asked, If the Caligula prediction did not come off, why was it retained in Mark (and repeated in Matthew)? I reply: Authority texts in their nature do not subtract; subtraction is an admission of error in a text already to some degree public. What usually happens instead is that the seeming difficulty is made good by reinterpretation.

¹⁵ The final imprisonment of Paul is imagined very differently by whoever wrote 2 Timothy 4:6-18. That this describes a second imprisonment has been shown to be untenable; see Macpherson **Second** (1900).

and his legacy. The available time window is small, and seems to require something like:

Luke A (c66) > Matthew (c68) > Luke B (after 70)

This would have been during the Jewish War, making a Palestinian place of composition problematic, but Luke has been persistently associated with Antioch, and since the two Gospels are obviously closely related, Syria may be a reasonable hypothesis for Matthew also.¹⁶ The difference between Luke (who consistently speaks for the poor) and Matthew (who is comfortable with large numbers, and, as in Mt 23:2 and many like passages, is somewhat in reaction against Jesus' abridging of the traditional laws) is as likely to be social as geographical.

Q. This is a conjectural source, supposed to be earlier than Matthew and Luke and used by both. "Q" is thought to account for much of the material common to Matthew and Luke but absent in Mark. Perhaps the strongest evidence for such a source is: (1) the apparent bidirectionality (often called "alternating primitivity") displayed by the common material, and (2) the assumption that both Matthew and Luke are integral texts, written at a single date. The latter assumption seems to hold for Matthew (I see no philological warrant for a stratification analysis, and do not believe that one has ever been proposed), but as argued above, not for Luke. Goulder (1989) sought to undermine the Q hypothesis by demonstrating Mt > Lk directionality for all the common material. This works for the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30 || Lk 19:11-27), which involves a narratively superfluous King in the Lukan version, and thus suggests the directionality Mt > Lk.¹⁷ But it founders on the Parable of the Feast (Mt 22:1-14 || Lk 14:16-24), which involves a narratively superfluous King in the *Matthean* version, and thus equally implies the directionality Lk > Mt. But if the earliest stage of Luke were earlier than Matthew, and the second stage of Luke were later than Matthew and aware of Matthew, the above and other facts can be accommodated. A further advantage of that model is that the Minor Agreements (not addressed in the Q hypothesis) can also be accommodated. So can such elements as the respective Birth Narratives, which cannot be derived by the usual redaction scenario from a common ancestor (they have almost no details in common), but have a clear Mt > Lk directionality (in Luke, but not in Matthew, the Birth story overrides a perfectly satisfactory beginning in the historical synchronisms of Lk 3:1f.).¹⁸ The conjectural "Q" will thus play no part in the following argument.

Paul. The strongest argument for an early Christianity is that Paul began by persecuting it; the second strongest is that in his letters he sometimes quotes what have been recognized as pre-Pauline formulas.

Paul was a vehement personality, and was just as zealous to assert his apostolic credentials (against those of the "superlative Apostles," 1 Cor 11:5 and 12:11) as he had earlier been to exterminate the Christians in his vicinity (Gal 1:13f). Paul is an author to read with care; not least because, in addressing Christians whose beliefs differed from his, he was prone to adopt their way of speaking initially, as a first step in converting them to his

¹⁶ See the careful discussion in Davies and Allison (1988) 1/138-147, who in the end opt for Antioch.

¹⁷ It also involves other absurdities; see Goulder's delightful account in **Luke** 2/680-683.

¹⁸ The effect of the transition has often been noticed, eg "At this point, the narrative emerges into the clearer light of day, and joins the main stream of the older evangelical tradition which began not with the birth but with the baptism of Jesus (Manson Luke 24). For the divinization trajectory which is implied in the divine birth narratives of both Matthew and Luke, see again Brooks **Trajectories**.

own quite different point of view. An extreme example is Rom 1:2, where he speaks of the Davidic descent of Jesus, seemingly to ingratiate himself with those he imagines himself as addressing, at least some of whom evidently took the old Davidic Messiah tradition of Jesus seriously. Paul had no interest in the Davidic or any other descent of Jesus, or in any other aspect of Jesus during his lifetime (see 2 Cor 5:16, where that knowledge is superseded by a higher knowledge of Jesus). It was exclusively Jesus *as resurrected* that interested Paul (emphasized as late as 1 Cor 15:14, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain”). The joke is that the author of the deutero-Pauline text 2 Timothy took this passage as genuine rather than rhetorical, and included it accordingly (in 2:8) as Paul’s own belief and indeed his teaching, doubtless thinking to strengthen thereby the perceived Pauline character of his work.

For present purposes, there are three major points requiring to be explained about Paul: (1) His persecution of the early Christians, (2) his conversion to Christianity, and (3) his adoption of the Atonement interpretation of the Resurrection. For the second, biographies of Paul usually find it sufficient to refer to the experience on the Damascus Road, though this is a Lukan fiction not greatly resembling what is probably Paul’s own account of the same experience in 2 Cor 12:2-5; in any case, what inner breakthrough prepared, or was expressed by, that experience? The first two questions are perhaps both best answered by Paul himself, with a guarded assist from Luke. Immediately after recalling that he “persecuted the church of God violently,” Paul in Gal 1:14 describes himself as “extremely zealous . . . for the traditions of my fathers” (the zeal and the persecution are even more closely linked in Php 3:6, “as to zeal a persecutor of the church”). These traditions would have included not only the written commandments, with the Decalogue at their center, but the oral elaborations developed and prized by the Pharisees. Jesus in Mark is frequently at odds with the Pharisees over such traditions as food purity, and such Decalogue prescriptions as the one enjoining observance of the Sabbath. Further, and more specifically, in Mk 10:19 Jesus gives an abridged version of the Decalogue. This is sometimes characterized as the “second table of the Decalogue,” but this is not precisely correct; the actual inventory (with their sequence numbers in the Decalogue at Deut 4:7-21, which is also that of Exod 20:1-17) is murder (#6), adultery (#7), theft (#8), false witness (#9), fraud (not in the Decalogue)¹⁹ and respect for parents (#5). This abridgement, plus the Markan Jesus’s frequent and conspicuous offenses against the Sabbath commandment and several Pharisaic purity rules, would be well calculated to infuriate the Pharisee Paul.

As to Paul’s motive for converting to Christianity, I think the likeliest possibility is that the Christianity to which Paul converted was not same as the Christianity which he had previously persecuted. If at some point there had arisen, within the Christianity of the time, a new theory which emphasized the resurrection of Jesus, this might easily have resonated with Paul’s Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the dead, and produced the sort of about-turning – the sudden recognition - which Paul’s conversion seems to exhibit.²⁰ That this idea was a

¹⁹ But compare Malachi 3:5, which also mentions other Jesus commandments. The prohibition of fraud is a signature of certain early Christian traditions; besides Mk 10:19, it also occurs at James 5:4 (with a probable echo in 1 Cor 6:8) and Luke 19:8. There are similar prohibitions in the Two Ways vice list.

²⁰ A point in favor of the two-Christianity view here suggested is that Paul as a Christian continued to oppose those who did not share his theological views, in particular those who did not place equal emphasis on the death of Jesus.

development in Christianity, and not original doctrine (Jesus can hardly have taught it to the crowds during his lifetime, and no Gospel depicts him as doing so), has been argued above. In support of the centrality of the Resurrection in Paul's conversion, we may notice the emphasis which Paul, to the end of his writings, places on the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:14, above cited), and his early visit to Jerusalem to confer with Peter, who had been the first to receive a vision of the risen Christ (this Gospel tradition is repeated by Paul at 1 Cor 15:5, "and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve")." Luke in Acts also makes the Resurrection the distinguishing point for Paul, saying that he "preached Jesus and the Resurrection" (Acts 17:18b), and later in Jerusalem defended himself by saying that he was being persecuted by other Jews who, unlike himself, did not believe in a resurrection (Acts 23:6; so also before Felix, Acts 24:21).

The Atonement doctrine is our third difficulty. Bultmann, following Bousset, suggested that Paul himself invented it, but the available facts do not seem to support this. We have firsthand testimony for Paul's theology only during 7 years from late in his life: from 1 Thessalonians at c51 to Romans at c57), but even in that short span some development may be observed, and it seems that the Atonement, which is so vigorously stressed in Romans (c57) is not yet present in 1 Thessalonians (c51).²¹ It is present, but as a seemingly late addition, in Mark. Given a latest terminus post quem of c45 for Mark, it is probable that the Atonement doctrine had been acknowledged by that text not long before; say perhaps c43. This is eight years before the date usually assigned to 1 Thessalonians. It thus seems that Paul got the Atonement doctrine from somewhere else, perhaps most likely from theoreticians at Jerusalem, the zone of John Mark's primary acquaintance, and, as the site of the Temple, also the place where sacrifice-based concepts like the Atonement might naturally have arisen.

Torah. The term "law" in our texts does not invariably invoke the whole of the Torah, whether written or oral. We have seen that Jesus in Mark preaches a reduced Torah (as it happens, precisely those parts of it that do not involve a specifically Jewish form of piety). In this paper, I will not be equating the term "law" with the full Torah. I will also not be using the term "Jewish Christian," which implies that the only significant difference within early Christianity is the contrast between Jewish and Gentile origin. Though this polarity existed and was consequential, I find that *doctrinal* differences, among Christians of whatever origin, were also significant.

Alpha Christianity. There are several extant texts which have in common that (1) they seem to portray a relatively early form of Christianity, and (2) they do not mention the Resurrection. These include the Epistle of James; the hymn embedded in Philippians 2,²² which features an exalted and even pre-existent Christ, but not one whose death is said to have salvific significance; and (from the preceding argument) the early layers of Mark. Among later texts, it is conspicuous that Peter in the Clementine Recognitions preaches endlessly, but

See his curse in the afterthought at the end of 1 Corinthians ("If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed [anathema]. Our Lord, Come!"). The latter translates the Aramaic prayer Maranatha, given in its original form in Did 10:6. Paul's meaning is, "Let the Lord indeed come, and condemn these heretics." At this and similar moments, I suggest that we are seeing an example of the general pattern to which attention was called by Walter Bauer in 1934: an original belief becoming heretical in terms of a later belief. Paul here represents the later belief.

²¹ See for example Ridderbos **Earliest**, and compare Donfried **Paul** 81-83.

²² As reconstructed by Lohmeyer, it includes an intrusive half-verse added by Paul in quoting it, and introducing, if not the Resurrection in an explicit form, an allusion to the theologia crucis. See Hunter **Paul** 41, Fitzmyer **Ascension** 267.

never mentions the Resurrection or any doctrine connected with the Resurrection. This seems to represent a vigorous survival (despite what was by then its heretical status) of Alpha doctrine.²³ In this paper, I will attempt to show the affinity of the Didache with this Alpha Christianity, whose ritual prescriptions I believe it preserves.

2. The Didache²⁴

The Didache has been an object of interest since the discovery of an almost complete text by Bishop Bryennios in 1873 (first published 1883), but opinions about its place in the scheme of things still differ. One focus of attention is the text's Gospel parallels, the strongest resemblances being chiefly to Matthew.²⁵ The question is whether these are intrinsic, in which case the Didache is post-Matthean and thus late; or interpolative, in which case the Didache or its earliest textual state is pre-Matthean and thus early.²⁶ I here seek to show, with special attention to the formal evidence, that the Matthean (and Lukan) elements are interpolative, and that the original Didache attests the earlier form of Christian belief and practice which I have above called Alpha, in contradistinction to the Beta or Resurrection Christianity preached by Paul.

The principal witness is the Bryennios manuscript, written in 1056. Other significant witnesses are the POxy

²³ I do not wish to imply that pre-Resurrection Christianity, here called Alpha, was itself uniform; there were undoubtedly many local variants and varieties. For example, a fairly coherent group, the Ebionites (seemingly, a Christian counterpart of the Essenes), shared many of the traits here mentioned, including the focus on the poor (whence the name) which is developed in Luke, but they also had some distinctive beliefs, and used their own texts, including a Gospel which was based on Matthew (Danielou **Theology** 55-64). That they used Matthew rather than Mark need occasion no surprise; beginning at some point not long after the destruction of Jerusalem, everybody, including Luke, was increasingly using Matthew; for its prominence, see Massaux 3/183-189. For another focus, see Pritz **Nazarene**.

²⁴ Like nearly all titles of ancient texts, the ones attached to the Bryennios manuscript were most likely labels meant to distinguish the text from others, and are thus not original. Of them, "The Teachings [ΔΙΔΑΧΗ] of the Twelve Apostles" is physically emphasized in the Bryennios manuscript (see the facsimile in Harris **Teaching**, Plate I), and is probably earlier; after it, and in the manuscript run together with the text proper, is "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles." This may come from a later time and reflect a later perception; I find nothing in the Didache itself which unambiguously suggests a limitation to Gentile converts or churches.

²⁵ Authorities differ as between reliance on common tradition and the unequivocal use of Matthew; in the end, one must use one's own judgement. I have consulted chiefly the Oxford Committee 1905, Massaux 1950, Kraft 1965, Köhler 1985 as appended to the 1990-1993 translation of Massaux, and Varner 2007. Discussion still continues, and the century update of the Oxford Committee study (Gregory **Reception**, 2005) still offers room for it. For a survey, with whose conclusion I cannot agree, see Tuckett **Synoptic**. I consider two instances to be unequivocal. Did 8:2, "And do not pray like the hypocrites, but like the Lord commanded in his gospel. Pray this way." There follows the Lord's Prayer in its Matthean, not its Lukan, version (see also Draper **Jesus** 279). Did 15:4, "And do your prayers and alms and all your actions (cf Mt 6:1-4, 5-15), as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord" (cf Mt 6:1-4, 5-15), confirms that the author of these passages regarded the Gospel of Matthew (not some more indefinite "gospel" teaching) *as authoritative for the Jesus tradition*. Then these verses of the Didache are unambiguously aware of Matthew in its Gospel form, not in some preliminary version that Matthew might have used the earlier Didache, or something having the same tendency, is not out of the question; see further below.

Did 1:5, "To everyone asking you for anything, give it and do not ask for it back." Here the text is closer to Lk 6:30 than to the parallel Mt 5:41, 40 (Varner **Way** 20). Then the Didache was aware of Luke as well as Matthew (the source for Did 1:4, immediately preceding), and thus aware of both the Second Tier Gospels, though regarding Matthew more highly.

A claim of contact with the Gospel of John (at Did 9:4) has been refuted by Vööbus **Regarding**. With respect to the Gospels, the Didache as we have it seems to occupy a position not unlike that of the Gospel of Thomas: some echoes of Mark (organic; see below), contact with Matthew and/or Luke, but none with John. The Luke > Thomas directionality has been convincingly argued most recently by Goodacre **Thomas**. The directionality of the Didache/Matthew parallels, and whether some form of the Didache existed before those contacts were made, is precisely the question explored in the present paper.

²⁶ With the third-text option I have dealt in the "Q" section of §1, above, by suggesting an alternative to "Q."

1782 fragments (late 4c), and a 5c Coptic fragment (Br Mus Or 9271) containing Did 10:3b-12:2a, probably an extract rather than part of a copy.²⁷ A version of the Two Ways portion also appears at the end of the Epistle of Barnabas, and the entire Didache is included in a comprehensive 4c Beta document, the Apostolic Constitutions.

The Didache consists of three readily distinguishable parts. The first is the Two Ways document, Didache 1-6:2, originally a separate tract,²⁸ of which a version is included in Barnabas 18-20. There are partial parallels in the vice lists of Romans 1:19-2:29 and Galatians 5:13-6:10, both of which have been challenged as interpolated in the respective Pauline letters.²⁹ The Two Ways tract functions as the ethical section of the Didache; it is addressed to ordinary believers: members rather than leaders of local churches. Comparison of the Bryennios and Barnabas versions permits recovery of their archetype: the passages common to both.

Next comes Did 6:3-12:1, with instructions for administering the sacraments and receiving apostolic visitors. This is the church order or liturgical section of the Didache; it is addressed to church leaders. Attention to the structural use of the itemization formula *perì dé* helps to distinguish an original core from later supplements.³⁰

Last is the Apocalypse, Did 16, the doctrinal section. Like the Two Ways, it is addressed to ordinary believers, and thus contrasts with the preceding material. Did 16 itself appears to be an integral production.

The Didache is incorporated whole into Apostolic Constitutions 7, but with orthodoxizing changes which introduce the Resurrection doctrine, and thus compromise its original Alpha character.³¹ ApCon 7/32:5f continue beyond the defective end of the Bryennios manuscript, and seem to preserve the material lost from that manuscript. These last verses I number as Didache 16:8-11.³²

²⁷ For details, see Niederwimmer 19-26. Some other relevant manuscripts will be mentioned below.

²⁸ The instructional part of the Two Ways seems to end with the list of evil deeds in 5:2, which concludes “May you be delivered, children, from all of these!” (tr Varner). Did 6:1, “See to it that no one leads you astray from this way of teaching, since he is teaching you apart from God,” refers instead to the whole of the Two Ways teaching, and, with 6:2, is probably a transition to the following church order section of the Didache. Compare the introductory phrase in Barn 18:1, “Let us now pass on to another kind of knowledge and instruction.” which seems to link the Two Ways tract to a text which had ended satisfactorily at Barn 17:2, “For if I should write you concerning things present or yet to come, you would not grasp them, because they are as yet hidden in parables. Let this, then, be enough” (tr Kleist). The implication of these bridging passages is that a Two Ways tract was appended to an already complete Epistle of Barnabas, and separately prefixed to the pre-existing liturgical portion of the Didache.

²⁹ For Romans 1:18-2:29 see Walker **Interpolations** 166-189; for Galatians 5:13-6:10 see O'Neill **Recovery** 65-71. I consider these arguments to be definitive.

³⁰ For details of this argument, see §4 below.

³¹ The lack of the Resurrection and associated doctrines in the Didache has been noticed. The concept of Jesus as redeeming others through his suffering can be connected to the Didache only by its use of the Greek word *παῖς*, considered as evoking the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 59:2-4 (Varner **Way** 94). There is no direct warrant *in the text* for that linkage.

³² I follow Aldridge **Lost**, except that with support from Boniface, which lacks it, and from Aldridge himself (**Lost** 10), who suspects that it “may be a later addition,” I regard the next verse, his Did 16:12, “And they shall rejoice in the Kingdom of God, *which is in Christ Jesus* (**Lost** 15), as a Beta addition in ApCon. The preceding Did 16:11, “to inherit those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, such things as God hath prepared for them that love him,” can be seen as drawing on 1 Cor 2:9, but that passage is itself an explicit quote, whose exact original is not to be found in the Septuagint. Opinions about its source vary. Moffatt, agreeing with Jerome, suggests a free rendition of Isaiah 64:4. Fitzmyer points to further possibilities, including an Apocryphon of Elijah (so Origen). It suffices for our purpose to say that Paul was quoting *some* text then current, whether freely or precisely, which may also have been available to the writer of this part of the Didache; it is not proved (but cf n99, below) that Didache is here derivative from 1 Corinthians. With Aldridge, then, but with the above qualification, the Didache originally ended in this way (Alpha tenets *emphasized*):

16:8. Then the world will see the Lord coming upon the clouds of Heaven, with the angels of his power, in the throne of his Kingdom,

This is the Didache text with which I will work. I now take up the three sections in turn, for closer examination, paying particular attention to possible interpolations.

3. The Two Ways: Didache 1-6:2

This is at bottom a list of good and evil deeds, plus the statement that the path of good deeds leads to Life, and the path of bad deeds leads to Death. It is clearly not the “faith” scenario preached by Paul in Romans; it is instead in the same category as the “works” scenario argued an Alpha document, the Epistle of James.³³

Barnabas. The Oxford Committee finds that Barnabas quotes or echoes Jewish scriptures, including noncanonical ones,³⁴ inexactly and sometimes in combination; the same applies to its use of canonical New Testament texts. On that understanding, Barnabas has sometimes striking resemblances to Romans among the genuine Paulines, and of the deuteroPaulines, to Ephesians, Hebrews, and the Pastorals. The case for knowledge of 1 Peter is considerable, but not for 2 Peter. There are possible links to Matthew among the Gospels.³⁵ This tends to locate Barnabas before 1 Clement (c96), and to identify it as aware of several deuteroPauline writings. Then authorship by Paul’s associate, Mark’s cousin Barnabas, is chronologically improbable, and the Epistle must instead by thought to be borrowing the established name of Barnabas.

Barnabas ends naturally at Barn 17 (“Let this, then, be enough”); the text is in effect reopened to include the Two Ways at 18:1 (“Let us now pass on to another kind of knowledge and instruction”). The 17-chapter text is attested in a 9c Latin manuscript at St Petersburg;³⁶ the Two Ways addendum is in place in both Sinaiticus (4c) and the Bryennios manuscript (copied in 1056). It seems clear that the Two Ways portion was added to an original 17-chapter Barnabas. The authorial stance of Barnabas should then be assessed from those 17 chapters.

Barnabas is structured like a Pauline church letter, and certainly has that model in mind, but despite its profession of warm regard, it has no discernible address, and was apparently intended as a general letter. The issue for Barnabas is the status of Jewish tradition and its appropriation by the Christians, and to this message it gives systematic attention. Whereas Hebrews as it were seeks to symbolically reinhabit Jewish sacrificial tradition from the inside, Barnabas rejects and interiorizes sacrifices (Barn 2) and fasts (3); it claims the Covenant for the Christians (4), explains the Atonement (5-8), and interiorizes circumcision (9) and food laws (10). It cites Scriptural predictions of baptism and explains the cross (11-12), and again claims the Covenant, this time specifically for the Gentiles (13). It allegorizes the Sabbath (14) and rejects other month and day

16:9. to condemn the Devil, the deceiver of the world, and to render to every one *according to his deeds*.

16:10. Then shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but *the righteous shall enter eternal life*,

16:11. to inherit those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, such things as God has prepared for them that love him (tr Aldridge).

This would seem to be a fittingly sonorous conclusion to the entire document, in its final form.

³³ For the sharp interchange between these two texts, see under “Luke” in §1, above.

³⁴ Kraft **Didache** 182-184 also notes many Barnabas quotes from now-unidentifiable Jewish writings.

³⁵ Kraft 181-185 sees a quotation (?) of Mt 22:14 in Barn 4:14b, and a “strong allusion” to Mt 26:31 par in Barn 5:12b.

³⁶ Lake **Apostolic** 1/338.

observances (15). It enjoins the building of a spiritual Temple for the Lord (16),³⁷ and concludes with a brief passage (17) saying that nothing has been omitted which is “necessary for salvation.” It is thus a complete presentation of the teachings that a Gospel might include, but not structured as a life of Jesus. The same might be said of Romans, the only genuine Pauline letter of which Barnabas is unquestionably aware. Doctrinally, Barnabas is a Beta document. Its allegorical style of argument, like that of Hebrews, is Alexandrian.

The Barnabas Two Ways. The version of the Two Ways which appears as Barnabas 18-20 includes one reference to the Atonement (19:2, “glorify him who ransomed you in death,” no parallel in the Didache version), presumably to adjust the Alpha stance of the Two Ways to the Beta position of the rest of Barnabas.³⁸ Its list of good and bad deeds is very different in sequence from that of the Didache Two Ways. Which is earlier?

Here are the two versions, with sequence numbers in each appended to the other:

Didache Two Ways 5:1	Barnabas Two Ways 20a-d
1. murders φόνοι (7)	1. idolatry είδωλολατρεία (6)
2. adulteries μοιχεΐαι (6)	2. audacity θρασύτης (20)
3. lusts επιθυμΐαι	3. pride of power ύψος δυνάμεως (~ 21)
4. fornications πορνείαι	4. hypocrisy ύπόκρισις (11)
5. thefts κλοπαΐ	5. double-heartedness διπλοκαρδΐα (12)
6. idolatries είδωλολατρείαι (1)	6. adultery μοιχεία (2)
7. feats of magic μαγεΐαι (15)	7. murder φόνος (1)
8. sorceries φαρμακΐαι (14)	8. robbery άρπαγή (9)
9. robberies άρπαγαΐ (8)	9. haughtiness ύπερηφανΐα (14)
10. perjuries ψευδομαρτυρΐαι	10. transgression παράβασις ³⁹
11. hypocrisies ύποκρίσεις (4)	11. fraud δόλος (13)
12. double-heartedness διπλοκαρδΐα (5)	12. malice κακΐα (15)
13. fraud δόλος (11)	13. willfulness αυθάδεια (16)
14. haughtiness ύπερηφανΐα (9)	14. sorcery φαρμακεία (8)
15. malice κακΐα (12)	15. magic μαγεΐα (7)
16. willfulness αυθάδεια (13)	16. covetousness πλεονεξΐα (17)
17. covetousness πλεονεξΐα (16)	17. lack of the fear of God αφοβΐα θεοϋ
18. foul speech αΐσχρολογία	
19. jealousy ζηλοτυπΐα	
20. audacity θρασύτης (2)	
21. pride ύψος (~ 3)	
22. boastfulness άλαζονεία	

³⁷ Barn 16:4-5 “owing to the war it [the Temple] was destroyed by the enemy” makes plain that Barnabas is post-70, which agrees with the evidence for relative date above cited. On the strength of 16:4b “at present even the servants of the enemy will build it up again” is taken by Harnack and others to refer to the period under Hadrian (c120) when the possibility of actually rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple under Roman auspices seemed to exist; Lightfoot **Apostolic** 241 argues otherwise. The present tense of the text is probably signaled by the Daniel 7:7f prophecy about ten kings subdued by one king (Barn 4:4); one opinion sees the tenth king as Vespasian (r69-79). Prophecy is perhaps by nature dark, to be made clear only in the event, and too much should not be built on these numbers, or possible numbers.

³⁸ A similar conclusion is reached in Draper **Riddle**.

³⁹ The term is Pauline (Gal 3:19; Rom 2:23, 4:15, 5:14) and deuteroPauline (1 Tim 2:14, Hb 9:15), which agrees with the Pauline focus of Barnabas, noted above.

The Barnabas list is evidently a simplification, rationalization, and revision of the Didache list:

- The three sexual offenses (Did #2-4) are subsumed under one (Barn #6)
- Thefts and robberies (Did #5, 9) are combined as one (Barn #8)
- Perjuries and fraud (Did #10, 13) are combined as one (Barn #11)
- Covetousness and jealousy (Did #17, 19) are combined as one (Barn #16)
- Foul talk and boastfulness (Did #18, 22) are omitted or subsumed as Transgression (Barn #10)

These statements are in the order of both the Didache and Barnabas lists. In addition:

- Idolatry (Did #6) is put first (Barn #1), and framed by the symmetrical Want of fear of God (Barn #17, last)

An orderly list is not usually disordered by a second user, and these rearrangements in Barnabas, which make for tidiness and are thus rational, are strong evidence for the order Didache > Barnabas. In addition, Rendel Harris has shown that the Didache version is based on a Jewish list of faults to be avoided or atoned (the Vidui prayer), 22 in number, each fault beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.⁴⁰ This abecedarius form (found also in the Psalms, and suggesting an origin in Jewish practice) is lost in Barnabas. Then the Didache list has been *twice* disordered in Barnabas. Again, the directionality seems to be Didache > Barnabas.⁴¹

The Didache version is also earlier than the Barnabas version in content. It is rooted, as is not consistently true of Barnabas, in law observance as the key to eternal life. This is what Mark, the earliest Gospel, reports Jesus as saying in Mk 10:19, when asked about “inheriting eternal life: “Thou knowest the commandments.”⁴² Jesus in Mark does not preach *himself*; he points to *the Law*, albeit in a simplified version, minus Pharisaic complications, and with the characteristic addition of “fraud.” It is characteristic of what I have above called Alpha Christianity. I see Barnabas as adapting an Alpha document to a Beta context.

The Archetype. If we compare the Didache and Barnabas versions as wholes, we find that certain parts of each version have no counterpart in the other. Rearrangement of material in Barnabas, as exemplified above, extends to mixing of material from one chapter to another, so that a full two-column comparison becomes hard to read.⁴³ The major sections of the Didache Two Ways which have no counterpart in Barnabas are the following:

- Did 1:2b-6. The so-called “sectio evangelica,” drawn almost entirely from Matthew and Luke, with verses also from Sirach and other texts.⁴⁴
 - Did 3:1-6, the “fence” passage,⁴⁵ warns of actions which, though not themselves sinful, may be the occasion of sin. It represents a Jewish development rather than a Synoptic extension of the original Two Ways.
 - Did 6:1-2. This ending to the Didache Two Ways is not found in Barnabas, which has its own

⁴⁰ Harris **Teaching** 82f.

⁴¹ Here as elsewhere in this paper, I consider the preceding argument to be definitive, and have chosen not to weary the reader by citing scholarship which, sometimes at book length, has reached a different conclusion.

⁴² For details of the Jesus commandments, see under “Paul” in §1, above.

⁴³ For a specimen, see Kraft 134-162.

⁴⁴ This section is also lacking in the Doctrina Apostolorum version. That it appears in the 4c POxy fragments merely shows that the fragments are later than the 1c formation period of the Didache, and in the specific textual tradition of the Didache version of the Two Ways.

⁴⁵ Kraft 146 quotes Pirke Abot 1:1 “Make a fence around the Torah.”

conclusion in Barn 21:1-9.⁴⁶

Certain passages in Barnabas, most conspicuously the Beta improvement in Barn 19:2a (2), “Glorify him who redeemed you from death,” are not in the Didache version, which is consistently Alpha in its theology.⁴⁷

Translation. I conclude this section with a translation of the Didache Two Ways,⁴⁸ eliminating the passages identified above as not attested by Barnabas, and indenting and italicizing one further passage which appears, like the above, to be a later Matthean improvement. Occasional comparison is made to Alpha texts such as the Epistle of James or the seemingly earlier strata of Mark, which share sufficient doctrinal and organizational features to be considered witnesses to the same kind of Christianity.

1:1. There are Two Ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways.

1:2a. On the one hand, then, the way of life is this: First, you love the God who made you.

2:1. And the second command of the Teaching:

2:2. You will not murder, you will not commit adultery, you will not corrupt children, you will not have illicit sex, you will not steal, you will not practice magic, you will not practice sorcery, you will not murder a child by means of abortion, nor kill one that has been born; you will not desire the things of your neighbor, [2:3] You will not swear falsely, you will not bear false witness, you will not speak evil of anyone, you will not hold grudges. [2:4] You will not be double-minded or double-tongued, for being double-tongued is a snare of death. [2:5] Your word will not be false or empty, but will be fulfilled in action. [2:6] You will not be covetous, nor greedy, nor a hypocrite, nor spiteful, nor arrogant.⁴⁹ You will not plot an evil plan against your neighbor. [2:7] You will not hate any one, but some you will reprove, and for others you will pray, and some you will love more than your soul.

3:7. But be meek,

since the meek will inherit the earth [Mt 5:5]

[3:8] become long-suffering, and merciful, and harmless, and gentle, and good, and one who trembles always at the words that you have heard.⁵⁰ [3:9] You will not exalt yourself, and you will not give boldness to your soul. Your soul will not be joined with the haughty, but with just and lowly people you will dwell.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Did 6:3 is sometimes included in this section; for reasons to be explained below, I regard it as the opening of the second main section of the Didache, none of which finds a place in Barnabas.

⁴⁷ “Ransom/redeem” appears in the Didache only at 4:6, where it refers to the individual’s good deeds counterweighting, or paying the price of, his evil deeds (for that process, see James 5:20 “cover a multitude of sins”). As the Didache Eucharist prayers show (Did 9:2 “revealed,” 9:3 “knowledge revealed,” 10:2 “knowledge revealed”) Jesus only gives *knowledge*, shows the way of salvation (Mk 12:14, “Way of God”). Consistently, Mk 10:19 shows Jesus in the very act of “showing the way.”

⁴⁸ Translation and some notes are drawn from Varner, revised as seems useful in light of the present discussion. The reader may wish to compare the reconstruction in van de Sandt and Flusser, *Didache* 120-130, which differs at several points. For Did 6:2-3, see their separate essay at 238-270.

⁴⁹ Compare Ex 20:13-17 (Varner).

⁵⁰ Compare Isaiah 66:2 (Varner).

⁵¹ Compare James 2:1, “My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons.” The egalitarianism of James is one of its salient traits. Economic egalitarianism in the early churches is depicted, in an obviously legendary way, by Luke in Acts 4:32-35. We here see the Didache reflecting a similar situation: it is the “justness”

3:10. You will accept the experiences that happen to you as good things,⁵² knowing that apart from God, nothing happens.⁵³

4:1. My child, the one speaking to you the word of God you will remember night and day,⁵⁴ and you will honor him as the Lord. [4:2] And you will seek every day the presence of the saints in order that you may find support in their words. [4:3] You will not cause division, and you will reconcile those who quarrel; you will judge justly, you will not show favoritism when you reprove others for their failings.⁵⁵

4:4. You will not become double-minded, whether it will be or not.⁵⁶

4:5. Do not become one who, on the one hand, stretches out your hands to receive, or on the other hand, draws them back from giving. [4:6] If you should have something through the work of your hands, you will give it as a ransom for your sins.⁵⁷ [4:7] You will not hesitate to give, nor will you grumble when you give, for you know who will be the good paymaster of your reward. [4:8] You will not turn away the one in need, but you will share together all things with your brother, and you will not say that such things are your own, for if you are partners in what is immortal, how much more in mortal things?

4:9. You will not take away your hand from your son or from your daughter, but from youth you will teach them the fear of God.⁵⁸ [4:10] You will not command your male or female slave, who are hoping in the same God, in your bitterness, lest they should never fear the God who is over you both; for He does not come to call [to salvation] according to social status, but those whom the Spirit has prepared. [4:11] And you slaves, will be subject to your masters as to the image of God in shame and fear.⁵⁹

4:12. You will hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord. [4:13] Never forsake the commandments of the Lord, but you will guard the things that you have received, neither adding nor subtracting anything.⁶⁰

4:14. In church you will confess your wrongdoings, and you will not go to your place of prayer with an evil

of the community that enables it to be viable, although “lowly.”

⁵² Compare James 1:2 “Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations.”

⁵³ Compare James 1:13, “Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man.”

⁵⁴ Varner notes the similarity to Hb 13:7

⁵⁵ In the primitive Christian community, each member is in principle liable to judge others. The function of judge has not yet been assigned to a permanent leader.

⁵⁶ Compare Mk 11:23, “. . . and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it.” Sincerity of belief is the requirement for any result of prayer. So also James 1:6-7, “But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting, . . . For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

⁵⁷ This is the only appearance of “ransom” in the text. Notice that it is not Jesus who ransoms sinners by his death, but the individual who ransoms himself from his sins by doing balancing good deeds. See James 5:19-20 (“My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins”), the final passage in that text.

⁵⁸ This clause corresponds to Barn 19:5d; it may have inspired “lack of the fear of God” at Barn 20:1d (#17 on that list).

⁵⁹ Did 4:10-11 are somewhat reminiscent of Col 3:22-4:1 (and its later duplicate, Eph 6:5-9). Those who have felt that the Didache is a 2nd century text naturally conclude that Didache is the borrower, but it may also be that the widely circulated Didache influenced those who composed some of the deuteroPauline material. I tentatively retain Did 4:10f as original.

⁶⁰ Varner cites Deut 4:2 or 12:32.

conscience. This is the Way of Life!

5:1. The Way of Death, on the other hand, is this.

First of all, it is evil and full of accursedness:⁶¹

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. murders, 2. adulteries, 3. lusts, 4. fornications, 5. thefts, 6. idolatries, 7. feats of magic, 8. sorceries, 9. robberies, 10. perjuries, 11. hypocrisies, 12. double-heartedness, 13. fraud, 14. arrogance, 15. malice, 16. willfulness, 17. covetousness, 18. foul speech, 19. jealousy, 20. audacity, 21. pride, 22. boastfulness. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5:2. B1. persecutors of the good,⁶² B2. hating truth, B3. loving a lie, B4. not knowing the wages of righteousness, B5. not cleaving to the good, B6. nor to just judgement, B7. those who are alert not for good but for evil, B8. far from being gentle and patient, B9. loving empty things, B10. pursuing retribution, B11. not showing mercy to the poor,⁶³ B12. not working for the oppressed, B13. not knowing the One who made them,⁶⁴ B14. murderers of children, B15. destroyers of what God has formed, B16. turning away from one in need, B17. oppressing the afflicted, B18. advocates of the rich, B19. unjust judges of the poor, B20. totally sinful |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

6:1. *See to it that no one leads you astray from this way of teaching,
since he is teaching you apart from God.*

6:2. *For, on the one hand, if you are able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect,
but if, on the other hand, you are not able, that which you are able, do this.*⁶⁵

These transitional passages, Did 6:1-2, are not original to the Two Ways; they serve as a transition to the following section of the Didache ("Teaching"). They were written at the time when the Two Ways was added, and are not part of the Matthean interpolation layer, which on other evidence comes later.

The Two Ways are in effect a Way of Death warning, elaborated in several ways but remaining essentially a list of things not to do (the prescriptions of the Way of Life is also largely negative). The added Matthean layer provided more positive maxims, for the Didache as a whole and also for the Two Ways as its first section. This

⁶¹ This is the original Atonement Prayer list, repeated from the above discussion.

⁶² I follow Varner in arranging Did 5:2 as a B list, parallel to that of 5:1. In the pre-Didache evolution of the Two Ways, it is the final rewrite of the original 22-item list. It repeats material from previous passages, and even repeats itself.

⁶³ The enmity of rich and poor is a major theme in James.

⁶⁴ This echoes Did 1:2a, and incidentally confirms that passage as integral in the original Didache.

⁶⁵ The "what you are able" motif is like that of the first passage in the Didache proper (Did 6:3), and at the time of its interpolation, Did 6:2 may have imitated that passage.

positive tone was one of the great merits of Matthew as an authority text.

4. The Original Church Order Document: Didache 6:3-12:1

Form. Within the middle part of the Didache, Did 6:3-12:1 is distinguished by the use of the itemization idiom *perì dé* (“as for; now concerning”).⁶⁶ The first such passage, the single verse 6:3, deals with questions of permissible food. It makes an abrupt beginning for the text, if this was indeed the oldest section of the Didache, but it is reasonable to assume that, as with the sections so marked in 1 Corinthians, the ruling dealt with a question concerning which uncertainty already existed in the Didache churches; the context is thus supplied by the concern.⁶⁷ The last *perì dé* passage begins at Did 11:3 (“Now concerning apostles and prophets”), but where does it end? I suggest that the key discontinuity is the forbidding of long-term residence in Did 11:5 (“But if ever he should remain three [days], he is a false prophet”) but allowed in Did 12:3 (“If, on the other hand, he wishes to settle down among you”), which in turn is linked by idiom to 12:2 (“If, on the one hand”), which repeats the substance of 11:5 as a preface to discussing the exception. The original “apostles” guideline then seems to end at 12:1, which has a summative function (“and everyone coming in the name of the Lord . . .”).⁶⁸

There are several points at which Matthean parallels occur. Most of them can be excised without damage to local continuity; these are italicized and indented on the right. A few (discussed in the notes) are more difficult. Some are indeed difficult, and it is not supposed that the last word has here been said on any of them.

Translation. The format of the preceding section is also followed here. The sections beginning with the structural marked *perì dé* are printed in **bold**.

FOOD

6:3. **Concerning Food**, bear that which you are able, but from the food sacrificed to idols, especially keep away, for it is the worship of dead gods.

BAPTISM

7:1. **Concerning Baptism**,⁶⁹ baptize this way. After you have said all these things beforehand, immerse in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit⁷⁰ in flowing water. [7:2] But if you⁷¹ do not have

⁶⁶ *Perì dé* is used as an organizing principle also in 1 Cor 7:1 (introducing the topic of marriage), 7:25 (the unmarried), 8:1 (food offered to idols), 12:1 (spiritual gifts), 16:1 (the collection for Jerusalem), and 16:12 (the visit of Apollos). Some have thought that, as is the case here (1 Cor 7:1, “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote”), *perì dé* occurs only in response to questions raised in a previous letter. Mitchell **Concerning** has shown that instead, *perì dé* in Greek generally is “simply a topic marker, a shorthand way of introducing the next subject of discussion (p234). It is not limited to a subject previously mentioned; rather, it introduces “a new topic, the only requirement of which is that it is readily known to both writer and reader” (p236). Mitchell mentions the Didache at p251 n98, but without discussion. The general usage she describes will serve for *perì dé* in the Didache, but without excluding the possibility, indeed, the likelihood, that authoritative guidance on these subjects, the “difficult cases” under law or custom, was much desired by the leaders of the various early Alpha churches.

⁶⁷ Note that one of the *perì dé* sections in 1 Corinthians also deals with food offered to idols. For considerations of date, see §8 below.

⁶⁸ See Jefford and Patterson **Note** for an argument, based on the Coptic text, that the Didache ended at 12:2a, and compare Jones and Mirecki **Considerations**.

⁶⁹ As in 1 Peter, which with Beare and others I regard as in origin a baptismal homily, the Christian life begins with baptism, considered not only as a symbolic purification (the tradition of John the Baptist) but also as a rite of Christian entry. It is thus entirely appropriate as the first part of this section of the Didache, which gives instruction to local church leaders.

⁷⁰ This formula, which also appears at Mt 28:19, need not imply a Trinitarian theology in the later sense. Its origin even in

flowing water, immerse in another water, and if you are not able to do so in cold, in warm; [7:3] and if you should have neither, pour out water on the head three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[FASTS]⁷²

7:4. And prior to the baptism, let the one baptizing fast, also the one being baptized, and if any others are able to do so;⁷³ and order the one being baptized to fast one or two [days] before.

8:1. *Rules on Fasting [cf Mt 6:16]*⁷⁴

[PRAYER]

8:2-3. *Rules on Prayer [Mt 6:9-13]*⁷⁵

THE EUCHARIST

9:1. **Now concerning** the thanksgiving meal, give thanks this way. [9:2] First, concerning the cup: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of your servant David, which you revealed to us through your servant Jesus.⁷⁶ To you is the glory forever.” [9:3] And concerning the broken bread: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you revealed to us through your servant Jesus. To you is the glory forever.” [9:4] “Just as this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, and was gathered together and became one,⁷⁷ In this way may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom. Because yours is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ forever.”

9:5. And let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving meal except those baptized in the name of the Lord.

For also the Lord has said concerning this: “Do not give what is holy to the dogs” [Mt 7:6]⁷⁸

10:1. And after being filled, give thanks in this way: [10:2] “We give you thanks, holy Father, for your holy name, which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you revealed to us through your servant Jesus. To you is the glory forever.” [10:3] “You, almighty Master, created all

Matthew has been much discussed, and remains unsolved. It is not firmly situated in Matthew, and I here take it as an early formula used by the Didache writer, and also, separately and later, by Matthew. Father, Son, and Spirit all play a role in the Didache scheme of things, as a reading of the whole text will reveal, and the formula is thus not locally anomalous.

⁷¹ The “you” in Did 7:1 is singular; in 7:2-4 it is plural. This has been thought to imply a complex history of the Didache baptismal advice (see Garrow **Dependence** 94f, with reconstruction). It is possible that the difference can be otherwise accounted for, but the matter cannot be pursued in the space here available.

⁷² There was no original Didache topic for fasts, as is indicated by the brackets around this heading. The rule on fasting before baptism was simply part of the instructions for baptism; it was thus included under the baptism topic.

⁷³ Note the recurrent motif of permissible relaxation of a known ideal procedure, which pervades this part of the text.

⁷⁴ When the Matthean material was added, this was the obvious place to include a note in fixed fast days (envisioned, but as an institution of the later church, in Mk 2:18-21; the Didache inhabits the situation predicted by that passage). At that point in the history of the text, there was created an implicit “Fasts” topic, though without the *perì dé* marker. The disuse of that marker perhaps suggests that the person in charge of the Didache at the end was not the same as the one who had been in charge at the beginning. Apart from its use of Matthew rather than Luke (in all probability the later version), the Did 8:3 prescription of thrice daily prayer seems also late; for a comparison with the Jewish Eighteen Benedictions, see Bahr **Use**.

⁷⁵ Fasting suggests prayer, and an implicit section on prayer was created at the same time the preceding note was added (the prayer in question is the Lord’s Prayer in its Matthean version), thus creating the two bracketed topics shown above. For another argument concerning the interruptive nature of Did 8, see Draper **Christian Self-Definition**.

⁷⁶ This passage, with its nonmention of the blood of Jesus, is crucial for the present argument; see n6 and n7, above.

⁷⁷ The comparison is enigmatic, but the ingathering of the saved at the Last Day is present already in Mk 13:27.

⁷⁸ A not wholly appropriate later insertion of a striking Matthean phrase.

things for the sake of your name, Both food and drink you have given to people for enjoyment, in order that they might give thanks. But to us you have graciously bestowed spiritual food and drink and eternal life through your servant." [10:4] "Before all things, we give you thanks because you are powerful; to you is the glory forever."

10:5. "Remember, Lord, your church, to save her from every evil, and to perfect her in your love, and to gather her together from the four winds,⁷⁹ the sanctified into your Kingdom which you prepared for her; Because yours is the power and the glory forever."

10:6. "May grace come, and may this world pass away! Hosanna to the God of David!"⁸⁰ "If anyone is holy, let him come! If anyone is not, let him repent! Come, Lord! Amen!"⁸¹

10:7. But allow the prophets to give thanks as much as they wish.⁸²

11:1. Therefore, whoever teaches you all these things said previously, receive him. [11:2] If, on the other hand, the one teaching, if he has been turned, and should teach another doctrine for the destroying [of these things], do not listen to him. But if it is for the bringing of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord!

VISITING APOSTLES

11:3. **Now concerning** the apostles and prophets in accord with the decree of the gospel,⁸³ act thus:

11:4. Every apostle coming to you, let him be received as the Lord, [11:5] but he will not remain except for one day, and if there is need, also another, but if ever he should remain three, he is a false prophet. [11:6] And when he departs, let the apostle take nothing except bread [that he needs] until he is [next] lodged. If, however, he asks for money, he is a false prophet.⁸⁴

11:7. And every prophet speaking in the Spirit you should not test or judge, for every sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven.⁸⁵ [11:8] But not everyone speaking in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he has the behavior of the Lord. Therefore, from their behavior will be known the false prophet and the prophet.

11:9. And every prophet ordering a table in the Spirit, will not eat from it; but if he does, he is a false prophet. [11:10] and every prophet teaching the truth, if he does not do what he preaches, he is a false prophet. [11:11] And every prophet who has been put to the test and is genuine, and who acts for the earthly mystery of the

⁷⁹ This is usually referred to Mt 24:31, but the "four winds" of Mk 13:27 will suffice.

⁸⁰ The unmistakable Davidic strand in Mark's account of Jesus (eg Mk 2:25, 10:47f, 11:10, 12:35-27) is troubling for later exegesis; it is the more remarkable (and perhaps a sign of early date) to find it preserved intact, here and at Did 9:2.

⁸¹ "Come, Lord" translates the Aramaic ejaculation prayer Maranatha. Paul in 1 Cor 16 :22 has just cursed [anathema] Alphas of Corinth, who do not, in his specific sense "love the Lord." Paul's sense of "Maranatha" (16:23) is, "Let the Lord indeed come, and judge all, and condemn you for your errors." The prayer appears in Greek translated form in Rev 22:20.

⁸² The new fixed forms prescribed by the Didache are not meant to inhibit the older way, which presumably featured prayer or prophecy by inspired individuals, as we know was the practice also in the churches of Paul.

⁸³ Not here a written text, but the teaching as apostolically preached. So also in Mk 1:14f, 10:29, 13:10, 14:9.

⁸⁴ That apostles are not to carry money, but to rely exclusively on local hospitality, is laid down in Mk 6:8.

⁸⁵ The unforgivability of the sin of denying the presence of the Spirit is established in Mk 3:29. The wording of Mt 0:00 is closer to that of the Didache, which may mark this as after all an interpolation. It also might indicate Matthew's knowledge of the Didache. If two texts, A and B, are literarily related, and A is a growth text whose timespan includes the date of B, then we have a situation where A is both earlier and later than B. Seeming borrowings in both directions then become possible, and the present argument is not entirely incompatible with that of Garrow, who sees a uniform Didache > Matthew directionality.

church, but not teaching to do what he himself does, he shall not be judged by you, for he has his judgement from God, for so the ancient prophets also acted.

11:12. But whoever should say in the Spirit, "Give me silver" or any other thing, you will not listen to him. But if he should say to give to others in need, let no one judge him.

12:1. And everyone coming in the name of the Lord, let him be received, and then, having put him to the test, you will know, for you will have understanding of right and left.

5. The Extension: Didache 12:2-15:4

As above mentioned, we here enter an area which is not formally organized in *perì dé* sections, and which, substantively, goes beyond the original apostolic-visit guidelines to include options previously undiscussed. What is happening here historically? The system of itinerant teachers undoubtedly obtained from the beginning, whereas we first hear of the resident-apostle variant in the mid 50's. Paul in 1 Cor 9:3-15 makes much of his supporting himself while at Corinth for an extended period, though claiming a right to support if he had asked for it; cf 1 Cor 12:28-31. The Didache text is thus moving into new territory: territory partly witnessed by Paul.

Translation. The format of the preceding section is retained.

[THE RESIDENT APOSTLE]⁸⁶

12:2. If, on the one hand, the one coming is passing through, help him as much as you are able. He will not remain, however, among you except for two or three days, if there should be a need. [12:3] If, on the other hand, he wishes to settle down among you, and if he is a craftsman, let him work and let him eat.⁸⁷ [12:4] If, on the other hand, he does not have a craft, according to your own understanding, plan beforehand how he will live among you as a Christian, without being idle. [12:5] If, on the other hand, he does not wish to behave in this way, he is a Christ-peddler. Beware of such ones!

13:1. And every genuine prophet wishing to settle down among you is worthy of his food.

Likewise, a genuine teacher is worthy, just as the laborer, of his food [Mt 10:10]⁸⁸

[13:3] So you shall take every first fruits of the produce from the wine vat and threshing floor, of both cattle and sheep, and you will give the first fruits to the prophets, for they themselves are your high priests. [13:4] But if

⁸⁶ I do not see this as a section subsequent to the previous instructions for apostles, and thus dealing with another topic such as ordinary Christian travelers (note the reference to "every genuine prophet," seeming to pick up the ending of the previous section, and the general conformity to the Apostolic instructions in Mark). Given further the witness of Paul, noted below, I feel that this material was added precisely to deal with the new situation of prophets taking root in the communities they visited. I do not assume that there were at any one time only twelve apostles, and regard this as a formalism, though it probably has a real history behind it (see Brooks **Secret**).

⁸⁷ One senses here the barely self-sufficient community, which must be continually watchful of its collective resources. Compare Paul in 1 Cor 9:4-14 (mid 50's), who ends by claiming the apostles' right to "get their living by the Gospel." If the chronology here suggested is correct, Did 12:2 is more or less contemporary with 1 Cor 9:4-14; that is, in the mid 50's. As other statements in this part of the Didache show, and as Paul implies, these questions of support were delicate.

⁸⁸ The intruded Matthean quote merely echoes the previous line, which probably uses a common saying. The interpolator here seems to be trying to give his production a gloss of support from the widely known and respected Matthew.

you do not have a prophet, give it to the poor. [13:5] But if you should make bread, take the first fruits, and give according to the commandment. [13:6] Similarly, when you open a jar of wine or oil, take the first fruits, and give it to the prophets. [13:7] And of silver and of clothing and of every possession, take the first fruits, as it seems good to you, and give according to the commandment.

[A CEREMONY OF RECONCILIATION]

14:1. And on the Lord's Day of the Lord,⁸⁹ when you are gathered together, break bread and give thanks, having before confessed your failings, so that your sacrifice may be pure. [14:2] However, let no one having a conflict with his comrade come together with you, until they have been reconciled,

in order that your sacrifice may not be defiled [Mt 5:23-24]⁹⁰

[14:3] For this [sacrifice] is that which was spoken by the Lord: "In every place and time, offer to me a pure sacrifice, because I am a great King," says the Lord, "and my name will be wondrous among the Gentiles" [Mal 1:11, 14]⁹¹

[APPOINTED LOCAL AUTHORITIES]⁹²

15:1. Appoint then, for yourselves, overseers and deacons worthy of the Lord:⁹³ gentle men, and not money lovers, and truthful and tested, for they likewise conduct among you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. [15:2] Do not then look down upon them, for they themselves are your honored ones, along with the prophets and teachers.

[INTERNAL DISCIPLINE]

15:3. And correct one another, not in anger but in peace.

As you have it in the Gospel [Mt 18:15-18]⁹⁴

And to everyone wronging another, let no one speak to him, nor let anyone hear from you about him, until he repents.

*15:4. And do your prayers and alms and all your actions
as you have it from the Gospel of our Lord* [Mt 6:1-4, 5-15]⁹⁵

Didache 15 ends with a clear reference to the Gospel of Matthew, for "your prayers and alms and all your

⁸⁹ This curious locution is convincingly explained by Tidwell **Didache XIV:1** (1999), who relates it to Hebrew superlatives on the order of "Sabbath of Sabbaths," and to a Christian version of the annual Yom Kippur observance, which emphasized reconciliation with others, and does Did 14:2.

⁹⁰ The Matthean quote in 14:2b merely underlines what was already complete in 14:1.

⁹¹ Notice the recurring echoes of Malachi in the Didache, and recall the frequent echoes of Malachi in Mark.

⁹² That this topic exists at all is a sign that we (and whoever was in charge of putting the Didache and keeping it current) have now left the Apostolic period, and entered the age of independent local churches.

⁹³ Compare Philippians 1:1 for the existence of these functionaries, and 1 Tim 3:2-10 for most of the qualifications here listed. Did 15:1 is perhaps less likely to be quoting the deuteroPauline texts than relying on qualifications generally accepted at the time. It is wrong to imagine that the producers of early Christian texts knew nothing more about Christianity than they, or we, can read in other early Christian texts.

⁹⁴ Another merely decorative quote from Matthew. The wording in 2 Tim 2:25 is actually closer.

⁹⁵ This Matthean ending, however, was constitutive: it apparently intended to invoke the authority of Matthew generally, or to proclaim the consistency of the Didache with Matthew, for all the preceding instructions.

actions," these being specified in Mt 6:5-13 (prayers) and 6:2-4 (alms). Since this has no relation to the immediately preceding text, and is probably meant as a concluding command, it should be regarded as another Matthean addition to the text. Its summary directions, referring to Matthew for specifics, probably at one point marked the end of the Didache. Then not even Didache 15 can be said to be a composition of the time of Matthew; it is a pre-Matthean composition to which a concluding Matthean touch was later added. I may add that it is noteworthy that some of the small interpolations proposed above begin with a subordinating introductory word: "for, likewise, however." This is a not unreasonable way of appending a comment to a previously existing statement.

6. The Concluding Apocalypse: Didache 16:1-11

This final chapter departs from the rest of the text in prescribing neither ceremonial behavior (Didache 6:3-12:1), nor institutional structures (Didache 12-15), nor yet rules of personal conduct (The Two Ways, now Didache 1-6:2), but in spelling out in detail a cardinal point of belief: the expectation of the Last Days. Joseph Verheyden, rightly in my opinion, has argued for the Matthean character of this final chapter.⁹⁶ In Did 16, as is not the case with the preceding material, the Matthean matter cannot be excised as interpolations, leaving a coherent text behind.

Translation. Since the Matthean passages are integral in this final Apocalypse, they will here be identified but not separated from the rest of the text.

16:1. Be watchful over your life, do not let your lamps be quenched, and do not let your waists be ungirded [Mt 25:8?], but be prepared, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord is coming [Mt 24:42].

16:2. And frequently be gathered together, seeking what is appropriate for your souls, for the whole time of your faith will not benefit you unless you are perfected in the End Time. [16:3] For, in the last days, the false prophets and corrupters will be multiplied, and the sheep will be turned into wolves, and the love will be turned into hatred. [Mt 24:10]. [16:4]. For, when lawlessness increases, they will hate each other and they will persecute and they will betray each other [Mt 24:12]. And then will appear the world-deceiver as a Son of God, and he will do signs and wonders [Mt 24:24], and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will do unlawful things that never have happened from eternity.

16:5. Then the human creation will come into the fiery test, and many will be led into sin and will perish, but the ones remaining firm in their faith will be saved [Mt 24:10, 13] by the curse itself.⁹⁷

16:6. And then the signs of the truth will appear [cf Mt 24:30]: first, a sign of an opening in Heaven, then a sign of a trumpet sound [Mt 24:30; 1 Thess 4:16], and the third, a resurrection of the dead, [16:7] but not all, but

⁹⁶ See Verheyden *Eschatology* 214-215.

⁹⁷ "By the curse itself," in that temptation is the opportunity to demonstrate steadfastness. See again James 1:2-4, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations. [3] Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. [4] And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." It may have been in part on some such reasoning that the Christians of the late 1st century and afterward came to seek martyrdom, not to avoid it.

as it was said, “The Lord will come and all he holy ones with him” [Zech 14:5; 1 Thess 3:13].

16:8. Then the world will see the Lord coming atop the clouds of Heaven [Mt 24:30, 26:64, Dan 7:13],⁹⁸ / with the angels of his power, in the throne of his Kingdom, [16:9] to condemn the Devil, the deceiver of the world, and to render to every one according to his deeds, [16:10] Then shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous shall enter eternal life, [16:11] to inherit those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, such things as God has prepared for them that love him.⁹⁹

7. The Completion Date of the Didache

Unlike other parts of the text in which Matthean touches are merely supplemental and can be construed as latter decorative additions, Did 16 would appear to have been composed with full knowledge of Matthew. To the time of its composition we may also reasonably assign the Matthean additions to the earlier material: self-interpolations designed to give the entire text something of the authority of Matthew.¹⁰⁰ The Apocalypse itself represents a new venture: it adds a doctrinal section to the Didache, giving it representation in all the categories of teaching which Matthew itself provides, though of course in different proportions. It lets the Didache function like something of a Gospel on its own, a complete guide to Christian behavior, administration, and hopes. This would be not unlike the Epistle of Barnabas, which though it assumes the form of an epistle, openly claims to provide everything “bearing on salvation” (17:1). These similarities, these novel intentions of completeness, in a context in which Matthew had begun to assume the pre-eminent place in Christian thinking which the work of Massaux has shown it to have occupied, would seem to suggest, for this final formative impulse of the Didache group, a date somewhere between 1 Peter (of which it is aware) and 1 Clement (c96).

8. The Beginning Date of the Didache

The preceding argument has have arrived at the following stages in the evolution of the Didache:

- The original liturgical handbook, Did 6:3-12:1, circularized to the Alpha churches at large.
- The addition of an ethical or Two Ways section, Did 1:1-6:1, with a new transition at 6:1-2
- The original handbook was kept current with post-Apostolic times by adding 12:2-15:3
- It made itself into a more complete guide to Christian life and expectation by adding an Apocalypse,

⁹⁸ From this point on, the defective end of the Bryennios manuscript is supplied, following Aldridge, from ApCon and Boniface. See n33 above.

⁹⁹ It may now be possible to reconsider the decision reached in n32 about the possibility of indebtedness of this passage to 1 Cor 2:9. Whatever Paul’s source may have been, the possible awareness of 1 Thess in Did 16:7 strengthens the case for 1 Cor as a source in this part of the Didache. A text which knows Matthew is chronologically well situated to know the genuine Paulines as well. For the deuteroPaulines, see further below. Directionality problems which are difficult in the absence of relative dates may become clarified as information about relative dates accumulates. It is also important to remember that not all of the Didache has the same date of composition.

¹⁰⁰ For self-interpolation in the earlier parts of a growth text, in order to keep it compatible with material added at a later stage, see Brooks **Analects** (for the Analects of Confucius) and Brooks **Nature** (for the Mencius). For the interpretation of Did 16 and the interpolated Two Ways passage Did 1:3b-2:1 (the so-called *sectio evangelica*) as belonging to the same textual layer, see Jefford **Jesus** 113f.

Did 16, derived from Matthew. At the same time, Matthean passages were added to the earlier parts of the text, to enhance its authority in a period when Matthew was rapidly gaining acceptance as *the* authority.

If the end of this process was reached somewhere around the year 90, where did it begin? Our best guess will come from analysis of its formation process, in which the liturgical section 6:3-12:1 turns out to be the earliest. It was above suggested that Did 6:2 (“if you are able to bear the whole yoke”) had in view the whole of the ethical injunctions in the preceding Two Ways (not the whole of the Jewish Torah),¹⁰¹ but that it also imitated the adjacent and original passage 6:3 (“bear that which you are able”). We may now notice this sense of permissible retreat from a perhaps unattainable ideal runs through the following sections as well:

- Baptism: “but if you do not have flowing water” (Did 7:2)
- Fasting Before Baptism: “and if any others are able to do so” (Did 7:4)
- Praise after Eucharist: “but allow the prophets to give thanks as much as they want”
- Acceptance of Apostles: “but if, on the other hand, the one teaching; if he has been turned”
- Duration of Apostolic Visit: “But if ever he should remain three [days]”

That is, every major area for which the earliest Didache prescribes has its qualifications, its accounting for exceptions, and its tolerance of special situations. The impression one gets is that the first recipients of this document (which was presumably recirculated in revised versions, over time) knew early versions of these things: Johannine running-water baptism, a simple Eucharist, the routine with itinerant apostles which is symbolized in Mark. But they needed guidance for the exceptional and the unexpected cases, and it seems to be just this sort of guidance that the first form of the Didache was designed to provide.

Which of these areas first experienced growth beyond what might have been primitive practice in the early Jesus movement? On present knowledge, it is difficult to say. But we seem to be informed from two sources (the angry Paul in Galatians, and with equal caution, the revisionist Luke in Acts) that the issue of acceptable food came up for central decision somewhere around 44, and that it was decided in somewhat the way that Did 6:3 says. That part of the Didache might then have been functional, as conveying a new ruling to all the Alpha churches, in c45. The first extensions of Apostolic privilege, however, are not reflected until the letters of Paul, specifically until c55, about a decade later. The evolution toward increasing local control, which is seemingly the burden of what I have called the Didache Extension, seems to have continued in ways that are also attested in the post-Pauline Pastorals, which must be dated somewhat later than Paul’s death in c60,¹⁰² and perhaps also later than the death of Peter, the last of the major Apostles, in c64.

¹⁰¹ The few and elemental commandments of Jesus, as James 2:10 points out, must all be kept (“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all”); his examples are adultery and murder. But the much longer Two Ways list contains some lesser offenses, such as arrogance (5:1 #14) and boastfulness (#22), which might be considered tolerable in an otherwise perfect person. It is in this context that the extenuations of Did 6:2-3 seem to make maximum sense.

¹⁰² Or 62; another tradition is that Paul perished with Peter in the first year of the Neronian persecution. The present argument is not affected by these alternatives: what might be called the major Apostolic period ended in c64. It cannot be said that there is a consensus about the date of the Pastorals. I regard the evidence of Gnosticism as indecisive (that tendency can probably be attested earlier than the end of the 1st century, when a more organized Gnosticism existed). Easton **Pastoral** 9f suggests a date shortly after the death of Paul.

The final increment of the Didache, as was argued above, was from later in the century, perhaps somewhat before c90. If so, then the entire growth process of the Didache, from inception to completion as a complete guide to Christian belief and practice, may have comprised about 45 years, from c45 to c90, or from a time roughly contemporary with the completion of Mark to the period of the wide acceptance of Matthew.

45 years is as long a span as one can reasonably attribute to a single person in charge of a text. It is perhaps more likely that the continuity of the Didache was not personal but institutional: that it is the product of some sort of central authority whose business it was to coordinate Apostolic activity, and to give approved and standard advice to the local churches founded and at intervals refreshed by Apostolic travels. If so, the addition of the Didache 16 Apocalypse may well have been the work of a second text proprietor, in succession to the first.¹⁰³

The first location of such an authority will probably have been in Galilee, where Mark shows the Jesus movement as centered.¹⁰⁴ At least some major figures and functions seem to have moved to Jerusalem early in the movement's history.¹⁰⁵ Both Galilee and Jerusalem, though in different ways, were sacred to Jesus history, and from either, the Didache would have been well positioned to have a widespread influence. Egypt and Syria have been proposed for its place of composition, but the Didache was probably not written for one church, but in principle for all churches. Given its continued prominence as the ancestor of more than one later church order document, it must from the beginning have carried considerable authority. As between Capernaum and Jerusalem, the Alpha character of Didache theology suggests the former (Jerusalem, as the *site* of Jesus' death, is more likely to have accepted the Beta soteriology *based* on Jesus' death). The Galilee alternative may also better account for the continuation of the Didache, and thus of whatever agency produced it, after the year 70.¹⁰⁶

9. Final Considerations

The original Didache was a liturgical reference, meant for the guidance of those in charge of textually fixed observances. In what might have been a second phase, it was extended by adding personal guidance material (the Two Ways) and guidance for new developments: salaried teachers and elected leaders (the Extension), the latter reflecting the waning of itinerant or apostolic authority and the beginning of local authority. A similar transition occurs between the Paul of the genuine epistles and the churches of the post-Pauline Pastoral Epistles. In what might have been a third phase, the text was further supplemented by interpolated material from Matthew, which our text calls "the Gospel," and a Matthean-based Apocalypse was added at the end, perhaps to let the Didache function as something like a complete Gospel, in competition with the other authority texts of the time.

Interest naturally attaches to the earliest form of any growth text, but I wish to conclude by urging that *all* of a growth text is interesting; the whole extent of the text directly shows the passage of time, and reflects events

¹⁰³ Compare n74 above.

¹⁰⁴ The shift to Jerusalem is increasingly emphasized in the later Gospels (Brooks **Trajectories** 172), which only underlines the importance of the earliest testimony, which is that of Mark among the Gospels.

¹⁰⁵ See Brooks **Secret**.

¹⁰⁶ The prominence of Sepphoris in Galilee, the former capital of Herod Antipas, as a center of later Jewish learning may also be relevant; Sepphoris had remained pro-Roman during the First Jewish War.

occurring during that period of time; it is an invaluable witness to the happening of history. In the case of the Didache, I believe we see a text with its roots firmly in the soil of Alpha Christianity, during the age of the itinerant apostle, slowly expanding to annex the function of moral instruction (the Two Ways); then gradually accommodating changes which occurred within the Apostolic period, as well as those that immediately followed it; and finally accepting the prominence of Matthew and of the Second Tier Gospels generally, and attempting to remain valid in an age when those Gospels had transformed the context and practice of Christian edification.

The heritage of the Didache was not lost. Though it did not develop further, it did bequeath something of its substance to later church order texts.¹⁰⁷ In that final process the Didache itself was transformed, both doctrinally and liturgically, according to the needs and tendencies of those later ages.

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¹⁰⁷ For an overview, see Niederwimmer 13-18.

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