

NANCY PARDEE

The Genre and
Development of the
Didache

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Mohr Siebeck

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Nancy Pardee

The Genre and Development of the *Didache*

A Text-Linguistic Analysis

Mohr Siebeck

NANCY PARDEE, born 1956; 1985 MA, 2002 Ph. D. from the University of Chicago; adjunct instructor at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, 2003–11 member of the steering committee for the *Didache in Context* Section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

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Preface

The following study is a revision of my doctoral dissertation, “The Genre of the *Didache*: A Text-Linguistic Analysis,” accepted by the Department of New Testament and Early Christian Literature of the University of Chicago in 2002. Early in my doctoral studies I had the exceptionally good fortune of sitting in on lectures given by Prof. David Hellholm while he was a visiting professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Prof. Hellholm’s lectures focused on the method of text linguistics and its usefulness for the study of the New Testament and other texts of the early Church. Though having little training in linguistics, I was nonetheless fascinated by his presentation and demonstration of the text-linguistic method on the *Shepherd of Hermas* and other apocalyptic works. Through the application of this method, Prof. Hellholm was able to show distinct generic characteristics that worked together to differentiate an apocalypse from other genres of ancient literature. The success of his method on these texts was especially intriguing to me since I was concurrently struggling with another of the texts of the Apostolic Fathers, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, commonly referred to as the *Didache*. Vastly different in content and character, the two texts nonetheless shared a common problem: an imprecise understanding of their ancient genres appeared to be impeding a clear understanding of their meaning and function in the early Church. What, I wondered, could text linguistics tell us about the *Didache*?

With the approval of my dissertation committee and the very generous mentoring of Prof. Hellholm, I undertook the task of acquiring a basic knowledge of text-linguistic methodology and applying it to the text of the *Didache* in the hope of using the results as a component of my dissertation on the development of the text. The results, I believe, have proven fruitful and, combined with data derived from other methods and sources, have resulted in better insight into the genre, developmental stages, and ultimately the meaning and purpose of this important and very ancient Christian text.

Due to a variety of circumstances, the completion of the dissertation itself and of this revised version has been inordinately long and it is only thanks to the support of many people that I have been able to finish this project. First of all I must extend my deepest gratitude to two extraordinary scholars: my long-time professor, Robert M. Grant, who, despite my initial deficiencies, none-

theless saw potential in me, admitted me to the university (twice), and continuously encouraged my progress; and, equally, my dissertation advisor, Adela Yarbro Collins (now of Yale Divinity School), who, upon the retirement of Prof. Grant, graciously agreed to take over the direction of my dissertation at an early stage, a task that, in the end, necessitated a great time commitment on her part. Without the crucial suggestions and corrections, as well as the patience and encouragement, of Prof. Yarbro Collins this work could never have been completed and it is she, as well, who must be thanked for recommending it for publication. My sincere thanks must also be expressed to the other members of my committee: first Prof. Hans Dieter Betz, whose challenging New Testament classes resulted in immeasurable intellectual growth for me and whose important questions and suggestions indeed made my dissertation more sound; and to Prof. Arthur J. Droge, whose guidance and continued encouragement have also been much appreciated. And of course I am deeply grateful to Prof. Hellholm for his incredible willingness not only to instruct me, but also to dialogue with me, on my text-linguistic analysis of the *Didache* – his many suggestions and criticisms, his sharing of his own publications and of references to other helpful resources, and his continual support of my work have, indeed, been crucial.

Secondly I must extend my sincere appreciation to Mohr Siebeck for the opportunity to publish my work: first and foremost to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, Editorial Director, Theology and Jewish Studies, for his patience and ever-kind encouragement; to Dr. Jörg Frey, Universität Zürich, for approving my work for publication and providing many important suggestions for revision and supplementation; and to Ms. Tanja Idler, production manager at Mohr Siebeck, for her acute eye for detail and continual support.

Of course I give my most heartfelt thanks to all of my family and friends for their unwavering support, but especially to my parents, Victoria, Arthur† and John†, to my son Timothy, and most of all to my husband, Dennis, for his patience and understanding, not to mention his many helpful suggestions.

Finally, while acknowledging the help I have received from others, I take full responsibility for the content of the study here presented – I have truly endeavored to represent fairly the views of all whose work I have used and apologize in advance for any omissions or misrepresentations that may be found – they are certainly unintentional.

Nancy Pardee, October 2012

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Abbreviations

Modern Publications

The following abbreviations have been appropriated from the *SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander, John Kutsko, et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999) or from Siegfried M. Schwertner, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete* (2d ed.; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1992). The abbreviations of ancient texts can be found in the Index of References.

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers. 1946–
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AUU	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3d ed. Chicago, 1999
BDF	Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago, 1961
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BrSR	Brown Studies in Religion
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series latina. Turnhout, 1953–
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. Edited by I. B. Chabot et al. Paris, 1903–
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DLZ	<i>Deutsche Literaturzeitung</i>
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FC	Fontes christiani
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d. ed. Oxford, 1910
HM	Hallische Monographien

HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSem	Horae semiticae. 9 vols. London, 1908–1912
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> . Editio minor. Berlin, 1913 [v. 1, 1924]–1940.
Irén	<i>Irénikon</i>
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JAC.E	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
KIT	Kleine Texte
KuR	Kirche und Recht
LCC	Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia, 1953–
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LCO	Letture cristiane delle origini
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with supplement. Oxford, 1983
LTK	<i>Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche</i>
MM	Moulton, J. H., and G. Milligan. <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament</i> . London, 1930.
NewIDB	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville, 2006–2009.
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Edited by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard. 2d ed. Oxford, 1970.
OrChr	<i>Oriens christianus</i>
OrChrAn	Orientalia christiana analecta
PG	Patrologia graeca [= Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886
PGL	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Edited by G. W. H. Lampe. Oxford, 1968
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RevScRel	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RQ	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
RTP	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations

SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
SCJud	Studies in Christianity and Judaism; Études sur la christianisme et judaïsme
SIG	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 4 vols. 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1915–24. Reprint [4th ed.], Hildesheim, 1960
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
STDJ	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
StPatr	Studia patristica
SVigChr	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
ThH	Théologie historique
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by G. Krause and G. Müller. Berlin, 1977–
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
WSt	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZWT	<i>Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>

Biblical Texts and Versions

NA ²⁷	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 27th ed.
UBS ⁴	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , United Bible Societies, 4th ed.
NAB	New American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

Introduction

The *Teaching (Didache) of the Twelve Apostles* was (re-)discovered in 1873 among the contents of the eleventh-century codex Hierosolymitanus 54 (H54), a manuscript that included other works of the Apostolic Fathers – specifically the *Epistle of Barnabas*, 1, 2 *Clement*, and the longer corpus of the Ignatian epistles – as well as the *Synopsis Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (attributed to Chrysostom) and a list of Hebrew/Aramaic titles of the books of the Old Testament with their Greek equivalents entitled simply Ὀνόματα τῶν βιβλίων παρ’ Ἑβραίοις.¹ Today the *Didache* is accepted by virtually all scholars as a text of the latter half of the first or the early decades of the second century. While not canonical, its importance and authority in the early Church can be seen by attestations to the *Teaching(s) of the Apostles*, (Διδαχὴ[αὶ] τῶν ἀποστόλων; *Doctrina[e] apostolorum*) in the writings of some of the early Fathers, texts clearly related to that of H54.² Such an early date and stature by themselves would make the *Didache* an important witness alongside the New Testament to the development of the early Church, but the additional fact that the text is of a more utilitarian nature means that it does not merely supplement the biblical texts, but complements them. In its instruction on baptism and Eucharist, its statements on the acceptance and/or support of apostles, prophets, teachers, overseers/bishops and deacons, its struggle with the Christian ideal of unconditional giving versus the reality of charlatans, the *Didache* shows another side to the nascent Christian community, to its self-understanding, and to the problems of forming a community of believers in the (post-) apostolic period.

Indeed, the last two decades has shown considerable interest in the *Didache*. Noteworthy among several new commentaries is one of nearly 1000 pages by Aaron Milavec that appeared in 2003;³ this study joined revised

¹ In addition, after the colophon, the scribe has filled the rest of the page with a portion of what J. RENDEL HARRIS described as “the patristic explanation of the divergent genealogies in Matthew and Luke” (*Three Pages of the Bryennios Manuscript* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1885], p. 1 of “Explanation of the Photographs”).

² On this relationship, see below, 105–11.

³ AARON MILAVEC, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, & Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York: Newman Press, 2003).

editions of commentaries by Willy Rordorf/André Tuilier (1998)⁴ and by Kurt Niederwimmer (1993), the latter also translated into English for the Hermeneia series (1998).⁵ Collections of essays have also appeared: one presenting new studies (1995, ed. Clayton N. Jefford);⁶ one gathering together (and translating into English) many important studies of previous years (1996, ed. Jonathan A. Draper);⁷ and two presenting papers from related international conferences on the *Didache* and Matthew (2003, ed. Huub van de Sandt)⁸ and on the *Didache*, Matthew, and James (2007, eds. Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg).⁹ Of course numerous books, articles, and dissertations centering on the *Didache* or at least featuring it in a prominent role have also appeared.

The modern reader, unfortunately, has been inhibited from a complete understanding of this early work. On the one hand, the preservation of the *Didache* in writing and the attestation of that text in the early Church means, *de facto*, that it was a text that communicated desired information to its early audiences. The fact that there is no introduction to the overall purpose of the text and no acknowledgment of its precise author or audience, means, however, that there must have existed underlying presuppositions and concepts held in common by the original author and audience(s) that at one point enabled clear communication but that are no longer present within the modern context. On the most basic level, the author and audience must have shared a common understanding of the genre of the text. Yet scholars have not yet determined what genre the *Didache* represents: some anachronistically call it the first “church order” while others simply consider it to be a text of “mixed genres”; a few see a clue in the term *didache* itself, though many dismiss the titles to the text of H54 as later additions.

On the other hand, the problems with the *Didache* are not simply that modern scholars have lost the original, shared presuppositions of its communication. The text exhibits contradictions and abrupt changes in subject, style, and audience, that have left its compositional integrity in question, and schol-

⁴ WILLY RORDORF and ANDRÉ TUILIER, *La Doctrine des douze apôtres (Didachè)* (2d ed.; SC 248; Paris: Cerf, 1998).

⁵ KURT NIEDERWIMMER, *The Didache* (ed. Harold W. Attridge; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); trans. of *Die Didache* (2d ed.; *Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern* 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

⁶ CLAYTON N. JEFFORD, *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History, & Transmission* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

⁷ JONATHAN A. DRAPER, ed., *The Didache in Modern Research* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

⁸ HUUB VAN DE SANDT, ed., *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* (Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

⁹ HUUB VAN DE SANDT and JÜRGEN K. ZANGENBERG, eds., *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings* (SBLSymS 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

ars still vigorously debate whether there is more than one redactional stage represented. Some important recent studies have come full circle to the original belief of the very first students of the *Didache*, namely that the text is the work of one author, albeit one who has combined source material with original work. Yet such studies have not satisfactorily explained the presence of contradictions and the overall lack of homogeneity, both of which would be unexpected if the text were the product of a single author or editor.

Thus the challenge of the *Didache* is simultaneously to understand it in the form in which it has been preserved, as a text valued and utilized by the early Christian community, and to uncover what historical developments in that community might be represented by the internal problems of the text. Toward this end, the following study attempts to recover both the generic identity and composition history of the *Didache* by means of a text-linguistic method first applied to early Christian works by David Hellholm in his study of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. This specific method focuses on the surface structure of a text with the premise that this structure is generically specific, i.e., that it either fulfills the common expectations of an explicitly stated genre or communicates the genre to the audience indirectly. Such a method is able to treat the *Didache* from a synchronic view, that is, as a text that was comprehensible to an audience in its present form, but, in its delimitation of the surface structure, has the advantage of being able to point to, or make more explicit, disruptions in that surface structure, signs that may indicate that there has been diachronic development.¹⁰

¹⁰ A note on the translations provided in this study: for the biblical texts cited I have decided to use a widely accepted translation and have chosen that of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Translations of other texts are either my own or are taken from others as noted.

Chapter 1

The Didache and the Question of Genre

1.1 Introduction

The Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, is generally acknowledged to be one of the earliest of the extra-canonical writings of the Church and is considered to be a part of the corpus known as the *Apostolic Fathers*, i.e., it is a text of the sub-apostolic age. A relatively recent discovery (1873)¹, its publication (1883)² caused great excitement among scholars studying early Christianity because it appeared to provide new information about the beginnings of the Church and, simultaneously, new support for various doctrinal positions debated among Protestant denominations, particularly in the U.S. Indeed the *Didache* seemed to have originated at some point during the first two centuries of the Christian era but, in comparison with other texts of the period, it had a much more practical character. The text is essentially a collection of prescriptions for the life of the Christian community. Structurally it is divided in the tradition into sixteen chapters.³ The first six chapters form a pre-baptismal catechism comprised primarily of a Two Ways text, i.e., a tractate on personal ethics based on the image of a choice

¹ The discovery of the *Didache* was first announced by PHILOTHEOS BRYENNIOΣ, then the Metropolitan of Serres (Serrae), in his publication, Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κλήμεντος ἐπισκόπου Ῥώμης αἱ δύο πρὸς Κορινθίους ἐπιστολαί (Constantinople, 1875), η', as being one of the other texts in the Jerusalem manuscript (Hierosolymitanus 54).

² BRYENNIOΣ, Διδαχὴ τῶν δωδέκα ἀποστόλων (Constantinople, 1883).

³ In H54 the text is presently divided into chapters by means of marginal notation. On the one hand, BRYENNIOΣ had stated that a division into chapters or paragraphs was completely unknown in the manuscript and that the transcription was *scriptio continua*. (Διδαχὴ, λε'). Yet in the margins of the *Didache* (as well as other texts in the manuscript) there are numbers given in Greek letters which correspond to the chapter divisions as given in BRYENNIOΣ (Διδαχὴ). Whether these notations occurred after the discovery of the manuscript by BRYENNIOΣ is unclear, but the earliest studies of the *Didache* attributed the chapter delimitation to him (see ADOLF VON HARNACK, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts* [TU 2/1–2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1884], 2; PHILIP SCHAFF, *The Oldest Church Manual Called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* [2d rev. ed.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886], 161). The generally accepted versification, however, was the work of HARNACK.

between the ways of good and evil.⁴ Chs. 7–10 provide methods and rules for baptism, fasting, prayer, and some type of communal meal. These are followed in chs. 11–15 by instructions concerning itinerant and resident ministers to the community and certain aspects of intra-community relationships. Finally, ch. 16 is an eschatological passage predicting the events of the end-time using apocalyptic imagery.⁵ Given such topics, it is clear that the *Didache* must be consulted when reconstructing the earliest history of the Christian Church.

Unfortunately the details contained in the *Didache* are greatly obscured by its literary style. The smallest units of material are, for the most part, understandable, but their relationship to each other and the overall portrait presented of the community are blurred and uncertain and, in some places, even contradictory. Much of the information is clouded by the elliptical nature of the text; apparently certain background knowledge on the part of the ancient reader was assumed, knowledge lost, however, to the modern audience with the result that the text appears laconic. In addition, the larger sections of the *Didache* often follow one another with little or no transition between them. Finally, the situation is further complicated by an apparent hesitancy to discard outdated material and the inclination instead to edit it or add to it, often with little attempt at overall harmonization. Thus, for example, community meals are described, but their exact function is unclear; traditional church officers – apostles, prophets, teachers, overseers/bishops and deacons – are mentioned, but their roles are not well defined and seem to overlap; perfection is important, though human fallibility is accepted. Such tendencies continued on a larger scale in the early Church with the appropriation of all or parts of the *Didache* into later texts of this type.

⁴ That the Two Ways is an independent text is seen by its attestation in works such as the *Doctrina apostolorum*, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Apostolic Church Order*. The function of the Two Ways in these texts, however, is uncertain. See below, pp. 76–78.

⁵ Though sometimes referred to as the “Little Apocalypse,” *Did.* 16 lacks the narrative framework and the figure of the heavenly revealer necessary for a formal classification as an *apocalypse*. It does, however, exhibit certain characteristics of apocalypses, e.g., eschatological crisis in the form of persecution and various social manifestations of an increase of evil in the world, including the appearance of a “world-deceiver.” The processes of eschatological judgment and salvation are also described. The imagery used exemplifies the emphasis in later Jewish as well as Christian apocalypticism on the individual and interpersonal aspects of the eschaton, rather than the cosmic and/or political. While personal eschatology is an important component of virtually all apocalyptic literature, some later Jewish texts, e.g., *Testament of Abraham* and *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, both likely to be products of the first century C.E., describe the rewards or punishment of the individual in the afterlife but lack any reference to a broader transformation of the earth or its political entities such as is common in many earlier Jewish apocalypses, e.g., Dan 7–12 and *1 En.* 83–90 (“Animal Apocalypse”) and 93 (“Apocalypse of Weeks”). See JOHN COLLINS, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” and “The Jewish Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 13–18; 22–27.

One of the most vexing problems is that the modern reader lacks an understanding of the *context* of the *Didache*. Who wrote the text, and for whom? What authority did it presume and how much was it accorded? Why were the topics selected? What information did it presuppose?

Certainly an important aspect of the context of a literary work is its generic identity; indeed the recognition of the genre, whether conscious or subconscious, is essential to the comprehensibility of a text. On the one hand there are similarities in terms of form, content, and/or function between the *Didache* and other earlier or contemporary texts of the Judeo-Christian milieu, in particular writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls such as *The Rule of the Community* (1QS), the *Rule of the Congregation* (1QSa) and the *Damascus Document* (CD); the first-century Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7);⁶ and perhaps other “teachings” alluded to in the New Testament.⁷ In addition, certain characteristics of the *Didache* also resemble several ancient, non-Judeo-Christian religious texts, for example, the ordinances for a religious association of Philadelphia⁸ and the regulations for the performance of the Andanian mysteries,⁹ both dating from the first century B.C.E., as well as the by-laws of an Athenian Society of Iobacchi of the second century C.E.¹⁰ Moreover, in the Graeco-Roman period, when rhetoric was a prominent discipline, the correct composition of texts was especially important and consequently the question must be raised as to whether the *Didache* was composed in accordance with a recognized generic structure, or whether its writing was much less deliberate and more the product of innate, human organizational tendencies.

⁶ See HANS DIETER BETZ, “A Jewish-Christian Cultic Didache in Matt. 6:1–18: Reflections and Questions on the Problem of the Historical Jesus,” in *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (trans. L. L. Welborn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 55–69; trans. of “Eine juden-christliche Kult-Didache in Matthäus 6, 1–18,” in *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie, Neutestamentliche Festschrift für Hans Conzelmann zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. Georg Strecker; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1975), 445–57.

⁷ E.g., 1 Thess 4:1; Rom 6:17; 1 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:9.

⁸ SIG 985. For a discussion of this inscription that includes the Greek text and an English translation, see S. C. BARTON and G. H. R. HORSLEY, “A Hellenistic Cult Group and the New Testament Churches,” JAC 24 (1981), 7–41.

⁹ SIG 736. A discussion, selected bibliography, and English translation can be found in MARVIN W. MEYER, *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 51–59.

¹⁰ SIG 1109 (= IG 2/3.1.1368). An English translation, commentary, and bibliography appear in F. W. DANKER, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 156–66.

1.2 *Status Quaestionis*

A review of the research from the last fifty years shows that a specific genre for the *Didache* has yet to be determined. Given the topics addressed by the text, many have called it the earliest example of a *church order*, i.e., a manual regulating various aspects of Christian community life, particularly worship and rituals on the one hand, and church offices and administration on the other. Texts of this type began to appear especially in the third and fourth centuries C.E., for example, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus,¹¹ the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Church Order*, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*. In 1975 Philipp Vielhauer stated the modern consensus:

Über die literarische Gattung der Did[ache] herrscht im übrigen Einigkeit: die Did[ache] ist eine Kirchenordnung, und zwar die älteste ihrer Art.¹²

Vielhauer believed this classification to be most apparent in the middle sections of the text, i.e., the liturgical instruction of chs. 7–10 and the teaching concerning community organization and life in chs. 11–15. Yet, though not quite as obvious, the Two Ways section, in his opinion, was also appropriate to a church order since parenetic material was so abundant in other documents of this type. The fact that the *Didache* appears to be composed out of other texts of various kinds and origins was also, according to Vielhauer, characteristic of its genre, as could be seen in its Christian counterparts as well as in the analogous texts from among the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹³ Following Vielhauer, Klaus Wengst wrote in 1984,

Die blockweise Zusammenstellung von Vorschriften für verschiedene Lebensbereiche der Christen und der Gemeinde erweist die *Didache* der Form nach als eine Kirchenordnung.¹⁴

Clearly, however, these observations on the genre of the *Didache* have been greatly influenced by a pre-conceived notion of the characteristics appropriate to a church order and a certain retrojection of the traits of later texts onto the *Didache* is evident.

Yet there have also been other voices in the contemporary discussion. In the introduction to his 1965 commentary on the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Robert Kraft classified both texts under the heading “evolved lit-

¹¹ In their 2002 commentary, however, PAUL F. BRADSHAW, MAXWELL E. JOHNSON, and L. EDWARD PHILLIPS situate the core of this community text as early as the mid-second century C.E. (*The Apostolic Tradition* [ed. Harold W. Attridge; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002], 14).

¹² PHILIPP VIELHAUER, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (rev. ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), 725.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 725–26. See below, pp. 161, 166–67

¹⁴ KLAUS WENGST, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet* (Schriften des Urchristentums; Munich: Kösel, 1984), 17–18.

erature,” by which he meant that they “show clear evidence of being products of a developing process.”¹⁵ Within that broader category Kraft further identified the *Didache* as a “community manual” based on the fact that it “transmits community instructions for proper conduct and worship.”¹⁶ In 1978, Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier openly rejected the idea that the *Didache* was the first church order, reserving that designation for the later, pseudepigraphic collections such as the *Didascalia* and the *Constitutions*.¹⁷ Describing the *Didache* as a catechetical, liturgical, and disciplinary manual, unique with respect to genre, they rejected an overall literary unity to the text and identified four distinct parts, each having its own particular structure and presupposing a different origin.¹⁸ While they accepted the unity of the Two Ways section and said that it had a parenetic character that corresponded “tres exactement” to the literary genre *didache* in primitive Christianity, the other sections showed a lack of literary unity within.¹⁹

A more significant study was published in 1980 by Hermann-Adolf Stempel. In it Stempel explored what he believed to be the central role of the teacher in the *Didache* and called for a “differenzierte Beurteilung der literarischen Gattung der *Didache*,” describing the work as being “nach dem Selbstverständnis des Verfassers ein Handbuch zur christlichen Unterweisung in Fragen der lebensentscheidenden Lehre, der Liturgie und der Gemeindeordnung.”²⁰ While he agreed with the idea that the *Didache* contains the oldest church order, at least from ch. 7 on, he maintained that the *Sitz im Leben* of the text was the instruction of the community, not the establishment of church law.²¹ In his opinion, the titles, the didactic terminology and references throughout, and the didactic methodology used in the composition of the text, show not only the work as a whole to be a “teaching” (*Lehre*) but also some

¹⁵ ROBERT KRAFT, *Barnabas and the Didache* (vol. 3 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation*; ed. Robert M. Grant; New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965), 1.

¹⁶ KRAFT contrasts this with *Barnabas*, which, he maintains, differs from the *Didache* both in form (*Barnabas* is an epistle) and content (its instruction deals with “‘school’ interests,” e.g., exegesis and commentary) (*Barnabas and the Didache*, 3).

¹⁷ RORDORF and TUILIER, *La Doctrine*, 21, n. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11, 17–18, 99.

¹⁹ On this see *La Doctrine*, 17–18. For the meaning of *didache* as a genre the authors cite in general two works by C. H. DODD (*The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* [Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company, 1937] and *Gospel and Law* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1951]; see below, p. 49, n. 247; 144–45) as well as the *TDNT* article by K. H. RENGSTORF (“διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, κτλ.,” *TDNT* 2:135–65; see below, 142–54). In the opinion of RORDORF and TUILIER, Διδαχὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων was likely the early, though still not original, title of the Two Ways (*La Doctrine*, 15–16).

²⁰ HERMANN-ADOLF STEMPEL, “Der Lehrer in der *Lehre der zwölf Apostel*,” *VC* 34 (1980): 215.

²¹ *Ibid.*

of its individual component sections.²² Here Stempel correctly acknowledged the importance of the term διδασχί for the text although he did not discuss the concept of *didache* as an independent, recognizable form or genre: *didache* is simply whatever is “taught” by the teacher/author of the *Didache*. While he pointed to some of the structural indicators in the text, he provided neither an overall generic view of its composition nor explanations of its internal inconsistencies and rough transitions with respect to genre, primarily because of his presupposition that the *Didache* is a single editorial redaction of pre-existent materials by an authoritative teacher within the community. Similarly in 1980 in a study on the ministerial roles represented in the *Didache*, André de Halleux also supported the original unity of the text and claimed, almost in passing, that the text was, indeed, a διδασχί, as evidenced by its (later) titles.²³ This is only briefly mentioned, however, amidst his attempt to distinguish the tradition-oriented, non-charismatic *teacher-author* of the *Didache* from the (sometimes *apostolic*) *teacher-prophet*, i.e., a (single) type of charismatic figure whom he believed to be the subject of *Did.* 10.7–11.12; 13; 15.1–2;²⁴ he did not discuss further the question of genre.

From another angle, others have maintained that the designation *church order* is not really appropriate for the *Didache* (nor perhaps for other texts in this group) because the work is not *comprehensive* in scope, either in terms of its range of topics or within each topic itself. The problem first came into focus in 1986 with an article by Georg Schöllgen in which he challenged Vielhauer and the virtually universal classification of the *Didache* as the earliest church order. According to Schöllgen, such a classification seems correct at first glance since the topics discussed in the text – catechesis, liturgy, and church offices – are typical of early church orders. Yet this appraisal is, in his opinion, erroneous, and leads to certain false presuppositions about the *Didache*, resulting in the misunderstanding and misuse of the text as a *complete* guide to the life of the early Christian community it represented. In Schöllgen’s opinion,

²² Ibid., 210–12; 216, n. 10. Here STEMPEL rightly mentions the sub-text defined by *Did.* 1.3; 2.1; and 6.1, each of which uses the term διδασχί. More questionable, however, is his assertion that the sections introduced by περὶ δέ in 7.1; 9.1; and 11.3 should also be considered individual units of teaching (“Lehrinhalte”) – in these instances the term διδασχί is not present. One should note, moreover, that the last occurrence of the noun διδασχί comes in *Did.* 11.2, a datum that may have significance for the text’s redaction history (see below, p. 123).

²³ ANDRÉ DE HALLEUX, “Ministers in the *Didache*,” in *The Didache in Modern Research* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 319; trans. by J. A. Draper of “Les ministères dans la *Didachè*,” *Iren* 53 (1980): 5–29.

²⁴ Ibid., 306–7; 314–15; 319–20. Similarly, MILAVEC, *Didache: Faith, Hope, & Life*, 438–41.

If one follows the understanding of the *Didache* as a comprehensive church order, then the text – as the only source from the post apostolic period – is in the position to give an untruncated picture of the whole external life of an early Christian community. In other words, the criterion of comprehensiveness allows one not only to utilize the positive provisions which the text gives its addressees, but also allows the interpreters to go beyond this to the rare opportunity of a methodologically legitimate use of the otherwise rightly rejected argument from silence: if the *Didache* is a comprehensive church order, then one can conclude – at least in the areas with which it deals more closely (eg. catechesis, liturgy and church offices) – that whatever it does not deal with was not practiced at the time of its composition. The reverse conclusion from the argument from silence raises the value of the text as a source considerably.²⁵

Schöllgen instead described the *Didache* as a “selective church order,” i.e., a text written to address specific controversies within the community and to provide direction for the handling of new circumstances that had come about.²⁶ Neither the *Didache*, nor the other early church orders, were intended to be comprehensive manuals.²⁷ In a later study he further concluded that the *Didache*, *Didascalia*, and *Apostolic Tradition* all considered “Scripture,” i.e., some form of the biblical writings, to be the real church order for their communities.²⁸ The *Didache*, for example, commands its audience to perform all things ὡς ἔχετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (as you have [it] in the gospel of our Lord, 15.4). New situations and problems had arisen within the churches, however, and it was deemed necessary that some supra-community rule address these specific issues. On the one hand, according to Schöllgen, the *Didache* and *Didascalia* often present their instruction with the support of

²⁵ GEORG SCHÖLLGEN, “The *Didache* as a Church Order: An Examination of the Purpose for the Composition of the *Didache* and Its Consequences for Interpretation,” in *The Didache in Modern Research* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 44; trans. by J. A. Draper of “*Die Didache als Kirchenordnung. Zur Frage des Abfassungszweckes und seinen Konsequenzen für die Interpretation*,” JAC 29 (1986): 5–26.

²⁶ Ibid., 63. In a more recent study, “Der Abfassungszweck der frühchristlichen Kirchenordnungen: Anmerkungen zu den Thesen Bruno Steiners,” JAC 40 (1997), 61, n. 30, SCHÖLLGEN mentions the use of the alternative term *Gemeindeordnung*, but finds *Kirchenordnung* still useful because ἐκκλησία itself can refer to an individual Christian community as well as to the Church at large.

²⁷ SCHÖLLGEN, *Zwölf-Apostel-Lehre, Apostolische Überlieferung* (FC 1; Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 14–15. SCHÖLLGEN believes that this also explains the fragmentary presentation of the *Didache*. Since the text is intended to deal only with individual problems, nothing more than a general schema is necessary. Such an understanding of the purpose of the *Didache* presents as well an alternative to the widespread tendency to dissect the text into smaller, sometimes minuscule, units, attributing each to a different redactional stage. While he does not deny that certain sections of the text were likely pre-existent units, he believes there is no proof of more than one editor at work and one compositional stage. See his “*Didache as a Church Order*,” 64–67.

²⁸ “*Die Didache will die Probleme des Gemeindelebens durch adaptierende Auslegung des Evangeliums lösen*,” SCHÖLLGEN, “Pseudapostolizität und Schriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen,” JAC.E 23 (1996), 119.

Scripture; the *Apostolic Tradition*, on the other hand, relies more on an orally transmitted tradition of the apostles that is understood as existing alongside Scripture.²⁹ All three additionally support their teaching by claiming apostolic authority. Ultimately, in Schöllgen's estimation, this claim was a dead end: once the rulings were written down, it was increasingly difficult to update them without casting suspicion on their origins and validity. Thus the church orders were finally replaced by the canons of the early Christian synods.³⁰

Schöllgen's warnings about the danger of viewing the *Didache* as a comprehensive manual are well taken. Certainly one must always be wary when making an argument *e silentio*. Nevertheless his premise that the *Didache* is "selective" is as much an unverifiable presupposition as the general belief that the text is the first, presumably complete, church order. Both views begin from a pre-conception of *church order* derived from later orders to which the *Didache* is compared.³¹ What the *Didache* lacks is then pronounced either not (yet) existent by the one group, or pre-supposed and non-controversial by Schöllgen. In his articles, Schöllgen himself seems to have in mind what a comprehensive church order should contain, but rather than conclude that unmentioned topics are non-existent, he believes them to be unimportant; in both cases speculation is involved. His own presupposition is evidenced in several places. Regarding the directions concerning the baptismal water (*Did.* 7.1–3), he concluded that the purpose of the passage was to address the situation that the preferred form of baptism could not be performed in some communities and that concessions had to be made, in particular for those lacking in water resources. He noted that certain "expected" topics are not represented:

The reader learns nothing about the actual rite of baptism, about the baptismal confession, about the person of the baptizer, about the conditions of admission of candidates (age, occupation etc.) or about the baptismal day.³²

While admitting that it cannot be assumed that all of these matters were already established in a detailed way in the era of the *Didache*, he nevertheless believes that, aside from the triadic baptismal formula, the issues which are found in the text are of a secondary importance.

Similarly, with respect to the comments on fasting in the text, Schöllgen stated,

²⁹ Ibid., 107–109; 119–20.

³⁰ Ibid., 120–21.

³¹ See below, pp. 31–32; 43–46.

³² SCHÖLLGEN, "*Didache* as a Church Order," 47.