

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe 64

James Carleton Paget

The Epistle of Barnabas



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Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius

64

The Epistle of Barnabas

Outlook and Background

by

James Carleton Paget



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To my parents

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This monograph is a revised version of my Ph.D. dissertation written in Cambridge between 1988 and 1991, and examined in April of 1992 by Prof. H.C. Chadwick and Prof. O. Skarsaune. Both examiners made important suggestions for the improvement of the dissertation, many of which have been incorporated in the revised version.

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Peterhouse, 12 August 1994

James Carleton Paget

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations used for this study are from the "Instructions for Contributors," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988), pp.579-596, with the following additions:

<i>AJSReview</i>	Association of Jewish Studies Review
ArchBib	Archéologie Biblique
B.	The author of the Epistle of Barnabas
Barn	The Epistle of Barnabas itself
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensum
BST	Basel Studies in Theology
EHPRUS	Études d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse de l'Université de Strasbourg
GCP	Graecitas Christianorum primaeva
<i>JDT</i>	Jahrbuch für Deutsche Theologie
<i>JLZ</i>	Jenaer Literaturzeitung
<i>MH</i>	Museum Helveticum
MTS	Münchener theologische Studien
PatSorb	Patristica Sorbonensia
SBEC	Studies in Early Christianity
Schermann	<i>Prophetarum vitae fabulosae - Indices apostolorum discipulorumque Domini Dorotheo, Epiphanio, Hippolyto aliisque vindicata: inter quae nonnulla primum edidit</i> by T. Schermann (Leipzig, 1907).
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in late Antiquity
<i>StPat</i>	Studia Patristica
<i>StPh</i>	Studia Philonica
<i>StStR</i>	Studi storici religiosi
TCW	Transformation of the Classical World
TH	Théologie Historique
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TSK</i>	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
<i>TTJ</i>	Tübinger Theologisches Jahrbuch
<i>TTK</i>	Tidsskrift for teologi og kirke
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

The Text

For the text of **Barn** I refer the reader to Kraft's discussion (*Épître*, pp.49-63). I have employed his sigla for the four major witnesses:

L	The Latin translation (text stops at 17:2)
S	Codex Sinaiticus
H	Codex Hierosolomitani/Constantinopolitanus
G	The archetype of the 8 Greek MSS. dating from the eleventh to the seventeenth century (text begins from 5:7)

The Aims of the Study

The Epistle of Barnabas¹ appears as an 'erratic block' in the history of Christianity. It seems to express a theology with little discernible antecedent or influence, and to defy any definitive interpretation.²

This 'strangeness' has done little to dampen scholarly interest. As early as 1876 Braunsberger was not exaggerating when he wrote: "Since this letter stepped out from the darkness of the library into the light of publicity, it has consistently attracted attention, and called into existence numerous Catholic and Protestant studies and books."³

Early studies tended to be theologically or historically orientated. In this respect, questions of date and authorship were particularly significant. Also discussed were the peculiarly hostile attitude of the author towards Judaism, and the related question of his approach to biblical interpretation. Discussion of these latter two subjects invariably elicited negative responses on the part of scholars,⁴ and led some to see the epistle as a 'Vorstufe' towards early Christian Gnosticism. Also prominent in early treatments of the epistle was the question of the literary unity of **Barn**, which had already been questioned by I. Voss as early as 1646.

It is in part with reference to interpolatory theories that we can explain the most recent phase in the study of the epistle, namely a tendency to look at the document from a source critical perspective. In these studies the observations of scholars who questioned the integrity of the epistle on the basis of perceived contradictions within it were taken seriously, but accounted for, not by a theory of interpolation, but rather by appealing to the idea that B. had made cumbersome use of sources. The 'fons et origo' of such an approach was Windisch, and all subsequent source theories are to a certain extent a 'fleshing out' of his initial observations. In these studies historical questions tended to play a minor role, partly because the author was felt to be no more than the inept regurgitator of the pre-existent. If this was true it was difficult to

¹In this monograph the epistle is referred to as **Barn** (except in headings, where it is written as Barnabas) and its author as B.

²Hefele described the letter as "eine der rätselhafteren Erscheinungen in der patristischen Literatur..." (*Sendschreiben*, p.III).

³"Seitdem dieser Brief aus dem Dunkel der Bibliothek an das Licht der Oeffentlichkeit getreten ist, hat er allenthalben die Blicke auf sich gezogen und zahlreiche katholische und protestantische Abhandlungen und Bücher ins Dasein gerufen..." (*Barnabas*, p.137).

⁴An early negative judgment comes from T. Elborowe (writing in 1668, and cited by Grant, 'Fathers', p.421): "His (B.'s) following letter indeed may not prove so very acceptable to some, in regard of his strange explications of scripture, which are not after the modern and more refined mode. But it is to be noted that when he wrote, Christianity was but in the cradle, and scarce advanced into her morning suit." Selwyn is much more caustic: "He (B.) did not know what was fit for the synagogue, much less for the modern drawing room." (*Ideas*, p.52).

discern what parts of the epistle were relevant to the author's contemporary situation. A particularly important consequence of this observation was the claim that the supposed anti-Judaism of the epistle was of little or no significance in determining its historical purpose.

In this monograph I shall attempt to address the questions raised by the source critics. In opposition to them, I shall argue that earlier studies which took historical questions seriously were justified in so doing. Hence my first chapter is devoted to the so-called introductory questions (authorship, date, provenance, genre, and purpose). Here I shall argue, amongst other things, that the anti-Judaism of the epistle should play a significant role in the epistle's interpretation. In my second chapter I shall examine the grounds presented by scholars to justify a source critical approach to **Barn**. In this context some space will be devoted to an investigation of B.'s citation of scripture, and the possibility, arising from this investigation, that he used scriptural testimonies. Against the backdrop of source critical studies, I shall examine chs.2-16. Here I will argue that while there are good grounds to accept that B. has used sources, we should not be blind to his own contribution. This lies in the anti-Judaism of the text and its approach to scripture: these are the two singular factors in the epistle's theological outlook. My third and final chapter will address the problem of the letter's theological background. To what extent is **Barn** an 'erratic block' in the history of the early church? While I will contend that we do not possess a precise parallel to the epistle's outlook (either in Judaism or Christianity), I will argue, amongst other things, that part of its perspective can be seen in the work of certain Christians who were themselves involved in the 'Christianisation' of the Jewish Bible. In addition to this, and more tentatively, I shall suggest that the veneration in which some held the epistle, at least until the end of the fourth century, might be seen as proof that its opinions were not so peculiar to some ancient Christians as they might appear to us.

The general objectives of the study can be summarised as follows:

(1) to survey the very extensive secondary literature, which has mainly appeared in languages other than English.

(2) to reconstruct a believable context out of which the epistle has emerged.

(3) to offer a critique of the source critical approach.

(4) to place **Barn** in the context of early Christian debates about scripture and Judaism, insofar as the two can be distinguished.

While I do not believe I have *overhauled* the judgment of Vielhauer that "Der Barn ist wohl das seltsamste Dokument der urchristlichen Literatur",⁵ it is my hope that, after studying this monograph, readers will find the letter less strange than the quotation above indicates.⁶

⁵ *Geschichte*, p.612.

⁶ In this respect, my aims are not so very different from those expressed by Müller, *Erklärung*, p.III.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Epistle of Barnabas

I. Authorship

If there exists a single axiom in the study of the Epistle of Barnabas, it is that, contrary to most of the ancient witnesses, its author was not Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul.¹ Indeed as early as 1840, Hefele, against his earlier convictions, wrote: "I do not believe that we can ever again see the apostolic Barnabas in this man (the author)."² He cited eight reasons in support of this judgment, of which two appeared decisive. The first related to chronology: it was simply impossible to date the epistle to a time in which Barnabas could believably have been thought to have been alive; and the second to theology: what we knew of Paul's estranged companion, particularly in relation to the incident at Antioch recorded in Gal. 2:13f., appeared incompatible with the contents of the letter attributed to him. Or stated more precisely, the radical attitude towards the law and the hostility towards the Jews witnessed in the epistle seemed at odds with the relatively conservative opinions ascribed to the Levite Barnabas in the New Testament.³

Yet quite recent attempts to defend an apostolic attribution do exist. Burger has given one of the most robust of these.⁴ Against the argument from chronology, he contended that the epistle could

¹For the apostolic origin of **Barn** see Clement: *Strom* 2.6:31; 2.7:35; 2.20:116; and 5.10:63; Vaticanus 859 (part of **G**): Ἐπιστολὴ Βαρνάβα τοῦ ἀποστόλου συνεκδηροῦ Παυλοῦ τοῦ ἁγιοῦ ἀποστόλου (probably reliant upon Clement); Jerome: *Vir. ill.* 6; and Didymus: *Zech.* 259:21–24. Origen: *c.Cels.* 1:63; **L**; the editors of **S** and **H**; and Eusebius: *H.E.* 3.25:4; 6.13:6 and 6.14:1, do not explicitly give an apostolic attribution. Of the surviving lists of apostles from later centuries, only the *Index anonymus Graeco-Syrus* attributes a letter to Barnabas (See Schermann, p.175).

²"In diesem Manne glaube ich nimmermehr den apostolischen Barnabas blicken zu dürfen." (*Sendschreiben*, p.175). In modern scholarship scepticism on the subject of apostolic authorship dates back as far as 1645 when Menard, somewhat nonchalantly, declared that the epistle was written by "S. Barnabas, sive quis alius." (*Epistola*, p.79). For a list of other early objectors see Müller, *Erklärung*, pp.16–17.

³On the basis of the Augustinian dictum 'si illorum essent recepta essent ab ecclesia' (*Contra adversar. Leg. et Proph.* 1.1:20) some scholars prior to Hefele, and some after him, had argued that the non-canonical status of **Barn** was the most decisive proof of its pseudonymity. But as Hefele stated, the supposed non-canonical status of **Barn** proved nothing in relation to its authorship. See further Braunsberger, *Barnabas*, pp.199f.

⁴'L'Énigme', pp.191–193.

legitimately be dated to the early 70s, a time in which one could reasonably imagine Barnabas still to have been alive. In refutation of the theological argument he made four points. First, he noted that according to Acts (Acts 11:22f.) Barnabas was an early participant in the mission to the Gentiles. As such he had probably adopted a liberal attitude to the law early on. Secondly, he claimed that the incident at Antioch proved nothing about Barnabas' theology for the Levite refrained from table fellowship with Gentiles out of political expediency, not theological conviction; thirdly, he noted that Barnabas' separation from Paul, recorded in Gal. 2, was not terminal (see references to Barnabas in 1Cor. 9:6 and Col. 4:10, both of which are later than the reference in Gal. 2); and fourthly, that it was quite possible for Barnabas, over a period of 20 years, and particularly in the wake of the Jewish war of 66–70 (a time in which hostility between Christians and Jews increased considerably), to have developed the kind of ideas we find in his eponymous epistle.

But such a thesis, while daring to attack the scholarly consensus at its strongest points, is untenable. First, Burger has posited an extraordinary development on the part of Barnabas: it is, I would contend, extremely difficult to imagine that the Jew, and former Levite, Barnabas, could have argued that the Jewish ritual laws should never have been implemented literally; could have imputed the literal command to circumcise to an evil angel (9:4); and could have denied that the Jews ever possessed a covenantal status with God (4:7–8; 14:1–4). Not even Paul, apparently more radical than Barnabas (Gal. 2:11f.), claimed any of these things.⁵ Burger's argument that the Jewish war of 66–70 can account for this mental transformation constitutes a weak form of the *argumentum e silentio*.⁶ Secondly, Burger has failed to explain the absence from the epistle of any reference to Barnabas himself or to Paul. Moreover, his argument is reliant upon his own

⁵See Windisch's observation: "Der die Lehrweise des Paulus weit übersteigende Radikalismus in der Beurteilung des Judentums und seines Kultus ist dem Apostel Barnabas, der nach Act 13:24; 14:23; Gal. 2:13 offenbar viel konservativer und mehr an die väterlichen Gebräuche gebunden war als Paulus, unmöglich zuzuschreiben." (*Barnabasbrief*, pp.412–413).

⁶For the same *argumentum e silentio* see Tugwell, *Fathers*, p.44. He writes, "... it is tempting to believe that the converted Levite, who spent some time as one of the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, who later travelled with St. Paul and then quarrelled with him, and who blotted his copy book, in some eyes, by being cowed into Judaizing, is the same man as the teacher who was cowed in the 70s to warn people against the temptation to which he had once succumbed." See Andry, *Introduction*, p.90 (and also p.261), who rejects *theological* arguments against apostolic authorship on the grounds that they are 'unscientific'. I admit that such arguments are 'unscientific' insofar as one does not *know* how Barnabas' opinions developed. But they are scientific insofar as they deal in probabilities. See Donaldson's apposite words: "... the possibility (that Barnabas turned out to be the author of the epistle) is one of which the highest degree of improbability may safely be predicated." (*Apostolic*, p.253).

early dating (just after 70) of the epistle, which, even if right, might have been after the death of Barnabas, an event about which we in any case have no reliable information.⁷

But a defence of apostolic authorship has one strength: it tries to account for what appears to be an extraordinary attribution. How could anyone have ascribed authorship of this epistle, with its strongly anti-Jewish tone and its idiosyncratic interpretation of the Jewish law, to the Levite Barnabas?

Some of those who argued that the epistle as it now stands was the result of a number of interpolations explained this fact by arguing that Barnabas actually wrote the original letter.⁸ But, as we will show later, all interpolatory theories are unconvincing. Others asserted that we need not think of the epistle as apocryphal for, "there is no indication ... that the author (of **Barn**) desired to be taken for the apostle Barnabas." Hence it would not be unreasonable to ascribe the letter to "some unknown namesake".⁹ But the regularity with which we meet pseudepigraphic epistles in the literature of the early church makes such a thesis unlikely. Müller adopted another theory.¹⁰ He noted that the first ascription of Hebrews to Paul appeared in Clement of Alexandria,¹¹ but that we hear of earlier ascriptions of the same letter to Barnabas.¹² On the basis of these two observations, Müller argued that once Hebrews had been attributed to Paul, another letter had to be attributed to Barnabas. Hence the ascription to Barnabas of what was an originally anonymous letter. But such a speculative theory assumed that Clement was the first Christian to attribute Hebrews to Paul, which on the basis of **P46**, where Hebrews is placed after Romans amongst the Pauline epistles, is shown to be incorrect. Equally problematic was the theory of a school of Barnabas. This relied too heavily upon the

⁷See Bardenhewer, *Geschichte*, p.108, for a sceptical discussion about the fragments of information we have on this subject; and Braunsberger, *Barnabas*, pp.129–135, who argues for a date between 56 and 62. The traditional date of his death is 11th June A.D. 56.

⁸See Schenkel, 'Barnabas'; Heydecke, *Dissertatio*; and Robillard, 'Barnabé', p.208 (though he is not absolutely decided on this point).

⁹Lightfoot, *Fathers*, p.504. For the relative frequency with which the name 'Barnabas' appears in Jewish ostraca and inscriptions see Tcherikover, *Jews*, pp.187–188.

¹⁰*Erklärung*, p.16.

¹¹See *H.E.* 6.14:2.

¹²See Tertullian, *Pud* 20. "Exstat enim et Barnabae titulus ad Hebraeos, a deo satis auctoritati viri, ut quem Paulus juxta se constituerit in abstinentiae tenore: aut ego solus et Barnabas non habemus operandi potestatem? et utique receptior apud ecclesias epistola Barnabae illo apocrypho Pastori Moechorum." There need be no doubt that the 'epistola Barnabae', mentioned in the latter part of the quotation, is a reference to Hebrews. Not only is this made clear by the words that precede it, but also by the fact that Tertullian goes on immediately to cite, somewhat loosely, a passage from Hebrews (6:1, 4–6). In his discussion of the authorship of *Heb* (*Vir. ill.* 5) Jerome mentions this passage from Tertullian, though without any obvious approval.

similarities between **Barn** and Hebrews (suggesting a literary relationship of some kind), and the ascription of Hebrews to Barnabas, already mentioned above.¹³ Kayser's admittedly tentative solution to the problem was even more speculative.¹⁴ On the basis of the thesis that **Barn** attacked the Ebionite heresy, and on the assumption that Barnabas was a hero of that movement,¹⁵ he ingeniously argued that the ascription of the letter to Barnabas was a polemical ploy on the part of the author of the epistle. What better thing than to ascribe your letter to the hero of your opponents! But if such a thesis is correct, and it could be correct without the Ebionite dimension,¹⁶ one might expect more usage of Barnabas' name in the text itself.¹⁷ Another solution to the problem lay in making a connection between, on the one hand, those traditions which associated Barnabas with Alexandria, and on the other, the evidence of the epistle's popularity in the same city.¹⁸ The popular epistle was attributed to Barnabas because it was thought, by some at least, that he had lived in that city.¹⁹ Such a thesis might appear more cogent when we note that in *Ps.Clem.Hom.* 2.4:2–3 Peter states that in Alexandria Clement (of Rome) learnt from Barnabas "the word about prophecy" (τὸν περὶ προφητείας λόγον): **Barn** has a strong interest in the prophetic value of the Old Testament (see 1:7 and the frequent references to ὁ προφήτης).

¹³See Veil, 'Barnabasbrief, 1904', p.297.

¹⁴*Barnabasbrief*, pp.126–127.

¹⁵In support of this Kayser points to the role of Barnabas in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, considered by him to be Ebionite in origin. In this respect, see especially *Ps.Clem.Hom.* 1.9f. and our discussion below.

¹⁶In the light of a text like Gal. 2:13f., Barnabas could have been thought to have represented the kind of Jewish-Christian opinions supposedly attacked in the epistle.

¹⁷For this same criticism of Kayser's thesis see Braunsberger, *Barnabas*, pp.248–249. For a similar thesis, which plays up the ironic dimension of the superscript see Draper, 'Barnabas', p.13. He writes: "One of the purposes of such an ironical device (the naming of the epistle after a man who apparently would not have held to the sentiments contained within it), would be to claim in support of the polemic against the Torah, one who was held in reverence by those who are the main target of the letter, namely, those Christians who are still keeping the Torah."

¹⁸For these references, the most important of which is *Ps.Clem.Hom.* 1.9:16, see my discussion of Provenance, pp.30f. We should also note the possibility that Barnabas actually preached in Alexandria. In Acts 15:39 Paul leaves Barnabas in Cyprus. An obvious missionary destination after Cyprus was Alexandria. See Dio, *Hist* 68:32, where the historian reports that "they (the Jews of Alexandria) perpetrated many similar outrages, and in Cyprus under the leadership of a certain Artemion", implying a close association of Cyprus with Egypt.

¹⁹Braunsberger summarises the argument succinctly: "Wollte man den Brief einem Apostel zuschreiben so war Barnabas derjenige von welchem man am Ehesten annehmen konnte, er habe die Alexandriner mit einem Brief beehrt." (*Barnabas*, p.249). See also Donaldson, *Apostolic*, p.253; and Trevijano, 'Church', p.471, who argues that the Alexandrian origin of the epistle may well have generated the myth that Barnabas actually visited Alexandria.

But the most satisfactory solution appears to be an adaptation of one suggested by Windisch. Building in part upon observations already made by Müller, he argued that the failure of the epistle to make mention of Barnabas in its actual text indicated that the ascription was secondary.²⁰ This secondary ascription could be explained as resulting from a desire to disseminate the epistle further afield. The decision to ascribe it to Barnabas was made on the basis of its Jewish/Levitical content,²¹ and, I would argue, the belief that Barnabas was associated with Alexandria where the epistle probably originated. This thesis has a number of things to commend it. First, in the New Testament we are actually told that Barnabas was a Levite (Acts 4:36), and it is quite rare (in the New Testament) to be given such information. The fact that Barnabas had been a Levite may have been quite well-known. In the epistle we find much legal (2; 3; 9; 10; 15; 16) and cultic (chs.7 and 8) material. Such material may have been thought to be compatible with someone who was known to have been an expert in such matters.

But any solution to the problem of the letter's ascription must necessarily remain conjectural.²²

Excursus 1: The Author of Barnabas: Jew or Gentile?

The debate about the ethnic origins of B. continues to stimulate discussion. Those in favour of a Jewish origin argue their case on the basis of the Jewish character of the epistle.²³ In this respect particular attention is paid to the presence in the epistle of rabbinic traditions (chs. 7 and 8), to the use and knowledge of Jewish exegetical methods,²⁴ to an outlook shared with Jewish apocalypses,²⁵ a future hope expressed in terms of the Jewish idioms of land (6:8–19) and temple (4:11; 6:15; 16:7f.), to the *Two Ways* material, which it is claimed is of Palestinian origin, to the great concern of the epistle with the interpretation of the law, and its obvious respect for the law²⁶ and in one instance, to the contention that the epistle reflects the concerns of a supposed Tannaitic

²⁰ *Barnabasbrief*, p.413.

²¹ A parallel to what Windisch suggested lay in the ascription of Hebrews (a similarly levitical text) to Barnabas (see p.5 n.12 above).

²² See Pfeiderer's observation: "Wer der Verfasser dieses Briefes gewesen sei, können wir, da er sich selbst nicht nennt, nicht wissen; ebensowenig, wie er in der Tradition zu dem Namen des Barnabas gekommen sei." (*Urchristentum*, p.560).

²³ For the Jewish origin of B. see amongst many others Funk, *Patres*, pp.viii-ix; Gudemann, 'Erklärung'; and Barnard, who has argued his case in many places, but most recently in 'Setting', pp.81f.

²⁴ Often noted in this respect are the presence of peshar-like passages (4:3–5 and 16:3–4), of midrash (6:8–19); and of Jewish-Hellenistic traditions, often conveyed through allegory. For the last of these three points see especially Martín, 'Barnaba', whose work I will discuss below.

²⁵ This point is emphasised by Horbury, 'Barnabas', p.332, who especially notes the strong hostility to Rome expressed in an apocalyptic-like passage such as 4:3–5 with its parallels in 4Ezra 11–12, 13 and *SibOr* 5:403–33.

²⁶ See especially 10:12, and the praise bestowed upon Moses' legislation (βλέπετε πῶς ἐνομοθέτησεν Μωϋσῆς καλῶς).

catechism.²⁷ These arguments can appear powerful, especially when we note that passages in *Barn* only appear to be thinly Christianised.²⁸ Those who oppose a Jewish origin for the author²⁹ point to the stridency of the epistle's anti-Judaism, the apparent lack of knowledge of rabbinic traditions, the likening of the Jerusalem temple to a pagan place of worship, and at 16:7 and possibly 14:5, the imputation to the author and his readers of a former state of unbelief (see the words at 16:7 *πρὸ τοῦ ἡμᾶς πιστεῦσαι τῷ θεῷ*).

To decide for or against either of these two positions is difficult, not least because, as we will see, some would contend that B. is using sources, and so the letter will tell us more about the ethnic origins of the writer(s) of the sources than of B. himself. While there can be no doubt that the epistle carries with it a strongly Jewish character, it is not easy to determine how this relates to the problem of the provenance of the author. It may simply indicate the proximity of a Gentile to a Jewish community, a proximity which we can probably assume, and the appropriation of Jewish ideas for polemical purposes, or alternatively the use of sources which were heavily influenced by Judaism. We certainly cannot assert that the author of the epistle was a converted rabbi.³⁰ However, the points made against a Jewish origin are equally unconvincing. A harsh anti-Judaism need not indicate a Gentile origin - the Gospels of Matthew and John and the letters of Paul in the New Testament, are salutary reminders of this fact. Indeed, it is perfectly reasonable to see the epistle as on occasions reflecting debates which were taking place within the Jewish community itself;³¹ and to argue on occasions for the close proximity in the epistle of what might be termed 'Jewish' and 'Christian' traditions.³² The supposed faults in B.'s knowledge of rabbinic traditions are not proven, and even if they were, would not be decisive.³³ B.'s harsh attack on the Jerusalem temple is not an unjewish thing, as the Hebrew Bible itself shows, and may, as we will argue later on, find a parallel in the

²⁷ See Barnard, 'Setting', pp.181f, for whom the author is a converted rabbi.

²⁸ This is a point particularly emphasised by Kraft, who writes, "Although our picture of Judaism before it became normative is not entirely clear, there is no necessary contradiction between it and the traditions used by Ps.Barn." (*Dissertation*, p.283). Horbury, perhaps more provocatively, and independent of Kraft, suggests that we should regard the epistle as a "sub-section of Jewish literature." ('Barnabas', p.345).

²⁹ See Harnack, *Chronologie*, p.411; Windisch, *Barnabasbrief*, p.413; and most recently, Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos*, p.174.

³⁰ It is striking that both Horbury and Kraft, who, as we noted above, placed special emphasis upon the Jewishness of the epistle, refrain from moving from this observation to the contention that the author was of Jewish origin.

³¹ Significant in this respect is the debate about the law, which plays such an important role in the epistle. Philo describes members of the Alexandrian Jewish community, who, like B., denied the admissibility of a literal interpretation of the ritual laws (*De Mig. Abr.* 88-93). On the whole question of the epistle's anti-Jewish polemic and its possible relationship to the Judaism whence the author hailed see Martín, 'Barnaba', pp.181-182, who sees the epistle as transposing the internal tensions of the Jewish Diaspora community into the new historical situation of the Christians.

³² A case in point might be 5:8-9, where the view that the apostles sinned above all sin (*ὅτι πάντες ἡμαρτίαν*) may very easily reflect a Jewish tradition. Further support for this contention is found in the fact that the Jews are referred to as 'Israel'. On this see Horbury, 'Barnabas', p.335.

³³ See Güdemann, 'Erklärung', who argues that B. makes mistakes in his understanding of the rabbinic sources, but does this intentionally!

Fourth Sibylline Oracle. Furthermore, B.'s claim that the temple is 'almost (σχεδόν)' like a heathen place of worship (16:2) may, in showing a reluctance to assert an exact likeness, give evidence of a Jewish origin for its author. The statement in 16:7 is perhaps the most powerful argument in favour of a gentile origin for the author. But it, too, can be explained as an attack upon Judaism, which in the epistle receives such harsh treatment.³⁴

Any conclusion on this matter must therefore be guarded. The epistle is strongly Jewish in character, but this observation does not allow us to state that the author himself was Jewish. Greater certainty can probably be established with regard to the identity of some of the recipients. Given the prominence of the issue of circumcision (ch.9), and such verses as 3:6 and 13:7, a gentile origin for them seems more likely.

II. Date

In setting the chronological boundaries within which to date **Barn**, we can restrict ourselves to a period of about fifty years. The letter is clearly written after the destruction of the Second Temple;³⁵ and the absence of any mention of the second Jewish revolt, particularly in a document so tainted by an anti-Jewish spirit, indicates a *terminus ad quem* of about 130 c.e.³⁶ Harnack's statement to the effect, "daß unser Brief an den Schluss des Zeitraumes 80–130 zu rücken ist",³⁷ is probably accurate.

In an attempt to establish an exact date scholars have regarded two passages as important.

i. Barnabas 4:3–5

These verses appear in a passage in which B. exhorts his readers to good behaviour. This exhortation is set within an eschatological framework, in which the author claims, apparently quoting from

³⁴ See Scorza-Barcellona, *Barnaba*, p.63, who argues that 16:7 "può essere considerato alla luce del rifiuto totale del giudaismo, e di per sé non esclude l'origine giudaica nè di Barnaba ..."

³⁵ See 16:4: διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτοὺς καθηρέθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν. Robinson, *Redating*, p.313, comments that this is the first document explicitly to mention this fact.

³⁶ It is significant that Justin, writing after the second revolt, often exploits that event for polemical reasons (see particularly his polemical interpretation of circumcision in *Dial.* 16). See also Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 12. The technical *terminus ad quem* is approximately 200 when Clement of Alexandria first mentions the epistle.

³⁷ *Chronologie*, p.418.

Enoch,³⁸ that the ‘final stumbling block’ is at hand, and that the arrival of the same has been speeded up in order that his ‘beloved’ (ὁ ἡγαπημένος) might come to his inheritance. Then, as if elaborating on the nature of this ‘stumbling block’, he cites two passages from Dan. 7:

λέγει δὲ οὕτως καὶ ὁ προφήτης. Βασιλεῖαι δέκα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς βασιλεύσουσιν, καὶ ἐξαναστήσεται ὅπισθεν μικρὸς βασιλεὺς, ὅς ταπεινώσει τρεῖς ὑφ’ ἐν τῶν βασιλέων. ὁμοίως περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ λέγει Δανιήλ. Καὶ εἶδον τὸ τέταρτον θηρίον τὸ πονηρὸν καὶ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ χαλεπώτερον παρὰ πάντα τὰ θηρία τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ ὥς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀνέτειλεν δέκα κέρατα, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν μικρὸν κέρας παραφυάδιον, καὶ ὥς ἐταπείνωσεν ὑφ’ ἐν τρία τῶν μεγάλων κεράτων³⁹

Before undertaking an interpretation of these lines, we need to make a number of preliminary observations:

(1) Both quotations are from Daniel and in parallel, though it is to be noted that B. only explicitly attributes the second quotation (Dan. 7:7–8) to Daniel, and does not quote the citations in the order in which they appear in that book.

(2) The wording of the quotations is not an exact transposition of any of the extant Greek texts of Daniel, either the LXX, Theodotion, or the surviving papyri.⁴⁰ Both quotations constitute an abbreviation and, it would seem, a free rendering, of the passages in Daniel. This is particularly the case in the second passage. Here B. omits the detailed description of the actions of the fourth beast (Dan. 7:25), and similarly

³⁸The Latin text contradicts the Greek at this point, and ascribes the quotation to Daniel (“sicut Daniel dicit”). Prigent, *Épître*, pp.93–94, claims that such an ascription is understandable given the Danielic provenance of the quotations which follow, and the fact that the sentiment contained within 4:3a (Prigent only ascribes this part of the verse to Enoch) is quite close to Dan. 9:26–27. But, on the basis of the textual axiom *lectio difficilior potior est*, he argues that one should hold the Greek reference to be correct. The quotation finds no precise equivalent in Enoch, which is probably explicable on the grounds that B. is inspired by something he remembers from Enoch at this point (see for a parallel to I Enoch 89:61–64; 90:17f.). Kister, ‘Barn.’, pp.66f., notes that in a recently published fragment from 4QEzekiel (4Q385) we read, in fragmentary form, something closer to this verse than any Enochian equivalent: “Let the days hasten on fast until all men say: Indeed the days are hastening on in order that the children may inherit. And Yahweh said to me: I will not re[fu]se you, O Ezekiel. I shall cut short the days and the years [...] a little and you said [So that Israel will inherit the land.]” Kister suggests that the replacement of ‘Israel’ with ‘Beloved’ in *Barn* may in fact witness to a Christian development of a Jewish motif. Here, of course, Kister is able to attribute the whole of the verse to one source, something Prigent was unwilling to do.

³⁹“Thus the prophet also says: ‘Ten kingdoms shall reign upon upon the earth, and there shall rise up a small king after them (this following S, which reads ὅπισθεν αὐτῶν), who shall subdue three of the kings under one.’ Daniel says likewise concerning him: ‘And I beheld the fourth beast, wicked and powerful and fiercer than all the beasts of the sea, and that ten horns sprung from it, and out of them a little excrescent horn, and that it subdued at the same time three of the great beasts.’”

⁴⁰See Geissen, *Daniel*, for the surviving text of the Chester Beatty and Cologne papyri.

of the little horn (Dan. 7:8). If we may speak of additions on the part of B. to Daniel, and given the complex textual history of this book, we should be cautious in this respect, they appear to proliferate in the description of the small horn: no extant texts of Daniel contain the words παραφυσάδιον (4:4) or ὕφ' ἐν (4:4 and 5). Furthermore, where Dan. 7:24 does not refer to the horn as small, **Barn**'s rendering of that verse does (4:4).

(3) The words ὕφ' ἐν should be translated as 'at the same time' (approximating to the Latin 'simul'),⁴¹ indicating that the abasement of the three βασιλεῖαι/κέρατα happens at a single stroke.⁴²

(4) The fourth beast is a symbol for the Roman Empire.⁴³

(5) It is probably best to take the little horn as number eleven in the list as it clearly is in the first quotation (Dan. 7:24). This would mean translating ἐξ αὐτῶν in v.5 as 'out of them', paralleling it with ἐξ αὐτοῦ of the previous section of the verse.

(6) In the two quotations the author does not refer to kings, as in the original, but rather to kingdoms. Although at least one scholar makes much of this,⁴⁴ it should not be accorded much importance.

It is significant that a number of scholars have questioned the legitimacy of using this passage in a discussion of the date of **Barn**.⁴⁵ They argue that B. is copying from a source and is unconcerned with a *precise* application of its contents to his own time.⁴⁶

A number of observations support this hypothesis. First, B.'s failure to attribute the first of his two quotations to Daniel finds its simplest explanation in the fact that he is using a source.⁴⁷ Such a view becomes more probable when we note that some of the supposed additions to the quotation are attested elsewhere. So in his *De Antichristo* (GCS 1,2, p.17), Hippolytus, like B., witnesses to a reading of Dan. 7:8 with

⁴¹The Latin text (L) translates ὕφ' ἐν as 'in unum' in v.4 and fails to translate it at all in v.5.

⁴²I am indebted to Dr. J. Diggle of Queens' College, Cambridge, for confirmation of this interpretation of ὕφ' ἐν. I quote from part of his correspondence: "ὕφ' ἐν is the origin of our 'hyphen', the original sign being placed not between letters but beneath them ('beneath one [word]'). From the technical use (originating, I should assume, among Alexandrian scholars from the third century B.C.) came a wider application to a plurality of things done together or at one time."

⁴³See 4Ezra 12:11–12; Ass.Mos. 9:8; Mk. 13:14; Rev. 13:17.

⁴⁴See D'Herbigny, 'Date'.

⁴⁵This need not mean that in its original context it did not have some specific reference. See Prigent's comment: "Tout au plus vient-il confirmer un *terminus post quem*." (*Épître*, p.97).

⁴⁶For the first presentation of this argument see Harnack, *Chronologie*, pp.418f. He is followed by Ehrhard, *Litteratur*, p.82; Pfeleiderer, *Urchristentum*, p.559; Knopf, *Zeitalter*, p.38; Haeuser, *Barnabasbrief*, p.21; Oepke, *Gottesvolk*, p.27; Prigent, *Testimonia*, p.220 and *Épître*, p.97; Kraft, *Apostolic*, p.43; and Wengst, *Schriften*, p.197.

⁴⁷See Harnack: "Hieraus ergibt sich die Vermuthung, daß beide Stücke aus zweiter Hand erhalten und sie für Weissagungen zweier verschiedener Männer erachtet hat." (*Chronologie*, p.414).

παράφυσιον.⁴⁸ Such an obscure addition, found in two texts which are probably independent of each other, favours a common source theory.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in Eusebius we have evidence of a reading of Daniel with something approximating to B.'s ὑφ' ἐν.⁵⁰ Secondly, some scholars have understood B.'s words in verse 6a (συνιέναι οὖν ὀφείλετε: "You ought therefore to understand") as a sign of his incomprehension of the texts he is using. As Prigent writes, "s'il se retranche ici derrière une exhortation à comprendre, c'est qu'il n'est plus sûr de lui."⁵¹

To these arguments Kraft,⁵² amongst others, has added the observation that in ch.4 B. is quoting from an eschatological/parenetic source.⁵³ He finds strong support for this suggestion in *Did* 16 where we witness similar material to that found in **Barn** 4. Both chapters are filled with warnings to watchfulness (*Did* 16:1; **Barn** 4:9, 11a); both encourage meeting together (*Did* 16:2a; **Barn** 4:10a); both emphasise that this is the crucial time with respect to salvation (*Did* 16:2b; **Barn** 4:1); both warn against lawlessness and error (*Did* 16:3–4; **Barn** 4:1–3a); and both imply that false security may lead to final rejection (*Did* 16:5b; **Barn** 4:12–14). This observation places 4:4–5 within the broader canvas of a thematically unified source which was probably Jewish in origin. In this reading B.'s interest in quoting these verses from Daniel lies not in their supposed reference to a specific emperor, but in their general hortatory content. Ehrhard reflects this argument when he writes: "Liest man die Stelle ohne vorgefasste Meinung ... so erhält man den Eindruck nicht, daß der Verf. einen bestimmten

⁴⁸For uses of παράφυσας see Ignatius *Trall.* 11:1 where the phrase might be used to refer to doctetic heresies, and Hermas where it is frequently used to refer to the "green and budded" ῥάβδους. It also occurs six times in the LXX for the twig or bud of a branch, sometimes with eschatological overtones (see Ps. 79:11; Ezek. 12:22; 31:3–8; 4 Macc. 1:28).

⁴⁹παράφυσιον could be seen as an adaptation of a reading of Dan. 7:8 found in Theodotion: καὶ ἄλλοι οὗ κέρως ἀνέφνη ἀναμέσον αὐτῶν μίκρον. For the possibility of such an adaptation see *SibOr* 3:400 where 'the abominable race of Rhea' is described as 'a perennial shoot from the earth' (παράφυσιον κέρως).

⁵⁰See *Dem Ev* 15 (GCS 23, p.493, l.17): καὶ τρία κέρατα ὑφ' ἐνος συντριβόμενα. See Kraft's conclusion: "It is clear that the Danielic cycle of literature extended beyond the mss. we now possess. The unique quotations found in Hippolytus itself attests to the existence of such material under the name of Daniel." (*Dissertation*, p.128). The divergent textual witnesses to Daniel bear out Kraft's assertion. On the controversy about Theodotion's translation and its relationship to the LXX see Jerome, *Preface to Daniel* PL 28: 1357. The popularity of Daniel in Judaism is well known (Josephus, *AJ* 10:186–281, dedicates more space to the discussion of Daniel than any other prophet), and this popularity may itself have led to the proliferation of a number of divergent readings.

⁵¹*Épître*, p.97. For a similar exhortation to understand see 13:3. For an exhortation to understand in a specifically apocalyptic context see Mk. 13:14 and Matt. 24:15.

⁵²*Dissertation*, pp.128f.

⁵³See also Windisch, *Barnabasbrief*, pp.320f.

römischen Kaiser im Auge hatte, sondern er führt die Weissagung an zur Beherzigung seiner Adressaten.”⁵⁴

But there are a number of problems with this interpretation.

While it is certainly possible that B. thinks he is quoting from two different sources, this should not be regarded as established. ὁ προφήτης in v.3 could be his own designation for Daniel.⁵⁵ Furthermore, even if we do accept that B. is quoting from a source, it need not follow that he could not have tampered with the source himself. Hippolytus in his *De Antichristo*, while making use of παραφυσάδιον, has none of the other ‘additions’ we find in **Barn**,⁵⁶ and the parallel to ὅφ’ ἐν in Eusebius is not exact. More significantly, we should draw attention to statements in the epistle which show B.’s manifest interest in the present times. So at 1:7 he writes that “the Lord has made known through the prophets ... things present (τὰ ἐνεστώτα)”: at 1:8 he concludes with the claim that he will show his addressees a few things “in which you shall rejoice at this present time (ἐν τοῖς παροῦσιν)”: and ch.4 opens with a plea to seek earnestly (ἐπιπολὶ) into the things which now are (τῶν ἐνεστώτων).⁵⁷ Furthermore, Kraft, in his comparison of **Barn** 4 and *Did* 16, argued that the essential differences between the two texts were “due to the note of urgency in **Barn**. These are not future events for which B. looks, but these are now present.”⁵⁸ Kraft seems to attribute this tendency to the source B. is using, but it is surely significant that if B. is in fact using a source, he has chosen to use such a source.⁵⁹ This observation might seem to run counter to the argument that B. quotes the two Danielic citations because he sees them as generally relevant, and not relevant in their specifics.⁶⁰ Finally,

⁵⁴ *Litteratur*, p.82.

⁵⁵ Ladeuze, ‘Barnabé’, p.212 n.2, makes the interesting observation that if the author of B.’s supposed source could use ὁ προφήτης to refer to Daniel and be aware of this fact, why could not B. also?

⁵⁶ The text of Hippolytus reads: ὅπερ λέγει Δανιήλ, Προσενόουν τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ ἰδοὺ δέκα κέρατα ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ, ἐν τοῖς ἀναβήσεται ἕτερον μικρὸν ὥς παραφυσάδιον καὶ τρία τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐκριζώσει.

⁵⁷ Some scholars might regard this observation as contradicted by 17:2 where B. maintains that he has not revealed all things concerning the present times. For a suggested emendation of the text see Hefele, *Sendschreiben*, p.118 n.1; and Völter, *Väter*, pp.359–360. Wengst, *Tradition*, p.13, argues that the statement is part of a typical apocalyptic topos (see 4Ezra 4:21; Ign. *Trall* 5:1) and is therefore of little significance.

⁵⁸ *Dissertation*, p.129. See **Barn** 4:1 and the appearance of the word νῦν (compare with *Did* 16:3–4); and **Barn** 4:9 and the reference to the present evil time.

⁵⁹ See Shukster and Richardson: “Although evidence leading to a conclusion on the final composition (of the epistle) might be merely evidence for the date of a particular source, prima facie it is likely that the author of a piece of work will be sensitive to the implications of his use of sources.” (‘Barnabas’, p.40).

⁶⁰ This particular observation was first made by D’Herbigny: “Le début de l’épître avait annoncé ces préoccupations chronologiques”; and: “Il est donc absolument illégitime de laisser ce passage de côté: toute construction qui exige ce sacrifice paraît caduque.” ‘Date’, p.420 and p.423 respectively.

we should note that the two Danielic quotations can be read as an explanation of the contents of the supposed citation from Enoch, with its interest in the arrival of the τέλειον σκάνδαλον. This *prima facie* indicates a more precise application of the quotations.⁶¹

But does a historical situation exist that is compatible with the information contained in 4:4–5? Or stated more precisely, can we find a Roman emperor who can be described as number eleven in a list of emperors; who fits the description of παραφύαδιον; and who can be said to have ‘humbled’ his three predecessors ‘at the same time’?

The complications are many and varied. Are we to count from Julius Caesar, or Augustus? Do any, all, or some of Vespasian’s three predecessors count as emperors?⁶² And even when we have arrived at a solution to this numerical problem, can our choice be said to fulfil the condition of humbling three of his predecessors ὑφ’ ἑν? Windisch’s comment reflects scholarly despair at ever reaching a resolution of the problem: “Jedenfalls ist eine gleichzeitige Demütigung oder Entthronung dreier Kaiser durch einen folgenden Kaiser in den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten genau genommen nicht nachzuweisen.”⁶³

It is, however, possible to narrow the candidates down to two.

a. Vespasian

There are two probable solutions here. In the first of these Vespasian is himself the ‘little horn’. We arrive at this solution if we count the ten horns from Augustus, including in our calculations Vindex and Nymphidius.⁶⁴ The destruction of the three is more problematic, for while we know that Vespasian’s principate followed those of the three emperors (Galba, Otho and Vitellius), he was not himself responsible for the destruction of all three. However, in this respect, it is worth noting that in *SibOr* 5:35f. three kings are followed by ‘a great destroyer of the ungodly’, who is evidently Vespasian.

The second solution was first propounded by Lightfoot. Unlike the majority of scholars he does not see the μίκρον κέρας as referring to an emperor; it is much more likely, on the basis of the description of the beast in Daniel, and the majority of patristic interpretations of the passage that the author is referring to an anti-Christ. Lightfoot then proceeds, by counting from Julius Caesar, to claim Vespasian as number ten in the list. The ‘three’ he accounts for by arguing that the

⁶¹ Kraft admits this when he claims that B. has drawn on apocalyptic sources, which commented on the σκάνδαλον (*Dissertation*, p.128).

⁶² For the various lists presented by scholars see Scorza-Barcellona, *Barnaba*, p.57. D’Herbigny, ‘Date’, suggested the inclusion of Mark Antony on the grounds that *Barn* 4:4–5 referred not to kings, but kingdoms.

⁶³ *Barnabas*brief, p.320.

⁶⁴ See Rashi on Dan. 7:7, who states that the ten horns ‘are the ten kings who would arise from Rome before Vespasian destroyed the temple.’

Flavians were already very much associated with each other in Vespasian's reign, and could therefore be seen as a unity. From this it follows that the anti-Christ will smite the three Flavians in the reign of Vespasian.⁶⁵ The attractive element in Lightfoot's solution lies in the fact that he accounts for the ὁφ' ἔν in a more literal way than other scholars. That is, the anti-Christ will literally destroy the three 'at the same time'. The problem with the theory is that when the projected destruction occurs neither Titus nor Domitian will be emperors.

b. Nerva

Hilgenfeld was the first scholar to suggest Nerva.⁶⁶ He argued that numerically this emperor was possible if one counted from Augustus and excluded Vitellius.⁶⁷ The 'three' were obviously the three Flavians, whose dynasty came to an end with the succession of Nerva.⁶⁸

But many scholars found this solution unsatisfactory on both numerical and historical grounds. Numerically, it seemed somewhat arbitrary to exclude Vitellius from the list of emperors, especially if the argument was solely based on the omission of his name from Egyptian lists of emperors; and, in historical perspective, Nerva seemed incompatible with the actions attributed to the Danielic horn. As Lightfoot wrote: "...could Nerva be said without excessive straining of language to destroy the three kings in one and at once?"⁶⁹

Recently, Shukster and Richardson have attempted to answer these objections, and, in the process, have added some new arguments.⁷⁰ For them the ten kings are of no relevance to the question of identifying the emperor, for, they argue, the redactional emphasis lies in the second half of the passage. "The figure 10", they write, "is simply carried over from Daniel as an introduction to Barnabas' development of 'three' and 'one'."⁷¹ An examination of these additions, they argue, reveals two

⁶⁵With modifications this thesis, dubbed by D'Herbigny 'la thèse anglaise', is followed by Ramsay, *Church*, pp.308f., and Gwatkin, *Church*, p.105.

⁶⁶Hilgenfeld had not always argued for Nerva. In *ZWT* 1858, p.288; and *ZWT* 1861, p.221 he had favoured Domitian. It was only in *Epistula* that he favoured Nerva.

⁶⁷Vitellius, he argued, was not declared emperor in Egypt, a significant fact if **Barn** is of Egyptian provenance. See Lepsius, *Königsbuch*, taf.63, for the omission of Vitellius from Egyptian lists of emperors.

⁶⁸Funk, 'Zeit', p.95, suggested that if one took ὁφ' ἔν to mean 'at the same time' then the reference might be to Domitian and his two adopted sons (Suetonius, *Domit* 15); but, as he conceded, this would somewhat complicate his arithmetic. See Renan's explanation of the words: "Un petit roi (Nerva), qui viendra humilier les trois (Flavius), réduits à un (Domitien), qui l'ont précédé." (*Évangiles*, p.375).

⁶⁹*Apostolic*, p.508.

⁷⁰'Barnabas'.

⁷¹Lightfoot noticed this a long time ago when he wrote: "The most important of these (additions to the Danielic text) is the twice repeated ὁφ' ἔν. The original entertains no hint that the three kings shall suffer at once or are closely connected." (*Apostolic*, p.506).

significant facts. First, B. attempts to play down the terrible nature of the horn. This manifests itself not only in the strange word *παρὰφυσίον* and the verb *ἐταπεινώσεν* (replacing the much harsher *ἐξεργίζωθι* of Dan.), but also in B.'s omission of the more vicious aspects of the Danielic horn. Secondly, in the addition *ὅφ' ἐν* B. seems to stress the importance of the political activity of the new emperor. The suggestion of Nerva seems the best, for it accounts most easily for the mollifying redaction of the Danielic text, and the problematic *ὅφ' ἐν* *τρία*. As they write: "When Nerva succeeded Domitian in 96 c.e., a powerful, distinguished and great dynasty (consisting of three emperors) was brought low by an assassin's knife. An 'excrecent horn', hardly a predictable choice as emperor in spite of an adequate senatorial career, ascended the throne."⁷²

Shukster's and Richardson's solution is not without difficulties. For instance, is it not a little arbitrary to exclude the number ten from consideration of the emperor's identity? If B. was interested in the question of the application of his sources to the situation he was addressing would he not have seen the number ten as significant?⁷³ Shukster and Richardson do not wish to address the numerical question because it will involve them in some necessarily speculative arithmetic. Furthermore, we must ask to what extent B. seeks to soften the tone of his Danielic quotations? Not only do the two scholars fail to address the possibility that the Danielic text reached B. in the form we actually find it, but they simply assume that *ταπεινώω* is less harsh than *ξηραίνω*.

But Nerva remains an attractive suggestion because he *can* be seen to fulfil the description of the 'little horn', especially in its assumed variants from the Danielic texts, and to accord with the 'three in one'. The fit is not exact (the number ten), but in the application of apocalyptic texts there is always an approximate character.⁷⁴

The tentative conclusion to this section is that Vespasian and Nerva appear compatible with **Barn** 4:4–5, though the former is perhaps more suitable. They are certainly better than any other suggested emperor.⁷⁵

⁷² 'Barnabas', p.40.

⁷³ See *The Sibylline Oracles* for a strong interest in the precise application of numbers.

⁷⁴ Funk's tentative conclusion should be noted: "Ist die Schwierigkeit, die so noch etwas zurückbleibt, nicht viel geringer als diejenige, mit der jede andere Deutung zu kämpfen hat." ('Zeit', p.94).

⁷⁵ The most frequently suggested emperors apart from Vespasian and Nerva are Domitian and Hadrian. The former makes arithmetical sense if we count from Julius Caesar, but with this emperor it is extremely difficult to account for the 'three' and the *ὅφ' ἐν*. Wieseler, 'Brief' (see also Ruggenbach, *Brief*, p.41), circumvents the problem by arguing that Domitian humbled Vitellius in the sense that he was present in the campaign against him (Suetonius *Vespasian* 1), that he poisoned Titus, and that Barnabas thought he had killed Vespasian! Those scholars who favour a Hadrianic solution must appeal to

Ultimately, however, any solution to the question must depend upon our interpretation of the second passage.

ii. Barnabas 16:3–4

At the end of the first major section of his epistle, B. turns to the subject of the Jewish temple. His discussion falls into two parts: Part A (vv.1–5), and Part B (vv.6–10). Part A is polemical in tone. Those who decided to build the temple (ταλαίπωροι) worked under a delusion (πλανώμενοι): God never wished that a temple be built, a fact made clear in the words of the prophet Isaiah (v.2).⁷⁶ B. then cites the following words, which most scholars agree are a very loose quotation of Is. 49:17.⁷⁷

πέρας γέ τοι πάλιν λέγει: 'Ιδοὺ, οἱ καθελόντες τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον αὐτοὶ αὐτὸν οἰκοδομήσουσιν. γίνεται. διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτοὺς καθηρέθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν: νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρέται ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν αὐτόν.⁷⁸

There are two problems with which we must deal before attempting a detailed exposition of the passage.

sophistry at every point. Volkmar, 'Barnabasbrief', leaving out Julius Caesar and Vitellius in his list of emperors, makes Vespasian the tenth. The three refer to Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian because Nerva adopted Trajan, and Trajan adopted Hadrian. The παραφυσάδιον is the Anti-Christ. But this solution suffers from (a) excluding the three from the ten, which is exegetically unjustified, and (b) from assuming too close a link between Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian. Veil's solution, 'Barnabasbrief, 1904', pp.212f., is yet more complex. By omitting Galba, Otho and Vitellius from the list, Hadrian becomes number 11. He is described as παραφυσάδιον because he gave up those eastern territories that Trajan had conquered; and the three before him are those who entertained anti-Jewish policies (Vespasian, Domitian and Trajan) whom Hadrian had dishonoured by adopting pro-Jewish policies. The complications of this theory are too great to render it likely. Barnard, 'Date', has combined Volkmar and Veil. The first ten emperors begin with Augustus and end with Trajan. The eleventh horn is Nero redivivus, and the three whom he slaughters are Titus, Vespasian and Domitian, all of whom indulged in persecution of the church. As Trajan is assumed to be dead in this calculation this makes an early Hadrianic date possible. But again Barnard's solution suffers from his attempts to account for the three. Can we speak, for instance, of a persecution of Christians under Vespasian? For other criticisms of the Domitianic/Hadrianic solution see Harnack, *Chronologie*, p.422.

⁷⁶Is. 40:12 and Is. 66:1.

⁷⁷The Greek of Is. 49:17 reads: καὶ ταχὺ οἰκοδομοθήσῃ ὡς ὃν καθηρέθη καὶ οἱ ἐρημωσαντές σε ἐκ σου ἐξελεύσονται. For the only other known Patristic reference to this verse see Eusebius, *Comm. in Is.* II.36:25f., where the reading is strictly in accord with the LXX, and the interpretation different.

⁷⁸"Furthermore again he says: 'Behold those who destroyed this temple they shall rebuild it.' It is happening. For because they waged war, it was destroyed by the enemy. Now they and the servants of the enemy will rebuild it."

a. The text

The second half of the passage (v.4) contains a number of significant textual variants. **S** (Codex Sinaiticus) reads: διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτοὺς καθηρέθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν. νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρεῖται ἀνοικοδομήσωσιν αὐτόν. **G** (Codex Vaticanus Graecus 859) reads as **S** except it adds to the beginning of the verse the asyndetic γίνεται, and omits the second καὶ after νῦν. **H** (Codex Hierosolymitanus 54) takes a middle course between the two. It omits γίνεται (as **S**), but also omits the second καὶ (as **G**). **L** (Latin translation) retains γίνεται, translating it as ‘fiet’, but omits the second καὶ. In the midst of this textual malaise most scholars, following amongst others Harnack,⁷⁹ retain γίνεται but omit the second καὶ. The first of these propositions is sound: γίνεται is certainly the more difficult reading given that it probably possesses a present referent, which might have seemed strange to a scribe copying after the events to which it refers; it appears compatible with the presence of the temporal νῦν;⁸⁰ and it could be argued that its starkly asyndetic quality is in keeping with asyndeta witnessed elsewhere in the epistle,⁸¹ and appears as an understandable introduction to the commentary on the verse which follows. I would, however, question the omission of the second καὶ. Harnack, who in his edition of **Barn** had argued in favour of its retention,⁸² later argued for its omission because (a) it lacked witnesses, (b) it seemed a clumsy way to express what was quite a significant point, and (c) in the citation from Isaiah only the participation of the enemy in the building of the temple is referred to.⁸³ Argument (c) is a powerful one, but could also be regarded as weak, for then the preservation of the second καὶ becomes the more difficult reading. But in addition to this it is possible to see καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν as standing in parallel to τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτοὺς and ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν.⁸⁴ It is, however, important to note that the interpretation endorsed below does not depend upon the retention of the second καὶ.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ *Chronologie*, pp.424f.

⁸⁰ Prigent, *Épître*, pp.76–77, who holds γίνεται to be an addition, interprets νῦν in a non-temporal sense, translating it as ‘Eh bien’. But it seems very odd to the present writer why an editor of **Barn** should add γίνεται, unless he wrote at a time when something was happening to the Jewish temple.

⁸¹ For asyndeta in **Barn** see 4:2, 3, 10, 12; 5:6; 6:5; 7:5, 6; 8:2; 9:5, 9; 12:10, 11; 15:4. The majority of these come from hortatory passages and, with the possible exception of 9:9, are not as stark as the one witnessed in 16:4.

⁸² *Editio*, pp.lxxi-lxxii.

⁸³ *Chronologie*, p.424.

⁸⁴ Cunningham, *Dissertation*, p.73.

⁸⁵ On this see below, and Shukster and Richardson’s interpretation. This is similar to my own, but does not involve a retention of the second καὶ.

But the retention of the second καὶ makes this interpretation more likely.

We will return to the significance of these conclusions later.

b. Physical or spiritual temple?

For many years scholars have debated whether these verses refer to a physical or a spiritual temple. Those who argue in favour of the latter position emphasise the context in which the passage appears.⁸⁶ They argue that in ch.16, it is the intention of B. to show that a transposition has taken place from a literal temple that has been destroyed to a spiritual temple that is the Christian community. Hence to interpret the temple spiritually is to be consistent with the general argument of the chapter, and, what is more, the general argument of the epistle. If we accept this interpretation it follows that the passage is no longer relevant to the question of date.

But such a view is untenable on exegetical and grammatical grounds. First, when in 16:6f. B. *explicitly* discusses the spiritual temple, he does not draw a simple analogy between the Christian community and the temple but between the Christian heart and the temple. Furthermore, he begins the section with an emphatic δὲ, thus implying a change of subject (i.e. a change from the physical temple to the spiritual one).⁸⁷ Secondly, if B. is concerned simply with a spiritual temple, 16:3–4 is an unnecessary addition, for the whole passage seems to interrupt the flow of the argument,⁸⁸ an observation which may receive support from the fact that B. begins verse 3 with the obscure connective phrase πέρας γέ τοι.⁸⁹ Thirdly, a spiritual interpretation does not account for the sudden introduction of ὑπηρεταί, forcing the reader to understand the phrase ὑπηρεταί τῶν ἐχθρῶν as a reference to Christians, which despite the arguments of Williams,⁹⁰ constitutes an excessive straining of language. Here Alon's comments are pertinent: "It is scarcely conceivable that the author would call the Christians servants. Although he does write to Gentile Christians, the gulf between them and the very pagan Romans of his day was vast. The phrase

⁸⁶See, amongst others, Hilgenfeld, Funk, Wieseler, Riggenbach, Lightfoot, Williams, Prigent and Gunther.

⁸⁷It could be argued that the emphasis falls on θεοῦ. In this case a translation might read: "But let us enquire if a temple of *God* exists." This seems unlikely since the issue of the existence of a temple of God has not yet been discussed.

⁸⁸See Völter's description of 16:3–4: "Sehen wir Capitel xvi an, so ist zunächst zu konstatieren, daß die Paragraphen xvi:3–4 eine nachträgliche Einschaltung in dieses Capitel bilden. Diese Paragraphen unterbrechen in sinnloser Weise einen ganzen regelrechten Zusammenhang." (*Väter*, p.359).

⁸⁹On this phrase see Wengst, *Tradition*, p.72 n.73.

⁹⁰He argues, 'Date', p.343, that the ὑπηρεταί are citizens of Rome, converted to Christianity. For a similar interpretation see Gunther, 'Temple', p.150.

would have simply been too incongruous.”⁹¹ Fourthly, the abrupt and concealed transition from the earthly temple spoken of in καθηρέθη to the spiritual temple intended by ἀντόν is “unnatural in the extreme.”⁹² Fifthly, where in 16:3–4 B. perceives the building of the temple as a future event, in 16:6 it appears already to have been accomplished. And finally, if the spiritual interpretation is right then B. is arguing in a way contrary to his usual method. Usually, in polemical contexts he proceeds from a negative (Jewish) observation to a positive (Christian) one (2:4–8/9f.; 3:1f./4–6; 8:2/3–6; 11:2f./4–11; 14:1–4a/4b-9), or vice versa (9:1–3; 4–6). If the spiritual interpretation is right then B. is unusually arguing from a negative observation (1–2) to a positive one (3–4) and then back to a negative one (5).⁹³

The above arguments are negative in content; they only *imply* a reference to a physical building. Furthermore, they do not impair one of the major strengths of the spiritual interpretation, namely the difficulty we encounter in discovering an historical situation which is compatible with what we read in 16:3–4.

But before considering such an argument, it is best to determine the meaning of that content. Here it seems reasonable to assume that B. has modified Is. 49:17 to suit his own interpretation.⁹⁴ Such a conclusion arises from the observation that B., who quotes from Isaiah more regularly than any other text of the OT, normally quotes the prophet accurately.⁹⁵ The citation at 16:3 is uncharacteristically inaccurate, suggesting that the author has himself modified it.⁹⁶

⁹¹Jews, p.450. Wengst, *Schriften*, p.114, raises another objection to Williams' interpretation: "Auch der Wortlaut von 16:3f., der Zerstörer und Erbauer identifiziert, fügt sich nur sehr schwer einem übertragenen Verständnis des neu aufgebauten Tempels sei."

⁹²Cunningham, *Dissertation*, p.73.

⁹³For this argument see Stegemann, 'Review', pp.149–150.

⁹⁴Veil, 'Barnabasbrief 1904': "Er hat sie in eigenmächtiger Weise umgeformt."; Shukster and Richardson, 'Barnabas', p.36; and Wengst, *Schriften*, p.126.

⁹⁵This fact is well set out by Wengst, *ibid.*, p.126, who shows that in complexes of citations those taken from Isaiah are invariably the most accurately recorded.

⁹⁶Kraft, *Dissertation*, p.269, uses the same argument to reject the thesis that the author idea that the author has modified a quotation to suit his own interpretation. Instead he suggests that B. is not quoting directly from Isaiah, but from a Jewish eschatological source, similar to Tobit 14:4–6, which noted the impending destruction of the Temple by Nebudchadnezzar (τὸν δὲ οἶκον κατέλυντες), but also looked forward to its rebuilding under Zerubbabel (οἰκοδομησαί). See Weizsäcker, *Kritik*, pp.25f. who believed that B. intended the reference to be to Zerubbabel. But in this particular interpretation it is difficult to account for the future orientation of the passage in *Barn*. He also points to what he regards as a similar tradition at 4Ezra 6:15f.) But there are three difficulties with this hypothesis. First, on the basis of probabilities it seems much more likely that the uncharacteristically garbled quotation from Isaiah indicates intentional modification on the part of B. Secondly, if the source B. was using looked anything like Kraft has suggested it is surely odd that in *Barn* the idea of the temple's reestablishment plays such a minor role, and that instead a negative critique of the temple predominates.

First, we should note that where the Isaiah text refers to the walls of Jerusalem, B. has changed that reference to the temple. Secondly, he has added to the text καὶ αὐτοὶ, which would seem, at least on the surface, to indicate that not only the Romans, but the Jews themselves will be involved in the rebuilding of the temple.⁹⁷ But this need not necessarily be the case, for as Schäfer has argued αὐτοὶ may refer to the Romans and ὑπηρεταὶ τῶν ἐχθρῶν to those people who are helping them. He writes: "This explanation is further supported by the clear similarity of the two sentences (... they themselves will rebuild it. It is happening now... now they themselves and the servants of the enemies will rebuild it) whereby the second sentence is only extended by mention of the servants of the Romans."⁹⁸ But if Schäfer is right we might have expected B. to write ἐχθροὶ καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ or αὐτοὶ καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ αὐτῶν, especially given the reference to the Jews as αὐτούς in the phrase διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολεμεῖν αὐτούς. Mention of this difficulty brings us to the addition of ὑπηρεταὶ, which again appears to add some specificity to what B. writes. In determining to what this word refers one is dependent, at least in part, on one's reading of 16:4. The majority of those who omit the second καὶ see the word as referring to builders employed by the Romans,⁹⁹ though it is worth noting that Shukster and Richardson, who also omit the second καὶ, understand ὑπηρεταὶ as a polemical reference to the *Jews*.¹⁰⁰ Fourthly, B. seems to have emphasised the *actual* nature of the building. This explains his additions to Isaiah of γίνεται and νῦν. But this observation should not blind us to the temporal tension witnessed in the verse. While γίνεται and νῦν indicate the present nature of the building, ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν implies that it is still to take place. The implication of this is that at the time that B. is writing the temple is not being rebuilt, but there exists the strong expectation that it will be.

We can draw three inferences from this discussion:

- (1) In 16:3–4 B. is concerned with the physical rebuilding of the Jewish temple.
- (2) The rebuilding will involve both the Jews and the Romans.
- (3) The rebuilding is not taking place at the time B. is writing, but will take place some time in the very near future. Here we should note

Thirdly, no writer, even if citing a source, could have been oblivious to its reference to the present time (see γίνεται and νῦν), or unable to modify the source himself.

⁹⁷Shukster and Richardson, 'Barnabas', p.36, while rejecting my retention of the καὶ in the phrase καὶ αὐτοὶ, note that αὐτοὶ still constitutes an addition to the text of Isaiah and serves to emphasise the fact that destroyers are builders.

⁹⁸See *Aufstand*, p.34; and 'Bar Kokhba', p.80.

⁹⁹Typical in this respect is *Revised Schürer* I, p.536. For references to its different meanings see Lidell and Scott, p.1872. In general the word refers to an individual in a subordinate relationship to someone else. See also Lampe, p.1444, where it seems to have little secular application.

¹⁰⁰'Barnabas', p.35 n.10. They support their case by arguing that ὑπηρετής usually refers to individuals, who work voluntarily.