

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe 82

Reidar Hvalvik

# The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant



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Herausgegeben von  
Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius

82

# The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant

The Purpose of the Epistle of Barnabas  
and Jewish-Christian Competition  
in the Second Century

by

Reidar Hvalvik



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To enter into the thinking of 'Barnabas' and his tradition requires great patience and a touch of imagination.

Philip Carrington

## Preface

This book is a slightly revised version of my dissertation, submitted to The Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology (Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet) in June 1994 and accepted as partial requirement for the degree of Doctor Theologiae. It was publicly defended in December 1994, and I would like to express my thanks to my 'opponents' on that occasion, Professor David E. Aune (Chicago) and Professor Mogens Müller (Copenhagen). Their constructive criticism has enabled me to make a number of corrections before final publication. At an earlier stage a number of other persons and institutions have made various contributions to this project, the value of which is highly appreciated.

My interest in the Apostolic Fathers started when I was an undergraduate student and was intensified in 1983, when Professor Ernst Baasland invited me to take part in the editing of a Norwegian version of these writings. At that time I was searching for a subject for further research, and soon decided to direct my attention to the *Epistle of Barnabas*. During my years as a research assistant I made some preliminary studies on different aspects of the epistle; and above all I tried to find a fruitful approach to this peculiar document. In this period I received important encouragement and advice from Professor Nils A. Dahl, and thanks to him I resolved to go on with the project. Thanks are also offered to Professor Edvin Larsson, who followed the project during the first years and gave me the opportunity to put forward some of my ideas in his research seminar. Other duties, however, caused the work to be put aside for some time, but it was taken up again in 1990. In that year I received a three-year scholarship from The Norwegian Research Council for Science and Humanities/The Research Council of Norway (NAVF/NFR), which made it possible for me to complete the dissertation.

During that period Professor Oskar Skarsaune acted as my supervisor, and I would like to express my deep gratitude for his valuable support. He has followed my work with interest for many years and has given much time to



discuss the project with me. I thank him both for his suggestions and advice and for giving me courage and belief in my work.

I likewise thank my colleagues in the New Testament department at the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology, especially Dr. Kjell Arne Morland, who gave useful comments and advice to the chapter dealing with the rhetoric and argumentation in *Barnabas*, and to Professor Karl Olav Sandnes, who commented on the whole manuscript in the final stage.

A word of gratitude is also directed to Mr. Richard Blucher and Dr. Thomas Kingston Derry, who read the entire manuscript and checked my English. This was made possible through a grant from The Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology and The Research Council of Norway, and I am grateful to both these institutions for their support. Thanks are likewise due to the librarians of The Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology for their assistance throughout many years.

Many thanks are also directed to Professor Martin Hengel and his co-editor Professor Otfried Hofius for accepting the work for publication in the WUNT 2 series.

Last but not least, I thank my wife Brit and my children Magnus and Margrete for their patience with a busy husband and father during the three years when he spent most of his time on this book.

Slattum, June 1994/September 1995

Reidar Hvalvik

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow the rules recommended by the Society of Biblical Literature, and used in the periodicals *CBQ* and *JBL*; see e.g. *CBQ* 46 (1984) 393-408. These rules include standard abbreviations for Biblical books, early Jewish and Christian literature. The abbreviations used are noted in the Ancient Writings Index (pp. 383-405).

### Abbreviations for Periodicals, Reference Works, and Serials

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AKG	Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>APOT</i>	<i>Apocrypha und Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> (ed. R. H. Charles)
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>Aug</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
<i>BARev</i>	<i>Biblical Archeology Review</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BZNW	Beihefte zur ZNW
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly - Monograph Series
CC	Corpus Christianorum
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CII</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum iudaicarum</i>
<i>CQR</i>	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad novum testamentum
<i>EKL</i>	<i>Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon</i>
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> (1971)

ErFor	Erträge der Forschung
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
EWNT	<i>Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> (ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider)
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IDBSup	Supplementary volume to IDB
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament-Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha-Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAV	Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LPGL	G. W. H. Lampe, <i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i>
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones, <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i>
LTK	<i>Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche</i>
MeyerK	H. A. W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
MTZ	<i>Münchener theologische Zeitschrift</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NCE	<i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> (ed. M.R.P. McGuire, et al.)
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements

NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NTA	<i>New Testament Abstracts</i>
NTAF	<i>The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers</i> (Oxford, 1905)
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Numen	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>
OrChr	<i>Oriens christianus</i>
OTP	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> (ed. J. H. Charlesworth)
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> (ed. J. Migne)
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> (ed. J. Migne)
PW	Pauly-Wissowa, <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft</i>
PWSup	Supplement to PW
QD	Questiones disputatae
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBén	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
RE	<i>Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
ResQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RQ	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SAQ	Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellschriften
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSBS	SBL Sources for Biblical Study
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Sources chrétiennes
ScrHier	Scripta hierosolymitana
SEÅ	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i>
SecCent	<i>Second Century</i>
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPA	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>
STK	<i>Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift</i>
Str-B	[H. Strack and] P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TBü	Theologische Bücherei
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>

<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
<i>TTK</i>	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke</i>
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>VCSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZBK</i>	<i>Zürcher Bibelkommentare</i>
<i>ZKG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZMR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
<i>ZWT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>

### Publications of Papyri

<i>BGU</i>	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen [Staatlichen] Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden I-VIII</i> (Berlin 1895-1933)
<i>PPetr</i>	<i>The Flinders Petrie Papyri I-III</i> (Dublin 1891-1905)
<i>PAlex</i>	<i>Papyrus Grecs du Musée Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie</i> (Warsaw 1964)
<i>PFay</i>	<i>Fayum Towns and their Papyri</i> (London 1900)
<i>PFlor</i>	<i>Papiri Fiorentini I-III</i> (Milan 1906-1915)
<i>PGiess</i>	<i>Griechische Papyri im Museum des Oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen</i> (Leipzig 1910-1912)
<i>PLond</i>	<i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum I-V</i> (London 1893-1917)
<i>PMert</i>	<i>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of Wilfred Merton I-III</i> (London 1948-1967)
<i>POxy</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchos Papyri I-XVII</i> (London 1898-1927)
<i>PRein</i>	Th. Reinach, <i>Papyrus Grecs et Démotiques</i> (Paris 1905)
<i>PRyl</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester I-IV</i> (Manchester 1915-1952)
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana: Papiri greci e latini I-XI</i> (Florence 1912-1935)
<i>PTebt</i>	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri I-IV</i> (London 1902-1976)
<i>SB</i>	<i>Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten I-VIII</i> (Berlin 1915-)

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is abbreviated *Barnabas*; its unknown author is simply called Barnabas. The work is alternatively referred to both as "epistle" and "letter", reflecting common practice. For a precise determination of its literary character, see section 2.2.

## A note on texts and translations used in this work

The text of *Barnabas* used in this work is the one edited by Klaus WENGST (1984). When in a few cases I depart from this text, it will be noted. The text critical signs are the same as in WENGST's edition: S = Codex Sinaiticus; H = Codex Hierosolymitanus; V = Codex Vaticanus graecus 859; L = the Latin translation.

As a standard English translation I have chosen Edgar GOODSPEED's edition of 1950. If nothing else is noted, this text is used - with the following alterations: the Greek word *διαθήκη* is always rendered "covenant" (and not "agreement"); *τύπος* is translated "type" (not "symbol") and "righteousness" is used instead of "uprightness".

In some instances, however, another text is quoted, the one most frequently used in addition to GOODSPEED being the translation by Michael W. HOLMES (revision of LIGHTFOOT/HARMER; 1992). This is indicated in the footnotes.

Biblical quotations are taken from the *Revised Standard Version*. Classical authors are quoted from the editions in the *Loeb Classical Library*, if nothing else is indicated. Early Christian writings are quoted from the separate editions listed in the Bibliography. If no recent English translation is listed, I have used the one found in the Ante-Nicene Fathers. For Justin, Lukyn WILLIAMS' translation is used for the *Dialogue*, Thomas B. FALLS' translation for his other works. Translations from the Pseudepigrapha are quoted according to *OTP*; rabbinic works according to the editions found in the Bibliography.



## Part One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. The *Epistle of Barnabas* in Recent Research

*Barnabas* has been characterized as "an extremely important document for the student of Christian origins"<sup>1</sup> and it has been suggested that it could turn out to be a "theologieggeschichtliche Quelle ersten Ranges".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in recent research *Barnabas* finds itself "eher am Rande der Forschung";<sup>3</sup> it is appropriately called "a somewhat mysterious and understudied document".<sup>4</sup> In the last century and at the beginning of this century, however, it attracted more interest, and we shall briefly sketch the history of research, focusing on the main issues during the last hundred years.

In the last century numerous contributions to *Barnabas* emerged. Many of them were historically oriented, concentrating on questions of introduction. Typical was the discussion about whether the apostle Barnabas could be the author. Today this is no longer a matter of discussion. With a single possible exception, nobody seems to claim an apostolic authorship.<sup>5</sup>

Another issue was the dating of the work, a question mainly connected with the interpretation of 4:3-6a and 16:3-4. Since both these texts are rather ambiguous, the dating is still a matter of dispute.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most disputed questions around the turn of the century was the integrity of the letter. Far-fetched hypotheses about different redactions and interpolations were put forward, e.g. by Johannes Weiss in 1888 and Daniel Völter in 1904, but none of them was generally approved. In more recent years the theory about interpolations has had few advocates,<sup>7</sup> and the inte-

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<sup>1</sup> KRAFT 1960:336.

<sup>2</sup> VIELHAUER 1975:612.

<sup>3</sup> WENGST 1971:1. This holds true even today.

<sup>4</sup> WILSON 1992:610.

<sup>5</sup> See further below, section 1.5.1.

<sup>6</sup> See further below, section 1.3.

<sup>7</sup> The last example is ROBILLARD 1971.



grity of the writing has been accepted by the great majority of scholars.<sup>8</sup>

Related to this question is the source critical approach to *Barnabas*. This was seriously taken up by Hans Windisch in his seminal commentary from 1920, *Der Barnabasbrief* in the HNT-series. In fact there are few other books which have had a corresponding influence on *Barnabas*-research. In an eminent way he utilized the results of the critical research on *Barnabas* so far, and laid the fundament for most of the research to come for many decades. The results of his work may be summarized in the following way:

1) *Barnabas* is not a uniform writing; it is made up of different elements. In Windisch's view the most secure result of his research was that the author utilized two "Vorlagen": "Testimonenstoff und Didachestoff".<sup>9</sup>

2) *Barnabas* is "eigentlich kein Brief, sondern ein leicht in Briefform gekleideter erbaulicher Traktat".<sup>10</sup>

3) There was no concrete occasion behind the writing of *Barnabas*. "Ein aktueller Anlaß konnte nicht entdeckt werden."<sup>11</sup>

All later *Barnabas*-research seems more or less to have accepted these views. This is evident in two ways. First: no one has really questioned Windisch's opinion on the literary character and occasion of *Barnabas*. In other words, items 2) and 3) have been taken for granted and are barely discussed in recent works. Second, recent research has been dominated by the view that *Barnabas* is no uniform writing. Most attention has been given to the sources and traditions used by Barnabas.

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<sup>8</sup> GOODSPEED is the only important exception. In his view the original *Barnabas*, written about 130, consisted of chaps. 1-17; a generation later it was enlarged by the Two Ways material, taken from the Greek original of *Doctrina Apostolorum*. The original edition of *Barnabas* is thus to be found in the Latin version with its 17 chapters (1945:235; cf. 1950:286). This argument is highly doubtful. It is much more probable that the Latin translator has shortened the Greek original. The fact that he has transported the doxology of 12:7 to the end of chap. 17 points in the same direction: it was obviously done to give the shortened version a "klangvollen Abschluss" (WENGST 1984:110). This means that the Latin version should not be used as evidence for a shorter edition of *Barnabas* (cf. also ANDRY 1951). Besides, the language and content of the whole letter clearly point to the conclusion that *Barnabas* from the beginning consisted of chaps. 1-21, i.e. had its present shape. See on the whole question MUILENBURG 1929:15-16 and 109-135.

<sup>9</sup> WINDISCH 1920:410.

<sup>10</sup> WINDISCH 1920:411.

<sup>11</sup> WINDISCH 1920:411.

In the first decades following Windisch's commentary the relation to *Didache* was the focus of scholarly interest. Many contributions, mainly from British scholars, dealt specifically with that question.<sup>12</sup> Many of these scholars held the view that Barnabas was the author of the Two Ways section found both in *Barnabas* and *Didache*. More recently this theory has been in decline, and today there seems to be a growing consensus that both Barnabas and the author of *Didache* are dependent on an earlier Jewish source.<sup>13</sup>

More directly related to the question of sources were two major works on *Barnabas* from 1961: Pierre Prigent, *Les Testimonia dans le Christianisme Primitif. L'Épître de Barnabé I-XVI et ses Sources*,<sup>14</sup> and Robert A. Kraft, *The Epistle of Barnabas, its Quotations and their Sources*. Prigent renewed Windisch's theory that Barnabas made use of *testimonia*, and presented a rather comprehensive hypothesis about the sources. In his view *Barnabas* was made up of four different types of traditions: 1) anti-cultic testimonies, 2) 'midrashic' traditions, 3) Messianic testimonies and 4) other material (from Jewish apocalyptic writings, Two Ways material and 'targumic' paraphrases).

Prigent's theory was met with reservations,<sup>15</sup> and the whole testimony-hypothesis is still debated. With regard to *Barnabas* it seems justified to say that a "modest form of it is defensible".<sup>16</sup>

Kraft's dissertation was devoted to the many quotations in *Barnabas*, their text-form and possible sources. His treatment of text-form is very detailed and accurate, and is still the standard work on this topic. With regard to the question of sources, Kraft concluded that Barnabas utilized traditions "from a hellenistic Jewish school tradition" which were "Christianized by means of editorial comments which hold the traditional material together."<sup>17</sup>

The approach used in the two last-mentioned works reflects common methods within New Testament research at the time: form criticism and history of tradition. Thus attention was given to what was *behind* the text and not to the final product. Consequently both Prigent and Kraft could

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<sup>12</sup> See MUILENBURG 1929; BURKITT 1932; ROBINSON 1934; CONNOLLY 1932 and 1937a-b; STREETER 1936; CADBURY 1936; GOODSPEED 1945; cf. survey in ANDRY 1949:60-68, 231-253.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. SCHOEDEL 1989:467. See also below 2.5.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> It should, however, be noted that PRIGENT's book is primarily a work on testimonies in early Christianity and not on *Barnabas*.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the recension of STEGEMANN (1962). KRAFT (1962) was more positive.

<sup>16</sup> SCHOEDEL 1989:469. The most recent discussion of the subject is found in CARLETON PAGET 1994:90-94.

<sup>17</sup> KRAFT 1961, appended summary, p. 4; cf. p. 286.

concentrate on chapters 1-16 without taking the letter as a whole into consideration.<sup>18</sup> Typical also is the evaluation of the author of *Barnabas* - found in Kraft's commentary on the epistle from 1965: "He has not consistently digested his materials so that they become a part of him; he has not integrated them by means of a perspective which may be called, in a special way, his own. Rather, his tradition speaks through him."<sup>19</sup>

Barnabas' use of traditions was also an important part of Klaus Wengst's book *Tradition und Theologie des Barnabasbriefes* from 1971. His aim was to map the theology of the letter, and he asked: What is traditional material and what is the author's contribution?<sup>20</sup> His approach had thus much in common with redaction criticism, at that time flourishing in biblical studies. Wengst's conclusion was: "Die Theologie des Barnabas ist also nicht sein eigenes Werk, sondern seine Theologie ist nicht anderes als die Theologie der Schule, der er angehört."<sup>21</sup> In other words: Wengst, too, suggested that *Barnabas* was a product of school tradition.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to earlier research, however, he stressed the unity of the letter. There was no discrepancy between the traditions and the editorial comments.

The thread from Wengst is also followed in the latest major work on *Barnabas*, James Carleton Paget's dissertation: *The Epistle of Barnabas. Outlook and Background*.<sup>23</sup> One of his main tasks is to examine the results of earlier research with regard to tradition and redaction, especially in connection with the works of Prigent and Wengst. With Wengst he argues for the theological coherence of the epistle, but denies that *Barnabas* is representative of a single tradition. Following Prigent, he claims that the author has made use of different traditions, which were perhaps in tension with each other. The specific theological outlook of the epistle is thus due to the creativity of its author, "a creativity that may at times lie in the combination of traditions, and at other times in his own particular interjec-

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<sup>18</sup> In his review of PRIGENT's book STEGEMANN (1962:150) called attention to this problem. He also pointed out that Prigent had "forgotten" to deal with chap. 13! (p. 146).

<sup>19</sup> KRAFT 1965:2 (with regard to an author-editor of the type we meet in *Barnabas* and *Didache*). Kraft's commentary is probably the best in the English language, containing many useful observations.

<sup>20</sup> The approach of WENGST's work is undoubtedly based on the proposal of STEGEMANN (1962:151-152).

<sup>21</sup> WENGST 1971:70.

<sup>22</sup> Following a suggestion by W. BOUSSET 1915:312f. Cf. also KRAFT 1961 (quoted above, on p.3) and LIETZMANN (1949:218) who thinks the Scriptural quotations are "derived from the tradition of some catechumen school".

<sup>23</sup> CARLETON PAGET 1994. The work was published after the completion of my own dissertation. Thus reference to his work is mainly limited to the footnotes.

tions".<sup>24</sup> In other words, the epistle "constitutes a mélange of traditions and ideas, brought together and adapted to form a moderately coherent theology".<sup>25</sup> In stressing the distinctive outlook of *Barnabas* and the creativity of its author, Carleton Paget is in no way typical of recent research.<sup>26</sup>

As becomes clear from the survey above, the main focus in *Barnabas*-research during the last several generations has been on traditions and sources. Also other questions have been dealt with, but few have been treated thoroughly. The only exception may be some theological issues, in particular the eschatology of the letter.<sup>27</sup> But many central questions have been more or less ignored. It is those questions which will be in focus in this work.

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<sup>24</sup> CARLETON PAGET 1994:182; cf. 184 and 262. Cf. also AONO 1979:213: "Es scheint uns, dass Barnabas mehr redaktionelle Zufügungen gemacht hat, als Wengst annimmt, sei es ad hoc oder schon in früherer Bearbeitung der Lehrstücke. Wengst scheint überhaupt zu stark am Problem der Ad-hoc-Bildungen orientiert zu sein und, als Folge davon, die redaktionelle Fähigkeit des Barnabas zu unterschätzen."

<sup>25</sup> CARLETON PAGET 1994:248.

<sup>26</sup> Also BARNARD has, however, stressed "the particular theological viewpoint which the writer has imposed on his sources" (1966:106). BARNARD has dealt with *Barnabas* in many articles during recent decades; see now his survey in *ANRW* (BARNARD 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. AONO 1979:211-297 and LOHMANN 1989:195-241 (both contributions are parts of bigger works on the Apostolic Fathers); note also HERMANS 1959 and FERGUSON 1990 (both on the question of millennialism in *Barnabas*).

## 1.2. Approach and Method

### 1.2.1. The neglected questions

Among the neglected questions in recent research we find those which concern the occasion, purpose and literary character of *Barnabas*. The views proposed by Windisch seem still to be shared by a majority of scholars. The prevailing view is thus that *Barnabas* is "eine Abhandlung ohne aktuellen Anlass und ohne Begrenzung auf ein bestimmtes Publikum".<sup>1</sup> To be sure, alternative views are found in recent research, but nobody has so far treated these questions more thoroughly, despite the fact that "das Hauptproblem des Barnabasbriefes dürfte die Veranlassung zu diesem Schreiben sein".<sup>2</sup> It is thus time to reopen the debate concerning occasion, purpose and literary character - questions which are closely connected. This is the starting-point for the present work.

One may ask why these questions have been neglected by most scholars. First and foremost it seems to be a consequence of the view that *Barnabas* is mostly dependent on traditional materials. According to a prevailing view Barnabas has only to a very limited extent put his own stamp on the material<sup>3</sup> and his epistle is seen as little more than a "collection of materials".<sup>4</sup> Of course this has important consequences for the interpretation of *Barnabas*. If the writing is regarded as a collection of various materials - and the author as a redactor with a rather limited capacity - it is difficult to imagine that *Barnabas* was to be a coherent work with a clear purpose. In fact a one-sided source-critical approach has no interest in questions such as occasion and purpose: "If one admits that much of the material found in the final form of the Epistle already existed in earlier forms, questions such as authorship, occasion, date, destination, and place of origin are exposed as, in some senses, illegitimate."<sup>5</sup> The neglect of questions concerning occasion and purpose may thus be seen as a consequence of methodological trends within biblical research some decades ago. A new situation with regard to methods

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<sup>1</sup> VIELHAUER 1975:602.

<sup>2</sup> VERWEYS 1960:173.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. KRAFT 1965:2, quoted above (p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> KOESTER 1982:278.

<sup>5</sup> KRAFT 1961:24.

may, therefore, make it easier to justify a new debate concerning *Barnabas*' purpose.

### 1.2.2. The purpose of *Barnabas* - An examination of earlier views

Even if the question concerning occasion and purpose<sup>6</sup> has not been in the foreground in recent research, it is nevertheless touched upon by most scholars. And there are many different answers to the question. In the following we shall briefly examine the most important views proposed in *Barnabas* research.

The question about the occasion and purpose of *Barnabas* is most closely bound up with the *anti-Jewish tendency* found in the epistle.<sup>7</sup> How shall this feature be interpreted? Was Judaism a real problem to the author and his readers, or are the statements concerning Jews and Judaism only theoretical? To formulate the question in this way brings us directly to the first position to be mentioned.

1) According to some influential, mainly German, commentators Judaism in no way caused the writing of *Barnabas*. This was the view argued in Hans Windisch's commentary from 1920,<sup>8</sup> and it has often been repeated, e.g. by Philipp Vielhauer:

Es ist heute wohl allgemein anerkannt, daß es keine aktuelle Gefährdung der christlichen Gemeinde durch die Juden war; nichts im Barn weist auf politische Machenschaften der Juden oder auf jüdische oder judaistische Propaganda, also auf eine äußere oder innere Gefährdung der Gemeinde durch die Juden hin.<sup>9</sup>

The scholars who hold this view do not deny the anti-Jewish polemic in *Barnabas*, but they claim that the discussion of Jews and Judaism is "völlig akademisch".<sup>10</sup> They think that "die Frontstellung des Barnabas gegen das Judentum theoretischer Art ist".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Occasion and purpose are seldom kept apart, so they will be seen together.

<sup>7</sup> DE LANGE (1978:128) calls *Barnabas* "das erste erhaltene Werk christlicher antijüdischer Polemik". On the question whether *Barnabas* is anti-cultic or anti-Jewish, see below 2.3.3.2.

<sup>8</sup> "Ein aktueller Anlaß, eine konkrete jüdische oder judenchristliche Gefahr liegt nicht vor." (WINDISCH 1920:411; cf. 322-323).

<sup>9</sup> VIELHAUER 1975:605.

<sup>10</sup> DIBELIUS 1926/75:130; cf. VIELHAUER 1975:606.

<sup>11</sup> WENGST 1971:102; cf. WINDISCH 1920:322f; HARNACK 1897/1958:416.

With this starting-point further reflections on occasion and purpose may lead in different directions. Even if Judaism is discounted as a reason for the writing of *Barnabas*, one may look for another occasion. Or one may argue that *Barnabas* is nothing but an academic work, with no connection to real life. Let us look at some proposals along these lines.

1a) Among those who disregard Judaism as a factor in the origin of *Barnabas*, some make a case for an internal polemical front, i.e. against other Christians. Wengst takes *Barn.* 4:6 to be a polemical statement against people who hold "die übliche christliche Auffassung von der Schrift und Israel" and thinks that this "nicht nur ein theoretisches, sondern auch ein konkretes, aktuelles Gegenüber bilden."<sup>12</sup> The same polemical front is also found in 9:6 and 12:10.<sup>13</sup> According to Wengst *Barnabas* is a "Propaganda-schreiben" and the author's purpose (announced in 1:5) is to recruit other Christians "für seine besonderer Sicht des Christentums".<sup>14</sup>

There have also been other proposals which interpret *Barnabas* in relation to an internal Christian debate. Thus Lawson thinks that the epistle is addressed to the question about the "position of Old Testament Scripture in the Christian system." More specifically he calls *Barnabas* "an essay in allegory and typology, in order to vindicate the Old Testament as a Christian book."<sup>15</sup> The background for this is found in the debate concerning the Old Testament in the Early Church, as seen for example in connection with Marcion.<sup>16</sup>

In the last proposal there is in fact no reference to a concrete occasion behind *Barnabas*; it is more a general theological problem taken up by a Christian teacher and treated in an essay. This is even more the case in other proposals.

1b) Some scholars stress the didactic character of *Barnabas* and call it a "treatise" or "Abhandlung" - thus indicating that it was not the result of a specific occasion and that its purpose is rather general. Koester calls *Barnabas* "a treatise of scriptural gnosis" and thinks that the author's aim is "the

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<sup>12</sup> WENGST 1971:102-103; cf. 1984:113. Cf. also VIELHAUER: *Barnabas* is an attack on "das Theologumenon vom Alten und Neuen Bund" (1975:606-607) and BARDENHEWER (1913:104) who claims that the author speaks against "die neutestamentlich-christliche Auffassung des Alten Testaments".

<sup>13</sup> WENGST 1971:103; 1984:113.

<sup>14</sup> WENGST 1971:104-105. In this view he is dependent on a proposal by H. STEGEMANN (cf. *ibid.*, 105, n.14).

<sup>15</sup> LAWSON 1961:193 and 198.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also PAULSEN (1986:231-232) who claims that *Barnabas* reflects "einer innergemeindlichen Auseinandersetzung über den angemessenen Gebrauch des AT".

demonstration of the deeper understanding of Scripture".<sup>17</sup> A similar view is taken by Lietzmann, who maintains: "The purpose of his work is everywhere to prove that the whole of Christianity has been prophesied beforehand by the prophets in the Old Testament."<sup>18</sup>

2) Other scholars come to quite different conclusions with regard to the occasion and purpose of *Barnabas*. First they will agree with Bousset, who claimed that *Barnabas* is "ein Schreiben, das mit einer bestimmten Absicht und Tendenz geschrieben und an Leser in einer ganz bestimmten Situation gerichtet ist."<sup>19</sup> Second, they will claim that Judaism was an important factor behind the writing of the epistle. More precisely: Barnabas writes to Christians with clear Judaistic inclinations<sup>20</sup> or even to Christians who were about to (or at least were tempted to) join the Jewish community. In most cases one speaks about a *relapse to Judaism*,<sup>21</sup> which means that the epistle is written to Jewish Christians.<sup>22</sup>

What prompted this situation? Two possibilities have been mentioned: there was some sort of pressure, either from people within the Church or from outside - as is indicated in the following proposals:

2a) The situation which Barnabas warns against was created by a group of Judaizers within the community<sup>23</sup> or by some Judaizing teachers active in the community (or communities) to which he wrote.<sup>24</sup>

2b) The threatening situation was the result of Jewish activity: "The author of 'Barnabas' felt that the Jewish propaganda was making headway, and that

<sup>17</sup> KOESTER 1982:277; so also VIELHAUER 1975:602.

<sup>18</sup> LIETZMANN 1949:218.

<sup>19</sup> BOUSSET 1915:312; cf. VEIL 1924:503; SCHMID 1950:1212.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. HARNACK 1897/1958:413 "gegen 'judaisierende' Christen".

<sup>21</sup> HEFELE 1840:136 ("Gefahr des Rückfalles in's Judenthum"); VEIL 1904a:149 ("die Gefahr eines Rückfalls von Christen in das Judentum"); KLEIST 1948:34 ("the temptation to fall back into Judaism"); SCHÜTZ 1957:880; BARNARD 1958a:101; cf. 1959a:177.

<sup>22</sup> At least the polemical front in the epistle is thought to be directed against Jewish Christians in the community; cf. WEIZSÄCKER 1863:8-9: "Wir haben daher alle Ursache zu der Annahme, dass die vorliegende Gefahr des Judaismus begründet ist in der jüdischen Herkunft seiner Vertreter. Aber sie sind nicht die ganze Gemeinde."

<sup>23</sup> Cf. WEIZSÄCKER 1863:8-9 (cf. quotation in the preceding note). A related proposal - based on the idea of a conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians (cf. the Tübingen School) - has found an advocate in A. DI PAULI (1903:324), who writes as follows: "Der Barnabasbrief ist von einem hochstehenden versöhnlichen Judenchristen an die Gemeinde von Jerusalem, bestehend aus Juden- und Heidenchristen, c. 130 bei Gelegenheit eines Streites zwischen den genannten Parteien abgefaßt worden."

<sup>24</sup> CUNNINGHAM 1877:xv; BARNARD 1959a:177.



there was a danger of some Christians making a shipwreck of themselves upon it."<sup>25</sup>

3) In some cases these proposals (2a and 2b) are connected with a further specification of the historical circumstances which gave rise to the Judaistic or Jewish propaganda. In one way or another these are thought to have something to do with Jewish expectations and/or political events. The following proposals are to be mentioned:

3a) The circumstance which gave rise to the writing of *Barnabas* was the rise of Jewish messianism. This is maintained by Lowy, who thinks that

the *Epistle* was written as an answer to the Jewish messianic movement which prophesied the early reconstruction of the Temple, the ingathering of the exiles, the coming of the Messiah, political freedom, etc. These aspirations were given a fillip by certain political and social events, which could be explained as favouring Jewish hopes, and they were consequently used as a proof that such hopes were going to be fulfilled. The Roman Empire was considered as being in favour (consciously or otherwise) of these hopes. By its preaching, prophecies and supposed success, the movement drew converts and sympathisers to Judaism and the Law, including some from the rank and file of Christianity.<sup>26</sup>

3b) According to some scholars the expectation of the rebuilding of the Temple was even more important. It was not only one element among others; it was the very thing that prompted the writing of *Barnabas*. According to this view *Barnabas* 16 refers to the rebuilding of the *Jewish* Temple in Jerusalem<sup>27</sup> in Hadrian's reign. In this solution chapter 16 is seen as the "Schlüssel zum ganzen Barnabasbrief",<sup>28</sup> though also other texts (e.g. 4:3) are thought to refer to the same event.

A similar view is also taken by Shukster and Richardson, but they date the letter earlier. In their view *Barnabas* is best "understood against the historical backdrop of the 90s, when the Yavnean consolidation and an expectation that the Temple would be rebuilt combined to make Judaism a dangerously attractive alternative to Christianity."<sup>29</sup>

Carleton Paget is also close to this view. He too thinks that the epistle is written against the background of a renewed hope of the rebuilding of the

<sup>25</sup> CARRINGTON 1957:486.

<sup>26</sup> LOWY 1960:32.

<sup>27</sup> VEIL 1904b:223; SCHLATTER 1897; cf. also THIEME 1945:25, 56.

<sup>28</sup> VEIL 1904b:225.

<sup>29</sup> SHUKSTER/RICHARDSON 1986:30; cf. HORBURY 1988:82-83. See also BARNARD 1959a:177, though he places the epistle somewhat later and thinks that the Judaizers were "impressed by Hadrian's promise that the Jerusalem Temple would be re-built".

Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> He admits, however, that this hope does not dominate *Barnabas*, and that this explanation of its purpose "does not appear to account for all the material in the epistle".<sup>31</sup>

3c) Also MacLennan connects *Barnabas*' origin to the possibility of the rebuilding of the Temple, but in addition he stresses messianic expectations. And the emphasis is laid on the last factor: *Barnabas* is "a tract written to moderate a Christian and Jewish fanatical messianism both within and outside of Barnabas's community or 'club' in Alexandria."<sup>32</sup> MacLennan denies that *Barnabas* reflects an anti-Judaic bias, "rather, it is a letter seeking a way to moderate Jewish and Christian fanatical and extremist ideas".<sup>33</sup>

3d) For different reasons many scholars hold the time of Hadrian to be the time of the writing of *Barnabas*. Thus Haeuser finds a lot of references to this period in the epistle. 9:4 is seen as a reference to Hadrian's edict against circumcision; 16:10 to a supposed destruction by Hadrian of a Jewish Temple, and chapter 15 is seen against the background of Hadrian's supposed edict against Sabbath observance.<sup>34</sup> In this time of anxiety Barnabas writes his letter to one or more congregations which "sind in Angst und Schrecken wegen der von außen her drohenden Gefahren und Leiden".<sup>35</sup> The real purpose of the epistle is thus to give consolation; it is governed by the author's tendency "den Gläubigen Trost in der trostlosen Zeit zu sein".<sup>36</sup>

3e) Also G. Alon thinks that the epistle has its origin in a time of distress. He thinks that *Barnabas* was written "at a time when Christianity was undergoing persecution, perhaps locally".<sup>37</sup> But the author's purpose is not to give consolation, it is "to counter any Judaizing tendencies among the

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<sup>30</sup> CARLETON PAGET 1994:64, 66f.

<sup>31</sup> CARLETON PAGET 1994:262; cf. 69. Note also his judicious comment with regard to purpose: "Anyone who undertakes to write anything may have a number of reasons for doing so. We would perhaps do better to speak not of a purpose lying behind *Barn*, but of purposes, though some of these may be more significant than others."

<sup>32</sup> MACLENNAN 1990:23-24; cf. 44, 47. He dates *Barnabas* to the early reign of Hadrian, c. 115-117. It should be noted that MacLennan fails to prove his thesis on the basis of the text of *Barnabas*. His solution seems solely based on a reconstruction of the historical situation in Alexandria in the second decade of the second century.

<sup>33</sup> MACLENNAN 1990:48. Elsewhere he says that the epistle "is evangelistic and apologetic - not anti-Jewish" (1989:195).

<sup>34</sup> HAEUSER 1912:108-109.

<sup>35</sup> HAEUSER 1912:107.

<sup>36</sup> HAEUSER 1912:111.

<sup>37</sup> ALON 1980-84:452.

Christians of his day (he himself is clearly a gentile)."<sup>38</sup> The connection between occasion and purpose is explained as follows: "We know that at such times Christians often adopted Jewish observances, whether as a cover to avoid discovery (without necessarily giving up their Christian beliefs), or because they were genuinely attracted to the Jewish way of life."<sup>39</sup>

4) In addition to the proposals mentioned so far, we also have to mention a solution which tries to take the *ethical* dimension of *Barnabas* into account.<sup>40</sup> Thus Armitage Robinson claims that the author's aim is "moral purity":

His fear is lest Christians may fail, as the Jews as a people have failed, and be rejected after all. It is not apostasy under stress of persecution that he dreads: there is no allusion to persecution of any kind in the Epistle. It is moral failure, due to a want of recognition of God's purpose for the New People, and issuing in laxity of conduct, neglect of the bond of Christian fellowship, self-satisfaction, and selfish disregard for the poorer brethren. It is to counteract this moral decadence that he calls for strenuousness of life and constant watchfulness, lest the Evil One effect a subtle entrance and rob them of their hope.<sup>41</sup>

The ethical dimension of *Barnabas* was stressed already by J. G. Müller, who thought that this was closely connected with the purpose of the letter.<sup>42</sup> Recently the ethical interest of the epistle has once more been pointed out by Horbury.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> ALON 1980-84:448.

<sup>39</sup> ALON 1980-84:452.

<sup>40</sup> According to TREAT (1992:614) one of the main problems with recent views concerning the occasion of *Barnabas*, is that they do not account for its "ethical orientation". See further below, 2.3.4.

<sup>41</sup> ARMITAGE ROBINSON 1920:24 (= 1934:145). Cf. WILLIAMS (1935:19) who thinks that the author has in his mind "the twin dangers of Judaism and Antinomianism"; so also OESTERREICHER in THIEME and OESTERREICHER 1952:66.

<sup>42</sup> J. G. MÜLLER (1869:9): "Es kann nicht bloss als ein *Nebenzweck* neben jenem Hauptzwecke des Briefes angesehen werden, wenn in demselben überall zum *sittlichen Wandel* aufgefördert wird. Denn es hängt diese Aufforderung überall mit dem Hauptzwecke unzertrennbar zusammen." Cf. also KRÜGER (1895:14) who sees a double purpose: "...vor judaistischen Einflüsterungen und vor Abweichungen von den Geboten der christlichen Sittlichkeit zu warnen."

<sup>43</sup> HORBURY 1992:323 (referring to J. A. ROBINSON). Related to the ethical dimension is also the recent hypothesis of P. F. BEATRICE (1989). In his view *Barnabas* is written in opposition to an enthusiastic movement in his community, a movement characterized by an over-realized eschatology and an ascetic and isolationist form of behaviour. His proof-texts are 4:10b; 4:14 (= Matt 22:14); 6:9 and 15:6. Traces of such tendencies may

### 1.2.3. The approach of this work

The survey above clearly shows that many questions are implicated in a discussion of the purpose of *Barnabas*. In the following I shall single out the important issues and indicate how they will be dealt with in this work.

1) *The role of Judaism*. The opinion that *Barnabas*' hostile stance over against Judaism is purely theoretical and academical, seems often to be influenced by one's general view on the relationship between Church and Judaism in the second century. In his treatment of the historical situation of *Barnabas* Adolf Harnack claimed that "Die Kirche hat jedenfalls gar nichts mehr mit dem Judenthum zu thun,"<sup>44</sup> and Windisch likewise stressed that "die Trennung vollzogen war".<sup>45</sup> According to this view there was no longer any contact between the Church and the Synagogue. In the words of David Rokeah: "Actually, Judaism did not worry the Christians; it was not interested in them and did not interest them. *The two religions disregarded each other, and did not confront each other in an active polemic.*"<sup>46</sup>

Sometimes the assessment of early Christian anti-Jewish polemic is determined by the understanding of post-70 Judaism. Especially in older research Judaism was seen as a religion in decline. As an example of this we may quote Hugo Gressmann: "Es war tragisches Schicksal, daß das Judentum im selben Augenblick seinen nationalen Mittelpunkt verlor, als das Christentum seinen Siegeszug antrat. Für das Christentum aber war es gütige Vorsehung, daß es fast ohne Kampf den gefährlichsten Konkurrenten verlor."<sup>47</sup>

This picture of Judaism as a dying religion had, of course, important consequences for the understanding of the relationship between Church and Synagogue. Typical is the assessment of the *adversus Judaeos* literature: it was seen as nothing but fiction; it was not polemic against Jews but apologetics for internal use in the Church.<sup>48</sup> In short: Judaism was no longer any threat for the nascent Church, no living reality to take into consideration.

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be found in these texts, but in my view BEATRICE reads too much into them. Besides, his theory does not account for the rest of the epistle. Cf. also the critical comments by CARLETON PAGET 1994:63f.

<sup>44</sup> HARNACK 1897/1958:415, n.3; cf. 416: "Diese abstracte Fassung des 'Judenthums' setzt voraus, dass die Auseinandersetzung mit dem c o n c r e t e n Judenthum und Judenchristenthum hinter der Zeit des Verfassers liegt."

<sup>45</sup> WINDISCH 1920:323.

<sup>46</sup> ROKEAH 1982:47; italics in the original.

<sup>47</sup> GRESSMANN 1924:183; cf. also GOPPELT 1962/70:119.

<sup>48</sup> HARNACK 1883:56-91; cf. HULEN 1932. For a critical and balanced evaluation of this view, see SIMON 1964/86:136-146 and WILKEN 1971:35-38; note also STANTON 1985.

In the light of recent research it is difficult to uphold such a view. There is a growing awareness that Judaism after 70 and 135 was a living and flourishing religion. In the words of Robert L. Wilken:

A fresh consideration of the place of the Jews in the later Empire will show that the Jewish communities continued to be a major factor after Bar Kochba, during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, and that this period was a time of new life and vitality for Jews, of material prosperity and economic growth, of spiritual and intellectual creativity.<sup>49</sup>

Of course this had an impact on the Church.<sup>50</sup> At the time of John Chrysostom Judaism in Antioch was a considerable power - and was felt as a real threat to the Church.<sup>51</sup> So it was in Caesarea in the third century<sup>52</sup> and in Alexandria in the fifth.<sup>53</sup> And in all probability this was also the case in the second century when *Barnabas* was written. To demonstrate this, a major part of the present work is devoted to the relationship between the Church and Judaism in the second century, or more precisely to Judaism as a living challenge and threat, even a competitor to the early Church.

2) *The author and the addressees.* In some cases the view of the purpose of *Barnabas* seems (at least partly) to be dependent on one's view of the background of the author and the addressees. Are they Jewish or Gentile Christians? This has been strongly debated, and many scholars have been in favour of the view that both the author and the addressees are Jewish Christians. Consequently they often think that the problem *Barnabas* is facing, is the possibility of relapse to Judaism. The background of the author and the addressees thus brings once more the role of Judaism into focus. Consequently it cannot be left out in an investigation of the purpose of *Barnabas*.

3) *The interpretation of chapter 16.* As we have seen, many of the proposals which presuppose a specific occasion for the writing of *Barnabas* are dependent on the interpretation of chapter 16 concerning the temple. It is thus necessary to have a closer look at this text. What does it tell us about the time of origin and purpose of the letter?

4) *The literary and rhetorical character of Barnabas.* An important factor for the understanding of *Barnabas* in general and for the question of its

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<sup>49</sup> WILKEN 1980:461; see now also FELDMAN 1993.

<sup>50</sup> This is strongly emphasized by SIMON (1964/86). Cf. McDONALD 1993:239-242.

<sup>51</sup> See WILKEN 1983.

<sup>52</sup> See BLOWERS 1988 and DE LANGE 1976.

<sup>53</sup> See WILKEN 1971.

purpose in particular is the view of the literary genre of the writing. While earlier research was in favour of the designation "letter", it has now become fairly common to speak about a "treatise" or "tract". Nevertheless, no one will deny the presence of typical epistolary features in *Barnabas*. According to the prevailing view these are nothing but "Einkleidung", but this is a question in need of further investigation. In an attempt to decide the question, I will make use of the insight from recent research in ancient epistolography.

Another question to be discussed in this connection is the rhetorical function of *Barnabas*. As we have seen, there are many different proposals with regard to what the author is aiming at: *Barnabas* is a writing whose purpose is to give consolation,<sup>54</sup> to moderate fanatical and extremist ideas,<sup>55</sup> to warn against moral failure,<sup>56</sup> to recruit people for a certain kind of Christianity.<sup>57</sup> To decide this question we have to look for the "governing idea" of the writing, and to discuss the author's concern in the light of ancient rhetoric.

5) *The central issue of Barnabas*. As we have seen, many scholars detect a polemical front in *Barnabas*, based mainly on the interpretation of some key texts, first and foremost 4:6-7. These key texts have thus to be investigated thoroughly. Is there a central issue, a question of dispute which may explain why the epistle was written? Included in this investigation is also an analysis of the texts where the author explicitly hints at the purpose of his writing. These "key texts" cannot, however, be seen in isolation from the rest of the content. This leads us to the next point.

6) *The theological concern of the author*. Even a superficial reading of *Barnabas* reveals the author's constant reference to Jewish rites and institutions (e.g. fast, circumcision, sabbath, and food laws). A theory about the purpose of *Barnabas* must, of course, give an explanation for this feature. Besides, it has to account for the great number of Scriptural quotations within the epistle. What is the function and purpose of the author's use of Scripture? To answer this question it is necessary to answer the overall question concerning the purpose of *Barnabas*.

The approach reflected in the questions singled out above differs from that found in the main contributions to *Barnabas*-research in this century. First, my approach is mainly synchronic rather than diachronic. This does not mean that I shall ignore the results of earlier research. In fact, I think it must

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. HAEUSER 1912:107-112.

<sup>55</sup> MACLENNAN 1990.

<sup>56</sup> ROBINSON 1920:24.

<sup>57</sup> WENGST 1971:105.

be taken for granted that the author of *Barnabas* used sources when he wrote his epistle. To ask for his sources is thus justified, but insufficient in an attempt to interpret the author's work. To admit that *Barnabas* to a large extent contains traditional material, does not mean that questions about occasion and purpose are illegitimate or superfluous. The author of the letter may have had different sources at his disposal, but there is no reason to believe that he collected his material in a haphazard way. As redaction critics have stressed, an author using traditional materials may to a large extent have set his own stamp on the materials. The creative role of the author has been more in focus in the most recent *Barnabas* research, and I think this is a path to be followed even further. To a greater extent than what has been done previously, I will thus direct attention to the author's *use* of his sources. With regard to the author's extensive use of Scripture, I will concentrate on the *function* of the quotations within the letter.

Second, the focus on the final product rather than its sources also implies a focus on the writing *as a whole*. While earlier research has been devoted mainly to chapters 2-16, I shall stress the connections between the two main parts (chaps. 2-16 and 18-20), and the connections between main body, introduction and conclusion. Much attention will be given to the question concerning coherence in the epistle - because coherence must be expected if the author had a clear purpose with his writing.

The primary aim of our investigation is to determine the purpose of *Barnabas*. That means that we shall try to make a contribution to the overall interpretation of this early Christian writing: What sort of writing is it and why was it written? To answer this question we shall choose a mainly text-oriented method, focusing on the epistle in its final form. Our investigation will, however, not be only text-internal. It will also include a historical part. Or, to be more precise, the results of the text-oriented investigation concerning the purpose of *Barnabas* will be tested against a broader historical investigation concerning the relationship between Church and Judaism in the second century. Thus our work will also have a second aim, namely to give a contribution to the history of Jewish-Christian relations in the first centuries, with special attention to the possible competition between the two religions.

We will start our investigation with the questions concerning date and provenance, because these questions are important for the overall understanding and interpretation of *Barnabas*. To some extent they also affect the view taken of the purpose of *Barnabas*, thus leading us into the central topic of this work.

### 1.3. The Date of *Barnabas*

#### 1.3.1. Introductory considerations

The dating of *Barnabas* must be characterized as a rather open question. The only thing that seems to be certain, is that it must have been written between 70 and the end of the second century. The first limit is set because 16:5 undoubtedly refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the year 70. According to J. A. T. Robinson *Barnabas* "is noteworthy as the first Christian document explicitly to mention the fall of Jerusalem in the past tense."<sup>1</sup> The second limit is due to the fact that *Barnabas* is clearly quoted by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata*,<sup>2</sup> written towards the end of the second century.

Today there is an increasing tendency to say that it is impossible to date the letter more precisely because the internal evidence is inconclusive.<sup>3</sup> With regard to the internal evidence, it has traditionally been limited to two texts in *Barnabas*: 4:3-6a and 16:3-4. The evaluation of these texts varies, however, very much. Some scholars think that both texts are relevant for the dating, some exclude the former, some the latter.

In my view it is, however, important to note the formal differences between the two texts. On the one hand we have 4:3-6a which mainly consists of quotations from Scripture. Besides, there are good reasons to believe that Barnabas here is using an existing tradition, applied to an earlier period of time.<sup>4</sup> This is based on various observations. For one thing there are striking similarities between Barnabas' version of the Daniel-text and Hippolytus' commentary on the same text in his *De Antichristo*.<sup>5</sup> Another detail is the fact that Barnabas does not seem to know that the first quotation (in

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<sup>1</sup> ROBINSON 1976:313.

<sup>2</sup> The references to *Barnabas* in Clement's writings are collected in HARNACK 1893/1958:59-60.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. ANDRY 1949:268-271; KOESTER 1982:277; TREAT 1992:613-614. Among earlier commentators: DONALDSON 1874:267-273.

<sup>4</sup> So convincingly WENGST 1971:21-22; 105; cf. KRAFT 1961:128.

<sup>5</sup> See the treatment in KRAFT 1961:126-128. Kraft concludes that the evidence "encourages the hypothesis that Ps-Barn quotes from apocalyptic traditions available to him, but not longer extant today" (127-128).



v. 4) comes from Daniel. "Hieraus ergibt sich die Vermuthung, dass der Verf. beide Stücke aus zweiter Hand erhalten," Harnack rightly remarks.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand we have 16:3-4, which most likely is formulated by the author himself. This means that there is an important difference between the two texts used for dating the letter, even on a formal level. Consequently one should *a priori* expect the latter text to be the more important. In other words, any attempt to date the letter on internal evidence should give the text in 16:3-4 priority over against 4:3-6a. Thus we start in chapter 16.

### 1.3.2. *Barnabas* 16:3-4

The text to be investigated runs as follows:

Further, he says again: "Behold, those that tore down this temple will build it up themselves." (4) This is taking place (*γίνεται*). For because they went to war, it was torn down by their enemies; now the very servants of their enemies will build it up again (*νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρεταὶ ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν αὐτόν*).

First to be noted are some significant textual problems. In the very beginning of v. 4 we find the word *γίνεται*, occurring in V (and L), but omitted in S and H. There is, however, good reason for taking it as original. In all probability it has been dropped from S and H "because the scribes recognized that, since the rebuilding is no longer underway, it is inappropriate".<sup>7</sup> The other major variant is the occurrence of a second *καὶ* in S in v. 4b: *νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρεταὶ*. In favour of S reference could be made to the rule of *lectio difficilior potior est*,<sup>8</sup> but against it are the three other witnesses: the second *καὶ* is not found in H, V and L. For that reason it is omitted in most recent editions and translations.<sup>9</sup> This leaves us with the text quoted above.

The next question to be dealt with is whether the text refers to a physical or a spiritual temple. Based on the context, especially 16:6-10, many commentators argue that the rebuilding of the temple mentioned in v. 4b

<sup>6</sup> HARNACK 1897/1958:419; see also AONO 1979:218-220.

<sup>7</sup> RICHARDSON/SHUKSTER 1983:35, n.10.

<sup>8</sup> So CARLETON PAGET 1994:18.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. LAKE 1912; GLIMM 1947; GOODSPEED 1950; KRAFT 1965; PRIGENT/KRAFT 1971; SCORZA BARCELLONA 1975; WENGST 1984; HOLMES 1992.

refers to the Christian community as a spiritual temple.<sup>10</sup> In their opinion the main point of the author is the replacement of the physical temple with the spiritual.

This is, however, true only to a certain extent. It is correct that Barnabas is speaking about a spiritual temple, but not before v. 6. There can be no doubt that both 16:1 and 16:5 refer to the physical temple in Jerusalem. Consequently, the nearest context demands that 16:3-4 refers to the same.<sup>11</sup> Besides, if Barnabas thought of a *replacement* of the physical temple by a spiritual one, he would hardly talk about *rebuilding*. That word suits an interpretation where a physical building is in question, not a totally new, spiritual temple (see further below).

But which temple does Barnabas have in mind? Two possibilities have been put forward: 1) A third, Jewish temple,<sup>12</sup> or 2) The Jupiter temple erected in Hadrian's reign. Those advocating the first alternative may stress the word "re-build" in v. 4.<sup>13</sup> This word seems to make sense only if a Jewish temple is meant. The decisive question is, however: Did such a rebuilding actually take place? We know of such plans in the time of the emperor Julian (361-363); but did something of that kind occur earlier? Often a late rabbinic passage (*Gen. R.* 64.10) has been put forward as evidence for a rebuilding of the Temple in the time of Hadrian. There are, however, numerous problems with this text, and there are good reasons for questioning its historicity.<sup>14</sup>

While some scholars have claimed that an actual building of the Temple took place,<sup>15</sup> most advocates of this proposal have chosen another way: Barnabas does not refer to an actual building, but to *the hope and expectation of a rebuilding* of a Jewish temple.<sup>16</sup> When this interpretation was launched by G. Volkmar, he had the early period of Hadrian's reign in mind.<sup>17</sup> Ewald, on the other hand, thought of Jewish expectations in the time of

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<sup>10</sup> So FUNK 1899:87-89; BARDENHEWER 1913:110; WILLIAMS 1933:343; PRIGENT 1961:71-83, cf. PRIGENT/KRAFT 1971:26; GUNTHER 1976:151; ROBINSON 1976:314; GIVERSEN 1985:50.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. WENGST 1971:107.

<sup>12</sup> Advocates for this view include SCHLATTER (1897:63-67), VEIL (1904b:223-235), BARNARD (e.g. in 1958a:102f).

<sup>13</sup> So BIETENHARD 1948:98-99; cf. CARLETON PAGET 1994:24.

<sup>14</sup> See SCHÜRER 1973-87:I:535; SCHÄFER 1981:29-32.

<sup>15</sup> SCHLATTER 1897 and HAEUSER 1912:108. But see the critical remarks in SCHÜRER 1920:673f, n.69.

<sup>16</sup> MÜLLER 1869:337; BIETENHARD 1948:100; LOWY 1960:21.

<sup>17</sup> VOLKMAR 1856:355-361; so also MÜLLER 1869:337.

Vespasian,<sup>18</sup> and recently Richardson and Shukster have argued that the text refers to Jewish hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple during the reign of Nerva. Because Nerva seems to have had a rather friendly attitude towards the Jews, as seen for example in his tax reform, it is assumed that a strong hope for a rebuilt Temple must have arisen.<sup>19</sup> In other words, *Barnabas* 16:4 refers to a "projected rebuilding": the Temple "will be built again (*ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν*) in the present (*νῦν*); it is still a future expectation but the hope is alive now."<sup>20</sup>

This solution is far from convincing, for two reasons.<sup>21</sup> First, the evidence for such a hope during the time of Nerva is unsure, though not wholly unacceptable. Second, and more important, the interpretation does not do justice to the actual wording of v. 4: *γίνεται*. There is, of course, a certain tension between, on the one hand, *γίνεται* and *νῦν* indicating the present nature of the building and, on the other hand, the future *ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν*. But these words have different weight. The future is part of the original quotation from Isa 49:17, while *γίνεται* and *νῦν* are the author's additions.<sup>22</sup> Consequently the last words are more important for the interpretation. This must mean that a rebuilding is taking place or about to take place. It is not sufficient to say that it is still a future expectation. Something is in fact going on, at least the preparation for the actual building.

Once more we have to face the problem. We do not know of any rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in the first and second century - with one possible exception. Some late sources say that the Jews started to rebuild the Temple during the Bar Kochba revolt.<sup>23</sup> Whether it actually took place is disputed.<sup>24</sup> It is, however, quite obvious that *Barnabas* 16:4 could not refer to this event: the text clearly says that the Romans ("those who tore down this

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<sup>18</sup> EWALD 1868:20; see critical remarks by MÜLLER 1869:336.

<sup>19</sup> RICHARDSON/SHUKSTER 1983:41-44.

<sup>20</sup> RICHARDSON/SHUKSTER 1983:35; cf. also BIETENHARD 1948:100 and CARLETON PAGET 1994:21.

<sup>21</sup> Even if the following is primarily said with reference to the most recent interpretation by RICHARDSON/SHUKSTER, it also has relevance for similar solutions with another dating.

<sup>22</sup> This is also emphasized by FUNK (1899:106) and BARDENHEWER (1913:110) - though they both advocate the "spiritual" interpretation.

<sup>23</sup> See the discussion in WENGST 1971:110.

<sup>24</sup> See SCHÄFER 1981:88-101.

temple") are involved in the rebuilding: "Now the very servants of their [the Jews'] enemies<sup>25</sup> will build it up again."

We thus have to look for a temple-building where the Romans were involved. And that leaves us with only one possibility: the building of the Jupiter-temple in Hadrian's *Aelia Capitolina*.<sup>26</sup>

There are some basic arguments against this solution, which have to be answered. The first objection is articulated by Lukyn Williams: "Neither Jew nor Christian could in any way have recognized a heathen temple as the fulfilment of a divine prophecy which equated the new Temple with the old."<sup>27</sup> That is probably correct, but the objection is of no relevance for our text because it does not contain such a prophecy. Let us have a closer look at what Barnabas actually says about the temple in chapter 16.

First to be noted is the absence of words like "old" and "new" in connection with the temple.<sup>28</sup> Neither does Barnabas speak about a replacement of the Temple. He obviously has the contrast between a physical and a spiritual temple in mind (cf. *πνευματικός* in 16:10), but not in the sense that the latter replaces the former. His perspective is not at all salvation-historical (in contrast to e.g. John 2:19-21). When Barnabas starts to talk about the temple, he is speaking about the empirical Temple in Jerusalem. But in Barnabas' view this building is not the house of God, even if the Jews believed so. This becomes clear in v. 1, where he uses the expression *ὡς ὄντα οἶκον θεοῦ* - "as though it were God's house". The Temple in Jerusalem is not God's house and never has been. The only temple which may truly be called God's house is the spiritual temple dealt with in 16:6-10. It is thus not accidental that Barnabas uses the expression "temple of God" only in this later section of the chapter (vv. 6<sup>2</sup>, 8; cf. v. 10).

<sup>25</sup> This is the reading of H, V, and L. S, on the other hand, has "they and the servants of the enemies". The last reading is usually taken to mean "the Jews and the servants of the Romans", but SCHÄFER (1981:34) has argued that it could mean "the Romans and the servants of the Romans". This is not impossible, but it is of minor importance since the reading of S probably is secondary. In both readings the *ὑπηρέται* is best understood as craftsmen (see MÜLLER 1869:339).

<sup>26</sup> A view held by, among others, HARNACK 1897/1958:423-427; LADEUZE 1900:212-221; EHRHARD 1900:83 ("die wahrscheinlichere [Auffassung]"); PFLEIDERER 1902:559; WINDISCH 1920:388-390; GOPPELT 1954:215, n.1; STEGEMANN 1962:150; GOODSPEED 1966:20; WENGST 1971:111-113 and 1984:114-115; SCHÜRER 1973-87:1:536; VIELHAUER 1975:611; M. MÜLLER 1985:191; KOCH 1992:24. The first to suggest this was LIPSIIUS (1869:372), but he dated the event to the period 120-125.

<sup>27</sup> WILLIAMS 1933:342.

<sup>28</sup> The word *καὶνός* occurs in 16:8 but without direct reference to the temple.

If we take this into consideration, it becomes less strange that Barnabas can speak about a "rebuilding" of the temple, even if he has the Jupiter-temple in mind. The expression does not refer to the rebuilding of "the temple of the true God",<sup>29</sup> but to the rebuilding of a *physical* temple in Jerusalem. And since the heathen temple actually was built close to the area where the Jewish Temple stood, it may have been seen as a sort of "rebuilding".<sup>30</sup> The objection that Barnabas speaks about a "rebuilding" of the temple and not the building of a previously non-existent pagan temple, thus loses its weight.

If we take Barnabas' view of the temple seriously, the prophecy in v. 3 (Isa 49:17) offers no great problems either. It is often taken as a prophecy about the rebuilding of the true ("new") temple, but it is not. In Barnabas' view it can be nothing but a prophecy about the rebuilding of the *physical* temple - which has nothing to do with the true, spiritual temple dealt with later. The verse from Isa 49:17 is a prophecy about a man-made temple, while the true, spiritual temple is built by God himself (cf. v. 6 "he would make it and finish it").<sup>31</sup> There is thus no correspondence between the Jewish Temple dealt with in 16:1-5 and the spiritual temple in 16:6-10. And the text gives no prophecy which equates the new Temple with the old, as Williams assumed.

Summing up, we can say that Barnabas' view of the temple clearly excludes the spiritual interpretation of vv. 3-4 and makes a reference to the Jupiter-temple quite probable. Some further objections against this possibility must, however, be mentioned.

These objections are connected with the difficulties of chronology and the actual evidence for the building of a temple to Jupiter/Jupiter.<sup>32</sup> Admittedly the temple-building is not mentioned in all the sources and there are some disagreement with regard to the actual date for the building of *Aelia Capitolina* and the Jupiter-temple. Some authors, in particular Eusebius and Epiphanius, place the event after the Bar Kochba revolt, but the oldest (and probably best) witness, Dio Cassius, places it before the revolt and makes

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<sup>29</sup> *Contra* BARDENHEWER (1913:110) who says: "Der Verfasser des Briefes spricht [...] nicht von der Errichtung eines heidnischen Götzentempels, sondern von dem Wiederaufbau des jüdischen Tempels, des Tempels des wahren Gottes."

<sup>30</sup> Cf. LADEUZE 1900:216. Note also BANG's comment: "Men netop dette, at Templet genopbygges som et hedensk Tempel maatte komme Barnabas udmærket tilpas, da Jøderne efter han Opfattelse aldrig have staaet i Pagtsforhold til Gud og i Grunden selv i deres Tempel dyrkede ham paa hedensk Vis" (1900-01:3).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also the negative evaluation of the "temple built with hands" in 16:7.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. CARLETON PAGET 1994:25.

explicit mention of the temple to Jupiter. In his *Roman History* (69.12.1f) he writes:

At Jerusalem he [Hadrian] founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of the god he raised a new temple to Jupiter. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there.

Besides, with regard to chronology, the different versions are not incompatible. In the words of Mary Smallwood: "The two authorities can be combined without difficulty by supposing that Dio records the inception of the plan and Eusebius its fulfilment."<sup>33</sup> In any case there is no reason to doubt Dio's account. According to other historical information the foundation of *Aelia Capitolina* and the Jupiter-temple can be dated to 130.<sup>34</sup> Since *Barnabas* has no hints of the outbreak of the revolt, the most probable date for its writing is 130-132 CE.

### 1.3.3. Chapter 16 and the purpose of *Barnabas*

The outcome of the above discussion is twofold. First, we have reached a likely dating for the writing of *Barnabas*.<sup>35</sup> Second, we have seen that there is no basis for taking chapter 16 as referring to Jewish expectations of an imminent rebuilding of the Temple. This has, of course, critical consequences for some theories about the purpose of *Barnabas*. As we have seen (cf. 1.2.2.) all theories concerning the occasion and purpose of *Barnabas* which are based on chapter 16 presuppose that the temple in question is a Jewish temple. If this is not the case, these theories are to be rejected.<sup>36</sup> And I think this has to be done for other reasons as well - which will be mentioned briefly.

If Jewish expectation of the rebuilding of the Temple was the direct occasion for the writing of *Barnabas*, why did not the author say so? "Why did he spend most of his ammunition on attacking Jewish ceremonials, and

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<sup>33</sup> SMALLWOOD 1976:433.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. FITZMYER 1962/71:317-320; SCHÜRER 1973-87:I:540-541.

<sup>35</sup> A date in the second century is also supported by the quotation in *Barn.* 12:1, which may stem from 4 Ezra 4:33; 5:5. According to most scholars 4 Ezra was written about 100 CE (cf. *OTP* 1:520).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. solutions 3a-c listed in section 1.2.2 above.

say so very little about the Temple?"<sup>37</sup> It is simply not correct to say that the Jewish hope concerning the Temple provides the "basic structure" for the epistle, as Shukster and Richardson maintain.<sup>38</sup> Their attempt to prove that the expectation about the rebuilding of the Temple is found everywhere in *Barnabas*<sup>39</sup> is totally unconvincing and in need of some comments.

First, they refer to the critique of sacrifices in chapter 2, anticipated already in 1:7. But criticism of the Jewish cult is not the same as a reference to the rebuilding of the Temple.

Second, they maintain that the phrase in 6:3 ("Does our hope [ἐλπίς] then rest on a stone?") is an "obvious anticipation" of the discussion of the Temple in 16:1 (talking about the wretched men who went astray and "set their hope [ἡλπισαν] on a building"). That Barnabas uses the traditional stone-testimony concerning Christ in 6:3 does not necessarily imply that he has the rebuilding of the Temple in mind. It is in fact far from obvious. Besides, little stress should be laid on the link made by the term "hope". The noun ἐλπίς and the verb ἐλπίζω are among the author's favourite words, occurring seven and eleven times respectively. When Barnabas speaks about "hope on a stone" in 6:3, he is in fact anticipating a central theme in the letter: to set one's hope in Jesus (6:9; 8:5; 11:11; 12:2, 3; cf. 11:8 and 16:8).

Third, they claim that in 6:15 (speaking about the heart as "a temple, holy to the Lord") "the Temple is again plainly in view". This is not correct. This is nothing but an example of traditional spiritualization of cultic language, and no hidden allusion to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Fourth, Shukster and Richardson say that the reference to the "holy mountain" in the quotation from Isa 16:1-2 in 11:3 "is suggestive of the Temple mount" and claim: "it is likely that Barnabas believed the Temple was intended".<sup>40</sup> This is an extremely weak argument, because Barnabas here is talking about "my holy mountain *Sinai*" in a quotation where the LXX (and the Hebrew Bible) reads "Zion". It is hard to believe that the Temple on Zion can be so important to Barnabas, since he fails to use this obvious opportunity to emphasize such a concern.

Summing up: there is some use of temple-imagery in *Barnabas* (also outside chap. 16), but nothing that goes beyond traditional use. And there is nothing (not even in chap. 16) which proves that the Jewish hope concerning the rebuilding of the Temple was "the most important reason for the epistle's

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<sup>37</sup> ALON 1980-84:452.

<sup>38</sup> SHUKSTER/RICHARDSON 1986:24.

<sup>39</sup> For the following, see SHUKSTER/RICHARDSON 1986:24-26.

<sup>40</sup> SHUKSTER/RICHARDSON 1986:26.

composition".<sup>41</sup> In fact there is nothing to indicate that the question concerning rebuilding of the Temple was a burning issue for the author of *Barnabas*. This is further sustained by the fact that the question concerning the Temple is treated only as an additional issue within the overall structure of the letter.<sup>42</sup>

Similar objections may also be raised against the view that "the *Epistle* was written as an answer to the Jewish messianic movement"<sup>43</sup> or as "a tract written to moderate a Christian and Jewish fanatical messianism".<sup>44</sup> Since the rebuilding of the Temple in both cases forms an important part of the argumentation for this theory about occasion and purpose, it is very much weakened by the above-mentioned objections. Besides, we look in vain for other features which could sustain this theory. If "messianism" was the problem, we would expect that the question about Jesus as Messiah would be debated, as it is in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue*. But in *Barnabas* this question is hardly touched upon (with the possible exception of 12:10-11). And other questions naturally connected with messianism (e.g. the signs of the messianic age) are not mentioned. We thus have to conclude that neither does this theory pass muster at a closer inquiry.

By our treatment of *Barnabas* 16:3-4 we have been able to evaluate some current views concerning the occasion and purpose of *Barnabas*. And the conclusion is that the most popular theories concerning a concrete occasion for the writing of the epistle have to be rejected. It should, however, be noted that this conclusion does not imply a definite stand about the existence of Jewish messianism<sup>45</sup> or concerning expectations about the rebuilding of the Temple in the first third of the second century. Our main point is the following: even if such movements and hopes were found among the Jews at the time of *Barnabas*' composition, they were not the occasion for the writing of the letter.

#### 1.3.4. *Barnabas* 4:3-6a

This text is certainly more cryptic than 16:3-4. Consequently it is open to many different interpretations, which we have summarized and evaluated in an excursus below. As we shall see, the most likely interpretation is that the

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<sup>41</sup> So SHUKSTER/RICHARDSON 1986:24.

<sup>42</sup> See the introductory comments on 15:1-16:10 below in section 2.7.1.

<sup>43</sup> LOWY 1960:32.

<sup>44</sup> MACLENNAN 1990:23-24.

<sup>45</sup> On this, see HENGEL 1983b.



text refers to the time of Vespasian. This confirms the assumption that the text is taken over from an earlier tradition (see above).

Pointing in the same direction is also the fact that the text is very loosely connected to the context<sup>46</sup> and is hardly utilized by the author; its only function seems to be to give a basis for his exhortation. He is eager to show that the end is at hand, but he is not concerned about the actual point of time. If he were, he would probably offer help in the interpretation of the texts which he quotes, but he does not do so. Maybe he himself was not sure about their meaning, and so leaves it to his readers: "You ought therefore to understand" (4:6a). This indicates that Barnabas in this section is not concerned with calculating the end of the world, though he certainly would stress that the end is near (cf. 4:3). And most likely this is his only reason for quoting the prophetic words.

This conclusion holds true, even if Barnabas was aware that at one time it was expected that Vespasian would turn out to be the "little horn". Even if the expectation proved to be wrong, it does not mean that the expectation died immediately. And it is not unlikely that it flared up in Hadrian's time, due to the cruelty of his reign.<sup>47</sup> At that time the chronology concerning the ten kings did not fit very well, but still Barnabas might have found the tradition useful for his purposes. And as G. R. Beasley-Murray says in a similar case: "When apocalyptic traditions are applied to history, precision is not to be looked for."<sup>48</sup>

Be this as it may, with regard to our present interest, we have in any case to conclude that 4:3-6a has no bearing on the dating of *Barnabas*.

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<sup>46</sup> It is best characterized as a digression; cf. the treatment below in section 2.7.1.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the connection between Hadrian and the Nero *redivivus* myth; see KREITZER 1988.

<sup>48</sup> BEASLEY-MURRAY 1978:257.

EXCURSUS 1: The chronological reference in *Barnabas* 4:3-6a

In spite of our conclusion with regard to the relevance of 4:3-6a as evidence for the dating of *Barnabas*, we shall discuss the interpretation of this text. The reason for doing so is the fact that the text even recently is used in various attempts to fix the date of the letter.

The text runs as follows:

(3) The final stumbling block is at hand, of which it is written, as Enoch says. For this is why the Lord has cut the times and the days short, in order that his Beloved may make haste and come to his inheritance. (4) And thus says the prophet also: "Ten kingdoms shall reign over the earth, and after them will rise a little king who will subdue three of the kings at once (ὅφ' ἔν)." [Dan 7:24] (5) Similarly of the same one Daniel says, "And I saw the fourth beast, which was evil and strong and fiercer than all the beasts of the earth,<sup>1</sup> and that ten horns sprang from it, and out of them (ἐξ αὐτῶν) a little horn, an offshoot (παράφυλλον), and that it subdued three of the large horns at once (ὅφ' ἔν)." [Dan 7:7-8] (6) You ought therefore to understand.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of this text the following dates are proposed: in the reign of Vespasian,<sup>3</sup> under Domitian,<sup>4</sup> under Nerva,<sup>5</sup> or under Hadrian.<sup>6</sup> Before we present and comment upon the different proposals, we have to make some comments on the text itself.

As indicated above, 4:4-5 contains two quotations from Daniel: 7:24 and 7:7-8. According to a widespread view in early Christianity the fourth beast in the last quotation referred to the Roman empire, and the kings/horns to Roman emperors.<sup>7</sup> The rendering of the text from Daniel is rather free, but attention should be given to the words παράφυλλον ("offshoot") and ὅφ' ἔν which are not found in the original text. The meaning of the last phrase has been debated, but the more natural interpretation is "at once".<sup>8</sup> To be noted also are the words ἐξ αὐτῶν. According to Daniel 7:24 the little king is coming after the ten kings; this is, however, not necessarily Barnabas' view - or should

<sup>1</sup> Following S; H and L read "sea".

<sup>2</sup> GOODSPEED's translation, slightly changed.

<sup>3</sup> WEIZSÄCKER 1863:30; MÜLLER 1869:108-109; D'HERBIGNY 1910.

<sup>4</sup> WIESELER 1870:612; RIGGENBACH 1873:38-45; SKWORZOW 1875:14.

<sup>5</sup> FUNK 1899:93-96; BARDENHEWER 1913:111-112; RICHARDSON AND SHUKSTER 1983 and 1986.

<sup>6</sup> VOLKMAR 1856:355-361; BARNARD 1958a:103-107.

<sup>7</sup> Besides, the "little horn" was often seen as referring to Antichrist; cf. LIGHTFOOT 1890:506-507.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. WILLIAMS 1933:343; BARNARD 1958a:104. It is so translated by KRAFT 1965 ("simultaneously"), PRIGENT/KRAFT 1971 ("à la fois"), WENGST 1984 ("auf einmal"), and HOLMES 1992 ("with a single blow"). Many commentators, however, presuppose another translation, e.g. "under one" (as used by LAKE 1912; GLIMM 1947; and GOODSPEED 1950). See also the discussion in MÜLLER 1869:103.

we say, the view of his source. The words ἐξ αὐτῶν may indicate that the little horn is also one of the ten horns.<sup>9</sup>

To identify the little horn (or: the time for the appearance of the little horn) we have 1) to find the tenth emperor and 2) to find the three emperors of whom it could be said that they have been subdued "at once".

With regard to the first task, we are faced with a problem: Who shall be counted in the list of Roman emperors? Shall Julius Caesar be included, and what about the three rival emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius? In my view there is good reason to include all the names mentioned - because they usually are included in the list by ancient authors.<sup>10</sup> Consequently none of them should be excluded without compelling reason.

With regard to the second task, it is notoriously difficult. Three candidates have been proposed: Galba - Otho - Vitellius, the Flavians (Vespasian - Titus - Domitian), and Nerva -Trajan - Hadrian (who formed a family by adoption). The last proposal seems very strained,<sup>11</sup> but the former two are not without basis. Naturally Galba, Otho, and Vitellius are often seen together, as their reign lasted little more than a year. Even in a short historical perspective their reign and their death may be seen as almost simultaneous.<sup>12</sup> The three Flavians - a father and his two sons - are also often seen together. In the words of Lightfoot:

When Vespasian assumed the supreme dignity, the power of the empire was sustained by Titus among the legions, while it was represented by Domitian in the capital (Tac. *Hist.* iii.84, iv. 2,3). The three were thus associated together in the public mind, as no three persons had been associated before in the history of the Empire.<sup>13</sup>

With these remarks in mind we can have a closer look at the different solutions - which may be presented as in the Table below (next page).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> BARNARD 1958a:104.

<sup>10</sup> Julius is included in Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum* and in *Sib. Or.* 5.12; besides both Josephus, *Ant.* 18.32 and 4 Ezra 11 presupposes that he is counted as the first emperor. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius also occur in *Sib. Or.* 5 (line 35) and by Suetonius. Besides they are reckoned as emperors in Josephus, *J.W.* 4.491-499 and in Tacitus, *Histories*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the criticism of LIGHTFOOT 1890:508-509.

<sup>12</sup> Besides, their short period of rule may be seen as a fulfilment of the Enoch saying in 4:3 about the shortening of times; cf. WEIZSÄCKER 1863:30; WENGST 1971:106.

<sup>13</sup> LIGHTFOOT 1890:509.

<sup>14</sup> The Table contains the most important but not all interpretations. In addition we may mention LOMAN's attempt (1884) to start the counting of Roman emperors from Galba (!), taking Nero as the fourth beast. No other scholars seem to have accepted his solution; see the critical remarks by FUNK 1899:96-98.

	Solution	A <sup>15</sup>	B <sup>16</sup>	C <sup>17</sup>	D <sup>18</sup>	E <sup>19</sup>	F <sup>20</sup>	G <sup>21</sup>
Julius Caesar	1				1	1		
Augustus	2		1	1	2	2	1	1
Tiberius	3		2	2	3	3	2	2
Gaius Caligula	4		3	3	4	4	3	3
Claudius	5		4	4	5	5	4	4
Nero	6		5	5	6	6	5	5
Galba	7	}+	6	6	7	7	6	-
Otho	8		7	7	8	-	7	-
Vitellius	9		8	-	9	-	-	-
Vespasian	10*	}+	9	8	}10+	8	8	6
Titus			10	9		9	9	7
Domitian			11*	10		10	10	8
Nerva				11*	Nero rediv.*	Nero rediv.*	(11)	9
Trajan							(12)+	10
Hadrian							(13) Nero/ Domitian rediv.*	Nero rediv.*

+ = The "humiliated kings"

\* = The "little horn"

<sup>15</sup> WEIZSÄCKER 1863:30; followed by MÜLLER 1869:108-109 (with regard to the chronological reference in 4:3-5, but not as basis for the dating of *Barnabas*) and CUNNINGHAM 1877:xxxv. A modified version of this solution is found by D'HERBIGNY 1910. To get the little horn as number eleven, he also counts Mark Antony (between Julius and Augustus). The basis for doing so is the fact that Barnabas speaks of "kingdoms", not "kings" in 4:4. Not too much importance should, however, be attached to this detail; a similar vacillation between "king" and "kingdom" is also found in Dan 7:17 and 23.

<sup>16</sup> WIESELER 1870; RIGGENBACH 1873:38-45; SKWORZOW 1875.

<sup>17</sup> EWALD 1868:157-158; FUNK 1899:93-95.

<sup>18</sup> LIGHTFOOT 1890:509-512.

<sup>19</sup> RAMSAY 1897/1954:308; BARTLET 1900:521.

<sup>20</sup> VOLKMAR according to MÜLLER 1869:107.

<sup>21</sup> BARNARD 1958a; cf. VEIL 1904b:215-217.