

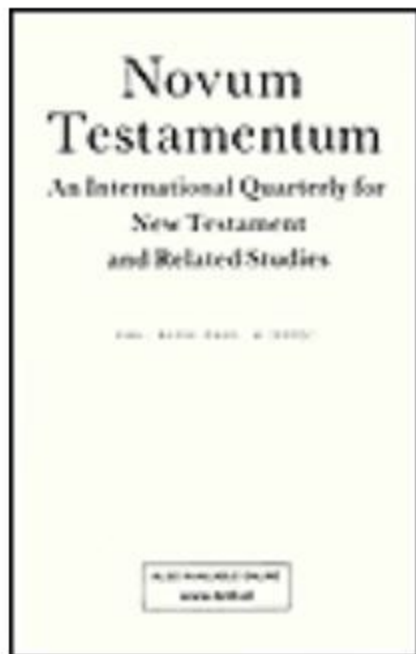


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## TORAH AND TROUBLESOME APOSTLES IN THE DIDACHE COMMUNITY<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

The *Didache* has long been one of the most puzzling of the early Christian writings. It is routinely left out of consideration when an analysis of the evolution of early Christianity is attempted. Alternatively, it is relegated to some rural backwater out of the mainstream of development. J. P. Meier, for instance, throws in the towel and declines to use *Didache* at all in his reconstruction of the development of Antiochene and Syrian Christianity, concluding that:

We are left with something of a paradoxical situation: while some of the theological and liturgical traditions of the *Didache* show expansion upon and perhaps decline from those of Matthew's gospel, the church structure remains more primitive than that of Ignatius.<sup>2</sup>

Meier sees *Didache* as the product of an isolated rural community, yet its influence is too widespread and early for this marginal origin.<sup>3</sup> J.-P. Audet's<sup>4</sup> attempt at a redactional analysis of the

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<sup>1</sup> This is a development of a paper presented to Dr. E. Bammel's Seminar on Christian Origins in Cambridge, while the author was on sabbatical leave sponsored by the Human Sciences Research Council.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Meier & R. E. Brown, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Christianity* (London: Chapman, 1983), 84.

<sup>3</sup> Even the textual evidence argues against this, since texts or fragments of the *Didache* have been found in Egypt, Ethiopia, Asia Minor and Syria. It has been used by a wide variety of secondary authors and was by some regarded as "Scripture".

<sup>4</sup> J.-P. Audet, *La Didachè: Instructions des Apôtres* (Paris: Gabalda, 1958). The multi-layered redactional nature of the *Didache* has been accepted also by R. A. Kraft (*Barnabas and the Didache* [New York: Nelson, 1965 (AF 3)], 1-3, 76), M. E. Boring (*Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* [Cambridge: University Press, 1982], 47-48), and W. Rordorf & A. Tuilier (*La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres* [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978], 17-21).

*Didache* is more convincing,<sup>5</sup> as is his early dating for the writing, although his reconstruction is speculative and unlikely. In this paper, I will be attempting to follow one *trajectory* through the *Didache*, namely the question of false apostles, and the threat they posed to the community. This represents the situation of the community at a particular stage of its development, which has been superseded by the final redaction of the text.

Form criticism seeks, by isolation and delineation of a literary form, to determine the life situation of the community which uses the form. On the other hand, since it is in the redaction of a text or tradition that the developing interests of a community at any particular stage of its history can be determined, particular care needs to be taken to map out the different layers of a developing tradition.<sup>6</sup> This article seeks, on the one hand, to make certain deductions concerning the *Sitz im Leben* of the *Didache* on the basis of the form of *instructions* given in a community rule, and on the other hand, to draw conclusions on the basis of the redaction of this form and its contents in the face of changing circumstances and controversy. The tradition concerning apostles and its redaction represent a historical dynamic, which is analysed in terms of its relation to the use of the same traditional material in Matthew's gospel.

## 2. *The Form and Redaction History of Didache 11:1-6*

While, as we have seen, it has often been noted before that *Didache* 11 is a patchwork of differing redactional stages,<sup>7</sup> the process of

<sup>5</sup> It is in the nature of the community rule to be constantly updated, in accordance with the changing situation of the community. The manifest redactions of the *Manual of Discipline* are a contemporary example of such an ongoing process. For a convincing analysis on this process in 1QS, see J. M. O'Connor's analysis ("La genèse littéraire de la Règle de la Communauté", *RB* 76, 1969, 528-549).

<sup>6</sup> H. Conzelmann succinctly sums up the methodology with regard to the gospel material in *Theology of St. Luke*, trans. G. Buswell (Harper & Row, 1960), 12: "The first phase in the collection of the traditional material ... has been clarified by form criticism. Now a second phase has to be distinguished, in which the kerygma is not simply transmitted and received, but itself becomes the subject of reflection.... This new stage is seen both in the critical attitude to tradition as well as in the positive formation of a new picture of history out of those already current, like stones used as parts of a new mosaic".

<sup>7</sup> Failure to take account of these stages has created confusion in the use G. Theissen makes of this passage in his theory of *Wanderradikalismus* (*The First Followers of Jesus* [London: SCM, 1978], 7-30). This confusion is present also in

development it represents needs further examination. The recent commentary by K. Niederwimmer<sup>8</sup> rightly sets a redactional analysis at the centre of its interpretation, but envisages the redaction in terms of composition by a single author. This seems to fly in the face of the way a community rule evolves by trial and error, by erasing words or phrases, by inserting new words or phrases above the line or in the margin, which are later incorporated into the text. This process is graphically displayed in the manuscript of the *Community Rule* from Qumran.<sup>9</sup> Certainly whole new sections may have been added from time to time, but one should not hypothesize a wholesale, consistent composition for every change.

C. N. Jefford<sup>10</sup> also sets out a consistent redactional theory, in which an original core of 1-5(6) was revised by a first correction consisting of 7-10, and then by 11-15 as a second correction. However, he also notices contradictions in the instructions on apostles and prophets, which he attributes to "an even later hand". The result of this overview is that Jefford sees the final version of *Didache* as reflecting "a mixture of worldviews that ultimately were deemed to be useless by later religious communities" which "soon led to its rejection within the evolving church".<sup>11</sup> It seems, however, that the *Didache* continued to be modified and used, particularly by the communities of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Liber Graduum* and the Coptic and Ethiopic churches. Jefford sees Matthew and *Didache* as representing divergent trends from a common starting point. This article argues for a closer dialectic between the two texts, in which Matthew utilizes and ultimately undermines the need for the community rule, by taking up key elements of the community rule into the gospel form. The rule is then subordinated in the community to 'gospel'.

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the study of G. Kretschmar ("Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Ursprung frühchristlicher Askese" [*ZTK* 61, 1964, 27-67], 37-38), who sees apostles, prophets and teachers all as charismatics, who can be subsumed under the generic title "prophet".

<sup>8</sup> *Die Didache* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 1989. This builds on his important article, "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wanderradikalismus im Traditionsbereich der Didache" (*Wiener Studien* 11, 1977, 145-167) 148-153.

<sup>9</sup> See especially 1QS 7 and 8, where numerous erasures, additions and corrections have been made. E.g. increasing problems in the community lead to the increase of a penalty from six months to one year, written above the line.

<sup>10</sup> *The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Apostles* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 109.

<sup>11</sup> Jefford, *Sayings of Jesus*, 117-118.



A certain perplexity also results from a fallacious use of the concept of 'decline' which seems to influence many New Testament scholars, who view the *Didache* as a 'decline' from the heights of Matthew's gospel.<sup>12</sup> This begs the question in assuming that a work inside the canon of Scripture must be prior to a work outside it. It is more likely that teachings emerge out of the concrete life-situations of a community in a rudimentary and unattractive form, and are later developed and refined theologically into a consistent whole.

The confusion over the *Didache* is also partly due to the failure to see that the instructions on the prophets represent the latest redactional phase of the text, and not the earliest.<sup>13</sup> The instructions concerning the apostles show a different formal construction and a different temper to those concerning the prophets. I have argued elsewhere<sup>14</sup> that the instructions concerning apostles in 11:3-6 are from the earliest stage of the text. It is no accident that the *Didache* is associated with 'the apostles' in its title uniformly through the tradition.<sup>15</sup> It is not that apostles are a thing of the past when the instructions were written.<sup>16</sup> There would be no need to write

<sup>12</sup> E.g. E. Peterson, "Über einige Probleme der *Didache*-Überlieferung", in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Rome, Freiburg & Vienna: Herder, 1959), 146-182.

<sup>13</sup> This is related to the idea of "decline", in that it is assumed that the earliest Christian communities were "free and spontaneous" in their patterns of life and worship, and that this then declined into the formalism and authoritarianism of *Frühkatholizismus*. This is more a product of the Reformation and Liberal Protestantism than of historical verification. There is little evidence that a Jewish group in Palestine in the first century, nor its first successors in Syria, would have worshipped in such a manner. Pneumatic or ecstatic worship was more widely known and practised in the Hellenistic cults and may well have influenced the development of Christian worship as it moved out from its Palestinian heartland (Cf. here Kretschmar, "Frühchristliche Askese", 38 note 26). It is significant that it is above all Luke's picture of the development of the Church that supports such a picture.

<sup>14</sup> See my 1989 Paper for the *Social History of Early Christianity* Sub-group of the *Society of Biblical Literature*, "Weber and the Wandering Charismatic: A Critique of Theissen's Handling of Prophecy in the *Didache*", which will be published elsewhere.

<sup>15</sup> See Audet, *La Didachè*, 91-103.

<sup>16</sup> Niederwimmer ("Entwicklungsgeschichte", 149-150) argues that the "Didachist" composed the section out of older traditions. However, if the *Didache* is indeed a community rule, there would be no "Didachist", but only an ongoing process of correction and updating by a community.

instructions regulating a dead institution, unless one posits an elaborate fraud to reconstruct an archaic document.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, this instruction concerning apostles corresponds to the form of the instructions which precede it. Each set of instructions is prefaced by the same formula: *περὶ δὲ τῶν ... οὕτω ποιήσατε*.<sup>18</sup> Only one subject appears in the title of each section introduced in this way, with the exception of 11:3, where the introduction of prophets into the title seems to be a redaction made at a time when instructions concerning prophets were added. The reference to the *δῶγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου* also marks this as a later interpolation, as we have seen. The original title probably read *περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων, οὕτω ποιήσατε*. The instructions of 11:3-6 show the same casuistic development and the same brevity as the other instructions in the section 6:2-10:6. The instructions on prophets are in marked contrast: detailed, self-contradictory in places and vivid. The instructions concerning prophets have tended, for this reason, to dominate discussion on the *Didache*.

Nevertheless, there are signs of controversy surrounding the institution of apostles in the *Didache* too.<sup>19</sup> Here I wish to focus

<sup>17</sup> Such an elaborate process is posited by F. E. Vokes (*The Riddle of the Didache. Fact or Fiction, heresy or Catholicism?* [London: SPCK, 1938]; cf. J. A. Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache* [London: SPCK, 1929], and R. H. Connolly, "The Didache in Relation to the Epistle of Barnabas", *JTS* 24, 1923, 147-157). However, late pseudonymous works usually mention the apostles by name and add biographical detail real or invented to support the fiction. The *Ecclesiastical Canons*, with their attribution of individual sayings to each of the apostles, or the *Didascalia*, with its elaborate description, show how such a "fraud" would operate. There is nothing in the *Didache* which indicates such a dynamic. Few critics today follow the "English School" in their radical rejection of the authenticity of the work.

<sup>18</sup> Compare *περὶ δὲ τῆς βρώσεως, ὃ δύνασαι βάστασον* (6:3); *περὶ δὲ τοῦ βαπτίσματος, οὕτω βαπτίσατε* (7:1); *πρὸ δὲ τοῦ βαπτίσματος προνηστευσάτω* (7:4); *περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε* (9:1); *μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε* (10:1); *περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐωδίας, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε* (10:8, in *Apostolic Constitutions* and the Coptic version, but absent from *H*). For a thorough examination of the Hellenistic background to the use of *περὶ δὲ*, see M. M. Mitchell, "Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians" (*NovT* 31/3, 1989, 229-256). Note also, however, the Semitic background in the use of *לע* or *לע* in CD 9:8; 10:10, 14; 16:10, 13, and *לע*, *לע*, *לע* in the Rabbinic writings (W. Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899], I, 5f; II, 148).

<sup>19</sup> *Contra* K. Wengst (*Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984], 37), who argues that the problem here is not dogmatic but one of charlatans. This comes from confusing the instructions concerning apostles with those concerning prophets.

particularly on 11:1-2. K. Niederwimmer sees this passage as a composition of the 'Didachist', connecting the liturgical tradition of 9-10 with further traditional material concerning apostles.<sup>20</sup> However, the form of *instructions* does not require such connecting links between sections, which are simply introduced by *περὶ δέ*. Thus 11:1-2 should not be seen as a connecting link but as a later redaction, modifying the instructions on apostles in 11:3-6 in the light of new circumstances in the community:

11.1 Ὅς ἂν οὖν ἔλθῶν διδάξῃ ὑμᾶς ταῦτα πάντα τὰ προειρημένα, δέξασθε αὐτόν·  
2. εἰ δὲ αὐτὸς ὁ διδάσκων στραφεῖς διδάσκη ἄλλην διδαχὴν εἰς τὸ καταλύσαι, μὴ αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε· εἰς δὲ τὸ προσθεῖναι δικαιοσύνην καὶ γνῶσιν κυρίου, δέξασθε αὐτόν ὡς κύριον.

3. Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων [καὶ προφητῶν, κατὰ τὸ δόγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου] οὕτως ποιήσατε· 4. πᾶς [δὲ] ἀπόστολος ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς δεχθήτω [ὡς κύριος]·  
5. [οὐ μενεῖ εἰ μὴ] ἡμέραν μίαν· εἰ δὲ ᾗ χρεῖα, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην. τρεῖς δὲ εἰ μὴ μείνη, ψευδοπροφήτης ἐστίν.  
6. ἐξερχόμενος δὲ ὁ ἀπόστολος μηδὲν λαμβανέτω εἰ μὴ ἄρτον ἕως οὗ αὐλισθῆ. εἰ δὲ ἀργύριον αἰτῆ, ψευδοπροφήτης ἐστίν.

The text presents several problems. In particular, the phrase *ὡς κύριος*, in 11:4 is missing in the Coptic and Ethiopic versions. However, the omission in the Coptic occurs in the break between folio I and II, where the manuscript contains five indecipherable letters. This indicates that the scribe was aware of making an omission.<sup>21</sup> The Ethiopic omits not only *ὡς κύριος* but *δεχθήτω* and *οὐ ... εἰ μὴ* as well, which seems to indicate a deliberate revision. The text given above is found in the Jerusalem manuscript, and is supported by the revision found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, *ὡς Χριστοῦ μαθητὴν*. The latter indicates a smoothing over of a theological problem, which may also be behind the omission of *ὡς κύριος* in Coptic and Ethiopic, namely the scandal of according the same treatment to a human teacher as to the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> *Die Didache*, 212-214. Niederwimmer recognizes that the formula is itself part of the tradition. On the other hand, he rightly observes that the reference to the "gospel" is characteristic of the last stage of the redaction, so that he sees the whole section coming from the pen of the redactor. We argue here that if the introduction and the following instructions are both provided by the tradition, then the work of the redactor is more likely to be in the form of an interpolation between the introduction and the instruction, to link this traditional instruction on apostles with instructions on prophets.

<sup>21</sup> See L. T. Lefort (*Les Pères Apostoliques en copte* [Louvain, 1952 (CSCO)], 33) *contra* C. Schmidt ("Das koptische Didache-Fragment des British Museum", *ZNW* 24, 1925, 81-99, esp. 87).



The *Apostolic Constitutions* takes the teaching as referring to the correct way to say the eucharist, and proceeds to omit the whole of 11:2-6. Clearly the idea of receiving anyone 'as the Lord' was problematic, given the development of a heightened Christology and the experience of imposters. The Coptic retains the phrase 11:2, in agreement with the Jerusalem text. Thus ὡς κύριος should be retained in 11:4.<sup>22</sup> δέ is present in 11:4 in the Jerusalem text, but absent in Coptic and Ethiopic and should be omitted. Its absence is a further indication that at one stage there was no mention of prophets in the superscription.

The passage 11:1-2, then, is connected to what follows by the *Stichwort* ὡς κύριον. The problem relates to the instruction that the apostle is to be received "as if he were the Lord himself". This is, of course, the proper function of an apostle, according to the Jewish legal institution of the שליח.<sup>23</sup> The instructions in 11:1-2 do not relate to anything in the instructions concerning prophets, but only to those concerning apostles. This is significant, in light of our contention that the instructions concerning prophets come from the latest phase of the text's development. Moreover, 11:1-2 must have been written *after* 11:3-6, since this formula *introduces* the instruction on apostles (περὶ δέ). Here in 11:1-2 we have to do with an

<sup>22</sup> As in Rordorf and Tuilier (*La Doctrine*, 184), *contra* Wengst (*Didache*, 82).

<sup>23</sup> The principle is that "A man's *shaliach* is as himself" (שליחו אדם כמותו) mBer. 5:5; bNed. 72b; bKidd. 41b; bHag. 10b; bNazir 12b; bBM. 96a; bMen. 93b). The Christian apostle's function is essentially *representative* of the Lord who sends him, whereas the prophet claims direct revelation through the Spirit. This is argued in detail in my SBL paper "Weber, Theissen and Wandering Charismatics". Whether or not a Jewish *office* of apostle existed in Jesus' lifetime is, of course, a matter of dispute. J. B. Lightfoot ("The Name and Office of an Apostle" [*St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, (London: Macmillan, 1865), 93-94]), A. Harnack (*The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* [London, 1908], I, 327ff) and K. H. Rengstorff ("ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ", *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trns. G. W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 407-447; c.f. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, 213) argue for the existence of such an office. Against its existence are A. Ehrhardt (*The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* [London: Lutterworth, 1953], 17), W. Schmithals (*The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* [London: SPCK, 1971], 98-110) and J. H. Schütz (*Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* [Cambridge: University Press, 1975], 28-29). The argument in favour of its existence seems strong, and it may be that the evidence against it is artificially strengthened by Paul's statements, when Paul himself is concerned to play down the significance of the "office" of the apostle for his own reasons. In any case, for the purpose of this paper, it is only necessary to establish that the *function* of the apostle is clearly differentiated from the *function* of the prophet.



intermediate phase, a redaction of the instruction concerning the reception of apostles by the community at a time when they were a very real institution, but apostles had come to feature in doctrinal dispute(s).

The problem with which the instructions deal is that of false teaching given by people claiming to be apostles. This teaching is fundamentally subversive of the foundational instruction of the community, reflected in *Didache* 1-10 (ταῦτα πάντα τὰ προειρημένα). We would be in a position to know a lot more about the mysterious *Didache* community if we could only know what dispute is hidden behind this brief redactional insertion in 11:1-2. To paraphrase a German proverb, "Tell me who you're fighting, and I'll tell you who you are".<sup>24</sup>

### 3. *The Threat to the Community of the Didache*

#### 3.1 The Relation between *Didache* and Matthew

Fortunately, there is a clue provided by Matthew's Gospel, to which *Didache* is closely related. *Didache* is a 'Q' community, and draws on the same traditions as does Matthew, although it cannot be shown to be dependent on Matthew as we have it.<sup>25</sup> The relationship of *Didache* with the 'Q' tradition is complex. It appears as if this 'Q' material gradually penetrated an existing community rule, especially in the catechetical section of chapters 1-6, where 1:2-6 is clearly an insertion. Chapters 8 and 15 also seem to be a later layer in the tradition, in which 'gospel' gradually comes to replace 'didache'. In particular, 15:4 is subversive of the whole community rule, since it subordinates its teaching to the emerging gospel tradition, which may, perhaps, already be a written docu-

<sup>24</sup> My translation. Cadged from E. Bammel, "Sadduzäer und Sadokiden" (*ETL* 55, 1979, 107-115), 107.

<sup>25</sup> See J. A. Draper, "The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*", in *Gospel Perspectives V: The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*, ed. D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 269-289; cf. R. Glover, "The *Didache's* Quotations and the Synoptic Gospels", *NTS* 5, 1958-1959, 12-29. The opposite view is held by H. Köster (*Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, TU 65 [Berlin, 1957], 159-241), B. Layton ("The Sources, Dates and Transmission of *Didache* 1:3b-2:1", *HTR* 61, 1968, 343-383) and E. Massaux (*Influence de l'Évangile de saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant saint Irénée* [Louvain, 1950]).

ment at this stage<sup>26</sup>: τὰς δὲ εὐχὰς ὑμῶν καὶ τὰς ἐλεημοσύνας καὶ πάσας τὰς πράξεις οὕτω ποιήσατε, ὡς ἔχετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. One may well ask, if all of this teaching is already in a written gospel, what need of *Didache*?

On the other hand, while the Jesus tradition of 'Q' represents a gradual intrusion, other points of contact between Matthew and *Didache* are not related to 'Q', but seem to have their original *Sitz im Leben* in instruction concerning community problems and discipline. Other factors apart, it would seem more likely that these points of contact originate in a community rule, which then influence the arrangement of the 'Q' material in Matthew's redaction, since the Sermon on the Mount is that writer's own creation, ordering originally independent material (found partially scattered in Luke) according to a grand design.<sup>27</sup> In this study the attempt will be made to show that the *Didache*, at least in an early form, lies behind the composition of parts of Matthew. Like Audet,<sup>28</sup> I believe that the *Didache* comes from the same community as Matthew, namely from Antioch,<sup>29</sup> although this is not the place to argue that in detail.<sup>30</sup> If both documents emerge from the same community, one need not see the relationship between them as a one way literary dependence, but as a dialectic in which each influenced the development of the other. In the end, however, the gospel *genre* replaced the *genre* of the community rule. The *genre* of the community rule or church order did survive on the periphery, but without the authority of Scripture.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. H. Köster, "Überlieferung und Geschichte der frühchristlichen Evangelienliteratur" (in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung* II.2, 1463-1542, 1466.

<sup>27</sup> This design may well have been catechetical, which would provide a further link with *Didache*. See the discussion on δικαιοσύνη below.

<sup>28</sup> *La Didachè*, 211-219.

<sup>29</sup> For a summary of the evidence, see W. D. Davies & D. C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Edinburgh: Clark [ICC], 1988) I, 143-147). A Syrian background to *Didache* is also accepted, with variations, by E. Peterson ("Einige Probleme", 146-182), A. Adam ("Erwägungen zur Herkunft der *Didache*", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 68, 1957, 1-47) and G. Kretschmar ("Frühchristliche Askese", 29-32).

<sup>30</sup> I have studied this connection more thoroughly in *The Didache: its Text, its Nature and its Community. A Study in the Relationship of Literary Form, Redaction and Society. Final Report to the Human Sciences Research Council on Specialized Research Abroad, at Cambridge University, September 1988 to January 1989* (Unpublished).

3.2 The Instructions of *Didache* 11:1-2 and Matthew 5:17-20

The implication of the instructions in 11:1-2 is that some (apostles) are going around teaching something different to what is contained in *Didache* 1-10. What is particularly interesting here, is the close relationship of the language of *Didache* 11:1-2 to the polemic in Mt. 5:17-20:

*Didache* 11:1-2

Ὅς ἂν οὖν ἐλθὼν διδάξῃ ὑμᾶς ταῦτα πάντα τὰ προειρημένα, δέξασθε αὐτόν. ἔάν δὲ αὐτὸς ὁ διδάσκων στραφεὶς διδάσκη ἄλλην διδαχὴν εἰς τὸ καταλύσαι, μὴ αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, εἰς δὲ τὸ προσθεῖναι δικαιοσύνην καὶ γνῶσιν κύριου, δέξασθε αὐτόν ὡς κύριον.

## Matthew 5:17-20

Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλύσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλύσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι. ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἴωτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. ὃς ἔάν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν· ὃς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ, οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν. Λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔάν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

The wording is so close that some kind of literary relationship between the two writings seems to be required. The problem seems to be the same in both. In Matthew, the problem is the abiding validity of the Torah<sup>31</sup>: heaven and earth will pass away, but not one least part of the Torah ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. R. Bultmann sees reflected here the debate between Matthew's community and the Hellenistic church.<sup>32</sup> E. Schweizer takes ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται, seen as the work of the evangelist redacting received tradition, as the key to understanding the passage. The phrase then makes the validity of the Torah conditional and points forward to its fulfilment in God and neighbour love in the teaching of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Cf. W. G. Kümmel, "Jesus und der jüdische Traditions-gedanke", *ZNW* 33, 1934, 129f; G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law", in G. Bornkamm, G. Barth & H. J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* [London: SCM, 1960, 58-164], 62-73.

<sup>32</sup> R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1972, 146f. Cf. G. Barth, who argues that "one cannot therefore avoid seeing behind the opponents attacked here the apostle Paul, whatever the distance" (*Tradition and Interpretation*, 161).

<sup>33</sup> E. Schweizer, "Matth. 5,17-20: Anmerkungen zum Gesetzesverständnis des Matthäus", in *Neotestamentica* (Stuttgart: Zwingli Verlag), 1963, 399-406. Cf. G.



W. D. Davies<sup>34</sup> sets these words solely on the lips of the historical Jesus, so that they refer to the death of Jesus and the inauguration of the new Covenant. According to him, the legalism belongs to Jesus and not to Matthew, so that any reference to Paul and legal controversy in the community is ruled out. However, we shall argue that this passage draws its meaning from the whole context of 5:17-48, and is intended to function as instruction for Matthew's community.

For Matthew, the man who teaches one to break the Torah (διδάξῃ οὕτως) is the least in the kingdom,<sup>35</sup> although with this, he is still recognized as a fellow Christian. Clearly this is the language of internal polemic in the Christian community. In *Didache*, the one who is teaching claims to be an apostle, but must not be received by the community. Still further detail is provided concerning this kind of apostle: he is one who has 'turned' (στραφείς). He once was acceptable, but his present teaching makes him unacceptable, because it is regarded as threatening the foundational norms of the community.

The uncommon word καταλύσαι seems to have a technical reference to undermining Torah,<sup>36</sup> as it is used in Matthew (καταλύσαι τὸν νόμον). This is confirmed by its use in 2 Maccabees 2:22 (καταλύεσθαι νόμους), Josephus (AJ XVI.35 καταλύσαι τι τῶν πατρίων; BJ II.393 σπουδῆ γὰρ ὑμῖν μία τὸ μὴ τῶν πατρίων τι καταλύσαι; cf. BJ IV.382) and Philo (*de spec. leg.* III.182).<sup>37</sup>

A further parallel with the *Didache* injunction comes in the demand that Christian righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) must exceed that of the Pharisees and Scribes (περισσεύση ... πλεῖον). Since G. Strecker,<sup>38</sup> it is widely agreed that δικαιοσύνη reflects a particular

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Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew" (in Bornkamm, Barth & Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, op. cit.), 31-32, 70-71; J. Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 140-149.

<sup>34</sup> W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), 334-336.

<sup>35</sup> Note the ironic interplay between "least commandment" and "least in the kingdom" observed by J. Gnllka (*Matthäusevangelium*, 195-196).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. F. Büchsel "ΛΥΩ" (TDNT IV, pp. 335-338), 336, 338.

<sup>37</sup> See also Tatian, resident of Antioch from AD c166 until his death, cited by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* III.12 (81.2ff), also in connection with the debate over the Law: πλὴν οὐχ ἡ βούλεται ἐκεῖνος καταλύων τὸν νόμον ὡς ἄλλου θεοῦ. Cf. Gnllka, *Matthäusevangelium*, 143.

<sup>38</sup> *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit*, FRLANT 82, 1966. Cf. G. Bornkamm, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 30-31.

redactional emphasis in Matthew, occurring at seven key points (3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32).<sup>39</sup> The use of δικαιοσύνη in 5:20 and 6:1 is particularly emphatic, in that it introduces and concludes a section of legal interpretation. In particular, 6:1 refers to actual conduct which can be observed or not observed.

This indicates that an ethical interpretation of the term is correct, and that it has its basis in observation of the Torah according to its interpretation within the Christian community.<sup>40</sup> So *Didache* suggests that one should receive the teacher who interprets the Torah in this way, who "adds to righteousness", but not one advocates the abolition of the Torah! Matthew amplifies what this means, since the following verses (5:21-47) take the five commandments of the second tablet of the Decalogue and heighten each of them in turn, to "add to righteousness".<sup>41</sup> This procedure is then summarized by the injunction to perfection, a key word also for the *Didache*: ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν (Mt. 5:48; cf. *Did.* 1:4; 6:2; cf. in verbal form 10:5; 16:2). The whole section shows Matthew collecting together catechetical material into a carefully constructed unit, in a way which matches the much briefer statement of the *Didache*.

Nothing in all of this suggests that *Didache* is drawing on the text of Matthew. There is no mention of the 'gospel' until 11.3, and here in what we have argued is a redactional insertion linked to the material on prophets. On the other hand, there are some features which suggests that Matthew may be drawing on *Didache* 11.1-2. Here it occurs in the form of *instruction*, where it has a clear setting in life in the community. Gnllka argues that the dispute over the Torah was a *past* debate by the time of the final redaction of the tradition in Matthew's gospel, although the text shows signs of the debate in different redactional layers.<sup>42</sup> In the final resolution, the Law is reaffirmed, but subordinated to the organizing principle of God and neighbour love, or the Golden Rule. It is important to

<sup>39</sup> The debate, which is well summarized by W. Popkes recent article ("Die Gerechtigkeitstradition in Matthäus-evangelium", *ZNW* 80, 1989, 1-23, esp. 1-3), has largely concerned whether Matthew holds a view of "righteousness" as grace or works or both.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Phil. 3:6, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος. Cf. Bornkamm, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Gnllka, *Matthäusevangelium*, 141.

<sup>42</sup> *Matthäusevangelium*, 147-148.

note that the same solution is adopted by the *Didache*, where these very things are inserted into the Two Ways (1:2) and become the *first* principle of the Way of Life (πρῶτον). The original interpretation of the Two Ways consisted of haggadic expansion of the moral sections of the Torah, especially the Decalogue. This now becomes the *second* principle (2:1).<sup>43</sup> The new 'first' interpretation is then further defined by the addition of material drawn from the 'Q' tradition in 1:3-6.<sup>44</sup> Seemingly, in *Didache* we can observe the development still in process, which comes to full theological expression in Matthew.

A recent contribution on the δικαιοσύνη-tradition within Matthew by W. Popkes, taking up a suggestion of G. Braumann,<sup>45</sup> has argued persuasively that the *Sitz im Leben* of the tradition lies in instruction for neophytes.<sup>46</sup> If he is correct, then this would tend to highlight the connection of tradition in Matthew with *Didache*, which contains such catechetical instruction in chapters 1-6, followed by instructions concerning baptism.

Matthew represents a development of the material by means of theological reflection, and its authority is guaranteed by setting it on the lips of Jesus himself.<sup>47</sup> The development is essentially

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Draper, "The Jesus Tradition in the Didache" (see n. 25), 271-272.

<sup>44</sup> The relegation of this material to the footnotes by Wengst (*Didache*, 66-68), while he retains the insertions of the Jesus tradition in chapters 8 and 15, seems to me to be inconsistent and misleading. No-one would deny that the passage was missing in the original Two Ways teaching, but it is present in every witness to the *Didache* which we possess.

<sup>45</sup> "Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Problem der Seligpreisungen Mt V 3-12", *NT* 4, 1960, 253-260.

<sup>46</sup> Popkes states the problem in helpfully precise terms, "Zudem fällt auf, daß Matthäus das Wort nirgendwo näher erläutert oder kommentiert, vielmehr als Interpretament verwendet und somit offenbar als bekannt voraussetzt. Es signalisiert anscheinend für Matthäus und seine Leser eine spezielle Vorgeschichte. Die Frage ist: welche?" (Die Gerechtigkeitstradition", 4-5). J. Jeremias raises the same question, with his insistence that particular sayings in the Sermon on the Mount can only be understood on the presupposition that "it was preceded by something else" (*The Sermon on the Mount*, trans. N. Perrin [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963], 26). *Didache*, it seems, offers the social historian a glimpse of that particular pre-history of the tradition in Matthew. More recently, Gnlika (*Matthäusevangelium*, 142) argues that the mention of entry into the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 5:19 indicates a catechetical *Sitz im Leben*.

<sup>47</sup> Although it is hazzardous to make comparisons, one might say of Matthew, as Bultmann says of Paul's relation to the Hellenistic church, that he "raised the theological motifs that were at work" in the Antioch community "to the clarity of theological thinking" (*Theology of the New Testament I*, trans. K. Grobel [London: SCM, 1952], 187).



*christological*, in that the material on the abiding validity of the Torah is bracketted between the 'I'-Sayings of vv. 17 and 20. "The consistent and radical acceptance of the law (in its actual intention) thus stands for Matthew in the closest connexion with the Christology".<sup>48</sup> *Didache*, on the other hand, shows little, if any, interest in christological speculation, which is usually seen by critics as a sign of late development of the tradition. The quarrel within the Christian community concerning the observation of the Torah seems to have receded somewhat in Matthew, and to be replaced by hostility to the Scribes and Pharisees. *Didache* 8:1-2, on the other hand, while it advocates separation of its community from other Jewish groups, whom it describes as ὑποκριτῶν, shows no other trace of hostility towards them. Yet it shows great hostility towards Christians who advocate the abolition of the Torah. These two features in Matthew represent a movement, towards rapprochement between his community and the Pauline churches, and a corresponding movement away from the Jewish community, a movement which is more fully represented by Luke-Acts. Increasingly, the abiding validity of the Torah is related to Jesus' word as interpretation and fulfilment. In Matthew 24:35, the words of Jesus (οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου) replace the Torah in the same saying in 5:18. *Didache* seems to represent the earlier stage of development.

In Matthew it is not false apostles who represent a threat, but false prophets (7:15-20). This would, according to the redactional analysis offered above, align Matthew with the latest redaction of *Didache* instructions, where prophets replace apostles as the burning issue in the community.

#### 4.1 The "Whole Yoke of the Lord" (*Didache* 6:2)

A further identifying mark of the *Didache* community, which relates to the instructions on false apostles in 11:1-2, and provides a further clue to the solution of the puzzle, is *Didache* 6:1-3:

6:1 Ὅρα, μὴ τίς σε πλανήσῃ ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς διδαχῆς, ἐπεὶ παρεκτός θεοῦ σε διδάσκει.

2. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ δύνασαι βαστάσαι ὅλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ κυρίου, τέλειος ἔσῃ· εἰ δ' οὐ δύνασαι, ὁ δύνῃ, τοῦτο ποίει.

3. Περὶ δὲ τῆς βρώσεως, ὁ δύνασαι βάστασον· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ εἰδωλοθύτου λίαν πρόσχε· λατρεία γὰρ ἐστὶ θεῶν νεκρῶν.

<sup>48</sup> Bornkamm, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 37. Cf. Barth, *ibid.*, 147-153.

Here again, there is a concern to preserve the foundational teaching of the community against false teachers. The perspective is markedly different, however, in the absence of a christological reference: it is not a matter here of *ὡς κύριος*, but of *παρεκτός θεοῦ*. 6:1 is part of the Two Ways teaching and acts as a final warning to preserve its integrity.<sup>49</sup> 11:1 represents a later stage of the redaction of the *Didache*, and shows a significant christological development.

Although traces of 6:2-3 remain in the Two Ways tradition, it is only in the *Didache* that this text occurs in this form.<sup>50</sup> This is an indication that it was found to be objectionable by redactors and compilers. A. von Harnack<sup>51</sup> and, after him, R. Knopf,<sup>52</sup> have seen here the teaching of Christian asceticism, which divided Christians into the 'perfect', who abstain from carnal pleasures, and the bulk of Christians, who do the best they can. There is certainly evidence that the passage came to be used in this way,<sup>53</sup> indeed, it may be that the text only survived at all because Tatian introduced encratitism into Antioch, but there is no evidence that this is its original meaning.<sup>54</sup> There is little, if any, trace of asceticism in the rest of the document, except for the lifestyle of the prophets, which reflects a later state of development in the community. Even here, the evidence for asceticism is implied rather than stated.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Contra* Jefford (*The Sayings of Jesus*, 93-96), who sees it as a late transitional section by "some redactor other than the Didachist".

<sup>50</sup> Although note the presence of at least 6:3 in the Ethiopian Church Order in a garbled form (G. Horner, *The Statutes of the Apostles* [London: Williams & Norgate, 1904], 129 lines 4-6). Textual critics of the *Didache* do not seem to have noticed this fact.

<sup>51</sup> *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel* (TU 2/1-2, Leipzig, 1896). 19-22.

<sup>52</sup> *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel. Die Zwei Clemensbriefe* (HzNT. Die Apostolischen Väter I, Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1920), 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> The sermon *De Centesima*, published by R. Reizenstein ("Eine frühchristliche Schrift von den dreierlei Früchten des christlichen Lebens", *ZNW* 15, 1914, 60-90), uses the passage in this way. Eusebius uses similar language in *Demonstration* I.8 concerning the *δύο βίων τρόποι* of the Christian life. Above all, it is the Fourth Century *Liber graduum* (ed. M. Kmosko, *Patrologia Syriaca* III, Paris, 1926), for which *Didache* is "Scripture" (*kthib*, e.g. VII.20), which best reflects this trend. Its compatibility with this ascetic usage is probably the reason for the survival of the *Didache*.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Rordorf (*La Doctrine*, 32-33) and Kretschmar ("Frühchristliche Akese", 61-62).

<sup>55</sup> Unless the *μυστήριον κοσμικόν ἐκκλησίας* (11:11) is taken to refer to "syzygy", the ascetic union between the prophet and a virgin, as suggested by Harnack (*Die Lehre*, 44-48), Adam ("Erwägungen zur Herkunft", 20f), H. von Campenhausen

Moreover, 6:3 clearly refers to the question of idol worship and belongs in the realm of Jewish ritual food laws. The sub-title of the *Didache* in the Jerusalem manuscript gives the setting: "The Teaching of the Lord through the twelve apostles to the Gentiles". This title implies the teaching of a basically Jewish church to Gentile converts, and there is no reason to doubt that it is intended literally. A. Stuiber<sup>56</sup> has argued convincingly that the reference of "the whole yoke of the Lord" is to the Torah as the yoke of Yahweh, which is the final step for the Gentile proselyte, although he sees this as a purely Jewish text. C. Deutsch, in a recent study of Matthew 11:25-30,<sup>57</sup> has re-affirmed the necessary connection between the metaphorical use of 'yoke' and Torah (or at least of "Wisdom ... which is to be equated with Torah"<sup>58</sup>) in Jewish thinking.

If, however, *Didache* 6:2 were a "purely Jewish text", the problem would be: why should any Christian document continue to advocate such a Jewish teaching? The reference certainly seems to be to the Torah as the 'yoke', but understood now as the yoke "of the Lord". There is no example of such terminology in the Jewish texts, where it is "the yoke of Heaven" or "the yoke of the kingdom". If the reference of 'yoke' in the *Didache* is to the Torah, as seems likely, it refers to the Torah as interpreted by the Lord, i.e. by the Christian community under the influence of the Jesus tradition.

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("Early Christian Asceticism" in *Tradition and Life in the Church* [London: Collins, 1968, 90-122], 117 note 190) and Kretschmar ("Frühchristliche Askese", 34), or ascetic renunciation of marriage, as suggested by Knopf (*Lehre der Zwölf Apostel*, 32-33). The evidence for such an assumption is slight, and the reference could also be to unconventional symbolic actions of the prophets (Audet, *La Didachè*, 451-453; cf. Rordorf & Tuilier, *La Doctrine*, 187). The contention of A. Broek-Utne ("Eine schwierige Stelle in einer alten Gemeindeordnung, Did., 11:11", *Zeitschr. für Kirchengeschichte* 54, 1935, 576-581) that it refers forward to almsgiving in 11:12, is possible but unlikely.

<sup>56</sup> See A. Stuiber, "Das ganze Joch des Herrn (Did. 6:2-3)", *Stud. Pat.* IV (TU 79: Berlin, 1961), 323-329. Stuiber sees the passage as Jewish in origin, rather than Jewish Christian, but this cannot explain the continuance of such a passage in an early Christian text, if it refers so unequivocally to the Jewish Torah. Audet (*La Didachè*, 352-357) also sees the reference to the Torah, though as the work of a Christian interpolator who reflects the situation of Acts 15. Cf. also G. Kretschmar, "Frühchristliche Askese", 47-48.

<sup>57</sup> C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25-30*, Sheffield: JSNT Supp. 18, 1987. See especially 126-128; 133-135.

<sup>58</sup> *Hidden Wisdom*, 115-116.



#### 4.2 The use of ΖΥΓΟΣ in the New Testament

A study of the expression δύνασαι βαστάσαι ὄλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ κυρίου confirms this background to the text. Of the five occurrences of ζυγός in the New Testament, one refers literally to a yoke (1 Tim. 6:1), and the others all relate to the Torah.

In Acts 15:10, the question concerns the obligation of the Gentiles to accept the full Jewish Torah, arising out of the crisis in Antioch<sup>59</sup>:

Now then, why do you test God, by laying a yoke (ζυγός) on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we ourselves have been able to bear (ισχύσαμεν βαστάσαι).

Note here the same combination of ζυγός and being able to bear, βαστάσαι, and a solution similar to that in the *Didache*: If the Gentiles are not 'able' to 'bear the yoke' of the Torah, the minimum obligation laid on them largely concerns ritual food laws (despite the ethicising attempt of the Western Text): "keep from what has been offered to idols, from what has been strangled, and from [meat which has] blood".<sup>60</sup> Although Luke suggests that the argument at the 'Jerusalem Council' was over 'circumcision' only, Paul makes it quite clear in Galatians 2:11-13, that the observation of the food laws was at the heart of the problem. The minimum requirement was intended to enable the Gentile Christians to continue worshipping with Jewish Christians, avoiding ritual impurity which could render them unclean. This probably continues the practice of the Diaspora synagogue. The language is certainly to be found in Rabbinic texts, for example the saying of Nehunya b. Ha-Kanah (T 1-2):

<sup>59</sup> This connection between 6:3 and the Council of Jerusalem was explored by W. Telfer ("The Didache and the Apostolic Synod of Antioch", *JTS* 40, 1939, 133-146, 258-271; cf. Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache*, 163), who sees *Didache* as relaxing the severity of Acts. See more recently, Jefford's similar suggestion that *Didache* may reflect the Council decision independently of Acts (*The Sayings of Jesus*, 96-98).

<sup>60</sup> καὶ τῆς πορνείας seems a little out of place in this theory. It is omitted by p<sup>45</sup>. In view of the manifest ethicising tendency of the tradition, the introduction of "fornication" could be seen as an early scribal gloss. Certainly there is evidence that Christians in the second and third centuries were still observing the prohibition against food offered to idols and meat with the blood in it. See also the *Martyrs of Lyons*. On the other hand, the confusion may have been introduced into the evidence by Luke himself, who was concerned to downplay observance of the food laws, since, for him, God had declared all foods clean (Acts 10:9-16).

He that takes upon himself the yoke of the Law (כל־המקבל עליו על תורה), from him shall be taken the yoke of the kingdom and the yoke of worldly care (MAboth 3:5)<sup>61</sup>

Acts links this solution to the problem of relationships between Jewish and Gentile Christians with Antioch, after the intervention of emissaries from Jerusalem. What must be questioned in Luke's account is his contention that Paul was present at the "Jerusalem Council" and was party to the agreement.<sup>62</sup> This creates almost insuperable problems in understanding Paul's letter to the Galatians—except, of course, by juggling the timing of it all.

Paul uses the word ζυγός polemically in Gal 5:1, against those Gentile Christians who want to be circumcised and keep the Torah: μὴ πάλιν ζυγῶ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε. The context is an attempt by envoys from outside the community, probably from Jerusalem, to persuade Gentiles in Paul's communities to keep the Law. Interestingly, Paul's defense against them is a rehearsal of the events of the Antioch crisis, in which he defends his own role. Peter and Barnabas succumb to pressure from James and the Judaizing party. Part of Paul's polemic seems to be a reworking of the Two Ways teaching—both parenesis and the schema in which the two ways become the way of flesh (presumably associated with the way of circumcision) and the way of the Spirit (the way of salvation by faith apart from works of Torah).

The image of the yoke recurs in Matthew 11:29-30, where again the symbolism probably relates to the Torah,<sup>63</sup> with Jesus as the new Law-giver like Moses, as in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>64</sup> The new law of Jesus is an easy yoke to bear, unlike the oral Torah of the Pharisees who "tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them" (23:4).<sup>65</sup> This is how it was understood by Cyprian (*ad*

<sup>61</sup> Compare MAboth 6:2; bBM 85b.

<sup>62</sup> P. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1937).

<sup>63</sup> Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke*, 40-44.

<sup>64</sup> The background to this concept is well depicted by W. D. Davies (*Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, 25-108), although he denies that Mt. envisaged Jesus unambiguously as a new Moses giving a new Torah. His caution is taken further by T. L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology* (Sheffield: JSOT Supp. 8, 1985), 111-118. Donaldson argues that Moses typology is absorbed by "christologically re-interpreted Zion eschatology" (*ibid.*, 118).

<sup>65</sup> My translation.

*Quirinum* III.119), who argues: "That the yoke of the Law was heavy, which is cast off by us, and that the Lord's yoke is easy, which is taken up by us".<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.3 The 'Yoke' in the Fathers

In the early Christian writings outside the New Testament, most occurrences of ζυγός simply reflect the influence of Mt 11:29-30. Otherwise the metaphorical use of ζυγός is not common. Those texts which do use the word use it to refer to the Torah. In particular, Barnabas 2:6 rejects the Torah as ζυγὸν ἀνάγκης and in its place puts the "new law of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ὁ καινὸς νόμος). Justin, *Dialogue* 53:1, also refers to the Torah as the yoke of the Jews, who are like a harnessed ass (ὄνον ὑποζύγιον), contrasted with the Gentiles who are like an unharnessed foal until they receive the yoke of the Word (τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ λόγου). So too *Didascalia* LII.17-35 differentiates between the Torah given on Sinai, which remains binding on the Church, and is the ζυγός of the eternal Law, and the laws given after the golden calf as a punishment for idolatry, which are the "Deutero Legislation", no longer binding. Justin takes a similar line in his *Dialogue*.<sup>67</sup>

All of this seems to confirm the supposition that the "yoke of the Lord" in the *Didache* refers to the Torah, as maintained and interpreted in the Christian community.

#### 5. *Becoming "Perfect" according to Didache 6:2*

The word τέλειος also has its roots in Jewish debate concerning the Torah.<sup>68</sup> In particular the Dead Sea Scrolls use מִמִּתְּ as the qualification of the Way of Light. "Perfection" means keeping the Torah according to the community *halakoth* (e.g. 1QS 1:8f; 2:2; 3:9f; 8:1f). So here in *Didache*, it is only by keeping the whole Torah, according to the Christian *halakoth* (the new law of Christ, which is an "easy yoke"), that one would become perfect in the

<sup>66</sup> Translation from A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 556.

<sup>67</sup> See also M. Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire, 135-425*, trans. M. McKeating (Oxford: University Press, 1986), 114-117.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Kretschmar, "Frühchristliche Askese", 49-54.



way of life. Presumably, then, if Paul was understood as advocating the abolition of the Torah, he would be understood as teaching contrary to God's will (παρεκτὸς θεοῦ 6:1). This is the whole issue of Galatians writ large from the other side.

The use of the word τέλειος in Matthew 5:48 confirms this reference to Torah. For, after the passage concerning the abiding application of the Torah, which must mean greater δικαιοσύνη for the Christian than for the Scribes and Pharisees, Matthew gives an example of what he means by this. Each of the five ethical commands of the Decalogue are given a more stringent application in 5:21-47. The concluding comment, which recaps and restates the principle, is ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν. For Matthew, at least, the word τέλειος summarizes the Christian approach to Torah<sup>69</sup>: the Torah remains intact and the Christian *halakah* represents a legal "righteousness" which exceeds that of the Scribe and Pharisee.

Matthew 19:16-22 has often been used to argue for an ascetic background to the word τέλειος, since the rich young man is asked by Jesus to sell his possessions and give to the poor. However, the context again indicates that Matthew understands the term as a reference to Torah in Christian interpretation ("adding to righteousness").<sup>70</sup> Where Mark 10:17-22 makes the pericope revolve around the christological question of who Jesus is, "Why do you call me good? No-one is good except God alone", Matthew makes the pericope revolve around the correct fulfillment of the Torah. The man asks, "What good thing must I do?" and receives the answer. "Why do you ask me concerning what is good? There is only One who is good ... Keep the commandments!" (τήρησον τὰς ἐντολάς). The question is pushed further, "Which commandments?" The answer is the five ethical commandments of the Decalogue, together with the golden rule (found also in *Didache* 1:2) which Matthew adds to Mark. Finally, when the man claims to have kept all these, Jesus responds to the question of what is still

<sup>69</sup> See G. Barth, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 97-103. Barth, however, seems unaware of the parallel to Matthew's usage in the *Didache*, since he argues that, "This use of τέλειος is found nowhere else in the LXX, the New Testament or the post-New Testament writings" (*ibid.*, 98). Cf. Gnllka (*Matthäusevangelium*, 141), who claims: "Man darf vermuten, daß die Vollkommenheit am Ende des 5. Kapitels ein Zielpunkt ist, auf den hin die Gedankenführung verläuft".

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Kretschmar, "Frühchristliche Askese", 54-61.

“lacking” with the statement about how to be “perfect”—again a Matthean addition εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι.

The “perfect” (τέλειος) or complete Christian in *Didache*, then, is the one who keeps the whole Torah according to Christian *halakah*. The food laws were the minimum legal requirement to ensure table fellowship between the “perfect” and the uncircumcised Gentiles.<sup>71</sup> The community of the *Didache* remains within the ambit of faithful Torah-observant Jewish Christianity,<sup>72</sup> but takes an understanding line on the problems of Gentile believers, who are not excluded from the Christian community, just relegated to the status of second class Christians.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, *Didache* takes a harsh line with those who oppose this instruction: anyone who teaches differently is teaching contrary to God himself! *Didache* 6:1 is connected to 6:2 by γάρ, indicating a causal connection. The implication is that there are people who teach that one can be “perfect” without taking up the whole yoke [of the Torah], and these must be understood as teaching contrary to God’s will. Further, the emphasis in the instruction seems to fall on ὅλον, which has a polemical edge. This teaching on the Torah was an inseparable part of what was taught to all converts before their baptism: “Having said all these things [beforehand], baptize in this way” (7:1).

In any case, their baptism would admit them only to partial fellowship with Jewish Christians, and they would know from the start that the goal of the Christian life was full compliance with the Jewish Torah, under the aegis of the Messiah. The question of admission to table fellowship in the Christian eucharist is raised in 9:5, where baptism, not Torah, is affirmed as the criterion; so the debate seems to have continued. This passage reflects the same world of Jewish ritual concern as 6:2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. P. J. Donahue, “Jewish Christianity in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch” (*VigChr* 32, 1978, 81-92), 90.

<sup>72</sup> Kretschmar sees Mt as remaining within the ambit of the Synagogue and Jewish people, but the *Didache* as presupposing a separation, but does not argue for this beyond a general supposition that no community rule would be necessary if Christians remained within Judaism. However this idea that a community rule would only be needed after a separation from Judaism is based on a naïve picture of a monolithic Judaism. Qumran, at least, saw the need for a *Manual of Discipline*.

<sup>73</sup> G. Barth (*Tradition and Interpretation*, 99-102) argues persuasively that the use of τέλειος by Matthew does not imply a two-level ethic, but the way the term is used in *Didache* must raise questions about this assertion.

6. *The Eschatological Teaching of Didache 16*

The full implications of this understanding of the Torah as the goal of the Christian life for Gentile converts may be gauged from the eschatological exhortation in 16:2. The whole time of the proselyte's life will not avail unless he/she be found "perfect" or "perfects him/herself" (τελειωθῆτε) in the last time. The word τελειωθῆτε is commonly used in the mystery religions to mean "to be consecrated" or "initiated"<sup>74</sup>. The connection of the noun τέλειος with Torah, which has been examined above, seems to indicate that final acceptance of the Torah by Gentiles is at issue here, as the final mark of initiation.

In other words, the *Didache* allows the proselyte flexibility about the timetable, but at the end of the day, it is required of him/her that he/she become a full Jew in order to attain salvation. Of course, the way this was understood would have been modified in the course of time, but this may well have been its original reference.

A parallel to this attitude is provided by the words of a Jew to the godfearer Flavius Clemens, who faces martyrdom for his conversion to Judaism: "Pity the ship that sails [towards the harbour] without paying the tax" (bAZ 10b; DeutR ii.24). The demand is that the godfearer be circumcised before he dies or forfeit his right to eternal life. When Flavius is circumcised, Ketiah b. Shalom says, "Thou has paid the tax, thou wilt enter [paradise]". This puts maximum pressure on the Gentile Christian to become a Jew. Meanwhile he/she must keep a minimum ritual purity, particularly with regard to the food laws. The Law was given to Israel, and only Israelites were obligated to keep it; the moral law was sufficient for God-fearing Gentiles who wished to attend the worship of the community, but the hope was that eventually the Gentile would become a Jew. This is the environment of the Diaspora Jewish synagogue, where a גֵּר תושב<sup>75</sup> is admitted to worship in the hope that he/she will eventually become a גֵּר צדק.

<sup>74</sup> W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt & F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University Press, 1957), 818.

<sup>75</sup> See Tractate *Gerim* 3:1, "What is a "resident proselyte"? Whoever undertakes to abstain from idolatry, in the view of R Meir; R Judah said, "Whoever undertakes not to eat flesh that has not been ritually slaughtered" (Translated by A. Cohen, *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud* [London: Soncino, 1965]). Cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 14:96-106; *Apoc. Zeph.* 10:8f.



The close connection of Did 16 with Did 6:2 and 11:1 has not been noticed before. Certain features indicate that it has an underlying thread of polemic. In the first place, the negative formulation of οἱ λύχνοι ὑμῶν μὴ σβεσθήτωσαν καὶ αἱ ὀσφύες ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκλυέσθωσαν (16:1) differs from the positive formulation of Luke 12:35, which follows Exodus 12:11 (LXX). The positive form derives from Passover tradition, but the negative form indicates a community facing a threat. This threat could be interpreted in terms of a waning of eschatological ardour certainly, but what makes this less likely is that the threat concerns their "life" (ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς ὑμῶν, 16:1), which ties the thinking to the Two Ways teaching of 1:6. It concerns the individual's faithfulness to the teaching of the Way of Life, which includes faithfulness to the Torah. Thus the warning re-iterates 6:1 ὄρα μὴ τις σε πλανήσῃ ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς διδαχῆς.

16:2 urges frequent meetings to inquire about τὰ ἀνήκοντα ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν, although it does not specify further what the things required might be. The context suggests that they are the things which would make it possible for the reader to be "perfect", since the warning which follows is connected to it by γάρ. The whole time of faith will be of no avail unless on the last day he/she is "perfected". This would seem to imply that τὰ ἀνήκοντα refers to instruction in the Christian *halakah*.

The threat to the community does not come from outside but from within, from false prophets (πληθυνθήσονται οἱ ψευδοπροφήται) and corrupters, from sheep who have turned into wolves (καὶ στραφήσονται τὰ πρόβατα εἰς λύκους, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη στραφήσεται εἰς μῖσος)—those who were once seemingly faithful members have turned against the community. The word ψευδοπροφήται could well refer to the false apostle(s) of 11:1-2, since the instructions of 11:3-6 call false apostles ψευδοπροφήται. Notice also the link with στραφεῖς in 11:2. The perspective of the Matthew 7:15 is somewhat different, since the wolves come from outside the community *clothed* as sheep (οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασιν προβάτων). The memory of the concrete origin of the saying in a betrayal by (a) particular member(s) of the community found in *Didache* (στραφήσονται) is absent in Matthew. This seems to be parallel to the softer line taken by the Gospel on the apostle who teaches that one need not keep the Torah (5:19), and to indicate a development of the tradition. In *Didache* love, which once existed between the false

apostles/prophets and the community, is turned into hatred.

The reason is again given in what follows, connected by a causal γάρ: αὐξανούσης γὰρ τῆς ἀνομίας μισήσουσιν ἀλλήλους καὶ παραδώσουσι. The disastrous betrayal by former members is caused by an increase in "lawlessness", ἀνομία. The signs are that ἀνομία should be given a more specific reference than general license. It refers here to those who put aside the νόμος and advocate καταλύσαι (11:1). Again, Matthew 7:23 preserves the tradition that the root of the conflict over true and false prophecy is ἀνομία, since Jesus says ἀποχωρεῖτε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν.

At this time the "world deceiver" is to appear (16:4), into whose evil hands the world has been given (for a time). Significantly, he is described as υἱὸς θεοῦ who even does signs and wonders, like the false prophets of Matthew 7:21-23. This seems to indicate that the title "world deceiver" is polemical and linked to the disputes within the Christian movement. The temptation to ἀνομία, under the influence of false teaching by former members of the community subjects present members to a fiery ordeal and many will stumble and be lost (σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ ἀπολοῦνται).

In this situation those who endure in their faith will be saved ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθέματος (16:5). This strange phrase has never been satisfactorily explained. The word καταθέμα is a rare word found only in Christian writings, usually in the context of polemic against heretics (apart from the cursing of Peter in Mt 26:74 and those writings dependent on it<sup>76</sup>). There is an interesting use of the verbal form in Justin's depiction of Jews and Jewish Christians in Dial. 47:4, where cursing is the means by which such people hope to escape from the fire (ὅπως τύχῃσι τῆς σωτηρίας καὶ τῆς τιμωρίας τῆς ἐν τῷ πυρὶ ἀπαλλαγῶσιν).

Another echo in this passage of Justin is found in the strange phrase ἐπ' αὐτὸν τούτον τὸν Χριστὸν, which is reminiscent of ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθέματος in *Didache* 16:5. It is likely that the same context of Judaizing polemic lies behind both passages. It has often been suggested that the expression means "by him who was cursed", i.e. by Jesus who became a curse by "hanging upon a tree" (Dt 21:23). That is the argument of Paul in Galatians 3:13f., that the goal of this curse was "that the blessing given to Abraham might come to

<sup>76</sup> Perhaps, even here, there is an implication of apostasy in the community forming the *Sitz im Leben* of the story as Mt. tells it.

the Gentiles through Christ Jesus". But Paul is here engaging in polemic against Judaizing Christians. He argues that "all who rely on observing the law are under a curse (ὕπὸ κατάραν)" (3:10) and that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law (ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου) by becoming a curse for us" (3:13). If the *Didache* is in some way connected with the conflict between Paul and the Judaizing party at Antioch, and originates in Antioch, then it could be that the phrase ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταθέματος is a polemic against Paul and refers to the "curse of the Law". This may have been a proverbial expression. The date of the Rabbinic proselyte tractate *Gerim* is uncertain, but it may contain ancient material. Here the proselyte is first initiated into the disadvantages of the Torah:

If a man wishes to become a proselyte he is not accepted at once but they say to him. "Why do you want to become a proselyte? Do you not see that this people are debased, oppressed and degraded more than all other peoples, that diseases and chastisements come upon them and they bury their children and children's children, that they are slaughtered for [observing] circumcision, immersion and the other precepts [of the Torah] and cannot hold up their heads like other people". If he says, "I am not worthy to place my neck under the yoke (ליחן צוארי בעול)" ..."

The instruction in the *Didache* would then remind the community that they are saved by the very thing which they find brings a curse on them, namely the Torah. It is to this that they must hold fast if they are to be perfect on the last day.

## 7. Conclusion

A study of the enemies of the *Didache* community seems to indicate that it is a community still living within the ambit of the Torah, though threatened by those former members of the community who, in its view, advocate the abolition of the law.<sup>78</sup> If our redactional study is accepted, then 11:1-2 represents a development of the original instructions on apostles found in 11:3-6, under the

<sup>77</sup> Translation from A. Cohen, *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud* (London: Soncino, 1965), 603; Hebrew text from G. Polster, "Der kleine Talmudtraktat über die Proselyten (Text und Übersetzung)", *Angelos* 2, 1926, 2-38. Compare the different, but perhaps not unrelated idea of the "curses of the Covenant" at Qumran, based on Dt. 30.

<sup>78</sup> Although, if the Pauline mission is in mind, it would refer rather to his ruling that *Gentiles* should not observe the Torah. In view of the *Didache* community, this was nothing less than ἀνομία.



pressure of historical developments. The one(s) who is/are advocating abolition of the Torah claim(s) to be an apostle. He is to be excluded from the community. He is like a sheep who has turned into a wolf and will destroy the community if left inside it. This is to be compared with the position of Matthew that such a one is "least in the Kingdom", but not outside of it. In comparison to this, *Didache* represents the more severe ruling. Matthew indicates the beginning of rapprochement. It is not difficult to extrapolate from the scenario which has emerged from our study, that the false apostle who advocates abolition of the Torah is Paul, and that the community of the *Didache* is Antioch. This clearly calls for further investigation.

What has also emerged from this study is that this redactional stratum of the text of *Didache* shares with Matthew's gospel not just the 'Q' sayings of the Jesus tradition, but also a common theological and structural conception. That they originate in the same community is hard to deny; they breathe the same air and reflect the same historical development. What must remain a matter of debate is the question of priority. Our contention here is that the *Didache* is the community rule of the Matthean community, constantly in process of development. Naturally, if this is so, some of its parts will reflect a situation pre-supposed by Matthew's gospel, other parts may reflect a situation after its composition. Only a careful redactional analysis can indicate in which way the influence runs in a specific instance. In the matter of the instructions on apostles, however, it seems that the text of the *Didache* forms the source of the material in Matthew.