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zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe 82

Reidar Hvalvik

The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant



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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



J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen

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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.

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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"¹ and it has been suggested that it could turn out to be a "theologieggeschichtliche Quelle ersten Ranges".² Nevertheless, in recent research *Barnabas* finds itself "eher am Rande der Forschung";³ it is appropriately called "a somewhat mysterious and understudied document".⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

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,⁷ and the inte-

¹ KRAFT 1960:336.

² VIELHAUER 1975:612.

³ WENGST 1971:1. This holds true even today.

⁴ WILSON 1992:610.

⁵ See further below, section 1.5.1.

⁶ See further below, section 1.3.

⁷ The last example is ROBILLARD 1971.

grity of the writing has been accepted by the great majority of scholars.⁸

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": "Testimonienstoff und Didachestoff".⁹

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

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

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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ WINDISCH 1920:410.

¹⁰ WINDISCH 1920:411.

¹¹ 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.¹² 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.¹³

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*,¹⁴ 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,¹⁵ 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".¹⁶

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."¹⁷

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

¹² 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.

¹³ Cf. SCHOEDEL 1989:467. See also below 2.5.1.2.

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

¹⁵ Cf. the recension of STEGEMANN (1962). KRAFT (1962) was more positive.

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

¹⁷ KRAFT 1961, appended summary, p. 4; cf. p. 286.

concentrate on chapters 1-16 without taking the letter as a whole into consideration.¹⁸ 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."¹⁹

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?²⁰ 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."²¹ In other words: Wengst, too, suggested that *Barnabas* was a product of school tradition.²² 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*.²³ 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-

¹⁸ 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).

¹⁹ 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.

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

²¹ WENGST 1971:70.

²² 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".

²³ 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".²⁴ In other words, the epistle "constitutes a mélange of traditions and ideas, brought together and adapted to form a moderately coherent theology".²⁵ In stressing the distinctive outlook of *Barnabas* and the creativity of its author, Carleton Paget is in no way typical of recent research.²⁶

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.²⁷ But many central questions have been more or less ignored. It is those questions which will be in focus in this work.

²⁴ 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."

²⁵ CARLETON PAGET 1994:248.

²⁶ 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).

²⁷ 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".¹ 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".² 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 material³ and his epistle is seen as little more than a "collection of materials".⁴ 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."⁵ 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

¹ VIELHAUER 1975:602.

² VERWEYS 1960:173.

³ Cf. KRAFT 1965:2, quoted above (p. 4).

⁴ KOESTER 1982:278.

⁵ 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 purpose⁶ 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.⁷ 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 1920,⁸ 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.⁹

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".¹⁰ They think that "die Frontstellung des Barnabas gegen das Judentum theoretischer Art ist".¹¹

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

⁷ 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.

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

⁹ VIELHAUER 1975:605.

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

¹¹ 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."¹² The same polemical front is also found in 9:6 and 12:10.¹³ 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".¹⁴

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."¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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

¹² 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".

¹³ WENGST 1971:103; 1984:113.

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

¹⁵ LAWSON 1961:193 and 198.

¹⁶ 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".¹⁷ 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."¹⁸

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."¹⁹ 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 inclinations²⁰ 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*,²¹ which means that the epistle is written to Jewish Christians.²²

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 community²³ or by some Judaizing teachers active in the community (or communities) to which he wrote.²⁴

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

¹⁷ KOESTER 1982:277; so also VIELHAUER 1975:602.

¹⁸ LIETZMANN 1949:218.

¹⁹ BOUSSET 1915:312; cf. VEIL 1924:503; SCHMID 1950:1212.

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

²¹ 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.

²² 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."

²³ 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."

²⁴ CUNNINGHAM 1877:xv; BARNARD 1959a:177.

there was a danger of some Christians making a shipwreck of themselves upon it."²⁵

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.²⁶

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 Jerusalem²⁷ in Hadrian's reign. In this solution chapter 16 is seen as the "Schlüssel zum ganzen Barnabasbrief",²⁸ 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."²⁹

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

²⁵ CARRINGTON 1957:486.

²⁶ LOWY 1960:32.

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

²⁸ VEIL 1904b:225.

²⁹ 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".

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