PROLEGOMENA TO A STUDY OF THE DOMINICAL LOGOI AS CITED IN THE DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM

Part I: Introductory Matters*

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In the third century of the Common Era, possibly during its first two or three decades, an anonymous Christian author, possibly a bishop, resident in Palestine or, more probably, Syria, composed, in Greek, a “Church manual” commonly known as the Didascalia or Didascalia Apostolorum.

Of those who discuss the question of the date of the composition of the original Greek text of the Didascalia, almost all are persuaded that it was composed during the third century of the Common Era. Of these, some contend that it was during the first half, if not within the first two or three decades, of that century (so, for example, F. Nau,1 A. von Harnack,2 R. H.

*Abbreviations employed in this article, which are not spelled out on the back cover of this journal, indicate the following series: ALCS = Ancienne Littérature canonique syriaque; BLE = Bulletin de Littérature ecclésiastique; CQ = Congregational Quarterly; CQR = Church Quarterly Review; DACL = Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie; DŚ = Dictionnaire de Spiritualité; DST = Duckworth Studies in Theology; ECC = Early Christian Classics; HS = Horae Semiticae; LTK = Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche; NAK = Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis; RGG = Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart; RHE = Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique; SeT = Studi e Testi; TCL = Translations of Christian Literature; TU = Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur.

1 La Didascalie, c'est-à-dire l'Enseignement catholique des douze Apôtres et des saints Disciples de notre Sauveur traduite du syriaque pour la première fois, ALCS, 1 (Paris, 1902), p. 1.
2 Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius (Leipzig, 1904 [reprint, Leipzig, 1958]), 1, 2, p. 516.
Connolly, F. C. Burkitt, J. V. Bartlet, C. J. Cadoux, G. Graf, P. Galtier, K. Rahner, J. Quasten, J. A. Jungmann, F. L. Cross, B. Altaner, and G. Strecker; some, that it was composed during the second half of that century (so, for example, F. X. Funk, H. Achelis and J. Flemming, De L. O'Leary, M. Viard, O. Bardenhewer, and C. H. Turner); and others, that it was composed sometime during that century without any


5 Church-Life and Church-Order during the First Four Centuries with Special Reference to the Early Eastern Church Orders (Oxford, 1943), pp. 75, 84, 89, 119-120, 146.

6 In Bartlet, Church-Life and Church-Order, p. 54, n. 3.

7 Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur, 1: Die Übersetzungen, SeT, 118 (Rome, 1944), p. 564.

8 “La date de la Didascalie des Apôtres,” RHE 42 (1947): 351.


11 “Didaskalia,” in LTK, 3, col. 3711.


15 “La date de la Didascalie des Apôtres,” RHE 2 (1901): 808; and Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum (Paderborn, 1905 [reprint Paderborn, 1964]), 1, p. V.


18 La Didascalie des Apôtres: introduction critique, esquisse historique (Langres, 1906), pp. 33-36.


preference for either the first or the second half (so, for example, M. D. Gibson, A. Jülicher, H. Achelis, H. Leclercq, J. M. Harden, Bartlet, E. Tidner, W. C. van Unnik, P. Beaucamp, H. von Campenhausen, G. Bardy, H. E. Feine, and E. J. Goodspeed).

Of those who discuss the question of the authorship of the original Greek text, most are persuaded that the anonymous Christian author was, in fact, a resident Bishop (so, for example, Achelis and Flemming, Viard, Achelis, Leclercq Con-

27 Sprachlicher Kommentar zur lateinischen Didascalia Apostolorum (Stockholm, 1938), p. XV; and Didascaliae Apostolorum, Canonum Ecclesiasticorum, Traditionis Apostolicae, versiones Latinae, TU, 75 (Berlin, 1963), p. IX.
30 Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, trans. of Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht by J. A. Baker (Tübingen, 1953; Stanford, 1969), p. 239, n. 7.
34 Die syrische Didaskalia, p. 378.
35 La Didascalie, p. 35.
nolly, Burkitt, Bartlet, Galtier, Beaucamp, von Campenhausen, Quasten, Cross, and Altaner. 47

And, of those who discuss the question of the place of the composition of the original Greet text, the majority favor Syria (so for example, Jülicher [Syria], Harnack [Syria], Achelis and Flemming [Coele-Syria], Funk [Syria], Viard [Syria], Achelis [Coele-Syria], Leclercq [Syria or Coele-Syria], Con-

38 Didascalia Apostolorum, p. xci.
40 Church-Life and Church-Order, p. 89.
41 "La date de la Didascalie," RHE 42 (1947): 316.
43 Ecclesiastical Authority, p. 240.
44 Patrology, 2: 147.
46 Patrology, p. 56.
47 Of course, the Didascalia Apostolorum itself purports to have been written by "the twelve Apostles"—at the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

In addition to the title, καθολικὴ διδάσκαλια τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων (see, below, the discussion on the title), note especially Didasc. 6.12. 1ff.; 6. 13. 1ff.; and 6. 14. 11: "When therefore the entire church was in peril (on account of heresy) we, the twelve apostles (δώδεκα ἀπόστολοι) gathered at Jerusalem and conferred on what should be done. And it seemed good to us (we were all of one mind) to write this Catholic Didascalia (καθολικὴ διδασκαλία) for your confirmation [P. de Lagarde, Didascalia Apostolorum Syriace (Leipzig, 1854 [reprint, Osnabrück/Wiesbaden, 1967]), p. 102, 11. 4ff.; Tidner, Didascaliae Apostolorum, p. 73, 11. 15ff.; Funk, Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, 1: 327, 11. 12ff.] . . . and we remained in Jerusalem for some days conferring concerning the common good with the aim of rectifying [the situation], and, at the same time, we wrote this Catholic Didascalia (καθολικὴ διδασκαλία) [Lagarde, Didascalia Apostolorum, p. 104, 11. 26ff.; Tidner, Didascaliae Apostolorum, p. 74, 11. 5ff.; Funk, Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, 1: 333, 11. 22ff.] . . . and we have left this Catholic Didascalia (καθολικὴ διδασκαλία) worthily and justly, as a memorandum of the confirmation for the believers [Lagarde, Didascalia Apostolorum, p. 106, 11. 28ff.; Tidner, Didascaliae Apostolorum, p. 78, 11. 7ff.; Funk, Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, p. 347, 11. 1ff.]."

48 Pauly-Wissowa, 9, col. 394.
50 Die syrische Didaskalia, p. 364.
51 Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, 1, p. V.
52 La Didascalie, pp. 31-32.
54 "Didascalie," DACL, 4, col. 812.
nolly [between Antioch and Edessa], Burkitt [between Antioch and Edessa], Bartlet [northern Syria], Graf [northern Syria], Galtier [Syria (?)], Beaucamp [Syria], Rahner [northern Syria], von Campenhausen [Syria], Quasten [northern Syria], Jungmann [northern Syria], Cross [northern Syria], Altaner [northern Syria], van Unnik [Syria], Feine [Syria], and Strecker [Syria], although some do not rule out the possibility of Palestine (so, for example, Jülicher, Harnack, Funk, and Connolly), or even Arabia (so, for example, Harnack and Galtier).

That the Didascalia was originally composed in Greek is the unanimous opinion of those who deal with that question (so, for example, P. Boetticher [P. de Lagarde], E. Hauler, Nau, Didascalia Apostolorum, p. 1xxxix.

55 Review of Connolly, Didascalia Apostolorum, CQ 8 (1930): 222; and Church-Life and Church-Order, pp. 75, 89, 119, 146.
56 Geschicte, p. 564.
57 "La date de la Didascalie," RHE 42 (1947): 316.
60 Ecclesiastical Authority, p. 239.
61 Patrology, 2: 147.
64 Patrology, p. 56.
66 Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte, p. 33.
67 In Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, p. 244.
68 Pauly-Wissowa, 9, col. 394.
69 Geschicte, 1. 2, p. 516; 2.2, p. 489.
70 Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, 1, p. V.
71 Didascalia Apostolorum, p. 1xxxix.
72 Geschicte, 2. 2, p. 489.
73 "La date de la Didascalie," RHE 42 (1947): 316.
75 Didascaliae Apostolorum: Fragmenta Veronensis Latina (Leipzig, 1900), p. IX.
76 La Didascalie, pp. 2, 164.
Jülicher,79 Gibson,80 Harnack,81 Viard,82 O'Leary,83 A. J. Maclean,84 Bardenhewer,85 Bartlet,86 Turner,87 Harden,88 Leclercq,89 Connolly,90 Burkitt,91 van Unnik,92 Cadoux,93 Graf,94 Tidner,95 Galtier,96 Quasten,97 von Campenhausen,98 Bardy,99 Altaner,100 and Tidner101.

And with respect to its literary genre the Didascalia is usually classified as a "church order," along with such works as the Didache, the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, the Apostolic Church Order, the Constitutiones Apostolorum, the Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. (so, for example, Maclean,102 Turner,103 Harden,104 Bartlet,105 Quasten,106 von Campenhausen,107 and

79 Pauly-Wissowa, 9, col. 394.
80 Didascalia Apostolorum, 1, p. v; 2, p. v.
82 La Didascalie, pp. 14-15.
83 The Apostolical Constitutions, pp. 19, 24, 26, 28.
85 Geschichte, 2: 304.
88 Ethiopic Didascalia, p. xi.
89 "Didascalie," DACL, 4, col. 802.
90 Didascalia Apostolorum, p. xi.
93 In Bartlet, Church-Life and Church-Order, p. 76, n. 3.
94 Geschichte, 1: 564.
95 Sprachlicher Kommentar, p. IX.
96 "La date de la Didascalie," RHE 42 (1947): 316.
97 Patrology, 2: 151.
98 Ecclesiastical Authority, p. 239, n. 7.
100 Patrology, p. 57.
101 Didascaliae Apostolorum, p. IX.
102 Ancient Church Orders, p. 2.
104 Ethiopic Didascalia, pp. ix-xii.
105 Church-Life and Church-Order, pp. 75-77.
106 Patrology, 2: 147.
107 Ecclesiastical Authority, p. 239.
Altaner108). Connolly, however, challenges this designation. He writes,

The book has naturally been classed with that family of documents which we know as the Church Orders, among which it forms a third in point of time to the Didache and the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus. In its aims, however, and in the character of its contents it stands apart from most of the other documents of this class, for it deals hardly at all with formal legislation. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, to take what is probably the nearest contemporary example, might fairly be described as a rudimentary Ordinal or Sacramentary, providing as it does set rules and forms for the ordination of ministers, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the administration of baptism. But any such description would be quite inapplicable to the Didascalia, which is much more an elementary treatise on Pastoral Theology. While the author does not come before us here as a theologian in the strict sense of the term, neither does he appear in any sense as a canonist, or one who formulates ecclesiastical rules on the basis of custom or tradition. His interest is engaged with other matters, with personal conduct, and with ecclesiastical discipline only in its wider aspect, as it affects the daily life of the community at large.109

Various other descriptive phrases have been employed to classify this document, for example, “un de ces recueils de prescriptions morales et disciplinaires qui se donnent comme d’origine apostolique” (Viard110); “the earliest manual on canon law” (O’Leary111); “a constitution” (Achelis112); “Sammlung von Sittenvorschriften und Rechtsnormen . . . der älteste uns bekannte Versuch eines, ‘corpus iuris canonici’” (Bardenhewer,113 and following him, Graf114); “a sort of Pastoral” (Burkitt115), “ouvrage canonico-liturgique” (Bardy116); and a “collection of miscellaneous precepts of professedly Apostolic origin” (Cross117).

(To be continued)

108 Patrology, pp. 54-58.
109 Didascalia Apostolorum, pp. xxvi-xxxvii.
110 La Didascalie, p. 9.
111 Apostolical Constitutions, p. 27.
112 New Schaff-Herzog, 1: 245.
113 Geschichte, 2: 304.
114 Geschichte, 1: 564.