DIDACHE 3,1-6: A TRANSFORMATION OF AN EXISTING JEWISH HORTATORY PATTERN

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Chapters 1-6 in the Didache present a catechetical section in which the doctrine of the Two Ways (Duae Viae) is the main theme'). In the following pages Did. 3,1-6 will be discussed, a passage which, as will be pointed out, probably did not belong to the original text of the Two Ways2). We seek to answer the question why this textual

1) Apart from the Didache, this tradition can also be found in the Letter of Barnabas (chaps. 18-20), the Doctrina Apostolorum (published by J. Schlecht, Doctrina XII Apostolorum. Die Apostelllehre in der Liturgie der Katholischen Kirche [Freiburg i. Breisgau, 1901]; critical edition: W. RORDORF et A. TUILLIER, La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachine) [SC 248; Paris, 1978], 203-210) and the 'Epitome' (critical edition: Th. Scher mann, Eine Elfapostelmoral oder die X-Rezension der 'beiden Wege' [VKHSM 2,2; München 1903], 16-18). Each of these writings probably offers a recension of the Two Ways which is independent of the Didache and, ultimately, is derived from a Jewish archetype that has been lost (cf. K. Wengst, Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet [SUC 2; Darmstadt, 1984]. 20-22 and K. Niederwimmer, Die Didache [Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vatéren 1; Göttingen, 1989] 48-54 and 61-63). According to Niederwimmer (51-54) the doctrine of the Ways in the 'Church Ordinances' (critical edition: A. Harnack, Lehre der zwof Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts [TU 2/1,2; Leipzig, 1884; repr. 1893] 225-237) does not show literary dependence of the Didache or the Duac Viae of the Didache either. The Two Ways-tradition occurs also in other writings, which, to all appearances, are less important for the reconstruction of the genealogy of the Jewish archetype. The literary framework of the Duae Viae is much akin to a text that occurs in the 'Rule of the Community' of Qumran in IQS 3,13-4,26 (cf. J. P. Audet, 'Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du 'Manuel de Discipline' ', RB 59 [1952] 219-238) and its moral instructions show many striking similarities especially with the poem of Pseudo-Phocylides (see the history of research on Ps-Phoc, in P.W. Van der Horst, The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides. With Introduction and Commentary [Leiden, 1978] 3-54).

2) We limit ourselves to Did. 3,1-6 here because, more than any other similar material in early Christian literature, this passage probably reflects the original tradition in its purest form. The passage is absent in the Letter of Barnabas (see below, p. 24). The Latin rendering of the parallel material in the Doctrina Apostolorum shows a deficiency because the saying occurring in Did. 3,3 is missing there. If the five major sins in Did. 3,1-6 are identical with the five 'fun-
unit was formulated the way it is. Where does it come from and what precisely is its function and meaning? It has been suggested that Did. 3,1-6 is derived from a Jewish Apocryphon or was found in “some ‘Testament’” (J.P. AUDET, on the other hand, considers it futile to look for some other work as its source. He claims that it might have been composed in connection with education at home: pieces of advice and wisdom of older men, matured by experience, are transmitted to the younger generation). According to K. NIEDERWIMMER the material in Did. 3,1-6 is “chokmatisch” and, consequently, he defines this section as “Teknon-Sprüche”.

In this article special attention is paid to the recurring terminology and pattern of Did. 3,1-6 as compared with material in Rabbinic literature and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In section 1 it will be established that some wordings in this passage have their equivalents in Rabbinic literature and can be explained in the context of views and ideas which were very much alive in certain Jewish circles at the time. However, in order to get a better insight into the structure and style of Did. 3,1-6 as a whole we will turn to a tradition in the Palestinian Targum to the Decalogue and in T.Jud. 23,1-4 (section 2). It will become clear that the midrashic expansion to the Ten Words and the passage in T.Jud. 23,1-4 are closely related to the textual unit of Did. 3,1-6. Each of these traditions seems to reflect a similar pattern of exhortation, which, however, in each case was adapted for specific purposes (section 3). In

damental laws” (see below, p. 25), Did. 3,3 must have formed part of this passage. In the ‘Church Ordinances’ and the ‘Epitome’ material occurs which is similar to the tradition in Did. 3,1-6 but has been arranged in a different way. Here the sayings are put in the mouth of the (eleven!) apostles (“‚eine sicher nachträgliche Stilisierung des Stoffes’”; cf. NIEDERWIMMER, Die Didache, 51; see also 124) in order to transform this material into a doctrine of the apostles. The passage is also found in the ‘Apostolic Constitutions’ (VII, 5-7; critical edition: F. X. FUNK, Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum I-II [Paderborn, 1905] vol. 1, 394-396) in a paraphrased form. However, the composer of this document used the Didache; cf. WENGST, Didache (Apostellehre), 7; NIEDERWIMMER, Die Didache, 45-47; RORDORF et TUILIER, La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres, 121.

3) J. MUILENBURG, The Literary Relations of the Epistle of Barnabas and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Marburg, 1929) 34 and 149.


5) J. P. AUDET, La Didacé; Instructions des Apôtres (EBib; Paris, 1958) 300-302.