

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

## Part I: Introductory Matters\*

JAMES J. C. COX  
Andrews University

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,<sup>1</sup> A. von Harnack,<sup>2</sup> 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*; *DS* = *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*.

<sup>1</sup> *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.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig, 1904 [reprint, Leipzig, 1958]), 1. 2, p. 516.

Connolly,<sup>3</sup> F. C. Burkitt,<sup>4</sup> J. V. Bartlet,<sup>5</sup> C. J. Cadoux,<sup>6</sup> G. Graf,<sup>7</sup> P. Galtier,<sup>8</sup> K. Rahner,<sup>9</sup> J. Quasten,<sup>10</sup> J. A. Jungmann,<sup>11</sup> F. L. Cross,<sup>12</sup> B. Altaner,<sup>13</sup> and G. Strecker<sup>14</sup>); some, that it was composed during the second half of that century (so, for example, F. X. Funk,<sup>15</sup> H. Achelis and J. Flemming,<sup>16</sup> De L. O'Leary,<sup>17</sup> M. Viard,<sup>18</sup> O. Bardenhewer,<sup>19</sup> and C. H. Turner<sup>20</sup>); and others, that it was composed sometime during that century without any

<sup>3</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments with an Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1929 [reprint Oxford, 1969]), p. xci.

<sup>4</sup> "The Didascalia," *JTS* 31 (1930): 259.

<sup>5</sup> *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.

<sup>6</sup> In Bartlet, *Church-Life and Church-Order*, p. 54, n. 3.

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

<sup>8</sup> "La date de la Didascalie des Apôtres," *RHE* 42 (1947): 351.

<sup>9</sup> "Busslehre und Busspraxis der Didascalia Apostolorum," *ZKT* 72 (1950): 257.

<sup>10</sup> *Patrology*, 2: *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Westminster, Md., 1953), p. 147.

<sup>11</sup> "Didaskalia," in *LTK*, 3, col. 3711.

<sup>12</sup> *The Early Christian Fathers*, *DST*, 57 (London, 1960), p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> *Patrology*, trans. of *Patrologie* by H. C. Graef (Freiburg, 1961 [2d ed.]; New York, 1961), p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> "On the Problem of Jewish Christianity," in W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. of *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* by a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins, ed. by R. A. Kraft and G. Krodel (Tübingen, 1964 [2d ed.]; Philadelphia, 1971), p. 244.

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

<sup>16</sup> *Die ältesten Quellen des orientalischen Kirchenrechts*, 2: *Die syrische Didaskalia*, *TU*, n. f., 10.2 (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 370-372.

<sup>17</sup> *The Apostolical Constitutions and Cognate Documents, with Special Reference to their Liturgical Elements*, *ECC* (London, 1906), p. 30.

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

<sup>19</sup> *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, 2: *Vom Ende des zweiten Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt, 1914 [reprint Darmstadt, 1962]), p. 309.

<sup>20</sup> "The Church Order of St. Hippolytus," *CQR* 85 (1917): 90.

preference for either the first or the second half (so, for example, M. D. Gibson,<sup>21</sup> A. Jülicher,<sup>22</sup> H. Achelis,<sup>23</sup> H. Leclercq,<sup>24</sup> J. M. Harden,<sup>25</sup> Bartlet,<sup>26</sup> E. Tidner,<sup>27</sup> W. C. van Unnik,<sup>28</sup> P. Beaucamp,<sup>29</sup> H. von Campenhausen,<sup>30</sup> G. Bardy,<sup>31</sup> H. E. Feine,<sup>32</sup> and E. J. Goodspeed<sup>33</sup>).

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,<sup>34</sup> Viard,<sup>35</sup> Achelis,<sup>36</sup> Leclercq,<sup>37</sup> Con-

<sup>21</sup> *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac: Edited from a Mesopotamian Manuscript with Various Readings and Collations of other Mss*, HS, 1 (London, 1903), p. v.

<sup>22</sup> "Didaskalia," in *Realencyklopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. W. Pauly and G. Wissowa (Stuttgart, 1903), 9, col. 394.

<sup>23</sup> "Apostolic Constitutions and Canons," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. S. M. Jackson et al. (New York, 1908), 1: 245-246.

<sup>24</sup> "Didascalie," in *Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, ed. H. Leclercq and H. Marrou (Paris, 1920), 4, col. 812.

<sup>25</sup> *The Ethiopic Didascalia*, TCL, series 4: *Oriental Texts* (London, 1920), p. xii; and *An Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature* (London, 1926), p. 63.

<sup>26</sup> Review of Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, CQ 8 (1930): 222.

<sup>27</sup> *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.

<sup>28</sup> "De Beteekenis van de Mozaische wet voor de Kerk van Christus volgens de syrische Didascalie," *NAK* 3 (1939): 71; and "Didaskalia," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3d edition ed. by K. Galling (Tübingen, 1958), 2, col. 189.

<sup>29</sup> "Un évêque du III<sup>e</sup> siècle aux prises avec les pécheurs: son activité apostolique," *BLE* 69 (1949): 27.

<sup>30</sup> *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.

<sup>31</sup> "Didascalie des Apôtres" in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, ed. A. Rayez (Paris, 1957), 3, col. 863.

<sup>32</sup> *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte: Die katholische Kirche* (Köln, 1964), p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> *A History of Early Christian Literature*, revised and enlarged by R. M. Grant (Chicago, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> *Die syrische Didaskalia*, p. 378.

<sup>35</sup> *La Didascalie*, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> *New Schaff-Herzog*, 1: 245.

<sup>37</sup> "Didascalie," *DACL*, 4, col. 812.

nolly,<sup>38</sup> Burkitt,<sup>39</sup> Bartlet,<sup>40</sup> Galtier,<sup>41</sup> Beaucamp,<sup>42</sup> von Campenhäusen,<sup>43</sup> Quasten,<sup>44</sup> Cross,<sup>45</sup> and Altaner<sup>46</sup>).<sup>47</sup>

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],<sup>48</sup> Harnack [Syria],<sup>49</sup> Achelis and Flemming [Coele-Syria],<sup>50</sup> Funk [Syria],<sup>51</sup> Viard [Syria],<sup>52</sup> Achelis [Coele-Syria],<sup>53</sup> Leclercq [Syria or Coele-Syria],<sup>54</sup> Con-

<sup>38</sup> *Didascalía Apostolorum*, p. xci.

<sup>39</sup> "The Didascalía," *JTS* 31 (1930): 261.

<sup>40</sup> *Church-Life and Church-Order*, p. 89.

<sup>41</sup> "La date de la Didascalie," *RHE* 42 (1947): 316.

<sup>42</sup> "Un évêque du III<sup>e</sup> siècle," *BLE* 69 (1949): 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ecclesiastical Authority*, p. 240.

<sup>44</sup> *Patrology*, 2: 147.

<sup>45</sup> *Early Christian Fathers*, p. 96.

<sup>46</sup> *Patrology*, p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Of course, the *Didascalía 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 διδασκαλία τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων (see, below, the discussion on the title), note especially *Didasc.* 6.12. 1f.; 6. 13. 1f.; 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 Didascalía (καθολικὴν διδασκαλίαν) for your confirmation [P. de Lagarde, *Didascalía Apostolorum Syriace* (Leipzig, 1854 [reprint, Osnabrück/Wiesbaden, 1967]), p. 102, 11. 4ff.; Tidner, *Didascalíae Apostolorum*, p. 73, 11. 15ff.; Funk, *Didascalía 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 Didascalía (καθολικὴν διδασκαλίαν) [Lagarde, *Didascalía Apostolorum*, p. 104, 11. 26ff.; Tidner, *Didascalíae Apostolorum*, p. 74, 11. 5ff.; Funk, *Didascalía et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, 1: 333, 11. 22ff.] . . . and we have left this Catholic Didascalía (καθολικὴν διδασκαλίαν) worthily and justly, as a memorandum of the confirmation for the believers [Lagarde, *Didascalía Apostolorum*, p. 106, 11. 28f.; Tidner, *Didascalíae Apostolorum*, p. 78, 11. 7ff.; Funk, *Didascalía et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, p. 347, 11. 1ff]."

<sup>48</sup> *Pauly-Wissowa*, 9, col. 394.

<sup>49</sup> *Geschichte*, 1. 2, p. 516; 2. 2, p. 489.

<sup>50</sup> *Die syrische Didaskalia*, p. 364.

<sup>51</sup> *Didascalía et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, 1, p. V.

<sup>52</sup> *La Didascalie*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>53</sup> *New Schaff-Herzog*, 1: 245.

<sup>54</sup> "Didascalie," *DACL*, 4, col. 812.

nolly [between Antioch and Edessa],<sup>55</sup> Burkitt [between Antioch and Edessa],<sup>56</sup> Bartlet [northern Syria],<sup>57</sup> Graf [northern Syria],<sup>58</sup> Galtier [Syria (?)],<sup>59</sup> Beaucamp [Syria],<sup>60</sup> Rahner [northern Syria],<sup>61</sup> von Campenhausen [Syria],<sup>62</sup> Quasten [northern Syria],<sup>63</sup> Jungmann [northern Syria],<sup>64</sup> Cross [northern Syria],<sup>65</sup> Altaner [northern Syria],<sup>66</sup> van Unnik [Syria],<sup>67</sup> Feine [Syria],<sup>68</sup> and Strecker [Syria]<sup>69</sup>), although some do not rule out the possibility of Palestine (so, for example, Jülicher,<sup>70</sup> Harnack,<sup>71</sup> Funk,<sup>72</sup> and Connolly<sup>73</sup>), or even Arabia (so, for example, Harnack<sup>74</sup> and Galtier<sup>75</sup>).

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],<sup>76</sup> E. Hauler,<sup>77</sup> Nau,<sup>78</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. lxxxix.

<sup>56</sup> "The Didascalia," *JTS* 31 (1930): 261.

<sup>57</sup> Review of Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, *CQ* 8 (1930): 222; and *Church-Life and Church-Order*, pp. 75, 89, 119, 146.

<sup>58</sup> *Geschichte*, p. 564.

<sup>59</sup> "La date de la Didascalie," *RHE* 42 (1947): 316.

<sup>60</sup> "Un évêque du III<sup>e</sup> siècle," *BLE* 69 (1949): 27.

<sup>61</sup> "Busslehre and Busspraxis," *ZKT* 72 (1950): 257.

<sup>62</sup> *Ecclesiastical Authority*, p. 239.

<sup>63</sup> *Patrology*, 2: 147.

<sup>64</sup> "Didaskalia," *LTK*, 3, col. 189.

<sup>65</sup> *Early Christian Fathers*, p. 96.

<sup>66</sup> *Patrology*, p. 56.

<sup>67</sup> "Didaskalia," *RGG*, 3d ed., 2, col. 189.

<sup>68</sup> *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> In Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> *Pauly-Wissowa*, 9, col. 394.

<sup>71</sup> *Geschichte*, 1. 2, p. 516; 2.2, p. 489.

<sup>72</sup> *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, 1, p. V.

<sup>73</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. lxxxix.

<sup>74</sup> *Geschichte*, 2. 2, p. 489.

<sup>75</sup> "La date de la Didascalie," *RHE* 42 (1947): 316.

<sup>76</sup> *Constitutiones Apostolicae Graece in Analecta Ante-Nicaena*, 2: *Reliquiae Canonicae* (ed. by C. C. J. Bunsen; London, 1854), pp. 42-43.

<sup>77</sup> *Didascaliae Apostolorum: Fragmenta Veronensia Latina* (Leipzig, 1900), p. IX.

<sup>78</sup> *La Didascalie*, pp. 2, 164.

Jülicher,<sup>79</sup> Gibson,<sup>80</sup> Harnack,<sup>81</sup> Viard,<sup>82</sup> O'Leary,<sup>83</sup> A. J. Maclean,<sup>84</sup> Bardenhewer,<sup>85</sup> Bartlet,<sup>86</sup> Turner,<sup>87</sup> Harden,<sup>88</sup> Leclercq,<sup>89</sup> Connolly,<sup>90</sup> Burkitt,<sup>91</sup> van Unnik,<sup>92</sup> Cadoux,<sup>93</sup> Graf,<sup>94</sup> Tidner,<sup>95</sup> Galtier,<sup>96</sup> Quasten,<sup>97</sup> von Campenhausen,<sup>98</sup> Bardy,<sup>99</sup> Altaner,<sup>100</sup> and Tidner<sup>101</sup>).

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,<sup>102</sup> Turner,<sup>103</sup> Harden,<sup>104</sup> Bartlet,<sup>105</sup> Quasten,<sup>106</sup> von Campenhausen,<sup>107</sup> and

<sup>79</sup> *Pauly-Wissowa*, 9, col. 394.

<sup>80</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 1, p. v; 2, p. v.

<sup>81</sup> *Geschichte*, 1. 2, p. 516; 2. 2, p. 488.

<sup>82</sup> *La Didascalie*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>83</sup> *The Apostolical Constitutions*, pp. 19, 24, 26, 28.

<sup>84</sup> *The Ancient Church Orders* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> *Geschichte*, 2: 304.

<sup>86</sup> "Fragments of the *Disascalie Apostolorum* in Greek," *JTS* 18 (1916): 308-309; and Review of Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, *CQ* 8 (1930): 222.

<sup>87</sup> "The Church Order of St. Hippolytus," *CQR* 85 (1917): 77.

<sup>88</sup> *Ethiopic Didascalia*, p. xi.

<sup>89</sup> "Didascalie," *DACL*, 4, col. 802.

<sup>90</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. xi.

<sup>91</sup> "The Didascalia," *JTS* 31 (1930): 259.

<sup>92</sup> "De Beteekenis," *NAK* 31 (1939): 67-68.

<sup>93</sup> In Bartlet, *Church-Life and Church-Order*, p. 76, n. 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Geschichte*, 1: 564.

<sup>95</sup> *Sprachlicher Kommentar*, p. IX.

<sup>96</sup> "La date de la Didascalie," *RHE* 42 (1947): 316.

<sup>97</sup> *Patrology*, 2: 151.

<sup>98</sup> *Ecclesiastical Authority*, p. 239, n. 7.

<sup>99</sup> "Didascalie," *DS*, 3, col. 863.

<sup>100</sup> *Patrology*, p. 57.

<sup>101</sup> *Didascalie Apostolorum*, p. IX.

<sup>102</sup> *Ancient Church Orders*, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> "The Church Order of St. Hippolytus," *CQR* 85 (1917): 77, 88-89.

<sup>104</sup> *Ethiopic Didascalia*, pp. ix-xii.

<sup>105</sup> *Church-Life and Church-Order*, pp. 75-77.

<sup>106</sup> *Patrology*, 2: 147.

<sup>107</sup> *Ecclesiastical Authority*, p. 239.

Altaner<sup>108</sup>). 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.<sup>109</sup>

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" (Viard<sup>110</sup>); "the earliest manual on canon law" (O'Leary<sup>111</sup>); "a constitution" (Achelis<sup>112</sup>); "Sammlung von Sittenvorschriften und Rechtsnormen . . . der älteste uns bekannte Versuch eines, 'corpus iuris canonici'" (Bardenhewer,<sup>113</sup> and following him, Graf<sup>114</sup>); "a sort of Pastoral" (Burkitt<sup>115</sup>), "ouvrage canonico-liturgique" (Bardy<sup>116</sup>); and a "collection of miscellaneous precepts of professedly Apostolic origin" (Cross<sup>117</sup>).

(To be continued)

<sup>108</sup> *Patrology*, pp. 54-58.

<sup>109</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, pp. xxvi-xxxvii.

<sup>110</sup> *La Didascalie*, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> *Apostolical Constitutions*, p. 27.

<sup>112</sup> *New Schaff-Herzog*, I: 245.

<sup>113</sup> *Geschichte*, 2: 304.

<sup>114</sup> *Geschichte*, 1: 564.

<sup>115</sup> "The *Didascalia*," *JTS* 31 (1930): 259.

<sup>116</sup> "Didascalie," *DS*, 3, col. 863.

<sup>117</sup> *Early Christian Fathers*, p. 96.