

The Association of Mark and Barnabas with Egyptian Christianity

(Part I)

by John J. Gunther

Dr. Gunther is already known to our readers from his article on 'The Family of Jesus' (46, 1974, 25-41). The problem of the origins of Christianity in Egypt is an extremely obscure one, and we are grateful to Dr. Gunther for this careful presentation and discussion of the evidence.

To what extent do N.T. evidence and ecclesiastical traditions concur concerning the apostolic foundation of churches in northeastern Africa? Is there any credible basis for evaluating modern speculation on the subject? After summarizing the case for an early planting of the gospel, this article examines the question of when Barnabas and Mark could have been in Egypt. In confirmation of this hypothesis, the provenance and early date (75-80) of the Epistle of Barnabas are then set forth.

THE PROBABILITY OF APOSTOLIC ORIGINS

Because Christianity made so many of its early converts in synagogues among the Jews and Gentile 'God-fearers' who attended, the presence of Jews in Egypt provides a clue for understanding the initial progress of the new faith in the land of the Nile. Jews had been dwelling in Egypt at least since the time of Jeremiah (44:1).¹ Political conditions in Palestine and economic opportunities in Egypt brought more immigrants in the last two pre-Christian centuries.² They settled throughout the country.³ In Alexandria there were many synagogues in each section of the city in the time of Philo (*leg. ad Gaium* xx, 132). Two of the city's five sections were called Jewish, though following the pogrom of AD 38 an attempt was made to restrict them to a portion of the Delta quarter (*in Flacc.* 8,55).⁴ Josephus (*Antiq.* xiv, 7.2; *cf. Against Apion* ii, 4) followed Strabo in assigning a large portion of the city to the Jews. Perhaps between a quarter and a third of the population was Jewish.⁵ Philo (*in Flacc.* 6,43) gave the figure of one million as the Jewish population of Egypt as a whole. This is a credible figure in light of the strength they exhibited in civil wars, especially that of AD 115-117. Diodorus Siculus estimated the population of Egypt as seven million in the time of Ptolemy I, while Josephus (*War* ii, 16.4) believed that there were seven and a half million people, excluding Alexandria. The number of Jews in any case was large enough to be highly attractive to early Christian missionaries; such

219

¹ V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, (Cambridge, Mass., i., 1957), Prolegomena, especially 1, nn., 1,3; 3,n.5; 12 and nn.32,33.

² *Ibid.*, i, 2-3, 26.

³ *Ibid.*, i, 3-6; H. I. Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, (N.Y., 1953), 32-36.

⁴ Jewish documents have been unearthed only in the "B" and "D" quarters (Tcherikover and Fuks, ii, 1-2).

⁵ S. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, (Manchester, 1967), 191,n.7; 192,n.1.

an immense gathering of the Chosen People would not be left destitute of an opportunity to respond to the Gospel. K. Müller observed: 'It is precisely because of the strength of the Jewish community in Alexandria that Christianity cannot long have been absent from Egypt.'⁶

The origin of Christianity in Egypt is a question which has aroused much scholarly interest.⁷ Research has always been crippled by the scarcity of information in the Acts of the Apostles. How chaotic would be the study of Christian origins elsewhere, had not basic information been preserved by Luke in Acts! His lesser interest in the evangelization of Egypt may be partially explained by two quotations. This first is from J. Moffatt: 'The passing over of years either silently or in a sentence, the ignoring of a figure like Titus, the indifference towards . . . movements of Christianity in the East . . . show that Luke had no intention of writing the history of early Christianity.'⁸ The movements of members of the Twelve, including Peter in his last twenty years, are unmentioned. Secondly, F. F. Bruce has written: 'The remarkably small place given to Alexandrian Christianity is due in the main to the fact that Paul concentrated on the road from Jerusalem to Rome, and that Luke is concerned to relate the progress of the gospel along this road.'⁹ Luke told only of the northward progress of the exiled Hellenist evangelists (Acts 8:1, 26, 40; 11:19). This was the area he knew best. The selection of data is one of the most difficult tasks for any historian, and Luke's principles of selection were not always the same as those of modern investigators. Therefore, his seeming neglect of Egyptian Christendom gives little warrant for assuming that the gospel had not reached this region in apostolic times. Actually he has left us an important clue in the mention of Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew who had been orally instructed in the way of the Lord before coming to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-25). The Western Text adds, 'in his homeland (*en tē patriđi*)'.¹⁰ The fact that Apollos' teaching concerning the Way and his baptismal liturgy were deemed to be less accurate and developed, respectively, then the Pauline (18:25-26) partially explains Luke's failure to dignify the origins of Alexandrian Christianity. While he makes it clear that Apollos' teaching became more accurate, Luke suggests that the catechesis in

220

⁶ *Kirchengeschichte*, (Tübingen, 1929), i,121; quoted from W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, (ed. R. Kraft and G. Krodel; Philadelphia, 1971), 46,n.5.

⁷ Bibliography in M. Hornschuh, *Studien zur Epistula Apostolorum*, (Berlin, 1965), 112-13,n.54.

⁸ *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, (Edinburgh, 1911), 305.

⁹ *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 382.

¹⁰ Bruce, 'Apollos', *Ekkles. Pharos* 57 (1975) 356.

Alexandria remained less than perfect from his own viewpoint; but he minimized theological differences in the church.

R. Kasser believes that Alexandria was one of the first regions touched by the gospel not only because of its large Jewish minority, but also *l'intense curiosité religieuse des autochtones* made Egypt an extremely favourable terrain for the penetration of all sorts of novel teachings.¹¹ In the opinion of H. I. Bell: 'Alexandria was the greatest port in the eastern Mediterranean, to which people were constantly sailing . . . Jews of Alexandria must have gone often enough to Jerusalem . . . It is not credible that among all of these there were no Christians, or that Christian visitors to Jerusalem should not seek to spread the Gospel there.'¹² C. H. Roberts reasons that 'Christianity must have reached Egypt from Palestine; communication between the two countries both by sea and land (along the main arterial road of the Empire) were so good and the number and prestige of Jewish communities in Egypt such that it can hardly have been otherwise.'¹³ L. W. Barnard continues that approach: 'It was this link (with the Jewish authorities in Palestine) and the fidelity of the Egyptian Jews to their ancestral faith, in spite of much assimilation of Greek thought and culture, which provided the seed-bed for the planting of Christianity in . . . Alexandria.'¹⁴ F. M. Braun remarks that 'Egypt maintained close relations with the other Mediterranean countries where the faith penetrated early.'¹⁵ J. A. Plumley deduced: 'When one considers how quickly the preaching of the Gospel spread to the other great cities of the Empire, it would seem scarcely probable that no hint of the new faith was brought to Alexandria.'¹⁶ K. Grobel¹⁷ and S. Brandon¹⁸ have noted

¹¹ 'Les origenes du Christianisme Egyptien', *RTP* 12 (1962), 13.

¹² *Op. cit.*, 79; cf. 'Evidences of Christianity in Egypt during the Roman Period', *HTR* 37 (1944), 190: 'When Christianity was making such headway at Rome, at Antioch, in Asia, at Corinth, and elsewhere, can we really suppose that at Alexandria, whose international populace and maritime importance made it a soil so suitable for any "new thing", should have escaped what a pagan would doubtless have described as the contagion?'

¹³ 'The Christian Book and the Greek Papyri', *JTS* 50 (1949), 161. M. Hornschuh and G. Quispel (review in *Vigiliae Christianae* 22 (1968), 62-63, 93) concur; so do M. Simon and A. Benoit (*Le Judaïsme et le Christianisme*, (Paris, 1968), 108).

¹⁴ 'The Background of Early Egyptian Christianity. II. The Egyptian Diaspora', *Church Quarterly Review* 164 (1963), 439.

¹⁵ *Jean le Théologien et son Évangile dans l'Église Ancienne*, (Paris, 1959), 79-80.

¹⁶ 'Early Christianity in Egypt', *Palestinian Exploration Quarterly* 89 (1957), 77.

¹⁷ 'How Gnostic is the Gospel of Thomas?', *NTS* 8 (1961-62), 373.

¹⁸ Brandon, *op. cit.*, 192. 'The faith probably came with returning pilgrims; for there is much evidence of close ties between Jerusalem and the Alexandrian Jews. As Acts 6:9 shows, there was a synagogue of Alexandrians in Jerusalem' (196 and n.1).

that 'Alexandria was no farther from Jerusalem than Antioch'. A. M. Perry argued: 'Luke was interested in an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27) and also Christian missionaries from Cyrene (Acts 11:20; 13:1; cf. 2:10; 6:9) . . . Is it not fair to assume that Christianity reached Egypt before it spread further?'¹⁷ If Cyrenian preachers went as far as Antioch, others would hardly bypass the more familiar and nearer city of Alexandria, the pre-eminent city of Hellenistic Judaism. In the words of F. F. Bruce, 'Hellenistic disciples who left Jerusalem after Stephen's death . . . are as likely to have gone to Alexandria as to Antioch.'²⁰ The same principles could apply to the spread of the new religion within Egypt. C. H. Roberts called attention to 'the abundant evidence for relations — business, official, literary and personal — between the Greeks of the capital and those of the nomes', and to 'the close connections between the Jews of Alexandria and those of Egypt as evidenced by the Jewish war in the reign of Hadrian.'²¹ It should not be surprising that the earliest New Testament fragment (P⁵², consisting of Jn. 18: 31-33, 37, 38), which is dated ca. AD 125,²² was found far up the Nile.

222

The failure of Paul to go to Egypt points toward the planting of the new faith there in apostolic times. Otherwise it would be hard to understand why he planned to go to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28), where few if any Jews were then settled,²³ rather than to the populous land of the Nile, after he had 'fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum' (Rom. 15:19). His principle was 'to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation' (Rom. 15:20; cf. 2 Cor. 10:13, 15-16). By implication, other men had laboured in worthwhile lands which Paul chose to pass by accordingly.

'That Christianity reached Egypt at an early date', writes W. Schneemelcher, 'is shown by the fact that all "Christian Gnosis" arose in Egypt, or at least made its decisive mark there.'²⁴ 'The earliest Christian Gnostics could hardly have arisen *in vacuo*', observes L. W. Barnard.²⁵ Even if a majority of second century Egyptian Christians were

¹⁹ 'Is John an Alexandrian Gospel?', *JBL* 63 (1944), 101.

²⁰ *New Testament History*, (London, 1969), 278. Cf. *art. cit.*, *Ekkh. Pharos* 57 (1975), 358. A. Loisy (*Les Actes des Apôtres*, (Paris, 1920), 711) argued similarly.

²¹ 'Early Christianity in Egypt: Three Notes', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 40 (1954), 92.

²² Bell, *art. cit.*, *HTR* 37 (1944), 199-200; *op. cit.*, 80; K. Aland, 'Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri.II', *NTS* 9 (1962-63), 307.

²³ J. J. Gunther, *Paul. Messenger and Exile*, (Valley Forge, Pa., 1972), 144-45.

²⁴ 'Von Markus bis Mohammed. Werden und Vergehen einer Landeskirche', *Evangelische Theologie* 8(1948-49), 391.

²⁵ *Art. cit.*, *Church Quarterly Review* 160 (1959), 329-30.

'unorthodox', similar divisions periodically arose in Syria, Palestine, Phrygia, etc. The fact that heresies grew faster than catholicism almost universally in the second century, does not support the hypothesis that Christianity could have taken root in apostolic times only in areas where 'orthodoxy' always remained dominant. Nor can the prevalence of first century unorthodoxy in an area be proved from developments of a hundred years later. That non-Gnostic Christianity had taken root in Egypt during apostolic times was the opinion not only of Clement of Alexandria (Letter to Theodore) but of some contemporaries. The mention in the Muratorian 'Canon' of the Marcionite Letter of Paul to the Alexandrians reveals the assumptions in Rome on the subject. The churches of Palestine, including that of Caesarea, were pleased with their agreement with the Alexandrians on the dating of Easter during the last quarter of the second century (Eusebius, *h. e. v.*, 25). Irenaeus wrote to the Alexandrians on the subject.²⁶ Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer. i. 3*) judged that the rulers of the church planted in Egypt were teaching the universal, unchanged apostolic faith and tradition, *i. e.* in opposition to Gnosticism. Even if the Western Text's attribution of an Alexandrian Christian training to Apollos is not an original reading, at least those who were responsible for inserting and retaining this reading believed that the gospel did not bypass Egypt in the first generation.²⁷

223

EVANGELIZATION BY MARK AND BARNABAS

The hypothesis that there were two Marks in apostolic times has been put forth by J. Weiss,²⁸ G. Dix,²⁹ F. C. Grant,³⁰ V. Taylor,³¹ P. Parker³² and J. E. Bruns.³³ The distinction is supported by the uncertainty of Jerome (*de vir. illustr. 8; comm. in Philemon*)³⁴ and the Greek Church's honouring Mark the Evangelist on April 25 and John Mark, Bishop of Biblos in Phoenicia, on Sept. 27.³⁵ The cousin (Col. 4:10) and close

²⁶ *Opera*, ed. Harvey, vol. 2, 456. This Syriac fragment is translated in the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, i., 576, no. L.

²⁷ R. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London, 1962), 167, n. 3; 'The Provenance of the Interpolator in the Western Text of Acts and of Acts Itself', *NTS* 12 (1965-66), 219.

²⁸ *Das älteste Evangelium*, (Göttingen, 1903), 382-414.

²⁹ *Jew and Greek*, (Westminster, 1953), 75.

³⁰ *The Earliest Gospel*, New York & Nashville, 1943), 53-54.

³¹ *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, London & New York, 1955), 26-30.

³² 'John and John Mark', *JBL* 79 (1960), 109; 'The Authorship of the Second Gospel', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 5 (1978), 4-9.

³³ *The Art and Thought of John*, (New York, 1969), 109-14.

³⁴ Migne, *PG* 26, 617-18.

³⁵ *Acta Sanctorum*, Sept. VII, 354, 379-90.

associate (Acts 12:39) of Barnabas was known as 'Mark'. The 'son' of Peter and co-worker of Paul was known simply as 'Mark'. The only problem is whether to identify the co-worker of Barnabas and Paul with the 'son' of Peter in 'Babylon' (1 Pet. 5:13) who, according to tradition, recorded Peter's recollections and preached in Egypt. There is little chance that there were *two* Hebrew Christians named Mark who were known in Asia Minor (1 Pet. 1:1; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11-12)³⁶ and who assisted Peter and/or Paul in Rome.³⁷ Mark was an uncommon name among Jews.³⁸ It is likely that a 'son' of the apostle to the circumcised (Gal. 2:7) would himself be circumcised. So would be a cousin of a Levite. In Col. 4:10-11 Mark is among the only three men of the circumcision who worked with Paul for the Kingdom. Peter's relationship with John Mark can be traced to the house of Mary, his mother (Acts 12:11ff.), in Jerusalem. Papias (*ap.* Eusebius, *h. e.* iii, 39.15) relates that Mark, as follower and interpreter of Peter, 'wrote down accurately all that he remembered of the things said and done by the Lord'. According to Clement of Alexandria (*ap.* Eusebius, *h. e.* vi, 14.6), 'because Mark for a long time had followed (Peter) and remembered what had been said, many requested him to record his words'. Both accounts imply a close and long association between Peter and his disciple which made his memories so valuable.³⁹ Belief in their special relationship was based on tradition and/or their interpretation of 1 Pet. 5:13⁴⁰ in light of Acts 12:11-17. T. Zahn recognized that according to the usage of 1 Cor. 4:15, 17; Philem. 10; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4, 'the characterization, "my son" . . . can hardly mean anything else than Mark was converted through Peter's influence, and possibly also baptized by him.'⁴¹ Some such spiritual sonship might be expected since Peter, after escaping prison, 'went to the house of Mary, the mother of John . . . Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying' (Acts 12:12). As Mark's own father is unmentioned, the situation was conducive to some sort of filial dependence on Peter. The Silvanus associated with Mark (1 Pet. 5:12-13) and Peter was also linked with Jerusalem and Paul (Acts 15:22-18:5; 1 Thess. 1:1).

The Monarchian Prologue to the Gospel of Mark describes Mark as a

³⁶ Gunther, *op. cit.*, 100-03, 107-14.

³⁷ A. Heckel, *Die Kirche von Agyptum*, (Strassburgh, 1918), 55.

³⁸ As admitted by P. Parker (*art. cit.*, *JBL* 79 (1960), 109); *Perspectives* 5 (1978) 9, n.26.

³⁹ T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, (New York, 1917), ii, 432, 440; B. Bacon, *The Gospel of Mark*, (New Haven, 1925), 282.

⁴⁰ Zahn, *op. cit.*, ii, 449-50, n.10; Bacon, *The Gospel of Mark*, 278, 284; M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 22.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, ii, 427, 445, n.2.

Levite who was converted and baptized by Peter.⁴² That he was a Levite like Barnabas (Acts 4:36) is presupposed by another tradition. Whatever be the actual reason⁴³ for the short fingers (*cholobodachtulos*) which the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Mark and Hippolytus (*Philos.* vii, 30.1) attributed to the Evangelist, the Monarchian Prologue and Codex Toletanus explain that he had mutilated a finger or thumb in order to escape service in the Temple. Although the traditions about Mark are questionable as history, they remain witnesses to the ancient belief that Peter knew but one 'Mark of Jerusalem'. Doubts arose only when developing legends about the apostolic Evangelist and Patriarch came into conflict with the portrait in Acts (13:5, 13; 15: 37-39) of a dropout youthful assistant. Paul's harsh criticism of Cephas (Gal. 2:11-14) similarly prompted his distinction from Peter (Epistle of the Apostles 2; Clement Alex., *Hypotyposes* V *ap.* Eusebius, *h.e.i.*, 12.2). Modern scholarly doubts are chiefly based on internal evidence of authorship of the Gospel of Mark. But would the Gospel be attributed to an otherwise unknown Mark, rather than Peter? Tradition portrayed the author as the one Mark in the NT. Doubts about the authorship⁴⁴ are more justifiable than doubts about the identity of Mark.

225

The movements of John Mark can be partially outlined. As a young man he made his home in Jerusalem, apparently with his mother (Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13). His cousin Barnabas brought him from Jerusalem to Antioch in AD 44⁴⁵ and from Antioch to Cyprus and Perga (12:25; 13:4, 13), whence he returned home. Barnabas again brought him to Antioch and subsequently to Cyprus (15:22, 36-39) in 49 (or possibly the Spring

⁴² Taylor, *op.cit.*, 3-4; original text found in J. Wordsworth & H. J. White, *Novum Testamentum . . . Latine*, (Oxford, 1889), 171-73.

⁴³ J. North ('MARKOS HO KOLOBODAKTYLOS', *JTS* 28, 1977, 498-507) thinks the term is a translation of *murcus* (one who escaped military service by cutting off his thumb) and hence an ironic reference to Mark's desertion of Paul (Acts 13:13; 15:36-39). More likely the name described his congenitally deformed digits (North, 502, nn.4-5), which were a physical and/or psychological handicap in facing hardships. He preferred his mother's company to Paul's. Mk. 9:43,45 ("enter life maimed . . . hands . . . enter life lame") elaborates the tradition found also in Mk. 18:8, whereas 18:9 (throw your eye from you) is longer than Mk. 9:47. Often Mark alone (5:41; 6:2,5; 7:32; 8:23,25; 9:27) refers to the power of Jesus' hands.

⁴⁴ Some assertions (e.g. Parker *art.cit.*, *Perspectives* 5, 1978, 4-5) are unconvincing. Mark's universalistic, if not anti-Judaic (7:3-4; 12:33), viewpoint is attributable to his association with those who founded the churches of Antioch and Egypt, though he spent little time with Paul after their split. The imperfections of Peter were mentioned in order to control a rising Roman martyr cult; those of Jesus' family were deliberately portrayed because of Roman resistance to the ecclesiastical authority of Jesus' relatives.

⁴⁵ Gunther, *op.cit.*, 26-55.

of 50).⁴⁶ Here they would 'visit the brethren . . . and see how they are' (15:36) and strengthen the churches (15:41; 16:5). Mark reappears in Paul's company as a 'fellow worker' (Philem. 24; Col. 4:10-11) during the Apostle's imprisonment at Caesarea in 58.⁴⁷ Mark was sent on a mission from Caesarea to the area of Colossae (Col. 4:10), where he proved himself very useful in serving Paul (2 Tim. 4:11). Timothy was instructed to bring him back to Paul. This fragment of 2 Timothy was written in August, 59, a month before Paul was sent to Rome.⁴⁸ Mark was personally known among the churches of Asia Minor to which 1 Peter (1:1; 5:13) was written. We do not know whether he reached Rome in time to help Paul,⁴⁹ but he is represented as being in Rome before Peter's death by 1 Peter and by some traditions about the origin of his Gospel (Clement Alex., *Adumbr. in 1 Pet.* v.13 and *ap.* Eusebius, *h.e.* ii, 15.2; vi, 14.6-7; Origen *ap.* Eusebius, vi, 25.5). Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* iii, 1.2; *cf.* Eusebius, *h.e.v.* 8.2-3) and the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Mark place the writing of the Gospel after Peter's death. This Prologue further relates that he wrote the Gospel '*in partibus Italiae*', which is plausible in light of the great fire and persecution. The late tradition that he preached in Aquileia (Ado of Vienne, *Brev. Chron.* 6) hints at the dispersion of Roman Christians. The Gospel's traditional association with Rome is supported by its Latinisms,⁵⁰ and its customary dating by its references to persecution and suffering (8:31, 34-38; 9:31; 10:33-34, 38, 45; 13:7-13). All available data thus points to Mark's being in Italy *ca.* 64-67. We are left with three gaps in our knowledge of Mark's general movements: 50-57, 60-63 and after 67. Or if one prefers a Roman setting for the Captivity Epistles, the gap is *ca.* 50-62 and after 67.

The movements of Barnabas after his return to Cyprus with Mark (Acts 15:39) are more obscure. In 1 Cor. 9:6 Paul speaks of Barnabas as if he were still alive and working for a living while serving as a missionary. Paul's other references to him (Gal. 2:9; Col. 4:10) do not hint of his death. He remained well-known, even at Colossae. Barnabas may have come into contact with Apollos at Alexandria *ca.* 50-53 and

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 57-59.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 98-107; on the dating see 88-89, 139-42.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 103, 107-14.

⁴⁹ Tradition supports Mark's working with Peter, not Paul, before the persecution began. Paul arrived in Rome by March, 60 and spent two years teaching there before going to Spain (Gunther, *op.cit.*, 141ff.). Did Mark arrive after Paul departed?

⁵⁰ B. Bacon, *Is Mark a Roman Gospel?* (Cambridge, Mass., 1919), 53-55; P. L. Couchoud, 'L'Evangile de Marc a-t-il été écrit en Latin?', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 94 (1926), 160-92 (the case is overdrawn); Taylor, *op.cit.*, 45; W. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (New London, Comm.), (London, 1974), 24-25.

encourages him to become a missionary in the Aegean area. Is it merely a coincidence that Paul and Apollos moved into the same vacuum simultaneously? The conciliatory nature of Barnabas (Gal. 2:13; Acts 4:36; cf. 11:22-24) and his own contact with the primitive church and the Hellenists would leave him relatively tolerant of whatever 'deviations' Aquila and Priscilla later sought to correct in Apollos (18:26).⁵¹ The reference to Barnabas in 1 Cor. 9:6 during the time when that community was divided into the parties of Apollos, Cephas, Paul and Christ (1:12; 3:4), may have been intended as a self-defence. To the Christ party Paul answered that his brothers and their wives were supported; to the Cephas party he replied that Peter himself was supported; to the Apollos party Paul replied that Barnabas (the apostolic exhorter of Apollos—?) had the right to food and drink.

The general attribution of an epistle to Barnabas and a large number of personal references in the Epistle, point to the earlier presence of Barnabas in Egypt. Among the references to personally known readers are 1:1, 3, 4; 2:8; 4:6, 9; 6:5; 9:9 and 21:7. The readers were largely Gentiles living in contact with Judaism (3:6; 13:7; 14:1, 4-8); such a group of converts is what we would expect Barnabas to be responsible for. Apparently the Epistle was written by a teacher to a community organized by Barnabas. For, how could the Alexandrians later accept it as coming from Barnabas if the closest he ever got to Egypt was Jerusalem and Cyprus? Clement not only quoted the Epistle seven times as the writing of Barnabas, but he even commented on the Epistle (Eusebius, *h. e.* vi, 14.1). He manifested a keen interest in Barnabas himself which may well imply a local veneration of his name. Clement referred to him as 'the apostle Barnabas' (*Strom.* ii, 6.31; 7.35) and as 'one of the Seventy' (*Strom.* ii, 20.116). He was the member of the Seventy who was singled out by name as a recipient of the *gnosis* transmitted through James, John, Peter and the other apostles (*Hypotyposes* vii *ap.* Eusebius, *h. e.* ii, 1.4). Only a few have received this *gnosis* 'from the apostles in unbroken sequence . . . through oral tradition' (*Strom.* vi, 7.61). This true teaching has been passed down from father to son unto Clement's own day (*Strom.* i, 1.11).

The Clementine *Homilies* (i, 7-14, especially 9; ii, 4) narrate Barnabas' visit to Alexandria and his preaching there while on the way from

⁵¹ Barnabas had long been in contact with the Hellenists at Antioch (Acts 11:22) and enjoyed their confidence (13:1-3). Barnabas favoured circumcision and kosher table laws no more than did Paul, but was willing to compromise for the sake of unity (Gal. 2:12-14). Would the radical teachings of the Epistle of Barnabas have been imputed to him if he had corrected as quickly as did Prisca and Aquila the Alexandrian catechesis and apologetics of Apollos?

Antioch to Rome. O. Cullmann in his study of the Pseudo-Clementine literature⁵² concluded that this narrative, which was repressed by the *Recognitions*, was derived from an Acts of Peter written at Antioch ca. AD 200. The tradition that Barnabas preached at Alexandria was mentioned also by Alexander the Monk in the sixth century.⁵³ Various traditions bring Barnabas to Rome (*Clem. Hom. i, 7-13; Recogn. i, 7-13; Acts of Peter (Vercelli), ch. 4; Pseudo-Dorotheus*) and to Milan and have him martyred on Cyprus.⁵⁴ Possibly his connection with Rome was deduced from the presence there of Mark, his missionary companion in Acts. But if it be historical, then it would be plausible that Barnabas went to Milan during the temporary dispersion of persecuted Romans believers. The late fifth-century Acts of Barnabas, which tell of Mark's departure for Alexandria following the demise of Barnabas in Salamis in AD 61, is marked by a typographical knowledge appropriate for a Cypriote. Little trust can be placed in its historical value.⁵⁵ By virtue of Barnabas' birth and two missionary journeys in Cyprus, the later church there felt justified in solidifying its claim to its apostle and his body.

228 Acts 15:39 leaves Barnabas taking Mark on a journey to Cyprus following an argument with Paul concerning Mark's fitness; on their first journey Mark had gone only to Cyprus and Perga (13:13; 15:38). Barnabas felt Mark was now ready for more responsibility further afield, but Paul was not convinced until he himself was imprisoned. Under these conditions would Barnabas be any more content with a return visit to only Cyprus than Paul would be to Galatia alone? Having been entrusted, together with Paul, with the mission to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9; Acts 13:2), Barnabas would feel an obligation to continue the work to which he had been called. His divisive *paroxusmos* with Paul concerning Mark's preparedness to face the unknown responsibly, indicates Barnabas' certainty about Mark. This confidence would be more apt to impel a major apostle like Barnabas to take an important step in evangelization *with* Mark, than merely to revisit fellow Cypriote brethren. This journey did contribute to the restoration of Mark's self-confidence after Paul's rejection, and to the loosening of his ties to his mother (if still alive) and Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). He had become a much more mature person when sent by Paul to unfamiliar churches.

When they went their independent ways, Paul, accompanied by Silas,

⁵² *Le problème littéraire et historique du Roman pseudo-Clementin*, (Paris, 1930), 71, 74, 109.

⁵³ ch. 14; Migne, PG 87, 4095.

⁵⁴ R. A. Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichte und Apostellegenden*, (Braunschweig, 1887), ii-2, 271-73, 305-20 (on Rome and Milan) 276-304 (on Cyprus).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 288.

travelled to the northwest while Barnabas, accompanied by Mark, headed toward the southwest (15:39-41). Cyprus is one third of the way from Antioch to Egypt and on a direct line. Because the Hellenists, who eventually at Antioch came under the supervision of Barnabas, were associated with Alexandria through Stephen, it would be a suitable area for Barnabas to visit.⁵⁶ Cyrene would have been another attractive site for his labours, since Lucius of Cyrene was one of the prophets at Antioch who had, by the laying on of hands, commissioned Barnabas to embark on his tour of Cyprus and Asia Minor with Paul (13:1-3). Cyrenian refugees had been among the founders of the church of Antioch (11:19-21). If Barnabas was sent from Antioch to Cyprus, why would he not go to Cyrene also, as there were both Cyrenian and Cypriote Hellenists at Antioch? 1 Macc. 15:23 mentions Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene together. Mark's reference (Mk. 15:21) to Simon the Cyrenian as the father of Alexander and Rufus, indicates that Mark personally knew some of them. Cyrenian Jews had close contacts with Jerusalem.⁵⁷ The militant apocalypticism of many of them was manifested in AD 73 (Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv,7.2;xvi, 6.1,5; *War* vii,11; *Life* 76) and 115-17.⁵⁸ The limited evidence suggests that no Diaspora Jews were more receptive to militant Messianism than the Cyrenians.

229

According to Rom. 15:18-20 (*cf.* 2 Cor. 10:13-16), Paul had no room left which was allotted to him for evangelizing the Gentiles. Because Barnabas had the same commission (Gal. 2:9; *cf.* Acts 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 9:6-7), the most satisfactory explanation for the exclusion of north Africa from Paul's possible missionary territory is that he did not wish to trespass in the domain of Barnabas, the other apostle to the Gentiles. Why else did Paul not plan to stop in Alexandria and Cyrene on the way from Jerusalem to Rome after delivering his gift to 'the saints'? Barnabas stayed out of Paul's territory, even in Asia Minor where he had been on their 'first journey'. They subsequently acted as if they had made an agreement on the division of missionary territory when they personally parted ways. A. Deissmann commented on the tradition of Barnabas' going to Alexandria: 'There was not much "place" (Rom. 15:23) left for him anywhere else as a missionary to the heathen.'⁵⁹ The

⁵⁶ V. Bartlet ('The Epistle to the Hebrews as the Work of Barnabas', *Expositor* 58 (1903), 381) wrote with reference to Barnabas: 'We must picture the Jews of Cyprus as under the influence of both Jerusalem and Alexandria. Doubtless they would partake of the "Alexandrian" mode of thought'.

⁵⁷ 'Cyrene', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1971, v, 1183-84.

⁵⁸ Gunther, 'The Epistle of Barnabas and the Final Rebuilding of the Temple', *Jnl. for the Study of Judaism* 7 (1977), 143.

⁵⁹ St. Paul. *A Study in Sacred and Religious History*, (New York & London, 1912), 263, n.1.

process of elimination further supports locating the work of Barnabas and Mark in north Africa after they sailed to Cyprus. Hebrew Christian preachers were unwelcome in Rome from AD 49 probably until the death five years later of Claudius, who had expelled them (Acts 18:2; Suetonius, *Claudius* xxv,3; Dio Cassius, *Rom.Hist.*lx,6.6; Orosius, *History* vii, 6.15).⁶⁰ The identity of Mark was unknown at Colossae (Col. 4:10) prior to his projected visit there. His ties with Jerusalem (Acts 12:12;13:13) seem to have been loosed long before the writing (or editing) of his Gospel, which bears few marks of Jerusalem Christianity.

Reasoning from New Testament evidence thus supports traditions associating Barnabas and Mark with Egypt or Cyrene. If such a visit by both did take place, it occurred after Barnabas and Paul parted ways, but by the time Paul wrote Romans 15:18-29 and was imprisoned. Mark could have returned on his way to Rome and/or after Peter died and the Gospel was written; but a return visit by Barnabas would be more conjectural. Either the Marcan tradition or the Gospel of Mark lies behind the noteworthy resemblances in the Epistle of Barnabas (4:3 and Mk. 13:20; Barn. 5:9 and Mk. 2:17b; Barn. 7:9 and Mk. 15:39; Barn. 12:10-11 and Mk. 12:35-36).⁶¹ But no historical facts about the movements of Mark and Barnabas can be convincingly deduced therefrom.

230

Mark is associated with Alexandria by: Clement of Alexandria (Letter to Theodore),⁶² Eusebius (*h.e.*ii,16.24; *Theoph.*iv,6), Epiphanius (*Haer.*29,5.4;51,6.10), Apostolic Constitutions (vii,46), the Acts of Mark,⁶³ the Acts of Barnabas (ch.26), the Liturgy of St. Mark (viii,xv),⁶⁴ Jerome (*de vir ill.*8; *comm. in Matt.*, praef.6), John Chrysostom (*Hom.I,3 in Matth.*), The Roman Martyrology for April 25, the Latin Monarchian Prologue to Mark, Theophilus as cited by John Malalas in his Chronicle,⁶⁵ the Syriac *Doctrina Apostolorum*,⁶⁶ and the Appendix on the Evangelists and Apostles in Ephraem's Diatessaron Commentary.⁶⁷ The tradition was almost universally accepted by the end of the fourth century.

⁶⁰ Gunther, *op.cit.*, 172, n.2.

⁶¹ H. Koester, *Synoptische Uberlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, (Berlin, 1957), 133-35, 137-39, 142, 144-146, 149-51, 153, 156-57. He considers literary dependence unlikely.

⁶² M. Smith, *op.cit.*, 446.

⁶³ The Acts are found in Migne, *PG* 115, 164ff.; *Acta Sanctorum*, April, III, 347-49. On the various recensions see Lipsius, *op.cit.*, ii-2, 329ff.

⁶⁴ Translated in the *Ante-Nicene Library*, vii, 553; see J. Finegan, *Hidden Records of the Life of Jesus*, (Philadelphia, 1969), 70.

⁶⁵ Ed. and transl. by M. Spinka and G. Downey, (Chicago, 1950), VIII, 59.

⁶⁶ W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, (London & Edinburgh, 1864), 13, 33.

⁶⁷ Louis Leloir (ed.), *Saint Ephrem Commentaire de l'Evangile Concordant*, (CSCO, Script. Armen.; Louvain:1954), vol. 145, p.248.

Clement wrote to Theodore that when Peter was martyred, Mark came to Alexander and 'left to the church in Alexandria' 'the more spiritual Gospel' which he had composed there for advanced Christians from his notes and Peter's. As Carpocrates corrupted a copy of this secret Gospel, the Alexandrian church must have early believed that Mark had taught there and left behind a secret Petrine tradition. If he had died there, as Clement states, the claim to this *gnosis* would be more substantial. At about the same time when this esoteric Gospel was written, the exoteric *Preaching of Peter* imputed to Peter the current Egyptian Christian apologetics.⁶⁸ While apocryphal writers needed no historical links to the apostles, Mark was the acknowledged transmitter of Petrine teaching. The *Preaching of Peter* (*ap. Clement, Strom.* vi, 5.43; 6.48) included non-canonical quotations from Jesus concerning the apostolic commission to teach the world the gospel. Another proponent of Petrine tradition in Egypt was the author of 2 Peter (1:1; 3:2).⁶⁹ The local church felt that through Mark it had access to the teachings of Peter and that it could put them in writing as need arose.

Eusebius (*h. e.* ii, 16.1), after citing 1 Pet. 5:13, relates: 'And they say (*phasin*) this Mark was the first to be sent to preach in Egypt the Gospel which he had written, and he first established churches in Alexandria'. He adds (ii, 24): 'In the eighth year of the reign of Nero (62-63) Annianus was the first to succeed Mark the Evangelist in the custody of the community in Alexandria'. Jerome's Latin version of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius (Migne, PG 19, 539) concurs with this dating after reporting under the third year of Claudius (43:44): 'Mark the Evangelist, the interpreter of Peter, proclaims Christ in Egypt and Alexandria'. The dates in the Armenian version of the *Chronicle* are, respectively, the seventh year of Nero and the first year of Claudius (the year of Abraham 2057) (ed. Schöne, ii, 154-55).⁷⁰ One of Eusebius' sources⁷¹ was the *Chronicle* of Julius Africanus, who said (*Chron. ap. Eusebius h. e.* vi, 31.2) that he himself 'went to Alexandria on account of the fame of Heracles'.⁷² In recording the Alexandrian episcopal list he must have

231

⁶⁸ J. Reagan, *The Preaching of Peter*, (Chicago, 1923), 14, 44, 45, 81; Gunther, 'The Alexandrian Gospel and Letters of John', *CBQ* 41 (1979), 592, n.72.

⁶⁹ Its origin in Egypt has been upheld by A. Harnack, J. Moffatt, J. W. C. Wand, C. Spicq and J. N. D. Kelly.

⁷⁰ The hypothesis of two editions of the *Chronicle* has been widely accepted (G. Salmon, J. B. Lightfoot, Schoene, A. Heckel, C. H. Turner).

⁷¹ Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, (Leipzig, 1897), 152ff.; Turner, 'Early Episcopal Lists III', *JTS* 18 (1916-17), 111; Heckel, *op. cit.*, 14, 16; E. Caspar, *Altteste Römische Bischofsliste*, (*Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft* (Geisteswiss. Klasse); 1926), 144-47.

⁷² Julius again spoke of his visit to Egypt in his *Chronicle* when giving the fourth dynasty of Memphis (anno Abr. 2237).

made some reference to its fountainhead.⁷³ Eusebius apparently followed the scheme of Julius Africanus whereby the churches in Antioch, Rome and Alexandria were founded in the Olympiadic year 205 (AD 41-44).⁷⁴ As he dated the Resurrection in Olympiadic year 202,1 (Oct.1,29-Sept.30,AD 30),⁷⁵ we may surmise that his early dating of the founding of these churches was based on the tradition that Jesus taught: 'After twelve years go out into the world' (Preaching of Peter *ap.* Clement, *Strom.* vi,5.43; Acts of Peter, ch.5;*cf.* Apollonius *ap.* Eusebius, *h. e. v.*,18.14).

Also transparently theological, but more in accord with Biblical data, is most of the tradition first recorded in the Acts of Mark. 'The Evangelist' went to Egypt when the Apostles were dispersed throughout the world. He preached to the *chōra* of Egypt, Libya, Marmarica, Ammoniac and Pentapolis, including Cyrene. Here it was revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should go to Alexandria (ch.1-2). After ordaining three elders, etc., he returned to Pentapolis and its surrounding *chōra*, where he spent two years before returning to Alexandria (ch.5). Canon 6 of the Council of Nicea in 325 decreed: 'Let the ancient customs hold good which are in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis, according to which the Bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places.'⁷⁶ The Jews of Egypt, Cyrene and Libya were linked in Josephus, *Against Apion* ii.4. Possibly these areas were united ecclesiastically partly because Mark had actually been active in both areas. Probably if he visited one locality he preached also in some of the others historically affiliated with it.

Clement in his Letter to Theodore implies that the dying Mark left the Alexandrian church alone his secret Gospel as a testament. No other ancient church claimed his relics. Julius Africanus had access to both epigraphical and literary evidence of Alexandrian beliefs about Mark and his successor, Annianus.⁷⁷ The *marturion* of Mark was a place of

⁷³ Harnack, *Chronologie* . . . , ii-1 (1897), 123-24.

⁷⁴ Heckel, *op. cit.*, 34, 36. The Chronicon Paschale dates the founding of the Alexandrian church in AD 39, the same year Peter went to Antioch. The Chronicon Alexandrinum, George Syncellus and Anastasius place Mark's arrival in Egypt in AD 40. This scheme implies that Julius is another witness to the belief that the Alexandrian church had an orthodox start.

⁷⁵ J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, (Princeton, N.J., 1964), 144, 150; *cf.* Turner *art. cit.* I, *JTS* 1 (1899-1900), 185.

⁷⁶ *Ap.* J. Stevenson (ed.), *A New Eusebius*, (London, 1963), 360. The same council addressed a letter to the Church of the Alexandrians and to the brethren in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis (Socrates, *H.E.* i, 9.1).

⁷⁷ Epiphanius (Haer.69.2) mentions a church in Alexandria named after Annianus. Bishops were buried in a church in Bucolia, a district northeast of the city's Jewish quarter (J. Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church: The Patriarchate of Alexandria.* ii-1, (London, 1847), 7; Lipsius, *op. cit.*, ii, 383.

pilgrimage toward the end of the fourth century (Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, ch.113; Migne, PG 34, 1218).

The episcopal tradition focused on Mark and ignored Barnabas because only Mark was believed to have confirmed Annianus and returned to Egypt from Italy. His death and burial there left him alone as 'the author and guardian of all the . . . occupiers of this pontifical chair' (*Passion of Peter Martyr*, Migne, PG, 18, 462). Similarly Poly-crates (*ap. Eusebius, h.e.v.24*) did not even claim Paul when naming Asian saints from whose relics some power seemed to flow. The Alexandrian catechetical tradition considered Mark more important than Barnabas because of his transmission of the Petrine tradition (both exoteric and esoteric). Who else was a fellow worker with Peter and Paul and had the disciples gather at his house (Acts 12:2)? Acts 4:36-37 kept Barnabas from becoming a disciple of Jesus himself. But in later tradition Mark did become a disciple.⁷⁸

Whereas tradition gradually elevated Mark, Barnabas was the more honoured before the scriptural, apostolic authority of Mark's Gospel became universally recognized in the first part of the second century. Pseudo-Barnabas witnesses to his status among initial readers in Egypt.

233

(To be continued)

⁷⁸ John Mark became one of the two disciples of the Baptist (Jn. 1:35) (Ms. R of the 5th century Egyptian Witness of the Holy John the Precursor and Baptist (*Patr. Or.* 4, 526, 540)); one of the servants who poured the water at Cana (Severus, *History of the Patriarchs . . . Patr. Or.* 1, 135ff.; Abu-l-Barakat, *ap. Oriens Christianus* 1 (1901), 257); the one who met Jesus at the pool of Bethzatha (Jn. 5:2) (Alexander the Monk, *Praise of St. Barnabas*, ch.7; Migne, PG 87, 4091-92; the owner of the house in Jerusalem where the Last Supper was held (Mk. 14:15); Jn. 19:27; Acts 12:12) (Alexander the Monk, *ibid.*; Nicephorus Callistus, *Eccles. Hist.* ii,3; Migne, PG 145, 758-59); one of the Seventy (Dialogue of Adamantius) and one of those who deserted Jesus (Jn. 6:66) and had to be won again by Peter (*cf.* Lk. 22:32; 1 Pet. 5:13) (Epiphanius, *Haer.* 20,4;51.6). The Acts of Peter Martyr (Migne, PG 18, 461-62) portray the Evangelist as a witness of the suffering of Christ who was 'chosen by Christ to be the first pontiff of the see of Alexandria'.