

Preface

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RUDOLF KNOPF'S COMMENTARY ON the Didache and 1–2 Clement first appeared in 1920 within the handbook series titled *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament. Ergänzungs-Band* under the title *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel. Die zwei Clemensbriefe*. This volume, being one of the first comprehensive, verse-by-verse commentaries on a non-canonical text, marked a significant development in the German-speaking world of New Testament studies. Knopf's commentary, along with the rest of the supplementary volumes to the series, helps set the stage for future commentaries on texts commonly designated *The Apostolic Fathers*. Though certainly dated, Knopf's commentary on the Didache and 1–2 Clement remains an important work in the field, as Andreas Lindemann demonstrates in his foreword to this volume.

In the English version of this work, I have made many translation and editorial decisions that should be mentioned here. First, I have attempted to provide a translation that is clear and easy to read, despite the concise and often unclear original. This required the expansion of incomplete, abbreviated constructions or the division of lengthy constructions into multiple sentences. Second, where there was ambiguity in the German original, I have provided Translator's Notes (TN) in the footnotes. These notes include alternative translations or explanations for the translation provided. Third, when either Knopf or Lindemann cited German texts, I have chosen to translate these citations into English.

In addition to these small, rather mundane matters, I have made major editorial changes to the original format of Knopf's commentary. The German typesetter rarely used headings, line breaks, or paragraph indentations to guide the reader. For instance, in the introduction to each of the respective works (i.e., Didache, 1–2 Clement), new headings were demarcated solely with the use of Small Caps, making it difficult to see when a section ends and a new one begins. This has been updated to

modern typesetting conventions. Furthermore, Knopf's fresh translations of the Didache and 1–2 Clement are presented in a unique but unfortunate manner. The translation appeared in the main body of the page and the running commentary in the footer. Line breaks were not used in the running commentary to segment the material. Instead, Knopf used Roman numerals and small caps in a somewhat convoluted, though consistent, way to indicate new sections and their relationship to one another. The result is wall after wall of text with little to no markers to aid readers as to how they should process the material.

In order to make the commentary easier to use, significant revisions to the format have been made. In this vein, the outlines Knopf provides for each ancient text is used to restructure the respective headings for the commentary. Introductions to each section have been taken from the commentary and relocated to the beginning of its respective section. Following this material is Knopf's translation of the text and then his commentary on it. Since Knopf did not consistently provide introductions to the main divisions he commented upon, I and the series editors felt it necessary to write brief introductions where they were lacking. This additional material was supplied by me, but in accordance with the views Knopf expresses throughout the work. Translator's notes appear in all instances where I have added such material.

Our hope is that these translation decisions and editorial revisions have made Knopf's valuable commentary more accessible and will not be viewed as a corruption of his historical work.

Foreword

ANDREAS LINDEMANN

1. Introduction

THE COMMENTARY BY RUDOLF Knopf, presented here for the first time in English, appeared in 1920 as a contribution to the series “Handbuch zum Neuen Testament” (HNT).¹ This commentary series was conceived at the beginning of the twentieth century by the church historian Hans Lietzmann. Lietzmann, who taught in Jena, consciously strived for the series to be a concise, strictly historical-critical interpretation of the writings of the New Testament.² Accordingly, the authors within this series came from the environment of the “History of Religions School” and “liberal theology.” In the “Ergänzungsbänden” (Supplementary Volumes) authors also interpreted the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, not unlike the writings of the New Testament, but without further explanation of the designation “Apostolic Fathers.”³

1. Otto Merk, “Knopf,” 215 says of Knopf’s commentary on the Didache and the letters of Clement that it remains “unsurpassed even up to this day.”

2. On the concept of the HNT, cf. Hammann, *Paul Siebeck*, 170: The commentary series was designed to explain the writings of the NT “with philological precision and understanding for the history of religions context of early Christianity.” On this, see the programmatic and detailed preface to the third volume: Lietzmann, *Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus*, v–x.

3. In addition to the commentaries published between 1906 and 1920, monographs on the history of early Christianity and its contemporary environment, along with a grammar, appeared within the series as “Ergänzungsbände” (Supplementary Volumes).

2. The Apostolic Fathers

The epithet “Apostolic Fathers” is often traced back to Jean-Baptiste Cotelier (1629–86), who in 1672 edited the non-New Testament texts from the time before the church fathers (*SS. Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt*). However, presumably it was William Wake (*Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers*) who first explicitly used the term “Apostolic Fathers.”⁴ The writings collected under this heading were often received in the early church though without attaining canonical status. The assumption was that the authors named within this collection or later attributed to them had some association with the apostles.⁵ Wake sees them as “the contemporaries of the Holy Apostles; some of them bred up under our Saviour Christ himself, and the rest instructed by those great men whom he commissioned to go forth and preach to all the world.” He continues by saying, “we cannot doubt but that what they deliver to us, must be, without controversy, the pure doctrine of the Gospel; what Christ and his Apostles taught, and what they had themselves received from their own mouths.”⁶ However, the question of whether this title refers only to a temporal proximity to the apostolic writings or a proximity to them with respect to theological content can be answered differently. The *Did.*, which was discovered in 1883, was shortly thereafter also attributed to the Apostolic Fathers. This means that the collection consists of writings from the time between 90 CE and 150 CE, which are not canonical, but which also do not give the impression that they were of “apostolic” origin by means of pseudonymous attribution.⁷ And thus the statement by J. B. Lightfoot remains valid: “The term itself . . . is sufficiently elastic.”⁸

4. De Jonge, “Origin,” 503–5. Cf. also Rothschild, “Invention,” 7–33.

5. The letter from the church in Rome to the church in Corinth was connected with the Κλήμης Paul mentioned in Phil 4:3. In the Muratorian Canon, the author of the extensive work “The Shepherd” is identified with the Ἐρμᾶς mentioned in Rom 16:14. The anonymous letter entitled “Barnabas” is attributed to the Barnabas mentioned several times in Acts and by Paul. Ignatius and Polycarp were considered to be disciples of John the Evangelist.

6. Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 157 (cited according to de Jonge, “Origin,” 504–5).

7. A controversial discussion in the literature is about whether it would be better to include the letter to Diognetus—which can be dated only with uncertainty—among the Apologists instead of the Apostolic Fathers.

8. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* 1.1, 3. His work entitled *A Revised Text of Clement of Rome: The Two Epistles to the Corinthians—With Introductions and Notes*, published in Cambridge in 1869, was a watershed in that Lightfoot comprehensively discussed the introductory questions, edited the Greek text, offered a translation, and provided a historical investigation and theological interpretation of 1–2 Clem. Lightfoot cited approvingly the thesis that the Apostolic Fathers were “not great writers, but great characters” (p. 7). Lightfoot deplored the modest interest in these writings, especially

3. Apostolic Fathers in the HNT

Although there have been numerous editions of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers since the seventeenth century,⁹ these texts were hardly perceived to be theological works in the true sense of the word. They were rarely commented on in detail. Apparently, as “late” writings, they were not a topic for New Testament scholarship. For research on church history, they were possibly too “early” and perceived to be of lesser value than the Apologists or the church fathers. In any case, the decision to include their interpretation in the HNT was unusual.¹⁰ “The fact that Lietzmann included the Apostolic Fathers in the handbook and had them annotated in the same way as the canonical New Testament was in accordance with the state of affairs—they were written largely at the same time as its later components—and was only consistent: when the environment of the New Testament was treated in special supplementary volumes (by Wendland and Bousset), it was impossible to leave the Apostolic Fathers aside.”¹¹ According to Kurt Aland’s judgment, the commentaries published from 1920 to 1923 were written “by outstanding experts.”¹²

Commentary on the writings of the Apostolic Fathers within the HNT had a prehistory. In 1904 two extensive books edited by Edgar Hennecke were published: *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung und mit Einleitungen* as well as *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen*

in the ancient church of the West, as seen in the paltry number of translations into Latin. “The Reformation brought a great change. The exigencies of the crisis turned the attention of both the contending parties to questions of Church order and polity; and the first appeal was naturally to those writers who lived on the confines of the Apostolic age” (p. 12). He detected, however, a growing interest in these texts within the nineteenth century when the authenticity and early dating of some of the canonical writings were questioned.

9. Bibliographical data can be found in von Gebhardt et al., *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera* 1.1, xvii–xix. On the early history of reception, see Ulrich, “Apostolischen Väter,” 256–67.

10. Kümmel, *Das Neue Testament*, 558n354: According to the archives of J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), the original title of the “Handbuch zum Neuen Testament” was planned to be “Handbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und seinen Apokryphen.”

11. Aland, *Glanz*, 32. Aland writes (in 1979!): “To this day, the Apostolic Fathers lead a marginal existence in the consciousness of even New Testament scholars (much to the detriment of many monographs and essays; the interest in them has been correspondingly low)” (32).

12. Aland, *Glanz*, 32. The interpreter of the epistles of Ignatius was Walter Bauer; the commentary on the epistle of Barnabas was written by Hans Windisch; and the commentary on the Shepherd of Hermas was written by Martin Dibelius.

Apokryphen, which included concise explanations and comments.¹³ In the edited translation of the Greek text, the term “Apocrypha” is explained. What is meant is “historical sources from the oldest form of Christianity” that are “equal to the New Testament books as the oldest apologetic, gnostic, and martyrological works of the second century.” Furthermore, it is stated that “in this sense there is no boundary between the New Testament canon and the extra-canonical (apocryphal) literature published here.”¹⁴ The designation “Apostolic Fathers” is not encountered in either volume. First Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and the epistle to the Laodiceans are found under the heading “Epistles.” Clement and Polycarp are “disciples of the apostles” and Ignatius is considered to be a “faithful successor.”¹⁵ In contrast, however, in the second edition of the translation of the Greek text published in 1924,¹⁶ in the chapter titled “Stimmen der Kirche” (Voices of the Church), 1 Clem., Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, as well as “the presbyter of Irenaeus” are explicitly compiled under the heading “Apostolic Fathers,” and this is placed under the understanding “that those in question belonged as apostolic disciples or otherwise men of repute among the apostles, more precisely in the post-apostolic era.”¹⁷ The whole edition shows the strong interest in this special, in a certain way quite “open” era of church and theological history.

4. Life and Works

Rudolf Knopf, born 1874 in Biala (Galicia, at that time part of the Habsburg monarchy), studied Protestant theology in Vienna and received his doctorate in 1898 in Berlin. In 1899 he received his habilitation in Marburg in New Testament studies. He became an independent professor (i.e., less than full professor) in 1907 in Vienna, and later in 1909 became a full professor there. In the summer semester of 1914, he began teaching in Bonn, where he died on January 19, 1920, after a short battle with illness. Knopf “sought to combine the concerns of liberal theology with the research in the history of religions of his time and saw himself as a representative of that ‘history of religions school.’”¹⁸ He was especially in-

13. Like the HNT, both of these volumes were published by J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

14. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, vi.

15. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, 80.

16. Unlike the comprehensive edition of the translations of the Apocrypha, which continues to be used to this day, the “Handbook” has not been reprinted.

17. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, 2nd ed., 480.

18. Merk, “Knopf,” 215.

terested in the New Testament “in its transition to the patristic literature” and wrote commentaries on 1–2 Pet, Jude, and Acts.¹⁹

In 1899 Knopf wrote a monograph on 1 Clem.²⁰ The presentation of the manuscript tradition is followed by Knopf’s own edition of the text.²¹ Knopf then describes the “literary character” of 1 Clem.²² He emphasizes “that we must not presuppose in Clement an exact and detailed knowledge of the Corinthian church-relations.” We do not learn what the dispute was about in Corinth, “it was perhaps not so easy to describe briefly.” The statements in 1 Clem. 4–38 are designed “to be a homiletic-paranetic congregational address.” In Clement’s argumentation from the Bible (OT), one notices that the author has all the evidence “at hand, [and he] does not have to search for it while writing.” Thus, 1 Clem. is not an “occasional letter,” but rather “one clearly sees that the letter is intended to be read publicly for the edification of the congregation.” The future fate of the letter shows that this intention was realized, as the reference to Dionysius demonstrates (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.11). Finally, Knopf emphasizes the direct relationship between 1 Clem. and Paul’s 1 Cor.

In the aforementioned edition of the text of the Apocrypha by E. Hennecke, Knopf was responsible for the introduction and translation of 1 Clem.²³ In the accompanying *Handbuch*,²⁴ he discussed the references to the OT, which occupy “such a wide space like that of no other ancient Christian writing.” The author, familiar with the LXX, was presumably born a pagan, but was “probably a member of a Christian community for decades” and was among those who, according to the picture sketched in 1 Clem. 63:3, “walked among us without fault from youth to old age.” Knopf’s statement—“Beside the word of God in the OT, there is not yet a written NT text that serves as a second, equal authority, but rather ‘the

19. In 1909, Knopf published his 123-page volume *Paulus* in the series *Wissenschaft und Bildung*, which was supplemented to some extent in 1913 (*Probleme der Paulusforschung*). His volume *Ausgewählte Märtyrerakten* was reprinted several times with an extensive list of secondary literature.

20. Knopf, *Clemensbrief*. In the preface, Knopf writes, “The present work, in all its parts, owes its origin to the suggestions of my highly respected teacher, Prof. Adolf Harnack.”

21. Knopf, *Clemensbrief*, 94–148.

22. Knopf, *Clemensbrief*, 156–94. The following citations are taken from this section.

23. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, 84–112. The church historian Hans von Schubert was responsible for 2 Clem.; Paul Drews, professor of practical theology in Jena, was responsible for the Did.

24. Hennecke, *Handbuch*, 173–90. The following citations come from pp. 173–76 of this work.

Lord,' i.e., Christ"—however, is not supported by the evidence he cites.²⁵ The NT did not exist at this time, yet the corresponding writings were "for the most part already available and known to the author of our letter." Knopf takes the knowledge of 1 Cor and Rom as "certain," whereas references to other Pauline letters "must be presupposed more than they can be proved." It is "very doubtful" that Clement had knowledge of Col, Eph, and the Pastoral Epistles. It is, however, "very likely" that he had knowledge of 1 Pet. In 1 Clem. 36, Heb is "quoted literally, even if silently." Acquaintance with the other NT writings "cannot be proved," which is in a certain tension with the remark quoted at the beginning. Concerning 1 Clem. 1:3, Knopf writes under the heading "Gliederung in der Gemeinde" (Divisions in the Congregation): "The two strata of the older and the younger in the congregation stand opposite one another. From the number of the older ones, partly by election, partly by emergence of the individual as a result of charismatic gifting, a group of 'leaders' is formed, the ἡγούμενοι (or προηγούμενοι). The elected ones among this group are the ministers, the bishops (and deacons), for whom the title 'presbyters,' 'elders,' according to their specific sense, is appropriate."

In what is probably his most important work, *Das Nachapostolische Zeitalter*, Knopf describes the historical development of the church and goes into detail about the writings written after the death of Paul up to "around 140 CE."²⁶ At the beginning of the chapter "Gemeindeverfassung" (Constitution of the Church), he emphasizes that the Didache shows "the closest relationship to the constitutional conditions of the apostolic age"; the "ministers" do not yet appear "as the guardians and keepers of pure doctrine in the face of a degenerated prophethood and teaching," and "the examination of the apostles, prophets, and teachers is carried out [*sic* unchanged] by the church itself." The church, however, became more cautious toward the pneumatics, and thus their number became "sparser."²⁷ In 1 Clem., which is presumably older than the Did., the data on the constitution of the church were "much more confused and ambiguous"; the theory of the church office

25. The words of Jesus cited in 13:2 and in 46:8 were "just as holy" as "the words of God from the OT"; Knopf noted at the same time, however, that the use of Jesus' words here is "rather loose."

26. The book follows the publication of Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter*. This "incision" separates "primitive Christianity from the early Catholic Church" (Knopf, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter*, v). The book "was given 'high praise' by none other than Adolf Harnack" (Plümacher, "Knopf" 165–66). According to the judgment of Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, 10, the book is a "work that has not been outdated even after about a hundred years."

27. Knopf, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter*, 152–59. In the Did., there exists "an extraordinarily strong continuity with the conditions of the apostolic age" (159).

was “measured in contrast to the Did., a significantly more advanced one.”²⁸ First Clement develops a theory of the origin of the apostleship and the consequent origin of the church offices, which, however, “is by no means to be regarded as historically grounded in any way.”

In 1919 Knopf’s comprehensive volume *Einführung in das Neue Testament* was published.²⁹ As the title already indicates, it differs considerably from the books of the genre “Einleitung in das NT” (Introduction to the NT), in which the historical conditions of the composition of the New Testament writings are presented. In Knopf’s book, however, “in 388 pages . . . a tremendous amount of material is covered, and it must be said that the book gives a good overview of the whole field of knowledge in a compact and easily readable form.”³⁰ In §19, Knopf presents the early Christian literature and he explains the term “Apostolic Fathers”: “Their authors are thus to be designated as ecclesiastical writers (‘fathers’) of the earliest times who still had direct contact with the apostles, were their disciples, which in truth is admittedly hardly true for any of them (most likely still true for the author of 1 Clem.).”³¹ In the chapter “Briefliteratur” (Epistolary Literature),³² Knopf says of 1 Clem.: “The extensive letter of 1 Clement, full of character, is of special value to us because of the fact that, in contrast to so many early Christian writings, its origin and destination (Rome to Corinth) as well as its time of composition can be determined with a reliability that is nowhere

28. Knopf, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter*, 160–72; citation comes from p. 160.

29. Knopf et al., *Einführung*. The following citations come from this edition. On later editions, see below.

30. This was R. Bultmann’s view in his review of the book in *DLZ* 42 (1921). Knopf did not indicate the special shape of the book since there is no foreword or something similar. Bultmann writes, “I welcome the book as an introduction and hope that in this sense, i.e., precisely as an *introduction*, it will have a good effect” (254; emphasis in original). As a “classic” work from the same period, we can mention the work of Adolf Jülicher, entitled *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. In this work, Jülicher addresses the writings of the Apostolic Fathers only in so far as they refer to statements that were regarded as “canonical authorities from ca. 70 to ca. 140 CE” (§35, [pp. 425–32]). The differences even in more recent times are seen by a comparison between Werner Georg Kümmel’s *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* and Philipp Vielhauer’s *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur*. Whereas Kümmel orients his work on the New Testament canon, Vielhauer uses the subtitle “Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter” (Introduction to the New Testament, the Apocrypha, and the Apostolic Fathers) for his work.

31. Knopf, *Einführung*, 67.

32. Knopf, *Einführung*, 69–95. The Pauline epistles are treated first, then the post-Pauline letters within the NT, and then the letters among the Apostolic Fathers (1 Clem., the epistles of Ignatius, the epistle of Polycarp, and the epistle of Barnabas).