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[Jan Slomp \(Footnote00\)](#)

The "Gospel of Barnabas" in recent research

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Summary ↓ ↑

In the first sections of this article the Author shows how the GB in almost every respect carries the characteristics of other literary forgeries. He further describes how the Spanish scholar Luis Bernabé, preceded by De Epalza and followed by Wiegers, precisely locates the origin of the GB within a series of Morisco forgeries of "early Christian texts" in Granada in the 16th century. The Author dismisses new efforts to discover an early Christian basic text within the present GB. He concludes with a survey of the reception of the GB in mainly islamist circles. As one way out of the predicament he suggests a mutual upgrading of the esteem for each others Scriptures.

Preface ↓ ↑

This article continues the debate about the early Christian or 17th century Morisco origins of this pseudo-gospel which began in previous issues of Islamochristiana [J.Slomp, "The Gospel in dispute" no.4, 1978 pp.67-112, and M.de Epalza, "Le milieu hispano-moresque de l'Evangile islamisant de Barnabé (XVI-XVIIe s.) no.8, 1982, pp.159-183]. A number of new studies and translations justify a survey of recent research. There are for the author two major concerns at stake: (1) intellectual credibility and (2) the apologetic use against christianity made of this gospel mainly in islamist circles. Removal of this obstacle will hopefully be beneficial for dialogue. What follows represents therefore not merely a description of recent research but also a continuation of the argument I have been involved in since 1973.

Introduction ↓ ↑

The so-called Gospel of Barnabas (abbreviated in this article with the capital letters GB; GBI= the Italian, GBS the Spanish text, etc..) is a forgery by all definitions. I quote by way of example the following definition from the article "Literary forgery" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica: "A forgery is essentially a piece of work created or modified with an intention to deceive" (Fn01). The 1907 critical edition of this gospel by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg established this fact with such force of conviction that it had "the effect of a death-blow to scholarly regard in the West" (Fn02). That was the reason why their critical edition went further unnoticed in Western theological scholarship, though copies of it remained on the shelves of libraries and were never removed, destroyed or hidden, as some Muslim polemicists have claimed.

But ninety years later we have to admit that the polemical interest in this spurious gospel in some Muslim circles continues unabated. Within the context of this polemical interest, resulting in a number of new translations with often very prejudiced introductions, arguments against its authenticity have not yet been taken seriously. The unwillingness to do so may

partly be understood, though not excused, by the fact that these arguments were proffered by missionaries and clergymen who, in the view of these Muslim polemicists were the successors of the old anti-Islamic Christian controversialists and apologists of the nineteenth century. They failed to see that missionaries like Prof.Dr.H.Bergema, Dr.W.F.Campbell, Dr.W.H.T.Gairdner, Fr.Dr.Jacques Jomier and myself had no other interest but getting this stumbling block out of the way in order to commence dialogues and establish good relations and cooperation with Muslims for the sake of peaceful coexistence (Fn03).

What these missionary scholars essentially did was elaborate and build upon the results of the joint intellectual efforts of the scholarly couple Lonsdale and Laura Ragg. All the basic reasons for exposing the "Gospel of Barnabas" as a forgery are already found in the introduction to their 1907 edition. But because their English translation was made available at low subsidized prices in pirated editions by a number of Muslim publishing houses, while purposefully omitting the introduction by the Rags, the unfortunate result was that no non-Muslim publisher would be prepared to sponsor a new edition of the Rags' translation containing their complete critical introductory study.

I myself approached a number of American publishers. Clarendon Press in Oxford did not show any interest either. Though missiologists and clergymen have continued to study the origins, impact and reception of the GB more recently others not linked with missions or churches, but with in the first place academic credentials have investigated the origins of this enigmatic book. We welcome especially the fruits of the disinterested recent research by David Sox (English), Eugenio Giusolisi, Giuseppe Rizzardi (Italian), Mikel de Epalza (French and Spanish), Luis Bernabé (Spanish and German), Christine Schirrmacher (German), Sjoerd van Koningsveld (English), Gerard Wiegers (English and Spanish). A summary of their important findings will be presented below.

a. Forgeries as a cultural danger, also for Muslims ↓ ↑

There is more at stake with the GB forgery case than just Christian-Muslim relations, though they are very important, when we realize that Christianity and Islam together represent almost 50% of mankind. Anthony Grafton, who wrote a historical survey of forgeries in Western scholarship warns in the epilogue of his fascinating book: "A culture that tolerates forgery will debase its own intellectual currency, sometimes past redemption - as happened to Hellenistic Greek admirers of forged alien mysteries and modern German admirers of the literature of the Anti-Semitic International" (Fn04). With the latter he means of course the nefarious part played by the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion in both Russia and Nazi-Germany and until the present day in Arabic translation (published in 1927) in feeding anti-Jewish sentiments in the Middle East (Fn05). That Grafton because of his own cultural limitations excluded as he puts it himself, "forgeries among rabbis, imams and Chinese (and Indian? J.S.) literates" does not mean that this phenomenon is absent from the Muslim world.

As far as I was able to trace such forgeries, the Muslim world had its own normal share of ascribing books to others, plagiarisms, literary hoaxes etc. (Fn06). But in the case of the GB forgery and its spread in many translations in the Muslim world, we are facing such an unprecedented uncritical reception that the above quoted lines of Grafton seem justifiably applicable to those sectors of Muslim culture which not only tolerate but promote it, without probably realizing they have introduced a dangerous virus. Of course no society is corruptionproof, there exists no culture which is immune to forgeries. A literary forgery seems to be an expected and not very surprising phenomenon in a culture so strongly influenced by one book in particular and consequently by many books in general. Wilfred Cantwell Smith has demonstrated how Islam is an example of a religion based on a book par excellence (Fn07). The part played by the Qur'ân in the Muslim world throughout its history is much more central than the role of the Bible even in countries in Northern Europe which were strongly influenced by the 16th century Reformation and its consequent Scripture-oriented dominant worldview or in the so-called Biblebelt of the United States of America.

The central position held by the Qur'ân makes Muslim cultures explicitly sensitive and vulnerable on that score as all those modern Muslim experienced who suggested a new approach in Qur'ânic studies. Non-Muslim academics and orientalists who applied critical tools to the Qur'ân (as they had done to the Bible) usually did fare not better at the hands of Muslim traditionalists (Fn08). In the case of the GB this defensive attitude resulted in a complete denial of the reliability of the Bible in general and of the four gospels in particular. But if in the case of the GB we are dealing with a forgery - as also a growing number of Muslim scholars believe; see below in the section on C.Schirmacher's study - and critical Muslims begin to realize that the Qur'ânic worldview has been defended with the help of a forgery, the end result may have a boomerang effect on Muslim scholarship, and the final outcome will be a devaluation of the status of the Qur'ân as Holy Scripture for Muslims.

This time it will be not because of attacks by outsiders but as a result of scholarly incompetence and lack of critical acumen on the part of credulous men, who wished the GB to be true or supported it as more reliable than the four canonical gospels. For the sake of our common Christian and Muslim search for truth, of which I do not claim to have a monopoly, and for the sake of the mental health of our cultures, I sincerely hope that more and more Muslim intellectuals will denounce this forgery. This section more or less anticipates my own conclusion, which I hope the reader will share. From the outset it should be realized that I read and was exposed to the influence of almost all the publications on the GB of which only a brief summary can be presented within the context of this article. But nothing prevents any reader, especially a person already involved in the debate, from going into more depth by choosing one or more of the writings under review.

b. The Gospel of Barnabas compared with other forgeries ↓ ↑

Producing a forgery is a literary crime. Those familiar with detective stories remember that the three essential ingredients for committing a crime are motive, means and opportunity and resulting from these three usually one or more victims and other affected people. It takes a detective to find out how these four components in a particular crime are connected. So far scholars have limited their research concerning the GB forgery case to show why they believe it to be a forgery on the basis of historical, literary and theological arguments. In other words the conclusion that we are dealing with a forgery is based on research. In this paragraph I suggest to reversing the procedure by taking our clues from studies which summarize a wide range of research on forgeries in order to find out how the results of recent GB research fit into this emerging pattern.

Put more simply I made a checklist from research done on other forgeries and try to find out how the GB fits into this grid. First I mention the general characteristics then we put the corresponding elements from the GB beside it. The scholars whose work I used to make this grid never did any research on the GB. This procedure therefore precludes foregone conclusions, because results of the GB research did not go into the making of the grid. In this way I hope to escape as much as possible from a circular argument. It goes without saying that not all aspects of the GB which make it a forgery will fit into this grid. Only those will emerge which the GB has in common with other comparable forgeries. The other aspects which are special for the GB will have to be dealt with from another angle. The grid was made on the basis of research, in the order of importance, of Anthony Grafton (Princeton), Gerhard Bronner (Durham), Joseph Veach Noble (New York) (Fn09).

1. The motives of the forgers

We will first look at the motives: love, anger, hatred, revenge, greed, personal gain, the desire for recognition and fame, the desire to promote a cause, to establish a historical claim, to justify an opinion or a faith, the desire to deceive or to embarrass, or simply to play a hoax. The purpose can also be to harm a person or a group. The latter is the case with the notorious Protocols of the Elders of Zion, already referred to. Various motives can be at play at the same time in this complex case: anger against the established religion (the false pharisees in the GB), revenge against the inquisition (David Sox, Gerard Wiegers), the desire to promote the cause of Islam, love for the prophet Muhammad, the desire to play a hoax against Christian authorities in Spain and Pope Sixtus V, justification of the Muslim view of Jesus against the official status given to him by the ecclesiastic authorities.

The GB throughout tries to establish the historical claim to be closer to the historical Jesus than any other gospel. The use made of the GB for almost 150 years in various Muslim quarters is certainly meant to embarrass Christians. Personal gain, greed or the desire for personal fame, which were for instance important motives in the art forgery of Han van Meegeren, seem to be almost absent in the case of the GB. The desire for recognition is there in as far as the "apostolic author" who impersonates Barnabas in the gospel claims to be truer and more genuine than the other disciples as he supposedly records and transmits Jesus'

message more faithfully than other disciples and followers of Jesus, among them "Paul, the deceived" (a phrase used in the first and the last chapter of the GB).

2. The means used by the forger

When the forger is a modern sculptor and he wants to make replicas of old Greek statues or paintings of the Dutch Golden Age in order to sell them as genuine, he uses skills and materials to make his artefacts appear old and antique. This was successfully done by the Italian sculptor Arceo Dossena and the Dutch painter Han van Meegeren. Artists make either exact copies, or composite creations combining aspects of an old piece, adding their own ideas, and produce work in the style of the old master. The author of the GB used the second method (see the analysis by the Raggs and Luis Bernabé) he combined and remodelled elements of the four canonical gospels and added his own material and perspective in order to create a new harmonious whole. The means vary with the purpose of the forger, who is usually very skilful.

3. Opportunities for a crime may vary

The author of the GB may have noticed the great credulity not only of ordinary people but also of scholars and authorities in the case of the discovery of the so called "lead books" in Granada in 1588, "los libros plumbeos" (see below the section dealing with Luis Bernabé). People wanted to believe they were ancient and dated from apostolic times. The inquisition posed an obstacle to making serious enquiries. It was a century before the final unmasking of the forgers. The R.C.Church in those days in Spain fostered a deep seated need to believe in miracles, which fact fostered popular belief in the miraculous discovery of these "lead-books". The miserable position of the Moriscos provided a situation in which it seemed fully justified to deceive the authorities. That this never came about is because both the GBI and the GBS remained hidden for more than a century and never appeared among the people for whom they were meant in the first place, and shows that the initial effort to deceive failed miserably.

The reason for this failure was not only fear for discovery by the inquisition. After 1609 the Moriscos lived in diaspora in either the Maghreb or Istanbul. But the result was such a strange mixture that it failed to convince Christians because it was too Islamic for them and it was too Christian to mislead Muslims (De Epalza). (Luis Bernabé offers still another explanation; see below) But the Muslim world made up for it only after 1907 when the the English version of the GBI became the intermediary for translations into Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Indonesian and later Turkish, German, Dutch, modern Italian and even coming full circle Spanish! (Cf. the review by L.F.Bernabé in Islamochristiana, 22, p.302).

4. Detection of a forgery

Perfect forgeries like perfect crimes do not exist; though the forger may have tried his very best to cover his trail there is always a flaw which gives him away. Some forgers leave a flaw

on purpose because they hope to be found out at some time! Suspicion may be aroused by miraculous circumstances of discovery or by mysterious and impressive stories of origin. The introduction of the GBS contains such a story. The place of discovery may be a box hidden in a garden, leadbooks under the minaret of a mosque in Granada, a forgotten corner in a library as in the case of the GBI in the library of Pope Sixtus V. The document is in a strange, archaic language with mysterious marginal notes as is the case with the GBI. The document is often introduced not as an original but as a contemporary copy, even a copy of a copy or translation in order to prevent detection. Neither the GBI nor the GBS explains why we are dealing with translations rather than originals in Aramaic or Greek.

In the case of a religious forgery, as for example Grafton notes, the forgery itself claims to support a doubtful canonical text or itself to contain such a text. For the GBS and GBI this is self-evident. Forged texts often contain attacks on other forgers. The GB is full of such attacks. Pre-emptive strikes seem to be the best way of defence. Almost all forged texts contain historical mistakes such as anachronisms and factual errors, because of the limited knowledge of the forger or his contemporaries. The tricks of forgers are often tied closely to their immediate context. Only later historical research about the period of the supposed time of its coming into existence may easily reveal these shortcomings.

The two extant texts are full of historical, geographical and numismatic mistakes. Authority to support fakes is often derived from non-existent earlier sources. In the case of the GB some Muslim editors referred to particular non-existent texts of Irenaeus, fictional sections of the Acta of the Council of Nicea, non-existent books of anti-trinitarian authors etc.. Finally most fakes are sharp in detail but vague and unreal in their periphery. An observant reader of the GB will notice this phenomenon as well. The discovery of fakes is often accompanied by a lot of noise, light and publicity. In the case of the GB this did not happen at the time of origin but it certainly was greeted with much clamour every time a new translation or edition was published from 1907 onwards. The Pakistan Times e.g. devoted whole pages to the new edition in 1973.

c. Barnabas among other "new" gospels ↓ ↑

Discoveries of fragments of ancient manuscripts of books of the Old Testament in Qumran and of the New Testament period and early church in Nag Hammadi (Egypt) and about the context of biblical times in Ugarit have stimulated the imagination of many concerning the possibility of the discovery of a so far unknown gospel written by one of the disciples. The discovery of the gnostic gospel of Thomas has very much enhanced such expectations. This has happened to such an extent that, as far as I know, five novelists have successfully elaborated on this theme. With three of them we will deal briefly:

1. Already in 1972 Irving Wallace produced a book of 702 pages with the title *The Word in which a gospel of James is discovered*. Both Rome and Geneva (the World Council of

Churches) are involved in the affair (Fn10). In the long run the forger is discovered. His motive was revenge. It reads as a cheap thriller full of fraud, credulity, even blackmail as the following quotation reveals : "I threatened to make the forgery known if he did not give me additional money." I wrote a letter to Irving Wallace asking him whether he was aware of similarities with the GB affair. He was not, he answered. He had even never heard about the Gospel of Barnabas!

2. The plot of Nicolas Saudray 's intriguing novel, *Le maître des Fontaines* (1978) is much more convincing in detail (Fn11). The dustcover had the subtitle: "Le Testament de Mâr Daniel". A great Bible specialist of the Dominican Order, a man once linked with "l'École Biblique" in Jerusalem turns out to be the clever forger. The Holy Office is called in to find out whether the manuscript of Mâr Daniel is the lost gospel of the Nazareans (119). The discovery (within the novel) causes a splash of publicity.

3. The plot of James Redfield's bestseller, *The Celestine Prophecy*, has also to do with the discovery of an ancient manuscript in the rain forests of Peru which of course contains "the nine key insights for life" James Redfield wants to share with his readers (Fn12). It is filled with a hodgepodge of mysticism and other deep ideas our generation seems to be in need of. All three books link up perfectly with the thrust of the GB and its fascination with a new gospel. What I appreciate in Jean-Michel Hirt, *Le Miroir du Prophète Psychanalyse et Islam*, is that he treats the GB as a Muslim source of inspiration (Fn13). In chapter 2, "Le dédoublement de la vie" "l'Evangile de Barnabé" opens to Hirt a vision into Muslim thought and especially the opposites of semblance (mithâl) and speculation (nazar).

d. A Spanish origin? Dr Garcia Gomez and Dr Mikel de Epalza ↓ ↑

Prof.Mikel de Epalza in an article in memory of Emilio Garcia Gomez (1905-1996) as scholar, translator of Arabic literature and publicist graciously gives full credit to the fact that Garcia Gomez already in 1962 during a conference in Beirut claimed Spanish authorship for the GB. But not until 1981 did Garcia Gomez present arguments for his thesis while contradicting the assertions of L.Cirillo and M.Frémaux about a Middle Eastern early Christian core text of the GB (Fn14). Mikel de Epalza himself explored this thesis about a Spanish authorship first briefly in 1963 in the *Journal Al-Andalus* (Madrid, XXVIII, 479-491) and in 1982 with many new data and convincing arguments in *Islamochristiana* (see for the source the preface to this article).

The author of the GB is to be found in communities of the Moriscos who were scattered all over Spain. For those not familiar with the term, Moriscos were Moors (Muslims) who stayed on and were baptized unwillingly after the fall of Granada in 1492. These forced conversions started in the early 16th century. But many of them continued to adhere secretly to Islam. The last of these crypto-Muslims as they were also called were expelled between 1609 and 1614. But the name Moriscos continued to be applied as they were dispersed in Muslim countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, until they had lost all the characteristics which disguised

them from their new environment. The earliest mention of the GB was found by Louis Cardaillac in Morisco manuscript BNM MS 9653 in Madrid written about 1634 by Ibrahim al-Taybili in Tunisia (Fn15). His Spanish name was Juan Pérez and he originated from Toledo. Taybili was a very prolific translator and author bridging two cultures, Arabic and Spanish. Though one of the most prominent Morisco scholars he was not the only one with such qualifications. De Epalza mentions several similar interesting personalities.

Some of these authors were not fully at home in both cultures and religions. That is why they make mistakes on both sides of the religious fence between Christianity and Islam. This is the case with the GB. It betrays great familiarity with both Islam and Christianity but contains at the same time factual errors about both religions. Al-Taybili claims that Spanish Christians are not allowed to read the Bible in their own language lest they discover the truth in it about Muhammad. That is why the Bible is in Latin, he says. The same thing (finding the truth about Muhammad) applies according to al-Taybili to the "Gospel of Saint Barnabas where one can find the light" ("y asi mesmo en Elanjelio de San Barnabé donde de hallara luz"). De Epalza shows that Morisco literature before the expulsions often had a syncretistic character, whereas publications meant for the first generations of expelled Moriscos in their new Muslim environment who knew better Spanish than Arabic are rather polemical. In the freedom of exile the minds of these Moriscos had to be purged from Christian accretions before they could be better grounded in the faith of their Muslim ancestors.

The GB obviously belongs to the first category. A fellow countryman of al-Taybili, alias Juan Pérez, Mustafa de Aranda claims in the preface of the GBS that he translated the GBI into Spanish while he worked in Istanbul, another centre to which many Moriscos had fled. De Epalza mentions a special type of Morisco forgeries of the 16th centuries the so-called jofores. These are "prophecies" often attributed to important Muslims from the past, foretelling a Muslim reconquest of Spain. A few of these jofores are attributed to Christian authors of the past but always containing texts which are in favour of the Muslims of al-Andalus. Granada was the last important centre of Islamic culture and it was there that the cultural and religious pressure on the Muslim population to make them conform to their new Spanish Catholic environment was more relentless than elsewhere. It is therefore not surprising that the Morisco reaction to this pressure was strongest in Granada.

In 1588 and between 1595-1599 a number of texts were discovered which threw a more or less Islamic light on the early history of Christianity in general and on the history and role of Spain in particular (for details see below the paragraph on L. Bernabé's thesis). He assumes with strong arguments, which cannot all be repeated here, that the place of origin of the GB must be the community of Moriscos in Spain most probably Granada. He expects that comparison of the Italian and Spanish texts (rediscovered in Australia) will throw new light on what he modestly calls his hypothesis of a Spanish origin of the GB. Already in 1963 and again in 1982 De Epalza has reasons to think that contrary to what is said in the preface of the GBS not the Italian but the Spanish text is the original. He suggests names of travelling

scholars and diplomats who might have been instrumental in bringing the GBI and the GBS to England and the Netherlands in the early 17th century.

e. A Morisco author? Dr Luis F. Bernabé Pons, Alicante ↓ ↑

The young Spanish scholar Prof. Dr Luis Bernabé wrote two major studies about the GBS, one in Spanish the other in German. I refer to him as Luis Bernabé lest author and reader get confused (nomen est omen sometimes) about who is meant Paul's apostolic companion, the supposed author of the Spanish and Italian gospels we are dealing with in this article, or the learned Spaniard who tried to unravel this mystery. He himself attempts to avoid this confusion by referring to the supposed author as San Bernabé, Saint Barnabas. But he will agree that this is not really a way out. The Saint Barnabas we know from the Bible has nothing to do with these forgeries and the one who borrows his name and title to provide coverage for his literary crime is far from deserving sainthood. Would it not have been simpler to put the word 'San' in quotation marks? But this is only a minor point. Already in 1987 Luis Bernabé had proved his competence in the field of Morisco studies by analysing a great Islamic poem by the important Morisco author Ibrahim Taybili, already referred to by L. Cardaillac and M. de Epalza (see above).

In this poem Luis Bernabé noticed a reference to Muhammad as the Messiah! On 3 June 1992 Luis Bernabé defended a thesis on 'Edición Y Estudio del Manuscrito Español del Evangelio de Bernabé Evangelio hispano-islámico de autor morisco (siglos XVI-XVII)' in the university of Alicante. His advisers were Miguel Angel Lozano and Mikel de Epalza. His research is in line with the earlier publications on the GBS by his teacher and now his colleague Professor M. de Epalza (see the preface to this article). The manuscript of Luis Bernabé, of which I received a copy, consists of five parts and 834 pages. Part B1 of his thesis contains a textcritical edition of the incomplete Spanish manuscript of the GB of Barnabas which was found in Sydney, Australia, to which he added his own translation from Italian into Spanish of the parts missing in the Sydney text. This Spanish translation is not found in the book Dr Bernabé published at the end of 1995 which I received in March 1996.

His scholarly edition of the Spanish text of the GB is in the press. But surprisingly in the meantime a Muslim in Mexico published a translation in Spanish which is based on the English translation of Laura and Lonsdale Ragg of the Italian Manuscript. My summary of Dr Bernabé's findings is based on his book: *El Evangelio de San Bernabé Un evangelio islámico español* (Fn16) and on his article which contains a German translation of a further elaboration of his thesis (Fn17). The latter article was published in September 1996 in volume 4 of *Religionen im Gespräch (Religions in dialogue): Zur Wahrheit und Echtheit des Barnabasevangeliums (Concerning the truth and authenticity of the Gospel of Barnabas)*.

The thrust of Dr L. Bernabé's studies is that the contents of both the GBI and the GBS can be fully explained in all details when we assume that the GB originated in a Morisco milieu and

was written by a Morisco scholar. This thesis excludes, in his view, all often very ingenious speculations by Cirillo and others, mainly Muslim apologists, about a supposedly early Christian basic text, which was obviously used by a late medieval author for his pro-Muslim treatise. He agrees with De Epalza that all Jewish and Christian roots found in the GB belong to a common religious legacy of Jewish, Christian and Muslim Spain. A hypothetical "Urtext" is completely unnecessary to explain the origins and the contents of this so-called gospel.

In the introduction he states that he does not deal with the question how the GB has affected Christian-Muslim relations, but that he wants to analyse the GBS as a literary Spanish entity which contained the creative and dynamic capacity to shape an "evangelical" text which agrees with Islam (16). In the first chapter he traces the complicated history of the Italian and the (incomplete) Spanish texts, the former ending up via Amsterdam in the Imperial library in Vienna, the latter via various libraries and auctions ending up in Sydney. The Dutch author and Islamicist Adriaan Reeland already in 1705 seems to have heard of a new gospel compilation in an Arabic/Spanish manuscript (26). Chapter II deals with the apostolic figure Barnabas (Acts 4, 34-37) and the works which were attributed to him in history and legends about him in the early church. Luis Bernabé reduces the conflict of Barnabas with St Paul to its due proportions (Acts 15: 36-40). Barnabas's connection with the church in Cyprus will play its part in the history of other Morisco forgeries preceding the GB (see below).

Chapter III contains a detailed analysis of the GBS (pp.53-159). It shows that there is hardly a chapter among a total of 222 which does not contain an Islamic dimension. Luis Bernabé explains the extraordinary length of the GB, not so much by comparing it with long gospelharmonies (Diatessaron, etc...), - which possibility in my view should not be fully excluded -, but as an answer to the Muslim claim that the four gospels are incomplete. They do not contain a comprehensive code of life as does the Qur'ân combined with the Hadith. The unknown author of the GB makes up for that by using various devices. One is the question and answer method of Jewish rabbis and their pupils, the other is by lengthy moral and dogmatic discourses which disrupt the dynamics of the gospel narrative found in the four canonical gospels. By using a lot of material from the prophets in the Old Testament and by referring in the preface to early church Fathers he creates an 'isnad' (= chain of transmitters in hadith literature) of authority and achieves at the same time an Islamic purpose by demonstrating that the GB and its Old Testament predecessors pass on an essentially identical message which finds its final expression in the Qur'ân.

Chapter IV about Islam and the Gospels shows how cleverly the author combines Christian and Muslim notions about what makes a true gospel. Already at the end of Jesus lifetime it becomes clear that the original gospel which descended upon Jesus heart with the help of the angel Gabriel and which functioned as a 'reflecting mirror' was irretrievably lost. Therefore the GB is not the 'Indjil' of Jesus, but as close to it as the circumstances allow. The original but lost Gospel would have been a worthy predecessor of the Qur'ân. That is why Jesus returns to earth to assign to Barnabas as his most reliable disciple the task to write down what he

remembers. The author of the GB opts for a 'Christian' solution. The form of his gospel tallies with Christian concepts.

The disciples have to make up for the loss. But Jesus own intervention in favour of Barnabas in one move disqualifies the four canonical gospels as subject to 'tahrif' or intentional changes in a Pauline direction. St Paul being the person responsible for changing the original message of Jesus (Fn18). But still the result will be a book which is inferior to the Qur'ân! By choosing the Christian model and using and retouching a lot of material taken from the four gospels in an islamic sense the author tried to show how close the church and Islam are. In other words the text may serve to help Moriscos to find a legitimate place next to Christians in Spain. The Gospel of John takes a prominent place as source of the GB.

Chapter V on the Qur'ânic christology of the GB offers an explanation why the Morisco author(s) speak(s) of Muhammad rather than Jesus as the promised Messiah. In line with suggestions by De Epalza, Luis Bernabé shows from within the dynamics of the GB itself why the title Messiah is denied to Jesus (NB: in Jesus' own words!) and given to Muhammad. The title Messiah (Al-Masih) in the Qur'ân was hardly more than a name and a title for Jesus of which 'mufassir'- give various interpretations. So what was possible in the Qur'an was no longer possible almost a thousand years later in a (new) gospel in a religious context which attributed great importance to the title Messiah. For the Roman Catholic Church in Spain during the conflict between inquisition and Moriscos the title Messiah implied finality of revelation and fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophecies, incarnation, divine sonship, sharing in the Holy Trinity and saviourhood.

All these "high" christological connotations of the word Messiah are denied by Islam and consequently by a Morisco author such as al-Taybili who is quoted by Luis Bernabé (209). What about Muhammad? He for Islam is the final prophet, who brings the conclusive message, his mission is meant for the whole world whereas Jesus' mission was limited to Israel. Muhammad therefore deserves the title Messiah more than Jesus. The high christological 'honorary' titles of Jesus are of course not transferred to the Prophet Muhammad. The name Messiah in his case is adorned with fully Islamic high titles. Jesus' inferior position becomes clear because he, in the Muslim view, according to both Qur'ân (Ahmad 61, 2) and Bible (John 14, 26 and parallels), predicts the coming of Muhammad. That is exactly what Jesus does in the GB! The Morisco authors were well aware of the practice of Muslim apologists of combining John's speaking of the Paraclete (or Periclytos) as referring not to the Holy Spirit but to Muhammad with Jesus' prediction in Sura 61, 2. Jesus is thus reduced to the status of forerunner-messenger and is assigned the role of John the Baptist, who completely disappeared from the gospel. Jesus (not John the Baptist) is quoted saying: "O Mohammed, God be with thee, and may he make me worthy to untie thy shoelatchet, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God." Cf. Mark 1:7 on John the Baptist and 1:24 about 'the Holy One of God'.

In a final sixth chapter Luis Barnabé describes the 'plot' leading to the gospel. It started on the 18th of March 1588 when workers discovered a leadbox under the ruins of a minaret in Granada (a church will be built on the same place; this is of course highly symbolic for the situation of conflict between a dominant party and a minority J.S.) containing a bone (of St. Stephen) a painting and a parchment supposedly written by the patron saint of Granada Cecilio containing a text in Latin, Arabic and Castilian, with a prophecy of Saint John meant for Granada. The Morisco Miguel de Luna translator for King Philip II is asked to translate the Arabic. Two other specialists were invited to check his translation. Pope Sixtus V (the same in whose library the GBI would be found; this is no coincidence; Sixtus V was moreover responsible for an important edition of the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible) gives permission to continue the investigations on the authenticity.

The archbishop of Granada is thrilled because the finds increase the prestige of his see (Fn19). He therefore ignored warnings mentioning Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo as possible forgers. A copy of a letter warning him has been preserved. Miguel de Luna was the author of a controversial history of Rodrigo the last Visigothic king in which the Muslims are portrayed as the true liberators from barbarism. Seven years later in February 1595 twenty-two leadbooks are found in Granada. The texts relate the arrival of St James in Spain with his disciples among them again patron saint Cecilio. One book about the "Truth of the Gospel" is attributed to the mother of Jesus. Mary received it from Gabriel in a splendid light (a motive returning in the GB). St James gets the task to hide this book in Spain lest it falls victim to alterations. The book will later be discovered by a holy priest, who will be helped in this task by Arabs, God's last chosen people.

The great champion of this gospel will be a great conqueror king of the Arab kings but not an Arab king himself (probably a reference to the Ottoman Sultan by whom the Moriscos expected to be rescued). This 'king of kings' will call a council on the island of Cyprus and have the book " Truth of the gospel" and another book accepted by it. Cyprus as is wellknown was the island of St Barnabas, where according to legend his body with the gospel of Matthew on his breast was discovered between 480-490). Why was Barnabas chosen as the author and not the real patron saint of Spain, Saint James (of Compostella). Luis Bernabé argues, because the leadbooks in which St James had a central place were already suspected and scrutinized. Though it was not until 1682 that Rome passed judgement on these books because of Islamic ideas found in the text, as e.g. the frequently occurring formula: "There is no god but God". Luis Bernabé mentions several names of Morisco scholars who possessed the learning in both religions which would have enabled them to write the GB. He mentions several possible candidates: Miguel de Luna, Ahmad al Hayari Bejarano and most likely Ibrahim Taybili a man of double culture. The scene seemed to be set for launching the Gospel of Barnabas, which as we know for certain existed in 1634, because it was mentioned in a book written by the Morisco scholar Taybili.

Why was the GB never published and diffused? Luis Bernabé has a simple and ingenious answer. He assumes that the plotters (including the author) were so surprised by the

measures of the Spanish government between 1609 and 1614 to expel all Moriscos that their whole plan had lost its meaning. The syncretistic text of the GB made it useful for Moriscos in Spain but not in exile in Morocco, Tunis or Turkey. Preparing a forgery such as the GB must have taken years of preparation. So one could not expect the GB to be ready very soon after the successful forgeries of 1588 and 1595. What a disappointment it was for the forgers that the whole Morisco milieu in Spain in which it could have functioned disappeared by this royal order to leave the country. An important question to be discussed remains why the forgers needed two texts, one in Spanish and one in Italian. De Epalza already suggested that an Italian version linked with the same Pope Sixtus V who had given permission to make inquiries about the origins of the discoveries in Granada in 1588 and 1595 would lend support to the claim for authenticity of the text of the GB.

In other words the Spanish preface stating that the Spanish text was translated from an Italian original is found in the Pope's library was a "literary device" (Van Koningsveld). It was meant to deceive and to mislead. It mixes truths and lies. The supposedly Italian original had to come from the central place of ecclesiastical authority that is from the Pope himself. The original could therefore not be Spanish. That is why the Spanish preface (a preface is lacking in the Italian MS) states that it is a translation. But it is the other way round. For this thesis De Epalza and L. Bernabé also present several linguistic arguments. This explains most probably why the Italian manuscript in Vienna has empty pages where the Spanish has a preface, as I was able to see myself during a visit of the Viennese national library on the 15th of May 1997. The translator was either suddenly stopped completing the preface or, as seems more likely, he did not know what to write. If as the Spanish text claims the Italian is the original, what was the original of this original supposed to be: Latin, Greek, Aramaic? To this question no answer is given. Because the answer would have given him away! After these personal reflections I continue my review of the thesis of L. Bernabé.

He assumes that the Italian manuscript in Vienna is most probably the one supposedly surreptitiously taken away from the Papal library by Fra Marino. Moreover Pope Sixtus V had both a personal record with the inquisition and he was the founder of the great papal library. Thus there were two more reasons to target him in the preface besides his involvement in the Granadan affair. Luis Bernabé has one more brilliant suggestion to identify not Fra Marino as a person but his prototype. In the Spanish preface Fra Marino is portrayed in the role of a great scholar who in the direct service of the Pope gets the chance to rewrite church history by finding a very early document, just as in the case of the leadbooks in Granada. Luis Bernabé recognized the prototype of this monk Fra Marino in the great orientalist scholar Fray Marco Marini (1542-1594).

Within the context of this article it was impossible to do full justice to the thorough investigations of Dr Luis Bernabé. That is why I hope he will start publishing in English as well, because his opponents publish mainly in that language. Via the medium of English it will reach also those who write in Arabic, Urdu etc.. In conclusion in my view De Epalza, L. Bernabé and G. Wiegers (see below) have decisively demonstrated that there can be only one milieu in

which the Gospel of Barnabas can have come into existence: the community of the Moriscos in Spain, which had to leave between 1609-1614 for North Africa and Istanbul.

Whether we will ever be able to identify exactly who the author could have been seems less important. The fact that a limited number of Morisco scholars could have qualified for this role is in itself a compliment to the detective reasoning of Luis Bernabé. The number is therefore limited because only the most intelligent person(s) in the Morisco community would have been able to accomplish such a clever forgery. Even if the reconstruction of the intellectual face of the forger(s) seems closely recognizable, the scholar detective can only be sure if he finds the missing link.

f. The Prophet Muhammad as the Messiah? Dr.G.Wiegers, Leiden ↓ ↑

Dr L.Bernabé, had, as we noticed in the previous paragraph his own, in my view convincing, explanation why the GB calls Muhammad rather than Jesus the Messiah. Dr.Wiegers in Leiden raised the question whether we can trace this idea in the writings of other (than the author of the GB) Morisco authors. Before I present his argument I quote Dr.Wiegers' conclusion in his own words: "Nevertheless we may conclude that in the seventeenth century the idea of Muhammad as the Messiah really was confined to a small group of Morisco writings and the Gospel of Barnabas" (Fn20).

In his research Dr.Wiegers came across another manuscript in the same collection in Madrid as consulted by Cardaillac, De Epalza and L.Bernabé but not described by them namely BNM MS no 9655 which though not mentioning the GB shows a number of remarkable parallels with the Gospel of Barnabas. The fact that it does not mention the GB may be an indication to the fact that BNM MS 9655 preceded the GB and was used by its author as one of its sources. Dr.Wiegers' argument is too detailed to reproduce at great length. The key issues will, however, be presented. From other contemporary Muslim sources it is known that the author of MS 9655 was Juan Alonso from Aragon, a child of Christian parents, master of theology who turned Muslim and left for Tetuan. He displays a thorough knowledge of the Christian heritage. Several works meant for the Morisco community were written by this Juan Alonso. The original was written between 1602 and 1612.

The first date because in 1602 the Protestant Bible translation was published which Alonso used. Several Morisco authors used Protestant books and arguments against the Roman Catholic Church. Juan Alonso is no exception. The second date 1612 because in that year Alonso himself referred to the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian text contained in MS 9655 which cannot be dated later. The manuscript is in Spanish in Latin characters. "The Arabic of the marginal notes is in a cursive Maghribi hand". Unfortunately the beginning and end of the MS are missing, but so much is left that it allows the reader to follow Alonso's five arguments against the divine nature of Jesus. He does so within the context of a refutation of the Apostolic Creed.

When Jesus spoke about himself as the Son of God he meant it in a metaphorical way. Alonso calls Jesus "the messiah of the gospel" (Spanish: evangelico mesias), Elijah redivivus, whose mission is limited to Israel as distinguished from the universal Messiah Muhammad (Spanish: mesias general) Cf. Barnabas chapter 82, where exactly the same contrast is made by Jesus himself. Jesus mission is limited to Israel, Muhammad's mission is universal. Several times the author of this MS claims that the texts of both the present Old- and the New Testament are corrupt.

As in the GB this theme returns again and again. The author also compares other rituals in the three monotheistic religions such as prayers, ablutions, fasting, etc.. One of the signs of corruption of the church is that it punishes those who circumcise their children as the Moriscos and Marranos (= crypto-Jews) do secretly in Spain. This is a big issue as well in the GB (preface; chapters 5, 23 etc.). Wiegers underlines both similarities and differences. The author of the MS writes about Islamic rituals in non-Islamic, often Christian, terminology. The Al-fâtiha prayer for example is called the Lord's prayer. A similar use of terminology is found in the GB. I may add an example I found myself the author of the MS uses the word cenophega for the feast of the tabernacles and so does GB chapter 30.

All three monotheistic religions confess that there is one God, he concludes, with twenty attributes. The number twenty comes from kalâm or Muslim theology. They define faith in much the same way and believe that all prophets were sent as a light and guidance for the world. A long section is devoted to the differences between canonical and apocryphal books. In the early church these books were hidden (the theme of concealing books returns in the GB). Apocryphal books in Juan Alonso's view are those taken away from the canonical ones and excluded from the 'regula fidei'. Anti-trinitarian gospels (e.g. of the Ebionites; see below the section dealing with Blackhirst) are in his view more authentic than others. The book breaks off in the middle of the discussion about the polemical issue concerning Israel and Ishmael. This theme returns too in the GB. Alonso also quotes from Pérez de Chinchón who under the cloak of attacking the Qur'ân tried to introduce Erasmian ideas. For the latter reason his book was put on the index.

Alonso's books contain errors both while describing Islamic and Christian ideas. This happens also in the GB, because it is of course extremely difficult to be equally well informed about two religions. Some Morisco authors belonged to this rare category of scholars who more or less mastered two religious systems in great detail. The watermark of the Italian MS of the GB, so Wiegers, is identical to the one contained in Morisco manuscript BNM MS 6016. The Italian MS of the GB was written in an Ottoman milieu. "The marginal notes in Arabic consist of a nearly complete series of Arabic chapter-titles (called sûras). "The impression is thereby created of a gospel which really deserves to be seen as a worthy precursor of the Qur'ân." Wiegers concludes.'

A striking similarity between the Spanish and Italian manuscripts is moreover that the GBS mentions the archangels Azrael and Azrafel, as if writing for Muslims, the GBI reads Rafael

and Uriel, as if writing for Christians, but the marginal notes in Arabic of the GBI has again Azrael and Azrafel. This proves the unity of the texts and probably identical authorship, but certainly the same scribe. These marginal notes interpret the main text in Islamic fashion. e.g. on chapter 44 on Ishmael and Isaac.

Returning to the similarities between the text of Juan Alonso and the GB, Wieggers stresses that the concept both in BNM 9655 and the GB of Muhammad as the Messiah is closely linked with the denial that Jesus is the Son of God. Further in both manuscripts Jesus was a manifestation of Elijah. Both texts are equally anti-clerical and if we include the preface to the GBS where Pope Sixtus is mentioned, anti-papal. Both texts make of Jesus a Muslim 'avant la lettre'. In both books Psalm 110 plays an important part in proving the Messiahship of Muhammad. Both texts often speak of textual corruption by Jews and Christians. Both BNM 9655 and the preface of the GBS mention Irenaeus and Ignatius as opponents of St Paul. Critics have drawn attention to the fact that the GBS and GBI call Pilate presidente or preside. But so does BNM 9655 while following Valera's Protestant Bible translation into Spanish.

Wieggers rightly concludes: "The similarities between the Gospel of Barnabas and MS 9655, which cannot be mere coincidence, seem to indicate the existence of an influence from MS 9655 upon the Gospel of Barnabas rather than vice-versa." The major reason for assigning influence upon the GB rather than the other way round may be the fact that MS 9655 has a "King Jesus of Damascus" substituting for Jesus rather than Judas as happens at the end of the GB at the time of the crucifixion. The reason for this 'correction' consisting of the replacement of Jesus by Judas was of course more in line with Islamic exegesis of Sura 4, 157 and fitted better into a gospel context. The story of this "King Jesus" had moreover too many details in common with the Greek myth of Oedipus Rex to be convincing anyhow. But both MS 9655 and the GB link Damascus with the gospel story (see below the section dealing with John Bowman's explanation of the link with Damascus).

g. Worldwide reception, Dr.Christine Schirmacher ↓ ↑

By the end of the nineteenth century John W.Youngson who worked for the "Church of Scotland Mission to Muslims" in India became so annoyed by the incessant reference of his Muslim opponents to the Gospel of Barnabas that he decided to do something about it. These Muslims knew about the GB on the basis of the information and quotations found in the Commentary on the Qur'ân of G.Sale (1734). Because Youngson and his missionary colleagues had no access to the actual text it was suggested to his mission board that inquiries be made in order to find it and to use it to settle once and for all the issue of this obvious (as they anticipated) forgery and to get this subject for always removed from the agenda of Christian-Muslim controversies. As a result of their efforts the Italian manuscript was discovered in the Imperial Library in Vienna where it went after the auction of the library of a well-known scholar in Amsterdam (1709). The present writer believes that he identified this scholar as Gregorio Leti, a biographer of Pope Sixtus V.

After his conversion to Calvinism this G. Leti had moved to Amsterdam. The learned couple Lonsdale and Laura, both well versed in Italian, were requested to edit and translate the text into English. So they did. In their critical introduction they left no doubt that the GBI contained a pseudo-gospel by a late medieval author. Being Dante scholars they believed that they had discovered traces of the Divina Comedia in the GBI. Their edition was published in 1907 by the Clarendon Press in Oxford. So we owe "The discovery of the Gospel of Barnabas" (the title of his own story) to the initiative of this Scottish missionary Youngson who would have little realized that far from ending the conflict the edition by the Raggs would only increase its controversial use.

Already in 1908 an Arabic version was made by a Christian named Sa`âdah at the request of the well-known Egyptian Qur'ân commentator Rashid Rida, followed by Urdu, Indonesian, Persian, Turkish. One of the leading Anglican missionaries in Egypt and a great scholar of Islam, Temple Gairdner, immediately wrote a reply which was used both in Egypt and India. His brochure is still being used in India. I found this story about Youngson unfortunate initiative in the third major recent study about the GB by Christine Schirmacher 18. The German title *Mit den Waffen des Gegeners* ("With the weapons of the opponent") is wellchosen and appropriate (Fn21). In either case the holy book of the opponent is used against himself. Christine Schirmacher does not deal with the Morisco origins of the GB but with its use in the context of Christian-Muslim confrontations during the 19th and 20th centuries in India but also elsewhere a.o. in Egypt.

Her thesis is a major contribution to the study of the milieu(s) of reception of the GB in various languages and cultures. Her book is mainly about two authors and three books. It was (unfortunately) written in German in order to comply with academic regulations in force in Germany, although the dominant language in India is of course English. The authors she deals with are the gifted German missionary Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865) but serving the Anglican Church Mission Society, and Rahmatullah ibn Halil al-Utmâni al-Kairânawi an apologetic speaker and writer in Northern India. The three books are (1) Pfander's *Mizan al-Haqq* (Balance of Truth) available since 1829 in several languages, (2) Rahmatullah's reply to Pfander *Izhâr al Haqq* (1867) (Manifestation of truth) and (3) the Gospel of Barnabas 19.

In 1854 both these champions of faith had a great long public debate in the old Moghul city of Agra. This debate had long-lasting repercussions of a negative nature for Christian-Muslim relations in the Indian subcontinent until the present day, as I noticed myself when I worked in Pakistan (1964-1977). Dr Schirmacher's book presents a very readable description of the whole context and aftermath of this debate. Her book contains a very important detailed description of Christian-Muslim controversies over a period of more than 150 years.

Summarizing her description would go far beyond the scope of this article. What concerns us in the first place is that part of this controversy deals with the Gospel of Barnabas. During the debate in Agra Rahmatullah referred several times to the GB as proof for the alteration (tahrif) of the Bible. The Urdu edition of *Izhâr al-Haqq* contains a long section on it (Fn22).

These references made Dr Schirmmacher devote an important part of her study to the history of discovery (Youngson), content and impact of this so-called gospel (pp.241-356). I found it interesting to note that my own modest part played in the debate about the GB in the Pakistani press (1973-1976) had become mission history already. In other words her major emphasis is on the history of reception which in her view has so far hardly been influenced by the history of its origin. That is one reason why in the present article the two strands, origin and impact studies, are brought together.

At the end of her study on the GB she mentions several Muslim authors who have rejected the GB (Fn23). The two most important ones should be mentioned: (1) Yahya al-Hashimi from Syria who wrote about the GB in the journal of the Islamic World League (Jan.1977). Al-Hashimi contends that the GB must have been written by a Jew who wanted to create hatred between Christians and Muslims. Moreover it would not be necessary, he claims, to quote apocryphal gospels to prove that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was predicted in the Bible because the Gospel of John clearly announced him as the Paraclete. (2) Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad, a well-known author in Egypt mentions several reasons for rejecting the GB.: (a) it contains expressions typical of Andalusian Arabic, (b) the descriptions of hell are anachronistic (not first century AD), (c) the Messiah did not preach in the name of Muhammad, (d) the book contains many mistakes which a first century Jew, a medieval Christian or a Muslim who knows the Qur'ân would not have made. To Schirmmacher's list we might add Prof.Mahmoud Ayoub who expressed his doubts about the GB in an article in Islamochristiana (Fn24).

h. Intermezzo about classification of Barnabas studies ↓ ↑

M.de Epalza distinguishes three trends in studies of the Gospel of Barnabas (Fn25). In what follows I have adapted his distinctions:

(1) Research by scholars who are convinced that the only real gospel of Barnabas is found in the Spanish and Italian texts of Morisco provenance of the late 16th or early 17th century. - In this category we find the names of scholars who study the Morisco milieu e.g.E.Garcia Gomez, M.de Epalza, L.Bernabé, G.Wiegers and P.S.van Koningsveld and the names of those who, although interested in the Morisco origin are primarily interested from a missiological or apologetic point of view in the impact of the GB in the Muslim world e.g. J.Jomier, C.Schirmmacher, D.Sox, J.Slomp, etc. (Fn26). This article has given more space to this first trend because new ground breaking discoveries were made by M.de Epalza, Luis Bernabé, Christine Schirmmacher and Gerard Wiegers.

(2) Research by scholars who assume within the late forgery by probably a Muslim redactor, a core-text with roots in the early church. In this category we find the names of M.Cirillo, Shlomo Pines, John Bowman and Roy Blackhirst and to some extent A.Mawdudi.

(3) The category of those Muslim apologetic authors who assume that the GB both in its Italian and Spanish version represent a gospel which is closer to the "injl" once received by the Prophet Jesus/`Isa than the four canonical gospels in the New Testament. This view is represented among more recent publications by M.H.Durrani, F.A. Fadhil, M.A. Hamayat, A.Mawdudi, Ahmad Tahir, M.T.Ushmani, M.A.Yusseff (Fn27).

It is obvious that category 2 is supportive of the third position. That is why we already find two Muslim names in category 2: Mawdudi and Blackhirst. Moreover non-Muslim scholars in category 2 generally ignore the milieu of reception of the GB. Most Muslim authors in both category 2 and 3 have not taken notice of the arguments for a Morisco provenance of the GBI and GBS. Consequently the conclusions of the authors in the second and third categories are squarely opposed to those of the first category.

This brief classification is necessary before continuing with this survey of recent research. It would take a second article of equal length to give weight to all the authors mentioned in the second and third categories. But they hardly present any new insights in comparison with their predecessors, with whom Jacques Jomier and the present author dealt before. Therefore the second and third trends in Barnabas studies can be dealt with briefly. The latest survey of references to the GB in recent commentaries of the Qur`ân and other Muslim publications can be traced in M.Borrmans, *Jésus et les Musulmans d'aujourd'hui* (Fn28).

i. A Samaritan author ? Prof.Dr John Bowman, Australia ↓ ↑

Several years ago Prof.Dr John Bowman in Australia came with the surprising hypothesis that Muhammad's knowledge of the contents of the Gospel came through the Syrian Diatessaron (= the four canonical Gospels harmonized into one long text), traces of which he believes to have discovered in the Qur`ân. His latest equally original 'discovery' is contained in an article of only twelve pages the conclusion of which is quoted: "So the Gospel of Barnabas itself, if written in Italian in Damascus, could be transported through Venetian traders who frequented important trade centres and through them would be introduced to Italy where, eventually, it would fall into an inquisitor's hands" (Fn29).

Bowman dates the GBI because of the Jubilee every hundred years mentioned in chapters 82 and 83 (in the story of the Samaritan woman cf. John 4) in the 14th century. Because he links this jubilee, as several others before him with the jubilee instituted by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300. He forgets, however, that the same text speaks of reducing the number of years. This reducing brings us to a much later date. Even if this is not a convincing argument 1590 and 1600 were also declared jubilee years by Sixtus V and his successor. These latter dates would bring us closer to Morisco dating.

Bowman claims to have discovered the author in a Samaritan highpriest Ishmael in Damascus, who became Muslim in the 14th century. Samaritan quarrels about authentic texts

of Moses which were current in Samaritan circles are reflected, in his view, in similar discussions in the GB. But an explanation by referring to Christian- Muslim polemics about 'tahrif' seems much more natural and less far fetched. As for Bowman's explanation of the references to Damascus in the GB, these can be more easily explained if we connect them with Jesus the King of Damascus who according to the Morisco convert Juan Alonso was crucified instead of Jesus. Why was Muhammad made Messiah in the GB? Bowman's answer: "An Ishmaelite Messiah would have been more attractive to Samaritans than a Davidic Messiah". The article displays Bowman's great learning and phantasy but is far from convincing. His ideas about the GB were influenced by L.Cirillo and H.Corbin, because he too sees, to some extent, a harmony between Christian, Jew and Muslim in the GBI.

j. An Ebionite source? R.Blackhirst, Australia ↓ ↑

Probably neither aware of L.Cirillo's doubtful defence of an earlier source of the GB nor informed about the new boost in Barnabas studies after the discovery of an incomplete Spanish manuscript of the GB in his home-country of Australia, R.Blackhirst of the School of Arts of La Trobe University in Bendigo tried to establish a link with an Ebionite (=Jewish-Christian) community in Qumran (Fn30). If such a community did exist at all! Two leading Qumran specialists, Dr F.Garcia Martinez and Dr Adam van der Woude, write that modern ways of dating the Qumran scrolls result in no date later than 70 AD, when the existence of Jewish-Christians communities was not yet possible (Fn31). Blackhirst agrees that the present text "seems tailor-made for Muslim propagandists" because they fulfil Muslim expectations. Referring to the studies by Sox and the present writer he concludes that the experts cannot agree on a specific period. But the two authors he mentions agreed on the end of the 16th century!

He assumes that the present text is medieval but believes there was an original composition now lost to us. Moreover a link with Barnabas because of an anti-Pauline Judaic trend in the life and writings of the man known by this name is in his view conceivable. He elaborates on this Judaic dimension in various paragraphs. That a Morisco author of the GB would of course emphasize the continuity of a Jewish understanding of prophethood in the Old Testament and in the GB (applied to Jesus and later to Muhammad) escapes Blackhirst's attention. The present text is for him a Muslim adaptation of a Jewish-Christian volume. The Muslim stratum is easy to remove from the text, so Blackhirst argues. Luis Bernabé showed that the very texture of the GB is Islamic. Because Muhammad is called Messiah the work cannot have been born in a Muslim mind, so Blackhirst. But Luis Bernabé and G.Wiegers, as we saw above, gave a clear explanation of how this idea did enter the Muslim mind of the Morisco author. Blackhirst title speaks of the battle at Mizpah where three huge armies (reference to the Holy Trinity?) were about to start a fight about Jesus' status.

He believes that the story was inspired by Judges chapter 2 where about the same number of armed men were about to fight in Mizpah. The story is symbolic for the conflict between the

Benjaminites (St Paul's party and the Levites (Barnabas party). The mirror-theme in Barnabas (cf. also section e) gives rise to other speculations (derived from the Latin speculum=mirror) "about reversal of events" in Paul's life, which are too complicated to summarize within the context of this article. I rather would stick to the simple explanation that looking into a mirror in New Testament language means: sharing in God's revelation (Fn32). Rather than finding in the sentence applied to Muhammad in the GB (ch 97) "for whose sake heaven and earth came into being" a reference to the Gospel of Thomas, it is more likely in the whole context of the GB to see in this verse another transfer of the glory of Christ to Muhammad with a clear echo from Colossians (1: 16): "all things were created through him and for him".

His main argument, the parallel between excommunication and cursing rites in Qumran texts, as he understands them, and the GB is purely based on the appearance of a few similar words which do not prove any connecting link whatsoever. The Jewishness of Jesus is of course very important for Blackhirst's effort to link the GB with Jewish-Christians, called Ebionites. Blackhirst is obviously not informed about a flood of Christian publications on Judaism and Jewish roots of Christianity in post second World War Europe, otherwise he would not contend that: "scientific study of Jesus as a Jew is still much neglected in Christian scholarship". As most Muslim authors he has no other answer to the question of the transfer of the title Messiah from Jesus to Muhammad than his refusal to accept a Muslim source for it. Our next Muslim author Maulana Mawdudi faced the same riddle.

k. Barnabas, more authentic? Maulana Mawdudi ↓ ↑

Rather than dealing with all recent, modern Muslim defenders of the GB in Egypt, Pakistan, India and elsewhere I have chosen one of their most important and influential spokesmen and prolific writers, Maulana Abu'l Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979).

He is the father of Islamism (I prefer this term to fundamentalism) (Fn33). In two of his writings he dealt with the GB at great length. In Volume of his six volume Urdu Qur'ân commentary, Tafhim al-Qur'ân, Mawdudi comments on the GB while explaining Sura 61:5, which makes Jesus announce the coming of Ahmad. Part of this 'Tafhim' text was used as introduction to a new Urdu edition of the GB in 1974. The longest section on Barnabas is found in Mawdudi's posthumously published two volume Urdu biography of the Prophet Muhammad (Fn34). But this second text only elaborates on the first. In this paragraph I therefore summarize the text from the Tafhim al Qur'ân. Mawdudi explains the discrepancy between the Qur'anic text : "Ahmad" = praised one and the Greek in John 14, 26, Parakletos, = counsellor rather than periklutos = praised one, as a mistake of the translator who rendered the text from Syriac the language spoken by Jesus into Greek.

Moreover, he remarks: "The Christians thought it permissible to change in the Bible whatever they liked". About the actual text he remarks that after the GB had been found at the end of the 16th century in the library of Pope Sixtus V nobody was allowed to read it. It was hidden.

But Mawdudi omits to mention that Fra Marino who claims to have found it in the library turned Muslim after reading it. Therefore the hiding, if we must call it so, must have been done by a Muslim not a Christian. Mawdudi repeats the same accusation without any proof about the text published by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg in 1907. Christians, so he says, made it disappear immediately from all libraries and it was never printed again. Mawdudi admits that the explicit mention of the Prophet Muhammad in the GB betrays a later editor, because it is against the style of previous prophets to mention exactly the name of later in their predictions.

They use a more allusive way of speech. But for the rest the Jesus of the GB acts and teaches as a Muslim expects him to. "It sounds more genuine than the four canonical gospels", so he told me during a long conversation in Urdu I had with him in his residence in Lahore on the 26th of September 1976, a day after his 73rd birthday. It escapes him that he uses a circular argument, wish being father to the thought. Moreover Barnabas, in Mawdudi 's view, presents his story in such great detail that he must have been an eyewitness. This is especially the case when Barnabas tells how Judas took Jesus place on the cross. Mawdudi rejects the idea that the whole gospel was written by a Muslim because no Muslim scholar mentions it. Mawdudi supports this 'argumentum e silentio' by presenting a whole list of medieval Muslim scholars who did not mention the GB. How could they while no GB existed before the late 16th century!

He accepts without question the extant Italian and Spanish gospel as being identical with the apocryphal Gospel of Barnabas, which is mentioned in the Pseudo-Gelasian Decree (6th century AD) but of which not a single line has been preserved. Mawdudi pities the Christian Church that it does not correct its message now that the GB is available to do so. One wonders in retrospect about the concepts of history of those authors (like Mawdudi and others) who assume that Christians had to wait almost 1900 years for a more reliable gospel to arrive than the four they have in the New Testament? A further question would be why the Moriscos would not have published it in the 17th century and Cramer, Toland and Sale a.o. through whose hands it went in either Spanish or Italian during the 18th century. Where all these scholars Christians and non-Christian (Toland) conspiring against the evident truth?

It is in my view disquieting that an influential author such as Mawdudi explains the in his view divine text of the Qur'ân not only while repeating the old accusation against Christians of tampering with the text of the Bible (this is part of his tradition), and in addition uncritically accepts an obvious forgery within the context of a Qur'ân commentary in order to prove his point. It is equally alarming that a growing number of Muslim writers not only in Pakistan but also in India, South Africa and most of all in Egypt use the Gospel of Barnabas as an authentic source of early Christianity. Most of these countries have in common that there is a strong Christian community.

This factor may explain why Muslim apologists like to revert to this dubious instrument to defend their faith. Especially the recent increase of publications about the GB in Egypt may

need further investigation. It seems likely that the great authority of Rashid Rida who in his Qur'ân commentary in the journal Al-Manâr defended the authenticity of the GB has increased the interest in the GB in conservative circles. Stating this fact still does not answer the question why Egypt is such a fertile milieu for reception? Is it due to the growing influence of Islamist thinking?

I. Fourfold yet one ↓ ↑

The fact that the New Testament contains four rather than the one gospel which according to the Qur'ân descended upon Jesus and which in essence must have contained the same message as the Qur'ân, has always puzzled Muslims. Popular explanation has it that the one original gospel got lost and that Jesus' disciples and their pupils made up for the loss by writing down their own memories. The four gospels which the Church accepts as canonical may contain parts of Jesus' message but certainly not the whole truth. This view we find also in the writings of Maulana Mawdudi. The search for this one lost gospel has always fascinated Muslims. This to some extent explains the uncritical and credulous enthusiasm for the Gospel of Barnabas.

But some Christian theologians in the early church felt also for various reasons embarrassed by the plurality of the gospels. One of them Marcion from Pontus in Asia Minor (died c.160) solved this problem by choosing one gospel (Fn35). He wanted to stress the unique identity of the Church against Judaism and therefore chose the in his opinion least Jewish of the four gospels namely the gospel according to St Luke. He moreover rejected all the other apostolic writings of the New Testament except those by St Paul. His solution for the plurality was the opposite of the one proposed in the GB which rejects St Paul and emphasizes the Jewishness of Jesus while denying his divinity as a Greek invention. The Church declined Marcion's solution and continued to adhere to the four gospels. A second solution was presented by the Syrian scholar Tatian (about 160) (Fn36). He combined the four gospels into one. His effort at unification is called in Greek: Diatessaron, literally through four.

I quote the internationally known Diatessaron specialist Dr Tj.Baarda: "In some way Tatian wanted to replace the sources with their contradictions by a new document that surpassed all these sources and would avoid the criticisms that pagans and Christian dissidents made on existing Gospels, not a fifth Gospel, but what actually became in the early Syriac-speaking churches, the Gospel" (Fn37). Tatian had many followers throughout the history of the church. But the Church (I mean all denominations) kept to the four canonical Gospels as an essential part of its identity. Oscar Cullmann, for many years a leading scholar of the New Testament, once beautifully explained why: "The unity of the one divine Gospel is hidden in the human plurality of the four gospels. It remains a challenge to find it in its full richness. The early Church already confessed that they are held together by one Spirit.

Every effort therefore to reduce this unity into uniformity was bound to fail because the greatness and uniqueness of the Christ event cannot be expressed by just one witness" (Fn38). We invite our Muslims partners in dialogue to respect this indissoluble Christian understanding of Scripture as part of the integrity and identity of Christians and churches. But as far as Islam has common roots with Judaism and Christianity this respect for Scriptures (plural) is part of the Islamic tradition as well. It is gratifying that some Muslim thinkers together with their Christian colleagues have started doing this in the Groupe de Recherche Islamo-Chrétien.

The result of their common search is: *The Challenge of Scripture: The Bible and the Qurân*. Though I myself did not participate in this group, I attended the presentation of the (original) French edition in Brussels on 20 August 1987 and I discovered that it confirmed my own journey towards a gradually growing openness for and appreciation of the Qur'ânic message, which in a paradox of faith, deepened my own Christian identity (Fn39). Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in *What is Scripture?*, has shown in the same vein how Christians, Muslims, Jews and others could upgrade and widen their concept of scriptures in a process of mutual respect and spiritual growth (Fn40). Such a growing respect for each others Scriptures combined with a critical alertness to distinguish the truth wherever it is found may be the decisive step to overcome the challenge posed to Muslims and Christians by this so-called Gospel of Barnabas.

Footnotes ↓ ↑

(Fn00) Jan Slomp, born in 1932, ordained in 1962, was given a doctorate honoris causa by the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in 1994. From 1964-1977 in Pakistan (district missionary; Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi). From 1977-1994 Islam Desk of the Reformed Churches. From 1978-1987 Secretary of the Consultative Committee 'Islam in Europe' of the Conference of European Churches (C.E.C.). From 1987-1994 moderator of the Islam in Europe Committee of the C.E.C. and Council of R.C.Episcopal Conferences in Europe (C.C.E.E.). For his publications see the liber amicorum reviewed by M.Fitzgerald in *Islamochristiana* 20 (1994), pp.316-317.

(Fn01) G.Bonner, "Literary Forgery", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Chicago, 1973 Vol.XIV, pp.105-106

(Fn02) D.Sox, *The Gospel of Barnabas*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p.31. Reviewed in *Islamochristiana* 11 (1985), pp.259-260

(Fn03) W.F.Campbell, *The Gospel of Barnabas. Its true value*, Rawalpindi, Christian Study Centre, 1989, 112p.. The C.S.C. also published an Urdu refutation of the GB by Yusuf Jalil. Eugenio Giustolisi and Giuseppe Rizzardi edited a new Italian translation, *Il Vangelo di Barnaba. Un vangelo per i musulmani?*, Milano, Istituto Propaganda Libreria, 1991 803p.

Reviewed in *Islamochriana* 17 (1991), p.346. Cf. in Italian Yusuf Abu Khalid Sarno, *Il Messia*, Milano, Edizioni del Calamo, 1994 chapter 2 "I Vangeli ed il Vangelo de Barnaba". The author considers the GB to be more authentic than the four canonical gospels. I owe this reference to M.Borrmans. The other authors are dealt with in C.Schirmacher's book in section g and notes 21 and 23.

(Fn04) A.Grafton, *Forgers and Critics. Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*, Princeton University Press, 1990, p.126 French translation: *Fausaires et Critiques. Créativité et duplicité chez les érudits occidentaux*, Paris, Editions belles lettres, 1993, 163p.

(Fn05) Goran Larsson, *Fact or Fraud. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Jerusalem, 1994, 79p.

(Fn06) Abdelfattah Kilito, *L'auteur et ses doubles. Essai sur la culture arabe classique*, Paris, Seuil, 1985, especially chapter 7: "Les aveux d'un faussaire"; cf. also Marc Gaboreau, "Criticizing the Abuses of the Sufis: The Debate in Early 19th Century India: 1798-1831", paper presented to the symposium *sufism and its opponents*, Utrecht, 1995, 32p. The article deals with a pseudepigraph of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi (1703-1762). I owe this reference to J.M.S.Baljon.

(Fn07) W.C.Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1989, chapter 4: "The true meaning of Scripture: The Qur'ân as example", pp.65-92.

(Fn08) Rotraud Wielandt, *Offenbarung und Geschichte im Denken Moderner Muslime*, Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1971. She deals with all the modern predecessors of Fazlur Rahman (d.1988) and Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid (Cairo) who is in exile in Leiden (1997).

(Fn09) Cf. "Art Forgery" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Chicago, 1973, Vol.II, pp.513-517 and D.Kraaypoel en H.van Wijnen, *Han van Meegeren 1889-1947 en zijn meesterwerk van Vermeer*, Zwolle, 1996, 96p. John Godley, *The Master Forger, the story of Han van Meegeren*, New York, 1952 and several other studies on forgers.

(Fn10) Irving Wallace, *The Word*, London Book, 1972, and reprints, 702p.

(Fn11) Nicolas Saudray, *Le Maître des Fontaines*, Paris, Denoël, 248 p.

(Fn12) James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy. An Adventure*. London, Bantam Books, 1994, 282 p. Cf. also Wilton Barnhardt, *Gospel*, New York, Picador 788 p. and by the Belgian author Paul Claes, *De Zoon van de Panter*, Amsterdam, 1996, 119 p. T.Baarda drew my attention to Barnhardt's book. It is announced as follows: "Gospel concerns the search for a lost first-century gospel of the Bible (sic J.S.), a document that could shake the foundations of Christianity."

(Fn13) Jean-Michel Hirt, *Le Miroir du Prophète*, Paris, Grasset, 1993, pp 47-49. I owe this reference to H.Voecking.

(Fn14) Mikel de Epalza, "Sobre Garcia Gomez como conferenciante y periodista: La autoría del "Evangelio de san Bernabé", in *Awrâq* (Madrid) 10 p. In the press. I owe this reference to the author.

(Fn15) Louis Cardaillac, *Morisques et Chrétiens Un affrontement polémique (1492-1640)*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1977 pp.293-294

(Fn16) Luis F.Bernabé Pons, *El Evangelio de San Bernabé. Un evangelio islamico espanol*, Universidad de Alicante, 1995 260 p. Reviewed in *Bulletin Critique des Annales Islamologiques* (Cairo) 13 (1997) pp.78-80 (De Epalza) and in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (Birmingham) 8, 1, 1997 pp.105-106 (Slomp). Cf. Luis F.Bernabé, *El Cantico islamico del morisco hispanotunico Taybili*, Zaragoza, Institucion Fernando el Catolico, 1988, 275 p. As in the previous and following sections pagenumbering for quotations is omitted in order to avoid multiplying footnotes.

(Fn17) Luis F.Bernabé Pons, "Zur Wahrheit und Echtheit des Barnabasevangeliums", in R.Kirste, ed, *Wertewandel und Religioese Umbrueche. Religionen im Gespraech*, Nachrodt, Vol.4, 1996, pp.133-188. Quotations from the GBS in this article are based on the Spanish original and not taken from Safiyya M.Linges, *Das Barnabas Evangelium*, Bonndorf, Turban Verlag, 1994. Linges translation was made from the English translation of the Italian manuscript. See my review in *Zeitschrift fuer Mission*, XXI, Heft 3, 1995, pp.211-212. Nearly all Muslim translations and editions were followed by critical brochures in the respective languages, several in Arabic and Urdu, which were listed in my earlier studies and are also mentioned in Schirmacher's book (note 21). I add for Indonesian: B.Drewes and J.Slomp, *Seluk beluk buku yang disebut Injil Barnabas*, Jakarta, BPK Gunung Mulia (Protestant) and Penerbit Kanisius (Catholic), 1983, 28 p., 9th edition 1997. Turkish: R.Benson, *Incil-i-Barnba Bilimsel bir Arastirma*, Istanbul, 1995,68p.

(Fn18) Cf. P.S.van Koningsveld, forthcoming 1997 "The Islamic image of Paul and the Origin of the Gospel of Barnabas", in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. I owe this reference to the author.

(Fn19) Cf. L.P.Harvey and G.A.Wiegers, "The translation from Arabic of the Sacramonte tablets and the archbishop of Granada: An illuminating correspondence." in *Qurtuba. Estudios Andalusies*, 1996, pp 59-79. I owe this refrence to G.A.Wiegers.

(Fn20) G.A.Wiegers, "Muhammad as the Messiah: A comparison of the polemical works of Juan Alonso with the Gospel of Barnabas", *Leiden, Bibliotheca Orientalis*, LII, no 3/4, April-Juni 1995, pp.245-292 (in double columns) and G.A.Wiegers, "Mahoma visto como el Mesias: Comparacion de las obras polemicas de Juan Alonso con El Evangelio de Bernabé", to be published in the Acts of the congress "La voz de los Mudejeres y Moriscos" held in Alicante in March 1996, 66 p.

(Fn21) C.Schirmmacher, *Mit den Waffen des Gegners: Christlich-muslimische Kontroversen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert dargestellt am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung um Karl Gottlieb Pfanders 'Mizan al Haqq' und Rahmatullah ibn Halil al-`Utmani al-Kairânawis 'Izhar al Haqq' und der Diskussion ueber das Barnabasevangelium*, Berlin, Scharzt Verlag, 1992, 437p. See my review in *Zeitschrift fuer Mission*, XXI Heft 3 1995 pp.210-211.

(Fn22) Rahmatullah's 'Izhar al Haqq' was reprinted in three volumes in Karachi in 1391 (=1971) with the Urdu title: *Baibel se Qur'ân tak* (From Bible to Qur'ân). Volume III, pp.371-385 contains one long footnote on the GB by the editor Muhammad Taqvi `Ushmâni. His whole argument is based on the old accusation of tahrif. A new Arabic edition was published in Riyadh, SA in 1889.

(Fn23) Schirmmacher, *op.cit.* pp.353-356.

(Fn24) M.Ayoub, "Muslim views of Christianity; some modern examples", *Islamochristiana* (10) 1984, p.63.

(Fn25) M.de Epalza, "Études hispaniques actuelles sur l'évangile islamisant de Barnabé", in *Al-Masâq, Studia Arabo-Islamica Mediterranea*, Vol.1, 1988, pp.33-38.

(Fn26) J.Jomier, "L'évangile selon Barnabé", *Cairo, MIDEO*, 6 1959-1961, pp.137-226, remains one of the best analyses of the GBI. Cf. J.Jomier, "Une énigme qui commence à être déchiffrée: l'évangile de Jésus-Christ selon Barnabé, approximately p.15. Forthcoming in *Se Comprendre*, 1998.

(Fn27) From friends in Egypt I received the following books on the GB which they had found in bookshops in Cairo between 1994-1996. The titles give an idea of the milieu of reception in that country. I feel insufficiently informed to analyse these publications in their context. The presence of publications from the Indian subcontinent and the United States of America in Egypt is an indication of exchange of opinion on this issue.

English:

M.H.Durrani, *The forgotten gospel of St Barnabas*, Delhi, Noor, 1982, 1992 125p. The dustjacket presents the author as an ex-Christian priest. I met him in 1975 in Karachi. Before the second world war Durrani became a Christian and spoke at Christian conventions. He returned to Islam and missed no opportunity to attack churches and missions.

M.A.Youssef, *The Gospel of Barnabas, Notes and Commentary*, Riyadh, International Islamic Publishing House, 1991, 229p.

M.A.Youssef, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. The Gospel of Barnabas and the New Testament*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publications, 1985, 1991 137 p. Youssef claims that he found a complete 'isnad' for the GB with the help of higher criticism. See below section j. on Blackhirst for the supposed connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Cf. C.Schirmmacher, *op.cit.* pp.344-345.

Arabic:

Indjil Barnaba, tarjamah Khalil Sa`âda, Cairo, Dar al-Fatah lil `ulûm al-`Arabi, undated reprint of the translation made in 1908.

Ahmad Tahir, Lil-Anadjil: Dirasat Muqârana, Cairo, Dar al-Ma`âref, 1991, 384 p. This new translation of the GB is preceded by an introduction of 165 p.

Saifullah Ahmad Fâdhil, Indjil Barnaba: Drâsat Haul Wahdat al-Din `inda Musâ, `Isâ wa-Muhammad, `alaihim as-salâm, Kuwait, 1982 404 p.

Muhammad Abdul Rahamn `Awad, Al-Ikhtilâf wa-l-ittifâq bain Indjil Barnaba wal anajil al-arba a, Cairo, Dar al-Bashir, 1986, 176 p.

Mahmoud `Ali Hamayat, Al-tajassd wal-Salb bain al-Haqiqat wa-l iftira, Cairo, 1990, AH 1410, 113 p. The GB is used as one of his sources for the denial of incarnation and cross. From the Christian side: `Awad Samân, Indjil Barnaba, Indjil Muzayyaf, Cairo, n.d., 171 p. The subtitle: In the light of history, reason and religion.

The subtitle: In the light of history, reason and religion.

(Fn28) M.Borrmans, Jésus et les Musulmans d'aujourd'hui, Paris Desclée, 1996 pp.87-88 describes the high esteem of Rashid Rida for the GB. Probably partly because of Rashid Rida's great authority (pp.82, 83, 87, 88) other Egyptian and North-African scholars did the same. Borrmans mentions the following authors and publications which refer to the GB as an authoritative text: schoolbooks in Morocco (pp.67 and 75) Ben Ashûr(Tunis) in his tafsir substitutes Judas for Jesus on the cross (p.94); further Tantawi Jawhâri (p.120) and Sayyid Qutb (p.119) refer to the GB in their tafsir; the great mufti of Lebanon Hasan Khalid (pp 138 and 140) refers to it in a theological text and Abdul Wahhâb al-Najjar (pp.142, 144, 145) uses the Izhar al Haqq (see note 22) in his Qisâs al-Anbiyâ (Stories about the prophets). Two Muslim speakers at the Christian-Muslim colloquium in Cordoba in 1977 referred to the GB and so did Al-Sahhar (p.211) in his biography of Jesus and Mary. For Muhammad `Ata ur-Rahim the GB is his main source for his book Jesus (a) Prophet of Islam. The second edition added the indefinite article "a" before Jesus! Cf. my review in Theological Review, Vol.III (1980) pp.35-39. Beirut: Near East School of Theology. On p.114 Borrmans presents an extensive bibliography on the GB. Borrmans did not elaborate on Mawdudi's use of the GB (pp.106-110; see note 33 in this article).

(Fn29) J.Bowman, "The Gospel of Barnabas and the Samaritans", Leiden, Abr-Nahrain, 30 (1992), pp.20-33, and J.Bowman, "The Debt of Islam to monophysite Syrian Christianity", in Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift, (1964-1965), 19, pp.177-201.

(Fn30) R.Blackhirst, Sediton in Judaea. The Symbolism of Mizpah in the Gospel of Barnabas, Studies in Western Traditions Occasional Papers No. 3 School of Arts La Trobe University, Bendigo, Australia, 1996, 84 p.

(Fn31) F.Garcia Martinez and Adam van der Woude, De rollen van de Dode Zee, Kampen, Kok, 1994, Vol.I, pp.30-31

(Fn32) G.Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Vol.I, p.178.

(Fn33) K.Duran, "Maududi, Chief Ideologue of Islamism", Trans-state Islam, Vol.I, 4, (1996) pp.9-14 and J.Slomp, "Mawlana Mawdudi, der Vater des Fundamentalismus, im Kampf mit dem Westen" (with a section on the GB), in R.Kirste, Religionen im Gespræch, Vol.3, Nachrodt, 1994, pp.256-275. Cf. also J.Slomp, Maulana Maududi and the reception of the Gospel of Barnabas in Pakistan, unpublished lecture University of Alicante, March 7, 1995.

(Fn34) A.A.Mawdudi, Tafhim al-Qurân, V, pp.461-476, and Sirat Sarwar-e`Alam, Vol.I, pp.659-669. The chapter is called in Urdu:"The true teachings of `Isa".

(Fn35) Cf. "Marcion", in F.L.Cross, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, London, 1974, pp.870-871.

(Fn36) Cf. "Tatian", in F.L.Cross, op.cit. p. 1341.

(Fn37) Tj.Baarda, Essays on the Diatessaron, Kampen, Pharos, 1994, p.47.

(Fn38) O.Cullmann, "Die Pluralitaet der Evangelien als theologisches Problem im Altertum", in Vortraege und Aufsætzte, 1925-1962, Tuebingen, Mohr, 1966, pp.548-565.

(Fn39) Muslim-Christian Research Group, The Challenge of the Scriptures: The Bible and the Qur`ân, New York, Orbis Books, 1989, 104 p.

(Fn40) W.C.Smith, op.cit. (note 8) pp.212 sq.(conclusions).

Many thanks

not only to the author [Jan Slomp](#), but also to [Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica \(PISAI\), Rome](#), for the permission to publish this content of ISLAMOCRISTIANA volume 23 in the INTERNET. We are also grateful, that we received the text comfortable in electronic manner.

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