

Kalina Wojciechowska / Mariusz Rosik

A Structural Commentary on the So-Called *Antilegomena*

Volume 3: The Second Letter of Peter:
Proclaiming the Coming of the Lord

Part 2. Eschatological Hermeneutics (2 Pet 3)



Eastern and Central European Voices

Studies in Theology and Religion

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Volume 3.3.2

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Part 2. Eschatological Hermeneutics (2 Pet 3)

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

The book was financed from the subsidy granted by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: <https://dnb.de>.

© 2024 by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany, an imprint of the Brill-Group (Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany, Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)

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Cover design: SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen

Publishing reviews: Prof. Dariusz Kotecki (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) and Prof. Mirosław S. Wróbel (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin)

Translation and indexes: Monika Szela-Badzińska, Wrocław

Typesetting: le-tex publishing services, Leipzig

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISSN 2749-6279

ISBN 978-3-647-50367-7

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List of abbreviations

Bibliographic abbreviations

ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> , vol. 1–8, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, New York–Buffalo 1885–1886, revised and edited for New Advent by K. Knight
APOT	<i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English</i> , ed. Robert Henry Charles, vol. 1–2, Oxford 1913
CBQ	“Catholic Biblical Quarterly”
JETS	“Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society”
NIDNTT	<i>New International Dictionary on New Testament Theology</i> , ed. L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther, H. Bietenhard, vol. 1–4, Grand Rapids 1986

Biblical texts and translations

ESV	English Standard Version
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NETS	A New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
USCCB	New American Bible available at the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Apocrypha

1 En	First Book of Enoch (Ethiopian)
2 En	Second Book of Enoch
3 Macc	Third Book of Maccabees
4 Ezra	Fourth Book of Ezra
4 Macc	Fourth Book of Maccabees
ApBaSyr/2 Ba	Apocalypse of Baruch (Syrian)

ApEl	Apocalypse of Elijah
ApPet	Apocalypse of Peter
AscIsa	Ascension of Isaiah
EpAp	Epistle of the Apostles
Jub	Book of Jubilees
PssSol	Psalms of Solomon
SibOr	Sibylline Oracles
TBenj	Testament of Benjamin
TDan	Testament of Dan
TIss	Testament of Issachar
TJud	Testament of Jude
TLev	Testament of Levi

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QH	<i>Hymns</i> (11Q5/11QPs ^a)
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1QpHab	<i>Peshar on Habakkuk</i>
1QS	<i>Community Rule</i>
1QS ^a	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i> (1Q28a)
4QpIs ^b	<i>Peshar on Isaiah</i> (4Q162 – Isa 5:5–6.11–14.24–25.29–30, 6:9)
CD	<i>Damascus Document</i>

Ancient non-Christian writings

<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i> by Josephus Flavius
<i>Bell. Iud.</i>	<i>De Bello Iudaico</i> by Josephus Flavius
<i>De migrat.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i> by Philo of Alexandria
<i>De vita Mois.</i>	<i>De vita Moisis</i> by Philo of Alexandria
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> by Justin Martyr
<i>Gen. Rabb.</i>	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i> (<i>Midrash to The Book of Genesis</i>)
<i>Leg. alleg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriarum</i> by Philo of Alexandria

Early Christian writings

<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>First Epistle</i> by Clement of Rome
<i>2 Clem.</i>	<i>Second Epistle</i> by Clement of Rome (<i>An Ancient Christian Homily</i>)

<i>Adv. Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> by Irenaeus of Lyon
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>Diogn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> by Eusebius of Caesarea
<i>IgnEph</i>	<i>Epistle to the Ephesians</i> by Ignatius of Antioch
<i>IgnMagn</i>	<i>Epistle to the Magnesians</i> by Ignatius of Antioch
<i>IgnRom</i>	<i>Epistle to the Romans</i> by Ignatius of Antioch
<i>MartPol</i>	<i>Martyrium Policarpi</i>
<i>PolPhil</i>	<i>Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians</i> by Polycarp of Smyrna

Grammar abbreviations

acc.	accusativus
ACI	accusativus cum infinitivo
act.	activum
aor.	aoristus
con.	coniunctivus
dat.	dativus
fut.	futurum
gen.	genetivus
imp.	imperativus
ind.	indicativus
inf.	infinitivus
masc.	masculinum
med.	Medium
nom.	nominativus
neut.	neutru
opt.	optativus
part.	participium
pass.	passivum
perf.	perfectum
pl.	pluralis
praes.	praesens
sg.	singularis

Manuscript designations after *Novum Testamentum graece*, ed. Erwin Nestle, Barbara Aland, edn 28, Stuttgart 2012 [NA28].

Preface

In most publications, a commentary on the Second Letter of Peter is intended to be part of various commentaries on other general (Catholic) epistles (most often on the Letter of Jude and the First Letter of Peter). *Proclaiming the Coming of the Lord* is a commentary devoted exclusively to the Second Letter of Peter in an attempt to restore autonomy to this text.

While other authors comment on the text in a linear manner, focusing primarily on the ethical aspects of the letter, and warnings against false teachers, this structural commentary aims to accentuate the main theological thought and enable the reader to draw conclusions therefrom. Due to this solution, the author of the letter can be seen as a theologian concentrated on eschatological issues, the sources of which are to be found in the prophetic texts and narratives taken from the Jewish tradition. To interpret these texts and narratives, the author proposes a particular method, named in this commentary as eschatological hermeneutics. Eschatology, rather than ethics or parenesis, is thus brought to the fore by the author, who seeks to answer the question of why God seems to delay the execution of judgements, and why the waiting for the parousia is prolonged.

The exposition of theological and hermeneutical issues with numerous intertextual references and their analyses, has considerably expanded the volume of the commentary on the Second Letter of Peter. Therefore, the authors and publishers decided to divide the English version into two volumes. The division was dictated by the very structure of the letter, in which two parts are clearly noticeable. The first part comprises chapters 1–2, and the second is a comment on chapter 3.

Chapter 3 of the Second Letter of Peter forms, as it were, a separate part of the study, since it begins with a transition (2 Pet 3:1) which contains a reference to another letter: “I am writing you this second letter”. This formula suggests that an earlier letter was written and sent. Its identification, however, is rather difficult. It has sometimes been pointed out that it is 2 Pet 1:1–21 that should be considered the first letter of the sender, while 2 Pet 3 is the second letter. However, if 2 Peter is a coherent text, then three writings can be identified as the first letter: (a) the canonical First Letter of Peter; (b) the canonical Letter of Jude; (c) a lost letter unknown to contemporary New Testament readers, but well-known to the recipients of 2 Peter.

Regardless of the hypothesis adopted, 2 Pet 1–2 and 2 Pet 3 clearly differ in terms of their theme. In chapter 3, the author of the letter focuses on the proper interpretation of eschatological prophetic and apostolic teaching using an appropriate hermeneutics based on texts taken from Jewish tradition and construed as predictions and typologies of eschatological events. Therefore, volume 2 of this study is

entitled *Eschatological Hermeneutics*. In explaining its principles, the author of the letter drew on the creation narrative, which Jewish apocalypticism read inversely. Thus, the eschatological hermeneutics was rooted in the prophetic tradition. The emphasis on the creative and destructive power of God's word and God's sovereign will for the creation of the world and, by analogy, for its destruction and the subsequent emergence of "a new heavens and a new earth", is a development of the letter's fundamental theological theme – the certainty of judgement.

The eschatological hermeneutics is an element, and even a condition, for the correct interpretation of texts in which eschatological content is implicit, or which were never considered primarily as doctrine about the end times. The division of this commentary into two parts allows the reader of the English version to take a closer look at the hermeneutical principle. It should be recalled here that in the structure of the entire letter the content of the eschatological teaching is marked as element D, while its interpretation is marked as element E. Eschatological scepticism, a result of a failure to see the eschatological potential of the text, was the main theme of volume one. Volume two shows, with the support of an appropriate interpretative key, how this eschatological potential can be extracted even from non-eschatological texts and interpreted in such a way as to prove that judgement is bound to come and that the alleged delay in the fulfilment of eschatological predictions is due to God's patience, mercy and salvific will. Thus, the readers are given an answer to the seeming delays of the judgement and the prolonged waiting for the parousia. In addition, the author of the letter includes a piece of advice on how to fill this waiting time.

Introduction – Transition (2 Pet 3:1)

D₂. Prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:2):

- Sources of doctrine: prophetic transmission, teaching of Jesus, apostolic transmission.

E₂. Interpretation of prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:3–4):

α. False interpretation (2 Pet 3:3–4):

I. Waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled according to human will; attempting to influence God's sovereign will regarding the fulfilment of the promises.

D₃. Prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:5–7):

- Creation of the world by God's word and its destruction by the same word through the Flood as a prediction of the events of the end times.

E₃. Interpretation of prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:8–10a):

β. Interpretation proper (2 Pet 3:8–10a):

i. The clarity of eschatological predictions resulting from the interpretation modelled on D₃ (2 Pet 3:8a);

ii. God's sovereign will regarding the coming of judgment – a perspective of divine chronometry (2 Pet 3:8b–9a);

iii. God's sovereign salvific will as the reason for the alleged postponement of the fulfilment of eschatological predictions (2 Pet 3:9b);

ii'. God's sovereign will regarding the coming of judgment – the day of the Lord like a thief (2 Pet 3:10a).

D₄. Prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:10b–11a):

- An account of the annihilation – a summary of the prophetic narratives.

E₄. Interpretation of the prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:11b–15a):

β. Interpretation proper – soteriology (2 Pet 3:11b–15a):

iii'. A call to holiness in anticipation of the coming of the day of the Lord.

D₅. Prophetic and apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:15b–16b):

- Sources of eschatological teaching – Paul's letters

E₅. Interpretation of apostolic teaching (2 Pet 3:16c–17):

α. False interpretation (2 Pet 3:16c–17):

I. Characterisation of eschatological sceptics as unlearned interpreters of Paul's letters and other inspired writings.

C'. Synthesis of faith and knowledge (2 Pet 3:18a).

Doxology (2 Pet 3:18b).

The juxtaposition of central elements deriving from the structure of Volume 1, *Eschatological Scepticism*, and Volume 2, *Eschatological Hermeneutics*, makes it possible to point out the basic theological message of the entire the Second Letter of Peter: judgement is bound to come (II – 2 Pet 2:3b–4, cf. Volume 1); its postponement is due to God's salvific will, His patience and mercy (iii – 2 Pet 3:9b); the proper attitude towards the predictions of judgment present from the beginning in the inspired narratives and towards God's patience and mercy is repentance and sanctification (iii' – 2 Pet 3:11b–15a).

In order to facilitate the reader's handling of the commentary, at the beginning of Volume 2 the authors and editors decided to repeat the most important elements of the Introduction: an analysis of the structure of the letter and the structural interpretation of the text. Volume 1 contains other introductory issues, such as textual witnesses, canonicity, lexis, authorship, Peter's authority, and information

not only on Peter's milieu, but also on Peter's discourse in contemporary biblical studies, which allows the reader to understand the similarities and differences between 1 and 2 Peter, connections with the Letter of Jude, literary genre, sources, and recipients. In order to capture a comprehensive picture of the Second Letter of Peter, the authors and publishers recommend reading both volumes together.

2. Structural commentary (continuation of vol. 1)

2.7 Transition (2 Pet 3:1)

¹Beloved, I am writing to you a second letter in which, by way of a reminder, I am reawakening/stirring up/arousing your pure/uncontaminated/wholesome/sincere thinking/reasoning/mind.¹

After presenting examples of correct and false interpretations of the scriptures, which result in true or false teaching and ultimately lead either to salvation in eschatological times and the eternal kingdom or to destruction and a terrible end, the narrator decides to recall once again the purpose of the letter. This decision may stem from the realisation that amidst the typological examples, and especially after the suggestive portrayal of the conduct and fate of the false teachers, the readers may have forgotten the core message of the text. By using transition, the narrator thus seeks to refocus the attention of the recipients and to remind them of the true prophetic and apostolic teaching on the parousia and final judgment. Therefore, some of the themes touched upon in chapter 2 (e. g. the typology of the Flood – 3:6 and destruction by fire – 3:7) will be finally clarified. Moreover, the thesis of 2:3b will also be explicitly proven: “the judgment/sentence is not idle, and their destruction is not slumbering”, with an explanation of why the contrary seem true (3:8–9). Furthermore – with reference to *exordium* – the narrator will encourage piety and a holy lifestyle (3:11), so that the coming Lord will find the faithful without blemish and without spot (3:14).

In fact, the narrator prepared the readers for a conclusion from verse 2:19 onwards, through the accumulation of exordial themes related primarily to the development of baptismal gifts, living a godly life and escaping corruption (1:3–11). In this verse he returns to the theme initiated in 1:12–13 with the phrase *διεγείρειν ὑμᾶς ἐν ὑπομνήσει* reminiscent of *διεγείρω ἐν ὑπομνήσει*. This lexical similarity seems not coincidental. For it indicates not only the transitive character of verse 3:1, but also its function as an *aphodos* (ἄφοδος), that is a return to the main theme after a rather lengthy digression on the behaviour and motivations of the false teachers

1 The authors wish to offer their own translation of the Second Letter of Peter, so all quotations from 2 Peter follow their proposal. The other biblical texts are quoted after the USCCB translation: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible> [accessed: 3.01.2024]. All the quotations are taken from cited sources; if texts are only available in the Polish language, the translator offers her own translation proposal.

(2:9b–22).² Thus, on the one hand, 3:1 summarises what has already been said; on the other hand, it focuses attention on the most important message of the letter, which in the last part will be edited in a similar convention as before, with a structure comparable to that used in chapter 2.³ The main theme remains the prophetic and apostolic teaching about the parousia and the judgement, which can be interpreted falsely or truthfully with all its consequences. Whereas 2 Pet 1:16–2:22 mainly included examples and warnings of false interpretation, 2 Pet 3:2–17d emphasises examples and encouragement of true interpretation, pointing the way to the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the letter, which is to continually remind present and future generations of Christians of the doctrine concerning the second coming of Jesus, his eschatological judgement and power over the world, was first set out in the final part of *exordium* – 2 Pet 1:12–22. This teaching, which includes both practical and theoretical aspects, is based on a Christological and eschatological reinterpretation of the prophetic teaching as well as on the testimony of the apostles. As Craig A. Blaising noted, there must have been a vivid image in the early Christian tradition of the apostle Peter making a Christological reinterpretation of the words of the prophets. It was used, for example, by the author of the Acts when he reconstructed Peter's speech delivered on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17–36) and the apostle's speech to the Jews (Acts 3:12–26), both based on quoting Old Testament texts that refer to the person of Jesus.⁴ This image is also evoked by the author of 2 Peter in 1:12–21 and in 3:1–2.

The transition in 2 Pet 3:1 is emphasised by the use of the addressive form ἀγαπητοί 'loved ones', perhaps taken from the Letter of Jude.⁵ Earlier, although the narrator addressed the recipients directly in the second-person plural, such phrases were not used. In the conclusion of the letter the narrator seems to make up for this scarcity, so that vocativus ἀγαπητοί appears three more times here (2 Pet 3:8.14.17).⁶ On the one hand, this may indicate a certain stylistic difference between 1:1–21 (or even 1:1–2:22) and 3:1–18, a different relationship to the recipients, and thus provide one argument for the stylistic complexity and inconsistency of 2 Peter.⁷ On

2 D.F. Watson, T. Callan, *First and Second Peter*, Grand Rapids 2012, p. 203; J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, London 1982, p. 352; R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Word Biblical Commentary 50), Waco 1983, p. 282; D.J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Collegeville 2003, p. 284.

3 See Introduction (vol. 1).

4 C.A. Blaising, *The Day of the Lord Will Come: An Exposition of 2 Peter 3:1–18*, "Bibliotheca Sacra" 169 (2012), no. 676, p. 388.

5 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, p. 354.

6 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 947.

7 See analysis of 2 Pet 3:1.

the other hand, the use of ἀγαπητοί as an apostrophe may be a rhetorical device, *captatio benevolentiae*, that element of the epilogue which, as Aristotle notes in the *Rhetoric* (1419b), is intended, among other things, “to dispose the hearer favorably [...] to excite the emotions of the hearer”⁸. Moreover, a persuasive purpose is also evident here; by introducing the addressives, the narrator wants to highlight three things. Firstly, how meaningless it is to calculate the exact date of the parousia (3:8). Secondly, how important it is to actively await the parousia, which ensures that the Lord will find his believers “unblemished and without spot” (3:14). Thirdly, it is an encouragement to be strengthened in true faith (3:17). Michael Green also draws attention to the appeal to do something or their semantic equivalents.⁹ In 2 Pet 3:1 it would be an appeal to recall words (“Beloved, that you may recall the words”), in 3:8, an encouragement to learn something (“This one thing let not escape you/Be not ignorant of this one thing, beloved”), in 3:14 a call to action (“beloved, be diligent/strive earnestly”), in 3:17 a call to vigilance (“beloved, beware”).

The term ἀγαπητοί ‘beloved’ is used by family members to show confidentiality and the emotional bonds with siblings (e. g. Tb 10:13) and parents¹⁰ (cf. also the declarative formulas in Matt 3:17, 17:5, Mark 1:11, 9:7, Luke 3:22). From the familial language the phrase was borrowed by Christianity. It began to be used when a preacher/apostle addressed an audience and gave doctrinal or moral instruction.¹¹ In this way, it was emphasised that the Christian community is organised on the model of the family, whose head is God the Father (Eph 5:1), and everyone who does God’s will is brother and sister in it (Mark 3:34–35) and should give each other brotherly love (cf. 2 Pet 1:7).¹² This model of relationship is also evident in early Christian epistolography. The sender of *1 Clem.* repeatedly addresses the recipients as “brethren” (e. g. *1 Clem.* 4:7, 13:1, 14:1, 33:1, 37:1, 41:1.4) or “beloved” (*1 Clem.* 7:1, 12:8, 21:11, 24:1, 35:1.5, 36:1, 47:6, 51:1.5, 53:1, 56:2.16) or “dearly beloved” (16:17). Similarly, the narrator of *2 Clem.* prefers the term “brethren”, and – less frequently – the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, who confesses: “For, my brethren, the habitation of our heart is a holy temple to the Lord” (*Barn.* 6:15).

Gene L. Green further argues that the recipients of 2 Peter felt appreciated because the use of this familial phrase ἀγαπητοί meant they were considered part of the family, as opposed to the heretics. This, however, seems far-fetched, for nowhere

8 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0060%3Abekker+page%3D1419b> [accessed: 3.01.2024].

9 M. Green, *The Second Letter General of Peter and the General Letter of Jude*, Grand Rapids 1987, p. 268.

10 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 947.

11 Rom 12:19, 1 Cor 10:14, 15:58, 2 Cor 7:1, 12:19, Phil 2:12, 4:1, Heb 6:9, Jas 1:16.19, 2:5, 1 Pet 2:11, 4:12, 1 John 2:7, 3:2.21, 4:1.7.11, Jude 3.17.20; G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 947.

12 See analysis of 2 Pet 1:7.

does the narrator advocate the disciplinary exclusion of heretics from the community. Moreover, in 2:1 the narrator announced that the heretics would be active “among you”, and thus their activity will be an intra-community activity (cf. Jude 4, where false teachers from outside the community make their way into the local church).¹³ On the other hand, the narrator speaks/writes to the community from the position of an older, more experienced brother (cf. 2 Pet 1:10) who lovingly and caringly instructs his siblings,¹⁴ and reminds the brothers and sisters of the importance of those elements of Christian doctrine and life which the false teachers question and will continue to do question in the future, ever more intensely and aggressively.

The transition in verse 3:1 takes on the function of an aphodos, which on the one hand allows one to return to an interrupted thread, and on the other may signal a summary.¹⁵ Indeed, the narrator refers back to what has been communicated to the audience earlier, namely faith, knowledge (1:1–2) and baptismal theology (1:3–11), and returns to the doctrine of the parousia interrupted by a commentary on the relationship between guilt and punishment with a description of the behaviour of false teachers. This return takes the form of a very synthetic recapitulation.

By using the reminder formula in 3:1 as an element of the aphodos, the narrator of 2 Peter comes close to those New Testament and early Christian writers who often placed hypomnemic formulas in the middle or towards the end of the letter (Rom 11:25, 1 Cor 8:1, 10:1, 12:1, 1 Thess 4:13, 1 Clem. 53:1). It may be noted that these Christian reminders refer, on the one hand, to the doctrine and/or Scripture and, on the other – analogous to Greek literature – to moral instruction.¹⁶ In 2 Peter the narrator combines these functions. Reaffirming the recipients ἐν ὑπομνήσει by reminding them of properly interpreted prophetic and apostolic teaching about the parousia is closely related to moral requirements.

2 Pet 3:1 begins with the mention that this very letter is a second letter addressed to the same recipients. This mention is introduced by the phrase ταύτην ἤδε δευτέραν γράφω ἐπιστολὴν “I am writing to you a second letter”. Various variants of the formula οὗτος ἤδε δευτερος (or elements of it) can be found when enumerating (e. g. Gen 27:36), but also when marking the recurrence or permanence of an event (e. g. Matt 15:32, 17:12, Mark 8:2, John 9:27, 21:14.16).¹⁷ Often this involves the

13 K. Wojciechowska, M. Rosik, *A Structural Commentary on the So-Called Antilegomena*, vol. 2: *The Letter of Jude: Expecting Mercy* (Eastern and Central European Voices 3.2), Göttingen 2021, p. 98–99 (We will continue to use the shortened title: *Expecting Mercy*).

14 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

15 J.L. White, *The Form and Function of Greek Letter: A Study of Letter-Body in the Non-literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle*, Missoula 1972, p. 42–43.

16 See analysis of 2 Pet 1:12.

17 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 948–949.

confirmation by the second – δεύτερος – element (event) of the existence of the preceding element (event)¹⁸ (e. g. Matt 26:42, John 4:54, 9:24, Acts 7:13, 10:15, 2 Cor 13:2, Titus 3:10, Heb 8:7, 9:28). In 2 Peter, this formula not only confirms the fact of writing and sending of an earlier letter, but above all authenticates the content of both writings. On the one hand, the issues raised in the first letter remain binding and normative for the recipients and are therefore recalled. On the other hand, the problems mentioned in the second letter are legitimised and gain importance as a reminder of what had already been written and sanctioned as apostolic teaching. G.L. Green¹⁹ points out that the narrator of 2 Peter refers to the first letter as he refers to other authoritative texts – the prophets, the Scriptures or Paul's letters – which may provide some guidance in identifying this writing.

The identification of the letter referred to by the narrator of 2 Peter in 3:1 is the subject of much controversy and debate.²⁰ Four main hypotheses are usually given. The letter referred to is: (a) the canonical Letter of Jude; (b) 2 Pet 1:1–21; (c) the canonical First Letter of Peter; (d) a text that is lost today but known to the original audience.

The first hypothesis is based on the similarity between 2 Peter and the Letter of Jude.²¹ One of the leading promoters of this view, John A.T. Robinson, argues that the affinity between 2 Peter and Jude is much closer than between the First and Second Letters of Peter. They can be seen both in lexis, style, motifs and in relation to similar (perhaps even the same) external circumstances, i. e. the threat of heresy. The weakest point in this hypothesis is the attribution of the two letters to a single author, especially since both senders introduce themselves and give their names in the prescripts. Robinson attempts to resolve this in the following way: the author of the Letter of Jude (according to Robinson, it is Jude himself, brother of James) wrote both a letter signed with his name and a pseudonymous letter in which he appears as a representative of the apostle Peter, i. e. the Second Letter of Peter. In 2 Peter he introduces himself as Simeon (Συμεών), such as Peter was called in the milieu of Jude and his brother James (Acts 15:14).²² 2 Peter would then be this letter that the narrator of Jude mentioned in verse 3a²³: “although I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation”. The hagiographer (Jude) temporarily postponed his intention to write a letter about “our common salvation” and, due to external circumstances, take up another subject – a call “to contend for

18 Ibid., p. 949.

19 Ibid.

20 See Introduction (vol. 1).

21 J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, London 1976, p. 195.

22 See Introduction (vol. 1) and analysis of prescript to 2 Pet 1:1.

23 J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p. 195.

the faith that was once for all handed down to the holy ones”.²⁴ After writing a letter encouraging the struggle for the faith, he returned to his original plans and indeed wrote a text “about our common salvation”, i. e. 2 Peter. In 2 Pet 3:1, he mentioned his first letter, i. e. Jude.

Criticising this theory, Richard Bauckham notes that the author of 2 Peter did not use Jude in the way the author of both texts would.²⁵ As could be seen, the material used in Jude is subjected by the narrator of 2 Peter to numerous transformations and additions. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that these are modifications made by the author. However, it would be difficult to explain them if both texts were sent to the same audience. If, on the other hand, the author of Jude adapted the material to the competence of the recipients, then the thesis that both texts were intended for the same audience cannot be sustained.²⁶ Additionally, the question of the pseudonymous character of 2 Peter, or even of the two letters, 2 Peter and Jude. If the same literary convention was used in both texts – introducing oneself and speaking on behalf of Jude in one letter and on behalf of Peter in the other – then audiences would, in line with this convention, attribute the two letters to two different authors. Revealing the narrator of 2 Peter as the author of Jude would undermine the credibility of both letters in the eyes of the recipients.

The second hypothesis refers to the complexity and a certain stylistic inconsistency of the letter. As early as in the seventeenth century, H. Grotius formulated the thesis that 2 Pet 3:1–17 was originally a separate letter. In the nineteenth century, other researchers established that 2 Pet 2 would be a later interpolation dependent on Jude, which led to the conclusion that 2 Pet 1:1–21 was the First Letter of Peter.²⁷ In the 1960s, Martin McNamara revised this thesis and further elaborated on it.²⁸ He pointed out that 2 Pet 1:15 (σπουδάσω δὲ καὶ ἐκάστοτε ἔχειν ὑμᾶς μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἔξοδον τὴν τούτων μνήμην ποιῆσθαι “I will be diligent/strive earnestly that you may always and after my departure remind one another of these [things]/have remembrance of these to keep”) can be read as a kind of foreshadowing of the second letter that was to begin precisely in 2 Pet 3:1. This fragment was originally a separate letter, announced by μνήμη “reminder”.²⁹ There is also no denying that 2 Pet 3:1 is reminiscent of epistolary exordial formulas in which previous correspondence is recalled. “More than once I have written to you to come and introduce me so that I

24 K. Wojciechowska, M. Rosik, *Expecting Mercy*, p. 89–90, 92.

25 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 285.

26 See Introduction (vol. 1).

27 M. McNamara, *The Unity of Second Peter: A Reconsideration*, “Scripture” 12 (1960), p. 14.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 13–19; see also Introduction (vol. 1).

29 M. McNamara, *The Unity of Second Peter*, p. 18–19; McNamara argues that there could have been more such reminders; they would have addressed various, not only eschatological, aspects of the apostolic teaching.

may get out of my present idleness”, wrote Polycrates, a canal builder in Egypt, to his father in the third century BC.³⁰ “According to what you have written to me, we have prepared for the arrival of Chrysippus”, reported Ameneus to an official in Faiyum.³¹ This can be supported by the different attitude to the recipients: more detached in 1:1–21 and more familiar, with the repeated apostrophe ἀγαπητοί, in 3:1–17.

The weakness of this hypothesis lies in that it ignores the rhetorical devices³² and the structure of the letter, which is foreshadowed in 2 Pet 1:16–21 and consistently applied in chapters 2 and 3 of the letter: the narrator first refers to the teaching of the prophets and apostles and then to the true or false interpretation of that teaching, which entails eschatological and soteriological implications. Furthermore, as we have already seen, *exordium* is also reflected and developed in 2 Pet 2, not only in 2 Pet 3. This hypothesis fails to take into account the narrator’s predilection to expand *exordium* (1:3–15), which may also translate into the expansion of the epilogue (3:1–18), and the intertextual references and even dialogue with the Letter of Jude that is noticeable in both the second and third chapters.

The third hypothesis has been accepted by most supporters.³³ The letter referred to by the narrator in 3:1 would be the canonical First Letter of Peter. This hypothesis is based on the thematic affinity between 1 and 2 Peter. To prove it, it is pointed out that 2 Pet 3:2 – the exhortation to remember “the words spoken earlier by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour [given by] your apostles” – evokes the themes of 1 Peter. This would imply that the themes of 1 Peter focus on the prophecies (1 Pet 1:10–12) and on the eschatological parousia-related reinterpretation of their teaching and the perception of the parousia as one of the motivations for leading a particularly moral and virtuous life (1 Pet 1:13–17, 4:3–5.7.17, 5:4). Both hagiographers even use the same term – ἀναστροφή – when describing this life. Moreover, the prophets are perceived as inspired persons, communicating God’s word (1 Pet 1:10–12 and 2 Pet 1:19–21).³⁴ Duane F. Watson, Terrance Callan³⁵ note that the prescriptive salutatory formulas are identical in 1 Pet 1:2 and 2 Pet 1:2; in both one can find the optative mood that is rare in the NT – χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ

30 *Kłopoty młodego Polikratesa*, Polish transl. J. Schnayder, [in:] *List antyczny*, p. 5.

31 *Przed przyjazdem namiestnika prowincji*, Polish transl. J. Schnayder, [in:] *List antyczny*, p. 15.

32 J.L. White, *The Form and Function*, p. 42–43; D.F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBL Dissertation Series 104), Atlanta 1988, p. 141–142; G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 943; P.H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter*, p. 569–570.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 570; F. Mickiewicz, *List św. Judy. Drugi List św. Piotra* (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny NT 18), Częstochowa 2018, p. 308.

34 J.F. Hultin, *The Literary Relationships among 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude*, [in:] *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude. A Resource for Students*, ed. E.F. Mason, T.W. Martin, Atlanta 2014, p. 42; the author emphasises that these are the only NT passages where the nature of inspiration is reflected upon.

35 D.F. Watson, T. Callan, *First and Second Peter*, p. 201.

εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη “grace to you and peace be multiplied”. Although expanded with additional, different expressions, they are intended to make the recipients sensitive to further lexical and motivic parallels between Peter’s letters. Among the most significant parallels intended to testify to the affinity between 1 and 2 Peter are first and foremost the words and phrases that rarely appear in other NT books or are even counted among Peter’s *hapax legomena*: the noun ἀρετή ‘virtue’ in 1 Pet 2:9 and 2 Pet 1:3.5; the verb χορηγέω ‘to supply’, ‘to provide’, ‘to add’, ‘to furnish’ in 1 Pet 4:11 and ἐπιχορηγέω (also ‘to supply’, ‘to provide’, ‘to add’, ‘to furnish’) in 2 Pet 1:5.11; the verb ἐποπτέω ‘to perceive’, ‘to notice’ in 1 Pet 2:12, 3:2 and the noun ἐπόπτης ‘eyewitness’ in 2 Pet 1:16; the phrase ἄμωμος καὶ ἄσπιλος ‘unblemished and spotless’ in 1 Pet 1:19, in an inverted order in 2 Pet 3:14 (ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀώμητοι), and in 2 Pet 2:13 as σπιλοι καὶ μῶμοι ‘with a spot and blemished’; he motif of fallen angels related with the story of the flood and the rescue of Noah in 1 Pet 3:18–20 and 2 Pet 2:4–5.³⁶ This last point is developed by Jeremy F. Hultin.³⁷ The author of 1 Peter narrated how, in the days of Noah, Christ preached – ἐκήρυξεν – the doctrine to the imprisoned spirits who did not obey (1 Pet 3:19). In turn, the author of 2 Peter called Noah a herald – κήρυξ – of righteousness (2 Pet 2:5). Both hagiographers mention eight people saved during the flood and both strongly emphasise God’s patience – μακροθυμία, although here the context is no longer identical. In 1 Pet 3:20, Noah and his family were saved thanks to God’s patience; in 2 Pet 3:9, God’s patience is the reason for the delay of the parousia, because God wants people to repent and be saved in the last days (2 Pet 3:9). Since the flood is an anticipation and a type of eschatological destruction, it can be assumed that both texts point to God’s salvific patience manifested throughout creation history. Bauckham³⁸ even argues that the motif of patience in 1 Pet 3:20 and 2 Pet 2:5, 3:9 is the only real point of contact between these letters.

As can be seen, the similarities are not numerous, and they do not seem convincing enough to prove the close affinity of the two letters on their basis. Moreover, as noted earlier, many biblical scholars argue that more elements “divide” than “unite” the two letters. Some even ironically say that, apart from the mention in 2 Pet 3:1, the letters actually have nothing in common.³⁹ Even ancient writers pointed out significant stylistic differences between the two letters and a small number – especially when compared to Jude – of borrowings of ideas and motifs from 1 Peter in 2 Peter. One cannot help but notice that 2 Peter resembles much more the Hellenistic style and vocabulary than 1 Peter does, which, according to the prescript, is addressed “to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,

36 Ibid., p. 202.

37 J. Hultin, *The Literary Relationships*, p. 44.

38 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 146.

39 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, p. 352.

and Bithynia". The use of examples from the ST in the two letters is also different – the author of 1 Peter quotes texts, while the author of 2 Peter refers only to those narratives and traditions that were well known in the Second Temple period and constituted a set of *topoi* showing the relationship between guilt and punishment and the inevitability of punishment. Finally, the differences in the main theme of the two letters are apparent: 1 Peter focuses on the attitude of Christians towards persecution, 2 Peter on the attitude towards a false teaching that rejects *parousia* and judgement, based on a misinterpretation of the prophetic and apostolic message.

Commenting on the differences between 1 and 2 Peter, Bauckham, who supports the third hypothesis, states that there is no need to look for closer thematic similarities between the two letters. Indeed, the mention of the first letter in 2 Pet 3:1–2 only serves to loosely link 2 Peter with the well-known and commonly accepted 1 Peter and to recall the purpose of 2 Peter, rather than to formulate a synthesis of the themes addressed in both letters. Here Bauckham puts forward the important question of the authorship of the two texts. For he argues that the lack of thematic convergence and stylistic distinctiveness are due to the fact that the author of 2 Peter not only was not the author of 1 Peter, but he was not even so strongly influenced by 1 Peter to adopt it as a literary model for him.⁴⁰ This would mean that, as a pseudonymous author, the narrator of 2 Peter refers first to the figure of the apostle, thus establishing credibility, and then to his letter, which he treats as a source of Christian doctrine, just like the Scriptures (prophecies) and Pauline letters as a further element of credibility.⁴¹ And if the pseudonymous narrator really wanted to draw on some letter of Peter enjoying authority in Christian circles because of its author, then verse 3:1 seems most appropriate; it allows the narrator to return to the testamentary convention of writing, dominant according to Bauckham, interrupted by an extended vituperative digression in 2:10–22, and to introduce a prophecy concerning the end times in 3:3–4.⁴² In other words – the narrator reminds the audience that he is writing on behalf of the apostle Peter. Thus, he abandons the present tense prevalent in 2:10–22 and returns to the future tense, referring to both

40 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 286; Bauckham, however, concedes that both hagiographers may have come from a similar or even the same milieu – the so-called Petrine circle in Rome; if so, 1 Peter may in some respects have been some inspiration for the author of 2 Peter.

41 Differently, P.H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter*, p. 571, who doubts that the author of 2 Peter refers to 1 Peter in order to authenticate himself; 1 Peter is so different from 2 Peter that it cannot lend credibility to the latter writing, since the readers are familiar with both texts. Furthermore, in 3:2 the narrator of 2 Peter refers to a group of apostles, not just Peter, which may suggest that the prophecy in 3:3–4 is made on behalf of the whole group.

42 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 286.

1:12–15 and 1 Peter. In this way, he lets the audience know that the text they are to read should be received like Peter's prophecy.⁴³

Although the author of 2 Peter did not author 1 Peter – as Bauckham argues – it is likely that they both wrote to the same audience.⁴⁴ 2 Pet 3:1 suggests that the first and second letters were written ὑμῖν “to you”, which presupposes that the recipients of 2 Peter were familiar with 1 Peter previously addressed to them. However, there are noticeable parallels between the recipients of 1 and 2 Peter. It has already been mentioned that 2 Peter has much more Hellenistic features than 1 Peter, although it is 1 Peter that addresses communities, presumably Helleno-Christian, in Asia Minor. It is more difficult to establish who the recipients of 2 Peter are, and although it is not ruled out that they could belong to any of the communities mentioned in 1 Peter, it is impossible to identify this community.⁴⁵ A fact that is often repeated in 1 Peter, though absent in 2 Peter, is that Christian refugees in Asia Minor suffer severe persecution (1:6–7, 2:12.20–21, 3:9–18, 4:1–2.4.12–16.19, 5:6–7.9–10).

In the nineteenth century, a view emerged based on 2 Pet 1:12,16 that the sender of 2 Peter had some personal contact with the letter's recipients, in contrast to the sender of 1 Peter, who most likely did not know them personally (1 Pet 1:12). Contemporary views are not so clear-cut. The prevailing view is that it is impossible to decide from the epistolary data whether either of the senders knew their recipients personally; moreover, both seem unlikely to have had any previous contact with them.⁴⁶ Although part of the arguments seems convincing (especially the one concerning the credibility of the pseudo-epigraphic narrator), the weakness of the whole hypothesis is the thematic distinctiveness of 1 and 2 Peter, neglected by Bauckham, and, above all, the different situation of the recipients to whom the two letters were addressed.

According to the fourth hypothesis, which is gaining an increasing number of supporters today,⁴⁷ the first letter mentioned in 2 Pet 3:1 is a letter now lost but known to the recipients. To prove that this is not an isolated situation, one cites the correspondence of Paul,⁴⁸ who recommends that the Colossians should read the letter to the church in Laodicea (Col 4:16). The letter, known to the Laodiceans

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, p. 353; P.H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter*, p. 572.

46 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 286; G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 951; P.H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter*, p. 570.

47 Ibid.

48 M. Green, *The Second Letter General of Peter and the General Letter of Jude*, p. 269–270.

and Colossians, is probably lost.⁴⁹ Also in 1 Cor 5:9, the apostle refers to an earlier, unknown letter to the Corinthians.⁵⁰

The first letter mentioned by the narrator of 2 Peter was probably addressed to the same audience and tackled similar issues, presumably related to prophetic and apostolic teaching on eschatological topics. This does not mean, however, that it was penned by the author of 2 Peter. Here, the lost-letter hypothesis generates similar discussions about the meaning of the now unknown text and its authorship. Perhaps the letter attributed to Peter, different from the canonical 1 Peter, was considered (at least in some circles, including the recipients of 2 Peter) to be authoritative and normative, rivalling the importance of the Scriptures (prophets) and Paul's letters. The pseudonymous author of 2 Peter, acting on behalf of Peter, chose to invoke it in order to make himself credible. This does not exclude a second possibility, namely that both letters were written by the same author, who adopted the same convention of pseudepigraphy in both texts and, in order to lend credibility to his teaching, adopted Peter's name. In this variant, it should come as no surprise that the author treats his own writing as meaningful and authoritative for his audience, since already in 2 Pet 1:12–15 the narrator expressed his desire that what he writes should be recalled ἀεί – 'always', 'constantly', even after his passing (death).

Critics of the lost-letter theory mainly accuse it of invoking a hypothetical writing whose existence has not been proven.⁵¹ However, this is not unusual in NT biblical studies. In addition to the examples from the Corpus Paulinum cited above, it is enough to point to the two-source hypothesis and its derivations, where one of the *a priori* assumptions is the existence of source Q, whose content is not only reconstructed but also subjected to exegesis.⁵²

Regardless of what topics beyond eschatology were addressed in Peter's lost letter and who was its author, the purpose of that letter undoubtedly coincided with that of 2 Peter – διεγείρω ὑμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τὴν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν "by way of a reminder of [the prophetic and apostolic teaching about the parousia and judgment] I am reawakening/stirring up/arousing your pure/uncontaminated thinking//reasoning/mind". In defining this purpose, as noted, the narrator has used a hypomnemic formula similar to the one he used in 1:13. He gave the formula

49 Tertullian believed this to be an epistle to the Ephesians (*Adversus Marcionem* V:11–17). Another well-known heterodox epistle to the Laodiceans (and the epistle to the Alexandrians) are mentioned in Muratorian Canon as written on Paul's behalf, but conveying a doctrine similar to that of Marcion; see R. Rumianek, *List do Laodycejczyków*, [in:] *Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu. Listy i apokalipsy chrześcijańskie*, Kraków 2001, p. 51–54.

50 M. Rosik, *Pierwszy List do Koryntian* (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny NT 7), Czestochowa 2009, p. 212–213.

51 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 285.

52 See, for example, A. Paciorek, *Q – Ewangelia galilejska*, Lublin 2001.