

Kalina Wojciechowska / Mariusz Rosik

A Structural Commentary on the So-Called *Antilegomena*

Volume 2: The Letter of Jude:
Expecting for the Mercy



Eastern and Central European Voices

Studies in Theology and Religion

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Volume 3.2

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the So-Called *Antilegomena***

Volume 2

The Letter of Jude: Expecting for the Mercy

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List of abbreviations

Bibliographical abbreviations

APOTen	Charles, Robert Henry, <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English</i> , vol. 2, Oxford 1913
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> , vol. 1–8, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Arthur Cleveland Coxe, New York/Buffalo 1885–1886, revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight
JSNT	“Journal for the Study of the New Testament”
JSNTSup	“Journal for the Study of the New Testament” (Supplement Series)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
NTS	“New Testament Studies”
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
HT	Hebrew Text

Apocrypha

1 En	First Book of Enoch (Etiopian)
2 En	Second Book of Enoch (Slavonic)
4 Ba	4 Baruch
ActsTmSir	The Acts of the Apostle Jude Thomas (Syrian)
ApAbr	Apocalypse of Abraham
ApBaSyr/2 Ba	Apocalypse of Baruch (Syrian)
AscIsa	Ascension of Isaiah
InfGTh	Infancy Gospel of Thomas
Jub	Book of Jubilees
SibOr	Sibylline Oracles
ProtEvJ	Protoevangelium of James
PssSol	Psalms of Solomon
TAsh	Testament of Asher
TBenj	Testament of Benjamin
TDan	Testament of Dan
TIss	Testament of Issachar
TJud	Testament of Judah
TLev	Testament of Levi

TMos	Testament of Moses
TNaph	Testament of Naphtali
TZeb	Testament of Zebulun

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QpHab	<i>Pesher on Habakkuk</i>
1QpMic	<i>Pesher on Micah</i> (1Q14)
1QapGen	<i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> (1Q20 ar)
1QS	<i>Community Rule</i>
1QS ^a	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i> (1Q28a)
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1QH	<i>Hymns</i> (11Q5/11QPs ^a)
4Q176	<i>Tanhumim</i> (4QTanh)
4Q177	<i>Eschatological commentary</i> (4Q Catena a)
4Q183	<i>Eschatological commentary e</i> (4QHistorical Work)
4Q182	<i>Eschatological commentary</i>
4Q227	<i>Book of Jubilees c</i> (4QpsJub c)
4Q280	<i>Blessings f</i> (4QBer f)
4Q286	<i>Blessings a</i> (4QBer a)
4Q287	<i>Berakhot</i> (4Q Ber b)
4Q369	<i>Player of Enosh</i> (4QPEnosh)
4Q544	<i>Visions of Amram b</i> (4QAmram b ar)
4QpIs ^a	<i>Pesher on Isaiah a</i> (4Q161)
4QpIs ^b	<i>Pesher on Isaiah b</i> (4Q162)
4QpNah	<i>Pesher on Nahum</i> (4Q169)
4QFlor	<i>Midrash on Eschatology a</i> (4Q174/4QMidrEschat ^a)
4Q204	<i>Enoch c</i> (4QEn ^c ar)
11QMelch	<i>Melchizedek document</i> (11Q13)
CD	<i>Damascus Rule/Damascus Covenant/Cairo Damascus Document</i>

Ancient Writings

- 1 *Clem. First Epistle* by Clement of Rome
- 2 *Clem. Second Epistle* by Clement of Rome

Adv. Haer. *Adversus Haereses* by Irenaeus of Lyon

Ant. *Antiquitates Iudaicae* by Titus Flavius Josephus

Bell. Iud. *De Bello Iudaico* by Titus Flavius Josephus

<i>Barn.</i>	<i>The Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> by Eusebius of Caesarea
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i> by Philo of Alexandria

Grammar abbreviations

acc.	accusativus
ACI	accusativus cum infinitivo
act.	activum
aor.	aoristus
con.	coniunctivus
dat.	dativus
fut.	futurum
gen.	genetivus
imp.	imperativus
ind.	indicativus
masc.	masculinum
med.	medium
nom.	nominativus
part.	participium
pass.	passivum
perf.	perfectum
pl.	pluralis
praes.	praeses
sg.	singularis

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

Preface

“The Letter of Jude is the most neglected book in the New Testament”, proclaimed Douglas J. Rowston in 1975 in an article with that title (*The Most Neglected Book in The New Testament*) published in “New Testament Studies” 21. Most contemporary commentaries on the Letter of Jude written after 1975 begin with this sentence. In 1983, Richard Bauckham referred to it. Lamenting that in writing his commentary (*Jude, 2 Pet*, Waco 1983) he could not take into account the rich and varied literature because it simply does not exist, he in fact echoed the diagnosis of Douglas J. Rowston. Indeed, against the background of commentaries and contributions to theology of the other books of the New Testament, the bibliography relating to the Letter of Jude until the 1980s was far less impressive. Among the more significant commentaries one should mention the works from the beginning of the twentieth century by Charles Bigg, Joseph Bickersteth Mayor and Montagure Rhodes James, as well as commentaries written in the second half of the twentieth century by John Norman Davidson Kelly, Bo Reicke, Walter Grundmann, Karl Hermann Schelkle, or the basic research on the establishment of the original wording of Jude by Carroll D. Osburn.

The situation began to change in the 1990s, when the following issues came to be addressed: rhetoric (Duane F. Watson; Stephan J. Joubert), literary structure (Ernst R. Wendland, Kevin Cassidy, Carroll D. Osburn), textual criticism (Charles Landon, Jarl Fossum,), the literature genre used in Jude and how it was applied and interpreted (Walter M. Dunnnett, J. Daryl Charles). In addition, classical commentaries kept appearing, usually covering the Second Letter of Peter, alongside the Letter of Jude (J. Daryl Charles, Jerome H. Neyrey, Michael Green, Norman Hillyer, Jonathan Knight), the First and Second Letter of Peter (Fred Craddock, Levis R. Doneson, Rebecca Skaggs) or the Catholic letters (Andrew Chester, Ralph Philip Martin, Simon J. Kistemaker, Otto Knoch, William Brosend, Richard Ch. H. Lenski, Wayne F. MacLeod, David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall). Another turn could be seen in the early twenty-first century, especially in the years immediately preceding and in the period immediately following the conference entitled *Methodological Reassessments of the Letters of James, Peter and Jude* organised in 2007 by the Society of Biblical Literature. The aftermath of the conference is a paper published in 2008, edited by Robert L. Webb and Peter H. Davids, *Reading Jude with New Eyes. Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude* (London 2008), which brings together essays on a new look at the Letter of Jude, i.e. the use of literary, rhetorical, socio-historical, sociological methods and various hermeneutics and

even ideologies in the analysis of this neglected book. In doing so, it is shown how methodology affects the extraction and presentation of the message of the text.

Nowadays, Biblical literature is increasingly concerned with issues related to the Letter of Jude, its construction, sources, ideology, theology, the methodology used by the hagiographer based on midrash and pesher, etc. Gene L. Green, in his commentary (*Jude and 2 Peter*, Grand Rapids 2013), has somewhat overstated this renaissance of interest in the Letter of Jude, since the text has never been the object of vigorous scholarly study and there is still a perceived disproportion between texts devoted to the Letter of Jude (and the Second Epistle of Peter) and the other books of the New Testament. This lack of interest is reflected not only in the literature but also, as Peter H. Davids notes (*The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Grand Rapids 2006), in academic reflection and church teaching, for one rarely hears sermons based on this text and there are rarely lectures or seminars devoted exclusively to the Letter of Jude. Usually academics – probably following the pattern of most commentaries – combine it with the Second Epistle of Peter and/or other Catholic epistles. The best evidence for this is a collection of essays edited by Eric Farrel Mason and Troy W. Martin and published by SBL in 2014 as *Resources for Students*, which covers issues specific to the First and Second Epistles of Peter in addition to those of the Letter of Jude (*Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude*, Atlanta 2014).

The Polish biblical literature on the Letter of Jude is not much different. There are not many studies, they are mostly introductory (Roman Bartnicki, Bogusław Seremet), and the commentaries, even the latest ones, connect the Letter of Jude with the Second Epistle of Peter (Franciszek Mickiewicz), while slightly older ones with other universal letters (Feliks Gryglewicz, Hugolin Langkammer, Mariusz Rosik, Mirosław S. Wróbel).

Formerly, distrust towards the Letter of Jude was connected primarily with the fact that the author refers to non-canonical writings – Enochean literature (*expressis verbis* he quotes 1 En 1:9) and the Testament of Moses, or rather its last fragment, the Assumption of Moses, to which he refers not only in a motific way as in verse 9 and 23, but also lexically in verse 16. Already in antiquity, the authorship of the letter was questioned, and the text itself even in the fourth century was included in the so-called *antilegomena* (together with 2 Pet and 2–3 John). It does not appear in Syriac translations of the New Testament until the sixth century. In late antiquity and the Middle Ages, disputes about canonicity and apostolicity quieted down, but were revived in the sixteenth century during the Reformation. Since the Enlightenment, the content of the letter, subordinated, as it was believed, to the call to defend the faith and concentrated on the ethical parenthesis – warning not to act as immorally as the false teachers, so as not to share their fate at the final judgment – has aroused resentment. Theological value of the text was overlooked, so discussions on the subject were generally not undertaken. The popularity of Jude could not grow because of its mysteriousness: data on the sender and recipients are very vague, it

is difficult to reconstruct the environment in which the letter was written and to which it was addressed. Moreover, it is impossible on the basis of the content to identify the false teachers and their teaching, which was initially associated with Gnosticism. Here it is not only the limited data that stand in the way, but also the vituperative, mocking and discrediting convention that exaggerates the existing vices and attributes to opponents those non-existent ones and resulting behaviour.

However, this was not always the case. In early Christianity, the Letter of Jude must have had great authority, since the author of the Second Letter of Peter decided to include almost the entire text of Jude in his writing. The Alexandrian fathers – Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria – were not distrustful; moreover, they themselves used arguments based on the same sources as Jude, namely the Enochean tradition. They emphasised the inspiration and theological qualities of the letter; Origen, not coincidentally, calls it “full of heavenly grace”. (*Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 10:17)

The authors of *Expecting mercy. A Structural Commentary on the Letter of Jude*, hope that it will restore Jude’s letter to its rightful place also in contemporary biblical reflection. That is why they offer the Readers a commentary devoted exclusively to the Letter of Jude, which is rare in the literature on the subject. The commentary consists of two parts. The first one, introductory, covers issues connected with the oldest testimonies of the text, its canonicity, authorship, time of writing and recipients. Hypotheses of authenticity and pseudepigraphy are quoted and commented on, as well as arguments pointing to early dating (60s of the first century) and late (turn from the first to the second century) dating of the letter. Much attention has been paid to the style and lexis of the letter, and consequently to its literary sources and the way they were used. These elements are developed in the commentary section, in which the identification of the materials used by Jude, coming from the Judaic and Hellenistic traditions, plays a significant role. This is because it indicates not only the hagiographer’s familiarity with both traditions and his readership, but also presents the way in which they were used, subordinated on the one hand to literary conventions and Jewish methods of interpreting the text, and on the other to Jude’s clearly Christocentric hermeneutics.

Literary genre is closely related to issues of style, lexis, sources and methodology, while text structure is closely related to genre. Research on structure can be observed as early as the 1950s. They were superimposed by genealogical studies – the subordination of the text to the requirements of ancient epistolography (assuming that Jude was primarily conceived as a letter) or to the requirements of rhetoric (assuming that Jude was to be a sermon). In addition to elements typical of both epistolography and classical rhetoric, the principles of Hebrew rhetoric prove helpful in examining the structure of Jude which highlights the main theme of the letter. It is not always fully revealed in the opening sentences, especially when reading the text in a linear fashion; in Jude it is announced in verse 3 and 5,

but a structural analysis, which reveals the chiasmic structure of the letter, makes it possible to show that verses 14–15 constitute the centre of the text, its main theological idea, which combines elements of Jude’s soteriology, Christology and hermeneutics. These verses also represent the climax of the warning argument and begin the turn to the mercy argument. The second – commentary – part of the study is organised around this chiasmic structure. For this reason, the commentary can be called “structural”.

In the commentary section each of the analysed fragments is preceded by a philological translation with translator’s variants (marked with a slash). Elements absent from the source text, but helpful in its understanding have been placed in square brackets. An attempt has also been made to indicate the structure of individual passages, which makes it possible to expose the essential theological message and rhetorical principles. Thus, one may notice the hagiographer’s tendency to use triplets and explicative parallelisms. In theological layer, elements of pre-existential Christology appear in the first part, while in the second they find an eschatological solution.

Quotations from extra-biblical literature, both Jewish and Greek, as well as from the early Christian and patristic tradition, have been introduced for the convenience of the reader, so that the reader will not need to search for the source texts and comparative material. When pointing out analogies with the biblical canonical literature, the authors generally confine themselves to giving sigla unless the differences between the Hebrew text and the LXX text are explained in more detail, in which case the biblical texts are quoted at length also in the original version.

As already mentioned, the commentary aims to restore the autonomy of the Letter of Jude and its rightful place in contemporary theological reflection. The Letter has much to offer theologians, especially those interested in Judeo- and early Christian theology, the formation of Christology, the process of canonization of Jewish and Christian writings, the development of canonical consciousness, and finally apocalyptic-eschatological oriented methods of interpreting texts considered inspired. It is no coincidence that a quotation from Jude 21: “expecting mercy”, which summarises theological message of the letter, is used as the title of this commentary. Jude writes about “our common salvation” from a non-obvious, judicial perspective. He emphasises that from the beginning, judgement is inscribed in the history of salvation, it concerns both the righteous and the ungodly, and it in no way denies a soteriology conceived in a liberatory way as liberation from sin and death, since it is at the judgement that “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” will be fully revealed. The images of punishment for the ungodly are of a warning nature; Jude suggests them to his recipients as arguments in their “contend[ing] for the faith/over the faith once for all delivered/handed down/entrusted to the saints”. At the same time, he urges the recipients to show

mercy to false teachers by proclaiming the whole doctrine of salvation based on the true revelation handed down by the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, exhorting and converting apostates so that they too may eventually experience God's mercy and abide in God's presence.

Expecting mercy is a study of the second text belonging to the *antilegomena* as seen by Eusebius of Caesarea. Both the structural approach of the commentary and the title taken directly from the biblical text refer to the previous work by both authors, *Mądrość zstępująca z góry. Komentarz strukturalny do Listu św. Jakuba*, Warszawa 2018/*A Structural Commentary on the Antilegomena*, vol. 1: *The Letter of James: Wisdom that Comes from Above* (ECEV 3.1), Göttingen 2021. Similarly to the study of the Letter of James, this publication is also ecumenical in nature, involving the presentation of an accepted commentary rather than a Catholic-Lutheran discrepancy protocol. At this point, thanks are also due to the Orthodox theologian, Dr Vsevolod Konach of the Christian Theological Academy, with whom some theological issues (mainly Christological) referring to the Eastern patristic tradition were consulted.

The monograph on the Letter of James was published one year after the five-hundredth anniversary of the publishing of 95 theses by Martin Luther, which testified to the ecumenical rapprochement between Catholic and Lutheran theology; the present commentary was written on the twentieth anniversary of the *Joint Declaration on Justification* signed in 1999 by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. In a joint statement on the conclusion of the year of the common commemoration of the Reformation, the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity stressed that “while the past cannot be changed, its influence upon us today can be transformed to become a stimulus for growing communion, and a sign of hope for the world to overcome division and fragmentation”.¹ It is to be hoped that the ecumenical structural commentary on the Letter of Jude fits into this ecumenical activity.

¹ *Joint Statement by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity on the Conclusion of the Year of the Common Commemoration of the Reformation*, 31st October 2017.

1. Introduction

1.1 Textual testimonies and canonicity

The oldest copy of the Letter of Jude that has survived to modern times is found in P⁷². The manuscript dates back to the third/fourth century, consists of 72 pages and, apart from the Letter of Jude, it also contains: 1–2 Peter; the Old Testament texts (LXX): Ps 33:3–34:16; the eleventh Ode of Solomon; the apocryphal Life of Mary and the correspondence between the Apostle Paul and the Corinthians; and early Christian writings – the *Paschal homily* of Melito of Sardis and the *Apology* of Phileas.¹ The copy of Jude belongs to an Alexandrian family, is well preserved, although the carelessness and perhaps the bias of its copyists makes it impossible to reconstruct the original text. More than thirty differences between P⁷² and other textual testimonies are usually enumerated.² The copyist, most likely accustomed to the itacastic pronunciation, had a problem distinguishing ι and ει, hence the error in the title of the letter: Ιουδα επειστολη; iotacism or itacism is also the cause of errors in verse 4, where instead of παλαι there is παλε, and in verse 5, where instead of Αιγυπτου one finds Ευπτου. The spelling of ζοη instead of ζωη in Jude 21³ is also striking. The genetivus of Ιησου Χριστου ‘of Jesus Christ’ is always abbreviated to ιηυ χρϋ, the name Ενωχ in Jude 14 as non-Greek is marked with a horizontal dash above νω. Instead of the name Βαλααμ there appears what at first sight looks like a hybrid word – Βαλαακ. Such a spelling may result from the carelessness of the copyist, but it may also be a deliberate device on Christological grounds. The intention was to absolve Balaam, a prophet predicting Christ (cf. 2 Pet 1:19–21), of the blame and place it on Balak.⁴

One of the most significant features of Jude in P⁷² is the occurrence of the term θεος Χριστος ‘God Christ’ in Jude 5b, where most manuscripts read κυριος, only some Ιησους (e.g. A B 33. 81. 2344), and others θεος (C² 5 vg^{mss}).⁵ The copyist very clearly identifies Christ as God, which may stem from a desire to use the text in anti-Adoptionist polemics⁶ and from an interest in the deity and pre-existence of Christ in the circles for which the codex of P⁷² was intended. The latter explanation is supported by the inclusion of the homilies of Melito and the *Apology* of Phileas in

1 T. Wassermann, *Papyrus 72 and the Bodmer Miscellaneous Codex*, NTS 51 (2005), no. 1, p. 140.

2 J.R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, Leiden–Boston 2008, p. 556, 561–563.

3 T. Wassermann, *Papyrus 72*, p. 150–151.

4 T.S. Coulley, *ΒΑΛΑΑΚ in the P⁷² Text of Jude 11: A Proposal*, NTS 55 (2009), p. 81.

5 These issues will be discussed in detail when analysing Jude 5 in the commentary section.

6 T. Wassermann, *Papyrus 72*, p. 153.

the collection 3 Corinthians.⁷ There are also harmonisations in P⁷². This applies, for example, to Jude's doxology (Jude 24–25). The text in Jude 24 is harmonised with Rom 16:25, so στήριξαι is used instead of φυλαξαι, while in Jude 25 the formula αὐτῷ δοξα κρατος τιμη,⁸ typical of doxology or inspired by Rev 5:13, is added.

This oldest known copy of Jude was made in Egypt, probably for monks living according to the rule of Pachomius; however, it is impossible to determine whether it was a text used only privately or whether it was used in the liturgy.⁹ Nevertheless, P⁷² testifies that Jude was known among Egyptian Christians in the third/fourth century. Its inclusion in the codex together with the apocrypha confirms that the Church of Alexandria tended to maximise the list of Christian normative books, from which some writings were later deleted after the canon had been constituted.¹⁰

From third/fourth-century Egypt comes also one fragmentarily preserved card – most probably representing Alexandrian family P⁷⁸ – which contains Jude 4–5, 7–8. It was once probably a whole miniature codex, which due to its small size (approximately 10 × 2.5 cm) and rather inelegant handwriting could serve as an amulet.¹¹ In the surviving fragment there are no substantial differences from the contemporary *textus receptus* (NA 28). Of the more significant ones, three may be mentioned: in verse 5, the transitive ἀδελφοί is added after the verb βουλομαι; in verse 7, instead of υπεχουσαι ('to bear', 'to suffer', 'to experience [punishment]'), επεχουσαι ('to keep', 'to pay attention') appears; in verse 8, instead of δοξας ('glories'), there is δοξαν ('glory'). As in P⁷², here too the name of Jesus Christ in gen. is abbreviated.

It is difficult to deduce what the earlier reception of the text was. Some parallels can be noticed between Jude and *The Didache*, *The First Epistle* by Clement of Rome, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the texts of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras or Theophilus, but it is not possible to prove unequivocally that these texts quote Jude. It is more likely that they draw on the same sources. This means that today we have no first/second-century copies that could confirm that Christian circles knew Jude. The only clear and reliable witness to the existence and knowledge of Jude's text in the first century is 2 Peter, which, as is generally accepted today, not only reveals a dependence on Jude, but even incorporates the entire Letter of Jude into its structure, though obviously not *in extenso*. This testifies

7 T.S. Coulley, *BAAAAC*, p. 80.

8 T. Wassermann, *Papyrus 72*, p. 154.

9 Ibid.

10 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids 2013, p. 65.

11 P.W. Comfort, D.P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, Wheaton 2001, p. 612.

to the authority of Jude in the early post-apostolic period,¹² and by the end of the second century the letter seems to have gained even wider acceptance.¹³ This early authority and wide acceptance, however, did not protect the letter from later debates about its canonicity and normativity.

It should be noted that the canonicity of Jude is to be considered on two levels. The first concerns the recognition of the letter itself as a normative writing for the Church; the second pertains to the references to non-canonical writings present in the letter, i.e. the quotation from 1 En 1:9 in Jude 14–15 treated as an excerpt from the prophetic writings, but also more discreet references to intertestamental literature, including the Testament of Moses (cf. Jude 9). The latter became increasingly problematic in the third/fourth centuries¹⁴ and affected the reception of Jude in the Christian world. This may be regarded as a regression in the treatment of the letter, since it was already given the attention due to canonical writings by the African fathers from the second/third century: Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria,¹⁵ and earlier even by the authors of the Muratorian Canon from the end of the second century.¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that neither Irenaeus of Lyons nor Cyprian of Carthage seem to have used it.¹⁷ Origen in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (10:17) describes the Letter of Jude as “filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace”, but in the same work (17:30) he also mentions that some people reject¹⁸ the letter. Tertullian in 202 AD¹⁹ even invokes the authority of Jude to justify references to 1 En in his treatise *De cultu feminarum* 1:3. In doing so, he argued that Christians should not reject, on the contrary, they should treat as inspired even those extra-biblical writings that speak of Christ and for this reason have been questioned by the Jews. He thus refers to the Christocentric hermeneutic applied by the narrator in Jude 14–15 to the interpretation of 1 Enoch. A similar argumentation is later put forward by Augustine, who in *The City of God* states that Jude’s quotation of a non-canonical though inspired book does not threaten the

12 P.H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary), Grand Rapids 2006, p. 83.

13 D.A. Carson, D.J. Moo, L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Manila 1992, p. 461.

14 R. Dutcher, *An Unorthodox Argument and Jude’s Non-Canonical Sources*, “Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies” 11 (2008), no. 1–2, p. 33.

15 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (Black’s New Testament Commentaries), London 1982, p. 223.

16 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (World Biblical Commentary 50), Waco 1983, p. 17.

17 T. Skibiński, *Listy katolickie w starożytności chrześcijańskiej*, “Vox Patrum” 28 (2008), p. 941.

18 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary*, p. 223.

19 N.J. Moore, *Is Enoch also among the Prophets? The Impact of Jude’s Citation of 1 Enoch on the Reception of Both Texts in the Early Church*, “The Journal of Theological Studies. New Series” 64 (2013), no. 2, p. 499.

canonicity of the letter; on the contrary, rather, the canonicity of the Letter of Jude ennobles the apocryphal text:

We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests [...]: heir antiquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings [...]. the writings which are produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the giants [...], are properly judged by prudent men to be not genuine (*The City of God* XV 23).

Tertullian's (and later Augustine's) argumentation did not convince everyone, especially as canonical awareness among Christians increased significantly in the third century, although the process of forming the canon itself was not yet complete. There were doubts not only about the Book of Enoch, but also about Jude itself, which quotes Enoch. Therefore, in the fourth century, Eusebius includes Jude among the *antilegomena*, disputed writings, but points out that it is recognized by many:

Among the disputed writings (τῶν δ'ἀντιλεγομένων), which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude (ἡ λεγομένη Ἰούδα), also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John (*HE* III 25:3, cf. *HE* VI 13:6, 14:1).

Earlier, he stated that, although few early Christian writers mention and/or quote from this letter, it came into common ecclesiastical use:

not many of the ancients have mentioned it [the Letter of Jude], as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches (*HE* II 23:25).

Eusebius does not explain what the nature of those doubts about Jude is. This is done a little later (in 392 AD)²⁰ by Jerome in his treatise *De Viris Illustribus* 4:

Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal Book of Enoch it is rejected by

20 N.J. Moore, *Is Enoch*, p. 500.

many. Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures.

According to Jerome, the authority of the Letter of Jude is based not so much on its content as on its antiquity (which can be largely identified with its apostolic origin) and on the use of the letter in and by the Church (which can be understood primarily as parenetic and disciplinary use).

Despite these doubts, the Letter of Jude appears in most of the canonical lists of the Church developing in the Mediterranean basin in the fourth and fifth centuries (e.g. in the Easter letter of Athanasius of 367, in the decisions of the synod Laodicea of 363 and in the decisions of the synod of Carthage of 397).²¹ Syria is an exception: there the canonicity of the letter of Jude was not recognised until the sixth century,²² so the letter was not included in the *Peshitta* (fourth/fifth century), but only in the translation of 507–508 called the *Philoxenian* after the translator, Philoxenus.²³

Doubts about the canonicity and normativity of the letter were revived at the time of the Reformation, although its canonicity was supported by the Council of Florence in 1441, which published a catalogue of normative writings for the Church in the document *Decretum pro Iacobitis*.²⁴

Luther, citing ancient objections and hesitations, placed Jude in the collection of New Testament *antilegomena* along with James, Hebrews and Revelation. In his 1522 *Preface to the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude*, he wrote:

no one can deny that it is an extract or copy from St Peter's second epistle, so very like it are all the words. He also speaks of the apostles as a disciple coming long after them, and quotes sayings and stories that are found nowhere in the Scriptures. This moved the ancient Fathers to throw this Epistle out of the main body of the Scriptures. Moreover, Jude, the Apostle, did not go to Greek-speaking lands, but to Persia, as it is said, so that he did not write Greek. Therefore, although I praise the book, it is an epistle that need not be counted among the chief books, which are to lay the foundation of faith.

As can be seen, Luther's distrust is aroused by four issues: first, Jude is secondary to 2 Peter. Second, the narrator's invocation of extra-biblical stories (the plural indicates that the reformer does not mean only the quotation from 1 En in Jude 14–15, but also other allusions to Enochian literature and the tradition related to Moses in Jude 9). Third, the ancient controversies. Fourth and finally, the uncertainty

21 P.H. Davids, *The Letters*, p. 83.

22 R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 17.

23 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 66.

24 T. Skibiński, *Listy*, p. 938.

about the apostolic authorship of the text arising from the belief in the late dating of the letter and from the confrontation of the Greek language with the tradition linking Judah to the mission in Persia, where – as Luther believed – Judah must have spoken Aramaic rather than Greek. Luther's opinion on the secondary canonicity of Jude was also shared by the Swiss reformer John Oecolampadius and Roman Catholic theologian Cardinal Cajetan (Tomas de Vio).²⁵ In contrast, John Calvin did not doubt the canonicity of the Letter of Jude; he referred to the decision of the Church (*Institutio Christianae Religionis* I 7,2). In the preface to his commentary on the Letter of Jude (*Commentarii in Epistolas Canonicas*) published in Geneva in 1551, he, like Luther, recalled the ancient disputes, but did not draw canonical consequences from them.²⁶ Ancient disputes about Jude were also mentioned in the introductions to Protestant translations of individual books or the entire New Testament, such as in the Dutch translation of the Bible called *Statenvertaling* published in Leiden in 1637:

As for the books of the New Testament which are in the Bible, there were, however, formerly certain teachers who doubted whether the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letter of James, the Second Letter of Peter, the Second and Third Letter of John, the Letter of Jude, and the Revelation of John, were canonical books. But the ancient Christian Churches in general did not doubt this, nor did they doubt the message contained in them; the letters were recognized and venerated as books of God and canonical.²⁷

It seems that the apostolic authority of Jude and its canonical status suffered most because of the apocryphal sources used in the writing (especially in Jude 9 and 14–15). Attempts have been made to find references to Jude 9 in biblical literature – in Zech 3:2 (Erasmus, Jean Calvin, among others), in Dan 10:13 and Rev 12:7 (e.g. Jaques Lefèvre or Faber Stapulensis, Lancelot Ridley), in Deut 34 (Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, Heinrich Bullinger, Lancelot Ridley, and Cajetan on the Catholic side) – but no texts were found which could replace the narrative of the Testament of Moses and at least partially support the authority of Jude. Thus, it was admitted that Jude refers to an episode which is not recorded in Scripture and most probably comes either from oral tradition (Jean Calvin), or from “some book belonging to the Hebrews” (Jaques Lefèvre), or, to put it simply, “from the Hebrew apocrypha”

25 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary*, p. 223.

26 B. Langstaff, *The Book of Enoch and the Ascension of Moses in Reformation Europe: Early Sixteenth-Century Interpretations of Jude 9 and Jude 14–15*, “Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha” 23 (2013), no. 2, p. 134.

27 M. Koktyisz, *Elementy parenetyczne Listów Piotra i Judy. Studium egzegetyczno-porównawcze* (MS), Warszawa 2016, p. 19 (own translation).

(Erasmus, Heinrich Bullinger).²⁸ Even more difficult was the interpretation of Jude 14–15 with a direct quotation from the Book of Enoch, the knowledge of which until the mid-sixteenth century was basically limited to the story of the rebellion of angels, their relationship with earthly women and the appearance of giants in the world. The discrediting of the Letter of Jude and above all of the source Book of Enoch was fostered by Augustine's definition of the apocrypha. This definition is referred to, among others, by Andreas Karlstadt in *De canonicis* of 1520, when he states that apocryphal writings are marked by unclear and/or doubtful origins and by a mixture of truth and falsehood – criteria which the Book of Enoch supposedly meets.²⁹ Jude's use of the Book of Enoch makes his letter fall very low in the hierarchy of the New Testament writings, becoming only a tertiary³⁰ New Testament writing.

Erasmus also claims that Jude's use of apocryphal sources undermines the apostolic authority of the letter. He addresses this problem relatively extensively in his *Letter of Dedication* of 1520, which precedes his paraphrases of the apostolic letters. He bases his argument on the opinion of Bede the Venerable, who maintains that the book:

appears not to have been really written by him but published by someone else under his name. For if it were really his, it would not be contrary to sound truth. But now because it contains many incredible things, such as the statement that the giants [...] it is deservedly evident to the learned that writings tainted by a lie are not those of a truthful man. Hence this very Letter of Jude, because it contains a witness from an apocryphal book, was rejected by a number of people from the earliest times (*Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, p. 250).

Following Bede, Erasmus therefore criticises Jude's use of the Book of Enoch because of doubts about the authorship and authenticity of this source and because of its unreliable content. This is why the Letter of Jude cannot gain the same recognition and authority as the letters of the Apostle Paul. The same opinion held, as mentioned, Catholic Cardinal Cajetan, who was convinced of the lesser apostolic authority and lower canonical status of Jude – not only because of the use of apocryphal sources, but also because they were called a prophecy (Jude 14) (*Commentario in Judae* of 1529).³¹

On the other hand, there were also voices recognising the prophetic authority of the Book of Enoch and invoking Tertullian's assertions in *De cultu feminarum* about

28 B. Langstaff, *The Book*, p. 145–146.

29 Ibid., p. 150.

30 Ibid., p. 156.

31 Ibid., *The Book*, p. 161.

the inspiration of extra-canonical writings if they speak of Christ. This claim fitted well with Reformation Christocentric hermeneutics and the principle that only this writing that proclaims Christ (*was Christum treiben*) is apostolic, regardless of who the author is.³² Not surprisingly, Luther distances himself from his harsh assessment of Jude from 1522 and a year later, in his commentary on Jude 14–15, states that the non-existence of Enoch’s words quoted by Jude is not sufficient reason to reject the letter. Furthermore, even “before the birth of Christ, God took to Himself for this purpose only a single line, from Adam to Abraham, and thence to David, down to Mary the mother of Christ, who possessed His word. Thus the Gospel has always been preached in the world”.³³ One can guess that one of those who “possessed His word” is, in Luther’s view, Enoch.

Bullinger in one of his sermons of 1549 (*Sermonum decades duae*) notes that although there are no writings prior to those of Moses, this does not mean that no prophecies were being written down earlier, as exemplified by the very words of Enoch “quoted by St Jude, the apostle, brother of the blessed James”.³⁴ In his commentary on this letter, he adds that this prophecy, like the story of the dispute over the body of Moses in Jude 9, may have been regarded by the recipients as deserving great respect, and were therefore used by the apostle. Nor is there anything in them that is not in accordance with the biblical testimonies.³⁵ In turn, Jaques Lefèvre bases his defence of the Book of Enoch in Jude on the meaning of the term ‘apocrypha’ – something secret, hidden. He opposes the pejorative value that is put on this word and argues that what is hidden from people today could once have been perfectly known to them in the time of Judah.³⁶

In the end, both the Protestant and Catholic sides retained the Letter of Jude among the writings of the New Testament. The Council of Trent in 1546, in the document *Decretum de libris sacris et de traditionibus recipiendis*, approved its canonicity. Nowadays, mainly because of doubts about the authorship of the text and thus its dating, and not because of the use of non-canonical sources, the Letter of Jude is included among the deutero-canonical writings of the New Testament.

32 “What does not teach Christ is not apostolic, even though St Peter or Paul taught it; again, what preaches Christ would be apostolic, even though Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod did it,” wrote Martin Luther in his *Preface to the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude*.

33 M. Luther, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained*, transl. E.H. Gillet, New York, 1859, p. 210.

34 After B. Langstaff, *The Book*, p. 152, fn. 89.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 162–163.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 159–160.

1.2 Author

In the prescript, the narrator of the letter presents himself very modestly as “Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James”. The sparsity of these data makes it difficult for contemporary recipients to identify the sender, especially since at the time of the letter’s composition the name Judah gr. Ἰούδας was highly popular in Jewish circles.³⁷ On the basis of ancient literature and inscriptions it can be assumed that the name was only given to Jews,³⁸ which is most probably connected with its semantic and historical characteristics.

This name in the Hebrew version יהודה is clearly theophoric; it means ‘to give thanks’ or ‘to give praise’, ‘to worship’ YHWH. Gen 29:35 explains that after giving birth to Jacob’s fourth son, Lea cried out: “This time I will give thanks to the Lord” and so she named the child Judah. Judah, Jacob’s son, is primarily linked to three events: first, the proposal that the brothers should not kill the hated Joseph but sell him; second, the offering of himself as a slave in exchange for Benjamin allegedly accused of theft; and third, the deception of his daughter-in-law Tamar to become pregnant by him. From his union with Tamar, Judah had two sons, Zerah and Perez; the latter is regarded as an ancestor of King David and Jesus (cf. Matt 1:2–3, Luke 3:33–34).

Judah is also one of the leaders of the Maccabean uprising against the Seleucids (167–160 B.C.),³⁹ which was sparked off in defence of the faith and Jewish temple worship (1 Macc 1:41–9:22).

Already at the time the Israelite tribes settled in Canaan, the name Judah became an eponym from which not only a whole generation, but also the territory, which was incorporated into the kingdom of Saul and, after the breakup of the United Kingdom, functioned independently as a southern kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem until the Babylonian captivity. Later it became a Persian province and then, with its name changed to Judea, a Greek province. In Roman times it was incorporated into the province of Syria.

If the Letter of Jude is a pseudonymous writing, then these historical, royal and leadership connotations may be significant. They influence the perception of the sender as a leader who comes from a royal family (which is confirmed by the addition of “brother of James”⁴⁰), who – like Judah Maccabaeus – encourages the

37 T. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity. Part 1: Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 91), Tübingen 2002, p. 112–125.

38 G.L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, p. 55.

39 M. Rosik, *List św. Judy*, [in:] H. Langkammer, M. Rosik, M. Wróbel, *Komentarz do Listu św. Jakuba Apostoła, 1–2 Listu św. Piotra Apostoła, 1–3 Listu św. Jana Apostoła, Listu św. Judy i Apokalipsy* (Komentarz teologiczno-pastoralny do Biblii Tysiąclecia. Nowy Testament 5), Poznań 2015, p. 129.

40 See below.